

THE HANDSOME FAMILY

BIO 2025 (Links to: **VIDEOS, PHOTOS, CONTACT** below text)

The Handsome Family (songwriting and marriage partners Brett and Rennie Sparks) have been defining the dark end of Americana for over 30 years. Brett writes the music and Rennie writes the words. Their work has been covered by many artists including Jeff Tweedy, Andrew Bird and Phoebe Bridgers. Their song “Far From Any Road” was the opening theme for HBO’s *True Detective* (season one) and still receives thousands of Shazams every week from all over the world.

Asked to describe their music Brett says, “Western gothic” — music inspired by the abandoned strip malls of desert America where thorny weeds slowly reclaim the land. Handsome Family songs may be dark, but there’s always laughter on stage. Rennie sings as well as plays banjo and bass. She often introduces songs with seemingly unrelated stories. Brett, with his deep baritone and stentorian presence, is the undeniable center of stage. The two are joined on-stage by multi-instrumentalists Alex McMahon (electric guitar, pedal steel) and Jason Toth (percussion and Omnichord).

The Handsome Family’s latest record *Hollow* (Sept, 2023) began with a scream in the night. “One night around 4 a.m.,” Brett says. “Rennie started screaming in her sleep. She screamed, ‘Come into the circle Joseph! There’s no moon tonight.’ Scary as it was, I thought, man, that’s a good chorus!”

Hollow delves into the natural world at the edges of the man-made. It is a record lush with leaves and shadows and occult mystery. The dream-inspired “Joseph” is followed by the haunting “Two Black Shoes” which filters a Portishead groove through the highway motels, homeless encampments and McMansions of post-pandemic America. The album closes with “Good Night,” a lullaby that at once soothes and threatens. Brett sings, “Time for Santa to sharpen his claws / Time for skin walkers / Time for the saw...”

“My proudest musical moments,” says Brett. “Are the check Richard Starkey wrote to buy all our cds and the words, “The Handsome Family” written in David Bowie’s last notebook. “There’s been a lot of smashed coffee cups in our house over the years,” Rennie says, “but we’re still unable to resist the urge to make music.”

VIDEOS: <https://www.youtube.com/@TheHandsomeFamilyOfficial/videos>

PHOTOS: <https://handsomefamily.com/photos>

REVIEWS: <https://www.metacritic.com/music/hollow/the-handsome-family>

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