



Multi-instrumentalist and folk musician Bryan Jones is known locally for his collaborative and solo works.
PHOTO/JERI CHADWELL

Far-out reflections

Buffalo Moses

Bryan Jones has been playing music in Reno since 2007. In addition to singing, he's a multi-instrumentalist who plays guitar, organ and banjo, among others. He's a former member of the locally renowned Americana band Buster Blue.

Jones came up with the name Buffalo Moses for his solo act only two-and-a-half years ago. It's based on memories of his grandparents, who raised him.

"My grammy used to say 'I move slower than Moses,'" Jones said. "And my grandpa always liked things with buffalo." Buffalo Moses, he said, just rolled off the tongue—and it would have the pragmatic effect of setting him apart in Google search results in a way that just "Bryan Jones" would not.

While living in Seattle, Jones began working on his second EP, *National Mammal Vol. 1*. This collection of songs was recorded at Barn Door Studio and was released in September 2018. According to Jones, his songwriting style has had to change since he's gone solo because there's less instrumentation to accompany him and an absence horns in his songs. As a result, his songs became a lot longer, and, he said, his lyrics had to become a lot more important. His songwriting became centered around storytelling.

Jones said a lot of his work is pretty autobiographical and is centered around him talking to his family. He said he's always looking to be authentic and honest with his lyrics rather than making them poetic for the sake of good songwriting. Jones said he's past the point of trying to write songs about "finding himself" and is now more focused on sticking to sincerity and humor.

"It's so much easier to make everyone else out to be the bad guy, you know?" said Jones. "This sucks, you suck, poor me, this happened to me. Now I feel like I'm the asshole most of the time, and it's usually funnier that way in my mind. I try to write a lot more with a sense of humor because that reflects a lot more of my personality."

When it comes to the actual songwriting process, Jones said he'll sing a song in his head and come up with chords later. His rule of thumb is that if he can't remember the song a couple days later, then it wasn't worth remembering in the first place.

Buffalo Moses's most recent release, a music video for "T. Bodett's Bedtime Blues," came out Feb. 25. The video, directed by J. Maxwell Bennett, features Jones as a character reflecting back on different points in his life. His appearance changes throughout the video to reflect the concept.

The footage itself was filmed all over the Pacific Northwest, from under a bridge in downtown Seattle at 1 o'clock in the morning; to the small town of Toppenish, Washington, with a population of about 9,000. The video features everyday life in the American West in a way that's perfectly paired with Jones' folk style.

According to Jones, he didn't aim to evoke a certain feeling with the song or the music video.

"I want everyone to listen to it, but people get different stuff out of [the video]," he said. "Some people were like 'Man that video was hilarious,' and other people were like, 'Wow, that was a really sad video.' People's opinions were all over the place."

Now back in Reno, Jones is looking to play local shows and tour frequently. He's also working on putting together another musical group in town. □

Buffalo Moses's new music video for "T. Bodett's Bedtime Blues" can be viewed here: bit.ly/2TKR4DA.



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