

In a world of urgency, there's little regard to the spiritual, emotional, or physical well-being of musicians. The creative process, often hidden from the listeners, remains a mystery, though we may pick up clues in the songs themselves. Throughout the ten tracks in their new album 'Let There Be Music', you can hear the spaciousness Bonny Doon allowed themselves since their 2018 sleeper cult-classic 'Longwave'. Their latest musical journey is one that has big payoffs for devoted followers and undeniable rewards for anyone just stumbling across the band for the first time.

In the past five years Bonny Doon has shied from being a Detroit band to an outfit spread between California and Michigan, and now Michigan and New York. Despite the new challenge of distance, members Bill Lennox (guitar and vocals), Bobby Colombo (guitar and vocals), and Jake Kmiecik (drums) leaned on their friendship to sustain the collaboration, which has blossomed more than ever on their third album. While many songwriters work in solitude, the back and forth magic of Colombo and Lennox's process is what gives Bonny Doon their unique voice. The two write and compose each song together, planning writing retreats throughout the year - to gather ideas, edit songs, and give each other feedback, continuing to dedicate themselves to the collaborative effort of being a songwriting team.

After extensively touring 'Longwave' by supporting Band of Horses, Snail Mail and Waxahatchee, Lennox and Colombo were invited by Katie Crutchfield to collaborate on Waxahatchee's critically acclaimed album 'Saint Cloud'. "The experience raised the ceiling on our imagination," Colombo said. Soon after, Colombo and Kmiecik, whose steady percussion and devotion to the songs creates a container for the indelible guitar lines, both entered a time of serious healing, Jake tending to complications of his Crohn's disease and Bobby to a brain injury and undiagnosed Lyme disease. While these detours of doctors' appointments and experimental care were taking place, the members of Bonny Doon were also playing on Waxahatchee's 'Saint Cloud' tour. These obstacles and commitments drew out the making of 'Let There Be Music' for several additional years, and in the process, redefined the record as an achievement in perseverance for the band.

The up-tempo and polished "Naturally" is an ode to love and trust. It celebrates the light that comes when we open up to those we love. Lennox's crooning voice switches from English to French part way through the song, as if the sentiment he wants to convey just does not exist in his primary tongue. This tune weaves together a world you want to be inside of, it makes you want to dance in the kitchen or turn it up on a long drive through the country.

In "Maybe Today" the band locks into a slower sonic experience, framed by the dynamic piano playing, which is heard throughout the album. Colombo's understated lyrics present the perfect example of the way Bonny Doon so beautifully imbue the ordinary with greater meaning. *And it started to rain. But how good did it feel? Slow at first, and then it came. Just to remind us what is real.* The song reassures that sometime soon- *maybe today, maybe tomorrow* - we'll come across what we're ultimately looking for. It acknowledges we may not control the pace of change, but we can flow within it.

The title track, "Let There Be Music," is perhaps the most unabashedly affirming song Bonny Doon has created to date. Driven again by piano and Kmiecik's elated drumming style, the song pairs a simple melody with a simple sentiment - the power of music. While there is plenty of humor and nuance to be found in the lyrics elsewhere on the record, Colombo and Lennox treat this matter with childlike earnestness. By the end of the song, the band is playing it fast and loose, cutting friend Michael Malis free on the piano to crescendo in joyful exuberance. In both its sincerity and simplicity, "Let There Be Music" reflects the essence of Bonny Doon.

"San Francisco", the big city next to Colombo's rural home of Lagunitas, offers a glimpse into the way this band sees the world - with both critical eyes and hope. Backup vocals from Crutchfield, who has become a continued collaborator, lend to the essence of the song's building finale. "Crooked Creek" boasts a robustness and thundering pulse that energizes the album with its presence. The playful imagery nods to the spiritual in an authentic but self-aware way - *If you're stepping in shit, you're probably on the path.*

On their long-awaited third album, we get a glimpse into the pure joy of Bonny Doon. The album serves as less of one conceptual story, and each song as their own individual offerings of putting words to the ordinary experience of being alive. The band is at their most dynamic and the songwriting deftly explores new terrain. 'Let There Be Music' is brimming with small truths - both profound and mundane, comforting and difficult - and we are invited to revel in them all.