“One of America’s preëminent bands.” — The New Yorker
Timothy Mahr ’78 finds harmony in a life of conducting and composing.

MIND

BY CARL SCHROEDER ’05

For St. Olaf Band

Conductor Timothy Mahr ’78, a musical performance begins long before its first downbeat.

“You have this glimmer of what can be,” says Mahr, describing the woodwind, brass and percussion sounds he will later guide from the podium, as well as the creative spark that inspires him to write music. That “ideal version you’re chasing in your head” is at the core of his work as a conductor and composer.

Since he took the helm of the college’s oldest performing ensemble in 1994, Mahr has led the St. Olaf Band in acclaimed performances throughout the United States as well as on tours to Norway, England, Ireland and Mexico. He has bolstered the ensemble’s reputation as a champion of contemporary music and earned international accolades for several of the band’s nine critically acclaimed CD recordings. The German music journal Clarino compared the St. Olaf Band’s recording of Yasuhide Ito’s Gloriosa to the recording by the Tokyo Kosei Wind Orchestra, widely considered the top professional wind ensemble in the world. “The American band produces a sensational outburst of sound,” the journal declared.

“We give audiences polished, exciting performances of memorable music that reach out, grab them by the heart and shake them.”

— Timothy Mahr ’78

1891 Students organize a band of 14 brass players to accompany the hymns sung during commencement. Only one member can read music.

1893 F. Melius Christiansen, a native of Norway, heads up a new music department.

1893 St. Olaf Academy graduate Andrew Onstad leads the band for a small stipend. He adds woodwind instruments to convert it to a concert band.

1894 Between 4 and 6 a.m. on Syttende Mai, Norwegian Independence Day, the St. Olaf Band serenades the campus from the rooftop of Old Main.

[CONTINUED]
Underneath all of the iridescent tone, the young people, under their inventive and highly musical director, Timothy Mahr, discover the essential elements of the score and allow their joy of playing to roam freely.”

Mahr also has guest-conducted a number of professional and award-winning ensembles, including intercollegiate and all-state bands in more than twenty states. The principal conductor of the Minnesota Symphonic Winds, he also has conducted performances with the Duluth-Superior Symphony Orchestra and will be featured with the Festival Band at the 2008 International Association of Southeast Asian Schools Conference in Bangkok, Thailand.

Along with building a notable conducting career, Mahr has become known as one of America’s leading composers of concert band music. He has written music for organizations such as the American School Band Directors Association and the United States Air Force Band. Prestigious ensembles around the world have performed his music as well. Many of Mahr’s works have been presented on CD recordings. In 2004 the University of New Hampshire Wind Symphony released The Music of Timothy Mahr, which contains nine of Mahr’s works for band — now totalling more than 50 in number.

Mahr regularly travels nationally and internationally as a guest conductor, and the waiting list of ensembles contracting him to write new works routinely approaches double digits. “I look to the future with a bit of trepidation,” he says, “and I just have to have faith that there’s still going to be some music left in me.” His professional career has been complemented by his personal life — most importantly, raising two daughters, Jenna, 14, and Hannah, 9, with his wife, Jill, who also teaches flute and conducts the handbell choirs at St. Olaf.

“Tim is a truly gifted composer-conductor and a highly valued colleague in the wind band profession,” says Mark Camphouse, a professor of music at George Mason University and editor of the multi-volume anthology Composers on Composing for Band, to which Mahr was a contributor in 2002.

Born in 1956, Mahr spent most of his childhood in La Crosse, Wisconsin, where he took piano lessons from his mother, Jeneane, and in second grade inherited his uncle’s trombone. In high school he seized several conducting opportunities and began to write and arrange tunes for a church brass ensemble and other groups.

Halfway through high school, a turning point occurred when Mahr attended a summer performance of the Symphony School of America in La Crosse and left awestruck after hearing a performance of Ottorino Respighi’s Pines of Rome. “It was an incredible, visceral experience,” Mahr says — one that inspired him to take up music as a profession.

In 1974 Mahr enrolled at St. Olaf and spent three of the next four years playing trombone in the St. Olaf Band. Conductor Miles “Mity” (pronounced mighty) Johnson, whom Mahr calls his “musical father,” was then in the midst of his 37-year tenure. From Johnson, Mahr “discovered the beauty in the band sound, whereas before I found primarily excitement.”

Mahr also learned valuable lessons from his trombone
and composition professors, Derald DeYoung and Arthur Campbell, and has fond memories of friendships that balanced the long days of studies and rehearsals. In 1977 he earned a bachelor of music degree in music theory/composition, and the following year he completed a bachelor of arts in music education.

For the next 16 years Mahr juggled conducting jobs and graduate music studies. He spent three years heading the Milaca High School band program in central Minnesota, a decade as director of bands at the University of Minnesota–Duluth and several years pursuing master’s and doctorate degrees at The University of Iowa.

Mahr incorporated many of his mentor’s hallmarks into his operation of the band, including Johnson’s system of internal student leadership, regular invitations to alumni guest conductors and an annual Cathedral Concert. He remained in close contact with his predecessor until Johnson passed away in 2004 after a six-year battle with Alzheimer’s disease.

Under Mahr’s leadership the ensemble also has explored more contemporary music. His programs often include pieces by current composers such as David Maslanka, Philip Sparke and Eric Whitacre. With support from the Miles Johnson Endowment Fund, Mahr has commissioned and premiers works from three of Minnesota’s best-known composers — Libby Larsen, Stephen Paulus and Mary Ellen Childs — and from Jocelyn Hagen ’03, Assistant Professor of Music Justin Merritt and former St. Olaf Professor of Music Peter Hamlin.

Mahr also teaches composition, conducting and music education at St. Olaf. His former students, now numbering more than a thousand, include success stories like Jayce Ogren ’01, assistant conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra, and Travis Cross ’99, a published composer and doctoral conducting student at Northwestern University. “Tim’s eagerness to support and promote his students has resulted in important growth opportunities we would not otherwise have experienced,” Cross says.

Although Mahr’s complementary professions require months of preparation for brief moments of harmony, he says that his work as a composer-conductor brings ample rewards in performance. “When the music finally comes out and you feel good about it, it’s a tremendously gratifying experience,” he says. “Nothing beats being on that podium and making fine music happen, especially if it’s your own.”

Carl Schroeder ’05 is a Minneapolis freelance writer and composer and a former student of Timothy Mahr. Elizabeth Child, a Northfield writer and communications consultant, also contributed to this story.

“Nothing beats being on that podium and making fine music happen, especially if it’s your own.”

