

*Celebrate*  
100  
ST. OLAF  
CHOIR  
1912-2012

SATURDAY, JUNE 4, 2011 • 4 P.M.  
SKOGLUND CENTER AUDITORIUM • ST. OLAF COLLEGE

# A Century of Singing

During its 1913 tour of Norway, the St. Olaf Choir established a tradition of bringing its music around the world. Not yet a robed choir, members of the ensemble performed in street clothes and wore black tasseled mortar boards to identify themselves as students from America.



P.G. Schmidt, F. Melius Christiansen, and President Herbert Hoover (center) with the St. Olaf Choir at the White House during the ensemble's 1932 tour.

The choir prepares to board a military transport plane on its 1957 tour to Iceland. The tour to Iceland became a matter of foreign relations, as the U.S. wanted to renew its contract to operate the air base at Keflavik and the Russians, also eager to lease the site, had sent the Red Army Chorus and the Russian Ballet to perform.



*Widely traveled and internationally known, the 100-year-old St. Olaf Choir continues to delight audiences, enrich student musicians, and offer music as a form of worship and praise.*

More than two decades after taking the reins of the St. Olaf Choir, Anton Armstrong '78 jokes that he's still "the new conductor."

Never mind that next year he'll match the length of time his predecessor, Kenneth Jennings '50, led the renowned ensemble. Or that, like Jennings, he has guided an organization steeped in tradition into a new era.

In its 100-year history, the St. Olaf Choir has had just four conductors. Each has built upon the foundational ideals of sharing choral music that stirs the souls of listeners. Each has worked tirelessly to expand the choir's outreach and sound, globally and culturally. And all have been deeply beloved, legendary figures on campus.

So Armstrong can understand if some people, especially those who can recall the magic of singing under one of his predecessors, still think of him as "new." After all, he wrote his doctoral monograph on the history of the St. Olaf Choir, a project that enabled him to closely study the repertoire and pedagogy of the first three conductors of the St. Olaf Choir and the ensemble's impact on the world of choral singing. Doing that research meant that when Armstrong was invited to lead the choir, he knew he was inheriting a finely tuned instrument with a firmly rooted legacy.

"Yet it's an instrument that is constantly changing," Armstrong says. "One of the things I gathered from my own research and study of the choir is that each conductor has built on the traditions of those who had preceded him, and then worked to open new doors."

In recent years, the St. Olaf Choir has been flinging those doors wide open. The ensemble has become a leader in the international music community, performing at the White House in 2005, touring extensively abroad, and regularly collaborating with ensembles such as the Minnesota Orchestra, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, VocalEssence, Cantus, the American Boychoir, and Magnum Chorum. Some of the best music schools in the country, Armstrong notes, look to the St. Olaf Choir as a pacemaker in repertoire and vocal pedagogy.

While F. Melius Christiansen established the ensemble's standard of excellence when he founded the St. Olaf Choir and his son, Olaf Christiansen, cemented its legacy, it's the work of Jennings and Armstrong that has taken the St. Olaf Choir into a modern age.

## IN THE BEGINNING

F. Melius Christiansen came to St. Olaf in 1903 with the task not of establishing a choir, but of leading a band. He quickly shaped a group of instrumentalists on campus into a remarkable performing organization that toured Norway in 1906. "It's just really quite amazing that he achieved that in such a short time," says Joseph M. Shaw '49, professor emeritus of religion at St. Olaf and the author of *The St. Olaf Choir: A Narrative*.

While conducting the St. Olaf Band, Christiansen also was asked to lead the choir at St. John's Lutheran Church in Northfield. In addition to his extensive musical training — he had studied music at Augsburg



Olaf Christiansen rehearses with the choir in Kelsey Theater in 1964.

The St. Olaf Choir performs Bach's *Mass in B Minor* with the Strasbourg Philharmonic Orchestra before an audience of thousands in the Strasbourg Cathedral in 1972.



The 2005 St. Olaf Choir performs at the White House for the president and guests to commemorate the National Day of Prayer.



Members of the 1930 choir on board a ship to Norway, where 40,000 people gathered to welcome them.



Seminary, the Northwestern Conservatory of Music in Minneapolis, and the Royal Conservatory of Music in Leipzig, Germany — Christiansen had led several choral ensembles in Minneapolis.

He put that experience to use and took the reins of the St. John's Church Choir in 1905. As the ensemble prepared to make its first tour across the Midwest in the spring of 1912, it officially changed its name and became the St. Olaf Choir. The following year, the choir toured Norway and established a tradition of bringing its music around the world.

Those early tours, notes Jennings, were part of the genius of F. Melius Christiansen. Few schools at the time toured nationally or internationally, and doing so helped the St. Olaf Choir become a national sensation. "This choir, and repertoire, began to be known all over the country," Jennings says, noting that invitations to perform began pouring in from across the nation.

The other part of Christiansen's genius, Shaw says, is that he turned choral singing into a professional endeavor with a purpose that went far beyond entertainment. He chose spiritually profound music and aimed to reacquaint listeners with the church's heritage of chorales and a cappella music. Legendary for his high performance standards, Christiansen expected his musicians to rehearse five days a week to perfect a tone that was disciplined, controlled, and free of vibrato. That sound — perfectly in tune, controlled in pitch, smooth in delivery — became the hallmark of the St. Olaf Choir.

The ensemble's 1920 tour of the East Coast was a critical turning point for the St. Olaf Choir. As critics in early stops such as Chicago took note of the choir's

unique, disciplined sound, manager Paul G. Schmidt sent copies of their glowing reviews ahead to venues along the East Coast. "By the time they got to places like New York and Washington, the people out there had already heard something about the choir," Shaw says.

The ensemble's rich sound did not disappoint the sophisticated listeners who gathered in cities like New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C. In some of the country's greatest performance halls, the St. Olaf Choir wowed audiences and critics alike. "It was a great success, and it certainly did put the choir — and the college — on the map," says Shaw.

By the time the choir toured Norway again in 1930, an estimated 40,000 people gathered to welcome the ensemble to Trondheim.

