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John Moe: A note to our listeners: this episode contains mention of suicide.

Maybe you've run across this question before. What do people with mental illnesses do all day? Well, I can help answer that. A lot of the time, they go to work. They have jobs. They need to have their jobs to make money and get by, and they go to work and do their work. And the work can be harder. Because unlike people without mental illnesses, they have to carry this extra load around all day. Some can't work. Lots of them can and need to and do.

23% of Americans live with a mental illness. Loads of them go to work. Sorry if that doesn't match your stereotype. And sure, sometimes they need to take time off to get help for their mental illness. Maybe if they're lucky they can get medical leave or something. But yeah, a lot of the time, eventually they have to get back on the job—on the assembly line, in the classroom, in the office—with their anxiety, their depression, their PTSD.

Or in the recording studio with their bipolar disorder.

It's *Depresh Mode*. I'm John Moe. I'm glad you're here.

Music: “Unforgivable” from the album *Beneath the Lilypad*.

It's unforgivable, ooh, unforgivable to

Oh, to take a girl, keep her from the world

Look at what you've done, why was I the one?

It's unforgivable

Unforgivable

(Music fades out.)

John Moe: That's “Unforgivable”, the first track of the new album *Beneath the Lilypad* by singer-songwriter Alexandra Savior. Alexandra's originally from Portland. She listened to a lot of Nina Simone and Billie Holiday growing up. She lives in Los Angeles now. Alexandra just turned 30, but she's been performing since high school—when she was more or less discovered on YouTube by Courtney Love, who helped launch her career. She's received critical acclaim, worked with some big-name stars, developed a big following. *Beneath the Lilypad* is Alexandra's third album, but her first in five years.

Several years ago, she was diagnosed with bipolar disorder type one. That's a condition marked with manic highs that can last for weeks, as well as crushing lows of depression. She's had both. You'll hear about that. It's a condition that used to be referred to as manic depression. She's also dealt with psychosis and has spent time in an inpatient facility. That mental health journey has informed her work as a songwriter and a musician, and inspired the songs on the new album.

Transition: Spirited acoustic guitar.

John Moe: Alexander Savior, welcome to *Depresh Mode*.

Alexandra Savior: Thank you. Thank you for having me.

John Moe: I want to thank you for telling your story, because—and we're gonna get into it, but—it can be, I imagine, a somewhat difficult story to tell. And I really appreciate you reaching out to listeners. And I think it's gonna help a lot of people. So, thank you again for doing that.

(Alexandra affirms.)

We have a lot to get to, but let's start with the title of the new album, *Beneath the Lilypad*. What's that about?

Alexandra Savior: Yeah, so I wrote—I had been writing the album, and I had recorded little bits of it, and then I was hospitalized for bipolar. And when I got out, the first thing I did was write this song that the title, you know, was “Beneath the Lilypad”. The first line was, “Beneath the lily pad, I find it hard to last.” And the song, it turns out, was actually pretty bad, because I don't know if psychosis really lends to great songwriting. *(Laughs.)* But I kept it, because it was just such a—it was just representative to me of what it feels like to be in that state of mind.

John Moe: There is a song on the album called “Beneath the Lilypad”, but the only words are la-la-la. *(Chuckles.)*

Alexandra Savior: Yeah. Yeah. That was—that's the interlude. I felt like one song needed to be titled it, at least. So.

(They laugh.)

John Moe: Okay. Yeah. So, let's talk about the hospitalization. What were the events that led up to being hospitalized?

Alexandra Savior: Good question. So, I was diagnosed when I was 23 with bipolar one, and I had gone on and off of medications.

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But I was kind of convinced that they were hindering my creativity. And so, in 2021, I stopped taking my medication, and I went into mania. And when I was in mania, it also followed with a flareup of an autoimmune disease that I have, and I was put on steroids for that. And so, the steroids catapulted me into a psychosis, and I attempted—you know—to take my own life. Which would be called a nervous breakdown, or like “I had an accident”—*(Laughs)* is that what they say? Back in the ‘50s, maybe that's what they would've called it.