— TIMOTHY MAHR ’78
Jonathan Bartz ‘08 is an aspiring film composer originally from Beloit, Wisconsin. He currently is finishing work on a bachelor of music degree in theory/composition at St. Olaf. He is studying composition with Timothy Mahr ’78, Justin Merritt and Charles Forsberg. Jonathan recently had the privilege of being accepted into the European American Music Alliance and spent one month in Paris studying composition with such notable composers as Robert Beaser (head of the composition department at The Juilliard School of Music), Phillip Lasser (also of Juilliard) and Narcis Bonet, a first-generation disciple of Nadia Boulanger. Creating music, whether on an instrument or through pen and paper, has always been Jonathan’s passion, and his plans for the future include graduate work in composition.

Willa Lengyel ‘08 is a religion and music major from Eureka, California. At St. Olaf she has been a four-year member of the St. Olaf Band, and had the opportunity to tour Norway in the summer of 2005. Willa has been a recipient of a Miles Johnson Endowment Scholarship. At St. Olaf she also has been a member of the St. Olaf Orchestra, Theta Alpha Kappa and the National Honor Society for Religious Studies, and she has directed the St. Olaf Flute Choir. In the summer of 2007 Willa had the opportunity to study theology and ethics at Oxford University. After graduation she plans to tour Spain with the St. Olaf Orchestra, travel in Western Europe, and start graduate school in theological ethics.

Keeley MacNeill ‘08 of Spearfish, South Dakota, is a biology major but has dabbled at four other majors (including music and Norwegian) while at St. Olaf. She is proud to spend her fourth year in the St. Olaf Band, and currently serves as its president. Keeley also performs in the St. Olaf Orchestra and several chamber ensembles and enjoys skiing, hiking, Norwegian breakfasts and ecology. This fall she is interviewing at medical schools in hopes of becoming a radiation oncologist.

Whitney Noble ‘08 is a clarinet performance major from Williamstown, Massachusetts. He loves performing music for friends and family. He came to St. Olaf after he heard of Minnesotans’ kindness and their good taste in music. Whit hopes to continue his musical studies in a rigorous graduate program. While clarinet is his instrument of choice for serious concent--
tration and performance, he enjoys other musical outlets as well. Whit’s expanding interests include playing rock music on the guitar and folk music on the banjo, and creating music with a computer. Other hobbies include skateboarding, Frisbee tossing and learning new dance moves.

JOHN SCHWEHN ‘08 of Valparaiso, Indiana, majors in religion and American studies at St. Olaf. He returns to the St. Olaf Band for his third year after taking last year to study abroad in Central America (Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua). John also is a member of the St. Olaf Orchestra and enjoys playing in chamber ensembles on campus. He has spent the last two summers working as a camp counselor in Montana. John loves the outdoors, books and Lutheran liturgy.

GREGORY C. SYLVESTER ‘08 resides in Savage, Minnesota, and is finishing a bachelor of music degree with a double major in theory/composition and instrumental music education. He has written pieces for a variety of genres, ranging from concert band to jazz and electronic. Greg’s compositions have been performed by a wide array of ensembles, including the Burnsville High School Concert and Symphonic Bands, the Norseman and Valhalla Bands at St. Olaf, the Calhoun Isles Community Band, the Dakota Valley Symphony, the Chippewa Valley Symphony, the University of Minnesota Symphonic Band, and the University of Minnesota Marching Band. Many of his works have been published through the online company Really Good Music.

At St. Olaf, Greg is the president of Musika Nova, the student composers group, and is the principal conductor of Valhalla Band, the student-run band. Upon graduation he intends to continue composing works while pursuing a career in high school or middle school music education.

LUKE VARLAND ‘08 is a bassoon performance major from Spring Arbor, Michigan. He is now in his fourth season as principal bassoon of the St. Olaf Band and third season in the same position with the St. Olaf Orchestra. An avid proponent of new music, Luke has worked closely with several student composers to produce solo repertoire for the bassoon. Upon graduating, Luke plans to pursue a master’s degree in bassoon performance and eventually perform in a professional orchestra.
Piccolo
Corinne Mona, Severna Park, Md.
French/music

Flute
Mary Elizabeth Detweiler, Appleton, Wis.
music education
Megan Ehresmann, St. Cloud, Minn.
mathematics/music
Rebecca Lambrecht, Neenah, Wis.
music performance
Anna Lehn, Rosemount, Minn.
biology
† Willa Lengyl, Eureka, Calif.
music/religion
Vanamali Medina, Clarkdale, Ariz.
music
Corinne Mona, Severna Park, Md.
French/music
Clifton Nesseth, Cameron, Wis.
music performance
Kendra Passow, Maple Plain, Minn.
chemistry
Brooke Reaser, Reno, Nev.
music
Elizabeth Stafford, Montpelier, Vt.
biology/environmental studies
Christopher Windle, Clarksville, Md.
church music
Maia Witte, Pacifica, Calif.
Hispanic studies

Oboe
* Megan Dvorak, Hayward, Wis.
music
Danielle Lovaa, Davenport, Iowa
English/French
†‡‡ Keely MacNeill, Spearfish, S.D.
biology

E-flat Clarinet
Linnæa Stole, Eden Prairie, Minn.
music/English

Clarinet
Ingrid Bakke, Burnsville, Minn.
music education
James Checco, Edina, Minn.
chemistry/math
Lauren Cook, Lincoln Neb.
music
Erin Cashner, Gig Harbor, Wash.
biology/environmental studies
Mara Fink, St. Louis Park, Minn.
undecided
Sarah Frank, Lincoln, Neb.
sociology/anthropology
‡ Alyssa Frazee, Eagan, Minn.
mathematics
Aaron Harcus, Minneapolis, Minn.
music
Clara Hermsdøter, Hammond, La.
music education
Jaime Hoefert, La Crosse, Wis.
environmental studies
+ Melanie Hornback, Jonesboro, Ark.
English/anthropology
Rebecca Killfoyle, Kasilof, Alaska
chemistry
†§§ Whitney Noble, Williamstown, Mass.
music performance
Meggie Ranheim, Eagan, Minn.
linguistics
Rebecca Ross, Osage, Iowa
biology
Joseph Sierra, Toledo, Ohio
music
Christopher Sherwood-Gabrielsson, Scandia, Minn.
music

Bass Clarinet
Leanne Barck, Northfield, Minn.
music/biomedical studies
† Alica Reuter, Seattle, Wash.
German/psycholinguistics
Kirsten Young, Coon Rapids, Minn.
German