### A LASTING LEGACY

F. Melius Christiansen remained at the helm of the St. Olaf Choir until 1943. Several years before he retired, he chose his successor: his son, Olaf Christiansen, who had built a career of his own as a conductor at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

The younger Christiansen left Oberlin to become his father's assistant conductor in 1941, a position he held for two years before taking full leadership of the St. Olaf Choir. And while it's tempting to say that

Olaf Christiansen simply continued what his father had begun, Shaw says that's not entirely true. Olaf Christiansen was an accomplished musician in his own right, having studied sacred music at Union Theological Seminary and founded the a cappella choir at the Oberlin Conservatory, where he taught for several years.

"It wasn't just that he was riding on the reputation and fame and the practices of his father," Shaw says. "In having studied voice extensively, he was actually more broadly trained as a musician than F. Melius was."

While Olaf Christiansen remained deeply committed to ensuring the St. Olaf Choir retained the purity of tone it had become known for — some critics of the time described the choir's tone under his direction as "an icy blue" — he also began to explore new genres and interpretations of music. He added contemporary songs, more Renaissance music, and American folk hymns to the repertoire of traditional church chorales.

Like his father, Olaf Christiansen believed in the educational potential of music and stressed the communal power it possessed. "The St. Olaf Choir goes beyond the members and includes both singers and listeners," he once said, noting that he wanted audience members to leave the ensemble's concert "with a different attitude toward themselves, toward others, and toward God."

"We had some spellbinding moments under his direction, in concerts all over the country," says Ronald Nelson '49, who sang in the choir for three-and-a-half years during Olaf Christiansen's reign as conductor. "Olaf could communicate, in very inconspicuous ways, every bit of emotion and tempo and any other dynamic that he was wanting. It was a fantastic experience to sing under him."

And it was an experience Nelson shared with none other than Jennings, a second tenor who would return to St. Olaf in 1953 — just three years after he graduated — to join the music faculty. Jennings returned to St. Olaf not only to accept a faculty position, but also with the understanding that Olaf Christiansen was looking ahead to the choir's 1955 tour of Norway and would need him to serve as the ensemble's assistant conductor.

### THE CHOIR EVOLVES

Jennings, who — much like Olaf Christiansen — was a product of the St. Olaf Music Department and had earned a Master of Music degree from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, had conducted both the Manitou Singers and Chapel Choir during his early years on the Hill. When Olaf Christiansen decided to retire in 1968, the process of choosing a successor was as simple as when his father had chosen him to lead the ensemble.

"Olaf got to the point that he thought that he would be ready to retire, and he just called me into the office and said 'We'd like you to become the new conductor of the St. Olaf Choir,'" Jennings recalls, noting that the offer was "a bit of a shock." When he said he needed time to think it over, Olaf Christiansen said that was fine — so long as he'd have his answer ready for a meeting with President Sidney Rand the next day.

Jennings, of course, accepted. And with that came the end of the Christiansen era. "When a musical genius and his highly talented son have given the world 56 years of exquisite music under the Christiansen name, one cannot but speak of the end of an era," Shaw wrote in his history of the choir.

Yet Jennings was ready for the challenge of building a new era. Although he had been a member of the St. Olaf Music Department for 15 years and had worked alongside Olaf Christiansen, he had his own ideas on how to shape the sound of the choir.

"I thought that the repertoire had been a little bit narrow, and there was a lot more music — interesting music — around, and I looked for it," Jennings says.

Under the Christiansens, the St. Olaf Choir had largely stuck with a smaller, art song-like repertoire, with shorter pieces such as motets and anthems. When Jennings became conductor, he believed the time had come to start performing larger choral works, including oratorios, masses, and passions. He also included more 20<sup>th</sup>-century works, with a focus on historically informed renditions.

And while Jennings retained much of the a cappella repertoire the Christiansens had established, he also appreciated the contrast between voices and instruments. In 1969 he introduced musical instruments to one of the choir's selections. Though only a flute and guitar, the instruments opened the door for full orchestral accompaniment in the future.

*While Olaf Christiansen remained deeply committed to ensuring the St. Olaf Choir retained the purity of tone it had become known for ... he also began to explore new genres and interpretations of music.*



Olaf Christiansen with the choir in New York's Philharmonic Hall during his final tour in 1968.

In addition to expanding the ensemble's repertoire and using instruments, Jennings also favored a "freer tone," Shaw says, that allowed the choir to really soar. Under Olaf Christiansen, members of the choir sang tightly and close together, standing on U-shaped risers

that meant most of them sang toward other members of the ensemble. Jennings ordered wider and deeper risers that enabled singers to hear themselves better, sing more freely, and direct their energy toward the audience. “I opened it up because I thought we needed to sing to the people, not to ourselves,” he says.

Under Jennings, the choir developed what one reviewer described as “a more vibrant, warm tone — a resonant, lively, brilliant sound that rings with vitality and conviction.” Jennings coaxed his students to reach their highest musical potential with a quiet leadership style and a graceful form of conducting that almost looked like he was “sculpting the sound with his hands,” Shaw says.

“He was a soft-spoken conductor. You had to be almost silent to hear what it was he wanted from you,” says former choir member Martha Kunau ’90. “He was able to bring very young voices together, knowing what it was we could do and then inspiring us to a higher level,

*Under Jennings, the choir developed what one reviewer described as “a more vibrant, warm tone — a resonant, lively, brilliant sound that rings with vitality and conviction.”*

“He inherited a treasured musical tradition from the Christiansens, respected it and let it sing, and added his own musical artistry to the growth and enrichment of the St. Olaf Choir,” Shaw wrote. “What he accomplished will live on through his compositions, recordings of the St. Olaf Choir under his direction, and especially through the hundreds of students he inspired.”

#### A NEW CENTURY

Jennings also paved the way for Armstrong, who has further expanded the choir’s repertoire and added even more flavor to its signature sound.

The first of the St. Olaf Choir’s four conductors to actually apply for the position and compete with others for the honor of leading the ensemble, Armstrong’s interview — which included leading the choir through several pieces — actually got off to a rocky start. The choir had already had a long week of singing under several other candidates by the time Armstrong stood before them for his audition. Members of the ensemble went through the motions of the first piece with little emotion. Then Armstrong handed out copies of Ralph Manuel’s *Alleluia*. As members of the choir struggled to sight-read the unfamiliar piece, the singing faltered and Armstrong worried the audition was heading toward failure. He stopped the choir and asked an alto what the word “alleluia” meant. “A word exuding praise and joy,” she answered.

