The St. Olaf Band

Timothy Mahr, conductor

A Concert of Birthday Anniversaries

Works by the birthday boys:
- J.S. Bach
- Samuel Barber
- William Schuman
- H. Owen Reed

Sunday, March 21, 2010 • 3:30 p.m. • Skoglund Center Auditorium
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A CONCERT OF BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARIES

Overture to “The School for Scandal” (1931)  
Samuel Barber (1910–1981)  
transcribed by Frank Hudson

Samuel Barber’s successful academic career at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia included a triple major in piano, composition and voice, and earned him the Bearns Prize for his Violin Sonata (1928). This prize money enabled him to travel to Europe in 1931, where he continued composition studies with Curtis professor Rosario Scalero. Barber composed his Overture to “The School for Scandal” under Scalero as a graduation thesis — it was the 21-year-old composer’s first major public work. Barber’s output extends far beyond the slow movement of his String Quartet, the ubiquitous Adagio for Strings. His catalogue includes operas, ballets, chamber, vocal, choral and orchestral music, including concertos and two symphonies.

Based on a 1777 dramatic comedy by Englishman Richard Sheridan about the upper class’s predilection for scandal, the Overture attempts to capture the play’s themes and characters and bring them to life through music. The School for Scandal features characters with names descriptive of their personalities, such as Lady Sneerwell and Mr. Snake.

Barber’s musical adaptation suggests these different characters and emotions. Arranged in sonata form, the Overture opens with an arresting summons from the winds as a prelude to the main theme, a wide-ranging melody that unfolds and gains momentum. The solo oboe introduces a romantic second subject over lush harmonies, after which the clarinet closes the exposition. A brief development recalls the introduction and main theme before a climax of rushing scales. A recapitulation follows, but with the English horn taking on the earlier role of the oboe. The piece finishes with a lively coda conveying the effervescent quality of Sheridan’s characters.

La Fiesta Mexicana (1954)  
H. Owen Reed (b. 1910)

A Mexican Folk Song Symphony for Concert Band
2. Mass

Reed’s most acclaimed composition, this three-movement masterwork of the band repertory has received thousands of performances. It depicts a religious festival dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and it faithfully represents all of the contrasts and contradictions of these festivals. It fluctuates between serious and comical, festive and solemn, devout and pagan, boisterous and tender. The second movement, Mass, brings the listener to the cathedral for worship. The principal theme is chant-like and is set amid coloristic sections representing the tolling of church bells.

Reed provides the following commentary on the inspiration for this work:
In 1948 I was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship to compose in Mexico. One of my projects was to write a symphony for concert band, primarily for Col. William F. Santelman and the U. S. Marine Band. It was while living in Cuernavaca that I happened upon a book called *Mexico: A Study of Two Americas*, by Stuart Chase. I knew immediately that I had found the framework for a three-movement symphony. There only remained the job of collecting some folk songs which I felt must be a small part of such a work as this...

...In a small choir loft in Chapala, I heard the chant from the *Liber Usualis* which I used in the second movement. The two-against-three rhythm of the two bells used throughout *La Fiesta Mexicana* was a standard cliché of the young musicians, who seemed to have little respect for my early morning sleep.

Dr. H. Owen Reed retired in 1976 as professor emeritus from Michigan State University, where he was chairman of music composition in the School of Music. Dr. Reed’s published compositions include a variety of works for orchestra, band, voices, opera, and chamber music, plus eight books on music theory and composition.

**A BOX SET OF BACH SETTINGS**

On this very date 325 years ago in Eisenach, Germany, an infant boy was born who would eventually become a major influence on the art of music composition. Many think of him as the greatest composer who ever lived. It only seems fitting that we mark the anniversary of the birth of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) by presenting a small collection of his works as set for woodwinds, brass and percussion.

With a background that boasted approximately 200 musical ancestors, it is not surprising that Bach developed a keen interest in music at an early age. While still very young, he learned to play the violin and harpsichord from instruction by his father, Johann Ambrosius, a court trumpeter in the service of the Duke of Eisenach. Orphaned at the age of ten, he was taken in by his oldest brother, Johann Christoph. Because of his excellent singing voice, Bach attained a position at the Michaelis monastery at Lüneberg in 1700.

