



Tchaikovsky's Serenade

February 2, 2025 | 2 p.m.

The Joslyn

Ankush Kumar Bahl, conductor

KEVIN PUTS

Elegy

IGOR STRAVINSKY

Symphonies of Wind Instruments [1947]

DARIUS MILHAUD

The Creation of the World, Op. 81

Overture

1st tableau: The Chaos Before Creation

2nd tableau: The Birth of Flora and Fauna

3rd tableau: The Creation of Man and
Woman

4th tableau: Desire

5th tableau: Spring or Appeasement

INTERMISSION

PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

Serenade for Strings in C Major, Op. 48, TH 48

I. Pezzo in forma di Sonatina

II. Walzer

III. Élégie

IV. Finale (Tema Russo)

Featured Artists



Currently in his fourth season as Music Director of the Omaha Symphony, **Ankush Kumar Bahl** has delivered resonant performances of masterworks (new and old) and continues to champion American composers and artists while pursuing innovative, community-based concert design. Committed to expanding the American repertoire, the Omaha Symphony and Maestro Bahl have commissioned seven new works in their first four seasons together and in 2023, their live recording of Andy Akiho's *Sculptures* garnered the Omaha Symphony its first GRAMMY nominations in the orchestra's history. On the podium, Bahl is recognized by orchestras and audiences alike for his impressive conducting technique, thoughtful interpretations, innovative concert experiences, and engaging presence.

Program Notes

Elegy

Kevin Puts

Born: January 3, 1972 – St. Louis, Missouri

Piece Length: Approximately 5'.

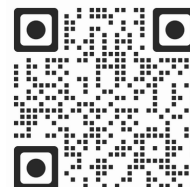
Based on an earlier piece for string quartet, *Elegy* was written for the Bay Brass in 2009. I composed the original version at the request of Barry Jekowsky, Music Director and founder of the Walnut Creek-based California Symphony, in memory of our friend Dr. Stanton Schwartz, who was an avid supporter of the orchestra for which I had the great honor of serving as Young American Composer-in-Residence from 1996-1999. I would like to thank Robert Ward, composer and hornist in the group, for his invaluable expertise and advice in this arrangement.

–Kevin Puts

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



Symphonies of Wind Instruments

Igor Stravinsky

Born: June 17, 1882 – Lomonosov, Saint Petersburg, Russia

Died: April 6, 1971 – New York, NY

Piece Length: Approximately 9'.

Igor Stravinsky's development can be broken into three periods. His *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*, composed in 1920, defies and yet builds bridges between the first two: Russian and Neoclassical. The work contains small musical fragments that could have come right out of *The Rite of Spring*, but unlike the massive forces required of the ballet, *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* leans into economy of material and emotional restraint. The first music of what would become the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* appeared in the music journal *La Revue musicale*. Stravinsky was asked to contribute a piece in honor of Claude Debussy, who had died in 1918. He composed a short chorale for piano for the issue; this would become the foundation for *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*. The first version was premiered in 1921; unfortunately, the reception was extremely negative, with listeners unable to make sense of the work. The English music critic Ernest Newman commented after, "I had no idea Stravinsky disliked Debussy so much as this." Perhaps part of the difficulty lay in the title – Stravinsky was using the ancient Greek translation of symphony – "playing together" – rather than any homage to Mozart or Haydn. In 1947, Stravinsky reorchestrated *Symphonies* to the version performed today, replacing some lesser used wind instruments such as the alto flute and basset horn with flute and clarinet.

The Creation of the World, Op. 81

Darius Milhaud

Born: September 4, 1892 – Marseille, France

Died: June 22, 1974 – Geneva, Switzerland

Piece Length: Approximately 15'.

In June 1920, Darius Milhaud was in London for a performance of his popular *Le Bouef sur le toit* (*The Ox on the Roof*) when he heard jazz for the very first time. This experience impressed him greatly, so much so that two years later, when Milhaud went to America for a series of concerts in New York City, Philadelphia, and Boston, he made sure to carve out time to go to clubs and listen to as much jazz as possible. The first result of this is arguably his most famous work, the ballet *La création du monde* – *The Creation of the World*. Leonard Bernstein described it as "not as a flirtation but as a real love affair with jazz." The music was written for the Ballets Suédois, a company that rivaled Serge Diaghilev's famous Ballets Russes (for whom Stravinsky wrote his three early ballets *The Firebird*, *Petrushka*, and *The Rite of Spring*!) The libretto of the ballet, by the modernist novelist Blaise Cendrars, is based on African folk mythology. *The Creation of the World* was premiered October 25, 1923, at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and was a succès de scandale.

Serenade for Strings in C Major

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Born: May 7, 1840 – Votkinsk, Russia

Died: November 6, 1893 – Saint Petersburg, Russia

Piece Length: Approximately 30'

In 1880, Tchaikovsky composed two of his most performed works, the *1812 Overture* and the *Serenade for Strings*. While he considered the overture “very loud and noisy, but [without] artistic merit, because I wrote it without warmth and without love,” the *Serenade for Strings* came from a desire for self-expression. In a letter to his benefactor Nadezhda von Meck, he stated “The *Serenade*... I composed from an innate impulse; it is something I felt deep within myself, and therefore, I dare to think, is not devoid of true merit.” He is correct in his assessment of the work. It has remained among his most beloved pieces since its first performance at a private concert held in his honor at the Moscow Conservatory.

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