

Saturday, January 18, 2014, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

Chick Corea, *piano* Béla Fleck, *banjo*



Duets

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An NEA Jazz Master, 18-time Grammy winner, brilliant American composer, and keyboard virtuoso, **Chick Corea** has attained living legend status after five decades of unparalleled creativity and an artistic output that is simply staggering.

From his 2012 Grammy win for Best Improvised Jazz Solo, through his enormously prolific career, Mr. Corea has touched an astonishing number of musical bases in his illustrious career— from straight ahead to avant-garde, bebop to fusion, children's songs to chamber music, along with some far-reaching forays into symphonic works—while maintaining a standard of excellence that is awe-inspiring. A tirelessly creative spirit, Mr. Corea continues to forge ahead, continually reinventing himself in the process.

Mr. Corea began his career with apprenticeships with the likes of Stan Getz, Sarah Vaughan, and Miles Davis, with whom he participated in such landmark sessions as *In a Silent Way* and *Bitches Brew*. Embarking on a solo career in 1966, Mr. Corea has been at the forefront of jazz, both as a renowned pianist forging new ground with his acoustic jazz bands, and as an innovative electric keyboardist with Return to Forever and the Elektric Band. His extensive discography boasts numerous essential albums, beginning with his 1968 classic, *Now He Sings, Now He Sobs*.

Mr. Corea continues to make a significant impact on the scene, as evidenced by 2007's Grammy-winning *The Enchantment* (duets with banjo virtuoso Béla Fleck), 2008's Grammy-winning *The New Crystal Silence* (duets with longstanding collaborator Gary Burton), 2009's *Returns* (documenting Return to Forever's 2008 reunion tour) and 2009's Grammy-winning *Five Peace Band Live* (with John McLaughlin, Christian McBride, Kenny Garrett, and Vinnie Colaiuta).

In 2012, Mr. Corea took home two Grammys, including Best Jazz Instrumental Solo, for *Forever*, the two-CD set recorded on

his acoustic trio tour with Return to Forever bandmates Stanley Clarke and Lenny White. The two honors were, remarkably, Mr. Corea's 17th and 18th Grammy Awards.

The same year, Mr. Corea undertook three world tours and released four new albums: the critically acclaimed *Further Explorations* (with Eddie Gomez and Paul Motian); *The Continents: Concerto for Jazz Quintet and Chamber Orchestra*, an ambitious new classical release and a crowning achievement in his work as a master composer; *Hot House*, a transcendent new set of standards in his Grammy-winning duo with Gary Burton; and Return to Forever's latest live album, *The Mothership Returns*.

In August 2013, Mr. Corea released his most recent album, *The Vigil*, featuring bassist Hadrien Feraud, drummer Marcus Gilmore, saxophonist Tim Garland, and guitarist Charles Altura, with guest appearances by Mr. Clarke, vocalist Gayle Moran Corea (Mr. Corea's wife), percussionist Pernelle Saturnino, and saxophonist Ravi Coltrane.



Just in case you aren't familiar with Béla Fleck, there are some who say he is the premier banjo player in the world. Others claim that he has virtually reinvented the image and the sound of the banjo through his remarkably diverse performing and recording career. The recipient of multiple Grammy Awards going back to 1998, Mr. Fleck has won a total of 14 Grammys and has received 30 nominations. He has been nominated in more different categories than anyone in Grammy history.

Born and raised in New York City, Mr. Fleck began his musical career playing the guitar. But in the early 1960s, while watching *The Beverly Hillbillies*, the bluegrass sounds of Flatt & Scruggs flowed out of the TV set and into his young brain. Earl Scruggs's banjo style hooked Mr. Fleck's interest immediately. "It was like sparks going off in my head," he later said.

When his grandfather bought him a banjo in September 1973, it became his full-time passion. That week, Mr. Fleck entered New York City's High School of Music and Art. Living in New York City, Mr. Fleck was exposed to a wide variety of musical experiences. Particularly impressive was a concert by Return to Forever, featuring Chick Corea and Stanley Clarke. This concert encouraged further experimenting with bebop and jazz on the banjo, signs of things to come.

After high school, Mr. Fleck moved to Boston to play with Jack Tottle's Tasty Licks, and at 19 years old made his first solo banjo album, *Crossing the Tracks*, on Rounder Records. After the breakup of Tasty Licks, Mr. Fleck spent a summer on the streets of Boston playing with bassist Mark Schatz. He and Mr. Fleck moved to Lexington, Kentucky, to form Spectrum, which toured until 1981. While in Spectrum, he and Mr. Schatz traveled to California and Nashville to record his second album, *Natural Bridge*, with David Grisman, Mark O'Connor, Ricky Skaggs, Darol Anger, Mike Marshall, and other great players.

That same year, Mr. Fleck joined the progressive bluegrass band New Grass Revival, lead by Sam Bush on mandolin, fiddle, and vocals. With the addition of Pat Flynn on guitar and John Cowan on bass and vocals, New Grass Revival took bluegrass music to new limits, exciting audiences and critics alike. Through the course of five albums, they charted new territory with their blend of bluegrass, rock, and country music.

During the 1980s, Mr. Fleck also recorded a series of solo albums for Rounder, including the groundbreaking 1988 album *Drive*.

He also collaborated with Mr. Bush, Jerry Douglas, Edgar Meyer, and Mark O'Connor in an acoustic super group called Strength in Numbers, whose MCA release, *The Telluride Sessions*, is also considered an evolutionary statement by the acoustic music community.

In 1988, Dick Van Kleek, Artistic Director for PBS's *Lonesome Pine* series, offered Mr. Fleck a solo show, for which Mr. Fleck assembled a band with harmonicist Howard Levy, bassist Victor Wooten, and percussionist Roy Wooten. The resulting televised concert became the first performance of Béla Fleck and the Flecktones.

The Flecktones' self-titled CD, released in 1990, was nominated for a Grammy, and the band's second recording, *Flight of the Cosmic Hippo*, followed suit. Over the years, the Flecktones have shared the stage with the Dave Matthews Band, Sting, Bonnie Raitt, and the Grateful Dead, and their albums have featured guest contributions from artists as diverse as Chick Corea, Bruce Hornsby, Branford Marsalis, John Medeski, Andy Statman, the Alash Group, and Mr. Matthews.

In 2006, the band released *The Hidden Land*, which won the Grammy for Best Contemporary Jazz Album in 2007. In 2009, *Jingle All the Way*, the band's holiday album, won the Grammy for Pop Instrumental Album.

Any world-class musician born with the names Béla (for Bartók), Anton (for Dvořák), and Leoš (for Janáček) would seem destined to play classical music, and in 2001 Mr. Fleck made the classical connection with *Perpetual Motion*, his acclaimed Sony Classical recording, which won a pair of Grammys, including Best Classical Crossover Album.