Bach became organist at the Neue Kirche (New Church) in Arnstadt (1703-1707). His relationship with the church council was tenuous since as the young musician often shirked his responsibilities, preferring to practice the organ. It was here that Bach became interested in composition, devoting every leisure moment to improving his skills. He became the organist at St. Blasius in Mühlhausen in June 1707 and married his cousin, Maria Barbara Bach, that fall.

He assumed his next post in 1708, serving as court organist and playing in the orchestra for the Duke of Sachsen-Weimar, eventually becoming the leader of the orchestra in 1714. His writing flourished there and he produced many organ compositions during this period, including his monumental *Orgel-Büchlein* (Organ Booklet, BWV 599-644). Bach left
Weimar and secured a post in December 1717 as Kapellmeister at Cöthen. The six Brandenburg Concertos, BWV 1046-51, among many other secular works, date from his Cöthen years.

Bach became Kantor of the Thomas School in Leipzig in May 1723 and held the post until his death. It was in Leipzig that he composed the bulk of his religious and secular cantatas. He began making trips to Berlin in the 1740s, not least because his son Carl Philipp Emanuel served as a court musician there. In May 1747, King Frederick II of Prussia warmly received the composer. It was for King Frederick that Bach wrote the gloriously abstruse Musical Offering, BWV 1079. Among Bach’s last works was his Mass in B minor, BWV 232. Besieged by diabetes, he died on July 28, 1750.

During his lifetime, Bach, a devout Lutheran, was more famous as an organist and court musician than as a composer. Most people of his time considered his baroque compositions too elaborate. Upon his death, Bach’s works were divided among his sons, and many have been lost. Unimaginable to current Bach aficionados, his works were largely unknown until rediscovered some eighty years after his death, largely through the work of Felix Mendelssohn and Robert Schumann. We are fortunate to enjoy these rediscovered masterworks now as Bach’s legacy.

Fantasia in G Major (1703–1707)  

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)  

transcribed by Richard Franko Goldman and Robert Leist

Although the title of this transcription would suggest that the full Fantasia is to be presented with its three sections, only the middle Grave section is given a treatment. From the score note:

The great G Major Fantasia for organ was composed between 1703 and 1707 during Bach’s residence in Arnstadt. It was here, at the beginning of his career, that his music was found to be too full of “wonderful variations and foreign tones,” and certainly the Fantasia is strikingly dissonant in its constant texture of suspensions. But the breadth of the five-part polyphonic writing and the richness of the harmonic sonority make the Fantasia one of the grandest of all Bach’s compositions for organ. It is also one that lends itself perfectly to the sound and sonorities of the modern wind band.

The transcription by Richard Franko Goldman and Robert Leist was undertaken as a memorial to Edwin Franko Goldman, who was the first bandmaster to include the works of Bach regularly in the band’s concert repertoire and did so much to introduce the music of this great master to wide audiences. In this transcription, an attempt is made to recapture the sound of the Baroque organ through the medium of the modern band. The first performance of this transcription was given by The Goldman Band, with Richard Franko Goldman conducting, on July 1, 1957.
Prelude No. 21 in B Flat Major (1722)  
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)  

BWV 866  

Alex Van Ryssleberghe '12, marimba

This prelude is from Book I of Bach’s Well-Tempered Clavier, one of the 48 preludes and fugues in a collection for keyboard (clavier) written in all 24 keys to demonstrate the variety of different tonal centers available when using a well-tempered tuning system. In Bach’s time, one popular method of tuning was meantone temperament, which produced better-tuned intervals but could only be used for certain keys. In this set of works, Bach instead advocates a system of tuning suitable for all 24 keys (though theorists debate whether Bach advocated equal temperament or another form of well-tempered tuning). Besides a demonstration of tuning methods, Bach’s Well-Tempered Clavier was intended to be a tool for teaching and keyboard practice. Prelude No. 21 in B Flat Major is a good example of a Bach piece that, while written for keyboard, can be explored on other instruments that were not available in his time.

