



ECHO IN THE VALLEY

Béla Fleck & Abigail Washburn

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Béla Fleck & Abigail Washburn, “the king and queen of the banjo” (Paste Magazine), have a musical partnership like no other. Béla Fleck is a fifteen-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 Béla & Abigail would begin making music together as a duo.

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 Béla Fleck is the world’s premier banjo player. 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, Washburn has recently created a non-profit with Chinese zither-master, Wu Fei, called the Ripple Effect, whose mission is to unite and open hearts through the unique sounds and harmony of American and Chinese folk music.

On stage, Fleck & Washburn will 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, Bela & Abigail meet in the mean, head-on, to present music that feels wildly innovative and familiar at

the same time. 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.

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