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WELCOME TO THIS CONCERT

How fortunate we are to have so many talented musicians living nearby and in the region; you'll see firsthand what I mean with all the talent displayed in this concert's two performances by the Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra. Friends of Music is delighted to offer a large-scale program by them each season and this one is sure to please. Some 31 musicians will again be filling the Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church with its fine acoustics.

The concert will demonstrate the artistry that our musicians and our music director, Jed Gaylin, consistently bring to us. The program is wide ranging and full of wonderful pieces that are both melodic and even rollicking. Who doesn't like folk tunes? Under Jed's baton, Bartok's Romanian Folk Dances lead nicely to a heartfelt elegy by Amanda Harberg, a contemporary composer whose work is achieving much acclaim and is sure to linger through the ages. Danzi's Sinfonia Concertante in B flat major follows, with more dances, if you will, between the flute and clarinet. Gounod's Symphony No. 1 in D major completes the program, with wind players (on oboe and bassoon), figuring prominently.

And speaking of talent from within our ranks, it's no accident that three of our regular musicians will be featured. Our principal violist, Jason Diggs, is a major presence at very many of our concerts, with our principal flutist, Barbara Spicher, and principal clarinetist, Dave Drosinos, also gracing our performances frequently. Their biographies are contained in this printed program, as are descriptions of the wonderful music you will hear. We take some pride in the printed programs you receive, knowing that many of you like to know more about the selections, the composers, and their eras. Take these programs home, if you like, to read at your leisure, and note the many wonderful advertisers and donors who make our musical endeavor possible.

We hope you enjoy this last concert of the current season and we look forward to seeing you again next fall. Our 2023-2024 concert season will be announced in August with our traditional brochure arriving in the mail. If you are not on our mailing list just yet but would like to be, please sign up at the door or send a note to Sherry Sykes, our administrator, at info@friendswv.org.

Have a wonderful summer!

With very best wishes,



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"Generous" is the word listeners and performers use time and again to describe conductor Jed Gaylin's approach to the orchestra, the score, and the audience. His joyful abandon and probing intellect combine to create powerful programs, compelling interpretations, and evenings that are fresh and exuberant. The legendary conductor George Szell said: "In music one must think with the heart and feel with the mind." Jed Gaylin embodies this maxim abundantly and passionately.

JED GAYLIN

This concert season, Jed Gaylin is celebrating his 10th season as music director of the Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra. He is a tremendous asset, and we are lucky to have him! He has made an enormous difference in the quality and creativity of the orchestra's programming and performances.

His approach to music, musicians, and life-lived-large is rare: It includes an old-world commitment to study and depth of conception, combined with a welcoming presence and warm engagement – both on and off the podium.

Orchestra members and soloists often recount how Jed's rehearsals and performances elicit their very best, not only individually but collectively. His dedication to exploring music's fullest potential in a collaborative spirit reaches beyond the stage to draw the audience into the creative act. Listeners feel engaged as participants in an eloquent musical conversation.

Jed is also the music director of the Hopkins Symphony Orchestra in Baltimore and the Bay Atlantic Symphony in New Jersey. In addition, he is principal guest conductor of the Cape May Music Festival. His numerous guest appearances include the St. Petersburg State Symphony, National Film and Radio Philharmonic (Beijing, China), Shanghai Conservatory Orchestra, Bucharest Radio Orchestra, Academia del Gran Teatre del Liceu (Barcelona, Spain), Eastman School of Music Broadband Ensemble, and many others.

He earned both a Bachelor of Music in piano and a Master of Music in conducting at the Oberlin Conservatory, and a Doctor of Musical Arts in conducting at the Peabody Conservatory. He attended the Aspen Music Festival as a conducting fellow. Among other honors, he has received a National Endowment for the Arts grant and the Presser Music Award. His conducting teachers have included Frederik Prausnitz, Leonard Slatkin, Jahja Ling, Murry Sidlin, Paul Vermel, and Michel Singher, and, for piano, Lydia Frumkin.

He lives in Baltimore with his wife, poet Lia Purpura.

For more information, visit his website at www.jedgaylin.com.