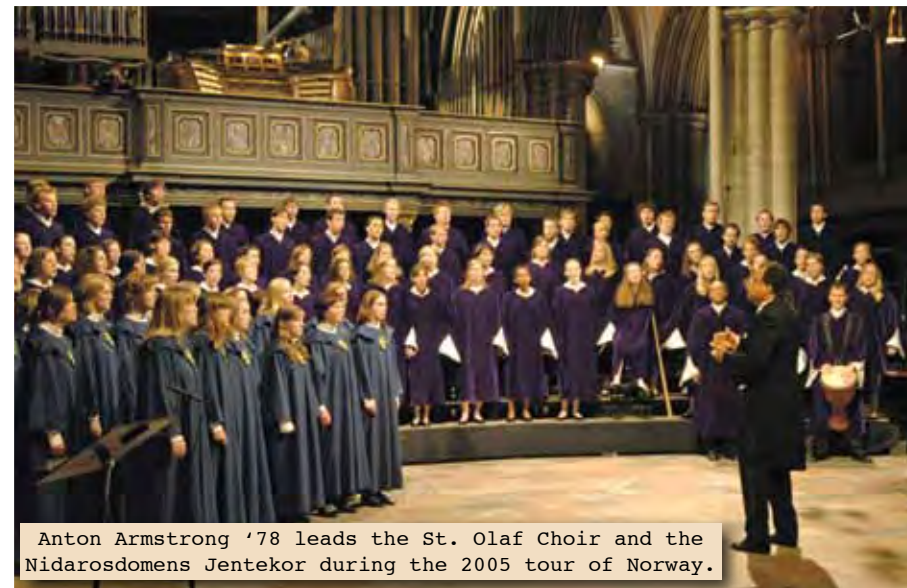
“Well, you could have fooled me by the way you all are singing this,” Armstrong told the students before him. He knew he needed a better connection with these young singers in order to elicit the sound they were capable of, and he took a few moments to give them a pep talk and encourage them to put their full energy into the song of praise he had chosen.

It was a gamble, and it paid off. “The choir took hold of the piece, and it leaped off the page,” Shaw wrote.

Not only did that experience propel Armstrong to the top of the search committee’s list, but it illustrated one of the fundamental principles of his leadership: his belief that it’s not enough for audiences to simply hear and understand the lyrics. They have to feel them. And that means the singers must understand and feel them first.

Although he expects his singers to strive for excellence, “it’s not about being perfect,” Armstrong says. “It’s about eliminating the distractions so that the infinite power can shine through and transform the lives of those who make and hear it.”

Armstrong offers his singers the mantra he learned from mentor Helen Kemp, professor emerita of voice and church music at Westminster Choir College: “Body,



Anton Armstrong '78 leads the St. Olaf Choir and the Nidarosdomens Jentekor during the 2005 tour of Norway.

“The palate is more colorful and broader now,” Armstrong says. “It retains the characteristic sound it had under the Christiansens, but now it’s not just salt and pepper. There are a lot of spices in it.”

Under Armstrong, the St. Olaf Choir has also begun to move. “I mean, they really move,” says Shaw, describing how members of the ensemble sway back and forth with the music during certain pieces. Sometimes it’s choreographed, and other times it’s simply an expression of what they’re feeling. “If Kenneth freed up the voice, maybe Anton freed up the body,” Shaw notes.

mind, spirit, voice — it takes the whole person to sing and rejoice!”

“When I first began conducting and teaching, I had a take-charge attitude, the notion that the young people in front of me were there to do my bidding,” Armstrong says. “I see myself as a catalyst now, someone who helps bring out the best in them, as musicians and as individuals.”

Armstrong’s vast knowledge of the music he works with and his ability to articulate his vision to singers and audiences alike has enabled him to take the St. Olaf Choir to the next level. “He gets beyond what’s on the page, what the texts are, and elevates it so that you’ve made art,” says Karin Laine McMillen ’94, who sang in the choir for three years under Armstrong.

Like Olaf Christiansen and Jennings, Armstrong is a product not only of the St. Olaf Music Department, but also the choir itself. He sang in the ensemble for two years under Jennings before moving on to graduate school at the University of Illinois and, later, Michigan State University. He returned to Northfield in 1990 to lead the St. Olaf Choir after a decade at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The choir’s repertoire under Armstrong has become increasingly multicultural. He has included music of the Pacific Rim, Africa, and Latin America in the choir’s catalog and added Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and Ireland to its tour annals, while also emphasizing a more historically informed interpretation of musical origins. At the same time, he maintains the cultivation of the choir’s rich traditions, most notably with a 2005 tour to Norway, during which the PBS special *A St. Olaf Christmas in Norway* was filmed.

With its annual national tour and trips abroad every four years, the St. Olaf Choir continues to bring its message of hope and faith to listeners around the world. Armstrong acknowledges that while he is the current link in a chain of strong leaders who have guided the choir and shaped its sound, it is really the students who have carried the ensemble’s legacy from one generation to the next.

“The conductor gives inspiration, but also receives it from the choir. You hear no sound from my hands,” he says, waving them in the air. “It comes from all those wonderful souls who have been part of the choir and who have contributed in some way.”

For many of those students, singing in the St. Olaf Choir served as a transformative experience that will remain with them for a lifetime.

“Singing with a group of musicians at such a high level allowed us to transcend the music on the page, to reach out to the audiences, to convey a message of faith, and to use our gifts in a joyful, incredibly moving manner,” says former choir member Kunau. “When you sing with a community like that, you understand the power music has to convey things that the spoken word doesn’t.”

Kunau says singing with the St. Olaf Choir changed her in a fundamental way and helped shape the path of her adult life — a sentiment echoed by many former members of the ensemble. And that shared experience gives members of the St. Olaf Choir a unique connection that lasts long after they leave the Hill.

“As a member of the St. Olaf Choir, you become part of a larger community,” McMillen says. “You have a shared experience with everyone who’s been in the choir over the years.”

*“If Kenneth freed up the voice, maybe Anton freed up the body.”*

— JOSEPH M. SHAW ’49



The choir’s 75th anniversary tour of Asia in 1986 helped expand its global reach.

producing a sound as a choir that perhaps none of us thought was possible.”

