

less suffered greatly at the hands of the band's label and (to a lesser extent) producer. Over the course of the group's three albums of that era, not once did the members find themselves free to make an album that honestly reflected the band's sound. In fact, many of the tunes on their records were written and performed completely without the group's involvement. Further complicating matters, some of the "fake" Watchband tracks—like "Expo 2000" from the band's 1967 debut album *No Way Out*—are excellent.

The band's best lineup didn't even stay together through the 1960s; frustrated with the machinations of the label, lead singer Dave Aguilar exited early. But the band's legacy has nonetheless endured, thanks to the quality of much of the music, songs that at their best captured the zeitgeist of the psychedelic and garage-rock scenes. Even though Aguilar didn't sing on "Let's Talk About Girls," a track memorialized on the Lenny Kaye-compiled Nuggets various artists collection, the band's punky aesthetic still managed to shine through.

The band's reputation and back story kept interest alive, though, and by 1999 the band—with many key members—was back in action. In 2012 the group released *Revolutions Reinvented*, a good-sounding collection of re-recordings of old Watchband classics. (That record was re-pack-

aged in 2015 as *I'm Not Like Everybody Else*.)

Moving away from recycling and toward proving that the band still has plenty to offer in terms of new material, *This is My Voice* features seven originals alongside covers of Frank Zappa, Bob Dylan, The Seeds (whose keyboardist Darryl Hooper guests on two songs) and The Music Machine. Mostly from the pen of Aguilar, the new tunes fit right in alongside the covers; the band's snarling, musically muscular attack is every bit as potent now as it was on the band's ill-fated first go-around.

—Bill Kopp

GARY CLARK JR. THIS LAND

Warner Bros. Records
(CD, 2-LP)

★★★★★

The fifth album by the Austin, Texas native kicks off with the blast of the searing title track, which was the album's lead single. The



song looks at racism in America. It refers to "Trump country" and contains the lyrics "Go back where you come from / We don't want your kind." It's an anthem of defiance and a critique of narrow-minded bigots that also includes some terrific blues guitar during the instrumental break.

Clark's fantastic signature guitar work is featured prominently on the album. The slow, bluesy "I Got My Eyes On You (Locked & Loaded)" and the blues rocker "I Walk Alone" both take full advantage of Clark's six-string prowess. The guitar break at the end of "Feelin' Like a Million" is fantastic and the guitar work in the heavy "Gotta Get Into Something" is outstanding.

The blues rocker "Feed The Babies" features a soulful vocal by Clark and is enhanced by the horns. The standout "Pearl Cadillac" contains a good vocal from Clark and features synthesizer in addition to Clark's rip-roaring guitar. The catchy "When I'm Gone" builds up from a spare start into something of a pop tune.

"Low Down Rolling Stone" contains some positively searing blues guitar.

The brief, countrified rocker "The Governor" is a throwback that stands apart from the rest of the album's tracks. "Don't Wait Til Tomorrow" is a mellow tune for the most part that picks up pace and gets

heavier in the midsection. "Dirty Dishes Blues" features some nice blues guitar at the start before Clark's vocal comes in.

The album is a valuable addition to Clark's catalog. And the material should work quite well in Clark's live show.

—John Curley

GOOD OLD BOYS LIVE: DRINK UP & GO HOME

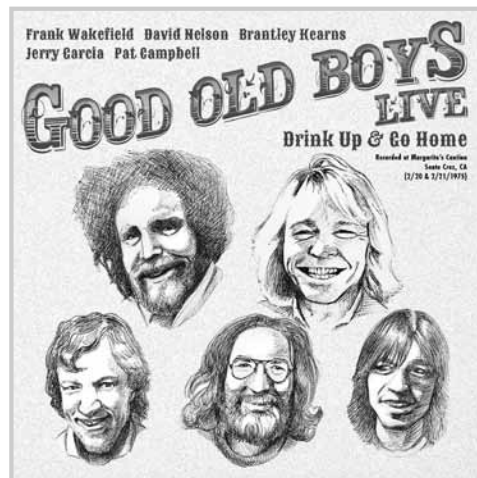
Rock Beat (2-CD Set)

★★★★★

Bluegrass being important to Jerry

Garcia's musical soul, he did a few grass projects apart from Grateful Dead—for example, *Old & In The Way* and informal sessions with David Grisman. Then there was *Good Old Boys* including mandolin maestro Frank Wakefield, bassist Pat Campbell and, from New Riders of The Purple Sage, David Nelson on guitar. Garcia produced their delightful LP *Pistol Packin' Mama* for the Dead's label Round (not to be confused with Rounder). Between its recording and its release, the quintet played two all-acoustic nights at Margarita's Cantina in Santa Cruz, CA. Here are 24 songs from those 1975 evenings, with Garcia filling in on banjo and Brantley Kearns on fiddle.

We hear why bluegrass has been called folk music in overdrive as the boys pick their way through bygone country classics like "Here To Get My Baby Out of Jail," "White House Blues" and "T For Texas." The high, quavering harmonies of early bluegrass end the title track, which Garcia later recorded with Grisman. "Dim



Lights" had already been covered by New Riders.

Garcia tells the legend of the blessing of Wakefield's hands as a child. Then comes one of Frank's near-classical compositions, all of which he's titled "Jesus Loves His Mandolin Player." Amid the quintet's instrumental solos, the five-minute finale "Orange Blossom Special" gives a glimpse of Franklin Delano Roosevelt Wakefield's humor. With generally good audio, these discs offer bluegrass the way its founder and patriarch Bill Monroe heard it.

—Bruce Sylvester