

## **The Roland White Band**

Roland White is known as one of the few unique stylists on the mandolin, with his own unmistakable sound and touch. In his distinguished career in bluegrass music, Roland has played in some of the most influential and popular groups in the music's history, and has played a large part in creating that history. The latest chapter in his saga of musical discovery finds Roland fronting his own bluegrass group, The Roland White Band. His gifts as a musician have delighted audiences everywhere: his vitality, soul, and infectious rhythm enable him to dance through his instrument. Add to this his mastery of ensemble playing, harmonic sophistication, and warm voice guided by a swinging sense of phrasing, and you have the legend of bluegrass that Roland has become.

The Roland White Band is Roland's current venture with bandmates Diane Bouska on guitar and vocals, banjo master Richard Bailey and versatile bassist Todd Cook. The band's debut album "Jelly On My Tofu", named after one of three of Roland's original instrumentals on the album, was nominated for a Grammy in 2003.

**The Roland White Band** features a diverse repertoire of songs and tunes consisting of old and new bluegrass classics, traditional country songs, original instrumentals, traditional instrumentals with a special fondness for Monroe, and a few favorites from Roland's years with the Kentucky Colonels and Country Gazette. Roland and Diane Bouska sing precise and texturally edgy duets in the classic country and bluegrass styles; Diane specializes in blues-flavored numbers in her distinctive voice, and in-the-pocket rhythm guitar. Richard Bailey provides a sparkling and often mischievous banjo, fluent across the spectrum from the straight-ahead Scruggs to melodic and swing tunes. On bass, Todd Cook shores up the bottom with a solidly swinging jazz sensibility and a big, warm tone. Roland's reputation as a master of timing is borne out in the band's rhythmic solidarity and drive.

### **More about Roland White:**

Springing from a large family of musicians, Roland, along with brothers Eric and Clarence, first played together as youngsters in their native Maine. Moving to southern California in 1955, The Country Boys (later to become The Kentucky Colonels) won talent contests and appeared on local television shows and even landed appearances on The Andy Griffith Show. The Kentucky Colonels' influence has far exceeded the band's short tenure as an active band. Their "Appalachian Swing" album remains one of the most influential albums of that era, a landmark in the history of bluegrass. During the years the Kentucky Colonels were together, they featured such great musicians as Roger Bush, Billy Ray Latham, Leroy Mack, Bobby Slone, and the legendary fiddler Scott Stoneman.

Moving from The Kentucky Colonels into a position as guitarist for Bill Monroe in the late 60's, Roland absorbed the traditional feel and repertoire from the Father Of Bluegrass that remains a strong element in his music today. He also took part in several landmark recording sessions while a Bluegrass Boy, among them The Gold Rush, Is The Blue Moon Still Shining, Crossing The Cumberland, Sally Goodin, Kentucky Mandolin, and The Walls Of Time. From Monroe's band, Roland moved on to that of another bluegrass pioneer, Lester Flatt, playing mandolin and recording several albums as a member of The Nashville Grass from 1969-1973. In 1973 a short-lived reunion of The White Brothers was brought to an untimely end due to Clarence White's tragic death. Roland then began a thirteen-year tenure with the progressive west coast group Country Gazette, first playing guitar and then mandolin, with such bluegrass luminaries as Byron Berline, Alan Munde, Joe Carr, and Roger Bush. Roland's most recent musical affiliation, with the highly decorated Nashville Bluegrass Band, began in 1989 and ended when he left that group at the end of 2000. The Nashville Bluegrass Band distinguished themselves as the premier bluegrass band of their generation, winning two Grammys and Grammy nominations on all of their albums.

### **Richard Bailey**

Banjoist Richard Bailey hails from Memphis, Tennessee, and has performed with innumerable bluegrass, country and pop artists, among them Vassar Clements, Larry Cordle, Kathy Chiavola, The Cluster Pluckers, and Curly Seckler. He's also a studio pro, having recorded with the likes of George Jones and Tammy Wynette, Al Green, and Kenny Rogers, and on Roland's 1994 Sugar Hill release, as well as many others. Richard is featured as one of the banjo masters in Pete Wernick and Tony Trischka's book,

## Masters Of The Five String Banjo.

### **Diane Bouska**

Guitarist and vocalist Diane Bouska is a native of Overland Park, Kansas, and has performed with Roland since the late 80's. Her first love in bluegrass was the banjo, and she has played and taught that instrument since the middle '70s. She traces her shift in emphasis to guitar to her beginning to play with Roland. A student of jazz guitar and flute, Diane also writes and performs original songs. Diane appeared on Roland's 1994 Sugar Hill album "Trying To Get To You", and has worked as a guitarist for dances around Nashville and as a member of Roland's New Kentucky Colonels over the past twelve years. She and Roland have performed as a duet at numerous venues, ranging from Nashville's bluegrass mecca, The Station Inn, to the Harrieville Bluegrass Festival in Australia. She authored their instructional book/cd sets "Roland White's Approach To Bluegrass Mandolin" and "Roland White's Mandolin Christmas".

### **Todd Cook**

Versatile bassist Todd Cook was born in Dayton, Ohio, and originally studied jazz bass with some of the finest instructors in the business. Since moving to Nashville he has played on the Grand Old Opry and at The Ryman Auditorium. He has worked with such wonderful bluegrass groups as The McLains, Jim and Jesse, Jimmy Martin, and The Dillards. He has also toured with stage productions of the Patsy Cline and Hank Williams stories, and was bassist for the Tennessee Performing Arts Center's production of a musical Tribute to Frank Sinatra.