Jennings also expanded the choir’s global reach. The St. Olaf Choir celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a tour of Asia in 1986, and in 1988 it was one of only five choirs in the world invited to participate in the Olympic Arts Festival in Seoul, South Korea.

Throughout his tenure, Jennings affirmed his belief that art does not stand still. He exposed the choir to the oral-based musical traditions of Asia and the cultures of Eastern Europe at a time when the Berlin Wall was coming down.

# DETAILS, DETAILS

*For as long as there has been a St. Olaf Choir, there has been a manager who makes it all come together by taking care of the details.*



*St. Olaf Choir conductors and managers (from left) Olaf Christiansen, P.G. Schmidt, F. Melius Christiansen, and Frederick Schmidt provided decades of distinguished leadership for the St. Olaf Choir.*



*Bob Johnson provides direction backstage during the choir's 1989 tour.*

WHEN THE ST. OLAF CHOIR RECEIVES AN INVITATION TO PERFORM IN ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S FINEST CONCERT HALLS OR ENTERTAIN AUDIENCES HALFWAY AROUND THE WORLD, IT'S UP TO THE CONDUCTOR TO ACCEPT.

AND THEN IT'S UP TO THE CHOIR'S MANAGER TO MAKE IT HAPPEN.

For more than three decades, that manager has been Bob Johnson — better known simply as “B.J.” to his many friends and colleagues. He takes care of everything from figuring out how to pay for tours to making travel arrangements for the ensemble to negotiating the contract details for venues. He often has to plan two or three years in advance to book concert sites while simultaneously putting the finishing touches on performances taking place next week.

It's important — and often overlooked — work that has enabled the conductors of the St. Olaf Choir to focus all of their energy on making great choral art. “With his assistance, I am able to achieve something much bigger, much more significant than I could otherwise,” St. Olaf Choir Conductor Anton Armstrong '78 says.

This partnership between conductor and manager has been a key component of the St. Olaf Choir's formula for success since the founding of the ensemble. Standing beside St. Olaf Choir founder F. Melius Christiansen for many years was Paul G. Schmidt, a St. Olaf mathematics professor who became the first manager of the choir in 1912. Schmidt planned and executed every tour and concert, traveled with the choir as its manager, and even sang in the bass section. He contributed significantly to the inception of the St. Olaf Christmas Festival, an event that today draws more than 12,000 alumni, donors, parents, and townspeople to campus each year to share in the music and celebration of the season.

In 1948 his son, Frederick Schmidt '31 — who sang in the St. Olaf Choir while majoring in chemistry and biology — took over the management of music organizations at St. Olaf and worked closely with the St. Olaf Choir's new conductor, Olaf Christiansen '25. This second-generation Christiansen-Schmidt team provided distinguished leadership until Christiansen retired in 1968. Because of Fred Schmidt's efforts, the St. Olaf Choir was the first college choir to appear on the concert stage of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., and the first college choir to perform in Philharmonic Hall in Lincoln Center.

After Fred Schmidt retired in 1972, there was a span of six years when the choir was without a full-time manager. The college's director of information services, Frederick Gonnerman, managed the choir on top of his other duties for several years, and music faculty member Sigurd Frederickson acted as manager during the choir's tour of Vienna and Rome in 1975.

In 1978, at the suggestion of St. Olaf Choir Conductor Kenneth Jennings '50, the Music Department appointed Johnson — who had been on the staff of the University Musical Society at the University of Michigan — as the full-time manager of the Office of Music Organizations.

A self-described entrepreneur, Johnson has pushed the leaders of the St. Olaf Choir to think big. He was instrumental in getting St. Olaf into the recording business, contracted for the St. Olaf Choir to perform one of the first choral concerts in Philadelphia's Verizon Hall, and has led the choir on tours to nearly every corner of the world. His work has ensured that the



*Johnson (center) with the choir during the 2009 tour of the United Kingdom.*

St. Olaf Christmas Festival is aired on Twin Cities Public Television every four years, and he has been the driving force behind simulcasting the event in movie theaters across the country.

“In many ways, this is an entrepreneurial enterprise,” says Johnson, who views himself as both a

visionary and a realist. “We can only live on our history and tradition for so long before it becomes a dinosaur. Our musical legacy is only as good as the next concert.”

And for 100 years, the choir's manager has made those concerts happen, seeing to all of the mechanical details and sharing the conductor's vision of a final production.

“While we have guided the choir artistically, it's because of Bob's entrepreneurial sense that many of the innovations in the last 33 years have come about,” Armstrong says. “He's always pushing us, always asking what we can do not just to advance the St. Olaf Choir, but what great choral music can do in the lives of other human beings.”

# THE ST. OLAF CHOIR

ANTON ARMSTRONG, CONDUCTOR ~ B.J. JOHNSON, MANAGER

## SOPRANO I

Kathryn Baber, Phoenix, Ariz.  
*nursing/women's studies*

Susan Boyle, Marquette, Mich.  
*music performance*

Maggie Burk, Lawrence, Kan.  
*music performance/music education*

Kata Calahan, Edina, Minn.  
*nursing*

Anna Christofaro, Plymouth, Minn.  
*music performance*

Rachel Dahlen, Northfield, Minn.  
*economics/biomedical studies*

Annie Deering, University Place, Wash.  
*music performance*

Heather Eikenbary, Waupaca, Wis.  
*music performance*

Erin Thieszen, Lake City, Iowa  
*music education*

Marin Werdahl, Chaska, Minn.  
*music education*

## SOPRANO II

Stephanie Abbas, Worthing, S.D.  
*religion/sociology/anthropology*

Katie Burk, Lawrence, Kan.  
*music performance/music education*

Iselin Donaldson, Northfield, Minn.  
*studio art/English*

Meg Granum, Athens, Ga.  
*church music*

✦ Katelyn Larson, Stillwater, Minn.  
*music education*

Elizabeth Rollins, Denver, Colo.  
*English*

Anna Shevik, White Bear Lake, Minn.  
*music performance*

Lynnette Simpson, Louisville, Ky.  
*music education*

Kate Swee, Oakland, Calif.  
*music*

Coraine Tate, Columbus, Ga.  
*music performance*

## ALTO I

Jessica Ballard, Los Angeles, Calif.  
*American racial and multicultural studies/history*

