



FACTS 2018/19

The Organization

- The Omaha Symphony is a non-profit professional orchestra that presents live musical performances from September through June. Currently celebrating its 98th season, it is the largest symphony orchestra in the region.
- The orchestra's annual budget is approximately \$8.7 million.
- With six concert series – **MasterWorks, Symphony Pops, Symphony Rocks, Movies, Symphony Joslyn and Family** – as well as a wide variety of education and community engagement programs, tours and run-outs, and one-night-only special concerts, the orchestra reaches more than 121,000 people each year in Nebraska and western Iowa. The *Physicians Mutual Omaha Symphony Christmas Celebration* production draws increasingly large audiences, and the number of performances has now risen to 10 to accommodate demand.
- The orchestra has invited many world-renowned guest artists to share our stage, including **Yo-Yo Ma, Itzhak Perlman, Ben Folds, Tony Bennett, The Beach Boys, Neil Sedaka, Joshua Bell, André Watts, Martin Short, Bernadette Peters, and Frankie Valli** – to name only a few!
- The orchestra primarily performs in the beautiful Holland Performing Arts Center, which opened in 2005 and accommodates an audience of 1,965 in its concert hall.
- Our paid concert attendance in the 2017/18 season was 70,261 people, the highest since the Holland Center opened. This number does not include complimentary tickets, attendees at free concerts, tour performances, participants in education/community programs, or the audience for our radio broadcasts on KVNO.
- Since 2011/12, the symphony's **paid attendance has risen 45%; overall ticket revenue has increased 80%**.
- The Omaha Symphony generated an estimated **\$45 million economic impact** in Douglas County over a recent five-year span, according to a 2013 study by UNL's Bureau of Business Research.

Funding

- Tickets sales and fee engagements account for only 38% of the orchestra's annual income. The remaining 62% of our income is contributed: 43% of our income is from individual donors, corporate supporters, and foundations; 3% is from government support; and 16% is income from our endowment.
- The Omaha Symphony's endowment fund is currently valued at \$29.8 million, with an additional \$6.3 million in pledges, and an endowment campaign in progress. The symphony's annual endowment draw is 4.75%.

Education & Community Engagement

- Each season, the Omaha Symphony reaches over 34,000 children and adults throughout the state and region with an innovative and nationally recognized music education curriculum designed for students preschool through high school, as well as for adults. The Omaha Symphony also provides professional workshops for band and orchestra directors and for Omaha-area music teachers.
- The Omaha Symphony partners with social service agencies, arts groups, and academic organizations across the metro area to provide engaging programs for thousands of individuals diverse in age, background, and opportunity. Partners include Boys Town, the Salvation Army Omaha Kroc Center, El Museo Latino, Completely Kids, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Omaha Conservatory of Music, Omaha Area Youth Orchestras, Omaha Public Schools, Creighton University, UNO, Joslyn Art Museum, Temple Israel, and others.

Community Leadership

- The Omaha Symphony has a 20-member **Board of Directors**. In addition to top corporate and community leaders, the Board includes representation from the musicians and the Omaha Symphony Guild.
- The **Governing Members** are an active group of nearly 50 supporters who advocate for the orchestra in the community and who enjoy “behind the scenes” social events and programs.
- The **Omaha Symphony Guild** and the **Council Bluffs Guild of the Omaha Symphony** have provided support for the orchestra for many decades.

The Musicians

- The orchestra’s musicians are all paid professionals who are highly trained. Most hold advanced degrees from top music schools and universities.
- The orchestra performs a **38-week season** each year. **Forty-two full-time musicians** form the “core” of the orchestra, and **28 part-time musicians** have annual contracts. Additional musicians are hired as extras, if a concert’s repertoire requires.
- The Omaha Symphony is a desirable orchestra in which to play, and our auditions attract musicians from around the world.
- The orchestra’s excellent musicians also enrich the community by serving as private music instructors, college faculty members, school music teachers, church musicians, chamber music performers, and more.

Thomas Wilkins, Music Director

- Music director since 2005, Thomas Wilkins oversees the orchestra’s artistic development and serves as principal conductor. His contract was recently extended through the 2020/21 season, at which time he will become Music Director Emeritus.
- Thomas also holds the positions of **principal conductor for the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra** and **family and youth concert conductor for the Boston Symphony**. He is a sought-after guest conductor for major orchestras across the nation, and is a **professor of music at Indiana University Jacobs School of Music**.
- Thomas serves on a variety of non-profit boards in Omaha and in other cities, and is an avid golfer. In 2014, Thomas received a Nebraska Governor’s Arts Award for “Outstanding Artist.”

Ernest Richardson, Principal Pops Conductor and Resident Conductor

- Currently in his 25th year with the Omaha Symphony, Ernest Richardson is primary conductor for our Pops, Rocks, and Movies series, and he oversees the orchestra’s education and community engagement programs. In 2016, Ernest received a Nebraska Governor’s Arts Award for Education.
- Ernest is also the **music director of the Steamboat Symphony Orchestra**, and the **artistic director and CEO of the Rocky Mountain Summer Conservatory**.
- Ernest and his family reside in Omaha. He is an avid fly fisherman and has earned a black belt in tae kwon do.

The Staff

- A staff of 24 full- and part-time employees manages the orchestra’s activities. The Omaha Symphony partners with Omaha Performing Arts for certain financial, administrative, and box office functions.
- Jennifer Boomgaarden, previously the executive director of the South Dakota Symphony, was appointed the Omaha Symphony’s president & CEO in July 2018, beginning her new position in September 2018.
- The staff comprises five departments: Artistic Administration, Orchestra Operations & Production, Development (fundraising), Marketing, and Education & Community Engagement.