

= Howling Bells =

Howling Bells are an indie rock band that formed in Sydney in 2004 . The band obtained moderate popularity in the United Kingdom following the release of its 2006 self @-@ titled debut album . The lineup consists of Juanita Stein ( vocals , rhythm guitar ) , Glenn Moule ( drums ) , Juanita 's brother Joel Stein ( lead guitar ) , and Gary Daines ( bass guitar ) .

Originally called Waikiki , the band changed its name and musical style preceding its move from Australia to England . Howling Bells ' debut album , Howling Bells , was produced by Ken Nelson . The album charted in the Top 100 in the UK and just outside the Top 50 in Australia , and it was included on Album of the Year lists for a number of publications . The band 's next release , Radio Wars ( 2009 ) , received mixed reviews , although it charted higher than its predecessor in both the UK and Australia . The band supported Coldplay on the third leg of the North American Viva la Vida Tour . In 2009 , Gigwise named Juanita Stein " the sexiest woman in rock . " Their third album , The Loudest Engine ( 2011 ) , received largely favourable reviews but underperformed on the charts in comparison to the bands ' two prior releases . In 2011 , original Howling Bells bass guitarist , Brendan Picchio , left the band .

Howling Bells are notable for a doom @-@ and @-@ gloom , country @-@ and @-@ rock music style , and they have been labelled as melodic blues and country @-@ goth . They are influenced by The Beatles and Jimi Hendrix , and they are often compared to Mazzy Star and The Velvet Underground . Their fourth album , Heartstrings , was released in June 2014 .

= = History = =

= = = Formation = = =

In 1999 , Glenn Moule , Joel Stein , and Juanita Stein formed the pop rock group Waikiki . They toured the Australian eastern states as a trio and released an EP , Presents , in 2000 . In 2002 , with a rhythm guitarist , they issued the Top 50 album I 'm Already Home . With four members , the band then toured Australia and New Zealand . Shortly thereafter , Brendan Picchio joined Waikiki as a bassist , and Juanita switched to rhythm guitar . The group soon became dissatisfied with its material , so the members chose a new direction for their music . They wrote a number of new songs and made a wish list of producers with whom they would like to work . In 2004 , the band changed its name to Howling Bells , as its members felt that phrase better embodied its newly adapted indie rock style .

Demos of the new material were sent to British producer Ken Nelson ( Coldplay , Gomez ) . The band members considered him to be an unattainable candidate as a producer , but he responded favourably . Upon learning that he was interested in working with them , they moved to London . At the time , Nelson was occupied working with Coldplay . For eight to ten months , the band lived in adverse conditions in one room in a house in London . During this period , the members took up menial employment opportunities . Picchio sold double @-@ glazing over the telephone . Moule worked in a pub and in a car workshop , and Joel worked on a farm .

= = = Howling Bells ( 2005 ? 2008 ) = = =

Howling Bells waited for almost a year while Nelson worked on Coldplay 's X & Y album . Frustrated by the unforeseen delay , they considered returning to Australia . However , in early 2005 , Nelson became available , and they recorded their first album at Parr Street Studios , Liverpool . Howling Bells exhibited a brooding sound , and it was a departure from the poppier style of music demonstrated by Waikiki . The long delay and the experience of a cold British winter had affected the tone of their music .

By July 2005 , the band was not yet signed to a record label . Howling Bells toured for ten months prior to the release of the album . They played sporadically in clubs in Australia and North America ,

and they toured Europe and the UK with Editors . The group played extensive UK club shows with many artists , including The Young Knives and Hank & Lily . Howling Bells also played Camden Crawl and the 2006 NME New Music Tour .

The album was released in May 2006 in the United Kingdom on the Bella Union label and in Australia in July through Liberation . It received critical acclaim , including a perfect 5 / 5 from musicOMH . NME rated it 9 / 10 and wrote in a review , " By turns beguiling and enthralling , this is an extraordinary album . " Howling Bells peaked in the Top 100 of the UK Albums Chart and just outside the Top 50 of the Australian Albums Chart . At the time , it was the fastest selling album on the Bella Union label . The release appeared on Album of the Year lists for a number of different publications . In its 22 March 2007 issue , Rolling Stone named Howling Bells one of their three bands to watch out for that year .

