



A Far Cry



Saturday, March 21, 2026, at 3:00 PM
Sweeney Concert Hall / Sage Hall
Smith College, Northampton, MA

A Far Cry

**Clara Lyon, Jae Cosmos Lee, Megumi Lewis, and
Miki Cloud, violin**

Caitlin Lynch, Celia Hatton, viola

Hannah Collins, Rafael Popper-Keizer, cello

***Tony Manzo, bass**

***Ashley Addington, flute, *Nicholas Brown, clarinet, and**

***Meryl Summers, bassoon, *April Sun, piano**

This Performance by A Far Cry is sponsored by Marsha
Harbison and Family in Memory of William Harbison

Program

Shelley Washington (b. 1991)

SAY, for String Orchestra, arr. Washington (2016)

Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

Appalachian Spring – Suite for 13 Instruments (1970)

I. Very slowly

II. Fast/Allegro

III. Moderate

IV. Quite fast

V. Still faster

VI. Very slowly

VII. Calm and flowing (Shaker Theme)

VIII. Moderate (Coda)

Intermission

***Guest Crier**

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Symphony No. 6 in F major, Op. 68 (1802-1808)

(arranged for String Sextet by Michael Gotthard Fischer, 1773-1829, in 1811)

- I. Awakening of cheerful feelings on arrival in the countryside
- II. Scene by the brook
- III. Merry gathering of country folk
- IV. Thunder, Storm
- V. Shepherd's song. Cheerful and thankful feelings after the storm

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Please, no audio or video recording of this concert is allowed.

About Today's Concert

Notes provided by A Far Cry.

SAY, for String Orchestra

In *SAY*, *Shelley Washington* explores one of the most complex aspects of being: identity. Who are you? Who do others say you are? Who gets to decide? Speaking from her own experience as a person of mixed race in 21st century America, Washington shines a bright light on a myriad of complicated emotions through a poem that prefaces the score. It is preceded by a dedication to “all lives lost through hands of misconception, and to all the lives safe at home who face challenges without question, dedicated to our history, and our future which is brighter, dedicated to those who taught me to always be a fighter.”

Emphasizing that our experiences are embodied, that what we look like, the sounds of our voices, and the regional or cultural accents we are perceived as having influence or change the way others interact with us, Washington writes extensive passages highlighting the body, by making it a dominant percussive element throughout the music. Using the power of text, the

About Today's Concert (cont.)

performers rhythmically speak in short, direct phrases that ask us to reflect on ways we encounter others in the world, pause to consider the reality of others, and exhort us to speak up.

Musically, the work is dotted with sections strongly reminiscent of the sing-song play tunes of children's playground games, an arena where our earliest memories and confusions about identity are often formed, juxtaposed with reflective, lyrical passages and dense contrapuntal sections.

Text by Shelley Washington:

Say it high	Appalachia
Say it low	Land of God
Sing it fast	Promised Land
Sing it slow	Who is safe?
Who are you	Who protects?
Who am I	"Be yourself"
We don't get to decide	But you can't
Should we get	Tell me who I should be
Can we get	I can be
Who should get to decide	If I want to be free
We don't get to decide	Cost of pain culture wars losing
Freedom in	hope gaining hope
Freedom out	Broken down to the core
Tell me when	Say it loud...I'm
Land of doubt	The Lost
Say it high	I am...
Scream it low	Say the name
Power comes	Say the hate
Power goes	Say the love
Say it loud...I'm	Say the point
What's it like growing up	Say the Who
Who were you growing up	Say the pride
White in America	Who are you
Black in America	Who am I
You in America	Say it loud
I in America	I'm
Place of Peace	You are...

Appalachian Spring: Suite for 13 Instruments

The creative partnership of *Aaron Copland* and *Martha Graham* was, in many ways, ideal, with both exploring core aspects of the human experience—context, community, and self—through boldly creative expression. Graham observed of her aesthetic, “I wanted to begin not with characters or ideas, but with movements . . . I wanted significant movement. I did not want it to be beautiful or fluid. I wanted it to be fraught with inner meaning, with excitement and surge.” Along similar lines,

Copland said of the sound he crafted for *Appalachian Spring*, “I felt that it was worth the effort to see if I couldn’t say what I had to say in the simplest possible terms.” These preoccupations with pared down, unadorned, raw, and sometimes bracing depictions of emotions and spaces found a perfect narrative container in the rural pioneer lifestyles set against the North American landscape.

The premiere took place on October 30, 1944, in Coolidge Auditorium at the Library of Congress. While we are perhaps more familiar with a full-orchestra version of the score, the orchestra pit at the premiere held only 13 players. That is the origin of what we will hear today. One year later, *Appalachian Spring* earned Copland and Graham the Pulitzer Prize in Music. Copland crafted a suite from the ballet score, establishing it as one of his most beloved and recognized works. Throughout, the music of *Appalachian Spring* channels feelings of expansiveness and possibility. In particular, the Shaker hymn “Simple Gifts” entered the public consciousness as a cherished source of communal ballast and hope.