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ABOUT THE SOLOISTS

JASON DIGGS **VIOLA**

Jason Diggs began studying violin at the age of nine in Baltimore City Public Schools. He received his Bachelor of Music in viola and Artist Diploma in quartet studies from Shenandoah Conservatory. His teachers included Doris Lederer and C. Thomas Shaw, of the Audubon Quartet, and Olivia Hajioff and Marc Ramirez, of the Marcolivia Duo.



He received his Master of Music in viola performance from the San Francisco Conservatory under the instruction of the violist Jodi Levitz of the Ives Quartet and received chamber instruction from the pianist and violist Paul Hersh and the violinist Axel Strauss.

He has participated in masterclasses given by the violist Kim Kashkashian, the conductor Christoph Wyneken, the pianist John O'Connor, and the Juilliard Quartet and has served as principal viola in an orchestral masterclass given by the conductor Sir Simon Rattle.

Mr. Diggs has performed with several orchestras including, the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra, the National Philharmonic, the Harrisburg Symphony, the Maryland Symphony, Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra, and the Roanoke Symphony. He was the violist in a recording of Hauschka's Foreign Landscapes; principal violist for the Naxos recording of the Kreutzer Violin Concertos 17-19 featuring violinist Axel Strauss; and violist for the 2008 Grammy-nominated album Indigo Road by lutanist Ronn McFarlane.

He is an active Suzuki violin and viola instructor at Frederick Community College and has participated in the Starling-DeLay Teaching Symposium at the Juilliard School in New York.



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ABOUT THE SOLOISTS

BARBARA SPICHER

FLUTE

Barbara Spicher is an active performer throughout the mid-Atlantic region. In addition to serving as principal flutist of the Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra, she is a founding member of the award-winning Appalachian Wind Quintet and she performs regularly with the Mercersburg Chorus and Orchestra, and the Frederick Chorale. She also plays the traverso, a baroque flute, for L'Arabesque Baroque Ensemble.



For four years she served as Artistic Fellow for the Washington, DC-based LaGesse Foundation under whose auspices she performed solo recitals at Carnegie Hall in New York City; the French Embassies of the United States and Canada; and at the LaGesse Festival in Toulouse, France. She was awarded a medal from the French government in recognition of her participation in these cultural exchanges.

She holds a Bachelor of Music degree from West Virginia University. She has studied flute with Toshiko Kohno, the former principal flutist with the National Symphony, and Timothy Day of the San Francisco Conservatory. She has also studied baroque period flute with Colin St. Martin of the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University.

She has performed many seasons with the Shippensburg University Festival Orchestra, the Maryland Symphony Orchestra, the Harrisburg Symphony, the Gettysburg Chamber Orchestra, the York Symphony, Millbrook Orchestra, the Garrett Lakes Festival Orchestra, and the Cumberland Valley Chamber Players. She served as adjunct instructor of flute at Hood College in Frederick, Maryland, from 1997 to 2020, and performed as a member of the Hood Chamber Players.

When not performing or practicing, Ms. Spicher can typically be found outdoors. She is certified as a Master Naturalist with the Potomac Valley Master Naturalists and serves as their instruction and training coordinator. She resides in Shepherdstown with her husband, Martin Burke.

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DAVID DROSINOS **CLARINET**

David Drosinos received his diploma from the Peabody Conservatory of Music and studied clarinet with Loren Kitt, the principal clarinetist with the National Symphony Orchestra. He won the Sidney Jensen Memorial Award for outstanding clarinet performance and has been a guest artist at the Greek, French, and Russian embassies in Washington, DC, and at the Taj Mahal in Atlantic City.



Mr. Drosinos is principal clarinetist and a soloist with the Maryland Lyric Opera and the Concert Artist of Baltimore. He has performed in Greece, Ireland, Moscow, Finland, and the Bahamas, as well as all over the continental United States. His Greek folk band Zephyros was a featured act at the International Clarinet Association in Washington, DC. The Washington Post has praised him as "playing with an unusually smooth and agile touch." Citing his performance of the Finzi Clarinet Concerto, the Baltimore Sun noted "He played the idyllic score with technical security, tonal warmth and exceptionally eloquent phrasing." In 2010 He traveled to St Petersburg, Russia where he produced a recording entitled Portals and performed and recorded the international premiere of the Sowash Clarinet Concerto with the St Petersburg Symphony.