Contralto Clarinet
‡ Erin Fulton, Mahtomedi, Minn.
environmental studies/biology

Contrabass Clarinet
Suzanne Johnson, Dayton, Ohio
undecided

Bassoon
‡‡‡ Molly Boes, St. Paul, Minn.
music/biomedical studies
Esther Tepenning, Boulder, Colo.
music history
‡ Lake Varland, Spring Arbor, Mich.
music performance

Alto Saxophone
Melanie Brooks, Wasaca, Minn.
music
† Karin Ericson, Maple Plain, Minn.
music performance
Christopher Roberts, Iowa City, Iowa
chemistry/math
Emily Tremblay, Oelburg, Wis.
political science/philosophy
Natalie Warren, Miami, Fla.
environmental studies

Tenor Saxophone
Andy Petran, Palatin, Ill.
biology/Asian studies

Baritone Saxophone
Zachariah Easty, Oak Park, Ill.
mathematics

Cornet/Trumpet
Brieanna Lise Carlson, Stillwater, Minn.
biology
Conor Cook, Yarmouth, Maine
music theory/composition
‡‡‡ Nathan Coulter, Bloomington, Minn.
nursing/political science
†‡‡ Telg Dalager, Austin, Minn.
trumpet performance
Jonathan Davick, West Des Moines, Iowa
biology
Jeff Fuhrer, Boxborough, Mass.
music
Hannah Griese, Barrington, Ill.
sociology/anthropology
Garrett Klein, Port Orchard, Wash.
trumpet performance
Jaclyn M exchanged, Mounds View, Minn.
music
Eric Sayre, Minneapolis, Minn.
music
Greg Sylvester, Savage, Minn.
music education/theory/composition

Horn
Tim Dwight, Brooklyn Park, Minn.
music education
Amy Glasgow, Shoreview, Minn.
Spanish
Stephanie Larson, Plano, Texas
music/biology
Melanie Paulsen, Center Junction, Iowa
music
‡ Aleksandar Pfaffe, Sterling, Alaska
music education
‡ Chloe Relfing, Bozeman, Mont.
history/religion
‡ John Schwein, Valparaiso, Ind.
American studies/religion
Andrew Watt, St. Paul, Minn.
English/music

Keyboards
Eri Isomura, Lauderdale, Minn.
music
Meggie Ranheim, Eagan, Minn.
linguistics

Harp
Erin Bonawitz, Myrtle Beach, S.C.
music

Tuba
Robert Eisinger, Wheaton, Ill.
environmental studies
†‡‡ Zachary Hathaway, Janevus, Wis.
mathematics/Spanish
Wes Olson, Minnetonka, Minn.
mathematics

Trombone
Christoph Dundas, Wells, Minn.
music education
Sean Johnston, Minnetonka, Minn.
chemistry/mathematics
Tim O’Neill, Burnsville, Minn.
social studies
† Steve Petersen, Lino Lakes, Minn.
music/physics
Michael Smeltzer, Fairbury, Ill.
Russian
* Jonathan Thornton, Armstrong, Mo.
piano performance
Katie Trux, Waukesha, Wis.
music

Euphonium
*‡ Johnathon Zart, Beloit, Wis.
composition
Brandon Fritz, Lakeville, Minn.
American studies/psychology
Christopher Leslie, Cincinnati, Ohio
music
†‡ Katherine Vilkler, Columbia, Mo.
mathematics/statistics

String Bass
‡‡‡ Eric Graalum, Fargo, N.D.
mathematics/statistics

Percussion
Erin Bonawitz, Myrtle Beach, S.C.
music
‡ Mitchell Ebert, Bloomington, Minn.
music/dance
‡ D. J. Erickson, Bloomington, Minn.
music education/philosophy
Kelsey Finks, Bloomington, Minn.
mathematics
Eri Isomura, Lauderdale, Minn.
music
Joshua Napravnik, Arlington Heights, Ill.
political science
‡ Michelle Pease, Sioux City, Iowa
mathematics education
†‡ Amanda Thorstad, Sun Prairie, Wis.
music/psychology

Principal/Co-principal
* Section Leader
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§ Miles Johnson Endowment Scholarship Recipient
* English Horn
† Contrabassoon
› Soprano Saxophone
> Flugelhorn

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MOTHER EARTH (2005)
David Maslanka (b. 1943)

SINFONIA IN B FLAT MINOR, OP. 153 (1872)
Amilcare Ponchielli (1834–86) · Edited by Luca Valenti

Jonathan Bartz (b. 1986)
Jonathan Bartz ’08, conductor
PREMIERE PERFORMANCE

THE QUINTESSENCE OF A MODERN CENTURY (2007)
I. Fire II. Water III. Wind IV. Earth V. Metal
Gregory C. Sylvester (b. 1986)
Gregory C. Sylvester ’08, conductor
PREMIERE PERFORMANCE

LINCOLNSHIRE POSY (1937)
I. Lisbon (Sailor’s Song)
II. Horkstow Grange: “The Miser and His Man, a Local Tragedy”
III. Rufford Park Poachers (Poaching Song)
IV. The Brisk Young Sailor (returned to wed his true love)
V. Lord Melbourne (War Song)
VI. The Lost Lady Found (Dance Song)
Percy Grainger (1882–1961) · Edited by Frederick Fennell

INTERVAL

THE NORTHERN PINES (1931)
John Philip Sousa (1854–1932)

SANCTUARY (2005)
Frank Ticheli (b. 1958)

A SOBERING SEA SHANTY (1998)
Joshua Eikenberry (b. 1976) · Edited by Timothy Mahr
Willa Lengyel ’08, Flute · Keeley MacNeill ’08, Oboe
Whitney Noble ’08, Clarinet · Luke Varland ’08, Bassoon
John Schwehn ’08, Horn

NOBLE ELEMENT (2002)
Timothy Mahr (b. 1956)
MOTHER EARTH (2005)  

David Maslanka (b. 1943)

Praise be You, my Lord, for our sister, MOTHER EARTH,  
Who nourishes us and teaches us,  
Bringing forth all kinds of fruits and colored flowers and herbs.  
— ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Mother Earth was commissioned by and is dedicated to Brian Silvey and the South Dearborn High School Band of Aurora, Indiana.

Born in New Bedford, Massachusetts, David Maslanka attended the Oberlin College Conservatory, where he studied composition with Joseph Wood. He spent a year at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria, and did graduate work in composition at Michigan State University with H. Owen Reed. He has served on the faculties of State University of New York at Geneseo, Sarah Lawrence College, New York University, and College of the City University of New York. He now lives in Missoula, Montana.

