

buzz BOX

BY VIJITH ASSAR
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O Brother! Living legend hits Starr Hill



HIGHLY respected as both a vocalist and banjo player, Ralph Stanley has been bringing mountain music to mainstream America for a half century. The hit film *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* rocketed Stanley into the spotlight in 2000 with his grim *cappella* "O Death" on the multi-platinum selling soundtrack. Stanley was also the final act on the sold-out concert tour that followed. He still seems to be on a mission to bring old-time music to new audiences—and this Sunday, he'll be playing at Starr Hill.

The Hook: Is your career still feeling the effects of *O Brother*?

Ralph Stanley: It's still going strong. I think it helped my career a lot. More and more people know me. This kind of music hasn't been exposed on the radio much. That put the icing on the cake.

The Hook: Did you want T-Bone Burnett as executive producer because of his role in that project?

Ralph Stanley: Well, he produced the soundtrack on *O Brother*, and I guess my

song done pretty well. He told me how much it helped the movie, so he wanted me to do a whole album.

The Hook: Did the album turn out differently as a result of his input?

Ralph Stanley: Well, I did it with a different group. They furnished music for me. I did all the singing, but it was pretty different because of that.

The Hook: What are your responsibilities as a re-interpreter of traditional songs?

Ralph Stanley: My job is to continue doing the original old-time sound that it started with. If something else gets real hot, I don't jump on it. I think I should keep my old sound and my old fans. I think that's why I've been around for 60 years.

The Hook: After so many decades in the business and appearing on over 200 albums, what made you want to make your 2002 album self-titled?

Ralph Stanley: Well, they wanted to do that because I did all the singing, I reckon.

The Hook: Who are your favorite modern musicians?

Ralph Stanley: I don't have any. ■

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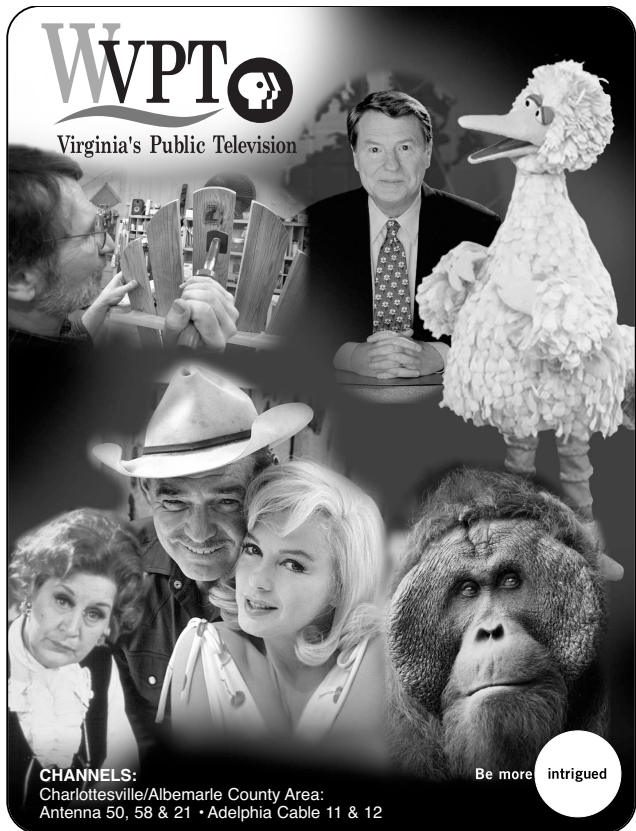
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