

Chris Murphy's Latest EP "TWO RIVERS CROSSING" is Another Complete Work and Robust in Emotion.

The record is a different style than the first fiddle I heard in concert from the Waylon Jennings band in the Blackham Coliseum in Lafayette, La. Waylon was there promoting his 1974 record "The Ramblin Man", he had a long shaggy haircut and a dark goatee and a big smile on his face. My mom immediately regretted that she'd agreed to take me as Waylon and the entire band was stumbling drunk. Jennings took that song, written by Ray Pennington, to #1 on the country charts. The highlight of the show was when he sang the Allman Bros, "Midnight Rider", accompanied by the most excellent fiddle playing of Thomas Jackson and Ralph Mooney on the steel guitar. The band was big - Waylon played rhythm and sang lead vocals, Dave Kirby played electric guitar, Kyle Lehning played piano, Roger Crabtree played harmonica, and in addition to the aforementioned Mr. Jackson and Mr. Mooney, Leon Rogers played bass. Chris Murphy mostly records alone and that is a feat in itself.

I had heard the fiddle before in Cajun Bars and restaurants where my mom and dad took my siblings and I to eat crawfish, but mostly it was a Cajun rhythm fiddle for swing dancing. I still loved that wah-wah sound and to this day I still love to dance the Cajun rhythm at places like the Atchafalaya club in Henderson Louisiana when I go home.

It's ironic that that the first show I ever saw was a man who was promoting a show called "The Ramblin' Man", as some forty-five years later I hopped into a van in Goose Egg park in Santa Monica that had been converted into a music teaching room by an Irishmen from upstate New York, named Chris Murphy. He quickly told me that his first love was the violin and then he began to teach me guitar. I'm about three years in and I'm starting to get the guitar, but the one thing I got right away was that Chris was a fine man, a great musician, and a dedicated teacher.

Having worked on Wall Street for more than 30 years, I have learned that there are basically two emotions – faith and fear. Chris lives his life in faith, playing gigs all over the world, and teaching his students, and loving music.

This six song EP is a joy to listen to and a combination of 'love gone wrong' songs and as always Murphy's playing is precise, clean, and never too much. The lyrics are relatable, and some of my favorites are on an "Early Grave". *"She gets me to give, after I already gave."*

His singing is soulful and deep, and his playing has that combination of happy and sad that only a master artist can deliver. Each track is unique and composed with the perfection Chris demands of his work. A few times, but especially on a "Complete Surprise", I was moved by the melody and the lyrics.

My favorite tract on the EP is "Long Ago". Chris's incomprehensible genius on the violin is loud and clear here; beautiful and perfectly rhythmic with great lyrics to match – *"Not sure what happened, I'll guess I'll never know."*

I also very much loved the "Wolves of Laredo", as I know Laredo and in fact have been there several times hunting deer with my dad. In the 70's and 80's, Laredo was a booming border town in the southern most part of Texas where men in the oil and gas business took their customers, drank

margaritas, and had their way with the brown skin *senioritis*. Sometimes they brought their sons along for the initiation, which usually meant a blood smear and other things.... his song is a metaphor for what's happening there today and the violin solo is haunting.

The lone instrumental, "Shantallow" has an Irish folk feel to it and all I could think of as I listened to it twice was my funeral. The participants, some of them loved ones, sitting in the church or on the lawn listening to the crying violin as my lifeless body lay in the coffin with that bloodless color of the embalmed. This record has it all, as does Chris Murphy.

Regards,

Blaine Lourd, May 2022

Santa Monica Canyon, CA