Mr. Drosinos resides in Cockeysville, Maryland and is in much demand with performing groups in the greater Baltimore-Washington area. He teaches at Shepherd University, the Baltimore School for the Arts, and the Peabody Preparatory School.



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FOLK 'N' FANCY

Béla Bartok (1881–1945)

Romanian Folk Dances, Sz. 68, BB 76

1. Joc cu bâță (Stick Dance). Allegro moderato
2. Brâul (Sash Dance). Allegro
3. Pê-loc (In One Spot). Andante
4. Buciumeana (Dance from Bucium). Moderato
5. Poargă românească (Romanian Polka). Allegro
6. Marușel (Fast Dance). Allegro

Amanda Harberg (b. 1973)

Elegy

Jason Diggs, viola

Franz Danzi (1763–1826)

Sinfonia Concertante in B flat major for Flute, Clarinet
and Orchestra, Op. 41

Barbara Spicher, flute

David Drosinos, clarinet

1. Allegro moderato
2. Larghetto
3. Polonaise — Allegretto

— INTERMISSION —

Charles-François Gounod (1818–1893)

Symphony No. 1 in D major

1. Allegro molto
2. Allegretto moderato
3. Scherzo. Non troppo presto
4. Finale. Adagio — Allegro vivace

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Béla Bartók

(Born in Nagyszentmiklós, Hungary in 1881; died in New York City in 1945)

Romanian Folk Dances, Sz. 68, BB 76

(The six movements are described by their Hungarian subtitles followed by the English translation)

1. *Joc cu bâță* (Stick Dance). *Allegro moderato*
2. *Brăul* (Sash Dance). *Allegro*
3. *Pê-loc* (In One Spot). *Andante*
4. *Buciumeana* (Dance from Bucium). *Moderato*
5. *Poargă românească* (Romanian Polka). *Allegro*
6. *Marunțel* (Fast Dance). *Allegro*

For the Hungarian composer Béla Bartók, studying traditional folk music was a passion – it was of interest to him anthropologically and nationalistically, as well as musically. But it was the musicality of folksong that was most important to him, and folksongs informed, often outright, much of his composing. When he began to discover the riches of the folksongs from Transylvania around 1903, Bartók said he had “found” his own voice as well. From that point on, his tireless love for traditional music blossomed, becoming one of his musical lodestars for the rest of his life.

The set of six folk dances featured in our concert comes from Bartók’s second collecting trip to Transylvania (then politically a part of Hungary) in 1910–12, when he was able to make field recordings using the then-new technology of wax cylinders. Bartók first reimagined these dances as a short piano suite entitled “Hungarian Folk Dances” in 1915. He kept this title when he rearranged the work for a small orchestra in 1917. The orchestrated version, however, was not published until after the restructuring of Europe that followed World War I, and by that time Transylvania had become part of Romania. Thus, the orchestra version was published as “Romanian Folk Dances,” and this is the name we continue to use today. The melodies of these dances are mostly true to the dances Bartók originally recorded, but since such dances were typically played solo on a regional fiddle or indigenous “peasant” flute, Bartók added harmonic accompaniment. The brilliant brevity of this set of dances – all six of them are typically performed in under seven minutes even with a pause

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PROGRAM NOTES

between each – and the dances’ light, but deeply effective, harmonizations have made Bartók’s Romanian Folk Dances one of his most popular works.

(1) Stick Dance. Bartók reportedly heard two Romani (Gypsy) fiddlers romping with this first tune. Such Transylvanian stick dances, according to the Dutch author Martinus Nijhoff, were danced by men as “a solo dance, with various figures [dance movements] the last of which—as a consummation—consists of kicking the room’s ceiling.” The dance is as graceful as it is lively, and here, it is especially tuneful.

