



Gary U.S. Bonds

“Back in 20”

MC Records

Gary U.S. Bonds' early 1960s hit, "Quarter to Three," can stake a claim to being *the* party record. Name-checking colorful cohorts like "Daddy G" and the "Church Street Five," Bonds helped lay the groundwork for the neighborhood characters found in the street-corner symphonies of artists like [Lou Reed](#) and [Bruce Springsteen](#). On *Back in 20*, the quintessential bar-band rocker still sounds thoroughly comfortable with his role as roadhouse master-of-ceremonies. After a two-decade absence from the recording scene, Bonds and his own band of veterans romp through a bunch of classic "tunes-to-imbibe-tequila-to." They give a fresh feel to well-worn standards like "Fannie Mae," but originals like "She Chose to Be My Baby" and "Too Much Too Little Too Late" do more than just fit in--they have a chance to become barroom standards themselves. Springsteen, [Dickey Betts](#), [Southside Johnny](#), and [Phoebe Snow](#) make appearances, but remain mere guests at Bonds's party. --*Michael Ross*