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Celebrities: Jesse McReynolds loves the Grateful Dead. Seriously

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"I think some people don't know if I'm serious about this," said [Grand Ole Opry](#) member and [International Bluegrass Music Association](#) Hall of Famer [Jesse McReynolds](#), 81. "I mentioned on the Opry that I had recorded a new CD that's a tribute to the [Grateful Dead](#), and some people laughed, thinking I was kidding. But after playing, I got a standing ovation."

McReynolds is serious, and he has long been known for tweaking the boundaries of bluegrass. In 1965 his Jim & Jesse duo with brother Jim McReynolds released *Berry Pickin' In The Country*, an album featuring down-home versions of Chuck Berry songs.

The new *Songs of the Grateful Dead* album came about after McReynolds' wife, Joy, began turning him on to Grateful Dead music. McReynolds learned that the Dead's Jerry Garcia was a Jim & Jesse follower.

"I thought, 'If he's a fan of mine, I'd like to do something in return,' " McReynolds said.

That "something" comes in the form of the new album, which finds McReynolds and friends covering 13 Dead songs. McReynolds will play a CD release show on Wednesday at Nashville's [Station Inn](#), 402 12th Ave. S. Cover charge is \$12.

"I never dreamed this would be accepted the way it is," McReynolds said. "I've been putting together a folder of reviews, and that thing's getting to look like an old Sears catalog."

— PETER COOPER