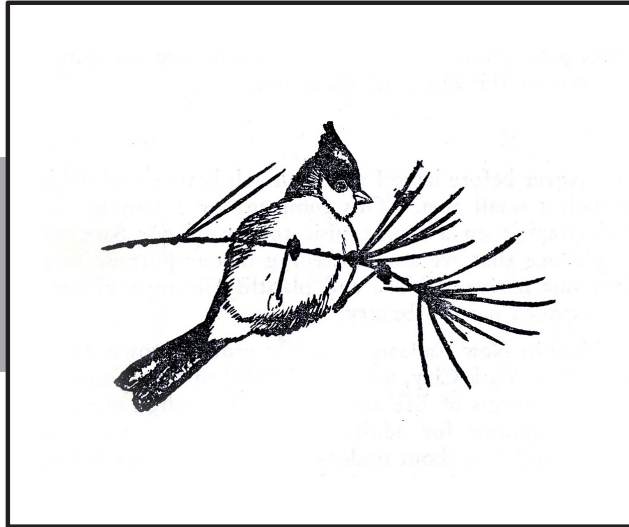


A Songbird Heaven

The 100 Year History of Bristow Park

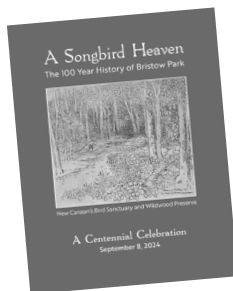


New Canaan's Bird Sanctuary and Wildwood Preserve

A Centennial Celebration

September 8, 2024

- 2:00pm - Welcome Address First Selectman Dionna Carlson
Program Overview Chris Schipper
Keynote Speaker David Allen Sibley
Woodwind Musical Performance Gwyneth Walker and Harmonia V
St. Francis Unveiling Steve and Leo Karl
St. Francis Commemoration Scott Herr
Dona Nobis Pacem NCHS Madrigals
Rescued Bird Release Wildlife in Crisis
Bristow Cake & Bird Cookies & Cider For All



Scan to purchase a commemorative book for this event.

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New Canaan
Land Trust



Friends of Bristow Park

Gwyneth Walker
All Nature Sings
FOR WIND QUINTET

Composed in celebration of the Centennial of the Helen and Alice Bristow Bird Sanctuary
and Wildwood Preserve, New Canaan, Connecticut – 1924-2024



- I. “In Flight”
- II. “Quiet Paths, a Pond”
- III. “Something Underfoot! (scurrying)”
- IV. “Interlude – This Stillness”
- V. “Celebration – The Music of the Spheres”

All Nature Sings is a suite of five movements for woodwind quintet inspired by the Bristow Bird Sanctuary and Wildwood Preserve, located near the composer’s CT home. This beloved refuge has been visited and enjoyed by the composer since her childhood. Much of the woodland beauty and peace have remained the same over the years.

Each movement of the suite speaks to a different aspect of the sanctuary life. “In Flight” are the birds, flying and singing overhead, or hopping playfully on the ground. Often they sing individually. But here they join together in chorus!

The pond in the sanctuary is hidden away near the edge of the property. Surrounded by trees, the surface of the water is extremely peaceful, offering an ideal home for a pair of mallard ducks. First one duck (the Oboe) and then two ducks (Oboe and Flute) glide across the pond. Motion is gentle and graceful.

And then...one’s tranquility is interrupted by the sounds of scurrying. There is “Something Underfoot!” Creatures large and small rustle in the underbrush. Some move quickly, some move deliberately. What joy and energy they have in exploring their home!

In “This Stillness” of nature, the traveler escapes to be alone. And yet, in the moments of solitude, one may encounter an infinite (divine) companion. “We walked together as one.” [The French Horn portrays the solitary traveler, with the Bassoon as the *companion*. In the meantime, the upper woodwinds form a canopy of trees overhead, as the spirit protecting and encompassing the traveler.]