Especially well known in the band world, Maslanka’s works for winds and percussion include A Child’s Garden of Dreams for Symphonic Wind Ensemble, Concerto for Piano, Winds and Percussion, the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 7th symphonies, and Mass for soloists, chorus, boys chorus, wind orchestra and organ. In addition, he has written a wide variety of chamber, orchestral and choral pieces. The St. Olaf Band, through generous support from the Miles Johnson Endowment, co-commissioned Maslanka’s 5th and 7th symphonies, the Clarinet Concerto and David’s Book, his concerto for percussion.

SINFONIA IN B FLAT MINOR, OP. 153 (1872)  

Amilcare Ponchielli (1834–86)  
Edited by Luca Valenti

The contributions to the instrumental repertory by the Italian composer Amilcare Ponchielli are summarized by Lisa Sirch, the leading scholar on his music:

In addition to his famous theatrical operas, Ponchielli also composed many instrumental works. His numerous pieces for band constitute an original body of work and should not be forgotten. These works consist not only of the typical marches and dance tunes, but also have light and agreeable passages, flowing from the fantasy and humor that today is noted only in La Gioconda’s “La danze delle ore” (The Dance of the Hours).

An operatic lyricism is at the foundation of the Sinfonia in B flat minor, Op. 153. Sirch continues with thoughts on this work: Ponchielli composed a number of instrumental pieces that he himself called symphonies, but they have very little to do with classical symphonies. These are instead compositions which follow the basic structure of the Italian opera overture. More precisely, Ponchielli’s symphonies are modeled on Rossini’s archetypal two-section structure: a slow introduction followed by a much longer central section in a fast tempo.
**The Valley of the Dry Bones (2007)**

Jonathan Bartz

Being an aspiring film composer, much of my writing is geared towards creating accessible yet original “cinematic sounds.” When Dr. Mahr approached me about writing a band piece for this tour, I immediately agreed to do it on one condition: that he give me a subject with which I had no preconceived ideas or emotional connections and have me write about it — similar to how a film composer is given an unknown movie to score and is expected to work with it as best as he or she can.

Enter the Biblical story of the Valley of the Dry Bones. Taken from Ezekiel 37: 1–14, the story revolves around Ezekiel’s famous vision and prophecy and God’s subsequent miracle. Ezekiel is visited by God and placed into a dark valley filled with ancient, lifeless bones. God asks Ezekiel, “Can these dry bones live?” In other words, God is asking Ezekiel to confront the spiritual condition of his people. Through ensuing prophecy and the majesty of God, life is breathed into the bones, and flesh and blood grow into an army of people.

I found this old story very applicable to contemporary times. We often ask God’s question to Ezekiel in our own lives, relationships and churches. Can these old bones in this dark valley live? Perhaps our answer is similar to Ezekiel’s: “You alone, O God, know.”

— Jonathan Bartz

**The Quintessence of a Modern Century (2007)**

Gregory C. Sylvester

I. Fire
II. Water
III. Wind
IV. Earth
V. Metal

Throughout the ages, scholars have marveled at the four forces of nature: fire, water, wind and earth. The ancient Greeks as well as the Chinese and East Indians believed that all the elements were interconnected; that the elements would generate and overcome one another. However, each of these cultures also believed that a fifth or ultimate element existed as well and had a degree of precedence over the other four. It was commonly believed to be aether, or the movement of life. This piece, however, depicts metal as the quintessential element of our modern era; the force that drives the machine, industry, and consequently life itself. Metal is unique in that its creation requires all four of the original elements, yet it consequently has both a positive and negative impact on the natural balance between the four.

In planning these movements, the keys were carefully chosen based on color relationships to sound. I interviewed a fellow colleague who was capable of “seeing” colors to all twelve tonal keys of music. I then imagined colors that reflected each of the elements and chose the keys based on those colors. For example, the fire movement is heavily based on f-minor, which is characterized as having a “dark orange/dark red” feel.

— Gregory C. Sylvester

*The Valley of the Dry Bones and The Quintessence of a Modern Century alternate on tour. Both are performed during the Home Concert.*
A cornerstone of the wind band repertory, Grainger’s *Lincolnshire Posy* has thrilled musicians and audiences for decades. The Fennell edition of this score quotes a letter dated 70 years ago from the composer, most likely to his life-long friend Roger Quilter, that provides interesting insight into the generation of the piece.

I have been having such a lovely time: The American Bandmasters Assoc. have asked me to prepare some military band works (if serious) for their convention in Milwaukee, March 7. So I am largely resoring my 1904 “Lads of Wampney” March (do you remember it? [five bars of main theme in treble clef—in F]) & composing a “Lincolnshire Posy” on folk tunes I gathered in Lincolnshire (Dublin Bay, Horkstow Grange, Rufford Park Poachers, Lord Melbourne, The Lost Lady Found). This means quick frantic work (which I love), with me writing out all the band parts myself without a score (for there’s no time to write both). A few days ago I thus wrote 3 new band pieces (Dublin Bay, Horkstow Grange, The Lost Lady) in 4 days. The last piece I started Tuesday midday & wrote unbroken (all the night) till Wednesday midday, just ending the piece (complete band parts for full band) in time to catch a train in order to hear it at 2:00 same afternoon in Brooklyn….

In Horkstow Grange (a tune I am very fond of) [9 bars of the tune] the phrase marked [X] gets new harmonies each verse with a heightening of discordant intenseness each time [6 bars illustrating the point].

The clash of the G, G#, C, C# in the 4th verse (on so harsh a medium as the military band) gave Ella & me a real thrill. It had a nervish sound, somehow. I feel very well … always do when I have performances just ahead & the need for using all my strength (which so rarely gets used). And I love hearing things played thru just fresh from the noodle.
Fall 2007 Tour
· Program ·

The Northern Pines (1931)

Known as the “The March King,” John Philip Sousa was in residence at the famed National Music Camp at Interlochen during the final summers of his career. Inspired by the level of musicianship found there, he was equally taken by the meritorious potential he perceived in the student body. Sousa was quoted as saying, “So much is said from the negative side about the youth that it indeed restores one’s faith to find here, year after year, hundreds of boys and girls with such ideals, such marked ability and evident industry.”

Prior to his second visit in 1931, he composed The Northern Pines and dedicated the march to the camp and its founder, Dr. Joseph E. Maddy. He conducted the premiere of the work with the National High School Band at a Sousa Day program. And a very young Frederick Fennell was a member of the percussion section that day. Sousa signed over the royalties from this march to the National Music Camp.

