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WELCOME TO THIS CONCERT

Welcome to this wonderful program. To me, this concert is very special, allowing us to showcase the consummate talents and considerable work of four principal musicians from the Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra. Past performances by the quartet have been stand-out events and we're sure this one will be as well.

There is another reason I find this concert so special. Often, I get compliments about Friends of Music as an organization that contributes to the richness of the Panhandle. Our presence here has even led some of you to make this area your home.

But sometimes other people say that they really aren't great fans of classical music: they don't quite understand it; it's just not their thing. Maybe they don't realize how pervasive classical music is. Not only does it provide much of the training to develop the skills of musicians, whether they ultimately play jazz or rock, it also infuses the other arts – and especially film – in ways that help form the bedrock of our society and shape our culture.

How so? As Max Derrickson has explained in his very excellent program notes for this concert, music is a counterpart to the visual. Particularly in film, it adorns and exaggerates the sentiments evoked and portrayed. Without the music, the cinematography doesn't have the same force or lasting impact.

When listening to the pieces included in this program, you will hear themes that have become very familiar over the years – and not just to film buffs. Many of these themes have been appropriated in commercials and for good reason: They heighten our senses and evoke emotions in ways that are not possible through spoken or written words.

So sit back and enjoy, let your senses be stroked, and come to appreciate once more what treasures we have in these fine musicians.

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JED GAYLIN

This concert season, Jed Gaylin is celebrating his 12th 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, and their standard poodle, Dasha.

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

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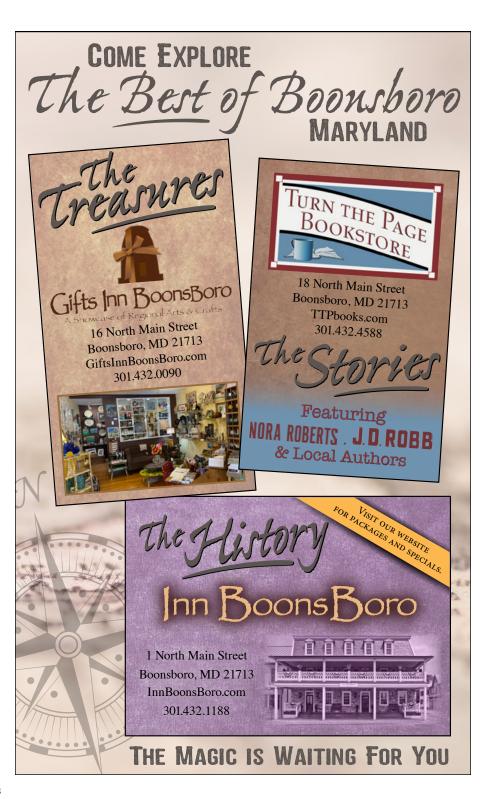
HEATHER AUSTIN-STONE

VIOLIN

Heather Austin-Stone began her violin studies at age 10. She attended Shenandoah University on full scholarship, studied with Dr. Kenneth Sarch, and received her Bachelor of Music in performance, summa cum laude, in 1994. A year later, she graduated with a Master of Music degree from Northwestern University.

Austin-Stone is currently the concertmaster of the Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra, and a section 1st violinist with the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra. She is the former assistant concertmaster with the Maryland Symphony Orchestra in Hagerstown. She is a sought-after performer at weddings and other events, on acoustic and electric violin.

She teaches violin and viola at Shepherd University and coaches the 1st violins of the Shepherd Community Orchestra. She has also taught at the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts in Hagerstown and in private and public schools. She maintains a home violin and viola studio in Shepherdstown.



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

PETR SKOPEK

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Petr Skopek was born in Prague, Czech Republic, where he began his musical studies at the National School of Music at the age of six. He attended the Academy of Fine Arts in Frederick, Maryland, and received a Bachelor of Music in violin performance from the University of North Texas College of Music. He received his Maryland state professional teaching certificate in 2006.

As a violinist, Skopek is currently a member of the Maryland Symphony Orchestra, the Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra, the Two Rivers String Quartet, the Gettysburg Chamber Orchestra, and the Shippensburg Festival Orchestra. In the past, he has performed with orchestras and chamber groups in Texas, Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Washington, DC, including the East Texas Symphony, the Richardson Symphony, the Amarillo Symphony, the Alexandria Symphony, Concert Artists of Baltimore, the National Philharmonic, the Washington Concert Opera, and the Choral Arts Society of Washington, DC.