Yeah. So, then I—luckily, I failed. And I woke up, and I was in the hospital, and then I got carted to a mental hospital. And I was there for about six days. And it was an interesting experience! Certainly made me decide I'm not gonna do that again. *(Laughs.)*

John Moe: Yeah. Well, I wanna talk about what happened inside the facility. But you were diagnosed with bipolar one eventually, which has the extreme mania, the extreme depressive states—for people who are listening. You know, it's—the term manic depressive isn't used anymore. Now we talk about things in terms of bipolar disorder. How far back did you go with those symptoms of mania and depression?

Alexandra Savior: They started when I was 12, and the mania took a lot longer to materialize. I would say probably when I was about 19 or 20 is when I first started to experience mania. But then when I was put on antidepressants—which this is really common, if you have bipolar and you're misdiagnosed as having depression and anxiety. If you take antidepressant or an SSRI, it's a stimulant. So, it usually causes like a severe manic episode, which is what happened when I started taking antidepressants.

John Moe: Mm. What happened? What kinds of things were happening in your mania? Because I hear all sorts of stories, and they all seem to be different. So, how did it manifest for you?

Alexandra Savior: When it first started, I was—I get really fixated on like escaping. So, I would like—I got like a burner phone and hopped in my car and like drove. I was living in Portland at the time. I drove to the coast by myself and like rented a cabin and stayed there for like four days and didn't speak to anybody. And I often like burn a lot of bridges. And I will like be hyper—either like promiscuous or I'll buy, you know, a bunch of stuff. I start to believe things that don't make any sense, and I have hallucinations. I have delusions, auditory and visual. It's just a mess. It's a mess. *(Chuckles.)* Yeah.

John Moe: When you're in that state, do you—? You must believe that those things are real. Like, I think it's hard for people who haven't been there to imagine that state of mind. I imagine there's no part of you that says, “I'm having a manic episode. This is not normal.” You probably feel like you've got it all figured out.

Alexandra Savior: Yeah, I think that it's—as I grow older and like the more experience I have with it, the easier it's become for me to recognize. Like, usually a big thing is that I'll like buy like 10 red cardigans or something silly like that, where I'm like, “Wait... why am I so fixated on attaining a cardigan that is red?” *(Laughs.)* But I also get really shaky, and I can't sleep. So, not being able to sleep is probably the first thing that goes that makes me—that tells me that I'm in mania.

John Moe: And then you get diagnosed, and then after that is the events that ended up with you in the hospital?

Alexandra Savior: Yeah. About six months after going off my medication in the summer of 2021 is when I was hospitalized. Yeah.

John Moe: What was that like? What happened when you were in the hospital?

Alexandra Savior: So, I overdosed on pills.

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And so, I was asleep for two days. Sleeping pills. I was asleep for two days, *(sighing)* and then I would just kind of wake up and eat. Then when I was like no longer sedated, they took me in an ambulance to a mental facility, and they took my shoes away, and they took the string out of my pants, and took my phone, and started putting me on just like a crazy excess of medication. And I was put in a room with a plastic mattress, and somebody watched me go to the bathroom and shower and eat.

And I met a lot of people who were also as crazy as I was and worse. *(Chuckles.)* And basically, I was just like—it was probably not what it's like to be in prison, but it felt at the time like I was in prison. *(Chuckles.)*

John Moe: Yeah. Well, was there like therapy sessions? Were there conversations with psychiatrists? Or was it pretty much just like a holding place?

Alexandra Savior: I would say—I mean, we had one or two group art therapy classes. So, I think— You know, one thing about having bipolar is that when you're in a mania or a psychosis or a depression, it's really hard to remember that period of time. So, from like May or June/July of 2021 until like February of 2022, I don't really remember that. It's very fragmented, especially right after the attempt. So, I don't know. Like, I kind of grasp at straws to remember what that was like. But I remember a girl *(chuckling)* snuck in an X-Acto knife in through her vagina, which is—*(cackles)*.

