

## Peter Rowan – Bio

Peter Hamilton Rowan was born on July 4<sup>th</sup> 1942 in Boston, Massachusetts and raised in the nearby town of Wayland. He has two younger siblings Chris [b. 9th Oct. 1947] and Lorin [b. 19th March 1952] who are also musicians. Peter's parents played piano and sang, and a number of relatives were accomplished musicians. An uncle taught Peter to play guitar, and as a teenager he frequented the now defunct Boston club, Hillbilly Ranch, where he saw acts such as the Lilly Brothers. Aged fourteen and still a high school student, Rowan formed a Tex-Mex influenced group, The Cupids, and they cut one and self-released single. In 1961 Rowan enrolled at Colgate University in Hamilton, New York but dropped out two years later after deciding to become a professional musician. He traveled to Washington D.C. and saw countless groups perform including the Country Gentlemen, then returned to Boston and eventually joined the Cambridge-based Mother Bay State Entertainers. Rowan contributed mandolin and vocals to their Elektra album **"The String Band Project."**

In late 1964 Peter joined the legendary Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys as rhythm guitarist and lead singer, after working with Jim Rooney and Bill Keith for a short time. During Rowan's tenure with the Blue Grass Boys the players included Keith [banjo], Gene Lowinger [fiddle], Lamar Grier [banjo] and Richard Greene [fiddle]. Rowan contributed to Monroe's Decca album **"Bluegrass Time."** Musical experimentation aka 'progressive music,' had become de rigeur and in mid 1967 Rowan joined Earth Opera, a band that cut two albums for Elektra Records. The group line-up included David Grisman [mandolin, vocals]. The band's single "Home To You," a Rowan composition, taken from their sophomore album was a minor hit [# 97 U.S.]. Rowan's next band Seatrain, formed by Blues Project members Andy Kulberg [bass, flute] also featured Richard Greene. Signed to Capitol Records, George Martin produced the band's London [England] recorded debut album, and their Massachusetts recorded sophomore album, and they scored a 1971 Top 40 U.S. hit single with "13 Questions." In 1972 Peter left the band to join his siblings in The Rowan Brothers. Having cut a self-titled album for CBS, produced by Grisman [although he used the name David Diadem], they promptly disbanded.

In 1973, Messrs. Rowan and Grisman joined The Grateful Dead's Jerry Garcia [who had played on **"The Rowans"** sessions], Vassar Clements [fiddle] and John Kahn [bass] in Old And In The Way. A short-lived project, a live self-titled recording culled from October 1973 shows the band played at the Boarding House in San Francisco was released two years later. Rowan's next supergroup was the bluegrass influenced, Muleskinner, which featured Rowan, Greene, Grisman, Keith and guitar genius Clarence White [The Country Boys, Kentucky Colonels, Nashville West, Byrds, The White Brothers]. The group cut one album, made one live television appearance and disbanded. Muleskinner's debut album was reissued on CD by Sierra, and the latter label eventually issued a recording of the aforementioned tv appearance. Peter then reunited the Rowan Brothers, and they continued to perform together into the early 1980's and in the process cut three albums. Concurrently, Rowan also played rock and bluegrass music with Mexican Airforce, a band that featured famed Tex-Mex accordion player Flaco Jimenez. The late 1970's aggregation Red Hot Pickers consisted of Greene, Tony Trischka [banjo], Andy Statman [mandolin] and Roger Mason [bass]. **"Bluegrass Album"** and **"Hiroshima Mon Amour"** were originally issued in Japan and segments later appeared on the Sugar Hill recording **"Peter Rowan With The Red Hot Pickers"** [1984]. From the 1980's onward, in addition to pursuing a solo recording career, Rowan has regularly collaborated on recordings with his friends, acquaintances and peers. Relocating to Nashville, in 1983 Rowan founded the band Wild Stallions.

**"Dust Bowl Children"** won the now defunct NAIRD [National Association of Independent Record Distributors] Folk Album of the Year Award. Lorin and Chris contributed to Peter's historical music journey **"Awake Me In The New World"** and it led to another trio album by the brothers, **"Tree On A Hill."** **"Bluegrass Boy"** was a tribute to Bill Monroe and was released the year that the bluegrass legend passed. **"Old & In The Gray"** was by way of a reunion of the old bluegrass band, with Herb Pedersen [banjo, guitar] taking the place of the late Jerry Garcia [d. 1995] and Bryn Davies [bass] replacing the late John Kahn [d. 1996]. **"High Lonesome Cowboy"** featured contributions from Tony Rice and Norman Blake. During the 1990's Rowan performed with The Panama Red Riders, which also featured Greene, plus Michael Munford [banjo], Viktor Krauss [bass] and Charles Sawtelle [guitar, vocals]. **"Live At Telluride"** was recorded at the 1994 edition of the famous Colorado bluegrass festival, and the band Crucial Country was composed of Larry Atamanuik [drums], Sam Bush [mandolin, fiddle, harmonies], Viktor Krauss [acoustic upright bass] and Kester Smith [congas, percussion]. In the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Rowan worked with Tony Rice and to date they have released **"You Were**