Cassandra Bogh, Coralville, Iowa  
*chemistry/physics*

Kira Fenstermacher, Dayton, Ohio  
*art history/studio art*

Johanna Hilfiker, Holtville, Calif.  
*music/religion*

Katharine Jenks, Greenlawn, N.Y.  
*nursing/women's studies*

✦ Elizabeth Kerstein, Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif.  
*music performance*

Laura Kyle, St. Paul, Minn.  
*English*

Kristin Sandness, Export, Pa.  
*English/biology*

Becca Tobin, Greenfield, Minn.  
*biology/English*

Sara Zieglmeier, Rothschild, Wis.  
*music*

## ALTO II

Amanda Balgaard, St. Louis Park, Minn.  
*English education*

Maren Beckman, Shorewood, Minn.  
*history/French*

Caitlin Block, Appleton, Wis.  
*social work*

Sarah Dean, Flower Mound, Texas  
*music education*

Kelsey Fahy, Gig Harbor, Wash.  
*physics/mathematics*

Karen Hopper, Longmont, Colo.  
*political science/music*

Siri Jorstad, Golden Valley, Minn.  
*Norwegian*

Jenny LaRoy, Minnetonka, Minn.  
*biology*

Eliza Snortland, Fargo, N.D.  
*music education*

## TENOR I

Riley Bruce, Wichita, Kan.  
*political science*

Phinehas Bynum, Salt Lake City, Utah  
*music/computer science*

Gus Connelly, New Brighton, Minn.  
*theatre/Norwegian*

Nathan Dougherty, Lakewood, Colo.  
*music performance*

Devin Hair, Prosper, Texas  
*music performance*

✦ Joseph Kemper, Portland, Ore.  
*music education*

James Ribe, West Chicago, Ill.  
*computer science*

Bryan Wells, Cambridge, Minn.  
*international relations and ethics/political science*

## TENOR II

Danny Dahlquist, Sioux Falls, S.D.  
*music education/linguistics*

Russell Draeger, Owatonna, Minn.  
*church music*

Sam Engelsjerd, Sartell, Minn.  
*chemistry/mathematics*

Ben Henschel, Minnetonka, Minn.  
*music education*

Aaron Holmgren, Willmar, Minn.  
*religion*

Will McLean, Duluth, Minn.  
*music education*

Zachary J. Schwalbach, Hudson, Wis.  
*music education*

Martin Shedd, Ashburnham, Mass.  
*classics/music*

## BASS I

Scott Hansen, Lee's Summit, Mo.  
*political science*

Paul Henderson, Glenview, Ill.  
*music/physics*

Jeremy Krahn, Manitoba, Canada  
*music performance*

James Leavell, St. Cloud, Minn.  
*English*

Cody Miller, Fairview, N.C.  
*music education*

Devin Orchard, Hastings, Minn.  
*biology*

Zachary Rygiel, Largo, Fla.  
*church music*

✦ Stanford Scriven, Beaverton, Ore.  
*music education*

Khashiar Shahbazi, Union, Ohio  
*music education*

## BASS II

Jordan Boucher, Overland Park, Kan.  
*music performance/music education*

Andrew Bourgoin, Conway, Ark.  
*music performance*

Timothy Brendler, Seaside Park, N.J.  
*church music*

Mark Donlin, Andover, Minn.  
*psychology/neuroscience*

Caleb Eboch, Fairfax, Va.  
*political science/music*

Will Esch, Stillwater, Minn.  
*music performance*

Isaac Lewis-O'Connor, Lawrence, Kan.  
*music education*

Ian McPherson, Westminster, Colo.  
*political science/Russian/music*

Chris Mode, Edina, Minn.  
*music/biology*

Benjamin Simmons, Sheboygan, Wis.  
*mathematics*

Samuel Willodson, Mankato, Minn.  
*English/Latin*

✦ Denotes section leader

## ST. OLAF DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

Alison Feldt, *chair*

Andrew Hisey, *vice-chair*

## OFFICE OF MUSIC ORGANIZATIONS

B.J. Johnson, *manager*

Terra Widdifield, *assistant manager*

Kevin Stocks, *marketing specialist*

Miranda Bryan, *assistant to music organizations*

Tim Wells, *administrative assistant*

Mary Davis, *performance librarian/mechanical rights administrator*

# THE ST. OLAF CHOIR CENTENNIAL REUNION CONCERT

*The St. Olaf Choir*  
ANTON ARMSTRONG '78, CONDUCTOR

## I.

**CANTATE DOMINO**  
Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562–1621)

**O JESU MEA VITA**  
Claudio Monteverdi (c.1567–1643)

**LET THE BRIGHT SERAPHIM (SAMSON)**  
George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)  
Mary Boehlke Wilson '92, soprano  
Martin Hodel, trumpet  
Chamber Ensemble

**THE KING SHALL REJOICE  
(CORONATION ANTHEM II)**  
George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)  
Chamber Ensemble

## II.

**KYRIE (MASS IN E-FLAT, OP. 109)**  
Josef Rheinberger (1839–1901)

**DER RINGES PAA JORD  
(TODAY THERE IS RINGING)**  
F. Melius Christiansen (1871–1955)  
(The first selection sung by the St. Olaf Choir in its  
inaugural concert in 1912)

**THE WORLDS ABOVE**  
Ben Allaway '80 (b. 1958)

**SET ME AS A SEAL (A NEW CREATION)**  
René Clausen '74 (b. 1953)

**PSALM 96**  
Ralph M. Johnson '78 (b. 1955)

*Intermission*

## III.

**GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN**  
John Ireland (1879–1962)  
John Ferguson, organ

**THIS IS THE DAY**  
Stanford E. Scriven '11 (b. 1988)

**SHIRU L' ADONAI**  
Aharon Harlap (b. 1941)

**SURE ON THIS SHINING NIGHT**  
Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943)  
Andrew Bourgoin '12, piano

**CHILDREN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER**  
arr. Robert Scholz '61

**THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE**  
arr. Moses G. Hogan Jr.

**THE BATTLE OF JERICHO**  
arr. Moses G. Hogan Jr.

*St. Olaf Centennial Reunion Choir*  
ANTON ARMSTRONG '78, CONDUCTOR  
KENNETH JENNINGS '50, CONDUCTOR EMERITUS

**LIGHT EVERLASTING**  
Olaf C. Christiansen '25 (1901–84)

**OUR FATHER**  
Alexander Gretchaninoff (1864–1956)

**O DAY FULL OF GRACE**  
arr. F. Melius Christiansen

**THE LORD IS THE EVERLASTING GOD  
(MVMT. II)**  
Kenneth Jennings '50 (b. 1925)

**KEEP YOUR LAMPS!**  
arr. André J. Thomas  
Devin Orchard '13, conga

**JOYFUL, JOYFUL, WE ADORE THEE**  
Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)  
arr. John Ferguson, organ  
Boe Brass Quartet

**BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR**  
arr. F. Melius Christiansen

# From one generation *to the next*

For some members of the St. Olaf Choir, singing in the ensemble is a family tradition.



