

In an era in which the magnitude of cultural sickness is coming to light, Henry Jamison has had some time to reflect. On his second record, *Gloria Duplex*, the Vermont songwriter deconstructs ideas of masculinity from boyhood to adulthood and what it means to be a white, middle class male in America today. “All of the images that were coming to me were of boyhood or of manhood,” says Jamison. “It ended up that every song on the record is in some way addressing that subject.” It’s a lot to unpack.

While an array of experiences fueled the themes behind *Gloria Duplex*, there were three in particular that made Jamison focus on the idea of coming-of-age. As a boy, he wanted to be a baseball player. “I had some desire to fall into that quarterback-cheerleader summer romance and that never happened for me,” Jamison says. He course-corrected from that archetype and attended the small liberal arts school Bowdoin College, where he grappled with being an artist in a sea of would-be businessmen. “My acquaintance said he literally got a hard-on when he thought of Goldman Sachs,” Jamison recalls. Jamison found himself avoiding classes and enacting his own form of resistance as an autodidact. Lastly, gaining perspective from his girlfriend and his own maturation prompted him to hone in on the theme of masculinity. “On my first record there are two songs where I tried to paint myself as that ‘heart of gold bro,’” he says. “I was charging around in my world in my oblivious ways, and then I got schooled by my girlfriend,” who’s spoken voice he samples throughout the record as a semi-subconscious feminine perspective (more on that later).

In his reading of the psychologist James Hillman, Jamison discovered the term *gloria duplex*, a Renaissance maxim for keeping a consciousness of both sides, or “healing the split.” If men in his position are guilty of too much certainty, an idea such as *gloria duplex* could bring complexity back into a discourse in which it is sorely needed. “It’s as if we’re standing in front of a beautiful rainbow and only seeing blue,” he says. “We need to see the whole ROYGBIV.”

With *Gloria Duplex*, he takes on his own shortcomings as well as those of the men around him, and they often appear to really be the same thing. Jamison’s flair for baroque pop and complex storytelling shines, as he blends intricate acoustic guitar and banjo with cinematic percussion and synthesizers. His baritone, Nick Drake-like voice tells vivid tales of boyhood and manhood, painting scenes intimately in the fashion of Sufjan Stevens. There’s a vulnerability in Jamison’s voice as he recounts memories and stories with such emotional candor, it’s impossible to tell the difference between what’s real and what’s not. But *Gloria Duplex* is utterly affecting, portraying the raw realities of what it’s like to come of age.

On the album’s first single “Gloria,” Jamison reworks a melody from Irish folk ballad “Arthur McBride,” a song that recalls military recruiters trying to get two boys to join the service. It’s significant to Jamison, though, that perhaps the main danger to boys when the original ballad was written was that they’d be recruited into the military; today the dangers may be ultimately similar, but arise in subtler form “There’s a slow process by which men and boys recruit each other into this very reductive sense of what it is to be a person,” he says. On “Boys,” Jamison sings about initiation rites and confronts the idea that boys in our culture don’t know how to

become proper men. “The thing is that I feel that way too and I really don’t have the answer,” he says. “Ether Garden” is a delicate, string-plucked lullaby, full of metaphor. And “American Babes” flaunts Jamison’s devastating talent for lyrical parole.

But it’s the moments on the record where Jamison addresses the subject of masculinity with acute self-awareness that really stand out. “Was I looking up your skirt? Yeah of course I was,” a confessional and repentant Jamison sings on “True North” as casually as it happens to women every day on the subway. “Florence Nightingale” tackles his own misguided views of feminism that are a larger reflection of society. “I started going to acupuncture and this acupuncturist was this Florence Nightingale-like, very nurturing nurse character, and when I told my girlfriend that she thought it was terribly un-nuanced,” he says. “She asked why I couldn’t like strong, feminine power. So I corrected it to Mary Magdelene and included that correction in the song.” The song is Jamison’s self-proclaimed thesis statement, which chronicles his trying to get it right but getting it wrong anyway.

Recorded over a two-week period in New York City during January 2018, *Gloria Duplex* features an all-star cast including producer Thomas Bartlett (Sufjan Stevens, The National, Yoko Ono, St. Vincent, Florence & The Machine) string arranger Rob Moose (Bon Iver, Arcade Fire, Laura Marling, Perfume Genius, Phoebe Bridgers) and mixer Patrick Dillett (Rhye, David Byrne, Glen Hansard).

Jamison’s 2017 debut album *The Wilds* has over 80 million streams and earned support from The Guardian, NPR, KCRW, Billboard, Echoes, Consequence of Sound, WXPB, World Cafe’s Artist To Watch and more. He has also toured with artists including Big Thief, Darlingside, Lady Lamb, Caroline Rose and Haux.