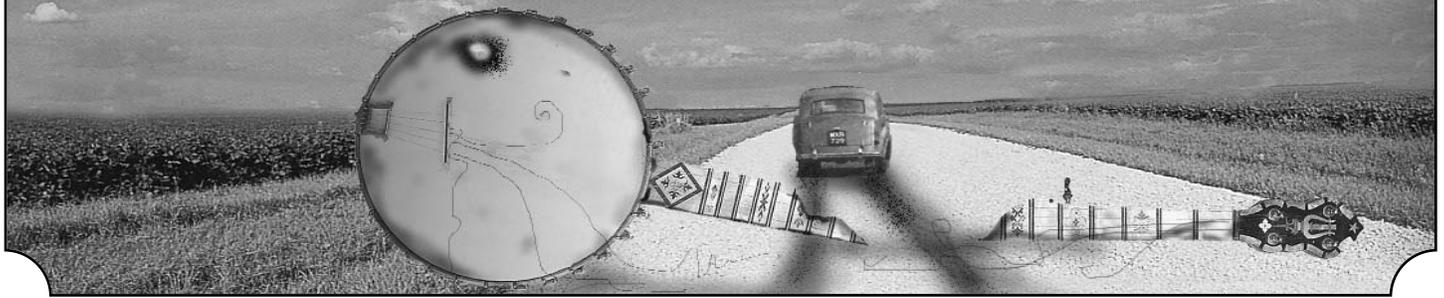
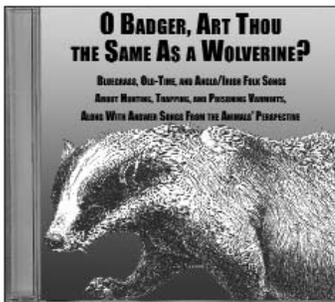


Bluegrass Blues



The recent explosion of interest in bluegrass and old-time music has led to an amazing and delightful abundance of compilation recordings destined to introduce these outstanding genres to listeners of virtually any musical taste! We must thank the recording companies, large and small, for this exciting, ear-opening cornucopia of sounds for the entire family.



**VARIOUS ARTISTS
AND ANIMALS**
O Badger, Art Thou the Same As a Wolverine? Bluegrass, Old-Time, and Anglo/Irish Folk Songs About Hunting, Trapping, and Poisoning Varmints, Along With Answer Songs From the Animals' Perspective

Squarer Records SQCD 00571 (2002)

This unique recording juxtaposes tracks of humans singing about hunting animals with answer songs from a furry creature's point of view. For example, a version of the English folk song "Reynard the Fox," in which the fox is ripped to shreds by the hounds, is succeeded on *O Badger* by an offering composed by the sly (and admittedly cuddly) little red fox, in which he schemes with the dogs (who were fed up about running around all

the time anyway) to mislead the hunters into a pool of quicksand. The classic "With My Dog and Gun" is followed by a sprightly ditty, penned by a coyote, whose namesake in the song transmits mange to the dog, and rabies to the human: Turnabout is fair play! Right after the hare-raising "Rabbit Up a Gum Stump," an enraged bunny performs the comeback piece, "Human is a Forrest Gump." The comeppance to a traditional ballad about trapping was put together by a skunk-badger-wolverine tandem; their contribution has a skunk spraying the flannel-bedecked biped and disorienting him so that he trips into a burrow specially dug by the badger and wolverine, and ultimately the trapper gets caught in a steel-jaw leg trap. The lyrics are vague, so it's skunk-clear as to the fate of the trapper at the end of the grizzly song.

