

Nova Notes

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF MUZIKO NOVA

Coming up "Roses"

Jocelyn Hagen '03 premieres requiem mass at Composition Recital
by Carl Schroeder '05

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Gabriel Fauré, Maurice Duruflé and Benjamin Britten are all composers whose requiem masses are among their best-known works. To that list we can now add current St. Olaf senior Jocelyn Hagen, whose 40-minute opus for choir and orchestra, "Ashes of Roses," was premiered in Boe Chapel on the afternoon of Sunday, March 2.

Hagen's "Ashes of Roses" is a setting of traditional texts from the Latin Mass for the Dead, complemented by an excerpt of poetry by early 20th-century American writer Elaine Goodale Eastman, from which the work draws its title. The requiem was performed by a large ensemble of singers and instrumentalists that included current students and alumni. Composed during the 17 months following September 11, 2001, the six movements of "Ashes" take the listener on a journey through emotions of mourning, reflection, healing, hope and perseverance.

During the summer of 2001, while Hagen was preparing an original piano sonata for performance on her Senior Piano Recital, she decided to set a larger goal for her Senior Composition Recital. "I really wanted to write something big," said Hagen. After settling on the medium of choir and orchestra, she began searching for words to set to music. "I was unsure of what text to use until after September 11th," said Hagen. "Then I realized it would be appropriate to write a requiem mass, because our country was in mourning." However, as the mass evolved over the course of a year and a half, a far broader theme for the requiem emerged. "The piece is about more than September 11th," she explained. "People live with loss every day."

This past summer, Jocelyn had the opportunity to study for two months in



From left: Paul Peltier '03, Jocelyn Hagen '03, Jennifer Kult '02, Rebecca Garbarino '03 and Matthew McDonald '03 gather on March 2 in Boe Chapel for the premiere of 'Ashes of Roses.'

Missoula, Montana with composer David Maslanka, whose Symphony No. 4 was recently played by the St. Olaf Band. "I completed the bulk of the work [on "Ashes"] during that amazing and enlightening time," recalled Hagen.

The culmination of more than a year of creative outpouring, hard work, rehearsal and planning, the March 2nd premiere of "Ashes" was attended by more than 200 people, who gave the piece a standing ovation at its conclusion. Hagen is currently student teaching at an elementary school in New Hope, Minnesota. She is still working on a "Dies Irae" movement that will complete "Ashes of Roses," and is also in the early stages of writing a piano concerto. Having completed her ninth and final semester at St. Olaf this past fall, she plans to pursue a musical living through composing, teaching and performing.

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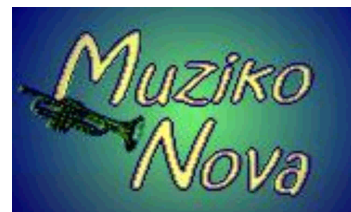
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On February 29, 2004, there will be a concert of new music by current St. Olaf students and alumni at the Southern Theater in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Nova Notes is a monthly publication of Muziko Nova, the official St. Olaf student new music organization.

To contribute an article, feedback or ideas, email novanotes@stolaf.edu.



St. Olaf Percussion Ensemble performs at SCI concert

by Carl Schroeder '05; photograph by Joshua Wyatt '05

Drums and buses were among the prominent themes of a contemporary music concert at St. Paul's Macalester College on Saturday. The concert, given as part of the annual regional conference of the Society of Composers, Inc., featured performances by members of the St. Olaf Percussion Ensemble under the direction of Professor Dave Hagedorn. Also included on the program was an orchestral work by former St. Olaf theory/composition professor Christopher Gable.

The percussion ensemble performed two works during the program's second half. The first, "metal...stone...being...cracked" by Alan Chan, draws on themes from ancient Chinese legend. According to the composer, the composition is intended to illustrate through sound the struggle between man's will and the unruly force of nature. The piece called for experimental percussion techniques and required a precise

sense of timing from the performers. "All of the players are working on the struggle," said Chan, who was in attendance at the concert. "It's very hard to coordinate."

The second piece, by native Minnesotan John White, was entitled "Introit, Illusions, Ritual and Dance." Scored for percussion and cello, the composition engaged the audience with its exploration of a rich variety of percussive textures and lyrical string solos. The cello part, performed by St. Olaf Professor David Carter, made imaginative use of natural harmonics and called for improvisation during several segments. A highlight of the program's first half was Christopher Gable's "The Blue-Wheeled Bus," performed by the St. Paul Civic Symphony with Edouard Forner conducting. The piece, composed in 1995 while Gable was studying with Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Dominick Argento, traces its lineage to the music of Igor Stravinski and George Gershwin, yet maintains a distinctly Minnesotan feel. Playful, jazzy and picturesque, "The Blue-Wheeled Bus" is a most fitting tribute to mass transit.

Hosted by Macalester College, the Society of Composers regional conference was a weekend-long event featuring seven concerts of new music by composers from throughout the Midwest. A concert on Saturday afternoon included a performance of a work by another former St. Olaf Professor, Tom Schnauber. For more information about the Society of Composers, please visit their website at www.societyofcomposers.org.

