

BEN RECTOR
The Walking in Between

Ben Rector has a theory: The beauty of life resides in the everyday moments. On his new album, *The Walking in Between*, he sets those ordinary moments to some extraordinary music.

Over the course of *The Walking in Between's* twelve tracks, Rector reflects on life's simple pleasures, offers a fresh view on matters of the heart, examines the pursuit of material wealth, and recognizes the importance of the subtle struggles and modest victories of ordinary living. On the soaring "Beautiful," the first single from the album, Rector explores the sentimental nostalgia of a youth-recalled, evoking feelings both uplifting and bittersweet. In the honest and slightly sardonic track, "I Like You," the young singer-songwriter sums it up with the sentiment: "*there are way too many love songs, and I think they've got it all wrong, 'cause life is not the mountain tops, it's the walking in between.*"

Produced in part by Jamie Kenney, Charlie Peacock, and partially self-produced, *The Walking in Between* is the first release on Rector's own label, Aptly Named Recordings. The new set follows his previous two successful independent releases, 2010's *Into the Morning* and 2011's *Something Like This*, which have collectively sold over 70,000 copies. Both albums were iTunes leaders, with *Something Like This* reaching No. 1 on the digital retailer's Singer/Songwriter Albums chart. Tracks from both albums appeared in multiple television shows, including *One Tree Hill*, *Castle*, *The Neighbors* and *Pretty Little Liars*.

"What is celebrated in our culture now are all these things that I don't know anything about: crazy dance clubs, private jets, expensive alcohol and lots of money. I've never experienced anything like that and I know everyday people certainly haven't. It's like we celebrate this stuff that isn't even real," says Rector. "The things that make me truly happy are the ordinary things, like my friends and playing music. That's what we're made to enjoy. We're made to connect and to have a conversation. That is the real stuff worth celebrating."

At times, *The Walking in Between* evokes Ben's influences: James Taylor, Paul McCartney, Sam Cooke and Randy Newman. But it is decidedly a Ben Rector album, driven by the Oklahoma native and Nashville resident's commitment to capturing exactly what it is that distinguishes him as an artist.

"A lot of the artists I look up to have something that is uniquely identified with them," he says. "For instance, when I think of Randy Newman, it's like when I think of a restaurant that I like. There's a flavor profile that I can taste. When I think of Randy, I can hear that: the way he plays the piano, the way he sings, the things he talks about. That's him. I wanted to explore that and focus on what that was for me."

What exactly that unique element is for Rector is up to the listener to decide. It could be his easygoing way with a lyric, his soulful voice, or the way he commands the piano and guitar.

In the drum-heavy “Ordinary Love,” another tribute to simplicity, it could be Ben’s evocative vocals. Or, in the heart-on-his-sleeve “Forever Like That,” it might be the way Ben bares his soul about his feelings for his wife of four years.

“It is one of the few moments as a writer where I got to say just what I wanted to say, in the way I wanted to say it, both musically and lyrically,” Rector comments. “Some love songs are so big, you wonder if anyone can really mean that. But this one is realistic. It says life is not going to be perfect, but I’ll be there for you.”

Tracks like the stripped-down “Making Money”—a piano ballad recorded in one take—and the cinematic “Sailboat” are insightful and tightly crafted, whether they’re questioning the value of the almighty dollar, or learning to let go and let life lead where it may.

Ben admittedly had to learn to relinquish control while making *The Walking in Between*. Feeling he had certain expectations to meet left him in what he describes as “a holding pattern.” Only through writing the up-tempo “When I’m With You” did he find the ability to loosen his grasp.

“I had this very tangible experience, but in writing that song, I was able to clear my head. I realized that when I trust in the grand scheme of things - that what will happen, will happen - is when I feel peace and know who I am,” he says. “‘When I’m With You’ is about that, and I hope it helps others find that peace.”

But other times, Ben is just happy for listeners to have a little fun. “Thank God for the Summertime” is exactly that: a literal appreciation of the warm-weather season. “It’s a feel-good song and the most soulful part of the record,” he says of the track, which was inspired by regular Wiffle ball games between some musician friends. “We’d go over to the park on Saturday mornings and play ball. It was hot and it was the best and that’s where this song came from: thank God for Wiffle ball and the summertime.”

One important focus for Rector in making *The Walking in Between* was to replicate the energy and audience-connection felt at a live show. Having toured consistently since his junior year at the University of Arkansas, the young artist has spent the past six years building an impressive fan-base that enables him to routinely sell-out clubs and theatres nationally. While Ben says he didn’t set out to make a live-in-the-studio record, he made sure not to plan anything too meticulously. The result is a purposefully organic experience based on relatable songwriting and authentic performances.

“I’m not an engineer or a programmer. I’m a singer, an instrumentalist and a songwriter, and this album is based on those things I enjoy. Because of that, there’s not as big of a gap between the songs live and on record,” he says. “I wanted the listener to feel as if they were sitting across from me and I was playing for them.”

“This album is less like an architect building something, and more like a photographer taking a snapshot of a moment,” Ben summarizes. “I don’t practice production or studio trickery; I practice piano, guitar, singing, and writing. That’s what *The Walking in Between* captures: the honest and genuine way I make my music.”

All while celebrating everyday life.