When it came time for **Rachel Dahlen '13** to choose a college, she made a point of leaving St. Olaf off the list.

Both of her parents are alumni, and her mom sang in the St. Olaf Choir under Conductor Kenneth Jennings '50.

Everyone assumed that Dahlen, herself a talented vocalist, would follow the same path. But she was determined to find her own way.

"I visited many schools around the country, trying to find a St. Olaf in another state. Trust me, it can't be found," Dahlen says. "None could match the level of choral music offered at St. Olaf. This ensemble operates like a professional music group but does not require its members to be music majors."

So three decades after her mom, St. Olaf Professor of Social Work and Family Studies Mary Carlsen '79, sang her last song with the St. Olaf Choir, Dahlen sang her first.

And she's far from the only member of the century-old St. Olaf Choir to carry on a family tradition of singing with the ensemble. This year 13 members of the choir continued a legacy begun by a family member.

For **Laura Kyle '13**, a first-year member of the choir, that legacy began nearly 90 years ago when her great-grandmother, Laura Stumley Mikkelsen, joined the ensemble that was then led by legendary founder and conductor F. Melius Christiansen. Mikkelsen sang in the St. Olaf Choir for three years before graduating in 1924, and Kyle is now following in her footsteps.



**Elizabeth Rollins '11**

*Family Member in the Choir:* Her mom, Susan Nepstad Rollins '69

*Interesting Tidbit:* Her mom sang in the choir during the last year of Conductor Olaf Christiansen '25 and the first year of Conductor Kenneth Jennings '50.



**Cassie Bogh '12**

*Family Members in the Choir:* Her mom, Lisa Curry Bogh '85, and aunt, Sara Curry Stevenson '97

*Interesting Tidbit:* Her mom and aunt both majored in chemistry and pursued careers in science, and she's doing the same — proof that you don't need to major in music to sing in the St. Olaf Choir.



saw her sister, Sammi Block '06, perform in the St. Olaf Christmas Festival. "She always told me it would be the best musical experience I would have," she says.

**Iselin Donaldson '11** received equally sage advice from her mom, Sue Boxrud '78, who sang alongside current St. Olaf Choir Conductor Anton Armstrong '78. "She often tells me to cherish every moment of this outstanding opportunity, as it will be in the form of memories faster than I can imagine," Donaldson says.

The St. Olaf senior realized just how powerful those memories can be during the choir's concert at Carnegie Hall last year. She remembers looking into the audience and seeing her mom, who had performed with the choir in the very same hall more than 30 years earlier. In that moment, Donaldson says she realized that she and



her mom were both part of a musical family that was as strong and steeped in history as any other.

"I am one small part of a family that has existed for 100 years," Donaldson says. "How amazing is that?" 🐦

"I've wanted to sing at St. Olaf for as long as I can remember," Kyle says. "I come from a long line of Oles and have been surrounded by CDs and recordings of all the St. Olaf ensembles. St. Olaf and music have always been a huge part of my life, and I feel so lucky to be able to experience it myself as a member of the choir."

Others are following the lead of family members who have much more recently been a part of the choir.

**Caitlin Block '11** knew she wanted to sing with the choir the first time she

**Stephanie Abbas '11**

*Family Member in the Choir:* Her brother, Matthew Abbas '06

*Interesting Tidbit:* While her brother had three years in the St. Olaf Choir, she's had just this one. His no-nonsense advice: Just "enjoy the experience."



**Sam Engelsgjerd '13**

*Family Members in the Choir:* His dad, Mark Engelsgjerd '87; uncle, Michael Engelsgjerd '93; and cousin, Joshua Engelsgjerd '10

*Interesting Tidbit:* During his dad's first year in the St. Olaf Choir, the ensemble's national tour included a stop at Calvin College, where a young alumnus named Anton Armstrong '78 was a faculty member. "Little did I know that 25 years later, my son would be singing in his choir," Mark Engelsgjerd says.



**Siri Jorstad '12**

*Family Members in the Choir:* Her dad, David Jorstad '77; mom, Dede Hokanson Jorstad '78; aunts, Mona Hokanson Grote '73 and Cindy Hokanson Chapman '76; and great-uncle, Curtis Jorstad '47

*Interesting Tidbit:* Family legend has it that her great-uncle served as valet to St. Olaf Choir founder F. Melius Christiansen.



## ST. OLAF COLLEGE MUSIC DEPARTMENT FACULTY

Steven Amundson, professor, orchestra, conducting, theory; B.A., Luther; M.M., Northwestern

Kathryn Ananda-Owens, associate professor, piano, piano literature, chamber music; B.A., Oberlin; B.M., Oberlin; M.M., D.M.A., Peabody

Anton Armstrong, Harry R. and Thora H. Tosdal Professor of Music, choir, conducting, voice, pedagogy for young voices; B.M., St. Olaf; M.M., Illinois; D.M.A., Michigan State

Christopher Aspaas, associate professor, choir, choral literature, conducting, voice; B.M., St. Olaf; M.M., Michigan State; Ph.D., Florida State

Christopher Atzinger, associate professor, piano, piano literature; B.M., Texas-Austin; M.M., Michigan; D.M.A., Peabody

Linda Berger, professor, music education; B.A., St. Olaf; M.A., Ph.D., Minnesota

John Bower, visiting instructor\*, theory and composition; B.M., Berklee; A.M., Ph.D., Duke

Julia Byl, visiting assistant professor, ethnomusicology; B.A., St. Olaf; B.M., Berklee; M.A., Ph.D., Michigan

