



OMAHA  
SYMPHONY

Ankush Kumar Bahl, Music Director

program notes

2023/24 SEASON

# Haydn, Wolf and Mozart

Sunday, October 15, 2023 | 2 p.m.

Strauss Performing Arts Center

Ankush Kumar Bahl, conductor | Brett Hodge, French horn

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

Symphony No. 94 in G Major  
"Surprise" or "With the Drum Stroke"

I. Adagio; Vivace assai

II. Andante

III. Menuetto: Allegro molto

IV. Allegro di molto

ADAM WOLF

*Everything In-Between* (World Premiere)

*Brett Hodge, French horn*

**INTERMISSION**

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Symphony No. 41 in C Major, K. 551 "Jupiter"

I. Allegro vivace

II. Andante cantabile

III. Allegretto

IV. Molto allegro

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# Featured Artists



## **Ankush Kumar Bahl, conductor**

Currently in his third 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 already commissioned or premiered five new works in their first three seasons together by celebrated composers including Andy Akiho and Stacy Garrop. On the podium, Bahl is recognized by orchestras and audiences

alike for his impressive conducting technique, thoughtful interpretations, innovative concert experiences, and engaging 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 Bahl’s classical series guest engagements include performances with the New York Philharmonic, Detroit Symphony, Houston Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Orchestre National de France, Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de México, and the National Symphony Orchestra (D.C.). An experienced collaborator, Bahl has worked with many prominent soloists, among them Daniil Trifonov, Lang Lang, Emanuel Ax, Sarah Chang, Bhezod Abduraimov, Conrad Tao, Anthony McGill, and Kelley O'Connor.



## **Brett Hodge, French horn**

Brett Hodge, a native of St. Louis, Missouri, is currently the principal horn of the Omaha Symphony, a position he has held since 2016. In addition to this position, he also serves as the third horn of the Grant Park Music Festival in Chicago, Illinois, where he now spends the majority of his summers. Hodge has appeared as a soloist with numerous organizations, including the Omaha Symphony, Omaha Chamber Music Society, and the Kansas City Symphony. He also frequently appears as a guest artist and lecturer at universities across the country. Notable opportunities have included the University of Iowa, Iowa

State University, the University of Kansas, University of Nebraska at Lincoln, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Columbus State University, and the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

In 2020, Brett founded Horns of the Heartland, a 501(c)(3) non-profit chamber group that performs works for horn ensemble. Led by conductor Martin Hackleman, Horns of the Heartland features French Hornists from the Omaha, Des Moines, Quad Cities, and South Dakota Symphonies. The Horns of the Heartland organization is the steward of the Marina Jan KrolHodge Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Brett holds a Bachelor of Music from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance. His primary teachers include Martin Hackleman, Ellen and Doug Campbell, Thomas Bacon, Tod Bowermaster, Thomas Jöstlein, Roger Kaza, Julie Landsman, and John Thomas.

In his free time, Brett enjoys spending time with his daughter, Paisley, and dog, Sadie.

## **Symphony No. 94 in G Major "Surprise" or "With the Drum Stroke"**

**Franz Joseph Haydn**

**Born:** March 31, 1732 – Rohrau, Austria

**Died:** May 31, 1809 – Vienna, Austria

**Piece Length:** *Approximately 25 minutes.*

Mozart and Haydn were contemporaries and good friends. One can find several connections across their lives as well as in their music; they even enjoyed playing string quartets together. Their two pieces on this afternoon's concert are perfect examples of where these two exceptional men overlapped, not least of which is their association with Johann Peter Salomon. Salomon, a German who moved to London around 1780, was a prominent musical figure who began his career as a brilliant violinist but created a lasting legacy in music as an impresario – someone who organized and financed concerts. He was instrumental in bringing Haydn to London to conduct a series of concerts for which the "Surprise" Symphony was written, and he is credited with giving Mozart's Symphony No. 41 its iconic nickname, "Jupiter." While the fame of Haydn's work lies with the infamous fortissimo chord played in the second movement, the real "Surprise" is the delightful – and ingenious – contrasts present throughout the entire work... and one might be "unsurprised" to find that this became one of Haydn's most popular pieces.

## ***Everything In-Between***

**Adam Wolf**

**Born:** May 6, 1986 – San Diego, CA

**Piece Length:** *Approximately 15 minutes.*

*The composer of Everything In-Between, Adam Wolf was kind enough to provide his own program notes for the world premiere of this concerto, written for Omaha Symphony principal French horn Brett Hodge. The following is an extract of the full notes, which can be found in our Digital Program Book.*

*Everything In-Between* is a single movement, long-form concerto divided up into five smaller segments. Though there are many melodic themes in the piece, one particular theme permeates throughout. I think of this as the 'light bulb' theme, as it was the catalyst to the rest of the piece being written. It is stated most clearly in this first segment, introduced by the horn in the opening phrase. Although the opening segment is without electronics, they're introduced soon after, taking the piece into a place that's high energy, fun, and aggressive in nature. My intention is that the horn, orchestra, and electronics become a trio of sorts. I think of segment three as a ballad, exploring more traditional choices found in concertos for horn and orchestra; it provides some much-needed calm, and pays tribute to the beautiful tone of the horn, especially its use in film music for nearly 100 years. Segment four is my take on a scherzo movement in a symphony, with the electronics prominently featured. The orchestra is used in more of a supporting role to explore colors. The final segment starts with the 'light bulb' theme, represented by the orchestra in its most aggressive and driving form. The form of this segment is a nod to a traditional song form, loosely using verses and choruses to guide the piece to its conclusion. Though the vast majority of this section is fast and energetic, there is a brief moment of slower reflection towards the end, representing my own personal reflection on the process of composing this piece. Writing this piece was one of the greatest privileges of my life. I'm grateful to have done it, and grateful to anyone who has taken the time to hear it."

# Program Notes

## **Symphony No. 41 in C Major “Jupiter”**

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

**Born:** January 27, 1756 – Salzburg, Austria

**Died:** December 5, 1791 – Vienna, Austria

**Piece Length:** *Approximately 35 minutes.*

On August 10, 1788, Mozart completed his Symphony No. 41, ending a remarkably productive summer in which he composed what would become his final three symphonies in a span of six weeks. While many of his works were a result of commissions, gifts for friends, or showcases for his own pianistic talents, there does not seem to be any known reason why these symphonies were written, and it is uncertain if No. 41 was even performed during his lifetime. In any case, Mozart’s friendship with Franz Joseph Haydn – as well as Haydn’s brother, Michael – is evident throughout this monumental work. Indeed, Mozart was such a great admirer of the younger Haydn that Michael’s moving Requiem would become an inspiration for Mozart’s own, and Michael’s sadly rather neglected Symphony No. 28 in C Major may have been in Mozart’s conscious as he composed “Jupiter.” It is fitting that the finale of Mozart’s final symphony is possibly the most impressive movement in his instrumental catalog. Its complexity and sheer, compositional mastery is so extraordinary, historians have difficulty not getting carried away, and it truly warrants the world-encompassing nickname bestowed upon it by Johann Peter Saloman.

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### **This printed program is a condensed version.**

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\*program subject to change

