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25126 SEASON

Béla Fleck & The Flecktones ***Jingle All the Way***

featuring **Victor Wooten**
& Roy “Future Man” Wooten
with special guests **Jeff Coffin and Alash**

THURS, DEC 18, 7:30 pm
Hodgson Concert Hall

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BÉLA FLECK & THE FLECKTONES

BÉLA FLECK, banjo

VICTOR WOOTEN, bass

ROY “FUTURE MAN” WOOTEN, drums, percussion

JEFF COFFIN, saxophone

ALASH

AYAN-OOL SAM, vocals, *doshpuluur*

BADY-DORZHU ONDAR, vocals, *igil, kengirge*

AYAN SHIRIZHIK, vocals, *kengirge, igil*

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Program to be announced from the stage.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

BÉLA FLECK & THE FLECKTONES

Banjoist Béla Fleck, harmonica and keyboardist Howard Levy, bassist Victor Wooten, and percussionist/drumitarist Roy “Future Man” Wooten have been creating some of the most forward-thinking music throughout their remarkable careers. Drawing from a vast array of genres—from classical and jazz to bluegrass, African music, electric blues, and Eastern European folk—their sound is impossible to define. It’s a unique musical language forged by the union of four brilliant minds, each contributing something distinct to the whole. Simply put, it is The Flecktones: music that only emerges when these four musicians come together.

“All the different things I do come together to make a new ‘hybrid’ Béla,” Fleck says. “Everyone else in the group is doing the same things, collaborating with others, exploring a variety of ideas. So when we come together, it’s like taking all of our separate ‘soups’ and throwing them into one big pot. The result is something incredibly diverse.”

Fleck first united the band in 1988 for a performance on PBS’ *Lonesome Pine* special, but the connection between the four musicians was immediate and deep. Their bond was built on a shared commitment to pushing the boundaries of music and creativity. Three groundbreaking albums and countless performances followed, but in late 1992, Levy decided to step away.



Sanjay Suchak

“I wanted to pursue other things,” Levy explains. “We were playing over 150 shows a year, and that’s a lot of focus on one project. I’ve never done anything that intensely before or since.” The Flecktones continued as a trio, bringing in a rotating cast of special guests, before saxophonist Jeff Coffin joined the ensemble. The band’s acclaim continued to grow, with five Grammy Awards and a global fanbase to show for it.

By 2008, however, the band found itself at a crossroads, embarking on a temporary hiatus. Fleck, Coffin, and the rest of the group were pursuing solo projects, but the pull of the Flecktones was strong. As Future Man describes, the “paintbrushes of fate” intervened when Coffin was invited to join Dave Matthews Band after the death of saxophonist LeRoi Moore. Fleck encouraged him to take the opportunity, believing it would breathe new life into both DMB and the Flecktones.

“We were all ready for something different to happen,” Fleck says. “We’d been in a kind of holding pattern. Having the same lineup for so long had made things feel almost ‘normal,’ and we were all drifting into other projects for new inspiration. The time off was necessary, but we all knew we’d be coming back.”

Each band member had been pursuing his own artistic ventures. Fleck collaborated with world-renowned musicians like Chick Corea, Zakir Hussain, and Edgar Meyer, and explored African music in his acclaimed *Throw Down Your Heart* project. Victor Wooten’s solo tours, clinics, and recordings, including the SMV project with Stanley Clarke and Marcus Miller, continued to raise his profile. Future Man focused on his innovative Black Mozart project and the development of new instruments. Despite these individual pursuits, all four musicians felt the pull of the Flecktones.

In 2009, they reunited for a tour that spanned the U.S. and Europe, with Levy back onboard. “It felt just like when we first started playing together,” Wooten says. “Just with a lot less hair.” Following the tour, the four musicians felt inspired to continue exploring the band’s possibilities, a sense of unfinished business lingering from when Levy had first left.

For Fleck, Levy’s return was key to fulfilling the original vision of the Flecktones: “Each of us reinventing our instruments, each of us creating something new with every note. The return of Howard gave us a chance to pick up where we left off, pushing further into that vision.”

The return of the original lineup gave many fans the chance to witness a version of the band they might have missed, especially those who discovered the Flecktones during the Jeff Coffin era. Now, for the first time ever, Coffin takes the stage with the original four—alongside Tuvan throat singing ensemble, Alash—to perform the group’s GRAMMY-winning holiday album, *Jingle All the Way*, for a reunion tour this winter.

