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Joshua Roman returns to Omaha Symphony for *Dreamsongs & Haydn*

Cello Concerto Dreamsongs composed for Roman by Pulitzer Prize winner Aaron Jay Kernis

OMAHA, Neb., Feb. 28, 2017- Virtuoso cellist Joshua Roman will return to Omaha to perform a concerto written for him by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Aaron Jay Kernis in the Symphony Joslyn program *Dreamsongs and Haydn*, Sunday, March 12, 2 p.m., at Joslyn Art Museum.

Conducted by Music Director Thomas Wilkins, the program will also include Martinů's Serenade for Chamber Orchestra, McTee's Adagio for Strings, and Haydn's Symphony No. 102. Roman returns to perform with the Omaha Symphony for his second time this season for *Dreamsongs*.

Aaron Jay Kernis is considered among the most accomplished representatives of the eclecticism of post-modern composers, embracing soaring melody, consonance, dissonance, drive, relaxation, color, strong harmony, and form. His *Dreamsongs* cello concerto unusually unfolds in two movements: the opening *Floating Dreamsongs*, an ethereal movement that evokes its name, and *Kora Song*, a movement that reflects Kernis' interest in global musical cultures. The kora, an African string instrument plucked like a guitar or banjo, is mimicked in the concerto by the soloist using a pick.

Dreamsongs was composed in 2013 while Kernis and Roman were living in neighboring apartment buildings in 2013. The duo, who had already collaborated through performance, found themselves working closely during the writing process.

"He would send me a text or email- 'are you at home?'" Roman recalled. "If I was, he would stop over with a snippet of something he'd written and I would try it on the cello and figure out if it would work, or how it could be changed to be more idiomatic to the sound he wanted."

When *Dreamsongs* was complete, Roman said the end result was gratifying and humbling at the same time, as he felt Kernis had captured much of their friendship and Roman's own personality as a person and cellist in the piece.

"It's humbling to be that close to the creative process," he said.

While Kernis' *Dreamsongs* breaks new ground, Haydn's own works helped develop the uncertain, fledgling symphonic format into a vehicle of musical invention. His 102nd Symphony was among the composer's last 12 symphonies, works that represent the genre at the peak of its development. It embodies the best attributes of its composer, delivering vast unleashed power and high spirits.

Joshua Roman has earned an international reputation for his wide-ranging repertoire, artistic leadership, versatility, and a commitment to communicating the essence of music in visionary ways. He is also recognized as an accomplished composer and curator, and was named a TED Senior Fellow in 2015. Roman has been hailed by the *Des Moines Register* as the musician most likely to succeed Yo-Yo Ma as the most famous cellist of the next

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generation. This is Roman's second appearance with the Omaha Symphony this season, having performed February 17 & 18 on the MasterWorks series, and his fourth appearance overall.

Symphony Joslyn concerts explore the unique connections between art and music. The highlighted work paired with this concert is *Cirium*, an acrylic on canvas from 1964 by Kenneth Noland. It is a light-filled abstraction of contrast and energy. Committed to evoking harmonies through the dynamics of pure saturated color and simple forms, Noland explored what happens when form inside a work is allowed to determine the shape outside: *Cirium* is an unusual and elegant diamond that seem to float on the wall. Joslyn curators will deliver preconcert talks about this piece at 1 p.m. and 1:25 in the U.S. Bank/Rismiller Pavillion Gallery 16.

Tickets to the concert are \$33. Joslyn Art Museum members may purchase single concert tickets for \$28.80 each (a 20% savings). Joslyn members must call Ticket Omaha to reserve advance single tickets or show a Joslyn membership card if purchasing tickets at the door the day of the concert. All other tickets can be purchased by visiting www.omahasymphony.org or by calling Ticket Omaha at 402.345.0606. Student Rush tickets are available one hour prior to the concert. Any student with a valid student ID may purchase up to two Student Rush tickets for \$10 each.

The Omaha Symphony is a non-profit organization that presents more than 100 live orchestral performances from September through June. In addition to MasterWorks, Symphony Pops, Symphony Rocks, Movie Music, Symphony Joslyn, and Family series concerts, the Omaha Symphony's nationally recognized education programs touch the lives of nearly 30,000 schoolchildren each year. For tickets or information regarding the Omaha Symphony, call 402-345-0606 or visit omahasymphony.org.

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