

# Scruggs, Earl (1924-) Encyclopedia Article

## Scruggs, Earl (1924-)

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## Scruggs, Earl (1924—)

An enormously influential musician, North Carolina native Earl Scruggs essentially rescued the five-string banjo from its fate as a country comedian's instrument, moving it into the realm of virtuosity by his work with Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys and his own band, the Foggy Mountain Boys, in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. Though he did not invent the three-finger picking style that bears his name, he refined, developed, and popularized it as both a backing and solo approach, winning enthusiastic fans worldwide and earning comparisons to the greatest classical music instrumentalists. In the late 1960s, he left the Foggy Mountain Boys to work with his sons in the Earl Scruggs Revue, bringing a fusion of bluegrass, country, and rock to audiences around the United States, especially on college campuses. Thanks to its use in the soundtrack for the movie *Bonnie and Clyde*, his "Foggy Mountain Breakdown" (1949) is one of bluegrass music's best known numbers.