The music is outstanding throughout, and it's obvious that the work of the four-legged ones features lynx to many other genres. An informative booklet includes translations of the lyrics from the animalese languages to English, courtesy of the online translation service Faulta Vista. Summink it all up, you should weasel out of whatever you're doing right now, run to your local record shop, and badger the staff to stock this album. You really otter get this CD whether you have to beg, burrow, or steal money-dollars, euros, cougarrands, whatever. It's so

good I don't think you woodchuck it out, and I'm not lion, because I couldn't bear to be without it fur a minute, to beaverry honest! As any badger would say, "It'stoat-ally cool! Dig it!" If you acquire the version of this album offered as a fund-raiser for the NRA, be forewarned that all the answer songs are omitted, as is the bonus track, a cover of Bill Staines' "A Place in the Choir." Avoid the sequel disc, called *O Possum*, because it appears to be dead on arrival, but I raccoon that *O Badger* should be a huge seller!

— Chip Munk (Walden Pond, MA)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
O Third Cousin Twice-Removed on My Steppather's Side, Who Art Thou?

Squarer Records SQCD 00577 (2003); 2-CD

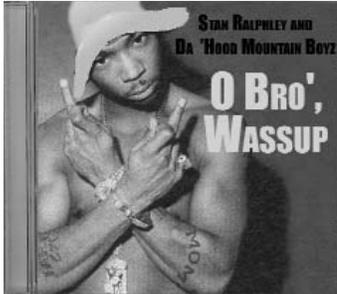
This incredible album features the performances of distant relatives (actually, third cousins, twice-removed, usually on the steppather's side) of 1960s one-hit wonders. These "artists" delve into the bluegrass/old-time tradition, and enthusiastically mix it with the sounds of the 60s, and the results have to be heard to be believed. Disc one includes distant kin of the Crazy World of Arthur Brown doing "Fire (On the Mountain),"

instrumentalists associated with members of the Surfaris performing "Wipe Out on the Wreck of the Old 97," and the breathtaking, genre-and-song-blending work of relatives of the Jaynettes, on the heartfelt "Sally (Goodin) Go Round the Roses While I Live." Folks representing Iron Butterfly provide a fiddle-banjo duet rendition of "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida," while long-lost cousins of Napoleon XIV were located just in time to record "They're Coming To Take Me Away Ha-Ha to the Little Cabin Home on the Hill." Two guys purported to have a connection with that great duo Zager and Evans contribute "In the Year 1935," disc one's concluding, obligatory hidden track. Disc two showcases 17 different takes on "I Am a Man of Constant Sorrow," played by the artists from disc one. A limited-edition third CD containing two versions each of "I'll Fly Away," "O Death," and "I'm My Own Grandpaw," by some of the afore-



mentioned performers, is packaged along with the initial release of this set. And don't forget that *O Third Cousin* is the soundtrack of the soon-to-be major motion picture and touring stage show of the same name. I've seen some rough cuts: Think "Hair" meets "Mamma Mia" on Clinch Mountain. Should be a blockbuster.

— *Rorri Lockpind (Gleams, MA)*



STAN RALPHEY AND DA 'HOOD MOUNTAIN BOYZ

O Bro', Wassup

Filthsonian/Smokeways Recordings
FSW 400199-2 (2002)

Bluegrass megastar Ralphley expands his circle of friends with the *O Bro', Wassup* release, as he welcomes guests from the world of gangsta rap. Current stars of that urban genre sing with the beloved icon and alternate material from Ralphley's repertoire and their own compositions. Cuts on this dynamite disc include "Pretty Polly," "#%*&?!@! Yo' Mama," "Angels in the Band," "%&*\$#@?#}\$%@!&*#/\$*]%,," and of

course "I Am a *@?!{&%\$#ing Man of Constant \$@&+?#\$!*ing Sorrow." A 64-page booklet is included, with complete discographical information, an illuminating history of the influence of bluegrass on every conceivable style of urban music, and an introduction by the famous egalitarian political leader, Lent Trott. Please note that copies of the CD sold at WalMart omit the bonus track by Ralphley and rap star Emmy Nem, "The Real Slim Shady Grove."

