

DAKOTA MUSIC TOUR

- ✓ **MAY 22 — Mankato, MN**
Mankato West H.S. Auditorium, 3 PM
- ✓ **MAY 28 — Morton, MN**
Esteban Performing Arts Center, 1 PM
- ✓ **MAY 29 — Granite Falls, MN**
Prairie Edge Casino, 1 PM
- ✓ **JUNE 4 — Winona, MN**
8th Annual Great Dakota Gathering & Homecoming, Unity Park, 12 NOON

The city of Mankato's premiere ensemble, Mankato Symphony Orchestra, and the renowned Dakota singers from Santee Nebraska, Maza Kute, hit the road touring the orchestra music of Mohican composer Brent Michael Davids! No matter what Minnesota weather, blazing sunshine will radiate on four spirited concerts, under the baton of Ken Freed.

A lustrous fanfare opens each concert, as the composition "Honoring Kwa'apoge" leaps from the trumpets and trombones of Mankato Symphony. Suddenly, soft wooden refrains of American Indian flute spring up as composer

Brent Michael Davids performs on his solo pipe of mahogany set against a gentle current of orchestral sounds. The composition is titled after the Pueblo name for Santa Fe, meaning "down at the water where they make the beads they so highly prize." The work is inspired by Pueblo Mockingbird songs, and incorporates actual mockingbird songs into the music.

The second composition features the remarkable Maza Kute singers, taking the stage with a steady succession of drum beats in a traditional song. From the Santee Indian Reservation in Nebraska, the prestigious Native group has been singing for over 30 years, keeping the music alive. "Maza Kute" singers were named by the community in honor of Santee leader Maza Kute.

A lyrical trumpet melody soars in the third composition, "Trumpeting the Stone." Manny Laureano, principal trumpeter for the

Minnesota Orchestra, rouses a brilliant and haunting spirit from his instrument in a way both rich and satisfying. Accompanied by a dark orchestral mood and the water drum one might hear inside an Iroquois longhouse, the trumpet concerto unfolds to a hopeful future, honoring the "People of the Standing Stone," known as the Oneida Nation. Following a Native American theme from its shimmering start to its brisk final two drum beats, the music evokes Oneida life, including Oneida brass bands and the famed Oneida hymn singing.

The composition before intermission is "Black Hills Olowan," for drum group and orchestra. Minnesotans might recognize "Olowan" as the Lakota word for "song." Yes, this composition honors the Black Hills of South Dakota, and the powerful Santee Dakota singers are integrated with the symphonic instruments, as another section of the orchestra. At first, a

glimmer of light violins quietly flicker in the darkness, broken immediately by a swelling up of thunderous drum rolls as if the Black Hills were breathing. Glimpses of the Maza Kute song appear around rocks and crevices of orchestral color, but traveling further into the Black Hills composition, a full

rendition of the final song ultimately shines majestic and magnificent.

The final composition is Davids' fiery "Powwow Symphony." Featuring a joke-telling powwow M.C. and American Indian dancers, the lively work is a "symphonic powwow" brought into the concert hall, and recalls the typical events of a powwow day. With Brent Michael Davids on his signature quartz crystal flute, and Chickasaw/Choctaw actor M. Cochise Anderson as the M.C., the composition starts just prior to the Grand Entry. A sublime adagio "sunset" colors a glowing orchestral landscape. With Grand Entry, a Flag Song, Contest Song, even a Tiny Tot Dance, "Powwow Symphony" vibrantly mixes together the orchestral tradition and Indigenous life, bringing orchestra music to Native audiences in a familiar way, and an understanding of the powwow to audiences already familiar with orchestra music.



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