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Omaha Symphony/USAF Heartland of America Band to Mark 9/11 Anniversary with Remembrance, Musical Celebration of American Spirit

Omaha, Neb. – The Omaha Symphony and United States Air Force Heartland of America Band will commemorate the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 tragedy with a very special event in Midtown Crossing's Turner Park, a tribute that will honor our nation's loss and celebrate the American spirit.

The event is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on September 11 and is free and open to the public. Attendees will be treated to a world-class musical performance – the Omaha Symphony partnering with the Heartland of America Band's Brass in Blue. The stirring vocals of special guest artist Ronan Tynan, a world-renowned singer and former member of The Irish Tenors, will add another powerful dimension to the event. Known for his ability to simultaneously console and inspire, event organizers said Tynan is uniquely and perfectly suited for the tribute.

Ernest Richardson, resident conductor, and Thomas Wilkins, music director, will lead the Omaha Symphony during the special concert. They'll be joined on stage by Captain Michael Hoerber, commander and conductor of the USAF Heartland of America Band.

"We cannot imagine a better way to mark the tenth anniversary of 9/11 than to welcome the people of Omaha and the region to join us in Turner Park for a free concert of American music," said both James Johnson, new president and CEO of the Omaha Symphony, and Captain Hoerber. "Our hope is to come together to offer tribute to those who paid the ultimate price for our freedom that day and in the years that have followed."

Both leaders, on 9/11, were in close proximity to the primary attack sites. Hoerber was in Washington D.C. that morning waiting to board a flight home to Phoenix. Coincidentally, he'd just auditioned with the United States Air Force Bands the day before.

"It was truly a surreal day," said Hoerber. "After the Pentagon was hit, they shut down

the airport and told us all we had to leave. Throughout the day, I saw complete strangers talking as if they had known each other for years. Witnessing the incredible spirit of our nation inspired me to pledge to do whatever it would take to join the Air Force Band program so I could serve and contribute in some way."

Johnson was living in New York City with his family at the time of the attacks. Prior to joining the Omaha Symphony, he spent more than ten years as CEO of the New York Pops.

"Before coming to Omaha in June, I was planning a memorial for the tenth anniversary of 9/11 in Central Park in Manhattan," said Johnson. "When I arrived in Omaha and heard that Captain Hoerber had already approached the Symphony about joining forces, I was very excited. The Captain and I agreed that what brought us together in the days after 9/11/01 unites us today: a desire to connect with loved ones and to prove to the perpetrators of those horrible deeds that the American spirit remains unbowed."

Captain Hoerber returns from a six-month deployment to southwest Asia as the Officer in Charge of the U.S. Air Forces Central Band just weeks before the concert. Due to his upcoming military reassignment, he will mark his last performance with the Heartland of America Band at this event.

The 9/11 tribute in Turner Park is scheduled to last 90 minutes. State and local dignitaries are expected to attend. In case of severe weather, the event will be moved to the Holland Performing Arts Center.

Members of the Heartland of America Band are available for interviews up to two weeks prior to the event. Please contact TSgt Amy Lynch at 402-294-0482 to schedule. James Johnson, president and CEO of the Omaha Symphony, is also available for comment. He may be reached at 402-342-3836 X102.

For more information about the commemoration, please visit www.americanspiritomaha.com.

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