Alex Van Rysselberghe grew up in the suburbs of Portland, Oregon, and is a first-year member of the St. Olaf Band. He is studying to earn a bachelor of music degree, majoring in music performance with hopes to someday teach percussion at the collegiate level or perform in a professional orchestra. When he isn’t playing percussion, he is probably watching movies, waterskiing at summer tournaments, or playing blues harmonica in a jam session with friends.

Who Puts His Trust in God Most Just (c. 1725)  
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)  

BWV 433  

arr. James Croft

James Croft, the long-time and now-retired Director of Bands at Florida State University, produced this setting for band of one of his favorite Bach chorales.

Wer Gott vertraut, hat wohl gebaut  
Who puts his trust in God most just  
Hath built his house securely.  
He who relies on Jesus Christ  
Shall reach his heav’n most surely.  
Then fixed on Thee my trust shall be,  
For they truth cannot alter.  
While mine Thou art,  
Not death’s worst smart  
Shall make my courage falter.

— Joachim Magdeburg
**Suite No. 2 in D minor** (c. 1720)  
**Johann Sebastian Bach** (1685–1750)  
BWV 1008  
Prelude  

Eri Isomura ‘11, *marimba*

During his service for Prince Leopold of Cöthen, Bach composed the six suites for unaccompanied cello around 1720. They were probably written for the cellist Christian Ferdinand Abel, also serving in the court. The suites contain movements written in a specific style of dance, of which the Prelude is the only non-dance movement. The suites were obscure until Pablo Casals started performing them in the early 20th century, and today they are standards of repertoire for any cellist. Compared to Bach’s solo violin works, the suites contain less polyphony but often imply it through high and low voicing. Also, the deeper tone combined with the slow harmonic rhythm brings out a serene style of expression.

**Eri Isomura** is a junior from Lauderdale, Minnesota, and a third-year member of the St. Olaf Band. She is a percussion performance major and is planning to continue her studies in the field through graduate school, planning to eventually perform and teach. When she is not practicing percussion or piano, she enjoys being involved in Intervarsity Fellowship, Hip-Hop Club, and spending time with her family and friends.

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**Toccata and Fugue in D minor** (c. 1708–1715)  
**Johann Sebastian Bach** (1685–1750)  
transcribed by Donald Hunsberger  
BWV 565

Donald Hunsberger, former conductor of the Eastman Wind Ensemble, provides the following commentary on his transcription of this infamous work:

This work, probably one of J. S. Bach’s most recognizable compositions, is currently at the center of controversy based upon recent research suggesting that the work might not have been originally for keyboard (perhaps a work for violin rescored for keyboard with pedals) and was perhaps not even written by Bach himself! Until now most scholars have felt that it was written in the first decade of the 1700s, possibly in Weimar or in Arnstadt. These theories arise from the fact that no original manuscript exists, merely an error-ridden copy of the work which was written out by a pupil of an acquaintance of Bach’s. Additional questions arise through the use of the toccata, not a common form with Bach. It is derived from the Italian term *toccare*, “to touch,” a meaning that was applied to technical or finger-oriented works. The BWV catalogue lists only four works with this designation.

The *Toccata and Fugue in D minor*, BWV 565, contains virtuosi writing combined with a recitative style that enables the performers to withdraw from a constant rhythmic pulse. Within the toccata itself there resides a freedom of tempo and technical display that is in great contrast to the formality of the various fugal statements and answers. The fugue draws its theme from the downward motion of
the opening toccata melodic line. It proceeds through numerous development sections until finally arriving back to the free toccata-fantasia style of development.

The *Toccata and Fugue in D minor* is truly a masterpiece of inventiveness that displays the tonal and technical capabilities of either the organ or the wind band.

Above is an image of Johannes Ringck’s copy of the first page of the *Toccata and Fugue in D minor*. A German organist and composer, Ringck (1717–1778) studied with Johann Peter Kellner, who was a pupil of J. S. Bach. It is surmised that this copy was made from a version in Kellner’s collection. The copies in Kellner’s collection, which were made approximately around 1725, are one of the most important sources of Bach’s work today.