From 1996 to 2002, Skopek worked as a private-lesson violin and viola instructor for the Texas independent school districts of Plano, Richardson, and Lewisville. From 2002 to 2022, he served as a band and orchestra director in the Frederick County, Maryland, Public Schools system, where his orchestras, bands, and jazz bands consistently received awards, superior ratings, and recognition at county and state music festivals and adjudications. In 2023, he became the orchestra director at Barbara Ingram School for the Arts, an arts magnet high school in Washington County, Maryland. He also serves as a clinician, conductor, adjudicator, and string coach. He has worked with many youth orchestras and festival ensembles in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.



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JASON DIGGS

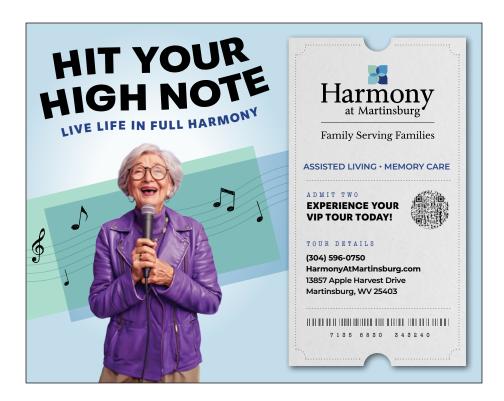
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Jason Diggs began studying violin at the age of nine in Baltimore City Public Schools. He received his Bachelor of Music in viola and Artist Diploma in quartet studies from Shenandoah Conservatory and earned his Master of Music in viola performance from the San Francisco Conservatory.

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

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 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 ARTISTS

CAMILO PÉREZ-MEJÍA

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Camilo Pérez-Mejía is a graduate of the Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá, Colombia. On moving to the United States, he studied at Shenandoah University, earning a Master of Music in Cello Performance and an Artist Diploma in Quartet Studies, and also completing coursework for a Doctor of Musical Arts in Performance.

He has received soloist awards from institutions such as the Sinfónica Nacional de Colombia, Universidad Javeriana, and Shenandoah Conservatory. He has performed with various ensembles, both nationally and internationally.

Pérez-Mejía is the principal cellist for the Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra, the founding music director of the Charles Washington Symphony Orchestra, and is the current conductor of the Shepherd Community Orchestra. He also actively participates in various ensembles, including the Two Rivers and Argot string quartets and the flute/cello duo Entropy in Two.

He teaches at the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts and Shepherd University.

THE PROGRAM

MATINEE MAGIC

Music from iconic film scores, soundtracks, and unusual pieces that capture the essence of cinematic moments.

Franz Schubert (1797–1828) — String Quartet No. 8 in B-flat major, D.112 (Op. Post. 168)

III. Menuetto: Allegro (Film reference: Little Women, 2019)

Samuel Barber (1910-1981) — String Quartet, Op. 11

II. Adagio (Platoon, 1986)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) — String Quartet No. 15 in A minor, Op. 132

III. Heiliger Dankgesang ("Song of Thanksgiving") Molto adagio — Andante (The Soloist, 2009)

— INTERMISSION —

Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904) — String Quartet No. 12 in F major, Op. 96 "American"

II. Lento (Kolja, 1996)

Max Richter (b. 1966) — On the Nature of Daylight, arr. Alice Hong (Arrival, 2016)

Howard Shore (b. 1946) — The Breaking of the Fellowship (from Shore's score for the final scene of the film *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring, 2001*), arr. Alex Phillip Yates

INTRODUCTION

Some thoughts about music and the movies

Music as a counterpart to visual scenes, as is common in films, precedes cinema itself. Famously, for example, Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony* (1808) intentionally evoked scenes of nature and the feelings nature elicits.

But composers were mixing the senses long before that. The French Baroque composer Marin Marais (1656-1728) often wrote music intended to portray specific images and sensations. One striking example is his 1725 work entitled *The Bladder-Stone Surgery*, which detailed exactly that medical procedure (the score includes notations such as "The patient is bound with silken cords" and "He screameth")!

