



OMAHA SYMPHONY

program notes

2025/26 SEASON



Physicians Mutual®

OMAHA SYMPHONY

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

December 11-14, 2025

Holland Performing Arts Center

Ernest Richardson, conductor

Sponsored by:



Physicians Mutual®



Immanuel communities

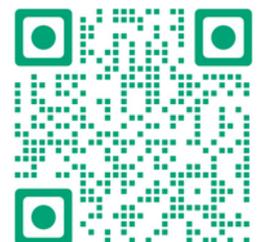


Kiewit



Get more with our digital program book!

This printed program is a condensed version. For more info about the orchestra, guest artists, and the music, download the Omaha Symphony app or scan this QR code with your mobile device.



Program List

O Come, All Ye Faithful

WADE, ARR. ROBERTSON

Spirit of the Season from The Polar Express

SILVERSTRI, ARR. POPE

That's What Christmas Means to Me

ARR. LANGFORD

Angel's Dance

S. AMUNDSON

Wexford Carol & Christmas Reel

TRADITIONAL, ARR. TYZIK

Go Tell it On the Mountain

TRADITIONAL, ARR. STEPHENSON

Christmas Time

ARR. BISBANO

I'll Be Home for Christmas

KENT, ARR. KATSAROS

Santa, Can't You Hear Me

ARR. MCKENZIE

Be a Santa from Subways are for Sleeping

STYNE, ARR. MEYERS & CASTLE

INTERMISSION

Joy to the World (Joyful Joyful)

ARR. GALBRAITH

My Favorite Things from The Sound of Music

RODGERS, ARR. WHITFIELD

Kid on Christmas

ARR. BRYMER

Pat-a-Pan

DE LA MONNOYE, ARR. KATSAROS

Everything's Great at the Top of the World from Finding Christmas

KATSAROS

Love is Christmas

BAREILLES, ARR. SARSANY

Pas de deux from The Nutcracker

TCHAIKOVSKY

Silent Night

GRUBER, ARR. RICHARDSON

Sleigh Ride

ANDERSON

I Saw Three Ships/

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

TRADITIONAL, ARR. RICHARDSON

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

ARR. WASSON

O Holy Night

ADAM, ARR. RICHARDSON

Hark Ye Shepherds

TRADITIONAL, ARR. RICHARDSON

We Wish You a Merry Christmas

TRADITIONAL, ARR. RAIMAN, SEIGEL & MOYTCKA

Featured Artists



Ernest Richardson

Ernest Richardson is the principal pops conductor and resident conductor of the Omaha Symphony. Since 1993, he has been integral in the development of the Symphony's vaunted education and community engagement programs, in addition to his artistic leadership in the "Live With" Series with popular music, dynamic performers, rock bands, movie favorites, and more. Richardson's innovation can be especially seen in the Symphony's Choral Collaborative, Celebrate Creativity, and Mission: Imagination programs, which remain mainstays of the organization's season.



Parker Esse

Parker Esse is a multi-award-winning director/choreographer known for his visionary, energetic, and earnest story-driven work. He has been hailed a "genius" by national publications such as *The Washington Post*. After performing as a featured performer on Broadway in the Tony Award winning *Fosse* (with Ben Vereen, Bebe Neuwirth and Ann Reinking, which was taped for PBS Great Performances), in National Tours and Regionally, he began collaborating on multiple Broadway, Off-Broadway, NYC and Regional shows as an associate director/choreographer.



Shereen Ahmed

Soprano **Shereen Ahmed** was seen on Broadway in *My Fair Lady* as Eliza. Off-Broadway, she has been seen as Franca in *The Light in the Piazza* (City Center Encores!), Adele in *A Man of No Importance* (Classic Stage Company), and originated Ellen in *The Age of Innocence* at The Old Globe and Arena Stage. In concert, she has performed for President Biden at the White House and headlined The Grand Egyptian Museum Opening Ceremony in Cairo, Egypt. Shereen has been profiled in *Vogue Arabia* and named one of the "40 Under 40" accomplished Arab Americans. She is a guest speaker at the UN and a global ambassador for Education for Employment (EFE). Instagram: @shereen_ahmed



Diane Phelan

Diane Phelan starred as Cinderella in *Into the Woods* on Broadway, a role she reprised on the recent limited engagement national tour. Other Broadway/NY credits include *School of Rock* (Wintergarden), *The King and I* (Lincoln Center), *Bernarda Alba* (Lincoln Center), *South Pacific* (Lincoln Center Tour). Select favorites include Belle in *Beauty and the Beast* (CSTC), Maria von Trapp in *The Sound of Music* (La Mirada), Imelda in *Here Lies Love* (The Public), Julie Jordan in *Carousel* (Baayork Lee's NAAP), Mable in *Pirates of Penzance* (CTRep), and Maria in *West Side Story* at the Paris Chatelet.