— *Daphna Swartt (Lumno, MO)*

VARIOUS ARTISTS *O Brother, The Circle is Unbroken*

Sucrose Mountain Records SUM-CD-954 (2003)

O Brother, The Circle Is Unbroken features all the living performers from the *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* album, interpreting versions of their songs on that disc done by Irish sean-nós singers who reworked the South African township jive versions of the renditions by Japanese taiko drum ensembles who covered the ambient trip-hop barbershop quartet interpretations of the original soundtrack. Therefore, there is no difference between the music on this *O Brother* CD and the first one, with the exception of two additional cuts by an all-star cast of singers and musicians from across the globe: There's a stunning bluegrass version of "We Are the World," and an updated "I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing," which is worth the price of the album, sporting

the heartfelt lyrics "I'd like to teach the world to sing / In perfect harmony, / I'd like to buy the world a banjo / And pluck it on my knee." This fine recording proves that we all live in one little global holler.

— *Tom Strian (Glen Pain, WA)*

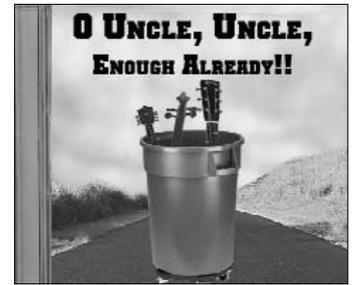
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Carter Family Redux: Songs of Country Music's First Family*

SuperMultiMega Record\$/Nashville Div. \$MM-CD 10,785,649-2 (2002)

Stars of many music genres paying homage to the first family of country music, by interpreting material from the Carter Family songbook combined with their own songs, is the premise behind the Redux CD, and a classic one it is. Among the many offerings are Aretha Franklin's "Gold Watch and Chain Chain Chain of Fools," Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven's Radio," and a newly discovered Ella Fitzgerald/ Duke Ellington cover of the obscure A.P. Carter/ Billy Strayhorn collaboration, "The Wildwood Flower Is a Love-some Thing." Other standout cuts are the warm, touching "Single Girl, Married Girl From Ipanema" by Astrud Gilberto, which could jumpstart a career revival for the Brazilian chanteuse, "Keep on the Sunny, Wild Side" by Lou Reed, and Willie Nelson crooning away on "I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain." The set's biggest surprise is a recently unearthed, previously rumored to exist, live

bootleg acoustic "Anchored in Love Me Two Times" from the Doors.

— *Adam Munss (Howert, TN)*



VARIOUS ARTISTS *O Uncle, Uncle, Enough Already!!*

Bandwagon Profiteer Recordings BPR-001 (2003)

O Uncle, Uncle was the last bluegrass/old-time various artist compilation to hit the record shops before the United States Congress, after a campaign of 55 million emails from exasperated American consumers, passed a House/Senate Joint Resolution prohibiting the release of this type of CD until further notice. That's too bad, because this platter-ful of polka bands from Cleveland, Chicago, and Buffalo exchanging their trumpets, accordions, and saxophones for fiddles, banjos, and mandolins from rural Appalachian Mountain bluegrass groups is an enlightening, innovative, entertaining idea. This highly recommend disc is one of the best of the year. Polkagrass rules!

— *Bert Frederick (Siels, AR)*



MUSICIANS SAY "DON'T HARRIS ME!"

Everywhere you look, Emmylou Harris is turning up as a guest star on someone's album. Besides her usual appearances on the works of alt-country stars such as Alison Krauss and Gillian Welch, she has been a guest star on CDs by Mark Knopfler, the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Buddy Miller, Pam Tillis, and Patty Loveless, and a Gram Parsons tribute, just this year! She has appeared on so many recordings over the past few years that the Surgeon General, along with Tipper Gore, has issued a special sticker proclaiming which albums DO NOT contain any Emmylou, and are certified to be Emmylou free. You may have already seen these stickers on the covers of CDs. Stu Softbottom, a record store clerk, explained, "We have nothing against Emmylou Harris; in fact, we love her. It's just not fair to the unsuspecting consumer to purchase a CD by Korn or Rage Against the Machine, and get home and find it has a country artist on it."

