A Far Cry
Chee-Yun Kim, violin
Barry Shiffman, viola

Lembit Beecher (b. 1980)
The Conference
Valleys –
The Reflection in the Lake

SERENADE IN C MAJOR FOR STRINGS, OP. 48 (1880)
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-93)
Pezzo in forma di sonatina: Andante non troppo – Allegro moderato
Valse: Moderato.
Elegie: Larghetto elegiaco
Finale (Tema russo): Andante – Allegro con spirito

:: INTERMISSION ::

SINFONIA CONCERTANTE IN E-FLAT MAJOR FOR VIOLIN, VIOLA AND ORCHESTRA, K. 364 (1779)
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)
Allegro maestoso
Andante
Presto

GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY NINA AND GENE DOGGETT
THE CONFERENCE OF THE BIRDS

Lembit Beecher (b. Santa Cruz, CA, November 23, 1980)

Composed 2017; 25 minutes

Finding a strong visual narrative in a much-loved 12th century mystical epic by Persian poet Farid ud-Din Attar gave composer Lembit Beecher an initial desire to turn the story into an opera. But it wasn’t long before the New York-based composer realized that it was the emotional potential of the Sufi poem—portraying an allegorical journey taken together by the birds of the world on a quest of self-discovery and enlightenment—that drew him in as a composer. Their search for leadership, perhaps a King, becomes a mission of identity, self-examination, discussion, risk-taking, instinct, commitment, survival and, ultimately, collective wisdom versus individual dominance. Whether the composer’s distillation of these qualities in the poem (after originally being guided there through the brilliant, timeless illustrations of the Czech-born American illustrator and author Peter Sís) or a commission for the 10th anniversary season of A Far Cry came first doesn’t really matter since Beecher has skillfully melded the two together. The required individual qualities revealed in the poem are as true of a mass migration of birds in pursuit of leadership as of the success of 17 independent string players who wish to make music together and thrive on an on-going basis.

Beecher’s present-day tone-poem opens with distant individual cries, outwardly random, sometimes keening, other times seeming in search of companionship or understanding—but always expressive. Indeed, the way Beecher paints pictures in the mind of the listener is powerful and emotionally engaging. A groundswell of discussion among the lower strings, led by solo cello (the wise hoopoe in the poem), results in the realization that collective action is possible, and we are soon carried along in the forward motion of both the music and glorious, soaring flight. The opening movement is shaped like a large arc, beginning and ending with cries from afar. The second and third movements are played without break, beginning with caution, pulsing strings. There is struggle and many birds die along the way. “So many birds are left by the wayside during this journey towards truth and self-discovery,” Beecher continues, “Does progress or attempted progress always come at a cost?” The closing musical landscape is at once tragic and reflective as a solo quartet emerges out of the groundswell of discussion among the lower strings, led by solo cello (the wise hoopoe in the poem), results in the realization that collective action is possible, and we are soon carried along in the forward motion of both the music and glorious, soaring flight. The opening movement is shaped like a large arc, beginning and ending with cries from afar. The second and third movements are played without break, beginning with caution, pulsing strings. There is struggle and many birds die along the way. “So many birds are left by the wayside during this journey towards truth and self-discovery,” Beecher continues, “Does progress or attempted progress always come at a cost?” The closing musical landscape is at once tragic and reflective as a solo quartet emerges out of the struggle and many birds die along the way. “So many birds are left by the wayside during this journey towards truth and self-discovery,” Beecher continues, “Does progress or attempted progress always come at a cost?” The closing musical landscape is at once tragic and reflective as a solo quartet emerges out of the struggle and many birds die along the way. “So many birds are left by the wayside during this journey towards truth and self-discovery,” Beecher continues, “Does progress or attempted progress always come at a cost?” The closing musical landscape is at once tragic and reflective as a solo quartet emerges out of the struggle and many birds die along the way. “So many birds are left by the wayside during this journey towards truth and self-discovery,” Beecher continues, “Does progress or attempted progress always come at a cost?” The closing musical landscape is at once tragic and reflective as a solo quartet emerges out of the struggle and many birds die along the way. “So many birds are left by the wayside during this journey towards truth and self-discovery,” Beecher continues, “Does progress or attempted progress always come at a cost?” The closing musical landscape is at once tragic and reflective as a solo quartet emerges out of the struggle and many birds die along the way. “So many birds are left by the wayside during this journey towards truth and self-discovery,” Beecher continues, “Does progress or attempted progress always come at a cost?” The closing musical landscape is at once tragic and reflective as a solo quartet emerges out of the struggle and many birds die along the way. “So many birds are left by the wayside during this journey towards truth and self-discovery,” Beecher continues, “Does progress or attempted progress always come at a cost?” The closing musical landscape is at one...
A Far Cry was founded in 2007 by a tightly-knit collective of 17 young professional musicians, developing an innovative process where decisions are made collectively and leadership rotates among the “Criers.” For each piece, a group of principals is elected by the members, and these five musicians guide the rehearsal process and shape the interpretation. By expanding the boundaries of orchestral repertoire and experimenting with the ways music is prepared, performed, and experienced, A Far Cry has been embraced throughout the world with hundreds of performances coast to coast and across the globe. In October 2014, A Far Cry launched its in-house label, Crier Records, with the album Dreams and Prayers, which received critical acclaim and a GRAMMY nomination. The second release, Law of Mosaics, followed in November 2014, and in 2018, its Visions and Variations received two additional Grammy nominations. The Criers are proud to call Boston home, and maintain strong roots in the city, rehearsing at their storefront music center in Jamaica Plain and fulfilling the role of Chamber Orchestra in Residence at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

Since winning the Young Concert Artists International Auditions in 1989 and the Avery Fisher Career Grant in 1990, Chee-Yun has performed regularly with the world’s foremost orchestras, including the Philadelphia Orchestra and the London Philharmonic. In 2016, Chee-Yun performed as a guest artist for the Secretary General at the United Nations in celebration of Korea’s National Foundation Day and the 25th Anniversary of South Korea joining the UN. Firmly committed to chamber music, Chee-Yun’s seven discs on the Denon label and one on the Naxos label have received exceptional acclaim, and she has been heard frequently on NPR’s Performance Today.

BARRY SHIFFMAN, viola

Please see full biography on page 11.