Markel Reed

Baritone **Markel Reed** "brings great articulate power and style" (*Broadway World*) to concert, recital, and opera performances throughout the U.S., Canada, and Europe. A passionate conveyor of the operatic repertoire, Reed has been cited for "delight[ing] the crowd with his musical and dramatic expression" (*Upstage Post*) in both standard and contemporary works. Recent operatic highlights include performing as Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at Virginia Opera, Parson Alltalk in *Treemonisha* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Young Emile in *Champion* with Boston Lyric Opera, and Joey in *The Time of Our Singing* with Theater St. Gallen in Switzerland.



John Riddle

Tenor **John Riddle** originated the roles of Hans in Disney's *Frozen* and Young Anton in *The Visit* on Broadway. He also played Raoul in the closing Broadway company of *The Phantom of the Opera*. Off-Broadway, John created the role of Cal Hockley (Lortel nom.) in the hit musical *Titanique*. His other credits include George in *Sunday in the Park...at The Glimmerglass Festival*, Jean Valjean in *Les Mis* and Anatoly in *Chess* (Critics Circle Award) at the MUNY. He has also been a featured soloist with the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra, The American Pops Orchestra, The Naples Opera and recently debuted his new solo show *Blue Lady*. John is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM).



Eloise Kropp

Dance Captain **Eloise Kropp** has been seen on Broadway in *Cats* (JennyAnyDots), *Dames At Sea* (Ruby), *On The Town* (Claire U/S), and *The Music Man* (ensemble). She has also been cast on TV and Film in *Fosse/Verdon*, *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, and *West Side Story*. Most recently, Eloise was in the world premiere of *Schmigadoon!* at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. All the love in the world to my family and friends, CGF, JBR and Amy, and Polly! Proud RN/BSN.



Gaby Albo

Dancer **Gaby Albo** is a proudly Mexican performer whose journey began as a very shy child; she never imagined she would end up performing not just for a living but as a life purpose. Her fifteen years in show business include *West Side Story*, *Evita*, *Aladdin*, *Cats*, starring as Anne Boleyn and the conga queen Gloria Estefan in the national tours of *Six* and *On Your Feet!* She is the proud recipient of two prestigious Helen Hayes Awards. She was also a semi-finalist in *The Voice México*. She is thankful for every person, teacher, show or magical event that has led her to today, making her symphonic debut in Omaha. Her goal is to always touch someone's heart through her art – let's spread love! @gaby.albo



RJ Higton

Dancer **RJ Higton** made his Broadway debut as Chet in the Tony Award Winning Best Musical, *The Outsiders* (Original Broadway Cast) directed by Danya Taymor. He has also been seen in *Boop!* (Original Broadway Cast) directed by Jerry Mitchell, Riff in *West Side Story* (Casa Manana Theatre) directed by Parker Esse, and *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* Season 5 (Amazon Prime) directed by Amy Sherman-Palladino. He is an alumni of The University of Michigan (MT) and represented by Douglas, Gorman, Rothaker, & Wilhelm Inc. @rj_higton



Derek Jordan Taylor

Dancer **Derek Jordan Taylor** is so excited to be making his way to the Omaha Symphony for the holiday season. Originally from Concord, NH, Derek grew up dancing and performing in local theater productions. Since departing college early in 2023, Derek has been a part of three Broadway productions. Those include *Funny Girl*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *BOOP! The Betty Boop Musical*. Derek would like to thank his Mom for her endless support, and sends love to Kayla and Brooklyn. Happy Holidays!

Special Thanks to Our Community Members

The Omaha Symphony would like to thank the following for their involvement with this year's Physicians Mutual Omaha Symphony Christmas Celebration!

- Anne Nagosky Violin & Viola Studio
- Heartland Youth Ballet
- Immanuel Chimers
- Omaha Area Youth Orchestra
- Omaha Conservatory of Music
- Résonance
- SNJ Studio
- UNO Brass Quintet

Résonance Members

Lauren Breed, Todd Brooks, Tara Cowherd, Zachary Fisher, Maxwell Heyden, Clara Kizer, Jamie Luedtke, Kimberly McGreevy, Eric Micks, Lauren Morrissey, Joseph O'Connor, Bret Olsen, Justin Parsley, Liam Richardson, Jillian Solano, Emily Voogd

Youth Ensemble Members

Lyla Barnes, Levi Grein, Ciaran Jimenez-Creegan, Reagan Lawler, Jetta Liermann, Lucy Posch, Finley Potter