

Short Bio

Bill and the Belles' latest album, *To Willie From Billy*, is a tribute to Willie Nelson, released in honor of the icon turning 90. It is a bold and playful meeting of the stringband's origins and genre-defying arrangements, and a celebration of Nelson's songwriting and musical ethos. It is that musical ethos that ties Willie and Billy together: **a commitment to timelessness and simplicity, with a good dose of rebellion.** *To Willie From Billy* was recorded in the summer of 2022, and in addition to the core band (**Kris Truelsen** on guitar, fiddler **Kalia Yeagle**, banjo player **Aidan VanSuetendael**, and bassist **Andrew Small**), Bill and the Belles is joined by **Ric Robertson** (Sam Grisman Project) on keys and electric guitar, **Nick Falk** (Hiss Golden Messenger) on drums and percussion, **Don Eanes** (Morgan Wade) on piano and B3, and **John James "JJ" Tourville** (the Deslondes) on pedal steel. Where Willie's Demo Sessions from the 60s (from which 5 of these songs were sourced) feel like a late night listen, *To Willie From Billy* has a bit less smoke in the room. The tracks shimmer, presenting refreshing interpretations of a range of Willie's songwriting history. *To Willie From Billy* is a warm and compelling salute to one of country music's greatest.

Long Bio

Bill and the Belles' latest album, *To Willie From Billy*, is a tribute to Willie Nelson, released in honor of the American icon turning 90. It is a bold and playful meeting of the stringband's origins and genre-defying arrangements, and a celebration of Nelson's songwriting and musical ethos. It is that musical ethos that ties Willie and Billy together: **a commitment to timelessness and simplicity, with a good dose of rebellion.**

It's a daring endeavor to make an album of all covers, especially after having just published an album of all original music (*Happy Again*, 2021). Some may find the tribute surprising, and while it is true that the band could have done a Jimmie Rodgers cover album with their eyes closed, Willie Nelson has particular significance to lead singer and guitarist **Kris Truelsen**. The two have a lot in common: boundless energy, a defiant nature, two character-rich figures that fearlessly integrate a broad range of influences. Just as Willie redraws musical boundaries time and time again, **Bill and the Belles** has been a hardworking band unafraid of pushing the boundaries of genre from the get-go. Beginning as an oldtime stringband exploring the sounds between rural and urban, Bill and the Belles developed a sound wholly their own. Early fans of the band were hooked by their harmony singing, and *To Willie From Billy* delivers stellar vocal arrangements that nod toward 60s girl groups.

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(Morgan Wade, Zach Williams, 49 Winchester) on piano and B3, and **John James “JJ” Tourville** (the Deslondes) on pedal steel.

Where Willie’s Demo Sessions from the 60s (from which 5 of these songs were sourced) feel like a late night listen, **To Willie From Billy has a bit less smoke in the room.** The tracks shimmer, presenting refreshing interpretations of a range of Willie’s songwriting history. There is a particularly moving rendition of “On the Road Again,” a hard-hitting reflection on the loss of live music during the height of the pandemic and a reminder to not take its return for granted. Some tracks recall the intimacy of Willie’s Demo Sessions (Remember the Good Times, Things to Remember), others feel like familiar country romps (Undo the Right, Old Fashioned Karma, Three Days, Gotta Get Drunk). The rest of the album offers **bigger, more ambitious** tracks, building on the band’s recent foray into **decade-spanning Americana** (Shotgun Willie, Will You Remember Mine, Waiting Time, Pretend I Never Happened, Permanently Lonely). Bill and the Belles play the songs of the man who taught the world about the beauty and challenge of simplicity, and the strength in being an original. **To Willie From Billy is a warm and compelling salute** to one of country music’s greatest.