John Moe: *(Softly.)* Oh my god.

Alexandra Savior: I remember being like, “That's commitment!” *(Laughs.)*

John Moe: Yeah, that's something, alright. Oh my gosh. But you say you were there for six days. Where does that fit in? Where did those six days fit into the period that you don't remember? Was that at the beginning of that period or the end of the period or what?

Alexandra Savior: I think it was like leading up to that, like several weeks. I have long bouts of mania, so I can have it for like months and months. So, yeah. But I would say it was worse after, and that might be because of the medication, or—I'm not sure. Just—I wasn't myself.

Transition: Spirited acoustic guitar.

John Moe: More with Alexandra Savior in a moment. Here's more from the new album *Beneath the Lilypad*. The song is called “The Mothership”.

Music: “The Mothership” from the album *Beneath the Lilypad* by Alexandra Savior.

I wouldn't mind if the Earth stopped turning

All for the better, the birds and blues

And when the mothership draws the curtain

I hope she beams me right up next to you

Next to you

(Music fades out.)

Transition: Gentle acoustic guitar.

John Moe: We are back talking with Alexandra Savior about mental health and music and her new album, *Beneath the Lilypad*.

You talked about how you had worked on some songs before this whole incident occurred. Were you working on music during this or immediately after? Or were you too far gone to be able to do anything?

Alexandra Savior: I was—I became really obsessed with the subject matter of this album. And I was writing every day for a year leading up to that and for probably about six months after my hospitalization. So, I was just constantly writing songs. A lot of them were not very good. *(Chuckles.)* Some of them were okay and made it on the record, but yeah.

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John Moe: New song every day, you were working on?

Alexandra Savior: Mm. I mean, I was trying to write a new—whenever I'd finish a song, I'd start a new one. But I wasn't necessarily finishing them each day. But trying to.

John Moe: What happened in early 2022? Like, what made you kind of come around? What made you stabilize and get to the period where you can start remembering what had happened?

Alexandra Savior: I got a new psychiatrist, and I think that was a big aspect. Because I was just going off of what was given to me at the hospital. It was like—I wanna say it felt like I was on like a dozen pills every single day. So, getting a new psychiatrist and then maybe just kind of like falling out of my cycle.

John Moe: Have you had manic episodes since then?

Alexandra Savior: It's interesting you asked that. Because, yes, I am currently in a manic cycle. *(Laughs.)*

John Moe: Oh, you are? Okay.

Alexandra Savior: Yeah, I am. I'm coming down from it, but it's been about a month of it.

John Moe: Wow. What's that been like? What's been happening?

Alexandra Savior: You know, this one took me a long time to recognize. I think maybe it was like the release of the album and the stress of all of it that could have led me there. But I was feeling very paranoid, and that's kind of when I know it's happening.

John Moe: Is it a stress responsive thing? Like, you know, when you had the other manic episode, I know it was triggered by some of these meds that you got. But was it—does it tend to be stress responsive?

Alexandra Savior: Yeah, for sure. I noticed that like tour really— It's a big reason why I am so hesitant to go on tour, because the last time I was on tour, I got triggered into psychosis, so.

(John “wow”s sympathetically.)

It's annoying. Lack of sleep is really, really not good for people who have—not good for anybody, *(laughs)* but not good for mental health.

John Moe: Have you been sleeping?

Alexandra Savior: I take sedatives at night, so I have been. But like, I'm taking about four times as much as I normally would to sleep. So, that's how strong it is. Like, a pill that would make me fall asleep within 30 minutes, I'm still like, “Let's go, you know, do some jumping jacks.” *(Laughs.)*

John Moe: Yeah. Yeah. Well, let's talk a little bit about the album. What—you know, you spent all this time writing all these songs, and you said some of them weren't very good.

