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Kansas City Symphony's Free Memorial Day Weekend Celebration Grows Bigger, Better for 2015

Event features concert, fireworks, expanded family activities, The Elders, John Amos, U.S. Air Force Band of Mid-America, plus 8 other local groups

KANSAS CITY, Mo. | April 22, 2015 — Kansas City's best Memorial Day weekend concert and party, Bank of America Celebration at the Station, just keeps getting bigger and better — and this year is no exception.

As the largest event of its kind in the Midwest, the Kansas City Symphony expects more than 50,000 people to attend the 13th annual free concert event on Sunday, May 24.

Thousands will gather in front of Union Station to picnic, listen to patriotic tunes and cap off the evening with a massive fireworks display set to the backdrop of the National WWI Museum at Liberty Memorial. While the event is a holiday celebration, it also serves as a special tribute to America's armed forces of past and present. This year, the concert will commemorate the 40th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War. Concurrently, the National WWI Museum is sponsoring the American Veterans Traveling Tribute (AVTT) Vietnam Wall, an 80-percent-size replica of the Vietnam Memorial, from May 22-25.

"There's no event during our season to which we look forward more to than our annual Celebration at the Station for Memorial Day weekend — and thanks to our friends at Bank of America, it really has grown over the years into a huge event!" said Michael Stern, music director of the Kansas City Symphony. "It's amazing to look toward Liberty Memorial from our stage, seeing 50,000 fellow Kansas Citians gathered to mark the holiday with friends and family. It's a moment of real civic pride to celebrate together. But it also affords all of us at the Symphony, with our music, a chance to say thank you to the entire city, as we honor the real and most profound meaning behind Memorial Day. For all of these reasons, this event is much more than just a concert."

Local Irish American folk rock band, The Elders, are special guests for the evening, performing "Building a Boat" and "Please Come Home" with the 80-member Kansas City Symphony. Continuous pre-concert entertainment on the main stage will include the prestigious U.S. Air Force Band of Mid-America "Phoenix Brass," A La Mode Quintet (local swing band), Vine Street

Seven (local big band-style jazz group), Diverse Jazz Quartet and Allegro Choirs of Kansas City: SPIRITO (young men’s choir).

National Guard veteran, actor and former Chiefs running back John Amos will serve as guest host and narrator for the evening. Senior leadership from the United States Army Garrison Fort Leavenworth and Whiteman Air Force Base will be in attendance along with other guests of honor.

New this year is an expanded family area and stage — the Celebration Family Zone — with fun for all ages, including appearances by the Youth Symphony of Kansas City Brass Ensemble, Drum Safari (a community drumming circle), School of Rock, Science City and the Chiefs Rumble Drum Line. The family area also will have chalk art drawings, face painting, a hands-on craft station plus the Bush and Jamie Helzberg Instrument Petting Zoo where children can try their hand at various orchestral instruments.

At 8 p.m., the Symphony will take the stage for an inspiring set of patriotic orchestral music, including the 1812 Overture, complete with three live firing cannons managed by “Truman’s Own” of the Missouri Army National Guard, Battery D. At 9:45 p.m., all heads will turn skyward toward the National WWI Museum at Liberty Memorial for a spectacular display of choreographed fireworks, bursting to the beat of American favorites. This annual fireworks display is the city’s most blazing of the year with more than 1,500 shells deployed.

KCPT 19 will broadcast the event live and is scheduled to rebroadcast the event several times during Memorial Day weekend.

KCPT and other public television stations throughout the region will rebroadcast the event over the Fourth of July weekend. Check local listings for broadcast dates and times. To join in on social media, the official event hashtag is #CelebrationKC.

Event schedule overview for Sunday, May 24. View detailed [event schedule](#).

Time	Event	Location
1 p.m.	Grounds open	Main St. & Pershing
1-7:15 p.m.	Pre-concert entertainment	Main Stage & Celebration Family Zone
8 p.m.	Symphony concert begins	Main Stage
9:45 p.m.	Fireworks begin	Over Liberty Memorial

For photo requests, interviews and other media inquiries, please contact Beth Buchanan at (816) 218-2621, bbuchanan@kcsymphony.org, or Jeff Barker at (816) 218-2626, jbarker@kcsymphony.org.

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About the Kansas City Symphony and Chorus

Founded in 1982, the Kansas City Symphony has established itself as a major force in the cultural life of the community. Praised for performances of uncompromising standard, the orchestra is the largest in the region and enjoys a national reputation under the artistic leadership of Music Director Michael Stern. The Kansas City Symphony Chorus is a volunteer, 160-member ensemble led by multi-Grammy® award-winning conductor, Charles Bruffy, that continues its long tradition of excellence as the choral voice of the Kansas City Symphony. The Kansas City Symphony performs more than 100 concerts each year, while also serving as the orchestra for the Kansas City Ballet and Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and often welcomes guests of international acclaim as part of its Classical and Pops subscription series.

Complementing its full schedule of concerts, the Symphony strives to enrich the lives of Kansas City residents by providing music education opportunities for children and adults, including KinderKonzerts, Young People's Concerts and an instrument petting zoo. Highlights each season include a range of free masterclasses, events and concerts reaching more than 200,000 community members, including the annual Bank of America Celebration at the Station concert each Memorial Day weekend and Symphony in the Flint Hills every summer.

Additionally, the Symphony has released four CDs with Reference Recordings — *Shakespeare's Tempest*, the Grammy®-winning *Britten's Orchestra*, an Elgar/Vaughan Williams project and most recently, *Miraculous Metamorphoses*, which highlights composers Hindemith, Prokofiev and Bartók. Three additional projects have been recorded and slated for future release, including the music of contemporary composer Adam Schoenberg (recorded June 2014), the great Symphony No. 3 (Organ Symphony) and other works of Saint-Saëns (planned for 2015 release) and Holst's *The Planets* (recorded January 2015). The Symphony and Michael Stern also have recorded for the Naxos label. KCS performances can be heard locally each week on KCUR 89.3 FM, Kansas City's NPR affiliate. More information on the Kansas City Symphony is available at www.kcsymphony.org.