

Old Road New Again

CD: Old Road New Again

Artist: The Dillards

Label: Pinecastle Recording Company

Artist Website: RodneyDillard.tv

Label Website: pinecastlemusic.com

Songs:

1. *Earthman*
2. *Save the Last Dance for Me*
3. *Common Man*
4. *Always Gonna Be You*
5. *Funky Ole Hen*
6. *Sweet Companion*
7. *The Whole World Round*
8. *Tearing Our Liberty Down*
9. *My Last Sunset*
10. *Old Road New Again*
11. *Take Me Along for the Ride*

I'm not exactly sure when The Dillards' **Old Road New Again** arrived in my mailbox, but it languished around my desk for a couple of weeks before I gave it a listen. I'm not sure what I expected, but no doubt I expected something. The Dillards have been part of the Americana music scene for a long time, first coming to my memory as The Darlins on The Andy Griffith Show. Later on, their collaboration with John Hartford on the Dillard Hartford Dillard album *Glittergrass from the Nashwood Hollyville Strings* (1977) was the first real Dillard experience I had, and to this day is still one of my favorites albums. So, I had some expectations, but not really sure what

they might be since the passing of Doug Dillard in 2012. Though Doug had had his own band and solo career, I never thought of Rodney without thinking of Doug and vice versa.

On the first listen, my expectations were exceeded. On the second listen, my now much higher expectations were again exceeded. This is a very enjoyable album, musically and lyrically. It has a depth in communication that is rare and refreshing. An all star cast of guest artists doesn't hurt a thing, either: Don Henley (The Eagles), Ricky Skaggs, Herb Pedersen (Desert Rose Band, among others), Sharon and Cheryl White (The Whites), Bearnie Leadon (The Eagles), and Sam Bush.

Favorite songs are *Earthman*; a surprisingly sporty rendering of The Drifters' *Save The Last Dance For Me*, arranged perfectly as a bluegrass song, featuring some fine slap bass; the soulful *Common Man*, with another nod to the bassist Gary Smith; *Always Gonna Be You*, and Beverly Dillard's beautiful clawhammer banjo, Andy Leftwich's poignant fiddle, Gary Smith's bowed bass, and Don Henley's harmony vocals...it gave me a bad case of chicken skin!!; *Sweet Companion*, a sweet foot-patting duet featuring Rodney and Beverley; *My Last Sunset*, again with Rodney and Henley teaming up for this powerful folk-rock song; and the title cut, *Old Road New Again*, with Bernie Leadon's banjo work. That's seven favorites out of eleven songs, remarkable considering the other four songs would all make honorable mention.

Salute to veteran producer Bil VornDick, who also engineered and mixed this recording; just perfect!

Mississippi Chris Sharp