More familiarly (and surely more pleasingly), Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741) at about the same time gave an exquisite musical expression of the seasonal changes of the year in his group of four violin concerti titled *Four Seasons*. Here, in a tour de force of Baroque complexity, each concerto is accompanied by a sonnet divided into three verses that correspond to that concerto's three movements. Each sonnet narrates incidents and emotions appropriate to the season at hand (such as spring birdsong, the buzzing of insects in the summer, the barking of hunting dogs in the autumn, and the howling cold winds of winter), and these incidents and emotions can be heard approximated in the music.

The Romantic Era, of course, brought musical representation of natural phenomena even more to the fore. Perhaps no one was more devoted to the creation of emotion-meets-image-meets-musical-sequence than Richard Wagner (1813–1883) and his extraordinary operas.

But to come together in their most potent combination, it almost seems as though music, emotions, and images had been waiting for the advent of cinema. From almost the very beginning of commercial moving pictures in 1895, music accompanied the visuals on the screen. But because film technology at first could only record images, this music was originally provided by live musicians—typically a pianist or a small instrumental ensemble. Later, the art-house organ and its many sound effects became hugely popular in movie houses, and the organists would improvise as they went along, playing beloved pieces of music, both popular and classical, to adorn and exaggerate the sentiments of each film's story.

By the early years of the 20th century, the movies had become so wildly popular that great composers began to write musical scores specifically for them. The first famous composer to do this was Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921) for a 1908 film called *The Assassination of the Duke of Guise*. Saint-Saëns's craftsmanship in treating this film's music as a piece of art unto itself, yet intrinsically linking the music to the



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action, characters, and emotions of the storyline, changed everything in cinema. In the ensuing decades, directors and composers would come together to make some of the greatest collaborations in all of art: Think of Sergei Eisenstein and Sergei Prokofiev (*Alexander Nevsky*, 1938); Alfred Hitchcock and Bernard Hermann (*Psycho*, 1960); and Steven Spielberg and John Williams (*Jaws*, 1975).

In addition to new music written specifically for films, Classical music on its own terms was also taken out of its concert hall context and used, to significant effect, in many movie soundtracks. Think especially of Stanley Kubrick's 2001: *A Space Odyssey* and its use of Richard Strauss's opening to *Also Sprach Zarathustra*.

In this concert, you will hear both original film music (by Max Richter and Howard Shore) as well as classical blockbusters (from Schubert, Barber, Beethoven, and Dvořák) that were "repurposed" to magically enhance different films.

In short, music and movies seem to have been meant for each other, regardless of the origins of the music itself. As an anonymous film critic once said:

When watching a film, the director or actor may put the tear in your eye, but it takes music to make it spill upon your cheek.

Franz Schubert

(Born in Vienna, Austria, in 1797; died in Vienna, Austria in 1828)

String Quartet No. 8 in B-flat major, D. 112 (published posthumously as Op. 168)

III. Menuetto - Allegro

The exceptional music of Franz Schubert can be heard in dozens of films, always giving added meaning – and an additional layer of excellence – to the scenes involved. Tapping into Schubert's genius in this way, Greta Gerwig employed no fewer than five of his dance pieces in her superb 2019 remake of the classic film and novel, *Little Women*. One of these dance pieces is the Dance Minuet movement from an early string quartet, No. 8 in B-flat major, written in 1814.

Schubert's later string quartets, such as Nos. 13, 14, and 15 from 1824 and 1826, were often laden with pathos. But his earlier string quartets, including No. 8, are instead filled with light, charm, and wit. (This is not incidental: Schubert wrote these early quartets for his family to play privately at their home, with himself on the viola and his father and two brothers rounding out the family's string quartet ensemble.)

No. 8's very lyrical third movement, the Menuetto (the Italian version of minuet), unabashedly embraces Schubert's lifelong love for the dance forms that were so

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popular in Vienna in his day, and it is absolutely danceable. The first section begins with the upper violin lilting along with a pleasantly elegant and singable melody. But notice how Schubert (the family violist) gives the viola an especially prominent part – and how this allows for the two violins to dally alongside in their own wonderful duets.