Sanctuary (2005)

Born in Louisiana, Frank Ticheli has composed works for a variety of media, including orchestra, wind ensemble, band, chamber music and the theater. His band music in particular is regularly performed throughout the world. He earned music degrees from Southern Methodist University and the University of Michigan, was a composer-in-residence with the Pacific Symphony Orchestra, and presently teaches at the University of Southern California. Ticheli offers this score note:

Sanctuary was composed for conductor H. Robert Reynolds as a symbol of our enduring friendship. The work was commissioned in his honor and received its premiere performance by the band he conducted for 26 years. As a personal tribute to Mr. Reynolds, who was a horn player in his earlier days, I chose the solo horn to be the work’s main musical messenger. The opening prologue grows out of a set of pitches that were derived from the letters of his first name (Harrah), an idea I first used fifteen years ago in Postcard (commissioned by Reynolds in memory of his mother). Vivid college memories of Mr. Reynolds conducting Grainger’s Hill Song No. 2 and Colonial Song — both well-known favorites of his — were also in the back of my mind, as the sounds that I created in some ways echo the lyrical mood of these works.

The word sanctuary conjures a rich array of images. It can imply a place of solitude, comfort, rest, prayer, or protection. It can suggest a place that is strong and imposing or one that is very small and private. I believe all of these images are suggested at one point or another in the music. The opening’s bell sounds suggest peace and joyful reverence. The main horn melody is at once reflective and reassuring. There is also an underlying hint of nostalgia — a wistfulness, perhaps suggested by the simple three-chord progression which threads the work. But there is also an expression of strength and power in the work’s dark and imposing climax.

After the climax recedes, the main melody disappears for a period of time, replaced by flute and clarinet solo episodes which create repose, space and distance. But in the end, the three-chord harmony returns and serves as a doorway for the final appearance of the main horn theme. The work ends with a quiet echo of the opening bells.
An old traditional Irish air was adapted into what is now one of the most famous examples of a “stamp ‘n’ go” sea shanty. Also known as a “walkaway,” this type of shanty was sung on larger sailing ships when the crew would grasp the halyard and stamp away up the deck, boisterously singing the tune while hauling a sail up the mast.

A take-off on the allegro con brio movement of Malcolm Arnold’s *Three Shanties for Wind Quintet* (1943), *A Sobering Sea Shanty* interrupts the Arnold movement with a bit of spirited elaboration.

Joshua Eikenberry ’98 was a four-year member of the St. Olaf Band horn section and a double major in theater and music theory/composition. He currently is active in the Twin Cities theatre scene.

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*Noble Element* was commissioned by the American School Band Directors Association Foundation in observance of the 50th anniversary of the association, with generous additional support from the Minnesota Music Educators Association and the Wenger Foundation. Dedicated to the 2002–03 MMEA All-State Symphonic Band, *Noble Element* was premiered by that ensemble under the baton of the composer in 2002 at the ASBDA National Convention in Duluth, Minnesota. Mahr shared these thoughts at the time of the premiere performance:

The title of the work, *Noble Element*, is a rather fitting play on words for the occasion of the commission. A 50th anniversary is known as the golden anniversary. One may recall from high school chemistry class that gold is a noble element. As work began on this piece, the materials that came to mind had a noble sense about them. I found myself thinking about effort, sacrifice, intent, strength and ideals as I developed the music.

*Noble Element* is a reflection on the founders, leaders and members of the ASBDA who have certainly been noble in answering the inward call they heard to share fine band music and to enable a quality band experience for our nation’s youth. In a much broader sense, this music is also a direct response to the countless stories of sacrifice and courage that have swept the world since the tragic events of September 11, 2001.

This work centers on the noble element within humanity. It acknowledges the world’s need, now more than ever, for noble efforts — especially from those who may not sense at first the inner strength to act upon their convictions. The music embraces struggle and success, conflict and victory. It celebrates the existence of this human trait.
The St. Olaf Band is the oldest musical organization on the St. Olaf College campus. During the spring of 1891, St. Olaf student Engebret Lee made a first attempt to organize a band. The ensemble was reorganized and officially formed on October 5, 1891, and Professor John Dahle was appointed director. The Manitou Messenger (St. Olaf’s student newspaper) of October 1891 states, “The students here have organized a brass band, titled the St. Olaf College Cornet Band. The Band has fourteen members who practice four times a week. This Band should have been started long ago; now that it is started, all should give it their hearty support.”

Student conductors Adolph Larsen, Kleber Mohlstad, A.R. Lavik, Reuben Johnson and Andrew Onstad led the band during the next seven years. The first open-air concert took place during commencement weekend in the city park in 1893. Selections performed at the concert included Down on the Farm and The Old Church Organ. At the top of the program appeared the title “St. Olaf College Band.” On Syttende Mai (Norwegian Constitution Day), May 17, 1894, Northfield citizens awoke to the St. Olaf College Band playing from the roof of Old Main. After that event, it became a tradition for the band to herald Commencement Day in this fashion for a number of years. Fortunetly for present-day band members, the practice of performing from rooftops has faded with time. The current St. Olaf Band, however, as in the early years, performs the processional music and accompanies the hymns at Commencement. Also, during the May Alumni and Commencement Weekend, the ensemble presents a full concert and participates in the Baccalaureate Service.

The early band members rehearsed in a woodshed that was attached to the front entrance of the original Hoyme Chapel, which was destroyed by fire on September 22, 1923. This woodshed became known as the “Band Hall,” and young boys of the Northfield area, reportedly, believed the building to be haunted. Soloists appeared with the band beginning in 1894. The very next year, the band embarked on its first tour, by band wagon to Kenyon, Minnesota, a roundtrip distance of twenty miles. On later trips, the band traveled in a special train car. Still, it was difficult to find enough money to fund band tours. It was not unusual when the train broke down to find the band moving via horse and wagon. A letter from J. Jørgen Thompson to acting President P.G. Schmidt from July 1909 reported on the tour to the West Coast as follows: “Receipts have been good. I got two wagons pulled by four-horse teams and one wagon with a two-horse team. We had hayracks on two wagons, and as we sent the instruments with the railroad, we all found room on the three wagons. It was slow traveling, but we saved $54.00 by going this way.”

In 1899 Andrew Onstad, a St. Olaf graduate and former band member, was hired with a small wage to lead the St. Olaf Band. He was known as a fine clarinetist, as well as an excellent leader. In a monumental move, Onstad added woodwind instruments to the St. Olaf Band permanently, thus changing it from a brass to a concert band. The Quarter-Centennial Souvenir Booklet of 1899 states, “As the Band is now full grown, containing some thirty members, the tendency will be to improve the standard by raising the requirement for admission.”