William Schuman was one of the towering figures of American music during the past century. His career was marked by many honors, including receiving of the Pulitzer Prize in Music (1943) serving terms as president of the Juilliard School of Music and the Lincoln Center.

Schuman’s George Washington Bridge was inspired by the composer’s view of the bridge on his daily treks to and from the Juilliard School. It is a masterful work in five sections, creating an arc structure and characterized by massive polychords, bold gestures, and vivid colors. Schuman comments about the work in his score note:

There are few days in the year when I do not see George Washington Bridge. I pass it on my way to work as I drive along the Henry Hudson Parkway on the New York shore. Ever since my student days when I watched the progress of its construction, this bridge has had for me an almost human personality, and this personality is astonishingly varied, assuming different moods depending on the time of day or night, the weather, the traffic and, of course, my own mood as I pass by.

I have walked across it late at night when it was shrouded in fog, and during the brilliant sunshine hours of midday. I have driven over it countless times and passed under it on boats. Coming to New York City by air, sometimes I have been lucky enough to fly right over it. It is difficult to imagine a more gracious welcome or dramatic entry to the great metropolis.

Bach’s Fugue à la Gigue (1928) Gustav Holst (1874–1934)

When the BBC Wireless Military Band commissioned Holst to write a new work in 1928, he felt rather out of practice in orchestrating for the medium — his last major works for band were the First Suite (1909) and Second Suite (1911). For some years he had had the idea of arranging some Bach fugues for brass and military band so he set himself the task of scoring Fugue in G Major, BWV 577, a work for organ from Preludes, Fugues and Fantasias. He, rather than Bach, called it Fugue à la Gigue.

The Fugue à la Gigue made an ideal exercise and Holst’s brilliant dovetailing of the counterpoint between different instruments shows his mastery. His joyous setting takes Bach’s single musical subject through the ensemble on a journey that picks up instruments en route until the trombones (Holst’s instrument) cut through the texture with perhaps the setting’s crowning glory. Holst later composed his complex and powerfully expressive Hammersmith to fulfill the commission.

Fugue à la Gigue was published for military band in 1928 by Boosey & Hawkes and shortly afterwards in a setting by Holst for orchestra.

Program notes compiled and written by Eri Isomura, Alex Van Rysselberghe and Timothy Mahr
THE ST. OLAF BAND
TIMOTHY MAHR, CONDUCTOR ~ TERRA WIDDIFIELD, MANAGER

Piccolo
Megan Ehresmann, St. Cloud, Minn.

Flute
Kelly Culhane, Hartland, Wis.
 hòa Elizabeth Detweiler, Appleton, Wis.
 Sonia Funkenbusch, Hudson, Wis.
 Becca Grupe, St. Louis, Mis.
 Megan Makeever, Bozeman, Mont.
 Vanamali Medina, Clarkdale, Ariz.
 Corinne Mona, Severna Park, Md.
 Clifton Nesseth, Cameron, Wis.
 Cecilia Noecker, St. Paul, Minn.
 Kendra Passow, Maple Plain, Minn.
 Molly Schull, Hayward, Wis.
 Alexandra White, St. Charles, Ill.
 Katherine Wisdom, Boise, Idaho

Oboe
John Broadway, Marquette, Mich.
 Megan Dvorak, Hayward, Wis.
 Danielle Lovaas, Davenport, Iowa.
 Lauren Seidel, Minneapolis, Minn.

E-flat Clarinet
Linnae Stole, Eden Prairie, Minn.

