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Contact: Shari Gasper | Communications Director | sgasper@overture.org | 608.443.1756

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Beloved bluegrass trio Nickel Creek celebrates human connection in its national tour

WITH SPECIAL GUESTS – THE STAVES

Madison, Wis. (Jan. 17, 2024) — Get ready to jam to classic American bluegrass music that brings people together in celebration and community. Overture Center and True Endeavors present Grammy-award winning trio [Nickel Creek](#) with special guests The Staves on Wednesday, Feb. 7 at 7:30 p.m. in Overture Hall. Tickets (\$54.50-\$104.25) are available at overture.org.

Nickel Creek is mandolinist Chris Thile, violinist Sara Watkins and guitarist Sean Watkins. Together a sum of more than their staggering parts, the trio revolutionized bluegrass and folk in the early 2000s and ushered in a new era of what we now recognize as Americana music.

After a nine-year absence, the Platinum-selling, Grammy Award-winning trio returned in 2023 with the highly-anticipated album, “Celebrants”—a bounty of 18 disparate but loosely connected songs written collectively during a creative retreat in Santa Barbara in early 2021. The result is perhaps the most audacious yet accessible release of the Grammy-winning trio’s 34-year career. The entire enterprise is, naturally, shot through with the trio’s virtuosic picking and shiver-inducing harmonies. The lyrics—addressing love, friendship, time and the universal travails of travel—combine the poetic and plain-

spoken, hitting a sweet spot of ethereal and relatable as bridges are built, crossed, burned and rebuilt. “Celebrants” has received a Grammy nomination this year for Best Folk Album.

The upcoming show adds to a landmark year for the group. In addition to releasing “Celebrants,” Nickel Creek recently received the Lifetime Achievement Trailblazer Award at the 2023 Americana Music Association Honors & Awards and performed on [“Jimmy Kimmel Live!”](#) and [“CBS Saturday Morning”](#) earlier this year.

Recorded at Nashville’s RCA Studio A, the album was produced by longtime collaborator Eric Valentine (Queens of the Stone Age, Grace Potter, Weezer) and features Mike Elizondo on bass. Reflecting on the project, the band shares, “This is a record about embracing the friction inherent in real human connection. We begin the record yearning for and pursuing harmonious connection. We end the record having realized that truly harmonious connection can only be achieved through the dissonance that we’ve spent our entire adult lives trying to avoid.”



photo credit: Josh Goleman

In a 2020 retrospective entitled, “The Year Folk Broke: How Nickel Creek Made Americana The New Indie Rock,” *NPR Music* praised, “20 years ago this month, an album arrived that seemed to speak all these languages at once: unafraid to push the boundaries of its primary genre, and packing the musical chops to bring such an eclectic vision to life. Behind it were three musicians just barely old enough to vote” and continued, “That makes Nickel Creek and its unofficial debut a critical point along a storied timeline, one whose innovations offer countless connections between the genre’s origins and its future. Once dubbed ‘progressive newgrassers,’ the three musicians now fit firmly within the ranks of Americana music—however nebulous, layered and diverse that realm may be. They have only themselves to thank.”

After meeting as young children and subsequently earning the respect of the bluegrass circuit for a decade, the trio signed with venerable label, Sugar Hill Records, in 2000 and quickly broke through with their Grammy-nominated, Alison Krauss-produced self-titled LP. Since that effort, the trio has released three more studio albums to date: 2002’s *This Side*, which won Best Contemporary Folk Album at the 45th Grammy Awards, 2005’s *Why Should the Fire Die?* and 2014’s *A Dotted Line*.

Each member of Nickel Creek has also taken part in many outside projects over the years. Thile is a 2012 recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship and served as the host of the American radio variety show *Live from*

Here (formerly *A Prairie Home Companion*) from 2016 to 2020. He has also released collaborative albums with world-renowned musicians like Yo-Yo Ma, Edgar Meyer, Brad Mehldau and Stuart Duncan as well as six studio albums with his Grammy-winning band, Punch Brothers. Sean Watkins is a co-founder of Watkins Family Hour alongside Sara, who has released three albums and maintains a long-running collaborative show in Los Angeles. Sean has also released a string of solo albums, while Sara's extracurricular projects include the aforementioned Watkins Family Hour, as well as the Grammy-winning roots trio, I'm With Her, which she co-founded alongside Aoife O'Donovan and Sarah Jarosz. Sara has released four studio albums and has contributed fiddle to recordings by artists like Phoebe Bridgers, the Killers and John Mayer.

For more information, visit www.nickelcreek.com.



Meet the Opening Act: The Staves are an English indie folk group consisting of sisters Jessica and Camilla Staveley-Taylor. Their upcoming album “All Now” showcases their piercing vocal and harmonic clarity as they explore the driving forces of difficult emotions.

OVERTURE CENTER FOR THE ARTS in Madison, Wis., is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit arts organization that features seven state-of-the-art performance spaces and four galleries where national and international touring artists, nine resident companies and hundreds of local artists engage people in nearly 700,000 educational and artistic experiences each year. With the vision to “create extraordinary experiences through the arts,” Overture’s mission is to support and elevate our community’s creative culture, economy and quality of life through the arts. overture.org

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