

Curly Seckler & The Steep Canyon Rangers

A Bluegrass Legend Teams with the Hottest Young Band on the Scene Today!

THE MASTER

Curly Seckler is regarded as one of the greatest tenor singers ever in bluegrass. In 2004 he was inducted into the International Bluegrass Music Association's Hall of Fame. Born in 1919, Curly began his musical odyssey in 1935, performing on radio in Salisbury, NC. Early in his career, Curly worked with Charlie Monroe, Jim & Jesse McReynolds, Mac Wiseman, The Sauceman Brothers and The Stanley Brothers, before settling into his best-known role as mandolin player and tenor singer with Flatt & Scruggs's Foggy Mountain Boys. Over the next dozen years, Curly recorded well over 100 songs with them, including many of their most popular hits. The Lester Flatt/Curly Seckler duets from the 1950s are still considered to be among the best bluegrass performances ever. Curly remained with Flatt & Scruggs until 1962. In 1971 he recorded his first solo album on County Records, and by 1973 he had reunited with Lester Flatt in his band, The Nashville Grass. When Flatt passed away in 1979, Curly took over leadership of the Nashville Grass for another fifteen years. Though Curly retired from active touring in 1994, he continued to make occasional appearances at festivals and concerts. Still a vibrant, creative, and charming entertainer, in 2004 he made his first new recordings in ten years. *Down In Caroline*, released on Copper Creek in the fall of 2005, was a finalist for IBMA Recorded Event of the Year. Curly's latest CD, *Bluegrass, Don't You Know*, was named one of the Top 10 Bluegrass CDs of 2006 by *The Chicago Tribune*.

THE PRODIGIES

The Steep Canyon Rangers are Graham Sharp (banjo and harmony vocals), Woody Platt (guitar and lead vocals), Charles R. Humphrey III (bass and harmony vocals), Mike Guggino (mandolin and harmony vocals), & Nicky Sanders (fiddle and harmony vocals). This band's explosive growth in popularity is a direct result of their fearless exploration of the tradition of bluegrass and their relentless drive to create a sound that is completely original. The Rangers have immersed themselves in the music of Flatt & Scruggs and Bill Monroe while continuing to write their own material. Songwriting influences ranging from Townes Van Zandt to John Prine and Norman Blake were instrumental as the band evolved its own literate and sophisticated style. They expertly fused tradition with innovation to create a sound that breaks boundaries while honoring the roots of acoustic music. Their intense focus is reaping rewards and bringing the band awards. Their song "One Dime At A Time" rose to No. 1 on *Bluegrass Unlimited* magazine's National Bluegrass Survey. In 2006 the band was named the IBMA's Emerging Artist of the Year. The Rangers' latest release, *Lovin' Pretty Women*, is a definitive statement from one of the most exciting, vital bands currently working in the acoustic music genre. It captures the magic of a band hitting its creative stride, firing on all cylinders and daring to reach for perfection.

THE WINNING COMBINATION

With the release of his latest recordings, Curly Seckler embarked on a series of festival appearances. In the spring of 2006 he was scheduled to perform at MerleFest and needed a band to accompany him. Enter the Steep Canyon Rangers. Though at that time they had only been playing professionally for five years, this young band was already catching the attention of press, promoters and record labels. They had signed with Rebel Records in 2004, and were quickly transitioning from regional act to nationally acclaimed powerhouse. Seckler's manager knew them well, and was delighted when they agreed to perform with him. As it turned out, the chemistry between Curly and the Rangers was instant. Rebel Records' Dave Freeman recalls their first meeting in the liner notes to the Rangers' new recording, *Lovin' Pretty Women*:

Chosen as a backup band for the legendary Curly Seckler at the prestigious MerleFest event in 2006, the group amazed Curly and other onlookers with its command of and familiarity with the classic Flatt & Scruggs' repertoire. In a pre-show warm-up session, after the band sailed through more than a dozen of Seckler's chosen favorites with hardly a hitch, Curly looked up and said, quietly but with great respect, "You boys can really pick." Not bad for a bunch of Carolina kids who grew up with the real thing!

Following their stage performance together, Seckler himself marveled that it was the first time in all of his years in music that he had received a standing ovation for performing the bluegrass standard, "Salty Dog Blues." Their rousing success at MerleFest has led Seckler and the Rangers to schedule several joint performances each year. These two acts - the seasoned legend and the dynamic disciples - have come together to create a highly entertaining and broadly appealing show. In 2008 they appeared together on the PBS TV series, *Song of the Mountains*. And when the Mountain Music Museum in Bristol, VA held Curly Seckler Day, the Rangers were right by Curly's side to help him celebrate not only his induction into the Museum, but his 88th birthday as well!

Curly Seckler is the embodiment of bluegrass history - a legendary entertainer who has seen it all - and living proof that traditional bluegrass still thrives in the new millennium. The Steep Canyon Rangers represent the future of bluegrass music. They are carrying on the tradition with reverence and unbridled enthusiasm, while breaking new ground and creating traditions of their own. It's a one-two punch that can't be beat!

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