

Nova Notes

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF MUZIKO NOVA
- Covering contemporary music news at St. Olaf College -

New Music Forum and Concert planned

Weekend of Muziko Nova special events set for Feb. 27-29
by Carl Schroeder '05

Muziko Nova, St. Olaf College, and Minneapolis' Southern Theater are presenting a New Music Forum on the morning and afternoon Saturday, February 28, 2004 followed by a Leap Day Concert of new music by St. Olaf student and alumni composers at 2pm on Sunday, February 29, 2004.

Leap Day 2004

Both events, which are open to the general public, will take place at the Southern Theater in Minneapolis. In addition, a public recital of works by

St. Olaf students, alumni, and guest composers will be presented at 8:15 on Friday, February 27, 2004 in the Orchestra Room at St. Olaf College.

For more information, see page 4 of this newsletter or visit the Muziko Nova website at www.stolaf.edu/orgs/nova.

Valhalla Band premieres student piece

by Carl Schroeder '05

On the snowy evening of Nov. 22, the St. Olaf Valhalla Band, a student-run ensemble of about 50 members, performed a concert of new and traditional band music in Boe Chapel. Conducted primarily by Erin Vork '04 and Dominic Hartjes '05, the program featured theme music from several popular films and TV shows as well as the premiere of "Light of Olympus," a new work by Carl Holmquist '05.

At the concert's midpoint, composer Holmquist took the podium to conduct the world premiere of his 5-minute work. A stirring exploration of a catchy, heroic tune, "Olympus" is described by Holmquist as "a spirited piece... that creates a sense of light through music."

The composition was well-received by the audience, and Holmquist appeared pleased with the performance. "It was a thrill and an honor to hear the piece and work on it with a group like Valhalla that plays music for all the right reasons," he said.

Founded in 1997 by James Miller '01 and Jayce Ogren '01, the Valhalla Band offers a musical opportunity for students who didn't qualify for an official ensemble. The group, which is not affiliated with the St. Olaf Music Department, is entirely student-organized, rehearses once a week on Sunday afternoons, and requires no audition.

"What I find unique about this band is that people are here purely because they want to be here," said Vork.

The group's spring concert, scheduled for May 15, 2004, will feature Valhalla Band co-founder Miller as guest conductor.

Anyone interested in playing with the ensemble this Interim or Spring Semester is encouraged to contact Erin Vork or Dominic Hartjes, who can be reached at vork@stolaf.edu and hartjes@stolaf.edu.



Carl Holmquist '05

Winter 2004 / Volume 2 # 2

INSIDE . . .

Herrera Lights up Pause . . . 2
Cuban-born pianist Nachito Herrera brought his "experiment around Cuban music to St. Olaf on October 30.

Music from the Hill 2005 . . . 2
How to get involved in the next St. Olaf student composition CD project.

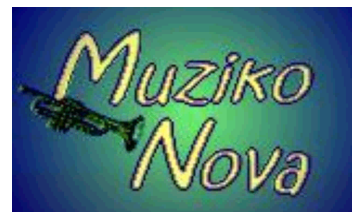
Dominick Argento Visit . . . 3
1975 Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Dominick Argento visited St. Olaf on October 9 for an honorary degree ceremony, Q&A session and a faculty concert of his music.

New Music Calendar . . . 3
Upcoming new music events at St. Olaf and in the Twin Cities area.

Forum and Concert Info . . . 4
On February 27-29, 2004, Muziko Nova will be hosting an exciting weekend of new music events at St. Olaf College and the Southern Theater in downtown Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Nova Notes is a quarterly publication of Muziko Nova, the official student-run contemporary music organization of St. Olaf College.

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



Cuban pianist Herrera lights up Pause

by Carl Schroeder '05

Local Cuban-born pianist Nachito Herrera and his band Puro Cubano paid a visit to St. Olaf on Oct. 30, performing a diverse concert at the Lion's Pause. During the 90-minute performance, the virtuosic Herrera dazzled the audience with numerous extended piano solos, racing up and down the keys and making use of two nearby synthesizers.

Herrera, 37, describes Puro Cubano as "an experiment around Cuban music," melding influences from a variety of diverse traditions. The end result is a uniquely modern sound with solid roots in North American jazz harmonies and catchy Afro-Cuban rhythms. At Thursday's show, the four-member Puro Cubano performed a mix of original songs and jazz standards.



Cuban-born pianist Nachito Herrera at the keys.

Herrera first visited Minnesota in the late 1990's while touring internationally with the band Cubanismo. After separating from that group, Herrera was invited back to the Twin Cities for a series of master classes at area schools, where he developed a strong attachment to the local community.

For several months Herrera served as the bandleader of local salsa ensemble Sabor Tropical before eventually forming Puro Cubano in 2001. The group's current roster includes Herrera on piano, composer/performer Terry Burns on bass, the energetic Gordy Knudtson on drum set and Shai Hayo on congas and auxiliary percussion. During their Thursday night performance at the Pause, all four performers were given ample opportunities to show off their strong musicianship through improvised solos scattered throughout the show.