David Carter, (on sabbatical) professor, cello, string methods, string literature and pedagogy, music appreciation, chamber music; B.F.A., Minnesota; M.M., Indiana; D.M.A., Illinois

David Castro, assistant professor, theory, counterpoint, advanced analysis; B.M.E., Pacific Union; M.M., Arizona; Ph.D., Oregon

Laura Caviani, instructor\*, jazz piano; B.M., Lawrence; M.M., Michigan

Beth Christensen, professor, music librarian; B.M., M.S., Illinois; M.A., Minnesota

Kurt Clausen, instructor\*, saxophone, chamber music; B.A., St. Olaf; M.M., Minnesota

Anna Clift, instructor\*, cello; B.M., Indiana; M.M., SUNY-Stony Brook

Dan Dressen, associate dean for fine arts, professor, voice, lyric diction; B.S., Bemidji State; M.F.A., D.M.A., Minnesota

Margaret Eaves-Smith, associate professor, voice; B.M., M.M., Cleveland Institute of Music

Andrea Een, (on sabbatical) associate professor, violin, viola, Hardanger fiddle, chamber music; B.M., M.M., D.M.A., Illinois

Tracey Engleman, instructor, voice, vocal pedagogy, vocal literature; B.M., St. Olaf; M.M., Minnesota

Alison Feldt, department chair, associate professor, voice; B.A., Luther; M.A., Iowa; D.M.A., Minnesota

John Ferguson, Elliot M. and Klara Stockdal Johnson Professor of Organ and Church Music, choir, organ, church music, chapel cantor; B.M., Oberlin; M.A., Kent State; D.M.A., Eastman

Charles Gray, professor, violin, viola, string literature and pedagogy, chamber music; B.M., Wheaton; M.M., Michigan

David Hagedorn, artist in residence, jazz ensemble, percussion, percussion methods, world music, aural skills; B.S., Minnesota; M.M., New England Conservatory; D.M.A., Eastman

Alice Hanson, professor, music history; B.A., Wells; M.M., Ph.D., Illinois

J. Robert Hanson, visiting professor\*, trumpet; B.M., Concordia; M.A., M.F.A., Ph.D., Iowa

Janis Hardy, associate professor, voice, lyric theatre

Philip Hey, instructor\*, drum set; B.A., Minnesota

Andrew Hisey, department vice chair, visiting associate professor, piano, piano pedagogy; B.M., Waterloo; M.M., D.M.A., Michigan

Martin Hodel, associate professor, orchestra, trumpet, chamber music; B.A., Goshen; M.M., North Carolina-Chapel Hill; D.M.A., Eastman

Gerald Hoekstra, professor, music history, early music ensembles; B.A., Calvin; M.A., Ph.D., Ohio State

Anthony Holt, instructor\*, voice; B.A., M.A., Christ Church, Oxford, England

John Jensen, staff pianist\*, B.A., Occidental; M.M., Southern California

Rachel Jensen, instructor\*, Hardanger fiddle; B.S., Minnesota

Dennis Johnson, piano technician; B. A., Luther

Sigrid Johnson, artist in residence\*, choir, voice; B.M., St. Cloud State; M.M., Michigan

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Timothy Mahr, professor, band, conducting, composition, music education; B.M., B.A., St. Olaf; M.A., D.M.A., Iowa

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Mary Martz, instructor\*, voice; B.S., Minnesota State University-Moorhead

Harriet McCleary, instructor\*, voice; B.M., B.M.E., Texas Christian; M.M., Westminster Choir College; D.M.A., Minnesota

James McKeel, professor, voice, lyric theatre; B.M.E., Westminster; M.M., Minnesota

Kent McWilliams, associate professor, piano, piano pedagogy, chamber music; B.M., M.M., Toronto; Artist Diploma, Stuttgart Musikhochschule; D.M.A., Montreal

Justin Merritt, associate professor, composition, theory, instrumentation; B.M., Trinity; M.M., D.M.A., Indiana

Elinor Niemisto, instructor\*, harp; B.M., M.M., Michigan

Paul Niemisto, associate professor, band, low brass, brass methods, chamber music; B.M., M.M., Michigan; Ph.D., Minnesota

Nancy Oliveros, instructor\*, violin; B.M., Florida State; M.M., Boston University

Paul Ousley, instructor\*, string bass; B.M., Wisconsin-Eau Claire; M.M., Eastman

Nancy Paddleford, professor, piano; B.M., M.M., Indiana; D.M.A., Minnesota

Michael Petruconis, instructor\*, french horn; B.S., Nebraska-Lincoln; M.M., Minnesota

Jun Qian, assistant professor, clarinet, chamber music; B.M., Baylor; B.M., Shanghai Conservatory; M.M., D.M.A., Eastman

Catherine Ramirez, assistant professor, flute and theory; B.A., Occidental; M.A., Queens; D.M.A. (ABD), Rice

Catherine Rodland, artist-in-residence, organ, theory; B.M., St. Olaf; M.M., D.M.A., Eastman

Lori Ronning Folland, staff pianist\*; B.M., Oberlin; M.M., Michigan

Miriam Scholz-Carlson, instructor\*, string methods, Alexander technique; B.M., St. Olaf

Ray Shows, instructor\*, violin, viola, chamber music; B.M., Florida State; M.M., Boston

Robert C. Smith, associate professor, voice, vocal literature; B.M., St. Olaf; M.M., Yale; D.M.A., Texas-Austin

Darrin Thomas, gospel choir\*

Paul Westermeyer, visiting professor\*, church music; B.A., Elmhurst; B.D., Lancaster Theological Seminary; S.M.M., Union Theological Seminary; Ph.D., Chicago

Karen Wilkerson, instructor\*, voice; B.A., California State University-Northridge; M.M., Westminster Choir College

Herbert Winslow, instructor\*, French horn; B.M., Curtis Institute of Music

Annalee Wolf, instructor\*, viola; B.M., St. Olaf; M.M. North Carolina School of the Arts

Larry Zimmerman, instructor\*, low brass; B.A., St. Olaf; M.M., Boston University

