



Gary Clark Jr. Live North America 2016

Gary Clark Jr. has brought back the soaring psychedelic blues-rock guitar solo. After a backlash of post-Hendrix overkill, replaced with severely articulate blues Nazi-approved Chicago and West Coast swing vocabulary, the pendulum is returning to the center – thanks to Clark. But that’s not all he does. Clark sings like he means it, and his voice resonates with personal conviction.

This live collection features cherry-picked songs from his 2016 tour supporting *The Story Of Sonny Boy Slim*. Performing material from that album like “Grinder,” “Our Love,” and “The Healing,” these songs are taken to fresh new places. Clark is simply feeling everything. His fuzz and hollowbody guitar recipe is powerful and incandescent throughout.

He channels the masters with covers of Elmore James’ “My Baby’s Gone” and Jimmy Reed’s “Honest I Do.” His performance of “When My Train Pulls In” from *Blak and Blu* is used as a vehicle to marinate within a hypnotic rhythm section and take his sweet time, stretching out with wah-laced intensity and emotional lyrics. This is offset by the smooth falsetto love ballad “Down To The Ride.”

This album has something for everybody.
– **Oscar Jordan**



James Luther Dickinson I’m Just Dead, I’m Not Gone/Lazarus Edition

Let’s get it straight from the get-go; Jim Dickinson was primarily a piano player. But he was also one of the great music makers of Memphis – which is saying a lot in a town whose lore included Sam Phillips, Stax’s Al Bell and Steve Cropper, the Ardent Studios and Hi Records crews, and many more. Dickinson played with and produced so many greats that any short list will be shortsighted. All of which makes him worth listening to.

His autobiography, written before his 2009 death and just now being published, is a journey through the roots of American roots music. Dickinson can tell a tale. He



HOMEGROWN HEROES

Subtitled “1950s & 1960s Oddball Labels,” these three boxed sets collect nuggets from dozens of independent record labels that popped up across post-Elvis America then faded away as the British Invasion and the pretentious spoiler called “rock” put – ironically – a chokehold on its own roots. Each 10-disc box covers the state’s homegrown blues, country, R&B, and rock and roll roots – many of which are deliciously raw and only recently electrified.

While it’s tough to define a Florida sound, it’s not hard to imagine young Duane and Greg Allman and friends inhaling the kind of music on that state’s box. On the other hand, the music from the Michigan and Texas boxes show a clear connection to the music from those states and surrounding regions that grew from it.

From the great state

of Michigan, sides like the Blue Echoes’ “Misery,” recorded in 1963; Lafayette Yarborough’s frantic Gene Vincent turn on “Livin’ Doll”; and other cuts from near-forgotten labels like Clix, Strate-8, and D-Town lead directly to Del Shannon, ? and the Mysterians, and Mitch Ryder – and then on to Bob Seger, the White Stripes, and beyond.

Likewise, Freddy King, Doug Sahm, the Vaughan brothers, and the future Los Lobos must have flipped over the Tejano, Cajun, polka, blues, and rockabilly on the Texas discs.

The increasing portability and practicality of electric guitars, basses, and amps galvanized and fueled much of this music. The touch of Duane Eddy, Link Wray, and especially Chuck Berry and Scotty Moore is heard on almost every cut.

The wartime recording ban was lifted completely by the end of the 1940s



Various Artists

The Texas Box
The Michigan Box
The Florida Box

and the record market was expanding and hungry. A record could travel outside the range of local radio stations and Southern and Western transplants brought musical touches of back home to new lives in and around northern cities. Everything was happening everywhere at the same time.

Most of us will be lucky enough to be hearing these cuts for the first time. Each disc has a reproduction of one of the original labels and each box includes a large, hardbound book full of artist and label info and pictures that are almost as engrossing as the music. – **Rick Allen**