

Omaha Symphony



James Johnson, President and CEO of the Omaha Symphony, spoke at the Treynor Optimist Club on April 14. Mr. Johnson is from Seattle, but his mother's family is from Iowa. He has a Masters degree from Southern Methodist in Texas. He spent 25 years in New York, and 10 years with the New York Pops.

Mr. Johnson came to Omaha in June 2011. The first thing he had to do was hire half his staff, about 16 people. The current program was already planned, so he is planning programs for next year and the following years. He said that the Omaha area has a higher percentage of the population in the area attend concerts than any other major orchestra.

The Omaha Symphony is 91 years old and has 40 full time musicians. They work September through June, with most of their performances at the Holland Center, which was built in 2005. Mr. Johnson said that the Holland Center is one of the finest facilities in the country. The musicians in the symphony are world class musicians.

The symphony also has 40 part time musicians and a \$6.5M budget. It is the largest orchestra in Nebraska and Iowa.

The symphony is non-profit, with half of its funding coming from ticket sales and half is from corporate and individual

contributions. Thomas Wilkins has been the conductor since 2005.

The Omaha Symphony plays more than 30 concerts each year, in six different series. Each series consists of several concerts throughout the year. They also have special concerts. The series are:

- Masterworks series
- Pops series
- Rock series
- Joslyn series – at the Joslyn Art Museum
- Movie music series
- Family series

The Omaha Symphony has several specials for subscribers. They have 50% off on first time subscribers. There is also no fee for exchanges. There are tickets available in all price ranges, some even costing less than movie tickets. More information is available at www.omahasymphony.org.