

BILLY DODGE MOODY



Life moves in seasons. Between birth and death, we experience joy, pain, loss, triumph, and everything else in between. The human condition hinges upon such instances of constant change. Boston singer and songwriter Billy Dodge Moody ponders this ebb and flow on his third full-length and debut album for Pasadena Records, *Condition*. Over a patchwork of Americana, soul, and rock, he explores family dynamics, depression, marriage, and saying goodbye to friends and loved ones gone too soon with unfiltered candor.

“It’s an examination of the human condition as seen through my eyes and my experiences over the years,” he states. “I wanted to make this music as human as possible, diving into universal themes pertaining to mental illness, grief, family, ambition, identity, and our relationship with the natural world. Given the more solemn nature of the lyrics, I aimed to perform a sort of balancing act by pairing these sad stories with a more uplifting musical tone. I’m typically attracted to more complicated stories that incite mystery when it comes to songwriting, and the human condition is a complex, enigmatic subject to say the least. For me, it’s always a rewarding exercise to critically examine who I am, and if I’m lucky, it can sometimes lead to enlightening discoveries into why we are the way we are.”

Growing up on the outskirts of Boston, Billy picked up a guitar as a kid and never put it down. Inspired by everyone from Nirvana, Led Zeppelin, and Bob Dylan to Dave Matthews Band, Cat Stevens, and James Taylor, he absorbed a myriad of influences. In high school, he notably took guitar lessons from Chad Stokes of Dispatch and State Radio in between the occasional pickup hockey game together. Between attending Villanova University, he cut his teeth on the Boston music circuit. After a year-and-a-half on Capitol Hill as a press assistant, he relocated to New York, performing regularly around Manhattan. He unveiled his independent full-length debut, *Dawn Breaks over Mystic*, in 2014 followed by 2018’s *Wildwood*. Along the way, he attracted a growing fan base and earned ink from *Boston Globe*, *Boston Magazine*, and more. In 2021, he entered Zippah Recording in Brighton, MA to record *Condition* with producer and engineer Brian Charles. This time around, he tapped into the folk eloquence of Laurel Canyon with rustic Americana spirit.

“It’s a good representation of my confidence and a more fully-formed identity,” he explains. “Up until this album, I felt like I was holding myself back from expressing myself the way I wanted to musically which led to this kind of apprehension deciding how I wanted to represent myself from a genre standpoint. Over the years, I have learned to become more comfortable embracing the different elements of my influences and channeling them into what I like to believe is my own unique sound, and I’d like to think that’s reflected on *Condition*.”

He welcomes everyone into this space via the lead single “Wildlife.” An electric guitar riff wraps around a shuffling beat as his intimate delivery takes hold. It builds towards a soaring refrain, “*The wildlife is running loose in the brain.*”

“My intention when writing [Wildlife] was to illustrate the experience of inner turmoil, whether it’s mental illness or any personal affliction that impedes on your ability to live life the way you want to,” he reveals. “It’s about coming to terms with these self-perceived weaknesses, accepting the sometimes daunting realization that there are parts of our nature that are out of our control, but we have to just roll with the punches to the best of our abilities. Life is crazy, but we’re all journeying through it together with our respective baggage.”

Banjo rings out on “Mother” as he laments *“the destruction of the earth.”* He goes on, “It’s a pandemic song, for sure. I wrote it in the thick of our first lockdown as I was stewing in this existential wonder of why this was all happening. Ultimately, I ended up playing off one of my theories that it’s all a retaliation for our mistreatment of the earth and this was all karma on humanity and its abuse of the natural world.”

Then, there’s “Charlie.” Over lithe country-style acoustic guitar, he pays tribute to a friend who took his life while in college. Facing survivor’s guilt head-on, he traces their journey together, *“Charlie was my best friend in seventh grade, but I’m not sure he felt the same.”*

“I never truly allowed myself to confront the experience and the effect it had on me, particularly the overwhelming amount of guilt that came from wishing I could’ve done more to prevent something so tragic. At its core, it’s a song about appreciating friendship and paying attention in relationships, as well as an ode to empathy; something I wish I exhibited more of during that time in my life.”

“Morning Fly” details his relationship with his dad, while “Highway To The Blue Sky” and “Zanzibar Moon” reflect *“my wife’s and my love for travel, and the experiences we’ve had as well as some I’ve dreamed of.”* The finale “Swindler” culminates on an emotionally charged guitar solo as he highlights *“the tribulations of self-dishonesty and cheating yourself, particularly when it comes to the negative effect it inflicts on others.”*

In the end, Billy Dodge Moody does the most human thing of all and connects.

“All I can really ask for is for folks to enjoy these songs,” he leaves off. “I’d like to think all these songs tie to universal, human themes we all relate to, and hope they connect to whoever listens.”

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