Clarinet
Ryan Bak, Colorado Springs, Colo.
 Ingrid Bakke, Burnsville, Minn.
 Sara Baumbauer, Bozeman, Mont.
 James Checco, Edina, Minn.
 Erin Cusner, Gig Harbor, Wash.
 Mara Fink, St. Louis Park, Minn.
 Alyssa Frazee, Eagan, Minn.
 Aaron Harcus, Minneapolis, Minn.
 Jamee Hoefert, La Crosse, Wis.
 Melanie Horbeck, Jonesboro, Ark.
 Clara Jung, Rosemount, Minn.
 Rebecca Kilfoyle, Kasilof, Alaska
 Cariann Newstat, Watkewgan, Ill.
 Meggie Ranheim, Eagan, Minn.
 Joseph Serra, Toledo, Ohio
 Christopher Sherwood-Gabrielson, Scandia, Minn.
 Casey Skeide, Webster, S.D.
 Nicholas Wilson, Apple Valley, Minn.

Bass Clarinet
Noah Anderson, Chanhassen, Minn.
 Leanne Barc, Northfield, Minn.
 Kayla Frederickson, Monterey, Calif.
 Alicia Reuter, Seattle, Wash.

Contralto Clarinet
Kirsten Young, Coon Rapids, Minn.

Contra Bass Clarinet
Ben Binder, Roseville, Minn.

Bassoon
Anne Daily, Anamosa, Iowa
 Joshua John, Beaverton, Ore.
 Chloe Mais, Peabody, Kan.
 Matthew West, Bloomington, Ill.

Alto Saxophone
Jenni Berg, Fargo, N.D.
 Melanie Brooks, Waseca, Minn.
 Daniel Haywood, Woodbury, Minn.
 Christopher Roberts, Iowa City, Iowa
 Emily Vomacka, Oostburg, Wis.

Tenor Saxophone
Zachary Sander, Rochester, Minn.

Baritone Saxophone
Zachariah Easty, Oak Park, Ill.

Corno/Trumpet
Joshua Castillo, Lakeville, Minn.
 Jonathan Davick, West Des Moines, Iowa
 Jeff Fuhrer, Boxborough, Mass.
 Thomas Hadley Rochester, Minn.
 Neil Halbert, Tacoma, Wash.
 Garrett Klein, Port Orchard, Wash.
 Jaclyn Melander, Mounds View, Minn.
 Erin Meyer, West Des Moines, Iowa
 Matt Nelson, Cottage Grove, Minn.
 Eric Sayre, Minneapolis, Minn.
 Anda Tanaka, Ames, Iowa

Horn
Zachary Erickson, Anoka, Minn.
 Amy Glasow, Shoreview, Minn.
 Melanie Paulsen, Center Junction, Iowa
 Matthew Perry, Des Moines, Wash.
 James Peterman, Lino Lakes, Minn.
 Molly Raben, Kenosha, Wis.
 Andrew Wett, St. Paul, Minn.
 Daniel Western, Charles City, Iowa

Trombone
Jesse Brault, Westby, Wis.
 Micah Buuck, Edina, Minn.
 Tim O'Neill, Burnsville, Minn.
 Cole Stiegler, Plymouth, Minn.
 Katie Truax, Waukesha, Wis.

Bass Trombone
Robinson Schulze, Santa Monica, Calif.
 Francis Maginn, Austin, Texas

Euphonium
Eric Choate, Glendale, Ariz.
 Robert Eisinger, Wheaton, Ill.
 Brandon Fritz, Lakeville, Minn.
 Jeff Krubsack, Maple Grove, Minn.
 Christopher Leslie, Cincinnati, Ohio

Tuba
Erick Carlsted, Howard Lake, Minn.
 Michael Gesme, Cannon Falls, Minn.
 Wes Olson, Minnetonka, Minn.
 John Vranich, New Ulm, Minn.

String Bass
Benjamin Van Howe, Marquette, Mich.

Keyboards
Andrew Belsaas, Rapid City, S.D.
 Emily Vomacka, Kandiyohi, Minn.

Harp
Erin Bonavitiz, Myrtle Beach, S.C.

Percussion
Andrew Belsaas, Rapid City, S.D.
 Erin Bonavitiz, Myrtle Beach, S.C.
 Thomas Fristad, Sartell, Minn.
 Madeline Giordana, Hudson, Wis.

English Horn
Soprano Saxophone
Contrabassoon

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* Section Leader
• Officer
+ Librarian
♣ Manager
¶ Miles Johnson Endowment Scholarship Recipient

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