Symphony No. 6 in F Major, Op. 68

Almost from the moment he moved to Vienna in 1792 to study composition with Joseph Haydn, *Ludwig van Beethoven* captivated the tastemakers of the town. With his wild looks, untamed personality, and unconventional, aggressive pianistic sound, paired with undeniable talent, he was a top candidate to be the next big thing. The aristocracy jostled for the bragging rights of having supported the creation of exciting new works, and at times the competition became so fierce that many families went into tremendous (even ruinous) debt trying to outdo their neighbors.

A version of the Sixth Symphony for six solo strings, arranged by Beethoven's contemporary Michael Gotthard Fischer, appeared in 1811. We don't know whether Beethoven approved of the transcription, but he would not have been surprised. At a time when copyright was unknown, publishers competed to bring hot new music to the public at large. Orchestral works were frequently published in chamber or keyboard arrangements, so that they could be played and enjoyed by amateurs. Fischer's transcription, far from being merely Beethoven through the wrong end of the telescope, works on its own terms.

Beethoven's Sixth premiered at the Theater an der Wien on

About Today's Concert (cont.)

December 22, 1808, in a four-hour concert of stunningly epic proportions, including the 5th and 6th Symphonies, Piano Concerto No. 4, portions of the Mass in C major, the Choral Fantasy, and more. One patron commented that it "confirmed the maxim that one may easily have too much of a good thing."

That night, the first sounds the audience heard floating through the chilled air of the hall were those of the Symphony No. 6, nicknamed the "Pastoral," evocative of warmer, sunnier days. The work was a unique departure from the composer's previous symphonic works because it was organized with programmatic content. Each movement contains a preambular sentence, describing a specific scene or emotion, yet strives to reach beyond picture-painting.

About the Artists

A Far Cry

Called a "world-wide phenomenon" by Boston's WBUR, *A Far Cry* has nurtured a distinct approach to music-making since its founding in 2007. The self-conducted orchestra is a democracy in which decisions are made collectively and leadership rotates among the players ("Criers"). This structure has led to consistently thoughtful, innovative programming, and impactful collaborations with celebrated performers and composers. Their omnivorous approach has led to collaborations with artists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Simone Dinnerstein, Awadagin Pratt, Roomful of Teeth, the Silk Road Ensemble, Vijay Iyer, and David Krakauer. They and their in-house label, Crier Records, have been nominated for several Grammy Awards.

The 19 Criers are proud to call Boston home, and maintain strong roots in the city. The group recently celebrated the conclusion of a 10-year residency at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Through educational partnerships with the New England Conservatory and Project STEP, *A Far Cry* aims to pass on the spirit of collaboratively-empowered music-making to the next generation.

For full information, visit <https://www.afarcry.org/the-criers>

From the Valley Classical Concert Vice President

Here we are at the last concert of our 2025-26 season. I am ending the season with mixed feelings. We have had the loss of two of our beloved board members, Peter Van Pelt and William Harbison, but we have also had a season of uplifting and glorious music-making.

Your contributions and ticket purchases have made it possible to "think big" for next year. We are grateful to Smith College for providing this wonderful hall. And it is especially thrilling to see Sweeney Hall nearly full.

Today I am looking forward to hearing "A Far Cry" chamber orchestra from Boston. What a concert it will be to listen to Aaron Copland's Appalachian Spring, an arrangement of Beethoven 6th Symphony, and a work new to me by Shelley Washington. Thank you to Marsha Harbison, who sponsored today's concert to honor the memory of her husband Bill.

Check out the teaser ad on the following page about our next season – more to come this summer in our newsletters.

Have a wonderful summer and enjoy all the summer music festivals in our area. I look forward to seeing you next fall for another great year.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laurel Rogers". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Laurel Rogers, Vice-President

So long as the human spirit thrives on this planet, music in some living form will accompany and sustain it and give it expressive meaning — Aaron Copland

In Memoriam William Arthur Harbison, M.D.



Saturday's concert will be in memory of VCC's beloved Board President, Bill Harbison, who died February 21st, aged 81. Beyond being a legend among cardiologists, Bill was a passionate hiker and cyclist, accomplished amateur violist, and devoted music lover. He worked tirelessly on behalf of VCC, the Springfield Symphony, and the cultural

life of the region. Bill's leadership saw us through the difficult years of the pandemic and Valley Classical Concert's strong and steady recovery since that dark time. We will miss his energy, good humor, and especially his friendship.



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ValleyClassicalConcerts.org (Programs subject to change.)

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Help is needed for bookkeeping, managing correspondence, editing concert programs, and designing promotional materials. As a volunteer, you'll enjoy access to concerts and gain an insider's view of our behind-the-scenes operations.

VCC is a virtual organization, so there is no office to commute to. Just bring your own computer! If you are interested in volunteering, write us at office@valleyclassicalconcerts.org or leave a message at (413) 239-0417.

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