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presents

SOMETHING OLD, NEW, BORROWED & BLUE

2017-2018 • SEASON 73

CELEBRATING THE
TENTH SEASON OF
MUSIC DIRECTOR
NICHOLAS WALLIN

BEETHOVEN

Symphony No. 6 ("Pastoral")

Grammy-Winning Violinists

**MARK & MAGGIE
O'CONNOR**

OCT 15, 2017 • 3:00PM

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CELEBRATING THE
TENTH SEASON OF
MUSIC DIRECTOR
NICHOLAS WALLIN

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Menotti

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WELCOME TO OUR 73RD SEASON!

The 2017/2018 season of the Mid-Columbia Symphony, **SOMETHING OLD, NEW, BORROWED & BLUE**, begins this afternoon with Mark and Maggie O'Connor as guest artists. I can't think of a more exciting way to begin your symphony's 73rd season.

The other exciting occurrence is the release of the **Vista Arts Center Predesign Study** by LMN Architects of Seattle. This study envisions a performing and visual arts center to be built at the Port of Kennewick's Vista Field development in Kennewick.

The Vista Arts Center will be the home of the four Mid-Columbia performing arts groups—Ballet, Mastersingers, Musical Theatre, and your Symphony. Features important to the symphony include an 800 seat auditorium, mechanically moveable pit, large stage with retractable and storable acoustic shell, passive acoustical control of reverberation time, green rooms, storage for percussion, and sharable business office space. Other features are a community space that is configureable for smaller performances, recitals, rehearsals, lectures, and dinners, as well as a separately accessible art gallery joined to a spacious lobby.

Please save the date of Saturday, March 10, 2018, for the Mid-Columbia Arts Fundraiser. This is a joint endeavor at the Three Rivers Convention Center with the Mid-Columbia Ballet, Mid-Columbia Mastersingers, and the Mid-Columbia Musical Theatre.

Boyce Burdick, *Board President*

A Note from the President

Only 1/3 of the funds needed to operate the Symphony come from ticket sales. If you would like to help, please send your donation to:
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A Note from the Conductor

Nicholas Wallin

Good evening and welcome to the first concert of our 73rd season, "Something Old, New, Borrowed & Blue"! The fun for you as audience members will be to try to figure out what piece I think satisfies each category per concert. Some of the pieces will be pretty obvious, some less so. Just to keep you guessing, a piece can satisfy more than one category.

We opened last season with a concert featuring Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*. This year we turn to his *Sixth*. It's difficult to imagine two pieces of music written by the same composer at the same time that appeal to listeners in such different ways. Please read the program notes by my friend Don Meyer for more specifics on the program of the "Pastoral" *Symphony*.

On the second half of the program we will welcome guest artists Mark and Maggie O'Connor. I think that you will be delighted with Mark's compositions, and amazed by the virtuosity and style of our two soloists.

I hope that you will be able to join us for some other concerts this year, as we celebrate 73 years of bringing live symphonic music to the Tri-Cities. I'm also personally hoping to enjoy this season as I celebrate my 10th year of working with this wonderful orchestra in my second home here in the Tri-Cities.

Enjoy the concert and thanks for your continued support! 🎶

Concert Etiquette

- Please turn off cell phones & pagers.
- Patrons entering late will be admitted at the first natural break in the music and will be seated in the rear of the auditorium.
- Please do not applaud after individual movements. Wait until the entire piece is completed, as indicated by the conductor turning and facing the audience.
- Recording and use of cameras are forbidden.

Thank You

TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

THE MID-COLUMBIA SYMPHONY

PRESENTS

SOMETHING OLD, NEW, BORROWED & BLUE

SEASON CONCERT #1

OCTOBER 15, 2017 • THE TRAC • PASCO, WA

NICHOLAS WALLIN, MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR

Symphony No. 6 in F Major "Pastoral", Op. 68

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN | 1770-1827

- I. Awakening of Cheerful Feelings Upon Arrival in the Countryside: Allegro ma non troppo
- II. Scene by the Brook: Andante molto moto
- III. Merry Gathering of Country Folk: Allegro
- IV. Thunder, Storm: Allegro
- V. Shepherd's Song, Cheerful and Thankful Feelings After the Storm: Allegretto

INTERMISSION

Fiddler's Dream

TRAD. | ARR. MARK O'CONNOR | B. 1961

&

Rock 'n' Roll

MARK O'CONNOR

Mark and Maggie O'Connor, violins
Joined by guest area high school musicians

Strings and Threads Suite

MARK O'CONNOR

Mark and Maggie O'Connor, violins

- | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| I. Fair Dancer Reel | VI. Road to Appalachia | XI. Texas Dance Hall Blues |
| II. Sailor's Jig | VII. Shine On | XII. Swing 11:11 |
| III. Captain's Jig | VIII. Cotton Pickin' Blues | XIII. Sweet Suzanne |
| IV. Off to Sea | IX. Pickin' Parlor Rag | |
| V. Pilgrim's Waltz | X. Queen of the Cumberland | |