“It’s like discovering a different version of a legendary band,” Future Man says, likening the reunion to an audience experiencing an iconic group for the first time.

NOTE FROM THE ARTISTS

Due to an unforeseen health issue, Howard Levy is unable to perform with Béla Fleck & The Flecktones tonight. While we are all most disappointed, it is of the utmost importance that we prioritize his health and rest to ensure a full recovery.

BÉLA FLECK, banjo

Just in case you aren’t familiar with Béla Fleck, there are many who say he’s the premiere banjo player in the world. Others claim that Fleck has virtually reinvented the image and the sound of the banjo through a remarkable performing and recording career that has taken him all over the musical map and on a range of solo projects and collaborations. If you are familiar with Fleck, you know that he just loves to play the banjo and put it into unique settings.

A nineteen-time Grammy Award winner, Fleck has the virtuosic, jazz-to-classical ingenuity of an iconic instrumentalist and composer with bluegrass roots. For more than 30 years, he has led Béla Fleck and The Flecktones, the groundbreaking quartet inspired by jazz, funk, bluegrass and beyond. From writing three banjo concertos for full symphony orchestra to exploring the banjo’s African roots with the award-winning 2009 documentary *Throw Down Your Heart*, many tout that Béla Fleck is the world’s premier banjo player. As Jon Pareles wrote for The New York Times, “That’s a lot of territory for five strings.”

Collaborators include Abigail Washburn, the Brooklyn Rider string quartet, Chris Thile, The Blind Boys of Alabama, McCoy Tyner, Zakir Hussain, Edgar Meyer, and Rakesh Chaurasia (their latest album *As We Speak* won two Grammys in 2024). Fleck’s album *Rhapsody in Blue* was released February 12, 2024 on the centennial of the

work's premiere in New York City, and he debuted it at Carnegie Hall with orchestra in May. His Grammy-winning project *My Bluegrass Heart* is named in honor of his friend, mentor, and hero Chick Corea (*My Spanish Heart*). Béla and Chick toured for many years as a duo and released three acclaimed albums, including their latest and final duo project, *Remembrance* (2024), which won the 2025 Grammy for Best Jazz Instrumental Album.

VICTOR WOOTEN, bass

Five-time Grammy Award-winning artist Victor Wooten has graced the cover of *Bass Player* magazine five times. He is a founding member of the eclectic group Béla Fleck and the Flecktones and is recognized as one of the greatest living bassists today, often drawing comparisons to Jaco Pastorius, and was named one of the Top 10 bassists of all time by *Rolling Stone*. He is also an award-nominated author, naturalist, and music educator and has been running his unique music/nature camps since the year 2000. Wooten's camps are held at his own Wooten Woods, just outside of Nashville. In 2010, he started his own record label, Vix Records, which has released a series of acclaimed recordings over the last few years.

ROY “FUTUREMAN” WOOTEN, drums and percussion

Roy “Futureman” Wooten, a five-time Grammy Award winner, is best known for his masterful drumming and percussion skills and is a founding member of Béla Fleck and the Flecktones. Roy, a seasoned drum set player, is mostly known for his frenzied, inimitable performances heightened by his surreal choice of instruments: his trademark inventions “The Drumitar” and “RoyEl” keyboard. He is also a philosopher, researcher, filmmaker, and educator. His impressive solo career and Black Mozart projects span the genres of classical, jazz, soul, gospel, and spoken word.

JEFF COFFIN, saxophone

Jeff Coffin is a saxophonist and composer who has earned international acclaim for his work with Dave Matthews Band and Béla Fleck & the Flecktones, as well as his 23+ solo projects. Coffin's approach to the saxophone is marked by a fearless sense of exploration, fusing elements of jazz, funk, world music, and rock into a style that is uniquely his own.

A 3x Grammy Award winner, Coffin has toured the world, captivating audiences with his powerful, emotive playing. In addition to his work as a performer, Coffin is deeply committed to music education, teaching at Vanderbilt University and presenting well over 300 workshops and clinics around the globe. He is also the founder of the independent record label Ear Up Records and co-founder of AfricaNashville, which promotes cross cultural relationships between celebrated African and American artists in Nashville, TN. Coffin's passion for sharing knowledge has made him a respected mentor to aspiring musicians everywhere.