The Trio section (middle section, beginning roughly at about two and a half minutes) is a delicate surprise. As the violins play a new and gentler melody in longer notes, the viola and soon the cello pizzicato their way through the harmonies, as though tenderly tiptoeing up behind one's beloved. The music from the first section returns for one last round of the dance, and the Menuetto ends with a smiling grace.

Samuel Barber

(Born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, in 1910; died in New York City, New York, in 1981)

String Quartet in B minor, Op. 11

II. Molto adagio

Barber wrote his only string quartet in 1936. The first and third movements are dissonant and angular but the middle movement, molto adagio, is a piece of astoundingly sonorous beauty. These contrasting approaches to composing would define Barber's unique career: He was equally masterful at pushing harmonic boundaries and in creating some of the most lush and lyrical melodies in the 20th century.

Immediately after finishing the string quartet, Barber arranged its middle-movement *Adagio* as a separate piece for string orchestra and entitled it *Adagio* for *Strings*. Knowing that it was, as he said, "a knockout," Barber sent it to the conductor Arturo Toscanini, who gave the piece its premiere in 1938. From that premiere, the *Adagio's* popularity and importance in American culture has never waned. It soon became regarded as America's semiofficial music for mourning, and it was performed often after tragic moments in American history. In 1945, it was played during the announcement of Franklin Roosevelt's death; in 1963, it was performed to an empty hall at the Kennedy Center after the assassination of John F. Kennedy; and in 2001, it was heard prominently after the World Trade Center bombing on 9/11. The *Adagio's* emergence into cinema began, most notably, in 1980 with David Lynch's classic film, *The Elephant Man*. But the music's huge popularity was forever cemented when Oliver Stone used it as the main theme for his 1986 Vietnam antiwar film, *Platoon*.

Adagio for Strings is at once contemplative and melancholic, and thus it is well suited to its use in films and memorial events. Nonetheless, as beautiful as this work is in its string orchestra arrangement, the Molto adagio middle movement from the original string quartet version captures an uncanny intimacy. The main theme, first played by the

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upper violin, is lyrical and pensive, as though lost in a circle of memories, which slowly moves upward by steps. Underneath, long chords create a darkly hued atmosphere which shifts unhurriedly. The theme's steplike motion eventually gives way to quiet, wide melodic leaps, but rather than jangling the psyche, they murmur sentiments of hope. The music builds to an intense climax at about five and a half minutes, which is answered by a long silence. The music then recedes by ingeniously recreating the feeling of several profound sighs, and then, of quietude. The music of the beginning returns to end the work, but now, with a feeling of almost impossible tenderness, whispering of a fragile sense of promise.

Ludwig van Beethoven

(Born in Bonn, Germany, in 1770; died in Vienna, Austria, in 1827)

String Quartet No. 15 in A minor, Op. 132

III. Heiliger Dankgesang ("Song of Thanksgiving") Molto adagio

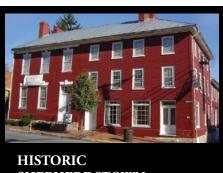
Beethoven has been a factor in films from the earliest days of cinema, perhaps beginning with a now lost French silent biopic called *Beethoven* produced around 1913. Since then, he and his music have figured in over 1,200 movies, television shows, and documentaries. One of the most memorable examples may well be Walt Disney's 1940 animated film, *Fantasia*, which featured Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 ("Pastoral").

The Beethoven music in our concert, the Molto adagio movement to his String Quartet No. 15, was used powerfully in director Joe Wright's 2009 movie about a homeless cellist, *The Soloist*.

Quartet No. 15 is one of Beethoven's late quartets, created very near the end of his life. Beethoven used these quartets to explore new musical territory and innovative ways to convey very deep emotions. No. 15 was written in 1825 while Beethoven was battling a gravely serious gastrointestinal illness. He survived this dance with death and captured his gratitude, and the sheer joy of coming back into health, in No. 15's third movement, Molto adagio (very slow).