Howling Bells spent much of the next two years touring the UK , Europe , Australia , and the US . They played at the 2007 NME Awards Show . They performed at numerous festivals during the northern hemisphere 's summer months in 2006 and 2007 , including Reading and Leeds and Latitude . They supported Placebo in Europe and Australia and The Futureheads in the UK . The band also supported Mercury Rev , Snow Patrol , and The Killers across three different continents .

= = = Radio Wars ( 2008 ? 2009 ) = = =

Howling Bells parted ways with Bella Union and , in 2008 , signed a deal with record label Independiente . The band worked with producer and mixer Dan Grech @-@ Marguerat ( Radiohead , Paul McCartney ) and recorded its follow @-@ up album , Radio Wars , at several different recording studios . At times , the members found it difficult to work with their new producer . However , they have stated that in retrospect , they learned a great deal from him and felt fortunate for having the experience of collaborating with him .

Radio Wars was first released in the UK in March 2009 , and it appeared in several other countries shortly thereafter . The album signalled a change in direction . The band 's music had become brighter and more accessible and placed a greater emphasis on keyboards . Consequently , reviews were mixed . BBC Music claimed " the second chance may well have been squandered . " Gigwise called it " an album of mashed @-@ up half ideas . " In a positive review , ABC described it as " anthemic , edgy , stomping indie rock at its best . " It peaked in the Top 30 in Australia and just outside the Top 50 in the UK .

Howling Bells headlined a tour of the UK in March 2009 , supported by The Joy Formidable and Chew Lips . They played V Festival in Australia in April and were then invited to support Coldplay in May and June in North America . The band played more festivals in Europe , including Hop Farm , Hard Rock Calling , and Pukkelpop . They supported Coldplay again for three nights of their European leg in August and September . The group returned to Australia to write music for its third album and to tour in December . Howling Bells received much praise from bands they supported on tour . Coldplay 's Chris Martin advised his audiences to download Howling Bells ' song " Nightingale . " In July , Snow Patrol 's Gary Lightbody named the group as his " Band of the Week " in Q magazine .

Juanita made the decision to develop her on @-@ stage persona in 2008 and 2009 . She became more confident , animated , and outgoing in her interactions with the audience and in her choice of clothes and hairstyles . In March 2009 , Gigwise proclaimed her " the sexiest woman in rock . " She also placed among the top ten of Clash magazine 's " Top Woman of 2009 " list .

= = = The Loudest Engine ( 2010 ? 2012 ) = = =

Howling Bells began writing material for The Loudest Engine in mid ? 2009 , and expressed hope that 2010 would see the release of the album , but it did not . Juanita labelled the band 's new writing as " real organic , real jammy ... very melodic , but very raw . " They played new material during their December 2009 Australian tour . One critic described it as " a more rollicking , rock and roll approach . " In 2010 , the band severed its partnership with Independiente and later negotiated a

contract agreement with Cooking Vinyl .

In September 2010 , Howling Bells started recording *The Loudest Engine* at the Killers @-@ owned Battle Born Studios in Las Vegas . It was produced by bassist Mark Stoermer , whom the group had met while it toured with The Killers . The relationship between Stoermer and Howling Bells strengthened after the band disembarked from its flight to Las Vegas . The flight had been delayed by more than 12 hours , but he had nonetheless waited for them at the airport . Howling Bells were impressed by his style of work . Rather than overproducing , he kept the amount of takes to a minimum and allowed the band just to play , which kept the sessions very natural . The band members became less conscious of trying to please other people , made the record that they wanted , and hoped that it would change people 's attitudes toward the band .

*The Loudest Engine* was first issued in Australia in September 2011 . The album received mostly favourable reviews from music critics , but it did receive its share of negative response as well . Mojo magazine rated the release 8 / 10 and praised it as the band 's finest album to date . On the opposite end of the spectrum , NME rated it 2 / 10 and claimed that it " [ fell ] flat in a puddle of MOR . " *The Loudest Engine* charted in both the UK and Australia . To coincide with the release of the album , Howling Bells played a short six @-@ date tour of the UK . In November , they supported Elbow in Europe , and later that month they returned to Australia , where they headlined shows in December . Following this , bass guitarist Brendan Picchio left the band and was eventually replaced with Gary Daines .

