



Echo in the Valley
Béla Fleck and
Abigail Washburn

Béla Fleck / *Banjo*

Abigail Washburn / *Banjo and Vocals*

Thursday Evening, February 7, 2019 at 7:30

Hill Auditorium

Ann Arbor

This evening's performance is supported by Leslee and Michael Perlestein and by Old National Bank.

Media partnership provided by WEMU 89.1 FM, WDET 101.9 FM, and Ann Arbor's 107one.

Special thanks to Libby DeCamp and Teagan Faran for their participation in events surrounding this evening's performance.

Béla Fleck and Abigail Washburn appear by arrangement with The Kurland Agency.

In consideration for the artists and the audience, please refrain from the use of electronic devices during the performance.

The photography, sound recording, or videotaping of this performance is prohibited.

PROGRAM

This evening's program will be announced by the artists from the stage and is performed with one intermission.





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UMS ARCHIVES

This evening's performance marks **Béla Fleck**'s third performance under UMS auspices, following his UMS debut in February 2010 in Hill Auditorium with Bassekou Kouyaté and Ngoni Ba. He most recently appeared under UMS auspices in November 2013 in Rackham Auditorium with Brooklyn Rider. UMS welcomes **Abigail Washburn** as she makes her UMS debut tonight.

ARTISTS

Béla Fleck and **Abigail Washburn**, “the king and queen of the banjo” (*Paste Magazine*), have a musical partnership like no other. Béla Fleck is a 15-time Grammy Award-winner who has taken the instrument across multiple genres, and Abigail Washburn a singer-songwriter and clawhammer banjo player who re-radicalized it by combining it with Far East culture and sounds. The two met at a square dance, began collaborating musically, and eventually fell in love. Over the years, they played together, most visibly in the Sparrow Quartet alongside Ben Sollee and Casey Driessen, and informally at a pickin’ party here, a benefit there, or occasionally popping up in each other’s solo shows. Fans of tradition-tweaking acoustic fare eagerly anticipated that they would begin making music together as a duo.

Mr. Fleck has the virtuosic, jazz-to-classical ingenuity of an iconic instrumentalist and composer with bluegrass roots. His collaborations range from his ground breaking standard-setting ensemble Béla Fleck and the Flecktones, to a staggeringly broad array of musical experiments. From writing concertos for full symphony orchestra, exploring the banjo’s African roots, to jazz duos with Chick Corea, many tout that Mr. Fleck is the world’s premier banjo player. Ms. Washburn has the earthy sophistication of a postmodern, old-time singer-songwriter who has drawn critical acclaim for her solo albums. She has done fascinating work in folk musical diplomacy in China, presented an original theatrical production, and has contributed to singular side groups Uncle Earl and The Wu-Force. In addition to being named a TED Fellow in 2012, Ms. Washburn was recently named the first US-China Fellow at Vanderbilt University, in addition

to Carolina Performing Arts/Andrew W. Mellon Foundation’s DisTil Fellow for 2018–2020.

On stage tonight, Mr. Fleck and Ms. Washburn perform pieces from their Grammy-winning self-titled debut as well as their new record, *Echo in the Valley* (Rounder 2017). With one eye on using the banjo to showcase America’s rich heritage and the other pulling the noble instrument from its most familiar arena into new and unique realms, Mr. Fleck and Ms. Washburn meet in the mean, head-on, to present music that feels wildly innovative and familiar at the same time. Their creative process on *Echo in the Valley* is sonically made manifest in the record’s major themes of harmony, empathy, and surrender. As Ms. Washburn explains, the intense, intimate collaboration that they put forward on this project required “a spirit of staying strong, but also a willingness to release into the other’s ideas to create something new,” possibly something bigger and more beautiful than one could do on one’s own. Whether at home, on stage, or on record, their deep bond, combined with the way their distinct musical personalities and banjo styles interact, makes theirs a picking partnership unlike any other on the planet.

TONIGHT'S VICTORS FOR UMS:



Leslee and Michael Perlstein

Old National Bank

*Supporters of this evening's performance by Béla Fleck and
Abigail Washburn.*

MAY WE ALSO RECOMMEND...

- 2/20 Las Cafeteras
- 3/12-13 Philharmonia Orchestra
- 4/14 Monterey Jazz Festival on Tour featuring Cécile McLorin Salvant
and Christian Sands

Tickets available at www.ums.org.

ON THE EDUCATION HORIZON...

- 2/13 The Present Effects of The Past: Artistic Responses to Police Brutality
(Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History,
315 E. Warren Avenue, Detroit, 6:30 pm)
- 2/14 Penny Stamps Distinguished Speaker Series
Carrie Mae Weems: *A History of Violence, Heave.*
(Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty Street, 5:10 pm)
- 2/14 Master Class: Anthony Dean Griffey, tenor
(Britton Recital Hall, Moore Building, 1100 Baits Drive, 7:30 pm)

Educational events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.