PIANO TOUR 2015 - DANCE INVITATION

ST. OLAF COLLEGE
Adrián Calderón '16

Hometown: Los Angeles
Major: Piano performance, China studies concentration
Activities: Plays guitar and drums, plays piano in Jazz I ensemble and keyboards in the campus band Air is Air, accompanies the modern dance ensemble, and plays intramural soccer
Career plans: Performing, composing, and teaching in his native Los Angeles
Asian influence: Calderón studies Mandarin Chinese and his interests in Asian history, language, and religion have been enriched during his time at St. Olaf. He also has been involved in academic projects related to East Asian history, Islam and Christian theology, globalization, and economics.

Kieran Berton '18

Activities: Piano performance, China studies concentration
Activities: Plays in a band and accompanies the St. Olaf Choir, accompanies the Manitou ensemble and a jazz combo, participates in St. Olaf Students for Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and Stateless People, and is a member of a study group called Beyond the Conversation
Career plans: Astrophysicist, combining research and teaching
Student researcher: This summer Berton will participate in two research programs: one at the University of California–San Diego and one sponsored by the Fullbright Foundation in the United Kingdom. He is in St. Olaf’s Great Conversation program, an integrated sequence of courses that introduces students to the major epochs of Western tradition.

John Carson '18

Hometown: Northfield, Minnesota
Major: Piano performance
Activities: Sings in Víking Chorus (first-year men’s choir)
Career plans: An orchestral conductor
Operatic obsession: Carson is passionate about opera and recently took an opera improvisation class, which was “a constant period of creativity,” he says. He hopes opera will be at the center of his career and appreciates that St. Olaf’s educational environment allows him to focus primarily on the arts. “I love the musical community and the nearly constant performances taking place around campus. There’s always a great concert to attend,” he says.

Phil Biedenbender '16

Majors: Music and physics
Activities: Plays piano in the Jazz II ensemble and a jazz combo, participates in St. Olaf Students for Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and Stateless People, and is a member of a study group called Beyond the Conversation
Career plans: Astrophysicist, combining research and teaching
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Rosanna Egge '15

Hometown: Lincoln, Nebraska
Major: Piano performance with collaborative emphasis
Activities: Plays oboe in the St. Olaf Orchestra and is a member of the Catholic Women’s Honor House
Career plans: Will attend Eastman School of Music to earn a master’s of music degree in collaborative piano.

Music to her ears: Being a student at St. Olaf is an all-consuming activity. In addition to her commitment to the piano, she has toured China in 2012 as an oboist with the St. Olaf Orchestra and calls herself the St. Olaf Choir’s number one fan.

Matthew Harikian '16

Hometown: Fresno, California
Major: Music
Activities: Plays the trumpet and cello, sings in Chapel Choir, and plays intramural volleyball
Career plans: Study music theory in graduate school, with the ultimate goal of teaching and researching at the college level while continuing to perform
Global perspective: “I am highly interested in world politics and international relations. I can talk about the current state of the Middle East or the problems of democratic social welfare states for hours.” He also studied abroad in Vienna, Austria, and took full advantage of the city’s storied classical music environment.

Nicholas Kovach ’15

Hometown: Zionsville, Indiana
Major: Music
Activities: Plays the trumpet, sings in Chapel Choir, volunteers with the Science Alliance, and is a member of the cycling team
Career plans: “I enjoy interacting with others, building on common interests, and exploring new avenues together, so I hope to build on those skills with something along the lines of teaching or managing music or possibly outdoor education.”
Outdoor enthusiast: Kovach enjoys being outside, whether he’s riding his bike, climbing a rock face, or simply relaxing in a hammock. He is a rock-climbing instructor for the fitness center of St. Olaf and he enjoys introducing others to his love for the sport.

Kelly McNeilly ’16

Hometown: Iowa City, Iowa
Majors: Mathematics and music
Activities: Plays viola in the St. Olaf Orchestra, swims, and is a member of the fencing club
Career plans: Thinking about graduate school in music or becoming a software engineer
When it counts: McNeilly considers himself as much a mathematician as a musician. He’s taken full advantage of St. Olaf’s mathematics department, calling the faculty members “excellent and personable.” He finds that his fellow math majors are some of the most pragmatic students on campus. McNeilly also isn’t bothered by Minnesota’s winters.

