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presents.
25|26 SEASON

The Del McCoury Band

FRI, MAY 15, 7:30 pm
Hodgson Concert Hall

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DEL MCCOURY, guitar, lead vocals
RONNIE MCCOURY, mandolin, vocals
ROB MCCOURY, banjo, vocals
ALAN BARTRAM, bass, vocals
CHRISTIAN WARD, fiddle, vocals

Program to be announced from the stage.

Please silence all mobile phones and electronic devices. Photography, video and audio recording, and texting are prohibited during the performance.

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

DEL MCCOURY

Even among the pantheon of music's finest artists, Del McCoury stands alone. From the nascent sound of bluegrass that charmed hardscrabble hillbilly honkytonks, rural schoolhouse stages, and the crowning glory of the Grand Ole Opry to the present-day culture-buzz of viral videos and digital streams, Del is the living link. On prime time and late night television talk shows, there is Del. From headlining sold out concerts to music festivals of all genres, including one carrying his name, there is Del. Where audiences number in the tens of thousands, and admirers as diverse as country-rock icon Steve Earle and jam band royalty Phish count as a few among hundreds, there is Del.

Emerging from humble beginnings in York County, PA nearly eighty years ago, Del was not the likeliest of candidates for legendary status. As a teen, he was captivated by the banjo playing of one of its masters, Earl Scruggs, and decided he'd be a banjo picker, too. The Baltimore/Washington, D.C. bar scene of the early 1960s was lively and rough. Del caught a break. More than a break, really. It was an opportunity of a lifetime; joining Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys in early 1963. Considered the father of bluegrass, Monroe transformed McCoury, moving him from the banjo to guitar, anointing him lead singer, and providing him with a priceless trove of bluegrass tutelage direct from the source.

Countless hours of recording sessions and miles of tireless touring dotted the decades. Del carried on, and carried with him the hallowed traditions of the form and its dedicated following. The passing years became certificates of authenticity. So, in the sea of grunge and R&B that dominated the music scene of the mid-1990s, it was special, perhaps even startling, to see: There was Del.

Now helming the Del McCoury Band with sons Ronnie and Rob, the ensemble did and continues to represent in a larger, growing musical community a peerless torchbearer for the entire sweep and scope of bluegrass history. Those many years, not to mention a good-natured willingness to stay alert to the latest sounds and opportunities around him, earned McCoury a whole new generation of fans, including some in unlikely places.

"I'm just doing what's natural," says Del. "When young musicians ask me what they should do I always tell them, 'You do whatever's inside of you. Do what you do best.'"

No surprise that contemporary bluegrass-bred stars sang his praises; marquee names like Vince Gill and Alison Krauss (who first met Del at a bluegrass festival when she subbed for his missing fiddler). Yet here too was rocker Earle recording and touring with the group. Here was Phish jamming onstage with the boys. Here was the band on TV, or headlining rock clubs and college campuses; the can't-miss appearances at country and jazz festivals. There was Del.

"We don't have a setlist," says Del. "We try and work in the new songs, but a lot of times it's just requests from the audience. It's more interesting for the band, for me, and for the audience because nobody knows what's coming next."

Almost unimaginable, McCoury's sixth decade in a half-century of bluegrass bliss brings new triumphs, new collaborations, and new music. With but a single change in membership in twenty-seven years, The Del McCoury Band shows unprecedented stability as well as garnering the respect and admiration of the industry for its unmistakable work: ten IBMA Entertainer of the Year trophies (most recently in 2024); in 2003, Del's awarded membership in the cast of the legendary Grand Ole Opry; the band's first Best Bluegrass Album Grammy award, in '05, followed by a second Grammy win in 2014 (not to mention double-digit nominations).

"I know (having the same band) helped with my success. It keeps your sound constant," says Del. "We really enjoy what we're doing."

