

BILL AND THE BELLES

Happy Again isn't exactly happy. But the delightfully deadpan new album from roots mainstays Bill and the Belles is full of life, humor, and tongue-in-cheek explorations of love and loss. *Happy Again* marks a new chapter for the group by featuring all original music penned by founding member Kris Truelsen. Over eleven tracks the group shows their knack for saying sad things with a bit of a smirk, and tucked amongst the grief and jubilation are some jingle-worthy oddballs for which the band is well known. The raw songcraft along with the deft production touch of Teddy Thompson gives *Happy Again* an emotional punch that deepens with each listen. Bill and the Belles is Truelsen on guitar, fiddler Kalia Yeagle, bassist Andrew Small, and banjo/banjo-uke player Aidan VanSuetendael. They revel in the in-between: deeply engaged with the stringband tradition and eager to stretch those influences to contemporary settings. *Happy Again* is the latest chapter of that ongoing story: what happens when a stringband from East Tennessee lays down a session at Motown. It's a welcome evolution that feels familiar and timeless.