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[Music Reviews](#)

[Print Reviews](#)

[Screen Reviews](#)

Music M

[Jesse McReynolds & Friends](#)

x-Reference

[Bill Monroe](#)

[David Grisman](#)

[Stu Allen](#)

[Jesse McReynolds](#)

[Robert Hunter](#)

[Jerry Garcia](#)

[David Nelson](#)

[Grateful Dead](#)

# Jesse McReynolds & Friends

## Songs of the Grateful Dead

### Woodstock

I'm betting that if you had mentioned to Jesse McReynolds and his brother Jim back in 1947 that 50+ years hence Jesse would be recording a tribute album full of songs by a bunch of drug fiends and hippies you'd have earned yourself a rather sharp rebuke, if not a punch in the eye. But here it is, 2010 and one of the true masters of bluegrass mandolin, Jesse McReynolds, is picking sweet on a dozen Jerry Garcia/Robert Hunter tunes, and they rarely have sounded as good.

McReynolds is credited with developing the "cross pick" style of mandolin playing, a more relaxed method than that of a Bill Monroe or David Grisman. He never sounds rushed, either vocally or instrumentally, and on numbers such as "Black Muddy River" or a weary, resigned "Loser" he gives the originals a run for the money. The album features occasional Garcia band mate David Nelson on vocals and Stu Allen, JGB Band member, on guitar. But it's McReynolds' effortless vocals and mando picking combined with the stellar songwriting of Garcia and Hunter that make *Songs of the Grateful Dead* such a memorable musical outing. Jerry Garcia wanted to be a Bluegrass Boy and play with Bill Monroe before he found fame as a counterculture hero, and at their core, these songs are simple folk songs that easily lend themselves to country adaptations. So put aside that moldy box of live tapes for a bit and experience the Grateful Dead, bluegrass style. It's a trip!

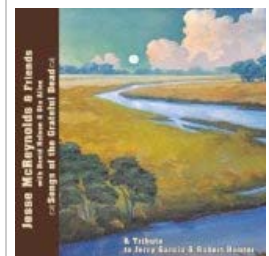
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