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BILL MONROE: FATHER OF BLUEGRASS MUSIC (DVD)

by Phil Hall

(2008-08-19)

2008, Un-rated, 90 minutes, [Music Video](#) Distributors

CREDITS



Steve Gebhardt's 1993 [documentary](#), which has just received its DVD premiere, pays tribute to the man who is commonly known as the Father of Bluegrass Music. Indeed, Bill Monroe took that title very, very seriously – I saw him in concert in Nashville in 1993 and he proudly informed his audience: "I am the Father of Bluegrass Music...and don't you forget it!"

Well, it is hard to forget Monroe's distinctive mandolin playing and a unique singing voice that peerlessly mixed the traditions of Appalachian folk and hillbilly-flavored [country music](#). The film traces Monroe's life from the rural isolation of dirt-poor Kentucky to the heady stardom of the Grand Ol' Opry. Along the way, Monroe earned thousands of fans and more than a little ill will (the film significantly plays down the long-running feud between Monroe and former band members Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs, claiming the duo were really at fault for the fight).

There's plenty of talk throughout the film, with a taciturn Monroe offering measured recollections while the likes of Ricky Skaggs, Marty Stuart, Emmylou Harris and (incongruously) Jerry Garcia heap bushels of praise. And that is all fine – the praise is deserved. But the film truly soars with concert footage and vintage phonograph recordings of Monroe steaming through his musical canon. For all of its flaws, the documentary soars once Monroe gets out the mandolin and finds the microphone. Bluegrass fans, get ready to pounce!

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Weekend of August 22 - 24		
1/1	Tropic Thunder	16.1/65.7
2/0	The House Bunny	15.1/15.1
3/0	Death Race	12.3/12.3
4/2	The Dark Knight	10.3/489.2
5/3	Star Wars: The Clone Wars	5.7/25.0
6/5	Pineapple Express	5.6/73.9
7/4	Mirrors	4.9/20.1
8/0	The Longshots	4.3/4.3
9/7	Mamma Mia!	4.3/124.5
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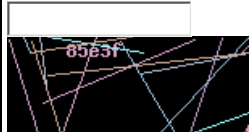
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Are the stars of the US version of "The Office" cursed when it comes to [feature films](#)?

- 1) Yes. "The Rocker" bombed, "Evan Almighty" may be the biggest bomb in history and I can't remember if the guy who plays Jim has had anything good said about him outside of the show.
- 2) No. Carell owned the world with "The 40 Year Old Virgin," and Jenna Fischer has been making cameos in tons of successful films for years.
- 3) Define "cursed." I mean, it's not like "Poltergeist" where actors are dropping dead. There have just been some weak films.

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