(2) Sash Dance. This dance has a particularly sweet and carefree melody. It likely is part of a courtship dance in which the female dancer uses a sash or a decorative belt as a prop; one can imagine her flashing flirtatious smiles over her shoulder.

(3) In One Spot. This a stamping dance, and Bartók imaginatively scored it for drone-like strings with a piccolo solo played overtop (Bartók said he first heard this song played on a peasant’s flute, an instrument akin to a penny whistle,) Transylvanian “stamping” could be as much about being seductively graceful as about athleticism. Indeed, the exotic-sounding mode (key) that Bartók exploits here reminds us of the Turkish-infused music that once was played in the area during the 16th and 17th centuries, when the whole region was a part of the Ottoman Empire, before it came under Hungarian rule.

(4) Dance from Bucium. There’s little documentation now of what social purpose this dance, also called the “Horn Dance,” from Bucium might have served in 1910. The area of Bucium, where Bartók collected this tune, was once a Roman military post in northeastern Transylvania, and the area likely saw quite a few travelers from foreign lands drift through. The tempo of this dance in Bartók’s original recording was much faster than it is recast here, where it is much more pensive with echoes of nostalgia permeating the beautiful tune. Again, the mode (key) sounds exotic like the preceding dance, reminding us of how musical elements likely traveled through this crossroad of Bucium.

(5) Romanian Polka. This polka was the Transylvanian version of the well-known polka that originated in what is now the Czech Republic and spread rapidly through Europe in the 1800s. Bartók captures brilliantly the rowdy and joyful character of its Transylvanian manifestation. This polka is set in three-bar phrases – two measures with three beats, ending with one

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measure having only two beats. The odd two-beat measure apparently allowed for a quick change of partners.

(6) Fast Dance. This final dance is two fast dances separated by a split-second pause. A fast dance is typically a hyperactive dance for couples arranged in columns of males and females. Fast fiddling and syncopation accompany the dancing, along with foot stamping and thigh slapping (recreated here with loud musical accents). The first dance in this pair is indeed fast and extremely brief and vibrant. The second dance is even faster and more exuberant. Together, they constitute an exhilarating ending to this wonderful early work. And as a footnote, you can detect here a precursor to the whirling, exciting final movement of Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra, which he composed three decades later in 1945, shortly before his death.

Amanda Harberg

(Born in Philadelphia in 1973)

Elegy

Amanda Harberg is one of the most gifted and sought-after American composers right now. She has been commissioned by many of our leading orchestras as well as dozens of regional and chamber groups. She is also currently the primary film-score composer for the documentary film company Common Good Productions. Her *Elegy* has been played worldwide and recorded on Naxos American Classics.

Alongside her distinguished career as an award-winning composer, the Juilliard-trained Harberg is also a celebrated concert pianist. She has performed with such world-class orchestras as the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Baltimore Symphony, among others.

Perhaps just as important as her composing and performing, Harberg is a deeply committed educator of composition, piano, music theory, aural skills and contemporary music history. For nearly a decade she has distinguished herself as professor of composition at Rutgers University's Mason Gross School of the Arts in New Jersey. This dedication to teaching has likely deepened her appreciation for those who taught her. And this is what inspired her to create one of her most poignant compositions, *Elegy*. Ms. Harberg explains the work's origin as follows:

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Elegy began as a prayer. The initial musical ideas came to me when I found out that my beloved piano teacher, Marina Grin, was terminally ill. But the full realization of the piece only emerged spontaneously after I learned of her passing. *Elegy* is dedicated to the memory of Marina Grin, who first showed me how to live a life in music.

