

**Preview****Tuesday Musical: Béla Fleck & Brooklyn Rider**

by Mike Telin



Prior to the performance of *Imposter, Concerto for Banjo and Symphony Orchestra* with The Cleveland Orchestra in December of last year, the 15-time Grammy Award-winning banjoist [Béla Fleck](#) told us about one of his recent classical compositions. “I’ve already finished my second commission, a 25-minute piece for banjo and string quartet,” Fleck said via e-mail. “The quartet is [Brooklyn Rider](#) and they are fantastic!”

On Tuesday, November 12 beginning at 7:30 pm in E.J. Thomas Hall, Tuesday Musical presents Béla Fleck & Brooklyn Rider in a concert featuring Fleck’s *Night Flight over Water, Quintet for Banjo and String Quartet*. The Tuesday Musical performance is the second stop on a 19-city North American tour.

Fans of Béla Fleck already know that from the beginning of his musical career Fleck was experimenting with ways to incorporate the banjo into all styles of music such as bebop and jazz. As a member of Sam Bush’s progressive bluegrass band, New Grass Revival, his blending of rock and country music with bluegrass caught the attention of audiences and critics. Since 2001 Fleck and his band the Flecktones have reached more than 500,000 fans annually with their own unique mix of jazz and bluegrass. Fleck connected to classical music with his 2001 multi-Grammy winning album, *Perpetual Motion*, which featured his friend, bassist Edgar Meyer.

On the other side of the coin, fans of Brooklyn Rider already know that violinists Johnny Gandelsman and Colin Jacobsen, violist Nicholas Cords and cellist Eric Jacobsen have roots steeped in classical music. And after joining Yo-Yo Ma’s Silk Road Ensemble, they have collaborated with artists from around the world including Chinese pipa virtuoso Wu Man, Japanese shakuhachi player Kojiro Umezaki, Irish fiddle player Martin Hayes, and Iranian kamancheh player, Kayhan Kalhor.

“This is a very special situation for us,” Brooklyn Rider cellist Eric Jacobsen told us by telephone. “This is a collaboration that was meant to happen.” And how did it happen? “I think Béla was looking for people who are interested in creating and playing [this kind] of music.” Jacobsen says the process of working with Fleck while he was writing *Night Flight over Water* was a lot of fun and all about sketches. “He sent us musical sketches in

different styles and was very interested in hearing how we played them, it was all a very natural process.”

In addition to *Night Flight Over Water*, Tuesday’s performance will also include a number of arrangements of works by Fleck. “My brother Colin has made three or four arrangements of Flecktone’s pieces and there will be a few of Colin’s works as well.” Brooklyn Rider will also do a couple of pieces on their own including *Culai*, by Russian-American composer and violist Lev “Ljova” Zhurbin. “This is going to be a great evening of music and I’m sure it’s going to be a serious happening.”

*Published on clevelandclassical.com November 5, 2013*