

## 'Tuned In' review: Austin's Wild Child pours on the charm

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### "The Runaround," Wild Child

Wild Child was born when violinist Kelsey Wilson and ukulele player Alexander Beggins met and made beautiful music together. The two Texans, who eventually fleshed out the act to six members (bringing in drums, keyboards, bass and cello), established their Austin-based band with the well-received, folk-oriented debut "Pillow Talk."

Producer Ben Kweller, who signed Wild Child to his The Noise Company label, helps the act diversify its sound on its new follow-up, "The Runaround." But Wild Child remains endearing as ever.

"The Runaround" casts its spell with lilting arrangements and clever lyrics about relationships (from gentle and wry to dark and bittersweet), though Wilson's clear-voiced, songbird vocals are the trump card. There's an aural smile in her delivery, even when she's confessing to cheating on her lover with a man whose name she can't recall ("Anna Maria") or sending listeners off on the dark closer, "Left Behind," with lines like, "Those friends you think you'll never lose will soon forget your name."

Beggins often sings duet with Wilson, his voice soft and gruff – and usually overshadowed by hers, though that's part of the appeal. The pair might sing, "Did you know that our days were numbered a long time ago?" on the grounded "Victim to Charm" or, "I wanna come home cause I miss your bones" on the plucky "Stitches," and it sounds as casual and true as any imperfect couple analyzing their relationship, for better and worse.

"The Runaround" is full of life, kicking off with the bouncing title track and going for baroque in the rousing "Living Tree." However, Wild Child is most powerful with understatement – as on the transfixing "Rillo Talk," where Wilson sings with deceptive calm, "Laid around all day, I've laid around all day ... This town's got secrets tonight."

They say the quieter children are, the more you better worry about what they're up to. That's certainly true of this Wild Child.

Rating (five possible): 4