Beethoven subtitled this movement *Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit, in der lydischen Tonart* ("Holy song of thanksgiving of a convalescent to the Deity, in the Lydian Mode"). This movement is the centerpiece of the whole quartet, and its beautiful opening chorale is transcendent. Cast in the modal-sounding key F Lydian, this chorale is slow, somber, and vulnerable – Beethoven's musical expression of humble thanks. Following this chorale is a quicker section, marked to be played "with renewed strength," that is frisky and joyful. The somber chorale and its joyful counterpart alternate twice, but while the chorale's return becomes increasingly introspective and eloquent, its quicker counterpart almost flits with dancelike





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ebullience: Especially jubilant is the passage at about eight minutes, with runs and embellishments twirling between the quartet's players. The chorale returns one final time to end the movement, now deeply lyrical and intense and marked to be played "with the most intimate emotions." It strengthens into a climax, and then retreats into quiet gratitude, like a prayer.

Antonin Dvořák

(Born near Prague, Bohemia (now Czech Republic), in 1841; died in Prague in 1904)

String Quartet No. 12 in F major, Op. 96, B. 179, "American"

II. Lento

The music of the Czech composer Antonin Dvořák has been accompanying movies almost since the birth of the industry, beginning in 1929 with a remarkable film, called *Hallelujah*, that featured an all-Black cast. Indeed, his music has been so popular in cinema that it has been used in over 100 films just since the 1996 film, *Kolja*, which used the Dvořák music featured in our concert: the Lento movement from his String Quartet No 12. (Incidentally, Greta Gerwig's *Little Women* uses another movement from this string quartet.)

No. 12 was written in 1893 while Dvořák was serving as director of the newly created National Conservatory of Music in New York City. In the summer of that year, he took a break from the frenetic New York scene to spend time in the quiet of the countryside with a diaspora of Czech immigrants in Spillville, Iowa. Within two weeks he composed his now hugely popular String Quartet No. 12, later nicknamed the "American" quartet. One of the most beloved string quartets in the repertoire, this one is beautiful and robust; folksy, yet sophisticated. Every movement shines with gorgeous melodies, but especially magical is its second movement, Lento (very slowly).

The Lento opens with the viola and second violin repeating a gentle, undulating ostinato while the cello quietly plucks below. Overtop of this sound bed, the violin enters with a song that is lyrically breathtaking and deeply melancholic – something like a slow spiritual mixed with a Czech folksong. The movement seems to search for answers to this sorrowfulness with mild climaxes and light drama. But overall, the song continues to sing, attracting ever-changing gorgeous harmonies, melting like sunsets. At about three and a half minutes, the two violins begin a dialogue that develops into one of the most beautiful moments in the entire quartet. The Lento eventually ends with the cello taking up the sad song and ending with a last, lonesome, and fading chord that uncannily evokes a feeling of uncertainty.

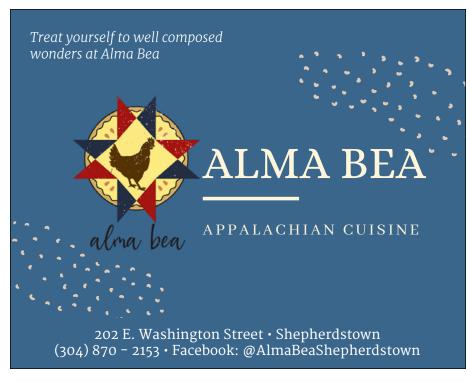
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Max Richter

(Born in Hamelin, West Germany, on March 22, 1966)

On the Nature of Daylight (Arr. for string quartet by Alice Hong)

German-born pianist and composer Max Richter was raised in England. He studied music at the University of Edinburgh and then the Royal Academy of Music (London), finally studying composition with the modernist Luciano Berio (1925-2003). His style evolved to include post-minimalism (minimalist-like), ambient, and contemporary (modern) classical music making, creating a tonally rewarding and thoughtfully crafted mix. He has written, performed and produced 14 solo classical music albums since 2002 and has kept immensely busy with arranging, performing, and composing for stage, opera, ballet, and almost 60 films.

On the Nature of Daylight (performed in our concert in its string quartet arrangement) first appeared as a solo track on Richter's 2004 album titled *The Blue Notebooks*, which was conceived as a protest album against the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Most of the album's musical tracks have voice-over readings from Franz Kafka's *The Blue Octavo Notebooks* (1917–1919) and the writings of Czesław Miłosz. With *On the Nature of Daylight*, however, there were no voices, just strings and electronics. Richter described his conception of the piece:

What I wanted to try and do was ... create something which had a sense of luminosity and brightness, but made from the darkest possible materials.

