

RECORD STORE



DAVID BAZAN

IN-STORE SESSION WITH DAVID BAZAN

SONGWRITER FARE

It's been three years since David Bazan released his debut solo EP, *Fewer Moving Parts*, and even longer since he stopped playing under the name Pedro The Lion. However, those of you still paying attention should know that Bazan is crafting the best music of his career.

Curse Your Branches may not be as instantly satisfying as his previous band's melancholy masterpieces *It's Hard To Find A Friend* and *Control*, but it is equally captivating in a completely different way. From the epic, six-minute opener "Hard To Be" to the synthesizer driven "Bless This Mess" (reminiscent of Bazan's defunct electro side project, *Headphones*) and the stripped down, acoustic "Harmless Sparks" (the sonic equivalent of the Christianity-questioning film *Doubt*), *Curse Your Branches* sees Bazan reconciling all of his musical motifs into



ALBUM
Curse Your Branches

RATING

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"Hard To Be"

one cohesive collection of songs.

Lyrical, he revisits the topics of religion and alcoholism, but in a way that isn't preachy or dogmatic; even a love song like "Please, Baby, Please" manages to incorporate a DUI fatality into its storyline. Sure, on paper this may sound bleak—and in many ways, *Curse Your Branches* is—but ultimately there's a level of solace in Bazan's sadness that's remarkably reassuring and, stranger yet, satisfying. (BARSUK; barsuk.com) *Jonah Bayer*

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Why did it take so long for *Curse Your Branches* to come together?

I don't know exactly. I was spending a lot of time [touring] since the *Fewer Moving Parts* EP came out—and touring also served the purpose of me trying to find out what I liked about what I was doing. So to put it in a silly way, I was out on the road kind of finding myself a little bit. As the songs came together, I noticed they were autobiographical songs about religion and drinking, and that just seemed so terrible to me. [Laughs.] So it also took me a little while to come to terms with the fact that I do actually really like these songs a lot, and they're really meaningful to me.

Religion is such a huge theme with all of your records. Do you ever get sick of talking about something that's so inherently personal?

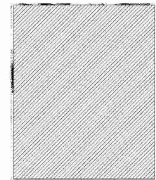
[Laughs.] It is interesting, but I can't really blame it on everybody else. When I started writing this record I thought, "Why are you doing this? It's just ridiculous to keep on with this stuff," but I just had to admit this is what is naturally coming out—and these songs resonate with me more than any of the songs I've written maybe ever. So embarrassing as this may be, this is kind of who I am.

"Hard To Be" is a really epic song by your standards. Did you feel that since this was your first proper solo record there weren't any sonic limitations?

I do feel more freedom, and part of that was because I would always limit what was playing on the records to what I could reasonably pull off live. I think *Fewer Moving Parts* really broke a lot of those rules, because it was really satisfying to go out and play all those tunes solo acoustic even though it was much different than what was on the record. So when I got to this album, I thought, "You just gotta do whatever the song kind of calls for."

You recently played a series of house shows. Do you ever look back at your career and think about how strange the trajectory has been?

It is pretty weird. When people ask how my music career is going, responding, "I'm playing to 40 people in someone's living room every night," isn't a good rapport or whatever. [Laughs.] But at the same time, there's something really romantic and punk rock about where I am right now. If 2002 Dave could look ahead and see this, I'd be a little confused, but I think ultimately pretty excited that I get to do this. [JB]



LYLE OWERKO