



# THE ST. OLAF CHOIR

ANTON ARMSTRONG · CONDUCTOR

1912 · THE CENTENNIAL TOUR · 2012

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 7:30 P.M.**  
**FOELLINGER GREAT HALL · KRANNERT CENTER**  
**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS · URBANA**

Video Presentation: *St. Olaf Choir Centennial Retrospective*  
6:30 p.m. (No additional ticket required)



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# THE ST. OLAF CHOIR

ANTON ARMSTRONG, CONDUCTOR

B.J. JOHNSON, MANAGER

The St. Olaf Choir, the widely acclaimed ensemble and long-time creative influence behind the a cappella choral tradition, has toured annually since 1912, when it was founded by F. Melius Christiansen. The 1920 tour to the major music centers of the East Coast sowed the seeds of the ensemble's national reputation and established its unaccompanied style of singing as a significant force in American choral music.



ANTON ARMSTRONG

Anton Armstrong has served as conductor of the St. Olaf Choir since 1990. A 1978 bachelor of music graduate of St. Olaf College (where he was a member of the choir he now leads), Armstrong later earned a master of music degree in choral music from the University of Illinois and a Doctor of musical arts degree in choral conducting from Michigan State University. He returned to St. Olaf after 10 years on the faculty at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Armstrong is well aware of the St. Olaf Choir's history and its place in American choral tradition. His D.M.A. thesis was devoted to "Celebrating 75 Years of Musical Excellence: The Evolution of the St. Olaf Choir."

Under the adept direction of Olaf C. Christiansen (who succeeded his father in 1941), Kenneth Jennings (who led the ensemble from 1968 to 1990), and Armstrong, the St. Olaf Choir has inspired and entertained audiences around the world. The St. Olaf Choir has performed under such notable conductors as Sir Neville Mariner, Osmo Vänskä, Neemi Järvi, Sir David Willcocks, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski,

Helmuth Rilling, and the late Robert Shaw, and it continues to make frequent appearances with the Minnesota Orchestra and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.

The St. Olaf Choir is acclaimed internationally, the result of 13 tours to Europe, Asia, and the Pacific Rim. In 1988 the ensemble was one of only five choirs in the world invited to participate in the Seoul Olympic Arts Festival in South Korea. In 1993 the choir

completed a 21-day concert tour to New Zealand and Australia. In 2001 it embarked on a 21-day concert tour to France, Germany, Austria, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. In 2005 the St. Olaf Choir joined the St. Olaf Band and the St. Olaf Orchestra on a 21-day concert tour of Norway commemorating the 100th anniversary of Norway's independence. In June 2009 the St. Olaf Choir made its first concert tour of the United Kingdom and Ireland.

The St. Olaf Choir appeared on the world stage at the Sixth World Symposium on Choral Music in the Twin Cities as part of the finale, "Minnesota Sings Farewell." The concert featured the St. Olaf Choir, VocalEssence, the Dale Warland Singers, and Moore by Four, all Minnesota-based, nationally recognized music ensembles.

The choir's growing discography features more than 25 discs, including *The Spirituals of Williams L. Dawson*, *Advance Australia Fair, Repertoire for Mixed Voices, Vol. I and II*, and the popular three-volume series *Great Hymns of Faith*.

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