In 1902 the St. Olaf Band was granted financial aid to purchase instruments and was recognized officially by the Synod of the United Lutheran Church. At the urging of the president of the college, Pastor J. N. Kildahl, the Synod agreed to establish a music department at the college. In 1903 F. Melius Christiansen was hired to take charge of the newly formed department and thus became the director of the St. Olaf Band. This event began a second epoch in the history of the organization. The ensemble developed more discipline, admission standards were raised, members were expected to understand the theory of music and to practice individually on their instruments, and more advanced literature was performed. Karl Kildahl wrote in the 1913 student yearbook, The Viking, “The Band does not play ‘Rag-Time’ music. Such a
thing is not tolerated. Only the standard composers are studied."

The first extended tour of the St. Olaf Band was made in 1905 to the cities of Faribault, Kenyon, Zumbrota, Austin, Albert Lea, Rochester and Red Wing in southern Minnesota, and Lake Mills and Forest City in Iowa. In 1906, under the leadership of Christiansen and the management of Schmidt, the St. Olaf Band became the first American musical organization to tour abroad. This trip marked the premier tour of six that the ensemble has taken to Norway.

Traveling west, the St. Olaf Band performed at the Alaska Yukon Exposition in Seattle in 1909. By this time, the band had grown in numbers and musical ability. That year, student O. I. Hetrgsaad became the director of a second band, known as the "Junior Band." Much larger today, and no longer a "junior" band, this group of 75 members is called the Norseman Band.

A Viking yearbook account of the 1916–17 band tour to northern Wisconsin mentioned the band tour booklet, which included rooming lists, travel maps, thank-you songs, and band member crew assignments. Today, this booklet, anticipated highly by band members, is compiled in secrecy before domestic and foreign tours by the band officers.

With the exception of two years spent abroad, Christiansen remained as director until 1919, when Johan "Jack" Arndt Bergh was hired to take over part of Christiansen's work. Bergh remained as director until he retired in 1946. The title of the ensemble appeared as either the St. Olaf Concert Band or the St. Olaf College Band during the early years. Either way, by 1921 the St. Olaf Band was known as "the greatest college band in the northwest." That same year, two women joined the band. In 1922 a second Pacific Coast tour was undertaken. A unique feature of this tour was that the entire concert program was played from memory.

Donald H. Berglund directed the St. Olaf Band from 1946–52, followed by Bruce E. Howden from 1952–57. During these years, the St. Olaf Band continued to play an important role in campus activities. However, tours were limited due to lack of funds.

A grand epoch in the history of the organization began in 1957 when Miles "Mity" (pronounced mighty) Johnson joined the St. Olaf faculty. Growing into a nationally and internationally acclaimed ensemble for its fine musical quality and unique programming, the St. Olaf Band remained under Mity's leadership for 37 years until his retirement in May 1994. During his tenure, the size of the band grew to between 90 and 95 members each year, and the quality of the musicians improved immensely. The brass, percussion, and woodwind areas of the Music Department expanded to include four additional full-time professors and eight more part-time professors. Auditions and recall auditions to enter the band program became the norm, and chair placement auditions for upper-class students grew in stature. Johnson also created a singing tradition within the instrumental ensemble.

An accomplished French horn recitalist as well as an outstanding conductor and master teacher, Johnson provided significant artistic and cultural experiences to band students and audiences alike through annual concert tours across the United States. In 1965 he founded the St. Olaf Horn Club — one of only three existing such clubs in the country. Johnson established the annual St. Olaf Band Cathedral Concert tradition in 1974, first at Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, and later at other churches in the Twin Cities area. Additionally, he took the St. Olaf Band to Norway in 1966, 1974, and 1987; to Europe in 1970; to London in 1977, 1980, and 1984; and to the British Isles in 1991. The amount of symphonic band, chamber band, and wind ensemble repertoire that band members learned under Johnson's baton was vast. However, the most profound influence he had on the St. Olaf Band and the audiences was his expertise in programming that literature.

Johnson stood at the pinnacle of his profession, and he gained the admiration of countless colleagues the world over for his creative, courageous programming. Timothy Mahr '78, who succeeded Johnson as director of the St. Olaf Band in 1994, says, "Johnson made his mark with the St. Olaf Band presenting memorable performances that demonstrated the continuous artistic growth of the ensemble while at the same time wrapping welcome musical arms around an audience in concert-long hugs."

The St. Olaf College Music Department and members of the St. Olaf Band continue to be blessed by Johnson's legacy through the Miles Johnson Endowment Fund that was established by former band members in 1993. In addition to providing funds for scholarships, composer commissions, musical instrument purchases and extensive band-related acquisitions for the Music Library, the fund helped produce the CD entitled The Legacy of Miles H. Johnson.

The St. Olaf Band and its traditions have become even stronger under Mahr's direction. "Many people say I look a bit like Mity when I conduct. I take that as a compliment and am thankful that I had the chance to learn from a master." Like Johnson, Mahr selects technically difficult pieces for the band, material by great composers old and new. Even so, his leadership has coaxed the band in new directions. Says Tom Niemisto '08, a writer for the Manitou Messenger, "Mahr is deliberately expanding the traditional band repertoire through his own compositions and daring concert programming."

