



**NEWS RELEASE**

**Wichita Symphony Orchestra**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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**WICHITA SYMPHONY PRESENTS INNOVATIVE 360-CONCERT**

**Audience Invited to Sit Around the Orchestra**

WICHITA, KS – The Wichita Symphony Orchestra announces plans for its second annual summertime concert, *Symphony 360*, in the Century II Convention Hall on Saturday, July 23 at 7:30 p.m. Music Director Daniel Hege conducts the orchestra. Soprano Courtenay Budd is the guest soloist.

The program consists of a lush work for orchestral strings, *Sonata da chiesa*, by the contemporary Black American composer Adolphus Hailstork, Samuel Barber's nostalgic *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, featuring soprano Courtenay Budd and sung to a text by James Agee, and Schubert's youthful and buoyant Fifth Symphony.

The orchestra will be seated in the center of the Convention Hall floor. The audience has the option of 360-degree floor seating around the orchestra that offers an intimate up-close view or a more traditional stadium view from the hall's raked seating.

Tickets start at \$40 and are available at [www.wichitasymphony.org](http://www.wichitasymphony.org) or by calling the Symphony Box Office at 316.267.7658.

Events of the past two years forced the Wichita Symphony to adapt and innovate in a constantly changing environment. Unable to present indoor concerts during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Symphony sent small ensembles into community parks for free neighborhood concerts and began collaborating with Botanica, the Wichita Gardens for outdoor concerts at the recently opened Dr. David and Mickie Brown Grand Lawn and Stage in the Koch Carousel Gardens. The Symphony also developed music videos to substitute for in-person Young People's Concerts.

Symphony 360 came about less because of the pandemic but because of a mechanical failure. Seeking to return to an indoor performance during the Summer of 2021, the Symphony scheduled a concert in its usual venue, the Century II Concert Hall. A malfunction and lengthy repair of the pit elevator at the front of the stage required

moving the performance into the larger adjoining Convention Hall, a vast, less intimate space. The Symphony staff adapted and chose to seat the orchestra in the middle of the floor with overhead lighting and sound installed, thus allowing the audience seating around the orchestra in a more intimate, club-like setting. Symphony CEO Don Reinhold noted that many patrons took advantage of the surround-seating, and the arrangement encouraged intermingling and talk between the audience and orchestra members after the concert.

This fall, Music Director Daniel Hege begins his thirteenth season with the Wichita Symphony. Also the Music Director of the Binghamton (NY) Philharmonic and the Principal Guest Conductor of the Tulsa Symphony, Hege has held previous positions with the Syracuse, Baltimore, and Kansas City symphony orchestras. For more information about Maestro Hege, please visit the Wichita Symphony website at <https://wichitasymphony.org/about/artistic-leadership/daniel-hege>.

Soprano Courtenay Budd appeared previously with the Wichita Symphony for the performances of Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* in November 2018. Frequently appearing on the stages of symphonies, operas, and recital halls, Ms. Budd is equally comfortable in music ranging from the Baroque and bel canto repertoire to contemporary works. She was a Metropolitan Opera National Finalist and a First Prize Winner with Young Concert Artists. For more information about Courtenay Budd, please visit her website at <https://www.courtenaybudd.com/Index.asp>.



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