The group traveled with the groundbreaking post-*O Brother* "Down From The Mountain" tour, and performed with Gill, recording on his Grammy-winning *These Days*, as well as country sensation Dierks Bentley. In addition to becoming something of a regular at the wildly popular Bonnaroo Music Festival, they've also curated and expanded Del's annual namesake festival. One of the premier string band events in the country, the multi-day, multi-stage DelFest showcases the new lions of the genre such as Billy Strings, Molly Tuttle, Greensky Bluegrass, The Infamous Stringdusters, and Old Crow Medicine Show, and legends like Ricky Skaggs, Sam Bush, and Bobby Osborne, plus a diversity of artists like Phish frontman Trey Anastasio and blues-rock veterans Gov't Mule to Americana darlings The Wood Brothers and Rhiannon Giddens.

"DelFest is a great accomplishment," says Del. "I never thought it would be as successful as it is."

The Del McCoury Band



"McCoury is a national treasure."
— *Washington Post*

And, when Sony Music came calling, post-Hurricane Katrina, proposing a collaboration with New Orleans' revered Preservation Hall Jazz Band, there was Del. If there were ever a collection of recordings confirming McCoury's wide-ranging impact and spirit of musical comradery, it would be *American Legacies*. A wonderfully fulfilling cross section of traditional bluegrass and the Dixieland pomp of New Orleans, the album typified the Del McCoury Band's evolution from bluegrass vanguard to an American treasure.

"All music is related. Bill Monroe went to New Orleans and listened to jazz players. Earl Scruggs—some of the tunes he recorded were from New Orleans," says Del. "It all fits together if you're willing to be open-minded."

And like any genuine treasure, the gifts keep coming. On their latest release, *Songs of Love and Life*, A glorious 15-song collection, the album follows 2021's celebrated Grammy-nominated release, *Almost Proud*, and once again features Del touching down on a diverse set of tracks—vintage and contemporary—as he and his crackerjack band nod to icons Kenny Rogers, Roy Orbison, and Elvis Presley, as well as welcoming next-generation talent Molly Tuttle to the party. Across his six decades of making classic albums, Del knows what he's looking for in a song. "I like a challenge. I've always liked a challenge," says Del. "I like to learn different things. Doing the same things is boring to me."

One listen and it's clear as crystal. There is Del.



30th Anniversary Campaign

Every Gift Makes an Impact

For three decades, the University of Georgia Performing Arts Center has been a cultural cornerstone for our campus and community—presenting extraordinary artists, fostering meaningful connections, and inspiring audiences of all ages. As we mark this milestone anniversary, we look ahead to the future of the performing arts at UGA. Support for our 30th Anniversary Fundraising Campaign will help advance critical facility upgrades and grow our Arts Impact Endowment, ensuring continued artistic excellence, access, and education for generations to come. Thank you for being part of our story—and our future.

Will you join us in honoring our past and investing in what's next?

Arts Impact Endowment

Launched in conjunction with the Performing Arts Center's 30th anniversary, this endowment helps sustain our arts-related education and engagement programming well into the future.



Facility Support Fund

This fund helps upgrade the technical systems and the physical facility in order to better accommodate current requirements of performing artists while also improving the audience experience.



Indigo Girls performed with the UGA Symphony Orchestra in Oct. 2023



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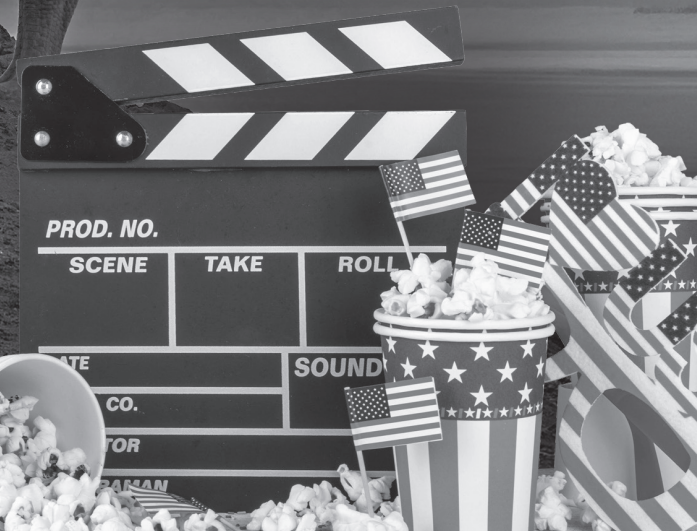


