

# Mp3 Bluegrass Brothers - The Old Crooked Trail - Hh-1370



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Hard core, high energy, traditional bluegrass. 14 MP3 Songs COUNTRY: Bluegrass, COUNTRY: Traditional Bluegrass Show all album songs: The Old Crooked Trail - HH-1370 Songs Details: Liner Notes: It was on a hot, steamy night in August 2003 when I first encountered these Bluegrass Brothers. I was waiting backstage at John Hutchinsons Amelia, Virginia bluegrass festival, tuning up and getting ready for our set when I heard the Brothers rendition of a song entitled Country Poor And Country Proud. Id remembered that song from the Bluegrass Cardinals version back in the 1980s and had always liked it; now I was curious that somebody else had picked it up and was doing a good job of it. Like the famous line in the movie Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, I kept thinking, who are those guys? I noticed right off that the singing was not only very good, but had a lot of feeling. The bass fiddle player (whom I was to find out later was Victor Dowdy, one of the two actual brothers who are the founders of the band) was wringing every ounce of emotion out of the song and I was captivated by their performance. About this time, Ralph Stanley arrived backstage and I leaned over and said I dont know who these guys are, but they can flat sing. Ralph asked what band they were and I told him they were called the Bluegrass Brothers, but that I didnt know any of them individually. He never said anything else until a few minutes later when the band finished their set and was greeted with thunderous applause and an encore. Ralph motioned me over and said see how much they would charge to come and play my festival. I said that I would talk to them and see if we could get them booked. Flash forward to May 28, 2004 and the Bluegrass Brothers are on stage at Ralph Stanleys 34th Annual Memorial Bluegrass Festival near Coeburn, Virginia. They have the worsst time slot imaginable - the opening band at 12:00 noon. At precisely 12:40, they finished their set and have left the festival audience on its feet, cheering with obvious approval. Needless to say, they were brought back for an encore. I knew these guys were good,

but to get this kind of reception on their first set at their first appearance at the festival in the middle of the day was phenomenal! Exceptional musicianship, family harmony, good song selection and top notch presentation are the ingredients for success, and that is exactly what you have here in this new album by the Bluegrass Brothers. The group hails from Salem, Virginia in the Roanoke Valley, an area steeped in its traditional bluegrass heritage. The Dowdy brothers, Victor on bass fiddle and Robert on banjo, with Victor's son Steve on guitar, are the nucleus of the group, along with the talented Jack Leonard on mandolin. All four sing, and they effortlessly trade leads and harmonies throughout the album. Victor Dowdy, a big likeable bear of a guy, is the most prominent of the vocalists. His high leads are a distinct feature of the band, and he is one of those singers who have the rare ability to make you know that he feels every note that he sings. He sings with the intense emotion of someone like Dave Evans, at times sounding ragged and raw, but at the same time always honest and straightforward. He can tear it up on a traditional song like Wild Bill Jones and still be quite at home with Merle Haggard's Living Legend Of The Highway or Tom T. and Dixie Halls The Old Crooked Trail. The latter, incidentally, is a new song written to promote tourism in Southwestern Virginia. A standout cut on this project is a song that he wrote and sang himself about a love lost early in life, later to resurface and be lost again in adulthood, entitled Forever Now Shes Gone. You will notice throughout the album that it is Victor's voice and bass playing that provides the glue that holds the band together. Banjo Player Robert Dowdy is one of those few pickers who have a knack for playing the right thing at the right time. He knows when and how to back up a song and he knows when to be quiet. He mixes in the right amounts of Scruggs and Stanley with a light dash of chromatics once in a while just to spice things up. A lot of the band's punch comes from his banjo playing. In addition to singing various harmony parts, Robert also takes a turn at lead vocal on Jimmy Hales' Save My Love For You. He takes care of all the band's business activities; I have enjoyed the various business conversations we've had, both over the phone and face to face. Steve Dowdy, Victor's older son, plays both lead and rhythm guitar with drive and finesse and contributes a self-penned song entitled You Should Be Ashamed. He also sings lead on I Called Her Sunshine and the Seldom Scene classic Wait A Minute. Music is clearly in his genes and his baritone ranged voice is well suited to the material that he chooses to sing. He can blister a guitar break when the need arises; just listen to him on the Stanley Brothers Nobody's Love Is Like Mine, and J. C. Radford's Five Mile Mountain Road, and you'll see for yourself that Steve is a rising talent. His guitar absolutely explodes on Tom T. Dixie Halls A

Stranger In My Own Home Town, which sounds like it was written especially for the Bluegrass Brothers brand of hard driving bluegrass. Jack Leonards mandolin is present throughout, providing tasteful intros, turnarounds and backup. Jack sings all the vocal parts with ease and contributes leads on Home Is Where The Heart Is and Nobodys Love Is Like Mine. Jack quietly makes his presence known by always contributing whatever needs to be done to fill the gaps. Donald Dowdy, Victors younger son, makes a guest appearance playing mandolin and singing lead on Lonesome Ole Prisoner, a song he wrote. This makes me think that the Dowdy Brothers are raising their own bluegrass dynasty, as there is an abundance of talent running through this family. \*\* This is another in a series of fine albums by the Bluegrass Brothers brought to you by the folks at Hay Holler Records, and is one that Im sure you will enjoy. It is a fine project and Ive really enjoyed listening to it repeatedly over the past several days as I gathered my thoughts to write these notes. The guys in the band are all down to earth and friendly, and if by chance you havent seen them at one of their, you can do yourself a favor and go see this exciting band in person. They will leave you wanting more! James Alan Shelton - lead guitarist for Ralph Stanley The Clinch Mountain Boys July 2004 \*\* Donald Dowdy, 16 years old, plays both mandolin and guitar left-handed, upside down; that is, the instrument is strung as a right handed picker would string it. It makes my head hurt to think about it. - Kerry Hay

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