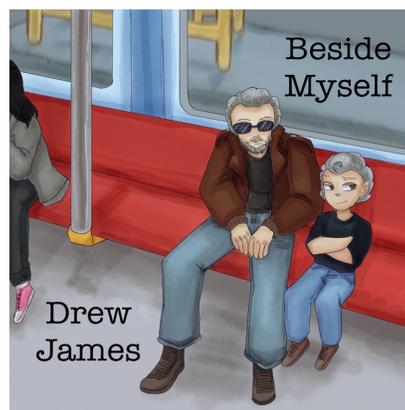


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San Francisco based Singer/ Songwriter Drew James has been described by Butch Kara of KZGM - FM as "The Master of the Bittersweet." Drew best describes his new full length album "Beside Myself" as a musical motion picture of his life. Although the album displays an eclectic range of musical styles and instrumentation, Drew's storytelling lyrics and smooth vocals have no trouble keeping the listener on track though an emotional journey.



On "Beside Myself," Drew teams up with producer and multi-instrumentalist Bruce Kaphan (American Music Club, John Lee Hooker, The Black Crowes) to create the soundtrack for his musical motion picture. Bruce, an experienced film scorer, enlisted an impressive list of musicians to flesh out Drew's musical vision. The result is a tastefully crafted set of arrangements with a vintage sound that perfectly matches Drew's songwriting style.

The album begins with "Time Flies," a song about the passage of time and the stages of life. Though not a religious song, Drew's song characters are the son, the father and the spirit – the same ones that make up the holy trinity. He explains, "As man's life unfolds over time, it transforms from child (or son), to adult (father) and finally to just a memory (or spirit) left to those who outlive him. So an individual's life passes through a "trinity" of stages mirroring the religious concept of the trinity. Time is the vehicle that connects one stage to the next." Dallis Craft's angelic backup vocals add perfect support to the lyric.

Next is "Taking My Time." This John Lee Hooker style blues tune has its roots in Drew's boyhood memories of his father's incarceration. His father suffered from a combination of childhood trauma and World War II PTSD which led him to a life of alcoholism, divorce and ultimately to crime. When Drew was 12 years old, his father, whom he had not seen in several months and who was suffering from a severe case of Delirium Tremors, paid Drew an unannounced visit. It turned out he was running from the law. During that visit he expressed the horrors he was feeling at the thought of going back to prison, which he ultimately did. This visit was the source of the song's lyrics. Bruce Kaphan's lap steel and "jailhouse" Silvertone guitars shine throughout.

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“The One” is a romantic ballad about the innocent adolescent longing for love. Drew draws from the emotions he felt when he was 12 years old and a cute new girl moved next door during that summer. She made it known right away that she was attracted to him. The feelings he experienced were all very new and confusing. She and Drew spent the summer together and then in the Fall she and her family suddenly moved away. He never forgot her or the feelings she stirred in him. Bruce's piano, Joe Kyle's standup bass and John Hanes' snare brushes provide a smooth jazz trio accompaniment to Drew's vocal.

“Lost In Her Eyes” is nothing more than a young man's fantasy. When he was in his late teens, Drew routinely hitchhiked all around the bay area. The song paints a picture of the real possibilities that lived on the road in that era of free love - at least in his mind. Jelly Roll Johnson's harmonica adds an authentic roadhouse blues band feel.

“One Thing Led to Another” is the true story of how Drew met his lifelong soulmate, Celeste. Drew knew right away he had finally found "The One," but apparently Celeste wasn't so sure. Shortly after they began seeing each other Celeste decided she wanted to break off the relationship. The song “Beside Myself” captures Drew's feelings during that breakup. The good news is that the breakup only lasted one day.

“You're the One” is a secret proclamation to love when it seems it just can't get any better – when all pistons are firing. Rich Kuhn's does a masterful job drawing from Paul McCartney's barrelhouse piano style. Bruce's hand clap percussion turned this tune into a mover and shaker.

“A Friend I Used To Know” brings to mind the songwriting styles of John Prine and Leonard Cohen. It is Drew's retrospective tribute to all the friends who have gone before, in particular his brother Mark who passed away unexpectedly at age 44. Bruce Kaphan's piano and Joe Kyle's arco standup bass lines are highlighted in this very emotional ballad.

“California Gold” is a song about the sacrifice's made by those who have chased after that gold over the last 150 years. The common thread that connects them all is their willingness to suffer splitting up their families in that pursuit. It is a phenomenon that is still highlighted by today's headlines. Drew's life story adds further evidence since grandfather and grandmother left a family in southern Italy to chase their dream of a better life in California. Rich Kuhn's accordion and Dallis Craft's backup vocals enhance the somewhat melancholy mood the lyric delivers.

“Different Worlds” is a 1960's style guitar driven blues rock song. Why can't “we all get along?” The song attempts to answer this question by drawing a parallel with the world of modern physics. If there really are multiple universes, then maybe we can all be living in different worlds. Drew has been fascinated with physics from a young age. It was what led him to pursue a college degree in mathematics.

“All Your Love” is a song, maybe more like a mantra, about the eternal nature and the unlimited capacity of true love. Our love can outlive us if there is someone to keep it alive after we're gone.

Finally “I Won't Be Singing With Her” is clearly a song about loss – actually a double loss. Drew's emotional vocals are dramatically decorated with Bruce Kaphan's cosmic pedal steel guitar. The perfect

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end to an album that takes us on a journey through the cycle of life.

Borrowing the words of Paul Bondarovski of Midnight Special Blues Radio:

“Drew James' music world is a place to stay - you can check out any time you like, but you can never leave.”