Connections between Cuba and the United States, musical and otherwise, were the theme of the evening. "We are both part of the American continent, but we play different styles," said Herrera after the concert.

Regardless of the distance from the rest of his family as well as recent cuts in arts spending, Herrera remains optimistic and says he intends to stay in Minnesota. "Everything is beautiful in my life," says Herrera. "I don't care how many people come [to my shows], just that good people come out."

As Herrera's cutting-edge experiment continues, it's a safe bet that good people will come out in large numbers to hear the musical evolution of a Cuban-born pianist with heart, soul and talent to spare.

Nova Notes

Carl Schroeder, editor

Muziko Nova officers

Carl Schroeder, President

AJ Wong, Vice President

Amy Jacobson, Secretary

Mike Bloem, Treasurer

Mike Sweeney, Webmaster

E-mail: novanotes@stolaf.edu

Web site: <http://www.stolaf.edu/orgs/nova>

Nova Notes is a publication of Muziko Nova, an official St. Olaf student organization dedicated to contemporary music. *Nova Notes* is published three times per school year, in October, January and April. To receive *Nova Notes* free by e-mail, send a request to schroedc@stolaf.edu.

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

Music from the Hill 2005

Get your music on the next student comp CD

Music from the Hill is a bi-annual collection of music by St. Olaf student composers released by Muziko Nova. The next edition will be released in February 2005, and submissions will be accepted from January 2004 to January 2005. The project funding allows St. Olaf music majors and anyone who has taken a composition class to have one composition recorded and mastered by current student audio engineer Joshua Wyatt, and considered for inclusion on *Music from the Hill 2005*. Email Carl Schroeder at schroedc@stolaf.edu if you are interested in participating in this exciting project.



The first release in the series is *Music from the Hill 2003*, a collection of new music by St. Olaf student composers released by Muziko Nova in February 2003. It features nineteen tracks of new instrumental, vocal, jazz and electronic music written and performed by St. Olaf students. Copies are still available for \$10; contact schroedc@stolaf.edu to purchase a copy or visit www.musicfromthehill.com for more details and online audio samples.

Composer Argento visits St. Olaf

By Carl Schroeder '05

Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Dominick Argento, a preeminent figure in contemporary American opera, was St. Olaf's guest of honor on Oct. 9. An array of activities marked the decorated composer's visit, including an honorary degree ceremony, an open conversation about his musical experience and a faculty concert featuring several of his works.

"It's fair to say that no single figure in the classical music world has done more to bring international attention to Minnesota than Dr. Argento," said Music Department Chair Dan Dressen during the morning chapel service honoring Argento.

After being presented with an honorary doctorate from St. Olaf, Argento thanked those who have supported him over the years and reflected on his good fortunes. "I have been exceptionally lucky to have been allowed to do the one thing that pleases me most: compose music," said Argento. "Thanks to institutions like St. Olaf College, the art I practice is viewed as an essential part of life."

During the afternoon, the community was invited to an open conversation with Argento in Urness Recital Hall. At the hour-long talk, which was moderated by Professor of Music Timothy Mahr, Argento answered questions about his music, experience and philosophies. St. Olaf's newest degree recipient answered the audience's inquiries with poise and humor.

When asked about his feelings regarding the teaching of music composition and theory, Argento responded, "I have a theory that you cannot teach music composition." He went on to explain that he "learned more about character than about composition" from his many distinguished teachers, who include Hugo Weisgall, Henry Cowell, Alan Hovahness and Bernard Rogers.

One audience member asked Argento how he copes with the widespread perception of opera as occupying a marginal role in the contemporary music world. "I don't ever expect to replace John Tesh," said Argento, drawing laughs from the crowd. "The music I write is for a particular audience I know is out there."

That evening, several St. Olaf faculty members performed compositions by Argento at a well-attended concert in Urness Recital Hall. Pieces on the program included the song cycle "Letters from Composers" for piano and guitar, a two piano arrangement of "Valentino Dances" from Argento's 1993 opera "The Dream of Valentino," and the popular "Six Elizabethan Songs" for soprano, flute, oboe, violin, cello and harpsichord.

Argento, who was born in York, Penn., in 1927, has lived in Minnesota since accepting a teaching position at the University of Minnesota in 1958. In 1975 Argento was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Music for his song cycle "From the Diary of Virginia Woolf," which was premiered at Minneapolis's Orchestra Hall in January of that year. He is married to soprano Carolyn Bailey, whose talents have been called upon for the premieres of many of his works.

During his visit to St. Olaf College, when Argento was asked about his most important advice for aspiring musicians and composers, he instructed students to "find a community that needs whatever it is that you do." In the artistically appreciative and supportive community of Minnesota, Dominick Argento has followed his own advice and flourished.



Dr. Timothy Mahr (left) moderates a Q&A session with special guest composer Dr. Dominick Argento.

New Music Calendar

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

Events at St. Olaf College and Muziko Nova- sponsored events are listed in **bold**.