Double Violin Concerto

MARK O'CONNOR

Mark and Maggie O'Connor, violins

- II. Midnight on the Dance Room Floor
- I. Swing



Something Old, New, Borrowed & Blue — Concert #1

DONALD MEYER

When one thinks of America, one of the first things that comes to mind is our great natural beauty. Mark O'Connor, native of Washington, seems to have our national landscape embedded into his compositions. Tapping into the great tradition of American folk and early recorded music, O'Connor's compositions are deeply connected

to the land. Pairing these two pieces with Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony makes good sense. Although separated by an ocean and two centuries, these compositions all express a profound love for the land and the great outdoors. 🎵



Symphony No. 6 in F Major "Pastoral", Op. 68

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN | 1770–1827

Beethoven's Pastoral symphony was composed in 1808, almost simultaneously with his famous Fifth (and premiered together at the same concert later that year). Beethoven was an ardent nature-lover, which was a place of repose especially as his hearing loss grew more acute in these years. An important early example of program music (although not the first, by any means), the symphony bears the following description for each movement in the printed score:

1. Awakening of cheerful feelings upon arrival in the countryside
2. Scene by the brook
3. Merry gathering of country folk
4. Thunder, storm
5. Shepherd's Song. Cheerful and thankful feelings after the storm.

As many historians have observed, Beethoven's Sixth Symphony looks both forward and backwards—back to pastoral pieces of Haydn, Handel, Vivaldi, and others, and forward to the program music of the later nineteenth century. The music is serene and blissful (for the most part), but underneath this placid surface, interesting compositional moves are occurring. The way Beethoven travels, without pause, from the dancelike third movement to the cinematic thunderstorm straight through to the resolution of the fifth movement is unlike anything heard in symphonic music up to this time. The music even anticipates the tropes and conventions of film music a century later (and indeed was a central component of Walt Disney's *Fantasia* of 1940), and became a touchstone for all the programmatic orchestral works that followed.

The first movement is in Sonata Form. The main theme is introduced right away in the violins, a sprightly tune that reflects the joyous mood Beethoven describes in his subtitle:



After this theme is traded among various instruments for a few bars, the orchestra comes together in a kind of affirmation:



The transition to the second theme is initiated with a woodwind triplet figure:



And this eventually brings us to a bucolic, restful second theme, relaxed and contemplative, built on a descending arpeggio:



This builds up gradually until we arrive at a firmer statement:



And then things become more relaxed, and the Exposition ends as placidly as it began.

Most Development sections—especially those modeled on Beethoven's Fifth—tend to be dramatic and tumultuous, with lots of modulations and manipulations of the melodic material from the Exposition. The Sixth is different. Beethoven does modulate, of course, but gently, almost like a caress. As Tom Service notes in his article on the Symphony in *The Guardian*, the entire section is dominated by the rhythm pattern introduced in the second measure of the piece. "It's like looking at a landscape that changes slowly with the lengthening of the shadows and the deepening of the light, in which time is virtually suspended." The Recapitulation takes us through the themes we heard in the Exposition, and this exquisitely crafted movement comes to a peaceful end.

The second movement is even more evocative of its title. This is one of the rare movements of Beethoven's that appears in 12/8 time—like 4/4 but with constant triplets—and it illustrates perfectly the gentle susurration of a small river in motion. At the end of the movement, we follow the brook to a beautiful pool, where birds alight on the surrounding trees. Beethoven took care to imitate the specific bird calls of birds he knew from his strolls through the Vienna Woods—sounds he was already starting to lose due to his encroaching deafness.

In the tradition symphonic structure, the third movement is a minuet or scherzo. Beethoven takes this opportunity to compose a peasant dance. This movement is in a fast triple meter—so fast, it is usually conducted in "one"—and features a light staccato string theme followed by a broader, arc-like answer. Like most dances, the music is fairly continuous (so that the dancers keep moving), and it feels like it could go on forever. But toward the end, Beethoven does something new, brilliant, and utterly surprising. He doesn't allow his music to finish, but instead interrupts the proceedings with a musical illustration of a coming rainstorm. One can imagine thunder rumbling in the distance, a few splatterings of water, and then the deluge erupts and the dancers go running for shelter.

This is the start of the fourth movement, perhaps the most forward-looking of all five movements of this symphony. It is theater music far ahead of its time, with thunder, lightning, and other musical sound effects. It is also essentially through-composed; this means that, although there are certainly repeating elements, it does not follow any traditional form, and is driven forward by the narrative momentum Beethoven is trying to convey.