Ms. Harberg originally wrote her *Elegy* for violin and piano. Soon afterward, she recast it for viola solo and string orchestra, the version featured in our concert. The work unfolds in the same way that news of great sadness always tends to sink in – slowly, as the mind initially struggles to grasp the immensity of what’s happened. At the very opening, the lower strings hum and pulse, filled with grief, everything in surreal slow motion. The upper strings then speak softly in a slow-burning, descending, five-note motif, as if that grief is sinking deeply into the heart. Before the motif can end, the solo viola – as the voice of the bereaved – comes in, speaking two downward-falling notes that float above time and space, deeply sorrowed. In this vein, *Elegy* moves through episodes – dialogues between strings and solo viola, like dialogues between emotions and the words we strive to give them – diving often into searing sadness but mostly allowing the grief to be processed and to come out into the open air. Throughout, the viola draws us inward, with its distinctly beautiful voice, into the heart’s narrative. About midway through the work, the viola bends (portamento) its initial two-note motif upward, as if by great intentional might, as though the bereaved refuses to keep casting eyes downward. From this point on, Harberg pushes the *Elegy*, bit by bit, into a memorial of tonal gratitude for her departed mentor, until the strings collectively rise together higher and higher into the light of the sky, to end this extremely moving work.

As the renowned virtuoso violist Brett Deubner (for whom Harberg wrote her highly acclaimed *Viola Concerto* in 2012), said:

The raw sadness followed by uplifting hope as the work ascends to the heavens is the stuff of great composers such as Barber, Tchaikovsky, and Elgar.... Her *Elegy* is still, in my opinion, her finest work to date.

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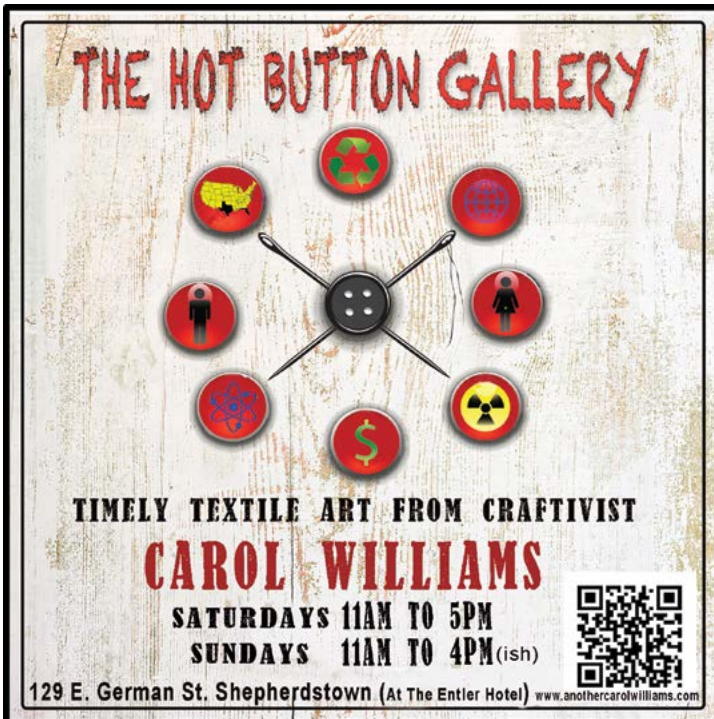
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Franz Danzi

(Born in Schwetzingen [near Mannheim], Germany in 1763; died in Karlsruhe, Germany in 1826)

Sinfonia Concertante in B-flat major for Flute, Clarinet and Orchestra, Op. 41

1. Allegro moderato
2. Larghetto
3. Polonaise – Allegretto

Franz Danzi was born near Mannheim, Germany into a dedicatedly musical family. His father, a friend of Mozart, was the principal cellist in the Mannheim Orchestra (which was rapidly becoming well known in Europe at the time), and his mother was a singer. Together, both parents tutored the young Danzi in cello, voice, and piano. During this period, the city of Mannheim itself was becoming well known, too, as a place where new musical ground was being broken while baroque style evolved into the classical style.

Danzi later became the teacher and close friend of Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826), who would become famous for writing the first successful German operas in a new romantic style. Together, Danzi and Weber were best known in their lifetimes as composers of opera and for voice. But Danzi also excelled in writing for winds and almost single-handedly created the first repertoire of works in the wind quintet genre. His gifts in writing for winds became recognized only later in his life as the taste for small wind ensemble music grew dramatically around the turn of the 19th century.

