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Heidi Johnston & Judy Jones

**Friends of Music's 26th season opens with vigor in Beethoven: For the Birders.** With 34 musicians in the Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra, the breadth of instrumentation enables us to reach further – presenting works of great depth and complexity. **Beethoven's Pastoral and Respighi's "The Birds" are joyful masterpieces layered with expression, rarely able to be performed so close to home.**

This ambitious concert fulfills a vision we've held for years – collaboration with our friends at Potomac Valley Audubon Society (PVAS). Many people in our circle also support and participate in PVAS activities and perceive a lovely congruence of missions. From musical excellence to land conservation to education, wide-ranging activities find their initial stimulus in nature. **Isn't it a wonder how the beauty of our environment inspires art and stewardship?**

Not only is this concert a portrayal of nature's vibrant symphony, but it also helps celebrate Friends of Music's sense of community. We surely feel the momentum of our supporters! The enthusiasm of members who are season ticket subscribers; the generosity of individual donors and corporate sponsors; and the investment of businesses that advertise in our program booklet carry us forward. We are filled with appreciation.

Many of you are participating again after years of involvement. Thank you for your loyalty. Others are joining us for the first time this season. Welcome! May all of you be enthralled by the performances and enriched by the sense of connection you find here. Other wonderful concerts will follow this one – in November, March, April, and May.

**Please enjoy this tribute to the wild chorus of nature and the close ties of our community.**

Sincerely,

Heidi Johnston  
President, Friends of Music

On a personal note, I owe a debt of gratitude to Judy Jones, our Immediate Past President. Judy has been the perfect mentor. In training me for my new role as President, she has become a fast friend, and all will agree, she has guided Friends of Music to a position of refinement and stability that will benefit us for years to come. **Thank you, Judy! Bravo!**



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# JED GAYLIN

## MUSIC DIRECTOR

**Jed Gaylin joined us as Music Director of the Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra in 2012 after a nationwide search.** He has been a tremendous asset ever since, making an enormous difference in the quality and creativity of the orchestra's programming and performances, and this year his title has been expanded to Music Director of Friends of Music. We are lucky to have him!

Jed's 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, and their standard poodle, Dasha.

For more information, visit his website at [jedgaylin.com](http://jedgaylin.com).



*"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.*

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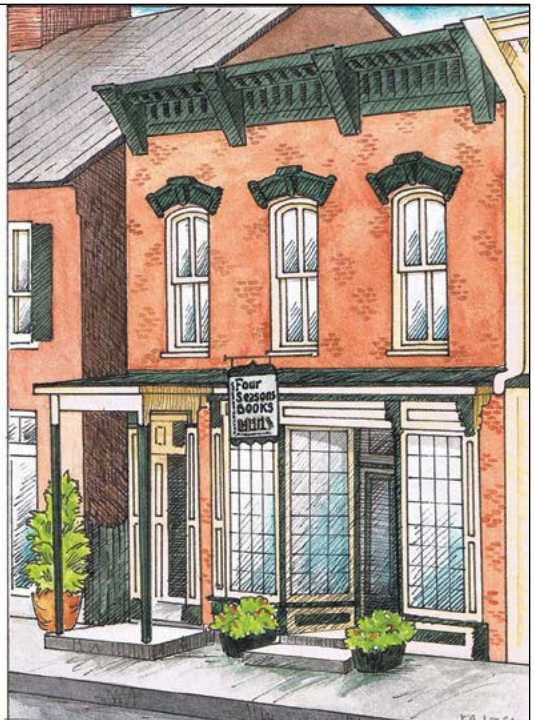
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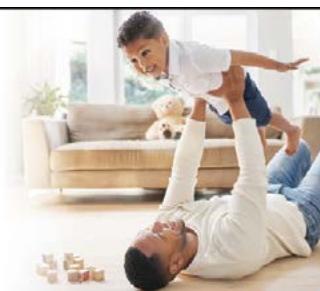
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# THE PROGRAM