January 24, 2004 -- Free concert by new music ensemble Zeitgeist (7 pm, Unity Church-Unitarian, St. Paul)

February 27, 2004 -- Muziko Nova Student and Alumni Composition Recital (8:15 pm, Orchestra Room)

February 28, 2004 -- Muziko Nova New Music Forum (morning/afternoon, Southern Theater, Minneapolis)

February 29, 2004 -- Muziko Nova student and alumni Leap Day Concert (2 pm, Southern Theater, Minneapolis)

March 20, 2004 -- Dale Warland Singers premiere a newly commissioned work by St. Olaf alumnus Mark Kilstofte (8 pm, Basilica of St. Mary, Minneapolis)

April 8, 2004 -- Faculty recital featuring the premiere of Peter Hamlin's Hot Sauce Rags (11:30 am, Urness Recital Hall)

April 18, 2004 -- VocalEssence performs Steve Heitzeg's Nobel Symphony and works by Stephen Paulus and Dominick Argento (4 pm, Orchestra Hall, Minneapolis)

April 26, 2004 -- Student Composition Recital (8:15 pm, Urness Recital Hall)

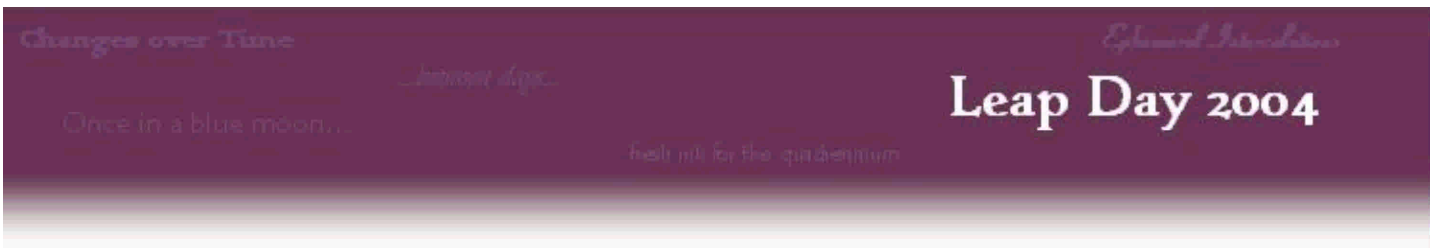
May 3-4, 2004 -- Minnesota Orchestra Reading Sessions and Composer Institute at Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis

May 10, 2004 -- Student Composition Recital (8:15 pm, Urness Recital Hall)

Transportation from St. Olaf is provided to and from many of these off-campus events. Sign up for a ride on the Muziko Nova ride sheet, located on the bulletin board between rooms 231 and 234 in the music building.

For more information on these and other new music events, visit the online calendar:

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



Muziko Nova New Music Forum and Leap Day Concert February 27-29, 2004

Muziko Nova, St. Olaf's student-led new music group, St. Olaf College, and Minneapolis' Southern Theater are presenting a New Music Forum on the morning and afternoon Saturday, February 28, 2004 followed by a Leap Day Concert of new music by St. Olaf student and alumni composers at 2pm on Sunday, February 29, 2004. Both events, which are open to the general public, will take place at the Southern Theater in Minneapolis. In addition, a public recital of works by St. Olaf students, alumni, and guest composers will be presented at 8:15 on Friday, February 27, 2004 in the Orchestra Room at St. Olaf College. St. Olaf and Southern Theater composer-in-residence Mary Ellen Childs, as well as faculty members Peter Hamlin and Tim Mahr, are advising the preparation of the weekend's events.

Please save the dates! The New Music Forum on February 28, 2004 will include several workshops for young composers, including a panel on commissioning new works that includes Heather Hitchens, president of Meet the Composer; tips for getting started as a composer; a workshop on incorporating lighting effects with contemporary music; and an opportunity to share recordings of your music with other composers and commissioners.

The exciting Leap Day Concert on February 29, 2004 will include music by St. Olaf alumni Ben Hogue, Abbie Betinis, Jocelyn Hagen, Dan Nass, Natasha Kelly Foreman, Mark Kilstofte and others, as well as current students Michael Smith, Tim Bradley, Amanda Wessel, Michael Sweeney, and Laura Conger.

The cost for the weekend's events, including transportation to and from St. Olaf, will be approximately \$25. Both events are free for those performing in the Sunday concert.

Email schroedc@stolaf.edu with any questions, or if you're interested in performing a student or alumni work.

Leap Day Concert program

Stopwatch by Laura Conger '05
A Reading From _____ by Ben Hogue '96
Echoes of Adagio by Tim Bradley '04
Zailflops by Michael Smith '05
I Offer Flowers by Peter Witrak '02
Jerusalem Lumniosa by Abbie Betinis '01
Infervesco by Timothy Takach '00
Hannah's Grave by Daniel Nass '97
Raw Sewage Music, mvt. 1 by Ryan Ingebritsen '95
Carew Songs, mvt. 3 by Alf Houkum '57
"Heart we will forget him," from *Hope* by Jocelyn Hagen '03
Quartet by Natasha Kelly Foreman '91
Transmogrifications, mvts. 1 & 2 by Michael Sweeney '05
Tempermentality by Amanda Wessel '04
Sonata for Saxophone and Piano, mvts. 3 & 4 by Mark Kilstofte '91