



OMAHA
SYMPHONY

Ankush Kumar Bahl, Music Director

program notes

2024/25 SEASON

Mazzoli & Weill

March 2, 2025 | 2 p.m.

The Joslyn | Witherspoon Concert Hall

Maurice Cohn, conductor | Lisa Meyerhofer, piccolo

MISSY MAZZOLI

These Worlds in Us for Chamber Orchestra

LOWELL LIEBERMANN

Concerto for Piccolo & Orchestra, Op. 50

I. Andante comodo

II. Adagio

III. Presto

Lisa Meyerhofer, piccolo

INTERMISSION

ERICH KORNGOLD

Theme and Variations, Op. 42

KURT WEILL

Symphony No. 2

I. Sostenuto – Allegro molto

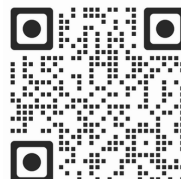
II. Largo

III. Allegro vivace - Presto

This printed program is a condensed version.

For more info about the orchestra, guest artists, and the full program notes, download the Omaha Symphony app or scan this QR code with your mobile device.

*program subject to change



Featured Artists



A two-time recipient of the Solti Foundation U.S. Career Assistance Award, **Maurice Cohn** is currently the 11th music director of the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra. Alongside his work with West Virginia, highlights of his 2024/25 season include appearances with the Filharmonie Bohslava Martinů and the Omaha Symphony.

Highlights of his 2023/24 season included a successful jump-in with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, a return to Aspen Music Festival to conduct the Chamber Symphony in a program that includes the world premiere of Peng-Peng Gong's *Late Bells* for Concertante Piano and Orchestra as well as conducting Mason Bates' *Philharmonia Fantastique* and a concert performance of Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. Recent seasons included debuts with Utah Symphony, Colorado Music Festival, and Symphoria New York, as well as frequent appearances with the Chicago-based contemporary ensemble Zafa Collective and the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble. Maurice served as the assistant conductor of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra until the end of the 2023/24 season.

Maurice was assistant conductor of the Aspen Music Festival in 2022 and returned for another season in 2023 having previously spent two summers as a conducting fellow there. He received the Robert J. Harth Conducting Prize and the Aspen Conducting Prize, and an M.M. in conducting from the Eastman School of Music, where he worked frequently with the Eastman orchestras and OSSIA New Music Ensemble. He holds a B.M. in cello performance from Oberlin Conservatory and a B.A. from Oberlin College, where he studied history and mathematics.



Lisa Meyerhofer is happy to call Omaha home, having moved to the area in 2021. Aside from performing with the Omaha Symphony, Lisa holds positions as Principal Flute with the Des Moines Symphony and Principal Flute with Opera in the Ozarks. She has previously served as Acting Assistant Principal Flute in the Omaha Symphony, Second Flute/Piccolo with the Chattanooga Symphony and Opera, and Principal Flute of the Lexington Philharmonic, and has performed with the Buffalo Philharmonic, South Dakota Symphony, Lincoln's Symphony, Tulsa Symphony, and Canton Symphony.

Lisa is a native of Lancaster, NY, just outside of Buffalo. She earned her BM in Music Education and Performance from Ithaca College, studying with Wendy Mehne and Kelly Covert, and her MM in Flute Performance from Northwestern University, studying with John Thorne and Richard Graef. Other accomplishments include a prize in the 2017 Walfrid Kujala International Piccolo Competition, competing as a quarterfinalist in the National Flute Association's Young Artist Competition, and performing as a winner of the Greater Buffalo Youth Orchestra Concerto Competition.

Outside of performing and teaching flute lessons, Lisa also tutors math and science. She especially enjoys reading, riding her bike, hiking, photography, gardening, cooking, baking, making paper beads and jewelry, sewing, and learning about wine.

Program Notes

by Mathew Fuerst

These Worlds in Us

Missy Mazzoli

Born: October 27, 1980 – Lansdale, Pennsylvania

Piece Length: Approximately 9 minutes.

Notes by the composer.

The title *These Worlds in Us* comes from James Tate's poem *The Lost Pilot*, a meditation on his father's death in World War II:

(excerpt)

My head cocked towards the sky,
I cannot get off the ground,
and you, passing over again,

fast, perfect and unwilling
to tell me that you are doing
well, or that it was a mistake

that placed you in that world,
and me in this; or that misfortune
placed these worlds in us.