Vivian Williams ’16

Hometown: Northfield, Minnesota
Major: Piano performance and ancient studies
Activities: Member of Eta Sigma Phi, Secular Student Alliance, GLOW (Gay, Lesbian, or Whatever!), Ballroom Dance Club, Swing Club, Defenders of WRITEousness, and Society for Ancient History
Career plans: Law school
Join the club: Williams has participated in a wide variety of student organizations offered at St. Olaf. “I love the way the clubs welcome you and befriend you no matter when you join, whether it’s your first year or your last.” She also is passionate about social dancing and has been successful at turning friends into dancers. “I can’t stop myself from sharing the joy of dancing!”
DANCING INVITATION

Xuan He '16

Valses nobles et sentimentales
Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

I. Modéré – très franc
II. Assué lent – avec une expression intense
III. Modéré
IV. Assué animé
V. Presque lent – dans un sentiment intime
VI. Assué vif
VII. Mains vif
VIII. Épilogue: lent

In this composition, Ravel pays tribute to the Viennese waltz style found in Franz Schubert’s Sentimental Waltzes, Op. 50, and Noble Waltzes, Op. 77, by exploring a wide array of luxurious sonorities and characters. To a 21st-century audience, this work seems to evoke lush harmonies and beautiful textures. At its premiere in 1911, however, the Parisian audience greeted the opening percussive dissonances with boos and hisses.

Philip Biedenbender '16

Les Rêves de Columbine: Suite Française, Op. 65
Amy Beach (1867–1944)

V. Danse d’Arlequin

The Sarabande originated in Spanish-speaking countries as a sung dance. In 1583 it was banned in Spain because of a claim that it could excite bad emotions. Later in the Baroque era, it became a popular dance in the aristocratic courts of Italy and France. The dance is infused with subtle expressivity, with a slight emphasis on the second beat of the measure. Bach especially loved this dance style, with the most famous example being the aria from his Goldberg Variations.

John Carson ’18

An der schönen blauen Donau, Op. 314
Johann Strauss II (1825–1899)

By the Beautiful Blue Danube, a classic 19th-century Viennese waltz composed in 1866 to convey Austrian pride in the wake of the disastrous Austro-Prussian War, has become a staple of Austria’s national identity. Initial performances included additional sung texts describing the natural landscapes that surround the Danube River.

Soirée de Vienne
Alfred Grünfeld (1852–1924)

This work is a paraphrase of Viennese waltz tunes associated with an extravagant New Year’s Eve party portrayed in Act II of Johann Strauss’ timeless operetta Der Fledermaus. The lyrics describe a celebration of wine, friendship, and love as numerous comedic shenanigans ensue. The title of the piece is meant to convey the magic of a Viennese evening under the spell of a waltz.

Kieran Berton ’18

Estampes
Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

II. La soirée dans Grenade

The Evening in Granada is an example of Debussy’s exploration of international flavors. Inspired by his one-day visit to San Sebastian, Spain, this voluptuous nocturnal work evokes the languid strumming of guitars and the sinuous rhythm of the habanera, a traditional Spanish folk dance. Debussy uses the piano as a poetic instrument of his wandering imaginative spirit and allows the listener to encounter and seize upon the soul of Spanish music.

Kieran Berton ’18 and Adrián Calderón ’16

Note: Berton and Calderón will alternate the performance of this piece.

Danse (Tarantelle Styrienne), L. 69
Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

The Italian tarantella dance portrays the wild gesticulations of the victim of a tarantula sting. Debussy’s composition, set in the Styria region of Austria, draws on the characteristic quick 6/8 pulse of this style, but also shows influences of the Russian dances of Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakov. An upbeat, jocose introduction becomes a whimsical cat-and-mouse game that evolves through a wide range of scenes, including a leisurely middle section, and eventually arrives at a triumphant outcry.

Adrián Calderón ’16

Rialto Ripples Rag
George Gershwin (1898–1937)

This piece was written in 1917 and is recognized as Gershwin’s first instrumental work. The syncopation and the strident left-hand accompaniment are the defining characteristics of ragtime, a genre that emerged partly from the jigs and marches played by African-American bands in late 1800s. The melody notes that anticipate or follow the beat stress the beat even more and the various dances that emerged with ragtime reflect that rhythmic emphasis in its footwork and the coordinated movement of the two partners.

Nicholas Kovach ’15

Two Mazurkas, Op. 40
Alexander Scriabin (1872–1915)

I. Mazurka in E-flat Major
II. Mazurka in F-sharp Major

Scriabin composed these three mazurkas over the course of a decade at the turn of 20th century. His early works were characterized by Chopinesque lyricism and later by his own brand of atonal mysticism. The former style can be heard throughout each of these pieces. Paying homage to Chopin’s Polish heritage, Scriabin blends the three types of Polish folk dance, the Kujawiak characterized by a steady walking pulse, the Oberek, offering a sense of cyclic continuity, and the Mazur, featuring lively and irregular rhythms.