Like all thunderstorms, this one is dramatic but temporary, and eventually we glide into the fifth movement, which expresses a sense of relief at the passing of the storm. At the beginning, we hear a horn call, like the sound of a distant hunting call, and then Beethoven creates a most satisfying modulation into the new key. This hunting call becomes the basis for the theme of this movement, in a gentle 6/8 time. The piece ends quietly, except for the final two chords, like a sigh of satisfaction. 🎵

Strings and Threads Suite
MARK O'CONNOR | B. 1961

Strings & Threads Suite is a piece comprised of thirteen tunes composed by Mark O'Connor. In 1986, the Tennessee Dance Theater commissioned the "Suite" from O'Connor to be performed at Nashville's Summer Lights Festival. The individual tunes are in various folk styles appearing in a chronological form which O'Connor says not only represents the evolution of American folk music, but also mirrors his own family's migration from Ireland and Holland to

America. It traces the family's route through the thirteen colonies initially, and then eventually out West during World War I nearly 300 hundred years later. O'Connor wrote the pieces in a manner and style in which he felt his family could have heard along the way. The "Suite" begins with Irish music, maybe similar to what O'Connor's family brought with them. (from the notes accompanying the sheet music). 🎵

Double Violin Concerto
MARK O'CONNOR | B. 1961

In addition to his active career as a fiddle virtuoso, Mark O'Connor is a prolific composer of original music, much of which reflects his passion for American folk music traditions. He has composed a number of concertos for violin solo, plus works for two violins, violin and cello, and other instruments, most of which have been performed numerous times. His Fiddle Concerto from 1992 alone has been performed more than 200 times since its premiere, making it one of the most successful concertos of the past half century.

Despite the freshness of his compositional language, O'Connor's concertos also hark back to the earliest days of Baroque concerto grossi, when a premium was placed on the improvisational prowess of the soloists.

The Double Violin Concerto is in three movements, with allusions to blues, Dixieland jazz, Texas swing, and big-band music from the 1930s. The outer movements both contain dual cadenzas, reminiscent of the fierce, improvised "cutting sessions" of jazz musicians. The first movement, "Swing", is fast and playful. The second, "Midnight on the Dance Room Floor," is slower and bluesy, a touch melancholy. 🎵

Donald Meyer is a composer, musicologist, and the author of the Music Appreciation text Perspectives on Music. Dr. Meyer is a Professor of Music at Lake Forest College, where he teaches courses, ranging from History of Rock and Roll to Music and Film.

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**Nicholas Wallin**
MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR

Nicholas Wallin returns in 2017–2018 for his tenth year as Music Director and Conductor of the Mid-Columbia Symphony. Wallin has garnered praise for his committed performances and his bold creative programming style, focusing on American music and collaborations with area musicians. While remaining firmly rooted in the standard symphonic repertoire, he is also an advocate for performing new music by living composers.

Wallin has conducted numerous ensembles across the country including the Spokane Symphony and Hartford (Conn.) Opera Theater. He has served as guest conductor or adjudicator for orchestras and music festivals across Washington, Idaho Oregon, Illinois, and Michigan, and previously served as Music Director for the Washington-Idaho Symphony. In the summer of 2006, Wallin studied and conducted in St. Petersburg, Russia, as a participant in the International Academy of Advanced Conducting. His conducting teachers have included Gustav Meier, Markand Thakar, Akira Mori and Craig Kirchoff, and he has conducted in workshops and masterclasses for numerous leading conductors, including Leonard Slatkin, David Zinman and Gunther Schuller.

Wallin is a native of Ann Arbor, Mich., and began his musical training there on piano and tuba. In 1991 he enrolled at Northwestern University, where he earned three degrees, a bachelor of arts in mathematics, a bachelor of music in tuba performance and a master of music in tuba performance. After leaving Northwestern, he earned a master of music degree in orchestral conducting from the Peabody Conservatory of Music. At Peabody he was a student of Gustav Meier and a recipient of the Graduate Conducting Fellowship. In December 2004, he completed a doctor of musical arts degree in conducting, with a secondary area in music theory at the University of Minnesota, where he received a College of Liberal Arts Graduate Fellowship.

Wallin is also an Associate Professor and the Chair of the Department of Music at Lake Forest College in Lake Forest, Ill. There he conducts the orchestra and teaches courses in music theory. Prior to this appointment, Wallin served on the faculty at Washington State University in Pullman. Wallin believes strongly in music education for all ages and enjoys speaking to organizations and music classes in the schools. He and his wife, Alice Swan, live in Evanston, Ill., with their sons, Rex and Enzo. 🎵

**Mark & Maggie O'Connor**
VIOLIN

A product of America's rich aural folk tradition as well as classical music, Mark O'Connor's creative journey began at the feet of a pair of musical giants. The first was the folk fiddler and innovator who created the modern era of American fiddling, Benny Thomasson; the second, French jazz violinist, Stephane Grappelli. Working with classical violin icons Isaac Stern, Itzhak Perlman, Yehudi Menuhin and Pinchas Zukerman, he absorbed knowledge and influence from the multitude of musical styles and genres he studied and participated in. With his body of work including 45 feature albums of mostly his own compositions, Mark O'Connor has melded and shaped these influences into a new American Classical music, and a vision of an entirely American school of string playing.

Mark O'Connor is exclusively represented by William Morris Endeavor Entertainment.

Please visit www.oconnorband.com and follow the band at: www.facebook.com/oconnorband and [@oconnorband15](https://www.instagram.com/oconnorband15)

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