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Omaha Symphony performs the works of Bernstein & Mahler

Program includes Bernstein's Serenade and Mahler's Symphony No. 4

OMAHA, Neb., April 5, 2018- The Omaha Symphony continues its celebration of Leonard Bernstein's centennial with *Bernstein & Mahler*, Friday and Saturday, April 13 & 14, 7:30 p.m., at the Holland Performing Arts Center.

Conducted by Music Director Thomas Wilkins, *Bernstein & Mahler* will include two Bernstein pieces, *Slava!* and his *Serenade*, after Plato's *Symposium*, featuring guest violinist Liza Ferschtman, as well as Mahler's Fourth Symphony. Concertmaster Susanna Perry Gilmore will be featured in the second movement of the Mahler symphony, as well as soprano Amy Owens in the fourth movement.

Serenade, after Plato's *Symposium*, written for solo violin, strings, and percussion, is widely considered Bernstein's finest concert piece. Written in 1954, Bernstein composed *Serenade* after re-reading Plato's *Symposium*, one of the Greek philosopher's famous dialogues considering the nature of love. Despite each movement bearing the name of one of Plato's speakers, Bernstein denied a literal correspondence between his work and Plato's.

The second half of the program features Mahler's most popular symphony, No. 4 in G Major. Coincidentally, Bernstein was a huge champion of Mahler, sparking a revival of appreciation for the composer and his work in the 1960s, after nearly 50 years of relative neglect. While much of Mahler's music addresses the issue of mortality, his Fourth Symphony perhaps offers the composer's happiest meditation on the subject, tracing a musical journey from earthly life through death to heavenly afterlife. The second movement is a scherzo with a macabre aspect, that of a Pied Piper-type figure striking up a fiddle to lead his followers to the realm of death. The fiddle is performed in an unorthodox tuning, a few steps higher than normal, and will be played by Gilmore.

Dutch violinist Liza Ferschtman is renowned for her passionate performances, superlative musicianship, and imaginative programming. She made her U.S. debut in 2015 playing the Bernstein *Serenade* with the Dallas Symphony, inspiring the *New York Times* to write of her performance: "Dutch violinist Liza Ferschtman bringing refined beauty and character to the solo part of the Bernstein... the concert was nothing short of revelatory." She has performed with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, London Philharmonic, Hong Kong Philharmonic, and many more, including virtually every orchestra in The Netherlands. In 2006, she received the Dutch Music Prize, the highest accolade awarded to a musician in The Netherlands.

Soprano Amy Owens is making her second appearance with the Omaha Symphony this season, after performing *Carmina Burana* in November 2017. She has performed with the Buffalo Philharmonic, Virginia Symphony, Dallas Opera, and the Washington Concert opera series "Opera Outside." Owens has fulfilled young artists residencies with the Santa Fe Opera, Utah Opera, Central City Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, and Utah Festival Opera.

Tickets to *Bernstein & Mahler* start at \$19. They can be purchased by visiting www.omahasymphony.org or by

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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.

Prior to each MasterWorks performance, one of the Omaha Symphony conductors will lead concertgoers in a step-by-step guide through the evening's program. These preconcert preludes begin at 6:45 p.m. in the Orchestra Level Lobby.

The Omaha Symphony MasterWorks series is sponsored by Omaha Steaks.

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, Movies, 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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