



OMAHA  
SYMPHONY

Ankush Kumar Bahl, Music Director

program notes

2022/23 SEASON

# Beethoven 2 & Hummel's Trumpet Concerto

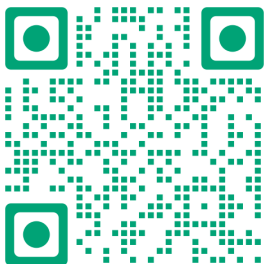
Sunday, January 8, 2023 at 2 p.m.

Strauss Performing Arts Center

Ankush Kumar Bahl, conductor | Scott Quackenbush, trumpet

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JOHANNES BRAHMS,  
arr. BRIGHT SHENG

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arr. BRIGHT SHENG

JOHANN NEPOMUK  
HUMMEL

EDW. KENNEDY "DUKE"  
ELLINGTON, arr.  
MORTON GOULD

LUDWIG VAN  
BEETHOVEN

*Prelude to Black Swan:*  
(After Brahms Intermezzo Op. 18, No. 1)

*Black Swan (Intermezzo):* (After Brahms  
Intermezzo in A Major, Op. 118, No. 2,  
"Andante teneramente")

*Concerto in E-flat Major for Trumpet &  
Orchestra*

I. Allegro con spirito

II. Andante

III. Rondo

*Solitude*

*Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 36*

I. Adagio Molto - Allegro con brio

II. Larghetto

III. Scherzo: Allegro

IV. Allegro Molto

\*program subject to change

## featured artists



**Ankush Kumar Bahl, conductor**

Currently in his second season as Music Director of the Omaha Symphony, Ankush Kumar Bahl has delivered resonant performances of masterworks, new and old, championing American composers and artists while pursuing innovative, community-based concert design. Bahl is recognized by orchestras and audiences alike for his impressive conducting technique, thoughtful interpretations, and engaging podium presence. In concert, he has left the *Washington Post* “wanting to hear more” and has been praised by the *New York Times* for his “clear authority and enthusiasm” and ability to “inspire.”

Highlights of previous and upcoming guest engagements include concerts with the New York Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Detroit Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, Orchestre National de France, Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de México, Richmond Symphony, Virginia Symphony, Louisiana Philharmonic, and the National Symphony Orchestra (NSO, in Washington, D.C.). Summer festival appearances engagements include the Copenhagen Philharmonic at Tivoli, Sun Valley Summer Symphony, Wintergreen Summer Music Festival, Chautauqua Institute, Wolf Trap with the NSO, and a debut at the Brevard Music Center in the summer of 2022. An experienced collaborator, Bahl has worked with many prominent soloists, among them Daniil Trifonov, Lang Lang, Sarah Chang, Lara St. John, Karen Gomyo, Aaron Diehl, Bhezod Abduraimov, Benjamin Grosvenor, Orion Weiss, Conrad Tao, Charlie Albright, Anthony McGill, Kelley O'Connor, Philadelphia Orchestra Concertmaster David Kim, and Vesko Eschkenazy, concertmaster of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra.

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**Scott Quackenbush, trumpet**

A native of Ann Arbor, Michigan, Scott Quackenbush began playing the trumpet at age 11. He holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the Eastman School of Music, where he studied with the world-famous teacher Charles Geyer. He was awarded his Master of Music degree from Northwestern University under the instruction of Barbara Butler and received additional training from the Aspen Music Festival and the National Orchestral Institute.

Scott joined the Omaha Symphony as principal trumpet in 2008 and has worked with other area ensembles as well, including the Omaha Chamber Music Society, Offutt Brass, and a tour with Brass in Blue. He also maintains a position in Music of

the Baroque in Chicago. In addition to his performance work, Scott is an artist-in-residence at UNL, an adjunct lecturer at Creighton University, and occasionally coaches local players. Scott can be heard on several albums released by Music of the Baroque, as well as their PBS holiday broadcast. Scott lives in Papillion with his wife, Maria, a music teacher in Bellevue Public Schools, and his son, Jacob.

# program summary



## ***Prelude and Black Swan***

**Bright Sheng**

**Born:** Shanghai, China, December 6, 1955

In 2006, Seattle Symphony Music Director Gerard Schwarz collaborated with Starbucks Coffee Company on a CD, the idea being to create an album of arrangements by several contemporary composers of existing pieces for which they had a special affection. Bright Sheng, who has had a long and fruitful relationship with the Seattle Symphony, including a stint in the 1990s as the orchestra's Composer in Residence, provided an engaging arrangement of Brahms' well-known Intermezzo No. 2 in A Major, Op. 118. Sheng's burnished orchestral sonorities – warm and largely focused on the middle and lower ranges of the symphonic palette – capture the tender, intimate quality of the original and serve Brahms admirably.

## **Trumpet Concerto in E-flat Major**

**Johann Nepomuk Hummel**

**Born:** Bratislava, Slovakia, November 14, 1778

**Died:** Weimar, Germany, October 17, 1837

Johann Nepomuk Hummel famously studied with Mozart as well as with Mozart's cinematic archrival/assassin Salieri, in addition to Clementi and Haydn. He counted among his friends Beethoven and Schubert, was a skilled conductor, had a good head for administration, and was known for his thoroughly pleasant personality, all wonderful traits, yet today he is best-known for his oft-performed trumpet concerto. Ironically, the concerto was largely ignored during Hummel's lifetime, and he laid it aside; it re-emerged in the 20th century. The work highlights the skill of the soloist – today, Principal Trumpet Scott Quackenbush – and an execution of brilliant, buoyant virtuosity.

**Solitude** arr. Morton Gould

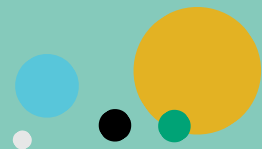
**Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington**

**Born:** Washington, D.C., April 29, 1899

**Died:** New York, New York, May 24, 1974

Emerging after World War I, during a period that expanded the horrors of anti-Black bigotry, Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington led his band at the famed Cotton Club in Harlem in performances aimed at white audiences. By the 1930s he and his musicians toured internationally. The "Duke" drew rapturous acclaim and was soon recognized as the greatest jazz musician in the United States. The eminent jazz historian Ralph Gleason wrote, "Ellington has created his own musical world, which has transcended every attempt to impose category upon it and has emerged as a solid body of work unequalled in American music... His songs have become a standard part of the cultural heritage." In 1934, Ellington composed "(In My) Solitude," a song he created in a mere 20 minutes while waiting for another band to complete their recording session. So taken was Morton Gould with the tune that he arranged an instrumental version that was recorded and released in 1946 as part of a collection titled "String Time" for Columbia Masterworks.

# program summary



## **Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 36**

**Ludwig van Beethoven**

**Born:** Bonn, Germany, December 16, 1770

**Died:** Vienna, Austria, March 26, 1827

One of the clichés of music history is that specific compositions reflect the immediate life circumstances of composers, yet examples abound that contradict this myth. In fact, one can argue that the emotional state of a composer is often inversely proportional to the character of his/her music. Take Beethoven, who composed his lyrical and optimistic Symphony No. 2 not terribly long after he began noticing a worsening of his hearing—a catastrophic loss to anyone, let alone a musician. In October 1802 he wrote a letter to his brother that became known as the “Heiligenstadt Testament.” In it he bewailed his woes, admitted to suicidal thoughts and resolved to “grapple with faith” and persevere. It was obviously a period of great stress and pain for the composer, yet the D-Major Symphony seemed to push away the depressing vicissitudes of his life. This buoyant work illustrates T.S. Eliot’s words that art “is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality.”

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