

"It's nice to be alive," Bob Schneider sings on Katie, the second song off of his new record "Blood and Bones", his 6th since his 2001 solo debut Lonelyland. While this might sound like naivety or blind optimism, for Schneider, one of Austin's most celebrated musicians, this observation was earned through experience. "Most of the songs are about this phase of my life," he admits. "I'm re-married, I have a 2-year-old baby daughter who was born over two months premature because my wife had life threatening preeclampsia. So dealing with that traumatic event while getting older and looking at death in a realistic, matter of fact way, experiencing the most joy I've ever experienced along with feelings of utter despondency in a way that would have been impossible to experience earlier in my life all comes out in the songs. My relationship with my wife is the longest committed relationship I've ever been in, so there was a lot of uncharted territory there to write about."

The songs on *Blood and Bones* reflect this. Recorded quickly with producer Dwight Baker, who has worked on Schneider's last 6 releases, the album highlights the chemistry that Schneider and his backing band of Austin's very best musicians have developed while relentlessly playing live, most notably at the monthly residency Schneider has held at Austin's Saxon Pub for the last 17 years. "I didn't want to overthink the songs," Schneider says. "I really respect Dwight's ability to make great calls when it comes to what works and isn't working when we are recording the songs. I felt pretty good about the quality of the songwriting, so I figured that would come through in the end if we just went in and played them the way I do live."

While the performance and production are stellar, the songwriting finds Schneider in a particularly reflective mode. Sure, there are live favorites like "Make Drugs Get Money" and "Texaco" that will get even the most reserved crowds dancing. But more often the album finds Schneider reflecting on marriage, parenthood and mortality. "I wish I could make you see how wonderful everything is most of the time, but I'm only blood and bones," he sings on the title track, a meditation on the beauty and the limits of marriage. Later, on "Easy" he tells his daughter "it's always been a scary thing to do, to let my heart fall down into the endless blue, but it's easy with you." Through it all, there is a clear sense of mortality, of just how fleeting all of this is. "The hours and days stack up in the mirror," he sings on "Hours and Days". "We're just snowmen waiting for the summer" he signs on "Snowmen", before adding "we can't bring them back, can't bring nothing back."

One thing Schneider has excelled at in his career is bringing audiences back. Though he has received little national press or major label support, he has managed to become one of the biggest acts in Austin, if not Texas. His fans, who often discovered him after being brought to his shows by their friends, are fiercely loyal. Many have attended dozens or even hundreds of shows. Thanks to these fans, Schneider has won more Austin Music Awards than any other musician, including Best Songwriter, Best Musician, and Best Male Vocals.

In retrospect, it appears inevitable that Bob Schneider would become an artist. He was born in Michigan and raised in Germany, where his father pursued a career as a professional opera singer. As a boy, Schneider studied piano and guitar, often performing at family parties and backing his father on drums at nightclubs throughout his youth in Germany and Texas. He went on to study art- his other primary passion and avocation- at the University of Texas El Paso, before moving to Austin and establishing himself as a musician. He performs relentlessly, writes songs compulsively, writes poetry and regularly shows his visual art in galleries around Austin. With *Blood and Bones*, Schneider further cements his reputation as one of the most versatile, inventive and engaging songwriters working today.