

Friday  
**APR 7**  
7:30 pm

# Martha Redbone

## *Bone Hill–The Concert*



"Martha Redbone is a mesmerizing performer, writer and storyteller. *Bone Hill* is a uniquely American story of family and dreams. No matter who you are or where you're from, Martha takes you home."

–Charles Randolph-Wright (Director, *Motown the Musical*)

"*Bone Hill* isn't tripped up BY uncomfortable truths and unresolved conflicts: It grooves through them... And it asks, with a coy wink and stern stare: 'What is native to American music?'"

–Larry Blumenfeld (*The Wall Street Journal*)

This performance is funded, in part, by:



This event is presented in association with the KU Powwow & Indigenous Cultures Festival. Learn more about the festival activities and events on Saturday, April 8 at **[fnsapowwow.ku.edu](https://fnsapowwow.ku.edu)**.

Inspired by her own life and stories of the women Martha Redbone is descended from, the lives of the Bone family members are driven by songs that span a swath of American music, almost telling a parallel history. From traditional Cherokee songs and lullabies to bluegrass, blues, gospel, jazz, rock & roll and rhythm & blues.

*Bone Hill–The Concert* is an epic story of one woman's return to her childhood homeland on Black Mountain and the coal mines of Harlan County, KY, where her family have dwelled for centuries. Traveling back in time to her childhood and through four generations of women in a Cherokee family, *Bone Hill* explores their lives and stories. It is a story about the family's connection to the land, the simplicity and sacredness of that connection and the ruptures that threaten to extinguish it. This piece reveals erased, forgotten truths—and it does so with humor, pathos and exuberance.

**There will be no intermission during this performance.**

### ***BONE HILL–THE CONCERT***

Created by Martha Redbone and Aaron Whitby  
Music and lyrics by Martha Redbone and Aaron Whitby

### **ENSEMBLE**

Martha Redbone – storyteller  
Charlie Burnham – violin, storyteller, Tibby  
Fred Cash – bass, storyteller  
Alan AB Burroughs – guitars, banjo, storyteller  
Kevin Johnson – drums, storyteller  
Aaron Whitby – music director, piano, organ, storyteller, Mr. Whitaker

### **SONGS**

"40 Wheels"  
"Mamaw Mason"  
"Census Man"  
"Bake a Cake"  
"Coal (Hardworking Miner)"  
"Strikebreaker"  
"Caught My Eye"  
"My Country Tis of Thee"  
"Love is a Simple Thing"  
"Breakdown for Freedom"  
"One Drop"  
"Two Dead Indians/I am Undone"

**Martha Redbone** (herself/Easter/Liza/Little Red/Sweetcake/Janice/Junior/Creech/Tommy)

Redbone is one of the most vital voices in American roots music. A multi-award-winning musician, the charismatic songstress is celebrated for her tasty gumbo of roots music embodying the folk and mountain blues sounds of her childhood in the Appalachian hills of Kentucky, mixed with the eclectic grit of her teenage years in pre-gentrified Brooklyn. With her gospel-singing father's voice and the spirit of her Cherokee/Choctaw mother's culture, Redbone broadens the boundaries of American roots music with songs and storytelling that share her life experience as an Indigenous Black woman and mother in the new millennium. Redbone gives voice to issues of social justice, bridging traditions from past to present, connecting cultures and celebrating the human spirit.

Her latest CD, *The Garden of Love: Songs of William Blake* (produced by Nitty Gritty Dirt Band founder and Grammy-winner John McEuen), is an unexpected twist. Redbone's magnificent voice, Blake's immortal words and a masterful cornucopia of roots music (folk, country, piedmont blues, gospel, bluegrass, soul and traditional Native) make "a brilliant collision of cultures" (*New Yorker*). Redbone and Aaron Whitby composed, arranged and orchestrated music for the 2022 Broadway revival of "*For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow is Enuff*," the 1976 classic choreopoem by the late Ntozake Shange, that premiered at the Booth Theater and garnered seven Tony Award nominations. Redbone and Whitby were the 2020 Drama Desk Award recipients for Outstanding Music in a Play and the 2020 Audelco Award recipient for Outstanding Composer of Original Music and Score for off-Broadway revival. Redbone is a 2021 United States Artist Fellow. For more info, visit [martharedbone.com](http://martharedbone.com).

