



Orpheum Bell is an American band, but in 21st Century America, those words can carry a lot of baggage, both musical and cultural. The five band members write songs that know no boundaries, laying down skewed grooves that skitter around the globe, absorbing beats and meters from Europe, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Imagine a Ukrainian gypsy band playing cowboy tangos in a smoky bar in Havana and you're on the right track.

The band's influences include **Don Gibson**, **The Clash**, **Django Reinhardt**, the **Boswell Sisters**, Russian poet and folksinger **Vladimir Vysotsky**, **Dock Boggs**, and **Bob Wills** and you can hear unmistakable elements of them in the music the band makes. **The Old Sisters' Home'** ('12) is their third album and the first featuring drums and percussion, but their elegant, folk inspired sound remains intact.

The band came together in 2005 when a couple members traded lists and listened. Early songs sprang from an archtop and an upright. To sound full and beautiful, singers, accordions, violins, horns, utensils, and good suits were added, some men, some women. Over the course of the next two years, several multi-instrumentalists coalesced around the core, creating a stark, darkly ornamented sound heard on their '07 debut release, **'Pretty as You'**. Relying on old, acoustic instruments, their sound moved from chiseled, plaintive songs stories to articulate rhythms – American Country, a little swing, Eastern European, a little gypsy.....“Country & Eastern” they called it.

ORPHEUM BELL

~Members & Instrumentation~

Aaron Klein - vocals, banjos, ukuleles, and guitars
 Henrik Karapetyan - vocals, violins, percussion
 Michael Billmire - accordion, trumpets, mandolin, xylophone, glockenspiel, shepherd harp
 Sarah Ring - vocals, ukulele, pump organ, percussion
 Serge van der Voo - vocals, double bass, foot percussion

~ Discography ~

'Pretty As You' ('07)
 'Pearls' ('09)
 'The Old Sisters' Home' ('12)

Several tracks from their second release, **'Pearls'** ('09) were selected for the soundtrack of the art documentary **'The Life of Chris Roberts-Antieau'** by Brookbank Productions. The film was released in '10 and was featured at Baltimore's American Visionary Art Museum.



~ Press ~

Americana UK (Jeremy Searle)

“ An American band for sure, but with members originally from Ukraine, Holland and Armenia as well as the States they throw in influences from all those places’ musical styles as well as roaming up and down the years.....It could be a recipe for disaster, and it’s true that when a band cites as influences The Clash, Django Reinhardt and Russian poet and singer Vladimir Vysotsky amongst others the specter of Pseuds Corner looms large but the Bell, as they probably don’t want to be called, pull it all off with aplomb. It’s a carny sound they create, the sound of a traveling medicine show rolling into town, but a long way from the sometimes sinister undercurrents of that music, for theirs is warm, welcoming and consistently engaging. The playing is inventive and sublime.....A great album, one that’s both enjoyable and interesting.))



American Songwriter (Evan Schlansky)

“ The genre-bending Ann Arbor folk band with an Eastern European bent (they call it “Country and Eastern”) have hit their stride with their latest collection of songs. ‘The Old Sisters’ Home’ is our third album and it is the best reflection so far of our original sound and our individual stories,’ says Orpheum Bell’s Aaron Klein. “We all came from very different places, physically and listened to some very different music growing up. But in our band, we come together around a sound that takes in the musical crushes we’ve had on country music, gypsy, early jazz, tango and pair them with our own rhythms, melodies and lyrics. Like growing up in different rooms of the same house and coming together for supper, say. That is the great part of being an American band with the freedom to listen and play as we choose.))



Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange (Mark S. Tucker)

“ Orpheum Bell saunters an elegant tightrope between old days and new, progressive as hell while firmly rooted. Beautifully packaged, quietly dark eleganza showcasing extremely attractive chops and trad vocals set in renewed context.... everything about it speaking of considered compositions, veteran experience, and literate lyricism drawn from elder days and almost nihilistic thoughts.))



~ Past and Upcoming Venues ~

The Ark (Ann Arbor, MI)
Bells Brewery & Eccentric Cafe (Kalamazoo, MI)
Cafe Carpe (Fort Atkinson, WI)
Crooked Tree Arts Center (Petoskey, MI)
The Detroit Institute of the Arts
Ferris State University’s Williams Auditorium (Big Rapids)
The Franke Center for the Arts (Marshall, MI)
The Frederic Meijer Gardens Amphitheater (Grand Rapids)
The Gem Theater (Detroit, MI)
The Inside Out Gallery (Traverse City, MI)
The Lydia Mendelssohn Theater (Ann Arbor, MI)
The Michigan Theater (Ann Arbor, MI)
The Pyramid Scheme (Grand Rapids, MI)
The Riviera Theater (Three Rivers, MI)
Uncommon Ground (Chicago, IL)
The Wealthy Theater (Grand Rapids, MI)
The Whistler (Chicago, IL)
Ann Arbor Summer Arts Festival
Aten Place Summer Concert Series (Boyer Falls, MI)
Black Swamp Arts Festival (Bowling Green, OH)
North by Northeast Music Festival (Toronto, ON)
Traverse City Wine & Arts Festival
WDET (Detroit, MI)
WNUR (Chicago, IL)
WQKL (Ann Arbor, MI)
WYCE (Grand Rapids, MI)

~ Contact Information ~

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