On October 19, 2024, Dave Matthews Band was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame — Jeff is one of a handful of musicians to attain this incredible musical honor! Jeff is a Yamaha Performing artist and clinician, a Boston Sax Shop ambassador, and a JodyJazz artist.

ALASH

Alash are masters of Tuvan throat singing (*xöömei*), a remarkable technique for singing multiple pitches at the same time. What distinguishes this group from earlier generations of Tuvan throat singers is the subtle infusion of modern influences into their traditional music. One can find complex harmonies, western instruments, and contemporary song forms in Alash's music, but its overall sound and spirit remain decidedly Tuvan.

Trained in traditional Tuvan music since childhood, the Alash musicians studied at Kyzyl Arts College just as Tuva was beginning to open up to the West. They formed a traditional ensemble and won multiple awards for traditional throat singing in international *xöömei* competitions, both as an ensemble and as individuals. Alash first toured the U.S. under the sponsorship of the OpenWorld Leadership program of the Library of Congress and the National Endowment for the Arts. Since then they have returned many times to the delight of American audiences. The *Washington Post* described their music as “utterly stunning,” quipping that after the performance “audience members picked their jaws up off the floor.”

Alash appeared as guest artists on Béla Fleck & the Flecktones' Grammy-winning holiday album *Jingle All the Way* (2008), and have collaborated with Fifth House Ensemble, beatboxer Shodekeh, and more.



Holiday Music Series

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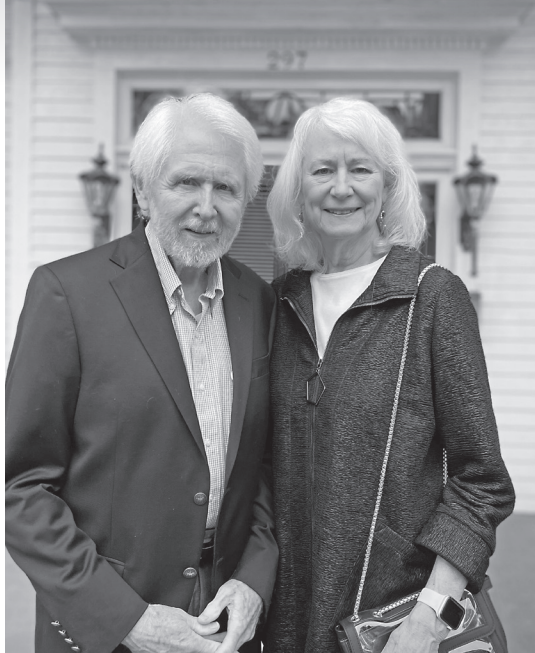


Photo by John C. Morris

Why I Give . . .

Meet C. Van and Libby V. Morris. She is the Zell B. Miller distinguished professor of higher education and director emerita of the Louise McBee Institute of Higher Education at UGA. He is a retired neurologist and a founder of Athens Neurological Associates. This season they are sponsoring the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's performance of Beethoven's Ninth.

When the Performing Arts Center opened in 1995, we were there.

Through the years we have witnessed gifted international artists, such as Yo-Yo Ma and Renée Fleming, and we have marveled at emerging stars among UGA's performing arts students. While we attend multiple performances throughout the year, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and the UGA Symphony Orchestra and combined choirs are among our favorites.

It is easy to say "why we give."

From a practical perspective, we give to the PAC to help bridge the gap between ticket revenue and performance costs. In a philanthropic sense, we give because it is a privilege to see extraordinary musicians, dancers, and actors perform on the campus of the nation's oldest publicly chartered university. We are honored to give to the PAC and support its mission, which celebrates creativity and humanity across people and cultures. The performing arts speak a timeless, universal language.

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UPCOMING PERFORMANCES



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HANDEL'S MESSIAH
ATLANTA SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA AND ASO
CHAMBER CHORUS
NORMAN MACKENZIE,
conductor

Sun, Dec 21, 3:00 pm
Hodgson Concert Hall



The world-famous Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Chorus return to Hodgson Concert Hall with the powerful sounds of Handel's *Messiah*. Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Chorus Director Norman Mackenzie takes center stage in this presentation of the Christmas portion of Handel's most enduring oratorio, culminating in the glorious "Hallelujah Chorus."