**There For Me**” [2004] and **“Quartet”** [2007]. The latter recording also features Bryn Davies [bass, vocals] and Sharon Gilchrist [mandolin, vocals]. Gilchrist, a former member of old-time band Uncle Earl, performed with Martie and Emily Erwin of the Dixie Chicks, in the teenage band, Blue Night Express. Bryn Davies aka Bryn Bright is a member of the Austin’s, Two High String Band.

Rowan's songs have been recorded by New Riders of the Purple Sage [“Panama Red,” “Midnight Moonlight” and “Lonesome L.A. Cowboy”], George Strait [“Dance Time In Texas”], Michael Martin Murphey [“Land Of The Navajo”], Ricky Skaggs [“You Make Me Feel Like A Man”], Desert Rose Band, Janie Fricke and many others. Rowan is a follower of Tibetan Buddhism. Among the record labels that Peter Rowan has recorded for are Elektra, Capitol, Warner Bros., Round, Elektra-Asylum, Better Days/Nippon Columbia [Japan], Rounder, Flying Fish, Appaloosa [Italy], Waterfront, Compass, Acoustic Disc, Sugar Hill and he has had his extensive catalogue reissued by label such as Evangeline [U.K.], Ridge Runner, Rykodisc, Sierra and Collectors’ Choice Music.

#### Discography :

with Mother Bay State Entertainers - **“The String Band Project”** [1964] :

with Bill Monroe’s Blue Grass Boys - **“Bluegrass Time”** [1966] :

with Earth Opera - **“Earth Opera”** [1968] ; **“The Great American Eagle Tragedy”** [1969] :

with Seatrain - **“Seatrain”** [1970] ; **“Marblehead Messenger”** [1971] :

with Muleskinner - **“A Potpourri Of Bluegrass Jam”** [1974] ; **“Live : Original Television Archives”** [1994] :

with Lorin and Chris Rowan, as The Rowans - **“The Rowans Brothers”** [1972] ; **“The Rowans”** [1976] ; **“Sibling Rivalry”** [1977] ; **“Jubilation”** [1978] ; **“Tree On A Hill”** credited as Peter Rowan & The Rowan Brothers [1994] ; **“Crazy People”** [2003] :

with Old And In The Way - **“Old And In The Way”** [1975] ; **“That High Lonesome Sound”** [1996] ; **“Breakdown: Live Recordings 1973”** [1997] ;

with Greene & the Red Hot Pickers - **“Bluegrass Album”** [1979] ; **“Hiroshima Mon Amour”** [1979] :

with Tex Logan & Greg Douglas - **“Revelry”** [1983] :

with Flaco Jimenez Y Su Conjunto - **“San Antonio Sound”** [1983] :

with Flaco Jimenez - **“Live Rockin' Tex-Mex”** [1984] :

with Bill Keith & Jim Rooney - **“Hot Bluegrass”** [1985] :

with The Nashville Bluegrass Band - **“New Moon Rising”** [1988] :

with Jerry Douglas - **“Yonder”** [1996] :

with Druha Trava - **“New Freedom Bell”** [1999] :

with Old And In The Gray - **“Old & In The Gray”** [2002] :

with Don Edwards - **“High Lonesome Cowboy”** [2002] :

with Tony Rice - **“You Were There For Me”** [2004] ; **“Quartet”** [2007] :

with Crucial Country - **“Live At Telluride”** [2006] :

with Crucial Reggae – **“June 10, 2005 - Bonnaroo Music Festival, Manchester, TN”** internet only download [2005] :

Solo - **“Peter Rowan”** [1978] ; **“Medicine Trail”** [1978] ; **“Peter Rowan & The Wild Stallions”** [1981] ; **“Texican Badman”** [1981] ; **“The Walls Of Time”** [1982] ; **“Peter Rowan With The Red Hot Pickers”** [1984] ; **“The First Whippoorwill”** [1985] ; **“Dust Bowl Children”** [1990] ; **“All On A Rising Day”** [1991] ; **“Awake Me In The New World”** [1993] ; **“Bluegrass Boy”** [1996] ; **“Reggaebilly”** [2002] :

#### Arthur Wood

Kerrville Kronikles 12/06 & 01/07.

[1000 words]