

# BILL KWAN





## Biography

Great songs transcend space, time, and sometimes even genre. Much of what makes a song so special, so timeless is its ability to be something entirely different and uniquely adored by every person who hears it. Every so often, one of these songs is interpreted by a fellow musician, resulting in an entirely new piece of art. Multiply this concept by twelve, and you end up with *Poison & Wine*, Bill Kwan's sweeping and melancholic collection of modern songwriting gems.

A longtime fan of all the songwriters on the album, Bill was drawn to the sweet sadness that is the common thread running throughout each song he recorded. Bon Iver's moody "Blindsided" immediately "haunted me, and I listened to the song a lot to finally realize that it is about a significant relationship in which cheating is going on," he explains, "I was drawn to the grace and sparseness." Kwan's producer Matt Pierson (Miles Davis, kd lang, Brad Mehldau) suggested they multitrack his vocal, changing the sonic nature of the song while holding tightly to the emotional tone.

Blur's heartbreaking "No Distance Left to Run" addresses the "dire acceptance and resignation" that is inevitable when relationship is coming to an end. Kwan experimented with his vocals again, doubling an octave apart. Adding a slide guitar transforms to song into part rock, part blues, and all very contemporary.

Always an avid Beck fan, Bill praises his work as “forever interesting and innovative” and insisted on paying homage to him on *Poison & Wine*. The somber mood and message of Beck’s “Missing” was carried on a bossa nova wave originally, so Kwan decided to tinker with timing and make it 7/8 for a portion of the track. Kwan acknowledges that “recording the rap section was brand new for me. We used a CB radio mic, and the whole process was very fun.”

He is self-loathing in Ryan Adams’ “Come Pick Me Up,” strips down Coldplay’s “The Scientist” and adds in a slide guitar that gives the song a lonesome cowboy twang, impossibly replaces guitar licks with a haunting Japanese shakuhachi flute in Gillian Welch’s “Revelator,” brings Everything But The Girl’s “Rollercoaster” to a new level of isolation and vulnerability and takes on Bjork’s “Stonemilker,” Aimee Mann’s “Invisible Ink” and the Civil Wars’ “Poison & Wine” fearlessly. By the time the album heads into the home stretch, Bill finds himself making his way through those stages of grief and simmers with a quiet rage on Calvin Harris and Florence Welch’s “Sweet Nothing.”

Although driven by heartache, Kwan took an interpretive approach to each song on *Poison & Wine* much like a studied jazz singer would to a jazz classic. So it should come as little surprise that Bill has a lauded background in jazz, with an ardent fan base that – like Bill himself – embraces great songwriting no matter what the format.

“It’s the song; the lyrics and the melody that make us stop in our tracks,” he explains. “Whether it’s jazz or rock or in the songwriter genre, it all comes down to the strength of the music. And these songs on *Poison & Wine* move me and make me feel down to the deepest part of my core. Singing them changes me, empowers me. They’re like old friends that I’m sharing stories with.”

*Poison & Wine* was released on August 17th.

# Poison & Wine

1. COME PICK ME UP (RYAN ADAMS)
2. BLINDSIDED (BON IVER)
3. THE SCIENTIST (COLDPLAY)
4. SOMEBODY THAT I USED TO KNOW (GOTYE)
5. REVELATOR (GILLIAN WELCH)
6. NO DISTANCE LEFT TO RUN (BLUR)
7. ROLLERCOASTER (EVERYTHING BUT THE GIRL)
8. STONEMILKER (BJORK)
9. MISSING (BECK)
10. SWEET NOTHING (CALVIN HARRIS AND FLORENCE WELCH)
11. INVISIBLE INK (AIMEE MANN)
12. POISON & WINE (THE CIVIL WARS)

**BILL KWAN  
RECONSTRUCTS SONGS OF  
ANGUISH AND DESPAIR  
ON  
POISON & WINE**

**NEW ALBUM  
INTERPRETS RYAN ADAMS, GILLIAN WELCH, CIVIL WARS  
AND MORE,  
DUE  
AUGUST 17th**

San Francisco, CA (August 13, 2015) --- On *Poison & Wine*, vocalist Bill Kwan delivers an impeccably curated collection of songs by some of the most transcendent songwriters of our generation. With lyrics filtered through his own heartbroken lens, he delicately reconstructs the tracks much like a jazz singer interpreting the great classics. A lovelorn rendering of these painful-yet-beautiful songs, *Poison & Wine* will be released on August 17th, with “Blindsided,” “No Distance Left To Run” and “Missing” impacting at radio on August 31st. Kwan will also launch a headlining tour in support of *Poison & Wine*, beginning with a series of shows in the Bay Area.

A longtime fan of every songwriter whose work fills *Poison & Wine*, Bill turns the sweet melancholy that runs throughout the album into an empowering bond, connecting the musically divergent songs. Each track is anchored the sadness and tension of the original, but is cleverly reassembled at the hands of Kwan and his producer Matt Pierson (Miles Davis, kd lang, Brad Mehldau). They add slide guitar to several tracks including Blur’s “No Distance Left To Run” and Coldplay’s “The Scientist,” a bossa nova beat and a CB radio microphone to Beck’s “Missing,” plenty of forlorn anger to spare on Ryan Adams’ “Come Pick Me Up” and “Sweet Nothing” (Calvin Harris and Florence Welch) and traded out guitars for a bamboo Japanese shakuhachi flute on Gillian Welch’s “Revelator.”

“We wanted to highlight how alone and vulnerable of a space that I was in,” Bill explains. “But I’m also such a fan of these songs and songwriters that we wanted to approach their art as delicately as possible. Their work means so much to so many people.”

***Poison & Wine* will be available on iTunes, Amazon and CDBaby.**

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