A former member of the St. Olaf Band and the college's first full-time woodwind faculty member, Jo Ann Polley '73 currently is the north central chair of the International Clarinet Association.
Steven Amundson, professor, orchestra, conducting; theory; B.A. Luther, M.M. Northwestern
Kathryn Ananda-Owens, associate professor, piano; B.A., 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, assistant professor, voice, choir; B.M. St. Olaf, M.M. Michigan State, Ph.D. Florida State
Christopher Atzinger, assistant professor, piano; B.M. University of Texas (Austin), M.M. Michigan, D.M.A. Peabody
Linda Berger, associate professor, music education; B.A. St. Olaf, M.A., Ph.D. Minnesota
Mark Calkins, instructor*, voice; B.M. Concordia (Moorhead), M.M. Colorado
David Carter, professor, cello, chamber music, music appreciation, string methods; B.F.A. Minnesota, M.M. Indiana, D.M.A. Illinois
Laura Caviani, instructor*, jazz piano; B.M. Lawrence, M.M. Michigan
Mary Ellen Child, (sem II) instructor, music composition; B.A. Minnesota, M.M. Illinois
Beth Christensen, professor, music librarian; B.M., M.S. Illinois, M.A. Minnesota
Kurt N. Claussen, instructor*, saxophone; B.A. St. Olaf, M.M. Minnesota
Anna Clift, instructor*, cello; B.M. Indiana, M.M. SUNY (Stonybrook)
Dan Dressen, associate dean for fine arts, professor, voice, diction, fine arts; B.S. Bemidji, M.F.A., D.M.A. Minnesota
Margaret Eaves-Smith, associate professor, voice; B.M., M.M. Cleveland Institute of Music
Andrea Een, associate professor, violin, viola, Hardanger fiddle, chamber music; B.M., M.M., D.M.A. Illinois
Julia Elkina, instructor*, piano; B.A., M.A. Leningrad Conservatory, Russia, D.M.A. Minnesota
Alison Feldt, department chair, associate professor, voice, vocal literature, vocal pedagogy; B.A. Luther, M.A. Iowa, D.M.A. Minnesota
John Ferguson, Elliott M. and Klara Stockdal Johnson Professor of Organ and Church Music, organ, church music, choir, cantor to chapel; B.M. Oberlin, M.A. Kent State, D.M.A. Eastman
Lori Ronning Folland, collaborative pianist*; B.M. Oberlin, M.M. Michigan
Charles Forsberg, professor, theory, composition; B.A., M.A., Ph.D. Minnesota
Michelle Gilman, assistant professor*; B.A. Western Washington University, M.M., D.M.A. Northwestern
Tracey Gorman, instructor*, voice; B.M. St. Olaf, M.M. Minnesota
Charles Gray, professor, violin, viola, chamber music; B.M. Wheaton, M.M. Michigan
David Hagedorn, artist-in-residence, jazz, percussion, world music, ear training; 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, orchestra; B.A. Concordia (Moorhead), M.A., M.F.A., Ph.D. Iowa
Janis Hardy, (sem II) associate professor, voice, lyric theater
Philip Hey, instructor, drum set; University of Hawaii, Minnesota
Andrew Hisey, department vice chair, associate professor, piano; B.M. Waterloo, M.M. Michigan, D.M.A. Michigan
Martin Hodel, associate professor, theory, trumpet; B.A. Goshen College, M.M. North Carolina (Chapel Hill), D.M.A. Eastman
Jim Holm, artist-in-residency, jazz, music history, early music; B.A. Calvin, M.A., Ph.D. Ohio State
Anthony Holt, instructor*, voice; B.A., M.A. Christ Church, Oxford, England
John Jensen, collaborative pianist*; B.A. Occidental, M.M. University of Southern California
Sigrid Johnson, (sem II) artist-in-residence*, voice, choir; B.S. St. Cloud, M.M. Michigan
Mark Kelley, instructor*, bassoon; B.M. Nebraska (Lincoln)
Nancy Lee, instructor, music education; B.A. Luther College
Dana Maeda, instructor*, oboe; B.M. St. Olaf, M.A. St. Mary’s
Jill Mahar, instructor*, handbells, flute; B.M. Minnesota (Duluth), M.M. Northwestern
Timothy Mahar, (sem II) professor, band, conducting, composition, music education; B.M., B.A. St. Olaf, M.A., D.M.A. Iowa
Dennis Malmberg, band, music education; B.S., M.A. Minnesota
Mary Martz, instructor*, voice; B.S. Minnesota (Moorhead)
James McKeel, associate professor, voice, lyric theater; B.M.E. Westminster, M.M. Minnesota
Kent McWilliams, (sem II) assistant professor, piano; B.M., M.M. Toronto, Artist Diploma Stuttgart, D.M.A. Montreal
Justin Merritt, assistant professor, theory, composition; B.M. Trinity, M.M., D.M. Indiana
Aaron Miller, assistant professor, organ; B.M. Eastman, M.M., DMA Manhattan School of Music
Elinor Niemisto, instructor*, harp; B.M., M.M. Michigan
Paul Niemisto, associate professor, band, low brass, brass methods; B.M., M.M. Michigan, Ph.D. Minnesota
Paul Ousley, instructor*, string bass; B.M.E. Wisconsin (Eau Claire), M.M. Eastman
Nancy Paddelford, professor, piano; B.M., M.M. Indiana, D.M.A. Minnesota
Dione Peterson, instructor*, music education, choral literature; B.S., M.M. Mankato
Michael Petruconis, instructor*, horn; B.S. Nebraska (Lincoln), M.M. Minnesota
JoAnn Polley, (sem II) conducting. B.A. St. Olaf, M.M. Northwestern, Ph.D. Michigan State
Jun Qian, assistant professor, clarinet; B.M. Baylor, M.M., D.M.A. Eastman
Catherine Rodland, (sem II) artist-in-residence, organ, theory; B.M. St. Olaf, M.M., D.M.A. Eastman
Kay Sahlin, instructor*; flute; B.A. St. Olaf
Miriam Scholz-Carlson, instructor* string class; B.M. St. Olaf
Ray Shows, instructor*, violin, viola; B.M. Florida State, M.M. Boston University
Robert C. Smith, assistant professor, voice, vocal literature; B.M. St. Olaf, M.M. Yale, D.M.A. Texas (Austin)
Paul Westermeyer, visiting professor*, church music; B.A. Elmhurst, S.M.M. Union Theological Seminary, Ph.D. University of Chicago
Herbert Winslow, instructor*, horn; Curtis Institute of Music
Jack Yates, instructor*, gospel choir; B.A. St. Olaf
Larry Zimmerman, instructor*, trombone; B.A. St. Olaf, M.M. Boston
* part-time
The Legacy of Composition
AT ST. OLAF COLLEGE

By Annie Timmer ’05

St. Olaf music has touched every corner of the globe via television, radio, recordings, tours and the eclectic multitude of scores written by students, alumni and faculty. "When I think of the legacy of composition at St. Olaf, the giants stand out immediately: F. Melius Christiansen, Olaf Christiansen, G. Winston Cassler, Kenneth Jennings and Arthur Campbell, to name a few," says St. Olaf Band Conductor Timothy Mahr ’78. Mahr, also a member of the composition faculty, continues, "Their legacy is tied to the music they created and its lasting presence today." The "early voices of the college," as Mahr calls them, not only set the bar for composition at St. Olaf, but also created the very ensembles and programs that have yielded hundreds of talented composers and performers.

Founded in 1891, the band was the college’s first musical ensemble and pre-dates the Music Department itself. Just a few years after conducting performances for audiences during the band’s 1906 tour to Norway, F. Melius Christiansen founded the St. Olaf Lutheran Choir (now known as the St. Olaf Choir) in 1912. Devoting much of his life to establishing the choir as one grounded mostly in the a cappella tradition, Christiansen and his immediate successors, son Olaf Christiansen ’25 and Kenneth Jennings ’50, expanded the choir’s repertoire and wrote their own compositions and arrangements for the choir to perform. Former Viking Chorus and Chapel Choir Director Robert Scholz ’61 also was a main contributor to the college’s tradition in faculty composition during his 37 years on the Hill. In addition, St. Olaf Orchestra Director Steven Amundson’s published works have been featured in more than 350 orchestra performances across the country in the last decade.

