

## Chick Corea & Béla Fleck - The Enchantment (2007)

Written by bluesever

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### Chick Corea & Béla Fleck - The Enchantment (2007)



1. *Senorita* (Corea) - (5:20) 2. *Spectacle* (Fleck) - (4:40) 3. *Joban Dna Nopia* (Corea) - (6:28) 4. *Mountain* (Fleck) - (3:53) 5. *Children's Song #6* (Corea) - (4:02) 6. *A Strange Romance* (Fleck) - (4:46) 7. *Menagerie* (Fleck) - (5:53) 8. *Waltse for Abby* (Fleck) - (3:02) 9. *Brazil* (Barroso & Russell) - (5:58) [play](#) 10. *The Enchantment* (Corea) - (5:39) [play](#) 11. *Sunset Road* (Fleck) - (4:36)

Chick Corea: piano; Bela Fleck: banjo.

It is not obvious that music is always musical. Formulaic repetition of past innovations quickly become recognizably trite and, to most ears, off-putting. The duo setting presses a brutal honesty between musicians that has historically not only kept curdled tendencies at bay but has also pushed forth innovation. Jazz musicians of the finest reputation, including guitarists Jim Hall, Joe Pass and Pat Metheny, and pianists Bill Evans and Brad Mehldau, have forged platinum grails of the jazz tradition in this setting. Pianist Chick Corea and banjoist Béla Fleck's *The Enchantment* is certainly no aberration.

Like the most successful duo pairings, Corea and Fleck burnish their well-deserved credentials through sensitivity. The careful inter-instrumental echoes of the melody on Corea's "Joban Dna Nopia" is an impressive example of the musical relationship rather than what the album could have been—a mere amalgamation of two musical giants stomping through tunes together but separately.

And yet, much to the album's benefit, the pair stretches past mere harmonious collaboration to make this record an arresting success. From Appalachian tip-toeing to ponderous laments and striding sambas, *The Enchantment's* stylistic variety is scintillating and harmonically titillating. The album possesses a wider reach and accessibility than it otherwise would have as an esoteric product of musical brilliance. The record is immensely listenable while also being

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immeasurably intriguing.

While the album's most laudable merits are earned collectively, Corea and Fleck's individual playing is just stunning. Corea shines forth in his proclivity to drift convincingly between jazz accompaniment, Brazilian musings, and fluttering improvisation. Fleck's right-hand alacrity is as mesmerizing as his gargantuan melodic presence.

As is the case with the most magnificent duo performances, each musician brings a career's worth of experience and innovation to these eleven tracks. The fusion of these two luminaries on this one disc is just as fascinating a result as it is an idea. Anyone with a musical palate—a sense for the beauty of consummate musical expression—will find this record, in many ways, a perfect synthesis of two of the greatest American musical traditions. One could not ask for a more shining and worthy project. ---Stephen Wood, [allaboutjazz.com](http://allaboutjazz.com)

Although this musical collaboration by pianist Chick Corea and banjoist Béla Fleck is pleasant enough on the surface, it suffers from an uncomfortable, oil-and-water conflict in the admixture, particularly when the pair works over tunes written by Fleck. When they play Corea's material the two seem mostly in accord, although Fleck is more adaptable, an essential element in duet get-togethers. The pianist's previous duo efforts in the jazz vein—notably with Gary Burton and Herbie Hancock—largely succeeded because the musicians shared a predisposition toward jazz. That is not the case in this outing: Although Fleck does incorporate jazz into the eclectic music he makes with his band the Flecktones, it is not his regular beat, and that shows here.

Fleck and Corea have worked together on previous album projects, but this is their first full-scale effort at dueting. The blend fits on the opening "Senorita" by Corea and continues to work with Fleck's "Spectacle," then spins somewhat aimlessly on the pianist's "Joban Dna Nopia." The most notable flaws are on the banjoist's "Mountain," on which Corea seems out of his element. Corea's "Children's Song No. 6" works well, but "A Strange Romance," the first of three consecutive Fleck tunes, after a promising beginning, turns too delicate and ultimately goes the way of baroque parlor music. Fleck's "Menagerie" and "Waltse for Abby" find the pair in an adequate zone. "Brazil," the only work not written by either participant, goes nowhere, but at least does so in a fairly attractive fashion. The title track by Corea and Fleck's "Sunset Road" are fitting closers, in a somewhat similar mood. "A Strange Romance" might have been a better album title than *The Enchantment*. ---Will Smith, [jazztimes.com](http://jazztimes.com)

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