

Sunday  
**APR 26**  
7:30 pm

Pavilion

# John Gorka

Preeminent singer-songwriter



Sponsored by



Landmark National Bank is pleased to sponsor this evening's performance.

**There will be no intermission during this performance.**

**Song selections will be announced from the stage.**

From New Jersey, **John Gorka** is a world-renowned singer-songwriter who got his start at a neighborhood coffeehouse in eastern Pennsylvania. Though small, Godfrey Daniels was and is one of the oldest and most venerable music institutions, and it has long been a hangout for music lovers and aspiring musicians. In the late 1970s, John was one of these aspiring musicians. Although his academic coursework at Moravian College was in philosophy and history, music began to offer paramount enticements. Soon, he found himself living in the club's basement and acting as resident emcee and sound man, encountering legendary folk troubadours, like Canadian singer-songwriter Stan Rogers, Eric Andersen, Tom Paxton and Claudia Schmidt. Their brand of folk-inspired acoustic music inspired him, and before long he was performing his own songs—mostly as an opener for visiting acts. Soon, he started traveling to New York City, where Jack Hardy's legendary Fast Folk circle (a breeding ground for many major singer-songwriters) became a powerful source of education and encouragement. Folk meccas like the Kerrville Folk Festival (Texas), where he won the New Folk Award in 1984, and Boston followed, and his stunningly soulful baritone voice and original songwriting began turning heads. Those who had at one time inspired him—Suzanne Vega, Bill Morrissey, Nanci Griffith, Christine Lavin and Shawn Colvin—had become his peers.

In 1987, the young Minnesota-based Red House Records caught wind of John's talents and released his first album, *I Know*, to popular and critical acclaim. With unusual drive and focus, John hit the ground running and, when an offer came from Windham Hill's Will Ackerman in 1989, he signed with that label's imprint, High Street Records. He proceeded to record five albums with High Street over the next seven years: *Land of the Bottom Line*, *Jack's Crows*, *Temporary Road*, *Out of the Valley* and *Between Five and Seven*. His albums and his touring (over 150 nights a year at times) brought new accolades for his craft. His rich multifaceted songs full of depth, beauty and emotion gained increasing attention from critics and audiences across the country, as well as in Europe, where his tours led him through Italy, Belgium, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, Switzerland and Germany. He also started sharing tours with many notable friends—Nanci Griffith and Mary Chapin Carpenter among them.

In 1998, John felt the need for a change and decided to return to his musical roots at Red House Records. The choice was driven, in part, by the artistic integrity that the label represents in an industry where the business of music too often takes precedence. The 1998 release *After Yesterday* marked a decidedly different attitude towards making music for John, and his next release *The Company You Keep* held fast to his tradition of fine songwriting, yet moved forward down new avenues. Ani DiFranco, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Lucy Kaplansky and Patty Larkin contributed stellar guitar work and vocals to this fan favorite. *Old Futures Gone* was informed by his life as a husband and father as well as the colorful experience of many hard years on the road. *Writing in the Margins* followed in 2006, an engaging collection of sweet and serious songs that spanned many musical genres—folk, pop, country and soul. In his 11th studio album, he returned to his roots with *So Dark You See* (2009), his most traditional album to date. More critically acclaimed albums followed: *Red Horse* (2010) with Lucy Kaplansky and Eliza Gilkyson, *Bright Side of Down* (2014), *Before Beginning (The Unreleased I Know - Nashville, 1985)* (2016), *True in Time* (2018) and *unentitled* (2025).