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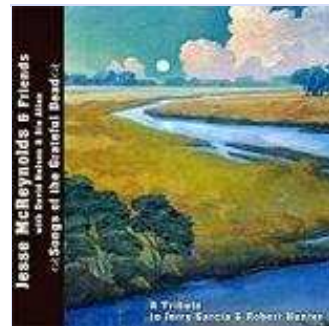
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McReynolds, Jesse & Friends: Songs Of The Grateful Dead – A Tribute To Jerry Garcia & Robert Hunter

Late Grateful Dead leader Jerry Garcia was first exposed to the sounds of country and bluegrass music at an early age and these influences would later find their way into his guitar playing with the Dead, New Riders Of The Purple Sage and his collaborations with David Grisman. So it seems only fitting then that we get a full on bluegrass tribute to the songs of Garcia and Dead lyricist Robert Hunter which comes courtesy of one of Garcia's musical heroes, legendary mandolin player Jesse McReynolds.



Together with a few of Garcia's closet musical allies, guitarists David Nelson (New Riders) and Stu Allen, McReynolds covers twelve tracks from the Garcia / Hunter songbook. Songs like "Ripple", "Stella Blue" and "Fire On The Mountain" will probably be familiar even to the average Dead fan, if there is such a thing, however Jesse also digs a little deeper into the duo's repertoire and offers up his own take on lesser known tracks such as "The Wheel", "Standing On The Moon" and "Loser" as well. While Jesse's voice might be a bit of an acquired taste, and the music might not appeal to the average SoT reader (I have to admit to not being the biggest fan of bluegrass myself) McReynolds and his band of seasoned musicians definitely put their own stamp on these songs without straying too far from the original spirit and arrangements. McReynolds also teamed up with Hunter for a brand new composition which closes out the album called "Day By Day".

This disc was really my first exposure to Jesse McReynolds and this style of music, although I don't think you would really categorize this as being a full on bluegrass album. I

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Review: "McReynolds, Jesse & Friends:..."

honestly didn't know what to expect going in but in the end I found myself seriously digging Jesse's unique sounding voice as well as his supreme chops as a player. There's definitely a reason why he's been an esteemed member of the Grand Ole Opry for over forty years. He may have felt some trepidation going into this project, but after listening to his interpretations it's clear that he was the right man for the job.

Interesting trivia note: Jesse played mandolin on The Doors' *Soft Parade* album back in 1969.

Track Listing

- 1) Black Muddy River
- 2) Ripple
- 3) The Wheel
- 4) Bird Song
- 5) Franklin's Tower
- 6) Standing On The Moon
- 7) Loser
- 8) Fire On The Mountain
- 9) Stella Blue
- 10) Deep Elm Blues
- 11) Deal
- 12) Alabama Getaway
- 13) Day By Day

Added: December 28th 2010

Reviewer: Ryan Sparks

Score: ★★★★★

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