Danzi also wrote numerous sinfonia concertantes. In the later decades of the 18th Century, the sinfonia concertante began to emerge from the baroque concerto grosso, which featured several solo instruments in dialogue with a small orchestra. The sinfonia concertante was, in effect, a hybrid between what would become the classical symphony as we know it today and the solo-instrument concerto. Even while Haydn and Mozart were perfecting the classical symphony, Danzi and others (including Mozart) continued to experiment with the sinfonia concertante, and the latter retained its popularity well into the classical era. One of the great joys of the sinfonia concertante form is the delicate balance the full symphony and lots of soloistic moments for several instruments. A



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splendid example of this is Danzi's *Sinfonia Concertante* for Flute, Clarinet and Orchestra, published in 1814, which succeeds imaginatively in this balance.

In the first movement, *Allegro moderato*, the orchestra's introductory themes brim with lyricism. The entrance of the soloists, first the clarinet and then the flute, continues a theme that the orchestra has just passed along to them, and the moment is expressly joyful. And thus begins this marvelous *sinfonia*, which includes a back-and-forth dance of solos and duets between the clarinet and flute, with chamber-like accompaniments from the orchestra, phrase-trading between the soloists and the full orchestra, and moments when the clarinet and flute delicately blend into the fabric with all the instruments. The themes are cheery and light and enriched with colorful harmonic turns, and the writing for the two soloists only gets more inventive and virtuosic as the movement progresses.

The middle movement, *Larghetto*, is a smilingly relaxed love duet. It begins with a harmoniously shared moment between the soloists and the orchestral winds. Then the clarinet initiates the duet over gently plucked strings, to be joined by the flute. This movement showcases Danzi's exceptional talent for writing perfectly for the two wind instruments together. His love of opera clearly shines here, too, as everything in this movement rings of song.

The final movement is a polonaise, a dance form from Poland that had become wildly popular throughout Europe in Danzi's time. Danzi's Polonaise is almost disarmingly filled with zest, delight, and magically tuneful themes. Most exceptional is the virtuosic demands the flute and clarinet must meet, both as soloists and in playing together as a duo. When the work concludes, it's impossible not to be smiling in admiration both for the soloists' virtuosity and for Danzi's masterful writing.

Charles-François Gounod

(Born in Paris in 1818; died in Saint-Cloud, France in 1893)

Symphony No 1 in D major

1. *Allegro molto*
2. *Allegretto moderato*
3. *Scherzo. Non troppo presto*
4. *Finale. Adagio – Allegro vivace*

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The French composer Charles Gounod is mainly remembered today as an opera composer. His great opera *Faust* (1859) was so popular worldwide that when New York's Metropolitan Opera House opened its doors in 1883, *Faust* was its obvious inaugural choice. But, of course, Gounod wrote more than operas and in these other genres he brought his superlative operatic gifts of lyricism. His Symphony No. 1 is an excellent example of this; it is lyrical, fresh, and altogether a melodic showcase. Gounod wrote the first of his only two symphonies in 1853 and 1854. He began it as a kind of exercise to hone his composing skills in writing "absolute" music – music for its own sake untethered to a story or poem, as opera and songs demanded. In this regard, one of Gounod's great heroes was Mozart. (Gounod once remarked that when he died, as soon as he had managed to wade through all the necessary introductions with the Holy Trinity, he would immediately ask to meet Mozart.)

Indeed, this entire symphony, and especially the first movement (*Allegro molto*), reflects the charm and lightness of many of Mozart's symphonies – but with the addition of Gounod's especially winsome singability and some more modern harmonies. The first theme includes a wonderful little hitch, like a musical hiccup, at the end of many bars that propel the pacing forward, as well as create a feeling of levity. Gounod, however, provides dramatic contrast as the movement progresses – dynamic outbursts, and beautifully crafted passages in darker keys. But another of Gounod's great talents is also on display here, as well as in this entire symphony – his exceptional skill in writing for winds. Particularly, he focuses often on the oboe and bassoon, two instruments that we'll hear much more of throughout the symphony. The movement ends with zest and a momentary flurry from the French horn, which will return at the conclusion of the last movement.

