



# AMERICAN LANDSCAPE

**FEBRUARY 10, 2024, 7:00PM**

**SIMON CONCERT HALL | OMAHA CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC**

**7023 CASS STREET, OMAHA, NE**

**COST: FREE (\$10 DONATION SUGGESTED - [orchestraomaha.org/donate](https://orchestraomaha.org/donate))**



## PROGRAM

### ***A WESTERN PLAINS OVERTURE - An Orchestral Premiere!***

Keith Michael Davis

### **WOOD NOTES**

William Grant Still

- I. Singing River
- II. Autumn Night
- III. Mood Dusk
- IV. Whippoorwill's Shoes

### **AN OUTDOOR OVERTURE**

Aaron Copland

### **RHAPSODY IN BLUE**

George Gershwin

Soloist: Madeline Rogers, Piano



MID-AMERICA ARTS ALLIANCE



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Ashley Byars	Ruth & Ken Meints	

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Virginia Janis	Michael Hartley	

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Cynthia & Robert Serfass	Heather Pash	September Symens-Lacroix

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Amy Lacroix	J. Ronald Johnson	Wendy Petty	

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## WANT TO DONATE?



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# meet our ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL

### Violin I

David Newberry\*  
*Concertmaster*  
Taryn Geiger  
Sophia Revesz  
Linda Autenrieth  
Collin Moriarty  
Leslie Steele  
Seha Ok  
Wendy Petty

### Violin II

Kumiko Tubrick\*  
Trisha Berquist  
Ginny Janis  
Annabelle Abisset  
Bonnie Hartley  
Jenny Reid  
Kelsey Brown  
Abigail Layne

### Viola

Ellie Thomas\*  
Danielle Acers  
Christine Seeman  
Darbi Hight  
Josephine Abuhl  
Sofia Starcic  
Anna Suh

### Cello

Michelle Juon\*  
Camille Hinz  
Annika Shaw  
Laura Goodwin  
Peter Nelson  
Abby King  
Ashley Byars  
Ashley Saddock  
Nicholas Mettler

### String Bass

Justin Zeleski\*  
Michael Overfield

### Flute

Tina Shogrin  
Tina Stoll

### Piccolo

Heidi Korsmo

### Oboe

Jonny Kurt  
Deanna Davis

### Clarinet

Shari Lyles  
Tami Cervantes

### Bass Clarinet

Carol Curry

### Bassoon

Chuck Serfass  
Kate Ziegerer

### Horn

Keith Davis  
Doug Divis  
Don Love  
Lenette Haliburton

### Trumpet

James Lund  
Ryan Anderson  
Caden Cervantes

### Trombone

Robert Serfass  
Hanna Ingraham de Hernandez  
Jeff Ingraham

### Tuba

Nate Griffith

### Piano

Tommy Roustio

### Timpani

Tommy Roustio

### Percussion

Nick Lacroix  
Steve Jordon

### Music Director

Dr. Kenneth Meints

\*section Principal

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## Meet Our Featured Artist Madeline Rogers!

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**MADELINE ROGERS, PIANIST**

Originally from Eldorado, IL, Dr. Madeline Rogers earned a Master of Music from Indiana University Jacobs School of Music as a student of André Watts, and a Doctorate in Musical Arts from the University of Nebraska with Dr. Paul Barnes. Rogers is an accomplished solo and collaborative performer in the US and abroad. In 2019 she collaborated with faculty from various campuses across Nebraska to present a program of music inspired by Shakespeare at Churchill College in Cambridge, UK. In July of 2022, Rogers spent several

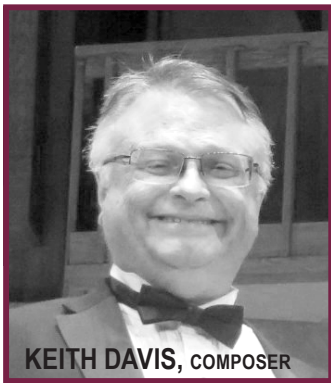
weeks researching the late music of Brahms in Baden-Baden while writing an article for future publishing. During her time in Germany, Rogers performed solo recitals at Brahmshaus Baden-Baden and a collaborative recital in Karlsruhe with clarinetist Valentin Müller. A proponent of living composers, Rogers has worked closely with Victoria Bond to revive a piano concerto that was last performed in 1997 and was the first to premiere the two-piano version of the concerto in 2021. Her most recent scholarship has been on the music of H. Leslie Adams, which will culminate in a new edition of his Horn and Piano Sonata with the American Composers Alliance. Rogers previously taught applied and collaborative piano as an Artist-Faculty member at the Omaha Conservatory of Music and is currently Visiting Assistant Professor of Piano at Berea College. Rogers performs regularly with the Lexington based Chamber Music Ensemble AmadeusLex.