On the Nature of Daylight soon became extremely popular for its lyrical reflectiveness and deep sense of sadness. The piece has found its way into several films since its album release, most memorably in Denis Villeneuve's 2016 sci-fi film *Arrival*.

Like Barber's Adagio, Richter's On the Nature of Daylight feels as though it connects profound sadness with the stirrings of hope. In its string quartet arrangement, the work begins with three members of the quartet playing slow and lush chords, repeating four-bar phrases almost continually, very much like a Baroque chaconne. The harmonic progression is ruminative and unhurried, basking in an inner glow. At almost two minutes, the first violin then begins to gently rhapsodize in a minimalist style (a melody or phrase that repeats continuously but with gradual modifications). The second violin soon joins with its own rhapsodizing, sonically drifting high above the rest of the quartet. The music continues in this ruminative way until about five and a half minutes, when the cello finally comes to rest on a single note. And like gravity, the cello's sound-space pulls in the rest of the quartet, slowing their rustling, until – at last – all motion concludes with a long-held chord fading into silence.



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Howard Shore

(Born in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, on October 18, 1946)

The Breaking of the Fellowship (from the final scene of The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring, 2001, arr. for String Quartet by Alex Philip-Yates)

The Canadian-born musician Howard Shore grew up learning how to play multiple instruments, and he began playing in several bands at age 13. He attended the Berklee College of Music in Boston, and from there, his career began to blossom, first as a jazz-fusion musician and then as a composer for musicals and films.

Shore's first success in film scoring was in 1979 with the thriller *The Brood*, and since then he's had a very distinguished career with over 80 film scores. His greatest fame has been won for his music for Peter Jackson's 2001-2003 film trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*, based on the fantasy books by J.R.R. Tolkien. Shore won his first Oscar for Best Original Score for his music to the first installment of the trilogy, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001). The music in the closing scenes, in particular (referred to as *The Breaking of the Fellowship*), has become extremely popular because of its great and lyrical theme. In the movie, Irish pop singer Enya sings words to this theme during the closing section of the film. This poignant music has been arranged many times for many kinds of ensembles; in our concert, we hear the string quartet arrangement.

The full quartet introduces the work with several long chords that are the basic harmonies of the main theme, and they conjure a somber and epic feeling – like an epilogue to a great adventure. The theme emerges briefly in the more rhythmically active violin but then recedes. The music then wanders through intertwining but independent parts from the quartet players, representing the group of friend-warriors (the Fellowship) each breaking out on his own journey. These independent parts, however, set the stage for the first full appearance of the main theme, also known as the song "In Dreams," at about two minutes. This theme sounds like an old and wistful English folk tune mixed with an air of the valiant – part folk song, part anthem. The music then does what the characters do, it goes a-wandering, through key changes and sets of lush chords, with snippets of the folk tune appearing like memories, and all the while stacking up in emotion. The final section, beginning a little before eight minutes, becomes increasingly heroic, rising with hope, with the understanding that the Fellowship shall one day reunite.

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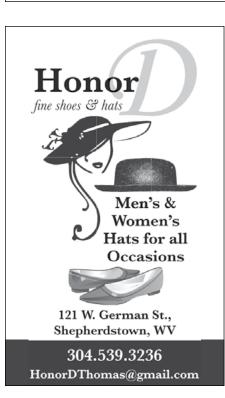
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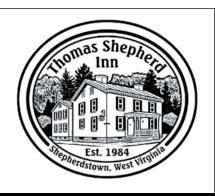
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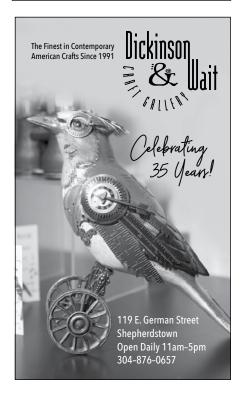
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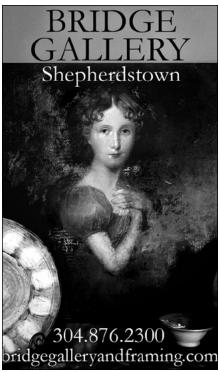
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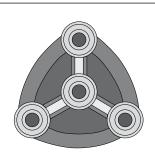
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