The second movement, *Allegretto moderato*, is wonderfully inventive. It begins with a very melodic but somewhat ambiguous theme that evokes a stroll on a perfect day that is unhurried yet preoccupied by troubling thoughts. A second and very lovely theme by the flute and oboe over pizzicato (plucked) basses soon follows and feels like the easy-going counterpart to the first – as if clearing the head and enjoying the outing. Gounod begins to dress both of those themes with light touches of clever counterpoint and countermelodies in both the strings and winds, suggesting that he might launch into variations on those themes. Instead, though, he begins a light fugue. As the fugue fills up with all the voices

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PROGRAM NOTES

playing in counterpoint to each other, the work coalesces into running unison notes that bring us to this movement's final magical section. Gounod takes tiny slices of all the movement's themes and has them flit here and there in what seem like random places and instruments (though uncannily keeping a completely coherent melodic line), and this wonderful movement comes to its close with three quietly plucked notes.

The third movement, Scherzo, is not the wild kind of scherzo-romp that Beethoven might have written. Rather, it's easy-going, almost lazy, and harkening back to the dance minuets of the classical period, only with the added depth of the larger orchestra for which Gounod composed. The themes here are delightfully tuneful and seem almost tailor-made for singing. The Scherzo's Trio (middle section) showcases a genteel duet between oboe and bassoon.

The Finale movement begins with a slow and serious introduction, a rather classically Mozartian approach. This prolongs the anticipation of the excitement to come and introduces the rapid, four-note motif that will permeate the rest of the Finale. Soon the Allegro vivace (fast and lively) begins, and the effect is as if we have been placed onto a galloping horse, alive with verve and excitement. Gounod also includes some brief but comical moments in this movement: Early on, several unresolved chords that linger with fermatas (markings that keep a note, or rest, held indefinitely, playing with our sense of momentum. Next, Gounod adds two trumpet solos in the vein of heralding horns, as if launching off into a hunt. Then the timpani and French horns revisit this hunting motif with vigor (and recall the end of the first movement). And just before the end, those unresolved, previously suspended chords appear again, as if trying to delay the final notes. But when they do indeed arrive, Gounod presents them resolutely to end this superb symphony with great cheer.

Program notes © Max Derrickson

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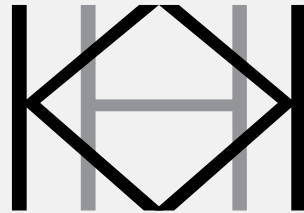
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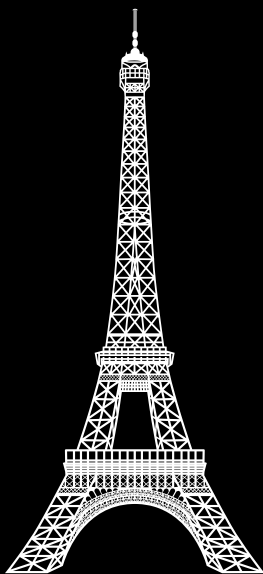
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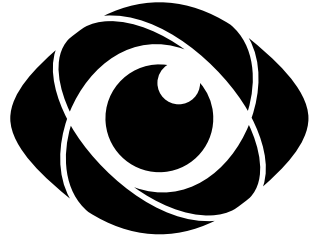
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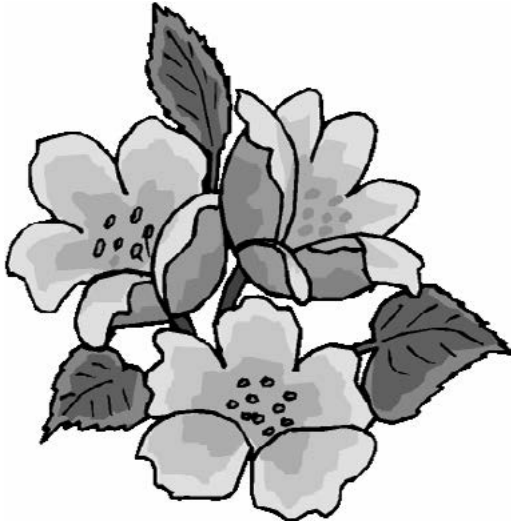
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