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## **An Orchestral Debut of Keith Davis’ “A Western Plains Overture”**

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Originally composed in 1997 for the Nebraska Wind Symphony concert band, A Western Plains Overture has been rescored for symphony orchestra by the composer. The piece is inspired by the wide open vistas of the Great Plains, and appropriately begins with an expansive fanfare in the horns and brass. The energetic main theme portrays the vigorous spirit of the pioneers of the westward expansion, perhaps evoking scenes of a bustling trading post or cowboys on a cattle drive. This theme leads into a more contemplative second theme which begins softly and builds to grandiose climax. The central section of the overture is a playful treatment of fragments of the various themes, which ultimately leads into a triumphant return of the second theme. This is followed by a recapitulation of the opening fanfare and a shortened version of the main theme. A joyful combination of the main theme juxtaposed with a statement of the opening fanfare in augmentation whisks the overture to a rousing close.

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## **“Who Are The Composers in Your Neighborhood?” Initiative!**

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MID-AMERICA ARTS ALLIANCE

This concert is part of Orchestra Omaha’s newly unveiled “Who are the Composers in Your Neighborhood?” initiative. This project is generously funded by Mid-America Arts Alliance, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the state arts agencies of Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas. This initiative will connect local composers directly with classroom students, offering an opportunity for learning, collaboration and exploring creative potential in the arts. By partnering with local composers, Orchestra Omaha aims to unlock students’ artistic potential, inspire a lifelong passion for music and show that composers can come from anywhere—even your neighborhood!

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# *additional PROGRAM NOTES:*

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## **Wood Notes**

**William Grant Still (1895-1978)**

Inspired by William Grant Still's love of nature and K. Mitchell Pilcher's poetry, Wood Notes is a four-movement orchestral suite. The work premiered in 1948 with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and has since only been recorded once by the Fort Smith Symphony with John Jeter. Scored for full orchestra, Wood Notes utilises many different voices within the ensemble to create both a pastoral and impressionistic atmosphere.

**Movement I – Singing River:** The longest movement of the four, the opening movement is entitled Singing River. The ebb and flow of the string part is said to represent the flow of water as the river passes through the scene. The warm timbre created by the orchestra is decorated by the flute and other woodwind instruments. Perhaps the most quintessential in the American style, this opening movement is lyrical and plays into the pastoral theme. Still uses muted trumpets to create interjections that soon melt back into the rich string theme. As the music grows into the climax of the movement, Still utilises the brass and percussion to bolster the sound and add to the growing dynamics of this section. As the music dies away back into the opening theme, the movement comes to its conclusion after the woodwind have one last play through the principal theme of the movement. The horns play their call theme once more before the strings slowly die away.

**Movement II – Autumn Night:** The swirling second movement opens with a solo flute accompanied by pizzicato strings. The light style of this movement adds more to Still's impressionistic style that sees a number of voices all speaking at once. The lightness in the texture is evident even when lots of voices are singing, with Still uses mutes in the brass once more to create a crisp sound. The jollity of the music comes out in sections of this movement, with the rest of music staying rather mysterious.

**Movement III – Moon Dusk:** Moon Dusk is the slowest movement of the four, with the elongated woodwind opening staying at the core of this movement. Swirling strings accompany, as the woodwind explores this intriguing theme. Once again Still relies on his impressionism rules to create a whirlpool of sound as soloists begin to rear their heads. An oboe solo brings the music into the pastoral side, which is soon followed by a soft violin solo. As the music grows into the climax, the themes fluctuate between voices, creating a really interesting effect. This movement ends quietly.