The lyrics to the hymn “This is my Father’s World” inspire the last movement “Celebration – the Music of the Spheres.” Of special relevance are the words *And to my listening ears all nature sings, and round me rings the music of the spheres*. When one visits the Bird Sanctuary, and takes a moment to listen, one hears a grand symphony of sound, the celebration of the natural world.

The Poems

*The composer has selected favorite poems which might be read aloud before the playing of each movement of music.
The woodwind players or audience may contribute their own choices.*

I. "In Flight"

"Hope" is the thing with feathers

Emily Dickinson

"Hope" is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm -

I've heard it in the chillest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.

"Hope" is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul.



The Windhover

Gerard Manley Hopkins

I caught this morning morning's minion, king-
dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn
Falcon, in his riding
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air,
and striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a
dimpling wing
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend:
the hurl and gliding
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird, - the achieve of, the mastery
of the thing!

II. "Quiet Paths, a Pond"

Acquaintance with Nature

Henry David Thoreau

I want to go soon and live away by the pond,
where I shall hear only the wind whispering
among the reeds.
It will be enough if I shall leave myself behind.

I seek acquaintance with Nature,
to know her moods and her manners.
I wish to know an entire heaven
and an entire earth!



III. "Something Underfoot! (scurrying)"

All Things Bright and Beautiful

Cecil F. Alexander (G. Walker alt.)

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful:
The Lord has made them all.

Each flower that opens,
Each bird that sings,
With their glowing colors,
And their tiny wings.

All things bright and beautiful,
The Lord has made them all.

The freezing wind in winter,
The baking summer sun,
The golden leaves in autumn,
God made them all - bright and beautiful...
wise and wonderful...
great and small.

IV. “Interlude – This Stillness”

Trees

Bliss Carman

IN the Garden of Eden, planted by God,
There were goodly trees in the springing sod,—
Trees of beauty and height and grace,
To stand in splendor before His face.
Apple and hickory, ash and pear,
Oak and beech and the tulip rare,
The trembling aspen, the noble pine,
The sweeping elm by the river line;
Trees for the birds to build and sing,
And the lilac tree for a joy in spring;
Trees to turn at the frosty call
And carpet the ground for their Lord’s footfall;
Trees for fruitage and fire and shade,
Trees for the cunning builder’s trade;
Wood for the bow, the spear, and the flail,
The keel and the mast of the daring sail;
He made them of every grain and girth
For the use of man in the Garden of Earth.
Then lest the soul should not lift her eyes
From the gift to the Giver of Paradise,
On the crown of a hill, for all to see,
God planted a scarlet maple tree.

This Stillness

Henry David Thoreau

This stillness, solitude, wildness of Nature
Is like an herb,
or food to my intellect.
This is what I go out to seek.
It is as if I always met in those places
Some grand, serene, immortal,
Infinitely encouraging, though invisible,
companion.
We walked together as one.

V. “Celebration – The Music of the Spheres”

The Music of the Spheres

(adapted by Gwyneth Walker from the hymn text
“This is My Father’s World” by Maltbie D. Babcock)

This is my beloved world,
And to my listening ears
All nature sings, and round me rings
The music of the spheres.

In my beloved world,
I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas —
The gifts that Nature wrought.

In our beloved world,
Where birds their carols raise,
The morning light, the lily white,
Declare our Maker’s praise...
Declare our Maker’s praise.

And to my listening ears
All nature sings, and round me rings
The music of the spheres.



The Composer

Widely performed throughout the country, the music of American composer **Gwyneth Walker** is beloved by performers and audiences alike for its energy, beauty, reverence, drama, and humor. Dr. Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947) is a graduate of Brown University and the Hartt School of Music. She holds B.A., M.M. and D.M.A. degrees in Music Composition. A former faculty member of the Oberlin College Conservatory, she resigned from academic employment in 1982 in order to pursue a career as a full-time composer. For nearly 30 years, she lived on a dairy farm in Braintree, Vermont before returning to live in her childhood hometown of New Canaan, Connecticut.