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Kelly McNeilly ’16

Papillons, Op. 2
Robert Schumann (1810–1856)

Papillons, meaning butterflies, is program music for a masquerade ball. The title refers to butterfly-shaped masks that the guests wear. Papillons consists of 12 movements, most of which include dances, although some scenes take place in other rooms with the dance music audible in the background. In the final movement, the clock chimes six in the morning as the guests slip out.

Vivian Williams ’16

Grande Valse de Concert in E-flat Major, Op.41
Alexander Glazunov (1865–1936)

The waltz began as a dance craze that swept the ballrooms of Europe in the early 19th century, but it evolved into a separate art-music form when Chopin published his Valses for the piano. With this composition, Glazunov has taken the basic elements of the dance and woven them into a large-scale virtuoso showpiece.

Queen of Violets
Glenn Jenkins (b. 1947)

Several forms of dance have historically been accompanied by ragtime music, including those from the 1920s — Charleston, foxtrot, and lindy hop — that can still be seen at swing and ballroom dance events today. The lilting melodic phrases in this graceful rag are particularly suited to the foxtrot’s easy flowing grace.

Rosanna Egge ’15

Rodeo
Aaron Copland (1900–1990)

IV. Saturday Night Waltz
V. Hoe-Down

Known for a particularly American style, Copland was one of the most successful musicians of the 20th century. Rodeo was originally a ballet subtitled “The Courting at Burnt Ranch” that Copland later arranged for solo piano. The story centers on a cowgirl looking for love and seeking to catch the eye of a local cowboy. During “Saturday Night Waltz,” the cowgirl is left without a partner until asked to dance by the champion roper. “Hoe-Down” brings the story to a crowd-pleasing conclusion as the couple dances together and shares their first kiss.
A Steinway In Every Dorm

As a St. Olaf student in the mid-1970s, Greg Buck ’77 enjoyed playing the piano in each of the dorms he lived in. Nearly forty years later, the memory of those late-night practice sessions led him to revisit the residence halls, particularly to assess the condition of the pianos in the halls’ lounges.

“As a newly appointed member of St. Olaf’s Board of Regents, I thought it was important to learn about the student residential experience and to see what the dorms were like,” he says, noting that more than 96 percent of St. Olaf students live on campus for all four years.

Buck, who is the owner of Productivity, Inc., a machine tool company, first stopped in at Mellby Hall, by most accounts the residence hall with the nicest student lounge. He played the piano, which he says looked fine, but sounded awful. When he remarked on this to a nearby student, the student replied, “Yeah, the piano only sounds bad when someone plays it.”

That comment and further investigation into the condition of other residence hall pianos spurred Buck to action. He recruited his friend, Doug Schmitt ’83, vice president of Schmitt Music, the area’s largest distributor of Steinway pianos, to join him in replacing each and every one of the worn-out pianos. “I thought it was a brilliant idea,” Schmitt says.

The duo’s efforts led to a unique distinction for St. Olaf: It is one of the only colleges to have a Steinway piano in each of its 11 residence halls. In donating the new pianos, Buck and Schmitt, together with their wives, Lisa Nave Buck ’77 and Ellen Anderson Schmitt ’83, have provided St. Olaf students with 24-hour access to top-of-the-line instruments in the comfort of their campus homes.

“The Bucks’ and Schmitts’ gift to the college includes an acoustic and digital piano for each residence hall lounge, including nine Steinway grands, two Boston uprights designed by Steinway, and twelve Roland digitals. Each piano comes with a lamp and an adjustable, leather-padded duet artist bench. The couples also established a fund to cover the costs of tuning and repairing the pianos as needed.

“This gift improves the piano experience for our students tremendously,” says Professor of Music Kent McWilliams, who notes that students have been enthusiastic about the new pianos and are using them regularly, both for formal practice and as part of social gatherings. Members of the music department’s student committee recently organized a cabaret concert featuring student pianists in the Ytterboe Hall lounge to thank the Bucks and Schmitts for their gift.

“It was a wonderful showcase,” Schmitt says. “It was music with great spirit at the highest level, which shows that students have captured the essence of the gift. These are excellent musicians who deserve good quality instruments.”

