



OMAHA
SYMPHONY

Ankush Kumar Bahl, Music Director

program notes

2024/25 SEASON

A Symphonic Journey – Rick Steves

February 15–16, 2025 | 7:30 p.m. & 2 p.m.

Holland Performing Arts Center

Ernest Richardson, conductor | Rick Steves, host

JOHN STAFFORD SMITH (ARR. DAMROSCH)

The Star-Spangled Banner

JOHANN STRAUSS II

Emperor Waltzes, Op. 437

RICHARD WAGNER

Prelude to Act III from Lohengrin

BEDŘICH SMETANA

The Moldau, from Má vlast

EDWARD ELGAR

Pomp and Circumstance: No. 1 in D Major

INTERMISSION

NIKOLAI RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

Capriccio espagnol, Op. 34

IV: Scene e canto gitano

V. Fandango asturiano

GIUSEPPE VERDI

Hymn and Triumphal March from Aida

EDVARD GRIEG

Morning from Peer Gynt Suite No. 1, Op. 46

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

Marche militaire française from Suite algérienne, Op. 60

LUDVIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125

IV. Allegro assai – Allegro assai vivace

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA (ED. MCALISTER)

The Stars and Stripes Forever





Ernest Richardson, conductor

Ernest Richardson is in high demand as conductor, composer, arranger, organizational leader and inspirational speaker. His versatility finds him within one season conducting Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite* or Broadway artists in the works of Leonard Bernstein, a live-to-movie production of *Harry Potter*, facilitating strategic decision-making for leading arts organizations, or training young musicians for the passionate, persistent pursuit of perfection.

He has been at the forefront of symphonic video/live music productions, conducting live-to-movie scores of the *Harry Potter* series with CineConcerts, *Indiana Jones*, *Jurassic Park*, *Back to the Future*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *Casablanca*, *Ratatouille*, *Star Trek* (2009), the Charlie Chaplin silent film *The Gold Rush*, and *Star Wars*.

In addition to his post in Omaha, Richardson holds the position of music director and principal conductor of the Steamboat Symphony Orchestra in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. During his tenure, the organization has grown from a community orchestra to a resident professional orchestra, attracting the finest musicians from the Front Range of Colorado. He is also the founding artistic director and CEO of the Rocky Mountain Summer Conservatory.



Rick Steves, host

Rick Steves is a popular public television host, a best-selling guidebook author, and a passionate speaker who encourages Americans to broaden their perspectives through travel. For 100 days each year, Rick hits and misses his way across Europe, bringing home the hits and teaching in hopes that others can learn from his experiences to enjoy smoother, smarter, and more impactful trips. He taught his first travel class at his college campus in the mid-1970s—and now, more than 40 years later, he continues to teach audiences around the country the skills needed to get the most out of their upcoming travels.

Widely considered America's leading authority on European travel, Rick has traversed the country speaking at major lecture series, corporate events, and globally minded universities to share the transformative power of travel and the skills needed to access it. Smart travel begins with the fundamentals, and Rick alleviates travelers' anxieties by teaching them how to plan an itinerary, pack light and right, stay safe abroad, select excellent places to eat and sleep, and connect meaningfully with local people. Most of all, Rick draws on stories from a lifetime of travel—from thin-air thrills tight-rope on alpine ridges, to fierce backgammon battles with playful Turks, to marveling with teary-eyed Germans at the blessing of democracy atop their new parliament building in Berlin. Rick understands what we can learn about our home by leaving it, and he makes it his teaching mission “to equip and inspire Americans to venture beyond Orlando.”

Rick spends about three months a year in Europe researching guidebooks, fine-tuning his tour program, filming his TV show, and making new discoveries for travelers. To recharge, he plays piano, relaxes at his family cabin in the Cascade mountains, and spends time with his son Andy and daughter Jackie. He lives and works in his hometown of Edmonds, Washington, where his office window overlooks his old junior high school.