

Ronnie Reno *and the Reno Tradition*

To watch Ronnie Reno and the Reno Tradition is to witness living traditional and bluegrass history. Ronnie has had one of the most colorful, diverse and distinguished careers in the music industry. On the country side, he has toured as an opening act and band member for Merle Haggard, toured with Mel Tillis, done studio work for Johnny Cash, Conway Twitty and Willie Nelson, and written hits for both Haggard and Twitty. On the bluegrass side, he spent several years providing part of the trademark harmonies of the Osborne Brothers.

Bookending those personal milestones is a career based in family that has provided modern music with some of its most noteworthy moments. As a boy, Ronnie became part of bluegrass greatness when he picked up the mandolin and joined his father's band. His dad, Don Reno, happened to be one-half of Hall of Famers Reno and Smiley, and young Ronnie was part of many of the act's great recordings in the '50s and '60s. These days, Ronnie heads the Reno Tradition, an act that encapsulates some of the greatest sounds and moments of traditional bluegrass music.

Ronnie was born into the world bluegrass, a uniquely American music spawned in the hills of Kentucky by Bill Monroe and a close band of like-minded musicians. His father replaced Earl Scruggs in Monroe's seminal band, the Bluegrass Boys, and popularized the three-fingered roll on the five-string banjo. Ronnie was just a boy when he picked up a mandolin and began playing with Reno and Smiley, often standing on a milk carton just to reach the microphone. He also sang and played mandolin and guitar for the Don Reno Band before joining the Osbornes, with whom he worked for five years and five albums.

It was while the Osbornes were opening for Merle Haggard that Haggard took note of Ronnie's talents, asking Ronnie to open for him, and bringing him on as a full-time band member. Ronnie appeared on ten of Haggard's albums and harmonized with Merle and Bonnie Owens through the '70s and early '80s, a period that included classic hits like "If We Make It Through December," "Always Wanting You," "If We're Not Back In Love By Monday," and "Ramblin' Fever."

Ronnie recorded the first of his own albums for MCA in the '80s, releasing singles like "Homemade Love" and "The Letter," before teaming up with his father and younger brothers Dale and Don Wayne for a few years until his father's death in 1984. At that point, the Reno Brothers recorded six albums and toured together for 15 years, setting a new standard of excellence in the Reno Tradition and completing the circle that had been set in motion when he was a boy. The songs and arrangements of this period have been carried into the Reno Tradition tours of today, which are nothing less than musical journeys through the music of Ronnie and his family members, as well as of the legends Ronnie has played and recorded with over the years.

Ronnie's life in music has seen his wide-ranging accomplishments earn him any number of honors. He created, produced and starred in his own cable TV program, "Reno's Old Time Music Festival," which could be seen in 28 million households and earned a nomination for the prestigious Cable Ace Award for Best Musical Series. Ronnie has received the Distinguished Achievement Award from the International Bluegrass Music Association, and has served on the board of directors of the International Bluegrass Music Museum in Owensboro, KY and the Kentucky Center for Traditional Music at Morehead State University.

Never one to rest on his laurels, Ronnie continues to travel and take bluegrass music to fans everywhere. Few families can boast the kind of accomplishments to which Ronnie is heir, and few entertainers carry the tradition forward to audiences with a greater balance of integrity and entertainment value than Ronnie Reno and the Reno Tradition.