What were you looking to do in compiling an album? Were you looking to tell the story of your bipolar and your psychosis and your hospitalization or what?

Alexandra Savior: I was. See, okay, this is where it gets really confusing, I think, for people who aren't in here. But at the time, I really thought that I had the key to like some parallel universe of like mystical femininity. And I was gonna be able to tell people what it's like to experience time within that space, and not realizing that like my obsession with writing about time was just a manifestation of the illness itself. And I wasn't writing about time; I was writing about the cycles of bipolar disorder, really. Which I understand now, but I didn't know that at the time.

John Moe: So, which of those— Are there songs on the new album that reflect that?

Alexandra Savior: Yeah, so like “The Harvest is Thoughtless” is definitely written from a place of depression. There's a song called “Venus” where time was a very like pinnacle subject matter for that. And then “You Make It Easier” a little bit as well. I wrote that when I was released from the hospital. It's hard to think about what is on the album. *(Laughs.)*

[00:20:00]

John Moe: Well, how did you go about choosing what songs of—? Because it sounds like, especially in mania and in recovery—it sounds like you were incredibly prolific. How do you decide what songs make the cut?

Alexandra Savior: I don't know if I'm prolific much, now that I'm medicated. I think—I thought that the record was done like at the end of 2021. And then I think when I was able to see it more clearly, that's when I was able to say like, “Actually, this doesn't make any sense.” I think that's a big thing that happens when you write from that perspective is that it just doesn't make sense. It's—you know. *(Chuckles.)* So, that was kind of how I was able to decipher which ones stay and go.

John Moe: Judging which ones made sense?

Alexandra Savior: Yeah. To me—I mean, they all made sense to me, but to other people. Yeah.

John Moe: At the time. Sure. Yeah. Yeah. And then how much of the—how many of the songs were from when you were, I guess, sick? When—you know—you were going through these troubles? And which ones and how many of them were written after you got kind of your feet on the ground again?

Alexandra Savior: I would say it's probably about maybe half and half. The songs that are the singles—the first two songs on the album, “Unforgivable” and “The Mothership”—I wrote in 2023. So, that was quite a while after I was—I had been stable for about a year and a half or two years by then.

John Moe: You talk about how you're coming down from a mania now, from a manic episode now. Would you consider yourself stable right now?

Alexandra Savior: Yeah, I am. I'm stable now. I would say— I definitely went shopping on Monday and bought a bunch of stuff, so maybe not completely stable. I've also been obsessively making buttons. And like, *(laughs)* I get like fixated on making things, and then I like—you know.

John Moe: What kind of buttons?

Alexandra Savior: Like the button—like buttons. Like, you know, that are like—you pin on?

John Moe: Like pins?

Alexandra Savior: Like pins, yeah.

John Moe: What do you hope people get from this album? What do you hope they take away?

Alexandra Savior: I mean, I think that I just want people to access the most— I mean, this is an incredibly personal album for me, and I want people to feel connected on a really deep level to it. I want people to feel like they can be like intimate—*(chuckling)* it sounds weird, “intimate with it”, but—and feel whatever. Like, whatever these songs provoke within them, I want them to be able to feel that really strongly.

John Moe: Were— the writing of the songs and the playing and the performing and the recording and everything—were you trying to capture what it was like to go through what you've been going through with your mental health? Or is that putting too fine a point on it? Is that being too specific?

Alexandra Savior: No, I think I was.

John Moe: How do you go about doing that?

Alexandra Savior: I don't know. You just—you just do, I guess. It's about my life, and that's the easiest thing in the world to write about is yourself. So. I hadn't thought that I was gonna share this part of it. And then when the album came out, I recognized that it's the most important part of what this album is, *(chuckles)* you know?

John Moe: What do you mean?

Alexandra Savior: Oh, just like my struggles with all of this.

John Moe: You know, most of us won't write a whole lot of songs in our time. *(Chuckles.)* What's your process like? Does it start with a lyric? Does it start with an idea? Does it start with a hook? Like, how does it come together?