**Movement IV – Whippoorwill's Shoes:** The playful and humorous finale movement is light on its feet and quick-witted at every turn. Quick and intricate melodies interweave between sections, as Still uses the brass and percussion for bold interjections. The youthful theme is exciting paired with Still's very fast changes between dynamics, character and textures. Similarly to the opening movement, the finale also represents the classic American style from this time, with warm colours from the ensemble and perky melodies taking the lead. The movement ends suddenly and with lots of energy.

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## ***additional PROGRAM NOTES:***

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### **An Outdoor Overture**

**Aaron Copland (1900-1990)**

The late 1930's may have been a rough time for Americans, but it was a fertile time for composer Aaron Copland, who was at the height of his "populist" phase. After periods composing in the jazz and then avant garde idioms, he had set out to consciously simplify his music, using folk themes and writing music for more utilitarian purposes, such as film scores or music for schools. In 1936 he wrote an opera, *The Second Hurricane*, to be sung by children in school performances (along with a chorus for their parents!). Alexander Richter, director of music for the High School of Music and Art in New York City, heard a performance of *Hurricane*, and when he began a campaign to get more new music written for use in schools, he contacted Copland and asked him to be a part of it. The campaign, called "American Music for American Youth," would feature music that was "optimistic in tone, which would have a definite appeal to the adolescent youth of this country."

Copland agreed to the project and created *An Outdoor Overture*, scoring both a band and an orchestral version of the piece. The work was premiered at Richter's school in December, 1938, the same year that Copland completed *Billy the Kid*. The two pieces share some distinct similarities, especially in the opening fanfare of the *Overture*. This fanfare, and an extended trumpet solo, are contrasted with a march-like theme and a lyrical melody for strings, all of which are cleverly woven into the final, joyous conclusion. Copland's contemporary, composer Elliott Carter, wrote that the work "...contains some of the finest and most personal music. Its opening is as lofty and beautiful as any passage that has been written by a contemporary composer."

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# *please enjoy our* **PROGRAM NOTES:**

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## **Rhapsody in Blue**

**George Gershwin (1898-1937)**

Rhapsody in Blue, musical composition by George Gershwin, known for its integration of jazz rhythms with classical music, that premiered on February 12, 1924, as part of bandleader Paul Whiteman's "An Experiment in Modern Music" concert at New York's Aeolian Concert Hall. The composition, perhaps Gershwin's most famous, is one of the most performed of all American concert works, and its opening clarinet glissando is one of the most recognized musical passages in the world. Woody Allen introduced the composition to a new audience with the visually and aurally striking opening of his 1979 film *Manhattan*, and United Airlines's use of the music in its advertisements since the 1980s greatly expanded its global popularity.

Legend has it that Gershwin completely forgot that Whiteman had commissioned a work from him for the upcoming concert in New York. According to the tale, George's brother Ira, on January 3 or 4, read in a newspaper that Whiteman would soon lead his musicians in a concert of works by Victor Herbert, Irving Berlin, and George Gershwin, the Gershwin piece to be a jazz concerto. When Ira asked his brother about the new piece, George expressed astonishment. He remembered talking with Whiteman about a concerto, but he had not understood that it was expected by Whiteman for performance at that concert. Gershwin had only five weeks left before the premiere on February 12.

He began composing the new concerto on January 7 . Because he needed to travel to Boston for the opening of his newest musical, the main theme of Rhapsody in Blue was actually written on the train from New York. The composer later claimed, Gershwin worked quickly, sketching out the ensemble parts of the piece at the piano, then handing over the score to Ferde Grofé, Whiteman's arranger, who orchestrated it. Thanks to their team effort, the band's parts were ready in time, but the solo piano part was not yet on paper. It existed only in the composer's mind, and at the first performance, fronting Whiteman's band, Gershwin played it from memory. Grofé completed a score for piano and full symphony orchestra in 1926.

Ira Gershwin would later recall that George wanted to name his composition *American Rhapsody*, but Ira, having just seen an exhibit of paintings by James McNeill Whistler that included Whistler's painting *Nocturne: Blue and Gold—Old Battersea Bridge*, instead suggested the title *Rhapsody in Blue*. In whatever case, the debut concert, attended by Sergey Rachmaninoff, Leopold Stokowski, and other luminaries, was a triumph, and an American classic was born.