

Robbie Fulks is a singer, recording artist, instrumentalist, composer, and songwriter. His current release, *Bluegrass Vacation* on Compass Records, returns him to his bluegrass roots, with a large group of masterful musicians including Sam Bush, Jerry Douglas, Justin Moses, Ronnie McCoury, Alison Brown, David Grier, Tim O'Brien, Todd Phillips, John Cowan, Brennen Leigh, Randy Kohrs, Sierra Hull, Stuart Duncan, Shad Cobb, and Chris Eldridge. Across 11 new original songs (and one freewheeling interpretation of the Delmore Brothers), Robbie covers themes like small-town blues, the endurance of childhood memory, inebriation, love, divorce, the role of music in strengthening family bonds, losing a loved one to Alzheimer's, and bluegrass itself.

His most recent release, 2017's *Upland Stories*, earned year's-best recognition from NPR and *Rolling Stone* among many others, as well as two Grammy® nominations, for folk album and American roots song ("Alabama At Night").

Fulks was born in York, Pennsylvania, and grew up in a half-dozen small towns in southeast Pennsylvania, the North Carolina Piedmont, and the Blue Ridge area of Virginia. He learned guitar from his dad, banjo from Earl Scruggs and John Hartford records. He attended Columbia College in New York City.

In 1983 he moved to Chicago and joined Greg Cahill's Special Consensus Bluegrass Band. He taught music at Old Town School of Folk Music from 1984 to 1996, and worked as a staff songwriter on Music Row in Nashville from 1993 to 1998.

His early solo work — *Country Love Songs* (1996) and *South Mouth* (1997) — helped define the "alternative country" movement of the 1990s. For most of the present century, Robbie has been playing acoustic music through microphones, which lets him give more attention to his flatpicking and banjo playing, and complements his more sepia-toned subject matter — the slings of time, the troubles of common people. His repertory of traveling players includes folks like Shad Cobb, Missy Raines, Robbie Gjersoe, Jenny Scheinman, Matt Flinner, Don Stiernberg, and Jesse Cobb. However, two non-acoustic recent side projects are his 2018 duo record with Linda Gail Lewis, *Wild! Wild! Wild!*, an NPR favorite which leans to rock-and-roll and classic country-and-western, and his double-vinyl reinterpretation of the Bob Dylan record *Street-Legal*, which is titled *16*, is musically unbounded and is no one's favorite.

Radio: multiple appearances on WSM's "Grand Ole Opry"; PRI's "Whadd'ya Know"; NPR's "Fresh Air," "Mountain Stage," and "World Cafe"; and the syndicated "Acoustic Cafe" and "Laura Ingraham Show." TV: PBS's *Austin City Limits*; NBC's *Today*, *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, *Later with Carson Daly*, and *30 Rock*. From 2004 to 2008 he hosted an hourlong performance/interview program for XM satellite radio, "Robbie's Secret Country." Artists who have covered his songs include Sam Bush, Kelly Hogan, Andrew Bird, Mollie O'Brien, Rosie Flores, John Cowan, and Old 97s.

Robbie's writing on music and life have appeared in *GQ*, *Blender*, the *Chicago Reader*, DaCapo Press's *Best Music Writing* anthologies for 2001 and 2004, *Amplified: Fiction from Leading Alt-Country, Indie Rock, Blues and Folk Musicians*, and *A Guitar and A Pen: Stories by Country Music's Greatest Songwriters*. As an instrumentalist, he has accompanied the Irish fiddle master Liz Carroll, the distinguished jazz violinist Jenny Scheinman, and the New Orleans pianist Dr. John. As a producer his credits include *Touch My Heart: A Tribute to Johnny Paycheck* (Sugar Hill, 2004) and *Big Thinkin'* by Dallas Wayne (Hightone, 2000). Theatrical credits include "Woody Guthrie's American Song" and Harry Chapin's "Cottonpatch Gospel." He served twice as judge for the Winfield National Flatpicking Guitar competition. He tours yearlong with various configurations.

Besides country and bluegrass music, Robbie is fiercely fond of Charles Mingus, P.G. Wodehouse, quantum mechanics, his wife Donna, comedy in almost all forms, cooking, swimming laps, the past, Arthur Schopenhauer, Universal horror movies, his grandson and even his sons, coastal towns in the off-season, and rye whiskey, though in nothing like that order.