



Austin, Texas-based mutant folk / acoustic Americana group SWARME of BEESE announce the release of *Orchard of Dreams*, their fourth studio album.

Of the album's eight tracks, four are newly written by the band's songwriting duo Lynne Adele & Stephen Canner, along with Ms. Adele's bittersweet reframing of Canner's "Distant Father" from a woman's perspective. Weaving together historical & contemporary themes, the album also includes three traditional ballads – the first time the group has deviated from recording original material to explore some of their early folk influences – each featuring the band's distinctive interpretations & arrangements.

Highlights include the title track, "Orchard of Dreams," a tribute to the American folk hero John Chapman – "Johnny Appleseed" (1774–1845) – who spent his life planting apple orchards for making hard cider. A follower of the mystic theologian Emanuel Swedenborg, Chapman was also spreading his spiritual beliefs as he traveled on foot throughout the North American frontier. Remaining true to his vision until the very end, he died of pneumonia at the age of 70 after trying to save an orchard of seedlings from being trampled by cattle during a late winter snowstorm.

The cinematic "Wreck of the Elizabeth" is inspired by the tragic death of the trailblazing feminist writer Margaret Fuller (1810–1850), an influential member of the Transcendentalist movement & close associate of Ralph Waldo Emerson & Henry David Thoreau. The song captures the drama & aftermath of the shipwreck off Fire Island, New York, that claimed her life along with her domestic partner, their infant son, & other passengers & crew members – with implications resonating far beyond the events of the ill-fated voyage.

Returning to the present, "The Last Petal" explores the oscillating emotions accompanying a romantic breakup; while the heartfelt anthem "The Shallow River," a solemn reflection on the current humanitarian crisis confronting immigrants & asylum-seekers, could be considered a song of protest, a call to action, or a cry for empathy.

Traditional selections include "The Cuckoo," a song of ancient British origin that crossed the Atlantic and became part of the southern Appalachian folk canon; "Selkie," a tragic ballad from the Scottish Isles about a shape-shifting mythical creature; and an unsettling version of the 19th-century American dystopian folk ballad "State of Arkansas."

The CD cover, inspired by the title track and designed by Austinite Will Branch to resemble an antiquarian book, reflects the trio's scholarly backgrounds – Canner's in literature & rare book librarianship; Ms. Adele's in art history; & violinist/violist Stefan Keydel's in folklore. Featuring emblematic engravings by Crispijn van de Passe the Elder (Dutch, 1564–1637), the "book" opens to reveal a bountiful harvest – *labore et coeli favore* – through labor & the favor of heaven.

Orchard of Dreams was produced, recorded, mixed, & mastered by Mark Addison at The Aerie in Austin, TX.

Available for purchase at swarmeofbeese.bandcamp.com
Formats: CD / download / streams on major platforms
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swarmeofbeese.com



SWARME of BEESE: Stephen Canner, Stefan Keydel, Lynne Adele.
[Photo: Will Branch]