This piece is dedicated to my father, who was a soldier during the Vietnam War. In talking to him it occurred to me that, as we grow older, we accumulate worlds of intense memory within us, and that grief is often not far from joy. I like the idea that music can reflect painful and blissful sentiments in a single note or gesture, and sought to create a sound palette that I hope is at once completely new and strangely familiar to the listener. The theme of this work, a mournful line first played by the violins, collapses into glissandos almost immediately after it appears, giving the impression that the piece has been submerged under water or played on a turntable that is grinding to a halt. The melodicas (mouth organs) played by the percussionists in the opening and final gestures mimic the wheeze of a broken accordion, lending a particular vulnerability to the bookends of the work. The rhythmic structures and cyclical nature of the piece are inspired by the unique tension and logic of Balinese music, and the march-like figures in the percussion bring to mind the militaristic inspiration for the work as well as the relentless energy of electronica drum beats.

– Missy Mazzoli

Concerto for Piccolo and Orchestra, Op. 50

Lowell Liebermann

Born: February 22, 1961 – New York City

Piece Length: Approximately 25 minutes.

Commissioned by the National Flute Association, Lowell Liebermann's Piccolo Concerto was premiered in August 1996 by Jan Gippo and the New Jersey Symphony. Its sound world is best reflected by The New Yorker's Alex Ross when he wrote – in praise of Liebermann's compositional style – “[he is] an epicure among American composers, savoring glittery chords, gossamer lines, and velvety textures that more self-consciously intellectual colleagues might be scared to put on paper.” Those gossamer lines and glittering chords shine throughout the concerto, aided by the sheer breadth of timbre achievable by the orchestra's smallest instrument.

Theme and Variations, Op. 42

Erich Korngold

Born: May 29, 1897 – Brno, Moravia, Austria-Hungary

Died: November 29, 1957 – Los Angeles, CA

Piece Length: Approximately 9 minutes.

Erich Korngold was one of the most accomplished child prodigies in the history of Western Classical music. By the age of 11, his ballet *Der Schneemann* (The Snowman) was a hit in Vienna. At 19, his operas were being conducted by the great Bruno Walter, while the pianist Artur Schnabel presented his Piano Sonata No. 2 on tours throughout Europe. His early works show a mastery of orchestration and harmony that rival Richard Strauss in complexity and chromaticism. Due to the rise of the Nazi Party, Korngold immigrated to the United States in 1934 where he would become one of the most important film composers in movie history. He would go on to write the soundtracks for *Captain Blood* - starring a young Errol Flynn - *Anthony Adverse*, and *The Adventures of Robin Hood* - winning Academy Awards for the latter two scores. Korngold continued to compose concert music as well, including the beautiful Violin Concerto that Blake Pouliot performed with the Omaha Symphony last season and the Theme and Variations on this afternoon's concert, commissioned by the American School Orchestras' Association in 1953.

Symphony No. 2

Kurt Weill

Born: March 2, 1900 – Dessau, German

Died: April 3, 1950 – New York, NY

Piece Length: Approximately 30 minutes.

Kurt Weill's Symphony No. 2 was commissioned by Princesse Edmond de Polignac, a patron of the arts whose salons offered first performances of works by Debussy, Fauré, and Ravel. The Princesse would go on to support many of the young avant-garde composers of the 20th century through commissions – including Stravinsky, Milhaud, Poulenc and, of course, Kurt Weill. Weill is best known for his collaborations with Bertolt Brecht, such as *The Threepenny Opera*, the song “Mack the Knife,” and *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahogany*. Despite his fame with works for the stage, however, Weill's career started as a composer of concert music. The music in Symphony No. 2 does not contain much of the musical language that one might expect from Weill's collaborations with Brecht, but it does showcase Weill's rich melodic inventiveness. Work on the symphony began in Berlin in January 1933. The rise of the Nazi Party in Germany forced Weill to flee to France – while in the middle of a divorce from the singer Lotte Lenya. (They would reconcile and remarry four years later). While there is no specific program that Weill provided for the symphony - in fact, he was rather adamant in insisting there was none – it's hard not to make connections between the events in his life surrounding the composition of the symphony and the music itself. Interwoven throughout this early 20th century symphonic showcase is Weill's own anxieties, his triumphs, and an ever-present motif redolent of Beethoven's Fifth – the hand of fate, knocking at the door.