

Bluegrass Notes, by Keith Lawrence

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Persimmon Sisters to debut new album

“Green Persimmon Trees”

Green Persimmon Publishing. 12 tracks

Local bluegrass fans will have a rare opportunity to attend an album release party Sunday afternoon at 4 in the International Bluegrass Music Museum at Second and Daviess streets.

The Owensboro-based Persimmon Sisters will debut their new album—“Green Persimmon Trees”—with a live performance plus “lots of homemade ice cream, cookies, peach tea” and more.

Persimmons ripen slowly and aren’t ready for market until well into the fall.

And like the fruit from which they took their name, the Persimmon Sisters have taken their time ripening their sound before moving onto the national stage.

The (mostly) all-female band has been working together since 2002.

And it’s definitely ready to pick now.

The band’s musical roots run deep.

Bass player Nancy Cardwell grew up in an Ozark Mountain family band and went on to play in several bluegrass groups across the country before settling into a day job as special projects director for the International Bluegrass Music Association.

Fiddler Cathy Rogier is a former member of Arnold Chin, a progressive bluegrass band that toured nationally in the 1970s and ‘80s. She’s also a middle- school science teacher.

Anita Owens, a school nurse supervisor, grew up in a family band in Bill Monroe’s native Ohio Ciounty. Her brother, Joel Whittinghill—“the bearded sister”—is a frequent guest on mandolin.

Vic Jordan, who has played with such legends as Bill Monroe, Jimmy Martin and Jim & Jesse McReynolds, brings his banjo to the project.

And gospel singer Martha Gipson, a teacher’s assistant, really shines on a cappella numbers.

The album takes its name from a song Cardwell wrote when she was in college, missing her home in the mountains. It has the feel of a shady porch on a warm spring day and a sound that melts stress away.

So do the beautiful ‘Ashokan Farewell” and Cardwell’s “Comin’ Home.”

But don’t get too relaxed.

Tunes like "Jerusalem Ridge," "El Cumbanchero," "Lost Indian" and "Muleskinner Blues" will get the blood flowing again. Anita Owens, who does a mean yodel on the latter, can hold a note as long as Bobby Osborne.

And that's a long time.

Great album by a band that's ready for some national attention.

Can't find it in stores? Try www.myspace.com/thepersimmonsisters/

Keith Lawrence, (270) 691-7301

klawrence@messenger-inquirer.com