

GUY CLARK



Sometimes The Song Writes You

(DUAL TONE) www.guyclark.com



Clark's carefully constructed tales have garnered wide acclaim since *Old No. 1* introduced his laconic style back in

1975. However, since that impressive debut, I have been out of step with the plaudits heaped upon him in finding him to be bland and unprepossessing, a view compounded by his soporific live performances. Yet critics, the public and his peers – including Bob Dylan, who recently acknowledged him as one of his favourite songwriters, hold Clark in high regard.

So whilst *Sometimes The Song Writes You* offers ten further compositions that will delight the faithful with their careful construction and smooth, deliberate vocal delivery, I am again left feeling underwhelmed. That said, there is quality here, particularly in the exemplary guitar work and complementary production whilst the songs offer some succinct narratives that engage the listener's attention – none more so than 'The Guitar', a semi-spooky tale of a mystery guitar that conveys special gifts to its chosen player, though a cover of Townes Van Zandt's 'If I Needed You' only serves to emphasise the failings I have always associated with his style. The emotional depth of the original gives way to a shallow attempt at conveying pain by sounding weary. Nevertheless, long-time fans will doubtless find this to be his best for many a year.

Simon Rowland