## BEETHOVEN: FOR THE BIRDERS

**Ottorino Respighi (1879–1936) – *Gli uccelli* ("The Birds"),  
Suite for orchestra, P. 154**

1. Preludio
2. La colomba ("The Dove")
3. La gallina ("The Hen")
4. L'usignuolo ("The Nightingale")
5. Il cucù ("The Cuckoo")

– INTERMISSION –

**Ludwig von Beethoven (1770–1827) – *Symphony No. 6*  
in F major, Op. 68, *Pastoral***

1. Awakening of Cheerful Feelings upon Arrival in the  
Country – (Allegro ma non troppo)
2. Scene by the Brook – (Andante molto mosso)
3. Merry Gathering of Country Folk – (Allegro)
4. Thunderstorm – (Allegro)
5. Shepherd's Song. Happy and Thankful Feelings after  
the Storm – (Allegretto)



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## OTTORINO RESPIGHI

Born in Bologna, Italy in 1879; died in Rome in 1936

### **Gli uccelli ("The Birds"), Suite for Small Orchestra, P. 154**

1. Preludio
2. La colomba ("The Dove")
3. La gallina ("The Hen")
4. L'usignuolo ("The Nightingale")
5. Il cucù ("The Cuckoo")

By the late 19th century, composers throughout Europe were rediscovering older music. In Italy, for example, the older forms being adapted and celebrated ranged from the plainchant of the Roman Catholic Church and Gregorian chant of Medieval times to the exquisite music of Italy's Baroque composers such as Scarlatti, Corelli, and Pergolesi, as well as many other lesser-known musicians. The great Italian composer Ottorino Respighi was one of those engaged in this rediscovery. And although he is typically remembered for his three gigantic Rome-centric orchestral tone poems (particularly *The Pines of Rome*), he was also very much in the avant-garde of composers who shared a keen interest in early music. Respighi used many "rediscovered" melodies from his "ancient" forebears and recast them into more modern instrumental and harmonic dressings. Starting with his 1902 *Suite for Strings*, he then achieved some certain popularity with his three instrumental suites collectively entitled *Ancient Airs and Dances* (composed in 1917, 1923, and 1932).

Perhaps Respighi's most enjoyable foray into older music was his *Gli uccelli* (The Birds), composed in 1928, a gloriously fun instrumental suite celebrating and recasting several Baroque composers' evocations of bird songs. (Respighi had already established himself as a great admirer of birdsong: He created one of the most groundbreaking and enchanting moments in modern symphonic history when he insisted that the first performance of his *Pines of Rome* in 1924 include a phonograph recording of an actual Italian nightingale. This was the first time recorded sound was used in a classical music concert.)



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For his *Gli uccelli*, Respighi uses a small, Baroque-sized orchestra and begins with a Preludio (Prelude) based on a melody from a harpsichord suite by one of Italy's most influential keyboard players of the middle Baroque period, Bernardo Pasquini (1637-1710). While we bask in this lovely melody of old, Respighi cleverly also uses this Preludio to introduce bits of the bird songs that he will feature in the following movements, delightfully evoking birds in all their quirky glory. After a brief and regal introduction, at just under a minute, the violins begin a series of quickly repeated pitches with the violin bows bouncing off the strings to evoke a sort of manic pecking. Embedded in the pecking, the violins and flute erupt in chirpy upward squeaks, followed by the sound of a cuckoo, then a birdlike chattering from the trumpets, and then a fluttering of wings in the clarinets and, at just after two minutes, a marvelous section of unbridled flight with rapid notes in the violins. The Preludio comes to a gallant close as it returns to the regal music of the opening melody.

