

Cloggers And Band Perform Before Enthusiastic Crowds

by Kim Nelson

Thursday night, January 27, I had the pleasure of seeing Earl Scruggs perform in Greenville, N. C., accompanied by a bluegrass band, The Flatland Family Band. I enjoyed the concert a great deal, and was fascinated by the talent of the Flatland Family Band. Much to my surprise, I later discovered that the band was to perform at the mall Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, appearing twice nightly; from 6:30-7:15 and from 9:00-9:45. I saw all six shows and it was really a lot of fun for me and everyone else. I was lucky enough to talk with Michael Connor of the Flatland Family Band and Brian DeMarcus of the Green Grass Cloggers after one performance. By talking to the, I learned some "inside information" that I'll share with you now.

The Flatland Family Band

The Flatland Family Band, a bluegrass band that was formed about four years ago, still consists of the six original members: Michael Connor and his wife, Linda; Linda's sister, Carolyn, and her husband, Skeet Creekmore; Bill Joyner, and Stan Riggs. The group began as an old-time string band, playing primarily old mountain tunes along with old Scottish and Irish music. Eventually, they changed this style into bluegrass, which is really a "jazzed-up" version of the old-time tunes. Many people confuse this type of music with country music, so I asked

Michael to explain the difference. He said that both bluegrass and country are branches of the old-time tunes, but each has taken its separate course in development. He also stated that bluegrass music appeals to both young and old (as was obvious by looking at the audience at Tarrytown) and that the band's type of music is played by ordinary musicians for the common person to enjoy.

An All-Around Good Time

I had never been exposed to very much bluegrass music until I saw the band's performances, but they really convinced me that bluegrass is a unique field of music that anyone can enjoy, especially when played by talented musicians like those in the Flatland Family Band. Half the fun of listening to the band was the chance to get involved and participate in the music. During each show, young and old alike joined in the fun with hand-clapping, singing, or whatever came to mind. The audience nearly went wild every time the band played, "Foggy Mountain Breakdown," a song that Earl Scruggs played for the movie, "Bonnie and Clyde." Later, shouts of "Go Skeet!" filled the air as Skeet sang "Dead Skunk" or began to play the spoons.

This band has performed with Earl Scruggs, played for the Heart Fund's Telethon, at benefits, Cherry Hospital, Central Prison in Raleigh and

in various other places throughout Virginia and North Carolina. They have placed first in contests in Charlotte, Granite Quarry, and Independence, Va. and have placed in numerous other bluegrass events. About a year ago, they were featured in a television documentary, "Bluegrass Roots," which traced the history of bluegrass music. The Green Grass Cloggers also appeared on this show.

The Green Grass Cloggers

The Green Grass Cloggers, a dance group of young, mostly college-age students from Greenville, N. C., has been performing together for about two and a half years. Not many people from "these parts" have ever heard of clogging, because most cloggers live in the mountains of N. C. and other states. Clogging is a type of dancing similar to square dancing, but the Green Grass Cloggers have innovated their own style of clogging. Each dancer wears hard-soled shoes, most of them with taps on the bottom. When the music starts, the cloggers begin to dance on a stage, stomping the &?:& out of the soles of their feet.

When I heard that some cloggers were coming to perform at the mall, I attended the first show with an opened mind, not really knowing what to expect. As the cloggers started their act, the whole audience seemed to be stunned by the talent of the young dancers, but readily accepted the new and unfamiliar style. The choreography was unbelievably impressive and interesting to watch. The Green Grass Cloggers is a group of talented and well-trained dancers, under the leadership of Brian DeMarcus, who clogs like he's been doing it all his life.

The group originated when several young people



Pictured in the top photo are the super-talented Green Grass Cloggers in action and below is the Flatland Family Band, masters of the bluegrass music. (Photos by Kent Murray)

decided to take up clogging in their spare time. Some of the cloggers are students at East Carolina University, but occupations of others include a carpenter, a trapper, an elementary school teacher, and an alcoholic rehabilitation counselor. It seems unusual that these people can actually find time to practice their clogging, tour, and compete in clogging events throughout several states, in addition to working and attending school, but evidently they find time to cram in many hard hours of practice. Brian, who has been clogging for nearly six years, said that most clog teams are either old-timers or groups sponsored by schools, but the Green Grass Cloggers originated through interested young people. "We do it because we like it," was one

comment he made after one of the performances at Tarrytown.

An Amazing Performance

Four couples of cloggers participated in the action Monday and Wednesday nights, but Friday night, the entire clog team of eight couples, performed before an eager audience. You should have heard the foot-stompin' madness then! One thing that I enjoyed so much about the cloggers was that while they were dancing, they really looked like they were enjoying themselves. I can easily see why the Green Grass Cloggers have already been named World Champion Traditional Cloggers at the Fiddler's Grove Competition in 1972. They have also been awarded first place for two years in events held at the Carolina, Virginia, South Carolina, New Jersey, and California, and is presently planning a Scandinavian tour. These cloggers seem to steal the show wherever they go, and are usually welcomed by a standing ovation from a cheering audience. They teach square dancing and clogging in Greenville and can be booked at the following address:

Green Grass Cloggers
c-o Brian DeMarcus
P.O. Box 7001
Greenville, N. C. 27834

Anyone who missed the Flatland Family Band and the Green Grass Cloggers has a chance to see them again March 15 at "The Attic" in Greenville. I can guarantee that the show will be worth both your money and time.

**Hurry on
down to
Hardee's,**



**where the
burgers are
charco-broiled**

Hardee's

**"6 Locations in the
Rocky Mount Area
to serve you"**

Hard-Working Clubs Attract Recognition

Often times it is the clubs and other organizations in a school that are overlooked. It is these clubs, however, that bring out the uniqueness and significance of the student organization. This month, the Gryphon Staff honors two hard working organizations, the Kudos Club and the Publicity Committee.

The Kudos Club, which is always busy with new ideas on how to contribute to the students and to the community is planning to have a project together before the Easter Sunrise Service Breakfast, which the Kudos

Club will also sponsor.

As for the Publicity Committee, they deserve the credit for the very informative Bulletin Board on Black Heritage Week. They also sponsor all the radio announcements and are responsible for all the activities of the SRA. In other words, the main purpose of the Publicity Committee is to let the students know what is going on at Rocky Mount Senior High.

Congratulations to both of these hard working groups that spend so many long hours in the interest of the school.

KILLEBREW STUDIO

134 HOWELL - TELEPHONE 442-0123