Alexandra Savior: Yeah. So, it's different every time. I would say for the most part, it starts with guitar, and then I have a bank of like one-liners that I just collect in my iPhone or a notebook. And I will—if something's not naturally coming to me just with me sitting with my guitar, then I'll look into that and—

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Because what happens— When I'm falling asleep, I start to get ideas right between when I am almost completely in slumber and being awake. So, it's that period of time. And I grab my phone, and I will start writing things down. And then I develop that out.

John Moe: Mm. You build from there.

Alexandra Savior: Yeah.

John Moe: How do you know when it's done?

Alexandra Savior: I don't know. That's a good question. It's funny for me, because I really don't like writing bridges, and I don't like pushing a song. So, I think some songs that maybe seem unfinished to other people feel like they're finished to me. But it's just like—same with if you were painting a painting, you would just be like that's— If you add too much, then it starts to get muddled, you know?

John Moe: When did you start writing music? When did you start making songs?

Alexandra Savior: My first song I ever wrote was when I was 14. So, my brother wrote songs growing up, and I would try to read his—he would write them down in a journal, and I would—that's how I kind of worked out what you do is just like spying on him, basically.

(They laugh.)

John Moe: Did he know you were reading his journal?

Alexandra Savior: Probably. But he was such a bad— He has such bad handwriting that it was pretty much impossible anyways.

John Moe: *(Chuckles.)* I understand that, pretty early on, a YouTube video led to you being contacted by Courtney Love. Can you tell us about that?

Alexandra Savior: Yeah. I started singing—I was a musical theatre kid, and we—I moved; I got bullied really bad. I got moved to a new school, and they didn't have musical theatre. So, I started singing on my own, and I met a girl named Summer Tong, and we started playing

together. And we did the talent show together. And then one day she was like, “We should film ourselves!”

And like, I didn't know how to do any of that. I still don't really know how to do that kind of stuff. But she posted it on her YouTube, and then like a week later I got a call that this manager—that Courtney Love wanted to talk to me.

(They laugh.)

And that her manager wanted to like meet up with me. I was like 15, I think?

John Moe: 15 years old. Okay.

Alexandra Savior: Maybe I was 16. 16.

John Moe: What happens when you're 16 and get a—? Do you like—do you believe that this is the real thing?

(They chuckle.)

Alexandra Savior: It was clearly the real thing. I had—so, my mom is quirky, to say the least—and we had a tomato phone, like our landline was a tomato.

John Moe: Okay.

Alexandra Savior: So, she would—it would ring, and would pick it up, and then she'd be like, *(choked stage whispering)* “It's Courtney Love!” Or whatever. *(Laughs.)* I don't know what she sounds like, but. And we would talk for like hours. Like, I would come home from school at 2PM, and then we would talk until it was dark outside, on the phone.

John Moe: What would you talk about?

Alexandra Savior: She was telling me—like, I didn't know who Stevie Nicks was, even. Like, I was from the middle of nowhere in like a suburb of Portland, Oregon. And yeah, so she just was like—she introduced me to a lot of stuff. She would email me like, “This is how you should cut your hair.” And like—I dunno, *(laughs)* it was a lot of stuff.

John Moe: And did that lead to your recording career? Was that a connection that got you out there?

Alexandra Savior: She sent my videos to Linda Perry who—you know, from 4 Non Blondes, and she wrote like “Beautiful” by Christina Aguilera and—

John Moe: Yeah, she's written all sorts of songs.

Alexandra Savior: Yeah, she's great. And so, I flew out to LA to write music with her, and I stayed out here for a month and almost got kicked out of school.

Transition: Spirited acoustic guitar.

John Moe: Back in a moment with more from Alexandra Savior. Let's hear more of her music. This is “The Harvest is Thoughtless”.

Music: “The Harvest is Thoughtless” from the album *Beneath the Lilypad* by Alexandra Savior.

