

# Yonder Mountain String Band ★★ ★

The Show *Frog Pad*

**Bluegrass fusionists have flavor but need songs**



THE CONCEPT IS great: Liberate bluegrass' hot-shit riffing and blue-sky harmonies from its hidebound formalism and see where it flies. It's turf explored by the Dead and others. But while this Boulder, Colorado, crew brings dazzling chops to the table, the songwriting is less memorable. The high-lonesome stuff works best (the melancholy hoedown "Rain Still Falls"), and "Isolate" is a minimalist mold-breaker. The rest mostly unspool string magic – like Adam Aijala's glistening, liquid acoustic-guitar lines on "Complicated" – over utilitarian barn-dance bounce. A meeting between these guys and some sympathetic Music Row poets might be pretty darn amazing.

W.H.

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**Key Tracks:** "Rain Still Falls," "Out of the Blue," "Isolate"

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