\* part-time

### PRINCIPAL INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLES AND CONDUCTORS

St. Olaf Band, *Timothy Mahr '78*  
St. Olaf Orchestra, *Steven Amundson*  
Norseman Band, *Paul Niemisto*  
St. Olaf Philharmonia, *Martin Hodel*  
Collegium Musicum, *Gerald Hoekstra*  
Jazz Ensembles, *David Hagedorn*

### PRINCIPAL CHORAL ENSEMBLES AND CONDUCTORS

St. Olaf Choir, *Anton Armstrong '78*  
Chapel Choir, *Christopher Aspaas '95*  
St. Olaf Cantorei, *John Ferguson*  
Manitou Singers, *Sigrid Johnson*  
Viking Chorus, *Christopher Aspaas '95*  
Early Music Singers, *Gerald Hoekstra*  
Collegiate Chorale, *Anton Armstrong '78*  
Gospel Choir, *Darrin Thomas*

### OTHER MUSIC ENSEMBLES AND CONDUCTORS

Clarinet Choir, *Jun Qian*  
Handbell Ensembles, *Jill Mahr*  
Pep Band, *Student-Directed*  
Percussion Ensembles, *David Hagedorn*  
St. Olaf Brass, *Martin Hodel*  
Trombone Choir, *Paul Niemisto*  
Tuba-Euphonium Ensemble, *Paul Niemisto*

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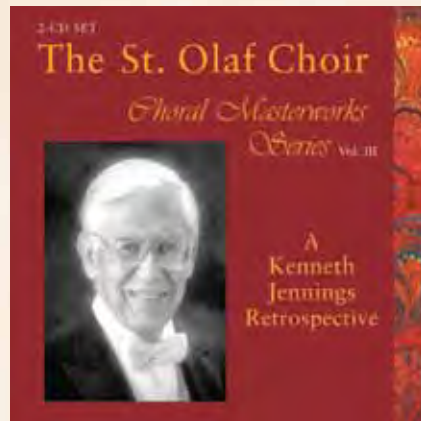
Preview at 2:30 p.m. | Performance at 3 p.m. CST

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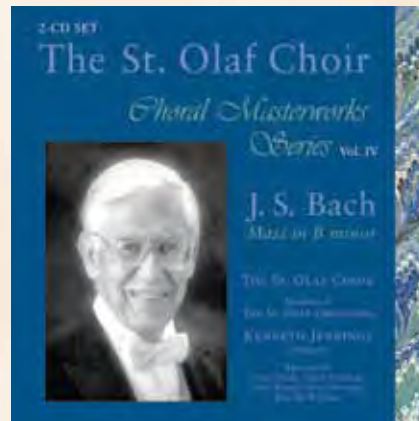


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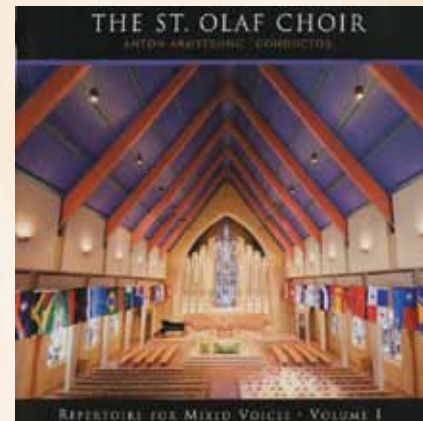
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*Jubilate Deo, Lassus; Elohim Hashivenu, Rossi; Singet dem Herrn, Bach; Light's Glittering Morn, Parker; Conversion of Saul, Stroope; Arroz con Leche, Guastavino*

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FOR ALUMNI, PARENTS, AND FRIENDS OF THE COLLEGE  
IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ST. OLAF CHOIR'S CENTENNIAL TOUR

## Tentative itinerary

Sunday, June 2	Depart U.S.
Monday, June 3	Arrive Oslo
Tuesday, June 4	Oslo
Wednesday, June 5	Oslo, Stavanger
<b>Thursday, June 6</b>	<b>Stavanger (concert)</b>
Friday, June 7	Stavanger, Bergen
Saturday, June 8	Bergen
<b>Sunday, June 9</b>	<b>Bergen (concert)</b>
Monday, June 10	Bergen, Ålesund
Tuesday, June 11	Ålesund
Wednesday, June 12	Ålesund, Molde
Thursday, June 13	Molde, Kristiansund, Trondheim
<b>Friday, June 14</b>	<b>Trondheim, Snåsa (concert)</b>
Saturday, June 15	Snåsa, Trondheim
<b>Sunday, June 16</b>	<b>Trondheim (concert)</b>
Monday, June 17	Depart Norway



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# ST. OLAF CHOIR CENTENNIAL CHOIR TOUR 2012

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## WEEKEND TOUR

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 21, 4 P.M.  
Fergus Falls, Minnesota  
Kennedy Secondary School

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22, 2:30 P.M.  
Moorhead, Minnesota  
Trinity Lutheran Church

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## MAIN TOUR

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 28, 8 P.M.  
Madison, Wisconsin  
Luther Memorial Church

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 7:30 P.M.  
North Bethesda, Maryland  
Music Center at Strathmore

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29, 3 P.M.  
East Lansing, Michigan  
Michigan State University  
Wharton Center for the  
Performing Arts

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 7:30 P.M.  
Cleveland, Ohio  
Mary Queen of Peace Catholic Church

MONDAY, JANUARY 30, 7:30 P.M.  
Indianapolis, Indiana  
St. Luke's United Methodist Church

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 7:30 P.M.  
Grand Rapids, Michigan  
Calvin College Covenant Fine Arts Center

TUESDAY, JANUARY 31, 7:30 P.M.  
Charleston, West Virginia  
Clay Center for the Performing Arts

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 7:30 P.M.  
Urbana, Illinois  
University of Illinois  
Great Hall, Krannert Center

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 7:30 P.M.  
Charlotte, North Carolina  
Blumenthal Center

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 7:30 P.M.  
Chicago, Illinois  
Fourth Presbyterian Church

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 7:30 P.M.  
Raleigh, North Carolina  
Meymandi Concert Hall

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2 P.M.  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
Marcus Center for the Performing Arts

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 7:30 P.M.  
Newport News, Virginia  
Christopher Newport University  
Ferguson Center for the Arts

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 3 P.M.  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
Orchestra Hall

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 7:30 P.M.  
Northfield, Minnesota  
St. Olaf College  
Boe Memorial Chapel