The second movement, *La colomba* ("The Dove"), employs a tune that Respighi discovered in the works of the Parisian Baroque lutenist and composer, Jacques de Gallot (ca. 1625-ca. 1695). Gallot was one of his era's greatest lute players and known for musical portraits of his human contemporaries as well as of animals, including an alluring composition entitled "Dove." For his own "Dove," Respighi uses the oboe to represent this most gentle of winged creatures, making Gallot's original tune sing with gentleness and mournfulness. The harp strums and plucks gently with a nod to Gallot's lute. To give his Dove even more character, Respighi has the violins play high, warbled pitches at what seems to be random moments, allowing for the bird's tendency to flitter back and forth to shine through. Especially enjoyable is the way the melody tracks all around the orchestral instruments – through the basses, flutes, violins, and clarinets – while the flittering warbles grow and spread, as if the Dove is in conversation with the whole bird kingdom. At last, all flutter away into the sky to end the portrait.

In the third movement, *La gallina* ("The Hen"), Respighi quotes from the French musician, Jean-Phillippe Rameau (1683-1764). Rameau was one of the great composers and theorists of the Baroque era, perhaps most famous today for his 1722 monograph entitled *Treatise on Harmony*, a scientifically based music theory book on which all modern study in

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Western music theory is based. But Rameau was equally renowned as a composer, and Respighi turned to Rameau's engagingly fun composition entitled *La poule* ("The Hen," or "gallina" in Italian) from a 1727 harpsichord suite. The main theme here is a manic bird-pecking motive, borrowed from Rameau, that Respighi hinted at in his *Preludio*. (Rameau directed this motive to be played "like a hen pecking for bugs on the ground," accompanied by surprised [accented] little chirpy clucks.) Respighi, however, ups the ante: He drops us into an entire field of fidgety, jerky, wildly beautiful feathered hens and creates a comically dramatic sense of seriousness to all their cavorting. Soon, this hen motive is heard nearly everywhere in the orchestra, even in the lower registers, suggesting that the roosters are marching into the pecking joy, too, creating an absolutely magical fantasy. The magic ends, appropriately, with a muted trumpet call evoking the beginnings of a rooster crowing.

The tune for the fourth movement, *L'usignuolo* ("The Nightingale"), comes from the very early *Broque* period in Holland when the great blind composer Jacob van Eyck (c. 1590–1657) wrote a piece for solo recorder that reimagined an old folksong entitled "*Engels Nachtegaeltje*" ("English Nightingale"). The nightingale's song clearly bewitched Respighi – we've already noted that he used a phonograph recording of it in the premier performance of his *Pines of Rome*. Here, this movement opens with mystery and surreal beauty. Beginning with low, long-held notes in the horns and basses, the strings begin to slowly pulse and undulate, growing from their depths and building higher in range, depicting the deep and dark of the depth of night. Shortly, the flute plays van Eyck's extremely popular and catchy *Nachtegaeltje* folk tune outright – a lyrical tune that wanders like an improvisation – accompanied by a good-natured countermelody in the bassoon. While the string undulations tumble gently onward, Respighi adds more winds to the tune, some of them beginning to warble and wiggle, like the growing chorus of birdsong before sunrise. The addition of the celeste (a metallic keyboard instrument) adds a delightfully magical sound to this chorus. Eventually, the tender and graceful song of this beautiful bird fades out, as do the strings, into silence of night.

The final movement of *Gli uccelli* returns to another tune, *Il cucù* ("The Cuckoo") by the Italian composer Pasquini whose *Preludio* inspired



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Respighi's first movement. Here, Respighi borrows an exquisite 1698 Pasquini harpsichord composition called "Toccata con lo Scherzo del Cucco." This Toccata was a piece of many faces – from the almost giddy recitation of the two-downward-note call of the cuckoo bird to flights of magisterial splendor and frolicking runs of notes – all combining to create a masterful piece of light-spirited entertainment. It's no wonder Respighi was drawn to this work, and he upholds its multifaceted qualities, while also giving it a rather cinematic grandeur. As the music dashes about, with grandness to fleet flashes of fanciful rhapsodizing, the cuckoo's call returns consistently, yet never predictably, sung out by every instrument in some fashion or another. It's comical and wonderful. As this marvelous musical aviary ends, Respighi returns to Pasquini's music of the Preludio to recount all the birds that flew through his suite, and to end, lastly, on a note of great and valiant cheer.

## LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Born in Bonn in 1770; died in Vienna in 1827

### **Symphony No. 6 in F major, Op. 68, "Pastoral"**

1. Awakening of Cheerful Feelings Upon Arrival in the Country – (Allegro ma non troppo)
2. Scene by the Brook – (Andante molto mosso)
3. Merry Gathering of Country Folk – (Allegro)
4. Thunderstorm – (Allegro)
5. Shepherd's Song. Happy and Thankful Feelings After the Storm – (Allegretto)

Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, the *Pastoral*, is filled with charm and gratefulness, the light of the sun through summer leaves, and the grace and quietude of nature observed, as well as a little bit of stormy drama and a sprinkling of levity. When one regards Beethoven, with all his scowling portraits and allusions to monumental struggle in his Fifth Symphony, hearing his Sixth comes as a complete surprise.

As with his Fifth Symphony, the essence of the composition had been germinating in Beethoven's mind for many years. His busy city life in Vienna was increasingly counterbalanced by long sojourns to its parks and out



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into the countryside, and especially in the lovely town of Heiligenstadt, where in the summer of 1808 he escaped to finish the *Pastoral*. As he wrote to a friend, "No one can love the country as much as I do. For surely woods, trees, and rocks produce the echo that man desires to hear." The composer, now truly suffering from his increasing deafness and dissatisfaction with human nature, found some of his greatest joy in nature that he captured in the expression he knew best - music.

Beethoven himself chose the name *Pastoral* for his Sixth Symphony as well as each movement's subtitle, and together they suggest a "program," or narrative series of scenes shaping a perception of the work. As such, the *Pastoral* is regarded as one of the first successful "programmatic" symphonies in the Classical repertoire – a fundamental structure that would soon dominate symphonic writing in the Romantic era. But despite these programmatic allusions, Beethoven cautioned against pictorial precision. In the brief, and rare, program note that he provided for its premiere, Beethoven called the *Pastoral* "... more of a matter of feeling than of painting in sounds... no picture, but something in which the emotions are expressed that are aroused by the pleasures of the country." His subtitles evoke, in a metaphysical way, the psychological essence of what being in nature meant to him, honoring nature's "music" with his own. Even so, Beethoven provides a few obvious, and delightful, musical representations in this symphony. The result is Beethoven at his happiest and most tenderhearted.

In the first movement, "Awakening of Cheerful Feelings...", Beethoven focuses on this gentle vein with quietness, repetition, and a relaxed (or, as the musicologist Donald Tovey called it, "lazy") pace. The mood is exquisitely peaceful, and Beethoven seems to blissfully luxuriate in the simple repetition of themes: one little five-note descending motive is repeated 80 times. And the harmonic pace of the movement is also on holiday; for example, near the middle of the movement, the key (B flat) lollygags for some 50 measures before Beethoven moves to a new key (of D). All this contentment-in-your-bones nurtures us, calms us, and brings us into nature's pacific realm. And this will be the spirit pervading the whole symphony.



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## PROGRAM NOTES

The second movement, "Scene by the Brook," contains some especially lovely naturalistic representations. The first one can be heard in the opening measures – a slow and sauntering triplet figure is played by the second violins, violas, and cellos representing a flowing brook. The brook gathers a little speed as Beethoven doubles the triplet's rhythm. Most beautiful here is the melody in the first violins above the burbling of the lower strings – as if the sojourning Beethoven is simply basking in nature's delights. It's some of the sweetest music in the entire symphony. And just before the end, some delightful imitations of birdsong arrive in an unlikely little quartet. The birds themselves are identified by Beethoven in the conductor's score: a nightingale, a quail, and a cuckoo are played by the flute, oboe, and two clarinets, respectively.