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CURRENT EXHIBITION



The Wall,
oil on canvas

Paintings

by Christopher Hocking

Through July 2026

Christopher Hocking is an associate professor of painting and drawing at the Lamar Dodd School of Art, where he teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in drawing and painting, fostering a collaborative learning environment. His painterly language explores a recombinant figural abstraction that engages form, space, and movement. Imagery draws from diverse sources: popular media, art history, science, toys, fashion, folk culture, children's books, fables, memory, and literature. Guided by sensation, intuition, and feeling, these images slip between abstraction and representation, triggering associations, contradictions, and multiple narrative possibilities.



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New Season Coming May 18



Photo by Mark Mobley

Why I Give ...

Meet Malcolm and Priscilla Sumner. He is a retired UGA Regents' Professor of crop and soil sciences who did 20 years of international consulting. She is a former nurse and chair of the Athens Area Emergency Food Bank, where she volunteered for more than 30 years. They were at the PAC's opening gala performance by soprano Jessye Norman in 1996, and have now lived in Athens longer than in their native South Africa. This season they supported the November appearance by the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (ASO).

Malcolm Sumner: When we came here, this was a cultural desert. There was nothing here. We started supporting the music school. When the PAC started, we decided to contribute to it because we are both fans of classical music.

Priscilla Sumner: We are so lucky to have these artists come to Athens. For the size of this little town, it never ceases to amaze me. Yo-Yo Ma came to Athens! It's mind-boggling. And he's been here twice!

Malcolm: We love the ASO when they come to Athens. Oh, man. Sweet music! They love coming to Athens because of the acoustics.

Priscilla: The acoustics in the PAC are famous.

Malcolm: We've enjoyed every performance but maybe one or two in the period of 30 years. The quality has been excellent. The PAC is the best addition to Athens there's ever been, it's my humble opinion.



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Guest artists, programs, dates, times, ticket prices, and service fees subject to change.

BOX OFFICE

Open Monday-Friday, 10:00 am-5:00 pm and one hour prior to performances. Tickets to all performances presented by UGA Presents, Hugh Hodgson School of Music, Dept. of Dance, and UGA Theatre are available in person at the UGA Performing Arts Center (PAC) Box Office, by calling (706) 542-4400, or online at pac.uga.edu. Tickets purchased from other outlets cannot be guaranteed and may not be honored. For exchange/refund policy, visit pac.uga.edu/policies.

WILL CALL

Tickets purchased in advance and left for collection at "will call" will be available for pick up at the PAC Box Office during regular business hours or beginning one hour prior to the start of the performance, including off-site locations.

FEES

Georgia 8% sales tax and restoration fees (PAC events only) are included in all ticket prices. Additional service fees for online or phone orders and ticket delivery apply.

PARKING

Through an arrangement with UGA Parking Services, complimentary parking for all UGA Presents performances is available in both the PAC surface lot and the PAC parking deck. For performances at the Fine Arts Theatre, please use the Hull Street Deck, the Tate Center Parking Deck (payment required), or other UGA surface lots in the area. For questions regarding parking, please call UGA Parking Services at (706) 542-7275. For information about parking at The Classic Center, please visit classiccenter.com.

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Unless noted otherwise, photography, video, and/or audio recording of any kind are strictly prohibited during all performances.

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Please silence all mobile phones and other noisemaking devices. Texting during performances is prohibited.

LATE SEATING

Late seating is subject to the discretion of the house manager. Late patrons may be reseated in an alternate location.

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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.

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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.

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

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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.

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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.

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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.

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