= = = Heartstrings ( 2013 @-@ 2014 ) = = =

*Heartstrings* materialized following a brief hiatus by Howling Bells , whereupon the band members worked on other projects . Additionally , Juanita became a first @-@ time mother after giving birth . This , along with frustration from the long period of inactivity and creation inspired her and she started to write songs again , at which point she got the other members of the band involved . They made demos and sent them out to prospective producers , one being Alan Moulder ( Nine Inch Nails , The Smashing Pumpkins ) . Moulder was busy at the time so he recommended that the band contact an assistant of his , Catherine J. Marks ( Foals , The Killers ) , who after meeting , Howling Bells chose to produce the album .

In November 2013 , Howling Bells recorded *Heartstrings* at Assault & Battery Studios , in London . The album was primarily produced by Marks , but Moulder supported the effort and was given credit as co @-@ producer . Marks set the tone of the environment in the recording studio and the band felt extremely open and comfortable in her presence . Her female nature was credited with her ability to elicit exceptional performances from the band , more so than any of her record producer counterparts who worked with Howling Bells previously . The band moved on from former label Cooking Vinyl and established a partnership with Birthday Records , a small , independent record label founded by former Kaiser Chiefs drummer , Nick Hodgson .

*Heartstrings* was released worldwide in June 2014 . The album received generally favourable reviews from music critics . NME rated it 7 / 10 and professed , " Howling Bells aren 't back to their best , but they 're within touching distance " . Q magazine rated it 3 / 5 and commented , " *Heartstrings* lacks the killer song that would bring Howling Bells the success they undoubtedly crave " . The album failed to chart in any nation . Howling Bells headlined shows throughout the UK in May and June . They played V Festival in the UK in August and a short series of shows in Australia and New Zealand in September .

= = Influences and musical style = =

Members of Howling Bells have cited The Beatles , Charles Mingus , Peter Green , Vinnie Colaiuta , and Jimi Hendrix as influences . The catalyst for the change from Waikiki to Howling Bells was Juanita and Joel 's trip to see Black Rebel Motorcycle Club in Australia . They saw this band shrouded in red lights , and it created an atmosphere that inspired them to alter their musical direction . The band 's style has been compared to that of Siouxsie and the Banshees , PJ Harvey ,

The Velvet Underground , Nick Cave , Mazzy Star , and The Duke Spirit . Their music has been called folk rock , melodic blues , and country @-@ goth . Juanita disagrees with the group 's gothic characterization .

The style of Howling Bells was greatly influenced by film . The Steins and Picchio have expressed admiration of French films in particular . Juanita has stated that she enjoyed bringing the strange and ethereal energy from those films into their music . To describe the sound of Howling Bells ' debut album , critics used terms like dark , brooding , and Americana . NME described it as " the sound of PJ Harvey hitching a ride with The Velvet Underground through Twin Peaks . "

The second album , Radio Wars , in which the band experimented with synthesizers and drum machines , had a more electronic pop sound . They also incorporated arrangements of string and brass into the album . Their goals were to make a different kind of record by exploring other genres of music and to create something more insightful and futuristic . Not unlike the first record , Radio Wars contained elements of dark subject matter . " Cities Burning Down , " the darkest track from the album , was a song that Juanita and Moule wrote together . Its lyrics were inspired by the apocalyptic sound of the music , which they created first .

The Loudest Engine features a sound adapted to the genres of folk and rock , more so than the previous two Howling Bells records . Juanita explained that the band relied less on the sound technology that was prominent in Radio Wars , instead returning to the more organic state of Howling Bells . For the new album , Joel was inspired by prog rock and krautrock acts such as Amon Düül and Aphrodite 's Child . Howling Bells were inspired by The Doors documentary When You 're Strange , which the members watched just before beginning to record The Loudest Engine .

Heartstrings , like the first record , was very much influenced by film , and is recognized for its cinematic quality . Juanita indicated that they deliberately made the album to sound like a soundtrack to a movie . Howling Bells along with the production team watched Paris , Texas and Blue Velvet , in an effort to replicate the mood , emotion , and atmosphere of these two films in particular . Other films that played a significant role in the making of Heartstrings include , Badlands , Bonnie and Clyde , Kluge , Léon : The Professional , Nashville , Pleasantville , The Last Picture Show , and Vivre sa vie .

= = Discography = =

Howling Bells ( 2006 )

Radio Wars ( 2009 )

The Loudest Engine ( 2011 )

Heartstrings ( 2014 )