

listening to

THE GHOST IN YOU



Billy Polard thinks Halloween songs are serious business.

"The majority of Halloween songs out there are silly or have a goofy tone," he says when asked what the holiday sounds like. "But a serious song about Halloween? There's not exactly a large market out there."

He's not wrong. Search the Internet or streaming services for Halloween music, and you'll find playlists loaded up with the likes of "Monster Mash," "This is Halloween," and a billion covers of Donovan's "Season of the Witch". Great themed tunes, for sure, but a bit overplayed.

So, what's a musician with an affinity for spooky season to do? Write his own songs, of course.

"My fall/Halloween songs are less what they sound like, and more what they feel like," says Billy. "To me, they FEEL like Halloween. And I approached it no differently than I would have in writing a song about love or heartbreak. I took it 100% seriously, and I think you can hear and feel that."

LOVE LETTERS TO HALLOWEEN

Billy's love of Halloween and autumn are rooted deep in his bones, and the holiday is one that has been important to him his entire life for a very personal reason. "My mother was a talented artist and would make costumes for her three boys, decorate the house and dress up like a witch. Her birthday was the day before Halloween, and her love of the holiday rubbed off on me. She was a major reason I find the season so special."

Under the band name The Ghost In You (a nod to The Psychedelic Furs song by the same name), Billy wrote his first spooky song, "Ten Thirty One", with his mother and his childhood Halloweens in mind. "It's my nostalgic love letter to Halloween," he says. "The leaves and spooky atmosphere, the

costumes, TV specials, and movies—all the things that were so magical about that time of year to me as a kid."

The song even includes a lyrical nod to John Carpenter's "Halloween", one of Billy's all-time favorite movies, but for that you'll have to head over to theghostinyou.bandcamp.com to listen for it yourself.

In 2019, Billy followed it up with another spooky song called "October". "That song is darker in tone and more specifically about the season, not the holiday. The music video is simple and moody."



SPOOKY SONGS INSPIRED BY SUNNY DAYS

Much like his love of Halloween, Billy's love of music goes back to childhood. He grew up listening to mainstream rock, grunge, and alternative bands. He also benefitted from an older brother who introduced him to underground and indie bands.

One band had a major impact on him.

"My favorite band since I was 11 was Sunny Day Real Estate. Hearing them changed the way I looked at music. Years later I had the honor to open up for Jeremy Enigk, the lead singer of the group. It was a surreal experience to share a stage with

someone who meant so much to me, who I daydreamed of playing with in my bedroom as a kid."

Other favorite bands included The Promise Ring, Texas Is The Reason, Smoking Popes, Jawbreaker, American Football, and Matt Pond Pa, just to name a few. Hearing artists who were more obscure and closer to the independent publishing side of the music world drew Billy into wanting to join their ranks and write his own songs.

"I knew I had songs in me, I just didn't own an instrument," he says. "I'd make up melodies and songs and tape record myself singing, but it never went further than that. Not until I was about 10 or 11 and I adopted my older brother's dusty acoustic guitar as my own."

FINDING THE GHOST IN HIMSELF

About five years later, once he realized it wasn't just a phase, Billy's dad bought him his first left-handed guitar. (He taught himself to play upside down on the one from his older brother.) Billy continued writing songs for himself and drifted through a few bands before deciding remaining a solo artist was the right fit for him. "It was then that I was finally able to find my voice. Writing just for myself and by myself—and not trying to sound a certain way or subconsciously imitate other artists and influences."

Since then, Billy has released three albums as The Ghost In You, along with a handful of singles: a self-titled debut in 2010, "Wet Wood" in 2012, and "Heaven Help Us" in 2016. "I feel like my songs as The Ghost In You really showcase who I am as a songwriter above anything else I've done," he says. "Every ounce of those songs and albums I did myself. From the writing, recording, producing, self-promotion—even the photography and album art for each record. The Ghost In You is definitely my longest and most personal project."

ADVENTURES WITH BONE BOY AND GHOST GIRL

Music was his first creative outlet, but Billy is also a published author. His independent children's book, "The Undead Adventures of Bone Boy and Ghost Girl", was published in 2019. The story came about by chance.

"When my dad decided to move a few years ago, he told me to get whatever boxes I had lying around in storage," says Billy. "While going through my old things, I saw some scrap pieces of junk mail that I had doodled some characters on while at work some years back. They were of a skeleton and a ghost, which I wrote the names 'Bone Boy' and 'Ghost Girl' under."

Billy shared the doodles on his Instagram, mentioning he always wanted to write a children's book. An online horror publisher saw the post, approached him about the project, and he got right to work.

One thing to know about Billy, though, is he is a stickler for seeing through his vision. When the publisher asked for a change to a line in the book that Billy felt was integral to the story, the project fell apart. "They thought mentioning death might be too dark for young children," he says. "But I disagreed and thought they weren't giving kids enough credit. I grew up on spooky children's books and horror stories. I loved every bit of it."

It took a little time, but Billy ended up going the self-publishing route with Bone Boy and Ghost Girl. Then early in the pandemic he was out of work and bored, so Billy decided to revisit his friends and published "Bone Boy and Ghost Girl meet Dead Dog".

"It picks up exactly where the first left off, sorta like how "Halloween II" picks up seconds after the first," he says. "These books were a labor of love, and I made them for that little kid inside me. The kind of books I would have loved to take out at the library as a boy and would sit and stare at the illustrations—with just

the perfect amount of 'spooky' in them."

SPOOKY ALL YEAR

When he's not busy composing new songs or writing new books, you can find Billy sharing his daily-in-the-life snapshots on Instagram, @theghostinyoumusic. Most recently, his account has been full of adventures on his scooter, dumpster diving treasures, and, of course, a bit of Halloween now and again—something he doesn't take for granted because he remembers a time in his life where loving Halloween wasn't cool.

"Hard to believe, but there was a time that loving Halloween wasn't 'normal,' he says. "If you were older than 10 and cared about it, you were deemed immature or weird. Today it has become so mainstream, that most people wouldn't even question it"

For Billy, that mainstream approach comes with a price, and he admits to feeling "Halloween drained" at times with stores and social media embracing spooky season more each year. The best way to combat those moments? Doing the things that make you love Halloween season.

"The memories of my childhood during the season are what I hold on to. Even as a kid, something about it felt so nostalgic and magical. I'd easily compare it to the magic of a child believing in Santa Claus. Going trick or treating is the one way I can still feel that nostalgic Halloween 'Santa magic' at my age. And I'll likely continue to do it for as long as I can—or at least until the Guinness Book of World Records recognizes me as the world's oldest trick or treat."

Advice for those who want to join him? "Don't let age, embarrassment, or a fear of what others might think stop you from enjoying what makes you happy," says Billy. "Put on a costume, grab a pillowcase, walk the dark leafy streets, and go be a kid again...it's your night." 🎃



PLAY THE MUSIC

Listen to The Ghost In You online at theghostinyou.bandcamp.com.



READ THE BOOKS

Grab your copies of Bone Boy and Ghost Girl's books on amazon.com.



ENJOY THE ART

Find Billy's original artwork, daily adventures and more by following [@theghostinyoumusic](https://theghostinyoumusic) on Instagram.