Summer Music Camp and Piano Academy at St. Olaf College

Young musicians who want to hone their performance skills under the guidance of some of the nation’s best music faculty members can attend the St. Olaf Summer Music Camp, which provides students who have completed grades 9–12 with conservatory-style musical training.

The camp, which will be held June 21–27, 2015, is a performance-based experience that challenges participants to expand and improve their musical abilities. Each student participates in at least one of three large ensembles — band, choir, and orchestra — and takes elective classes each day.

The St. Olaf Summer Piano Academy is held the same week and offers high school-aged pianists an opportunity to work with the college’s renowned piano faculty members. The week’s program includes master classes, private lessons, piano literature and music theory classes, instruction in chamber music, and solo and chamber recitals. Performance opportunities and social activities are offered in cooperation with the Summer Music Camp.

Kathryn Ananda-Owens, winner of first prize in the 1993 Neale-Silva Young Artists’ Competition, is a laureate of the American Pianists Association Biennial Fellowship Competition. She has performed as a soloist with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, appeared at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and toured internationally as a piano soloist. Ananda-Owens is serving her second term on the board of directors of the Performing Arts Medicine Association.

Christopher Atzinger has performed throughout North America and Europe, with concerts at St. Martin in the Fields, the American Academy in Rome, Salle Cortot, and Carnegie Hall (Weill). He is a medalist of the New Orleans, San Antonio, and Cincinnati International Piano Competitions, and a 2012 winner of the McKnight Fellowship for Performing Musicians. He has recorded for Naxos, Centaur, and MSR Classics and has made guest appearances at the Brevard, Banff, and Chautauqua music festivals.

Sarah Burk is an active music director, conductor, composer, pianist, violinist, and arranger. She has studied salsa and Latin jazz with Nachito Herrera and performed on National Public Radio with Salsa Del Soul. She has toured the United States, Europe, and the Middle East, and performs in African and international dance music, jazz, R&B, gospel, big band, classical chamber music, and variety ensembles.

Kent McWilliams studied in Poland with Andrzej Jasiński, in Germany with Oleg Masenberg, and in Canada with Marc Durand and Boris Lysenko. He has performed in more than a dozen countries, including live concerto and recital broadcasts on the CBC in Canada and the ABC in Australia. He is a prizewinner of the Porto International Piano Competition and the Canadian National Festival, and has judged the national finals of the MTNA competition as well as the Canadian Music Competitions.

Nancy Paddleford is a chamber and solo recitalist, as well as an adjudicator at piano competitions in the United States and Central America. She studied piano with Gyorgy Sebök, Alfonso Montecino, and Bernhard Weiser, and chamber music with Janos Starker, Joseph Gingold, and William Primrose. She has been artist in residence at the University of Costa Rica and has performed at the International Festival of Music in Costa Rica and at the Monteverde Music Festival. She also serves on the board of directors of Minnesota’s Perpich Center for Arts Education.
Piano Tour 2015
Concert Itinerary

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 7 P.M.
Urness Recital Hall
St. Olaf College
Northfield, Minnesota

THURSDAY, MAY 28, 8 P.M.
Piedmont Piano Company
Oakland, California

TUESDAY, MAY 26, 7:30 P.M.
St. Clements Episcopal Church
Berkeley, California

WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 7 P.M.
Grace Cathedral
San Francisco, California

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 7 P.M.
Valley Music Center
Fresno, California

SATURDAY, MAY 30, 2:30 P.M.
Transfiguration Episcopal Church
San Mateo, California

Students will also be playing service music at First Presbyterian Church, Central Presbyterian Church, and Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in Atlanta, Georgia on Sunday, March 23.

About St. Olaf College

One of the nation’s leading liberal arts colleges, St. Olaf offers an academically rigorous education with a vibrant faith tradition.

A St. Olaf College education develops the habits of mind and heart that enable students to embrace the challenges of a changing world, leading to lives of professional accomplishment, financial independence, and personal fulfillment.

This uncommon educational experience is grounded in intellectual rigor, residential learning, global engagement, and a deep commitment to the exploration of the important questions of faith. These pillars help St. Olaf students become fully formed and actively engaged individuals prepared to make a difference in the lives of their families, friends, colleagues, and communities.

Many excellent colleges provide one, two, or three of the elements of the St. Olaf experience. What makes St. Olaf unique is the combination of so many distinguishing features working together at the highest level: an intense academic program that sharpens minds, and an emphasis on a global perspective that broadens them; the vitality of a residential community that engages thoughtful people across the full range of human experiences; and a faith tradition that encourages reflection and honors different perspectives.

Visit stolaf.edu for more information.