The third movement, "Merry Gathering of Country Folk," is Beethoven at his most witty. His friend Anton Schindler remembered something Beethoven had observed:

*Beethoven asked me if I had noticed how village musicians often played in their sleep, occasionally letting their instruments fall and keeping quite still, and then waking up with a start, getting in a few vigorous blows or strokes at a venture, although usually in the right key, before dropping to sleep again.*

It's likely that Beethoven is making musical jokes at the musicians' expense in this movement. Although the "Gathering" begins in a relaxed way, quite soon the instruments start getting a little out of hand in volume – making



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## PROGRAM NOTES

"Merry" indeed. Shortly, at about one minute into the movement, this friskiness leads to some overzealous French horn heralding, and it's a gloriously fun moment. Perhaps Beethoven was having the horns wake up the bassoonist, for as the next section immediately begins with a chirpy little tune in the oboe, the sleepy bassoon apparently can manage only two different pitches in accompaniment.

The fourth movement, "Thunderstorm," is another of the famous musical representations in this symphony. It's a marvelous moment, too, crafted as a kind of "Meanwhile, as the band is engaged in their frivolity, a storm is brewing on the horizon." Without a break, the country musical scene cuts to pianissimo (very quiet) tremolos (quickly repeated bow strokes creating a shimmering effect) in the basses, evoking the electricity that's quivering in the atmosphere. The storm builds up rather quickly. To capture it, Beethoven uses thunderous timpani, piercing piccolo chirps, and, as the storm passes directly overhead of the now shelter-seeking country folk, the trombones sound out with a colossally dissonant set of chords to create the storm's blistering climax.

As the storm gradually subsides, Beethoven creates one of the loveliest moments in any of his symphonies. Out of the shivering tremolos arise the oboes; then, without any pause, the final movement, "Shepherd's Song. Happy and Thankful Feelings after the Storm," opens up musically through the winds, then horns, and then the strings, like the breaking of the clouds and the glow of the sun spilling through the storm clouds and across the earth. The symphony ends in this happy radiance with a beautiful hymn-like theme, and as the essayist Basil Lam astutely observed, it's Beethoven's thanks to "... the Creator ..., not for ending the storm, but for the glory of Nature, of which the storm is a part."

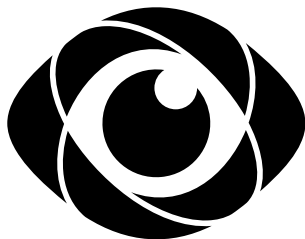
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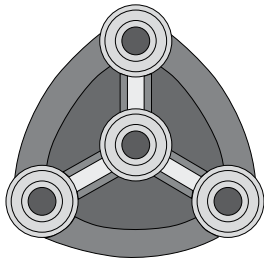
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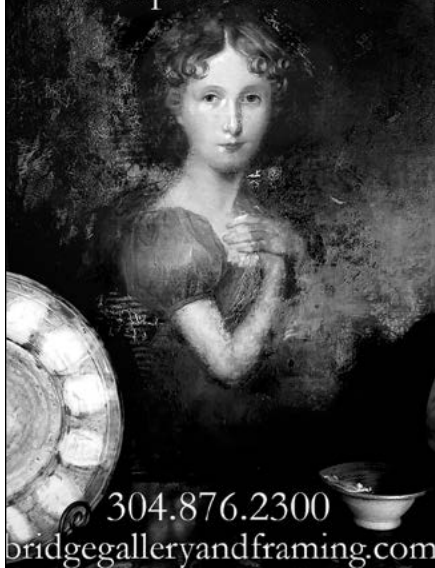
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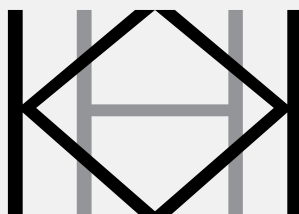
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Ottorino Respighi (1879–1936) — *Gli uccelli* ("The Birds"), Suite for orchestra, P. 154

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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2025

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SATURDAY, MARCH 28 & SUNDAY, MARCH 29, 2026

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Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741) — Guitar Concerto in D major  
Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959) — Concerto for Guitar & Small Orchestra  
Franz Schubert (1797–1828) — Symphony No. 5 in B-flat major

Note: All programs subject to change.

SATURDAY, APRIL 18 & SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 2026

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