**Aaron Whitby** (storyteller/Mr. Whitaker/music director/piano/organ)

Whitby, London-born and raised producer, composer, songwriter and pianist, who was mentored by Walter "Junie" Morrison of Parliament Funkadelic and Ohio Players, is best known for the multiple award-winning albums he has written and produced with longtime collaborator and wife Martha Redbone. Whitby also tours with Redbone, whose band he leads. He engineered Natalie Cole's Grammy-winning single "Living for Love," and has recorded and/or performed with George Clinton, Randy Brecker, Lisa Fischer, John McEuen, Raul Midon, Nona Hendryx, Vernon Reid, Omar Faruk Tekbilek, Mino Cinelu, Snehasish Mozumder, Keith Secola and more. Whitby's own album project, *Cousin from Another Planet*, is a jazz/funk exploration of his more esoteric musical vocabulary released in 2019 to critical acclaim, featuring Charlie Burnham, Keith Loftis, Fred Cash, Jerome Harris, Gary Fritz and Rodney Holmes.

**Charlie Burnham** (storyteller/Tibby/violin/harmonica/vocals)

Brooklyn-born and raised Charles Burnham is a singular, versatile and virtuosic American violinist and composer, whose highly imaginative improvisational style crosses bluegrass, delta punk, free jazz, blues, classical and chamber jazz. Worldly and other-worldly sounds can be heard from Burnham's soulful voice. He has graced the recordings of many: Cassandra Wilson, James Blood Ulmer, Steven Bernstein, Susie Ibarra, Peter Apfelbaum, Henry Threadgill, String Trio of New York, Ted Daniel, Medeski, Martin & Wood, Living Colour, Queen Esther, John Zorn, Steve Swell, Rufus Wainwright, Krishna Das, Kenny Wollesen, Norah Jones, Billie Joe Armstrong, Jason Kao Hwang, The Woes, Hem, Elysian Fields and many more. Burnham also performs on harmonica and mandolin, and he is a highly regarded singer.

**Fred Cash Jr.** (storyteller/bass)

Chicago native Fred Cash Jr. has recorded and toured with Martha Redbone since 2000. Cash attended the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago. He hails from a musical family—his father is Fred Cash Sr. of the legendary vocal group The Impressions. Cash is one of the most in-demand bass players around. He has recorded for film and TV and, in addition to Redbone, he has worked with such artists as Alicia Keys, Nona Hendryx, George Clinton, Henry Butler, Jean-Paul Bourelly, India Arie, Jerry Butler, Toshi Reagon, Michelle Dorrance, Sweet Honey in the Rock, Barbara Streisand, Marika Hughes and many more.

**Alan Burroughs** (storyteller/background vocals/dobro and electric guitar)

Burroughs, a jazz and blues recording artist in his own right, has both recorded and toured with Martha Redbone since 2000. His great uncle was the legendary bandleader Fletcher Henderson, known as one of the founders of jazz and the band which launched the great Louis Armstrong. Burroughs is one of the most in-demand guitar players worldwide, known for his versatility of styles from blues, jazz, rock, reggae, soul and funk—he plays and sings it all effortlessly. He has recorded for film and TV and has worked with such artists as Miles Davis, Art Porter, Philip Bailey of Earth, Wind and Fire, The Dells, and Captain Sky Band, to name a few.

**Kevin Johnson** (storyteller/drums/percussion)

Kevin Johnson has had the privilege of playing with artists with rich histories, including the Average White Band and Ashford & Simpson, among many others. "I feel blessed to have sat on the same thrones as Steve Ferrone and the late Yogi Horton. To appreciate what an honor that is, you have to understand the influence that both Steve and Yogi have had on my playing. But I also view it as a huge challenge—a challenge to capture their spirit, while maintaining my own."