"metal...stone...being...cracked" and "Introit, Illusions, Ritual and Dance" will be among works performed at the St. Olaf Percussion Ensemble's spring recital at 8:15 pm in Urness Recital Hall on May 1, 2003.



Members of the St. Olaf Percussion Ensemble, conducted by Dave Hagedorn, are joined by faculty member David Carter in a performance of "Introit, Illusions, Ritual and Dance" by John White.

Nova Notes

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Muziko Nova is an official St. Olaf student organization dedicated to new music.

To join the Muziko Nova alias, send an email to wang@stolaf.edu.

Muziko Nova recitals and events A call for scores

Muziko Nova, St. Olaf's student new music organization, will be holding a composition recital on April 8, 2003 at 8:15 in CHM Urness Recital Hall. The recital, open to student, faculty and guest composers, will have a peace theme. The event is free and open to the general public.

Muziko Nova is currently seeking student submissions for the recital. To have your music considered for performance at the April 8th peace concert, submit a score of any composition that somehow relates somehow with the theme of peace along with the names of your performers to the Muziko Nova PO Box (#138 in Buntrock) by **Tuesday, April 1st**.

Also, mark your calendars for Monday, April 28, when nationally renowned composer Libby Larsen will be visiting St. Olaf and giving a talk on new music and society at 6pm in the Valhalla Room in Buntrock. Anyone interested is welcome to bring their dinner trays and converse with one of America's leading composers.

Email schroedc@stolaf.edu with any questions.

St. Olaf Orchestra premieres new work for Hardanger fiddle and orchestra

By Carl Schroeder '05

The St. Olaf Orchestra's spring concert in Skoglund on Sunday featured four of the most famous notes in the history of music as well as a pair of twenty-first century compositions. The concert, conducted by Steven Amundson, was presented as part of the music department's 100th anniversary celebration.

After opening with a movement from Edvard Grieg's "Norwegian Dances," the orchestra was joined by faculty member Andrea Een for the world premiere of "Three Pieces for Hardanger Fiddle and Orchestra," composed for Een and the St. Olaf Orchestra by Dan Trueman of Princeton University.

"This is a really challenging piece because of the rhythmic difficulty," said Een, who Amundson describes as one of the world's foremost experts on the Hardanger fiddle.

The demanding nature of the composition reflects Trueman's efforts to write music that evokes the folk history of the instrument. "Traditional music for Hardanger fiddle is tuneful, yet hard to whistle; rhythmic, yet hard to dance to; complex, yet seemingly transparent," said Trueman. The three-movement work is an ambitious entry into a nearly empty genre, since music for Hardanger fiddle is traditionally not written down but rather passed from generation to generation by oral tradition.

With its rising two-note figure, the composition's haunting second movements, titled "Fire Song," seemed most true to the evening's recurrent theme of music built from simple motives.

Following the Hardanger piece, Native American flautist Keith Bear and composer Linda Tutas Haugen, a St. Olaf graduate, took to the stage for a performance of Haugen's "The Fable of Old Turtle," which premiered in 2001. "This music is a message of peace during these tumultuous times," Amundson said before conducting the 17-minute work.

Based on the children's book "Old Turtle" by Douglas Wood, the composition portrays the simple but powerful fable through musical motifs and narration, in the tradition of Sergei Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf."

"Old Turtle's" story involves animals, humans and various elements of nature coming to an understanding of their relationship to each other and with their creator. "The music really brings an extra layer of meaning to the text," said violist Phil Knutson '05.

The featured soloist for "Old Turtle" was Grammy Award nominee Keith Bear, whose improvised flute solos and renditions of traditional Native American melodies provided the work with an emotional centerpiece. Benjamin Krug '04 performed several of the composition's crucial cello solos and composer Haugen provided the narration.

The sole work on the program's second half was Ludwig van Beethoven's epic "Symphony No. 5." Famous for its opening four-note motif, the work was composed by Beethoven in 1804 shortly after he began to come to terms with his loss of hearing.

A recording of the concert will be presented at 3 pm on April 5 on WCAL 89.3 FM.

Other upcoming performances by the St. Olaf Orchestra include a performance with Chapel Choir on April 13 and the Senior soloist concert on May 11.

New Music Calendar

Upcoming new music events at St. Olaf College and in the Twin Cities

Events at St. Olaf College are listed in **bold**.

March 23, 2003 -- Minnesota Orchestra performs Steve Heitzeg and Amy Scurria's *We Are Met at Gettysburg*

**April 6, 2003 -- Senior Composition Recital :
Kristin Roust (4:30 pm, Urness Recital Hall)**

**April 8, 2003 -- Muziko Nova Peace Concert
(8:15 pm, Urness Recital Hall)**

**April 28, 2003 -- Dinner with Libby Larsen
(6 pm, Valhalla Room in Buntrock)**

**April 28, 2003 -- St. Olaf student
composition recital (8:15 pm, Urness Recital
Hall)**

May 4, 2003 -- A Celebration of Minnesota Composers (7 pm, St. Anthony Park United Church of Christ, St. Paul)

**May 9, 2003 -- St. Olaf student composition
recital (7 pm, Urness Recital Hall)**

For web links to more information on many of the above events, visit the Muziko Nova calendar online at:

www.stolaf.edu/orgs/nova/events.html