

David Childers
Run Skeleton Run
a review by: **Becky Huskins**
DavidChilders.com



I have to make two disclaimers before I can even begin talking about this record. First off, I love David Childers. I have a piece of David Childers art hanging in my house. I've even heard my husband refer to him as his idol. I adore his art, his music, and his personality. So when this new record came out a few months ago, it was kind of a no-brainer that it would make it into our home. Several months ago, when I heard previews of the title cut, "Run Skeleton Run", I put it on blast to everyone I knew.

Second, I didn't want to write a review on his new record. There's not much I could tell you about David Childers that you can't read / listen to just about everywhere you turn in local

and national press. He is beloved by his fans and peers and is regularly covered by North Carolina darlings, The Avett Brothers. I've seen him out at shows and realized he's not only admired on stage, but is fawned over as a person. It's easy to see why. He's a regular, down-home dude (who lives in my own home county) and is making extraordinary music. So since I could expound more on that, I'll just talk about this new record.

Right out of the gate, "Run Skeleton Run", grabs you with a spoken word story (spoken by Scott Avett, no less) and then bursts into a rollicking tune that is not unlike Johnny Cash or other early rock/country idols of the 1950's. This song begins a tale that is told throughout the record that I will call the three L's: love, loss, and learning.

"Radio Moscow" is a more somber song that brings to mind something many of us remember about our own childhoods: how to carve your way into and out of a small-town world that can't quite hold you. The decades might be different, but the sentiment is the same.

"Greasy Dollar" takes us forward to David's adulthood and how hard it can be to drag yourself to that J.O.B. every morning. Here's a good song to play on your I-hate-my-job days... "but I've got to go and earn my greasy dollar, so I can keep on working 'til I die." Luckily, "Collar and Bell" kicks your spirits back up and helps you make it to the weekend. And who doesn't have a long-lost love they think about every now and then? "Ghostland" takes you back to that memory.

I have to stop here and say something about the at-times mournful and other times playful violin on the record. There's something about this sound that takes me back to me childhood, mountain ancestry and roots across the pond in Scotland and Ireland. Does everyone from Western North Carolina relate to that sound like I do?

"A Promise to the Wind" might be the most modern-sounding song on the record, even though the idea is repeated by every man who couldn't do right and then wrote a song about it: what to do about the woman you can't stop loving but also can't seem to stand still with? "Once the wind has caught it, it's gone, gone, gone, it won't be back!" You said it, mister!

"Belmont Ford" has all the makings of a song that will be sung to children years from now as an old folk spiritual of Gaston County. "Bells" reminds me of myself. Sometimes it's hard to explain what's in your own mind even to the person who loves you best.

I need to stop here to say something directly to Robert Childers, another respected artist and musician many of us are lucky enough to know and who also contributed art and percussion on the album. Do you know how cool your Pops is? Fair enough, let's continue.

"Thanks to All (Long Ago)" seems to be David's heartfelt song of gratitude to all the individuals who kept him fed, educated, loved, aware, healthy, and alive long enough to make it to the age he is today. I don't think I know a single musician who doesn't owe this song to several folks along the way. "Manila", again, speaks to both David's generation and mine in remembering Vietnam, the war that hurt the men who fought it and the children who came after. How it manages to be so upbeat, I can't imagine, but that's just more of

the David Childers magic!

"Hermit" is probably my favorite song partly because it sounds like something George Harrison and Roy Orbison would have created together, and it's just so fun and rocking. "Goodbye to Growing Old" has a simple but beautiful line that has stayed with me since I heard it... "and I'm a better man for loving you." Oh, and it has a harmonica! The country girl in me loves it even more... "I'll get on in the game, I ain't about to fold." Bless the old gambler who can't throw his cards down.

As I listened to the record in its entirety and read some other reviews, I realized that I tend to interpret music in a very literal and real sense. The stories sound like real stories to me, not just symbols or metaphors. They're the stories of a man who has lived, loved a good life, and learned some lessons along the way. I'm not sure if that's what David was going for with the album "Run, Skeleton, Run", but it's definitely the road I traveled while listening. And, believe me, it was an old, country road winding through snow... and then rain... and then leaf-heavy trees. Just ask David Childers where that road is. He knows.