Blowing mines through honest hearts

The lips I've kissed, the love I've caught

All was fine, but suddenly I can see

That none of it's for me

(Music fades out.)

[00:30:00]

Promo:

Music: Playful, exciting synth.

Ellen Weatherford: Hi, everybody. It's Ellen Weatherford.

Christian Weatherford: And Christian Weatherford.

Ellen: People say not to judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree.

Christian: But we can judge a snake by its ability to fly or a spider by its ability to dive.

Ellen: Or a dung beetle by its ability to navigate with the starlight of the Milky Way galaxy.

Christian: On *Just the Zoo of Us*, we rate our favorite animals out of ten in the categories of physical effectiveness, behavioral ingenuity, and—of course—
aesthetics.

Ellen: Guest experts like biologists, ecologists, musicians, comedians and more join us to share their unique insights into the animal kingdom.

Christian: Listen with the whole family on MaximumFun.org. Or wherever you get your podcasts.

(Music ends.)

Promo:

Music: Fantastical, medieval style synth.

Griffin McElroy: *(With a wise, aged affect.)* The wizards answer eight by eight.

The conclaves call to demonstrate—

Their arcane gift; their single spell.

They number 64—until!

A conflagration! 63.

And 62, they soon shall be,

As one by one, the wizards die,

‘Til one remains to reign on high!

(The music picks up tempo.)

(Returning to his normal speaking voice.) Join us for *TAZ Royale*, an Oops, All Wizards battle royale season of *The Adventure Zone*, every other Thursday on MaximumFun.org or wherever you get your podcasts.

(Music ends.)

Transition: Gentle acoustic guitar.

John Moe: I'm talking to the singer songwriter Alexandra Savior about her new album and life with bipolar disorder.

So, you were—what?—16? 17, down in LA?

Alexandra Savior: Yeah, I think I was 17 by that time.

John Moe: Living on your own?

Alexandra Savior: No, my mom was with me.

John Moe: Oh, okay. Your mom was with you. Okay.

(Alexandra confirms.)

I can imagine, you know—especially if you're a solo performer; you're not part of a band; you know, still even in your late teens, getting into the recording industry—getting your name out there and your picture out there and your music out there—that must be kind of psychologically demanding as well. That's—you know, you're pretty young to have that much of the spotlight on you. How did that go?

Alexandra Savior: Yeah, it was really tricky. I think that the effect that it had on me was I really veered away from who I truly was. And I started to like mold myself into what I thought people wanted from me or what was more like marketable or rock and roll or whatever. And I think kids now have to deal with that on another level. Like, 'cause when I was growing up, we didn't have Instagram. Like, it wasn't like you were chronically online or documenting yourself the way that people do now. But I think it was—it really tore me apart, and it was like probably the hardest thing I've ever been through. And I've been through a lot of difficult things. And I would say, as a teenage girl, having people tell me to figure out how I'm gonna be the most marketable version of myself, you know, that was really like soul crushing.

John Moe: Yeah! Do you think that contributed to mental health problems you had later on, or was it a separate thing?

Alexandra Savior: I don't know. I think about that a lot, because there's this book called *The Bipolar Survival Guide*, and it's basically like all of these studies of why people have bipolar disorder. And a lot of them are based off of genetics or like experiences when you're a baby in the womb, the stress that your mother goes through, even. So, I think— It runs in my family, so I think I just have it. But who knows if those experiences made it worse? I really—like, I don't know.

John Moe: What do you wish more people understood about bipolar disorder?

Alexandra Savior: Oh, you know, I got broken up with one time by this guy who—I had just been diagnosed when we were dating, and he was like, *(dramatically)* “One day you're up, and the next day you're down! Like, you are all over the place!” And I'm—that's not what it's like.

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It's really not like that. It's like weeks and weeks and weeks and months of being up, and then like weeks and weeks and weeks and months of being down. And I think also people think that people with bipolar disorder are like unable to have meaningful relationships or are selfish or—you know—shouldn't have children. I think there's a lot of stereotypes. And that's just not true.

