

"This much-anticipated event brought hundreds of older fans and curious youngsters out of the woodwork to commune in a fantastic show at a great festival. So we did that DGQ reunion thing, not having played all together since 1979. Big crowd- they packed a ballroom at the Sheraton Tacoma with mostly geezers like us and a few curious youngsters and about a hundred tapers.

I know, it wasn't exactly the original band. We couldn't really do the original band because bassist Joe Carroll died in 1980 or 81. This band was actually sort of an idealized original band, though the group sure wouldn't be what it became without Joe and Bill. They both contributed so much in so many ways.

So it was Todd on bass and Mike on 2nd mando- Tony was there and in really good shape and playing beautifully, stoically putting up with thumb problems. It was hopeful. So there was very little baggage about who could play, who couldn't, etc. The tunes just rolled out of us, my parts just happened, like they're in the DNA now.

We just played down that first Kaleidoscope record, top to bottom, it worked like it was supposed to. People were calling out the next tune from the audience. I would guess that the high level of euphoria in the band was completely amplified by the audience. There wasn't that much separation between the stage stuff and the audience stuff. We were all on a big joy bus celebrating our work and the music. It was especially great for me because all feelings of musical inequality had vanished and I felt free to express everything I used to struggle to get across back then, and was able to really use Dawg music, that fantastic setting for the fiddle, to the fullest.

David said in rehearsal, "Man, this band has gotten loud!" Of course he hasn't gotten any quieter! Dawg has lost none of the brilliant, unstoppable fire and drive he has always had, but the difference is, everyone else is big and fiery too.

Tony did his unmatchable grace & power thing, but leavened with the subtle harmonic expansion which he has worked on for so long. Mike did the hardest thing, finding ways to thread through David's unbreakable and untameable rhythm fugues. Mike, as the most resourceful mandolinist in the world right now, is uniquely suited for that job, and created complementary textures to David which boggled the mind. Todd was his usual rock in the middle of a swirling sea of rhythm. And the band did swirl. We put all our syncopated brains to work in there, with extended solos befitting our extended years. Sometimes it felt like getting caught in a brawl, or a tornado filled with large furniture but it was so exhilarating fighting your way through to the last bar. The Jon Cooper fiddle I recently acquired served well- I was able to carve long melodic trenches like a backhoe through the roil, or use it like a ribbon gun to stitch through everything, and of course the guys were always there to meet you on the one at the end. The textures were a lot richer, too, with more harmonic choices and a clearer sense of emotional arc through most of the tunes. I swear the audience was playing this stuff almost as much as we were- the energy in the room was pretty much all one.

The encores were really fun, we brought out the young inheritors, Chris Thile and Sara Watkins from Nickle Creek and unbroke the circle for a couple of tunes. The last tune had David's 10 year old son, Sam, debuting with the band on string bass while Todd went back to mandolin for a really emotional Dawg's Bull, dedicated to a fellow Taurean, David's late ex-girlfriend Janice Bain, who virtually supported the DGQ in its first 2 years (the group rehearsed a whole year in David's house before its first gig) and the Nicklers and everyone all just going at it full blast. Certainly one of the most joyful concerts I have ever played.

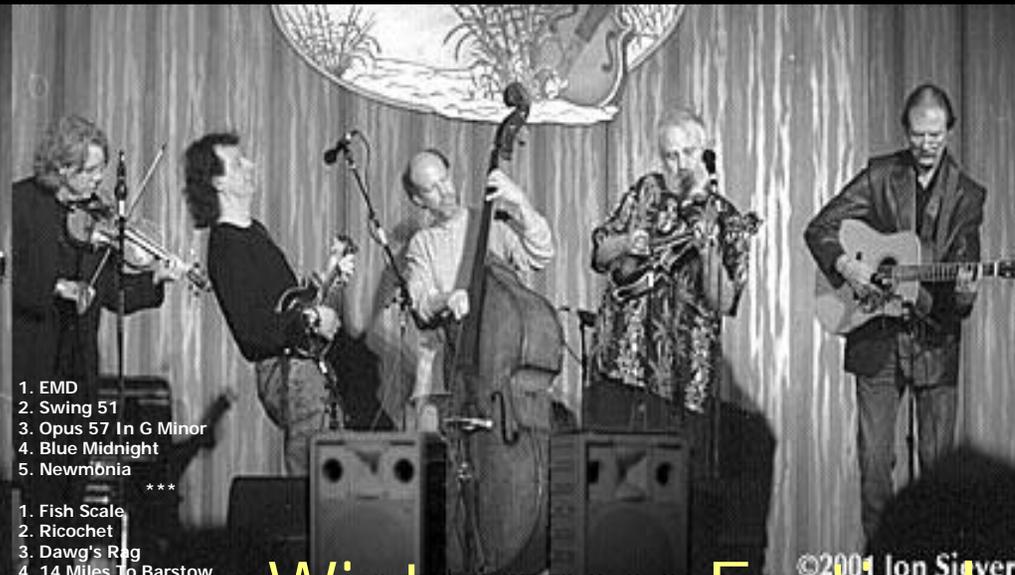
David Grisman Quintet 25th Reunion



Wintergrass Festival Tacoma, WA

David Grisman Quintet 2/23/01 Tacoma WA

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1. EMD
2. Swing 51
3. Opus 57 In G Minor
4. Blue Midnight
5. Newmōnia

1. Fish Scale
2. Ricochet
3. Dawg's Rag
4. 14 Miles To Barstow
5. Minor Swing
6. Dawg's Bull (w/Sam Bush)

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