



SYMPHONY IN THE FLINT HILLS IS DRAWING TICKET BUYERS FROM ALASKA TO FLORIDA AND CALIFORNIA TO VIRGINIA FOR THE JUNE 10 EVENT

STRONG CITY, KANSAS....If you haven't bought your tickets to the state's newest outdoor music concert, then you might want to get going. Even without an official announcement about the start of ticket sales, people from across the United States have found out about the Symphony in the Flint Hills outdoor music concert, and have been buying tickets at a steady pace. Organizers of the event at the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve near Strong City, Kan., on June 10, 2006, have confirmed that close to 1,000 of the 5,000 available tickets have been sold.

"The largest remaining expanse of tallgrass prairie in North America is located in the Flint Hills of Kansas. Home on the Range speaks to the hearts of people everywhere," says Kathy Miller, board chairperson for the event. "The ticket buyers are using the venue as a way to draw their families together. We know of some ticket purchasers who have bought 40 tickets for their family reunions this summer," reports Miller.

Only 5,000 tickets will be available for this inaugural concert. The organizers now expect a sell-out event so they are encouraging concert-goers to buy their tickets early.

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Advance tickets are \$28 for adults, \$17 for students, and \$7 for children ages 12 and under. Tickets may be purchased by phone from Select-a-Seat at (316) 755-7328 or online at www.symphonyintheflinthills.org. An additional \$3 convenience fee will be added to each ticket purchased through Select-a-Seat.

Tickets are also available at the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve. These tickets must be purchased in person.

If tickets are still available on June 10, tickets purchased at the gate will be \$36 for adults, \$25 for students and \$15 for children ages 12 and under.

This new concert series will combine Kansas' greatest natural feature -- the majestic tallgrass prairie in the Flint Hills - with world-class symphonic music to create an unforgettable evening in the midst of the rolling green prairie and endless sky. At one time, much of the continent was a vast prairie grassland. Today, the largest remaining expanse of native tallgrass prairie in North America is located in the Flint Hills of Kansas.

This concert for the senses features the 85-piece Kansas City Symphony along with its 100-voice chorus, three orators, and the Grammy award-winning Paul Winter Consort performing one of the greatest "place-based" symphonic productions, "Grasslands: Prairie Voices," composed by Kansas native Eugene Friesen, cellist with the Consort. The Kansas City Symphony's resident conductor, Timothy Hankewich, will direct this musical extravaganza.

Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius, president of the Kansas Park Trust, is the honorary chair of the Symphony in the Flint Hills event. "We are dedicated to making the Flint Hills a destination for Kansans and visitors," said Governor Sebelius. "The event is a dynamic way to mark the 10th anniversary of the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve."

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The Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, the nation's only national park dedicated to the rich natural and cultural history of the tallgrass prairie ecosystem, will be the site of the 6 p.m. performance. The concert will last 90 minutes with one intermission. The Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve is located near Strong City, Kan., 20 minutes west of Emporia in the heart of the Flint Hills.

The Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve will open at 9 a.m. that day with tours of the historic ranch house, massive limestone barn and historic schoolhouse, along with prairie walks and bus tours into the prairie. The concert site will open at 1 p.m. with a number of activities included in the concert admission ticket:

- * Guided wildflower walks with Kansas Native Plant Society members
- * Bird hikes accompanied by Kansas Audubon Society members
- * Presentations about 1880's Ranch Life by a regional historian and folklorist
- * Presentations on geology and fossil record of the Flint Hills
- * Educational talks on Native American inhabitants of the region
- * PrairieArt Plein Air Auction of Flint Hills paintings by over 50 landscape artists
- * Symphonic instrument "petting zoo"
- * Authentic horse-drawn covered wagons for rides

The concert site is one mile out in the middle of the prairie - beyond the sight and sound of anything but heaven and earth - surrounded by miles of uninterrupted tallgrass and wildflowers. Getting to the concert site will be a one-mile walk from the stone barn over rolling terrain on a wildflower trail, or concert-goers can ride on flat bed trailers with straw bales or on shuttle buses. Come early to catch a ride or to save a good spot for enjoying the concert and to participate in all of the pre-concert activities. Plan one hour to get from the parking area to the concert site, either by walking or by riding. Concert-goers may carry in their own lawn chairs or blankets to sit on during the concert, however, chairs will be available for rent for \$2 at the concert site.

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The concert site will be wheelchair accessible. Call 620-273-8955 to make arrangements for special needs. An American Sign Language interpreter will be on stage.

Award-winning barbeque and vegetarian options will be available for purchase at the concert site beginning at 1 p.m. or you may carry in your own picnic. Iced tea and lemonade will be for sale, along with plenty of free water. Wine and beer will be for sale after 3 p.m. Concert-goers are encouraged to bring a hat, sunscreen and bug spray. Open-toed shoes and strollers are discouraged due to the rocky terrain.

Sunset in the Flint Hills can be extraordinarily beautiful. Concert attendees may stay at the concert site to watch the sunset after the event, but everyone will be asked to leave the site early enough to return to their automobiles before dark. Flashlights are recommended for those staying to watch the sunset.

Symphony in the Flint Hills is a new concert series created to echo the June 1994 "Symphony on the Prairie" that drew several thousand people from communities in the Flint Hills and across the Midwest. "Those attending experienced the magic of symphonic music on a prairie hillside," said Emily Hunter, event coordinator for Symphony in the Flint Hills, Inc., a nonprofit organization. "Since that night, people have been asking if there will ever be another symphony on the prairie. The answer is a resounding 'Yes!'"

Symphony in the Flint Hills, Inc. plans to produce an annual symphonic concert series in different locations within the natural landscape of the Flint Hills of Kansas.

For important logistical information and details about the inaugural Symphony in the Flint Hills on June 10, 2006, visit www.symphonyintheflinthills.org or call (620) 273-8955.

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In case of inclement weather, the concert will be held the next day at 6 p.m. on Sunday, June 11, 2006.

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