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FEATURED ALBUM: BAND OF HORSES' *WHY ARE YOU OK*

Written by **Mike Duffy** on June 9, 2016

Photo credit: Andrew Stuart

Living in a house full of females had a profound effect on Band of Horses frontman Ben Bridwell as he wrote the group's upcoming fifth studio album, *Why Are You OK* (due out June 10 via Interscope).

The father of four daughters who range in age from just under 1 to 8 penned many of the demos in the middle of the night in his Charleston, S.C., converted garage/studio so he could play dad all day.

"I work all night and then take them to school in the morning," he **told *Entertainment Weekly***, adding, "I'm the f-cking scariest dad in the school, I'm sure."

The new perspective to writing – typically, Bridwell would hole up in a remote location for inspiration – runs throughout *Why Are You OK*, as many of the 12 songs deal with what it means to head a household and, well, grow up.

“Whatever, Wherever” is a breezy homage to returning to his family – which is featured in the accompanying video. “In a Drawer” – featuring guest vocals from Dinosaur Jr’s J Mascis – has a chorus that comes from a search for his daughter’s pacifier. There is a lyric in “Barrel House” where Bridwell sings about “the life of a man is head above the water and pushed under again.”

Sounds like Bridwell spent a lot of time ruminating on his place life, and it’s telling in the album’s stark honesty.

“On the first record, I used reverb to hide the words and then I think it slipped into using metaphors at times to hide the true sentiment of the feeling,” he explained in an [interview with NME](#). “I tried to be more honest with myself and tried not to hide so much. I think it worked. We’ll see.”

Rounded out by bassist Bill Reynolds, guitarist Tyler Ramsey, keyboardist Ryan Monroe, and drummer Creighton Barrett (along with producer Jason Lytle of Grandaddy), Band of Horses delivered yet another musically diverse and layered record.

Opener “Dull Times: The Moon” clocks in at a bold seven minutes, beginning with dreamy synths before breaking out in a full-on rocker with two minutes remaining.

“Throw My Mess” is a foot-stomping alt-country gem, with audible hoots and hollers in the background as the guys laid down the track.

There is a jangly vibe on “Country Teen” that recalls the Lemonheads or even R.E.M. Lead single “Casual Party,” which lightheartedly discusses inane party conversations, boasts sharp indie rock and power pop riffs that would make it at home on their Grammy nominated 2011 album, *Infinite Arms*.

While at times *Why Are You OK* might be a mellower offering than most are accustomed to, Band of Horses comes across refreshed and invigorated. It’s ambitious. It’s introspective. And it represents a band that keeps delightfully surprising after a decade-long run.

Watch the video for “Casual Party” below and click [here](#) for more from Band of Horses.





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