John Moe: Do you think—? *(Sighs.)* Do you see it as something that you can get rid of, or something that you're just going to have to live with and manage?

Alexandra Savior: I wish it was something I could get rid of. But it's—I mean, whenever I'm having a “woe is me” moment, it's about the fact that I'm gonna have this for the rest of my life. And then I get really mad about what that means for me. But it's sort of just—you have to accept it. If I could go back in time and be given different genetics to make me not bipolar, I 100% would. But it does not go away.

John Moe: What are the—? We've talked a little bit about the mania. What's the depression like? What's the other pole?

Alexandra Savior: Um. It's very isolating. Depression, for me, feels kind of like having the flu. Like, it feels like you're worn down. You have this ache. You're like—you just wanna rest. And it's like your head hurts, and you're—but like, it's like having the flu on top of having sort of these racing thoughts about wanting to die and feeling like nobody loves you and that you're the worst. And, uh...

John Moe: How long do those cycles last?

Alexandra Savior: My most recent one was nine weeks long. It was from October to January, I think.

John Moe: Okay. Do the meds help?

Alexandra Savior: They do. I think. If—I wish they— Honestly, I wish they helped a little more. Because— And I wish there was a way for me to be on medication and also feel like creative, which I've struggled with that. But they do. They help, yeah.

John Moe: Besides meds, what do you do to stay healthy and stay on track?

Alexandra Savior: For me, socializing is really important. So, I try to make sure to keep really good, quality relationships. And also, I really love to walk, so I walk a lot. I try not to drink alcohol very often. I try not to drink too much coffee. Just kind of normal stuff.

John Moe: And then, you know, you have a new album out. You're gonna— It looks like you're doing some touring coming up. What kind of measures do you take with that level of, you know, heightened life with the tour and the scrutiny and the crowds and all this? What do you do to manage all that and stay healthy?

Alexandra Savior: I'm not sure yet. *(Laughs.)* I am kind of starting slow with the touring. And for the most part, I find that people are really genuine and kind when I meet people on tour—when people come to the shows—and that makes me feel good. But it's— You know, it's been a long time since I was on a real tour, and I didn't do very good on that one. So, this next one's my practice run.

John Moe: Was that in 2021, the last one?

Alexandra Savior: Yeah. Yeah, it was 2022.

John Moe: Yeah. That's when you were still in pretty rough shape, it sounds like.

(Alexandra confirms and they laugh.)

Okay. Well, do you know what it's gonna be like, then? Considering some of the songs on *Beneath the Lilypad*, they're all coming from this period in your life of this crisis, whether it was—you know—leading up to or in the aftermath of this hospitalization.

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How do you feel about putting yourself out there like that? Of like, you know, taking that leap of vulnerability to share this painful part of your life with the general public? With, you know, people like me on some podcast?

Alexandra Savior: *(Laughs.)* Well, I think in a way, I was really hesitant to start putting this record out, because I didn't know if I was gonna be able to deal with the—I felt like if people didn't like it, then it would mean I had failed within the most like pure, tender center of myself. Because that's how I see this album. So, I think sharing this is a way for me to be like, “This is what happened. This is what this is about. You take what you need from it, but also recognize that like this is what it is about.” And it's a hard thing to share, I think. So, I want people to know— Don't be too mean. Maybe that's what the whole point is. *(Laughs.)*

John Moe: Don't be mean at all!

Alexandra Savior: I'm fragile. *(Laughing.)* Clinically fragile.

John Moe: *(Chuckling.)* Proven by doctors to be fragile.

Alexandra Savior: Yeah, exactly. Fragilé.

John Moe: Alexandra Savior, thank you so much.

Alexandra Savior: Thank you so muuuch. This was great. It's like a therapy session! Nice!

(They laugh.)

