

BELA FLECK 1958 -present



Another Bluegrass style player that deserves great respect. His sound and techniques are exceptional and distinctive

He has taken the banjo into every conceivable arena. He has been nominated for "Grammys" in Bluegrass, Country, Jazz, World music, Pop instrumental, Classical crossover, Folk, and American Roots categories.

He plays with amplified and electronic instruments. With artists like John Williams. In supergroups and with symphony orchestras. He works alongside percussion, brass and strings. All totally abhorrent to banjo "traditionalists". He is yet another exponent of the idea that the banjo is not, and never should be, confined to genre straightjackets and tradition that becomes stifling.

Tradition is fine as long as you accept that it is just what happened in the past.

Ignore the "diehards" and check the banjo's real history. It has continually evolved and moved on. Banjos can be used in limitless applications. (TV programme and Advert producers love them). They are beautiful, versatile instruments.

Let them ring out !!

MILES KRASSEN



Miles wrote the book "Clawhammer Banjo" published in 1974 by Oak publications. Through this book Miles had a lasting effect on my style and expanded my love of Appalachian banjo: both its tunes and its techniques.

Miles makes good use of the Galax Lick and drop thumb technique.

He introduced me to various different tunings like "C Modal" and the way they give depth and feeling to certain tunes.

He explains why so many clawhammer tunes are tabbed in "D" to enable them to be played with fiddle accompaniment.

There are many fine traditional mountain tunes in the book. Two of my favourites are "Boogerman" and "Ida Red". Both simple but full of drop thumbs and hammer ons that make the notes and tune sparkle.

Try and get the book. It is well worth it.