



NEWS RELEASE

Wichita Symphony Orchestra

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact: Don Reinhold, CEO

Phone: (316) 267-5259, ext. 106

Email: dreinhold@wso.org

WICHITA SYMPHONY TAKES FLIGHT WITH *BLUE ELECTRA*

February Masterworks Concert Features New Violin Concerto Inspired by Amelia Earhart

(Wichita, KS) The Wichita Symphony continues its busy winter schedule with a Masterworks concert featuring a new violin concerto inspired by Amelia Earhart and written by GRAMMY-Award-winning composer Michael Daugherty on Saturday, February 11, at 7:30 PM in the Century II Concert Hall.

Tickets are available at the Symphony's website, www.wichitasymphony.org, by calling the Symphony's Box Office at (316) 267-7658, or to walk-ins at the Symphony's second-floor office in the Century II Concert Hall between the hours of 10 AM and 4 PM, Monday through Friday.

Michael Daugherty, whose previous works inspired by American icons Ernest Hemingway and Grant Wood won standing ovations from the Wichita Symphony audience, composed *Blue Electra* for superstar violinist Anne Akiko Meyers, who will be the soloist for this concert. The concerto's title references Earhart's plane, a Lockheed 10-E Electra. Daugherty's new work premiered this past November at the National Symphony in Washington, DC; the Wichita concert marks only the second performance of the piece.

William Grant Still's *Serenade* opens the February 11 concert. Regarded as the "Dean of African-American classical composers, Still infuses his music with romanticism and folk-inspired melodies. In the second half of the concert, the audience will enjoy Robert Schumann's evocation of travels down Germany's Rhine River as the orchestra, under the baton of Music Director Daniel Hege, performs Schumann's Third Symphony, subtitled "The Rhenish."

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The *Washington Post* declared *Blue Electra* "a stunning, cinematic, and relentlessly inventive stretch of music." The composer notes the first movement, "Courage," inspired by a poem written by Earhart, evokes her pioneering flight as the first woman to fly nonstop solo across the Atlantic. In the second movement, "Paris (1932)," Daugherty imagines Earhart as a guest celebrating her Legion of Honor Medal at a high society "Hot Jazz" soirée in Paris. The third movement, "From an Airplane (1922)," is the composer's ruminations on Earhart's dreams of becoming a pilot. The fourth movement, "Last Flight (1937)," reflects on Earhart's attempt to circumnavigate the globe, a flight that ended in her disappearance somewhere over the Pacific. The *Post's* music critic described the ending as speed and stasis at once, terminating in a shock of silence. (Call it G-force.)"

Regarded as one of the world's most esteemed violinists, **Anne Akiko Meyers** regularly performs as a soloist with leading orchestras, in recitals, and is a prolific recording artist with over 40 recordings. In addition to the Wichita Symphony, her 2022 – 2023 orchestral season includes appearances with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the National Symphony, and the orchestras of Detroit, Nashville, and San Diego, among others. Meyers has championed many new works and, in addition to Michael Daugherty, has worked closely with composers Mason Bates, Jennifer Higdon, Arturo Márquez, Wynton Marsalis, and many others. Meyers performs on the Ex-Vieuxtemps Guarneri del Gesù, dated 1741, considered by many to be the finest-sounding violin in existence. For more information about Ms. Meyers, visit her website at <https://anneakikomeyers.com/>.

GRAMMY Award-winning composer **Michael Daugherty** first came to international attention when his *Metropolis Symphony* was performed by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, conducted by David Zinman, at Carnegie Hall in 1994 and subsequently recorded by Decca/Argo. Since then, Daugherty's music has entered orchestral, band, and chamber music repertoire and made him, according to the League of American Orchestras, one of the ten most-performed American composers of concert music today. His music has received six GRAMMY Awards, including Best Contemporary Classical Composition in 2010 for *Deus ex Machina* for piano and orchestra and 2016 for *Tales of Hemingway* for cello and orchestra. For more information about Michael Daugherty, visit his website at <https://michaeldaugherty.net/>.

Daniel Hege marks his 13th season (2022 – 2023) as Music Director and Conductor of the Wichita Symphony Orchestra. Hege is the seventh music director in the orchestra's 77-year history. He is widely recognized as one of America's finest conductors, earning critical acclaim for his fresh interpretations of the standard repertoire and his commitment to creative programming. He served for eleven seasons as the Music Director of the Syracuse Symphony and, in June 2009, was appointed Music Director of the Wichita Symphony. Hege held the position of Principal Guest Conductor of the Tulsa Symphony from 2015–2021, and in May 2018, was appointed Music Director of the Binghamton (NY) Philharmonic. He has also held positions with the Baltimore, Kansas City, and Pacific symphonies. A native of Colorado, Mr. Hege is proud of his Native America Heritage; he is Nez Perce, a member of the Colville Confederated Tribes, and his grandfather, Boyd Eagle Piatote, was a jazz musician and composer.

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