LEIF OVE ANDSNES

Wed, Jan 21, 7:30 pm
Hodgson Concert Hall



"A pianist of magisterial elegance, power, and insight."
—*New York Times*

Acclaimed Norwegian pianist Leif Ove Andsnes makes his UGA Presents debut with works by Kurtág, Janáček, and Robert Schumann, including *Carnaval*—21 vivid miniatures showcasing his masterful technique and expressive, deeply insightful interpretations.

FRIGG

Sat, Jan 24, 7:30 pm
Hodgson Concert Hall



"Frigg can justly be described as one of the greatest success stories in Finnish folk music."
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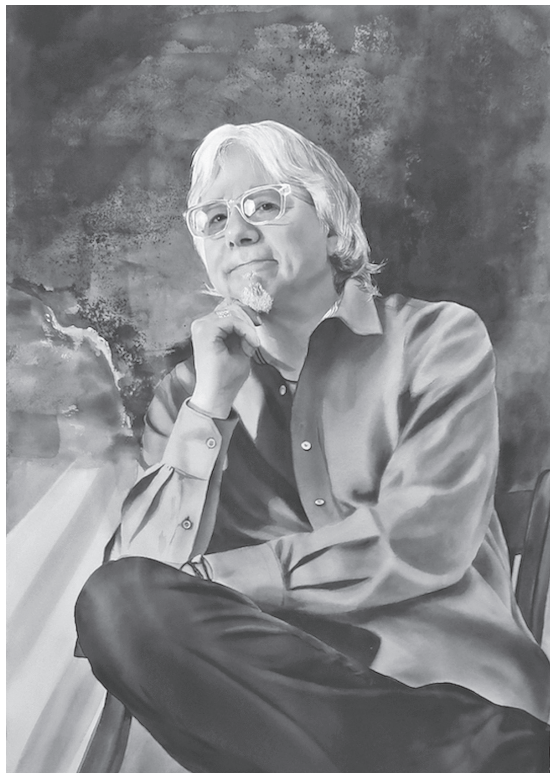
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Mike Mills, watercolor on paper

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Jackie Dorsey is an award-winning watercolor artist in Athens, Georgia. In this series, she pays homage to eight Georgia-based living legends. Based on her own photo shoots, these paintings form a subset of a larger exhibition originally shown during the summer of 2023 at the Lyndon House Arts Center in Athens. It will be shown in an expanded version at the Marietta Cobb Museum of Art during fall 2026.

For more detailed bios and photo shoot descriptions of the musicians in the larger exhibition, catalogues are available at jackiedorseyart.com.



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Children ages 6 and older are welcome to attend all performances, unless indicated otherwise for specific events. Children under age 6 and babies will not be admitted. Parents and guardians are encouraged to exercise judgement when determining if programs are appropriate for their children. Please contact the box office at (706) 542-4400 with questions about specific performances.

ACCESSIBILITY

Venues are accessible to people using wheelchairs or with restricted mobility. Please contact the box office to make advance arrangements if you require special assistance. Accessible parking spaces are located near the entrance to the PAC lobby.

LARGE-PRINT PROGRAMS

Large-print programs are available by calling the box office at least 72 hours before the performance.

ASSISTIVE LISTENING DEVICES

For individuals requiring hearing assistance, the Performing Arts Center offers Assistive Listening Devices that may be checked out at no cost to patrons with a photo ID at the coat check desk in the Performing Arts Center lobby. The photo ID will be returned in exchange for the device at the conclusion of the performance.

FOOD AND DRINK

Concessions are available for purchase in the PAC lobby for all UGA Presents performances and other selected events. Food and drink are prohibited inside the performance venues. Complimentary cough lozenges are available at the coat check desk. Please do not unwrap lozenges during performances.

VOLUNTEERS

We appreciate the dedicated service of the many community volunteers who serve at the Performing Arts Center. To inquire about joining our team, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator at (706) 542-2634. Training sessions are held each August.

RENTALS

Hodgson Concert Hall and Ramsey Concert Hall are available for rental. For information please call (706) 542-2290 or visit the rental page at pac.uga.edu/rentals. Rental inquiries for the Fine Arts Theatre should be directed to the UGA Dept. of Theatre and Film Studies.

STAY CONNECTED!

Follow us on our social media platforms for the latest news, updates, and behind-the-scenes information:



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