John Moe: One more from *Beneath the Lilypad* as we go out. Final track on the album, “You Make It Easier”.

Music: “You Make It Easier” from the album *Beneath the Lilypad* by Alexandra Savior.

I write this song from a new autumn dawn

The place where I can find my way again

You

You make it easier

(Music fades out.)

John Moe: Alexander Savior's album and her story make me think of Kintsugi. You guys know what Kintsugi is? Are you familiar with that term? It's this Japanese art of putting pottery back together, basically. Like, if a beautiful vase breaks into a bunch of pieces, you reassemble it; you glue it back together. But the glue is mixed with gold, so you can see where the breaks happened.

Music: “Building Wings” by Rhett Miller, an up-tempo acoustic guitar song. The music continues quietly under the dialogue.

John Moe: The art of Kintsugi recognizes that the breaks, the fissures, occurred. But they're golden now, and they're beautiful. You don't restore everything back to normal. It's not like it was; you acknowledge the rupture and create a new, beautiful thing. Kintsugi is an art. I also

think art itself is Kintsugi, especially when you're talking about art inspired by a mental health journey. Something is broken. There is recovery. There is healing. There is repair. And things aren't like they were, but they can still be beautiful.

I believe that in making art, we tell stories. But we also kind of take stories apart, reassemble them, use the golden glue that comes from our humanity. And anyone can do it, is the thing. We can all make art. We can't all sing like Alexandra can, but we can all sing, or write something down or draw something, or paint something, or build something, or otherwise create something that wasn't there before. That helps us understand our world. Helps us explain our world and maybe our mind to ourselves.

Depresh Mode exists because people help fund it, and we appreciate people who do. We think the show is helping folks out in the world, especially those of us with complicated minds, and we ask for your support. It's easy to become a member. All you need to do is go to MaximumFun.org/join. Find a level that works for you. Maybe it's five bucks a month, maybe it's ten bucks a month. And then select *Depresh Mode* from the list of shows. If you have already done this, if you are already a member, you know how good it feels. And thank you so much. Be sure to hit subscribe. Give us five stars, write rave reviews.

[00:45:00]

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline can be reached in the US and Canada by calling or texting 988. It's free. It's available 24/7.

We're on BlueSky at [@DepreshMode](https://bsky.app/profile/depreshmode). Our Instagram is [@DepreshPod](https://www.instagram.com/depreshpod). Our newsletter, the *Depresh Mode* newsletter, is free, and it's available on Substack. A lot of interesting stuff in there. Search that up. I'm on BlueSky and Instagram at [@JohnMoe](https://www.instagram.com/johnmoe). Join our Presbies group on Facebook. Good discussion happening over there. People supporting each other, people talking about mental health, people sharing art and pets. It's a good time. Presbies on Facebook. Search that up. I'm part of that. I'll see you over there.

Our electric mail address is DepreshMode@MaximumFun.org.

Hi, credits listeners, Savior is actually Alexandra's middle name. Her mom was diagnosed with cervical cancer when she was pregnant, but then the cancer disappeared. Her dad chose the middle name Savior for the baby.

Depresh Mode is made possible by your contributions. Our production team includes Ragu Manavalan, Kevin Ferguson, and me. We get booking help from Mara Davis. Rhett Miller wrote and performed our theme song, "Building Wings". *Depresh Mode* is a production of Maximum Fun and Poputchik. I'm John Moe. Bye now.

Music: "Building Wings" by Rhett Miller.

I'm always falling off of cliffs, now

Building wings on the way down

I am figuring things out

Building wings, building wings, building wings

No one knows the reason

Maybe there's no reason

I just keep believing

No one knows the answer

Maybe there's no answer

I just keep on dancing

(Music fades out.)

Transition: Cheerful ukulele chord.

Speaker 1: Maximum Fun.

Speaker 2: A worker-owned network.

Speaker 3: Of artist owned shows.

Speaker 4: Supported—

Speaker 5: —directly—

Speaker 6: —by you!