



Guy Clark, *Somedays the Song Writes You*

By Mike Thomas

Guy Clark's elevated standing in the Nashville singer-songwriter firmament is well established, but that doesn't mean the cagey ol' West Texan has any intention of running on cruise control. Soul deep in moody, minor-key vibe and featuring superb acoustic lead guitar work from longtime compadre Verlon Thompson, *Somedays the Song Writes You* stands shoulder to shoulder with any Clark collection to date. In keeping with the usual Music City modus operandi, Clark shares songwriting credit on all but one of the 11 tracks. Along with veteran writing companions Gary Nicholson (the title track), Ray Stephenson ("Hemingway's Whiskey"), and Rodney Crowell ("Eamon"), Clark sets off collaborative sparks in various combinations with up-and-comers Jedd Hughes, Patrick Davis, and Ashley Monroe on cuts such as "Wrong Side of the Tracks" and "The Coat." For good measure, Clark continues his tradition of including a song by departed friend Townes Van Zandt, this time covering the lilting lover's plea "If I Needed You." Closing the set is "Maybe I Can Paint over That," a battle-scarred elder's unflinching assessment of a life equally rich in triumphs and blunders that would serve as an eloquent parting message if the songwriter never again set foot in a recording studio. But odds are the durable Clark has plenty more up his sleeve. (Dualtone Music Group, dualtone.com)