

## **“Birds”**

### **Program Notes**

Herman Beeftink is a Dutch-American composer, born in the Netherlands in 1953 and now living in Los Angeles. The natural world is the driving inspiration behind many of Herman's pieces. “Birds”, a three-movement composition written in 2017, tells the story of three birds and their seasonal migration.

“Birds” opens with a motif that mimics a beckoning bird, who calls out to a sleepy, morning forest. The woods awaken; a second bird responds with its own short motif. When a third bird joins in, birdcalls develop into a birdsong.

The three birds lively chirp from their branches, gradually developing a moving bel-canto melody, which leads into shadowy arpeggios and repeating patterns by the end of the movement. The birds fly, brewing adventure from thin air and excitement for their journey.

This final movement opens with a harmony-establishing duet: the two birds reflect on the past, anticipating what change may come with their new destination. Arpeggios now grow in intensity and frequency; the birds are starting to flap their wings. The journey begins! The piccolo interjects with spontaneous, off-beat melodies and exclamations, adding even more thrill to the wonder they have undertaken. The movement ends with the same reflective and melancholic trio that began the action, as the long, tiring flight comes to an end.