



Gene Clark **“Silverado ’75: Live And Unreleased”** Collectors’ Choice Records

This live recording dates from 1975, Wednesday 19th February to be precise, and captures Clark in great voice at the now defunct Denver venue, Ebbets Field. Operated by local concert promoter Chuck Morris, this club located in the Brooks Tower near 15th and Curtis, brought countless national touring acts to the Colorado city during the period 1973-1976. Gene Clark was sharing a bill with Tom Waits that evening [part of a five-day residency?], and is accompanied on this twelve-song collection, actually the second set he played at the club that evening, by Roger White [guitar, vocals] and Duke Bardwell [bass, guitar, vocals] aka The Silverados.

Ebbets Field shows were regularly recorded by the staff of ListenUp, a local audio/video retailer and also the venues sound company, sometimes for live broadcast or for airing at a later date on local radio station KBPI. In truth downloads of both Denver sets by the former Byrd have been floating around the internet for some time. Now Collectors’ Choice in association with the Gene Clark estate and Saul Davis, his late career manager, have stepped in with this official release and John Einarson, author of **“Mr. Tambourine Man: The Life & Legacy of The Byrds’ Gene Clark”** [Backbeat Books, 2005, ISBN 0-87930-793-5] has penned two pages of insightful liner notes. I guess the question arises, will Gene’s first set ever officially see the light of day on CD?

Produced by Gene’s long time friend, the late Thomas Jefferson Kaye [d. 1994], the previous year Asylum Records had released the **“No Other”** album to glowing reviews, but following an altercation with label owner David Geffen active promotion of the album ceased. Clark departed The Byrds during 1966, but his subsequent solo recordings and sojourn with Doug Dillard in Dillard & Clark failed to emulate the commercial success he had enjoyed with The Byrds. There was renewed interest in Clark as a solo artist following his imaginative contributions to The Byrds 1973 self-titled reunion album which Asylum had released. However following the aforementioned altercation, instead of performing in major concert halls, Clark was relegated to touring clubs and small venues.

“Silverado ’75: Live And Unreleased” opens with the Danny Dill/Marijohn Wilkin classic murder ballad “Long Black Veil.” From the sophomore Dillard & Clark release **“Through The Morning, Through The Night”** [1969] there’s that songwriting staple, the train song – in this instance Gene’s remembrance of his Missouri upbringing “Kansas City Southern.” Towards the close of the disc there are two selections from the duo’s debut **“The Fantastic Expedition Of Dillard & Clark”** [1968], namely “She Darked The Sun” and the ‘back to the track’ “Train Leaves Here This Morning” both penned by Clark and future Eagle Bernie Leadon.

Delving into his back catalogue Gene delivers “Here Without You” which first appeared on The Byrds debut album **“Mr Tambourine Man”** [1965] and from the band’s sophomore outing **“Turn, Turn Turn”** [1965] there’s “Set You Free This Time.” His later A&M Records release **“White Light”** [1971] is the source of the audience request “Spanish Guitar.” As for active promotion of **“No Other”** there are but two selections, respectively the album title cut and a haunting acoustic guitar reading of “Silver Raven” the closing, ‘encore’ song on his disc. Gene went on to ink a solo deal with Robert Stigwood’s RSO Records and Kaye produced the resulting **“Two Sides To Every Story”** [1977]. “Home Run King” and Gene’s arrangement of the traditional “In The Pines” turned up on that disc and also feature here, while Clark’s “Daylight Line” appears for the first time ever anywhere. The latter, a melodically urgent number, references being on the road and doubles as a bittersweet love song.

Gene Clark passed away in May 1991, leaving behind many classic songs but a solo career that never quite fulfilled its potential. On “**Silverado '75: Live And Unreleased**,” his first ever [official] solo live release [*], Gene Clark proves that when all the tumblers fell into place he could truly weave vocal magic.

Notes.

[*] – Excepting, that is, the solo Clark tracks taken from a 1988 Mountain Stage performance that appeared on last year’s Collectors’ Choice 2CD release, Gene Clark with Carla Olson “**In Concert**.”

Folkwax score 7 out of 10.

Arthur Wood.

Kerrville Kronikles 07/08.