The hundreds of pieces written by these and other former and current faculty members are staples of the band, orchestra, and choir ensembles’ repertoires. Mahr marvels at the “amazing amount of composition activity among many [St. Olaf] music faculty in the more recent past.” He cites Amundson, John Ferguson, Charles Forsberg, Peter Hamlin, David Hagedorn, Jennings and his wife Carolyn, James McKeel, Justin Merritt and Scholz as just a handful of faculty composers. Mahr believes that their legacy "centers on the expansion of the Music Department’s offerings and the interest and love for creating new music that we’re trying to ignite within more and more students.”

This more recent generation of faculty has definitely succeeded in igniting that spark within the new generation of St. Olaf musicians. Recent graduates have embarked on a new phase in the legacy, exploring new genres and professions and composing music for performances all over the world.

Matthew Peterson ’06, a music theory/composition and bass performance major, is rapidly gaining widespread recognition as an up-and-coming composer. He currently is earning his master’s degree in music composition from Indiana University. This spring, his chamber opera The Binding of Isaac, which he co-wrote with librettist Jason Zencka ’06 and premiered during his senior year, earned him a coveted 2007 BMI Student Composer Award. The award, given to composers between the ages of 15 and 25, is one of the most prestigious awards for student composers. Out of more than 400 submissions, Peterson’s received one of the 11 awards at a ceremony in New York City. “I got to meet big names in composition, such as Ellen Taaffe Zwilich — the first woman composer to win the Pulitzer Prize for Music,” he says.

The day after hearing of his BMI award, Peterson learned that his Miserere Mei had made him one of five participants eligible to attend the 2007 VocalEssence Essentially Choral workshop. Peterson attended the workshop at the Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis, where he worked with the professional VocalEssence Ensemble Singers. “It was incredible to have one of the best choirs in the country sing my piece,” Peterson says. “I heard things in terms of pacing and form that I have since revised, and I got to see how conductor Philip Brunelle interpreted my piece.” While there, Peterson also collaborated with widely known composer Libby Larsen. “She was so charismatic, and to work one-on-one with one of the premier composers in the country was incredible,” Peterson says.

Peterson’s roughly three dozen pieces range from short songs to a 40-minute opera. He is now working on several projects, including a 10- to 12-minute orchestral work to be performed in Reading, England. Peterson received this commission as winner of the 2007 Aldworth Philharmonic Orchestra’s Young Composers Award. A full-size opera also is in the works, as well as a large-scale orchestral piece, which Peterson hopes will earn him recognition as a professional composer.

On the opposite side of the world, Ben Houge ’96 also has a career in composition, but under quite different circumstances. Based in Shanghai, he composes music and sound for video games as a senior audio engineer for Ubisoft, a French videogame
company. Houge, a music theory and composition major who also earned a master's degree in composition from the University of Washington, has designed and composed audio and sound effects for several video games, gradually moving into high-level sound integration and audio system design, which he considers a form of composition itself. He is currently working on the sound for a new Xbox 360 game titled *Tom Clancy's EndWar*, a real-time strategy game that takes place in the near future.

As videogames become more realistic and non-linear, Houge enjoys the challenge of creating non-repetitive, realistic sound that corresponds with what the player chooses to do. "The game audio designer has to find ways to structure sound that can handle any eventuality without driving players to insanity through repetition. I've found this a rich and rewarding puzzle to try to solve," Houge writes on his web site.

Houge has also composed several ecclesiastical compositions, two for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, as well as many other pieces ranging from pop songs to string arrangements. He is the founder of Sound Currents, an organization for composers in the Pacific Northwest and now in Shanghai.

Houge developed many of his electronic composition skills in courses taught by former faculty member Peter Hamlin. Houge says the St. Olaf composition program gave him the invaluable skills he needed to make a successful career in composition.

Peterson also believes the composition program prepares students well for careers in writing music. "Mahr and Merritt are turning St. Olaf composition into what I believe will be one of the top small-school composition programs in the country. The program has always been strong, but it is now becoming geared toward students who want careers in composing," he says.

Mahr believes that the program and its students draw inspiration from faculty members' continuous composition achievements. "That kind of creative atmosphere is a very positive one for the students to experience," he adds.

Recent alumni have certainly benefited from this "creative atmosphere," as they make names for themselves via competitions and publishing contracts. Just a few of these recent successes include: Travis Cross '99, Ken Hakoda '96, Carl Holmquist '05, and Jayce Ogren '01, who are all published or contracted-to-be-published band music composers; Hakoda, Holmquist, and Christopher Renk '05, who have won national competitions in band composition; Abbie Betinis ’01, who has held residencies with The Schubert Club, The Singers—Minnesota Choral Artists and The Rose Ensemble; Jocelyn Hagen ’03, who has received four national honors for her vocal writing as well as 20 commissions, 30 premieres and 80 performances of her works; and Renk and Carl Schroeder ’05, who were both selected competitively to participate in the National Band Association’s Young Band Composer Mentoring Project.

Mahr praises St. Olaf students, and the group Muziko Nova in particular, for encouraging and helping one another in the composition process. Muziko Nova, a group of student composers and performers, has written and recorded contemporary music since 2000. The organization "has been a vital part of what’s been going on in composition at St. Olaf for the last few years," Mahr says.

Indeed, there is no shortage of student composers at St. Olaf. "It’s not unusual to find 18 or so in a composition class," Mahr notes. In his Composition I class, students write six pieces during the semester. "Add to that the work being produced by the Composition II and III students, as well as those not currently enrolled in a composition course, and we are probably creating about 200 new pieces each term. That’s an amazing amount of new music," he says. In addition, many students like Peterson are able to premiere their works on campus.

The amount of new music emanating from the Hill multiplies each year as more and more students of all academic disciplines flock to composition courses. Mahr adds, "Certainly the successes of our recent grads and current students with state and national competitions have also helped in the recruiting of top-notch young composers into the program. It is becoming self-propagating." Indeed, the program continues to attract and inspire students. "St. Olaf was a place where I could develop that crucial inquisitiveness that has fueled my continuing development as a musician and as a person," says Houge.

Annie Timmer ’05 is a freelance writer and an editor for a human capital consulting firm. She lives in Shakopee with her husband, Andy.
ST. OLAF ATHLETIC TEAMS hope to build off last year’s championship finishes and impressive milestones as they gear up for action-packed seasons in 2007–08.

Last fall the Ole football team was one game away from a Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) title, boasting a league-high 12 All-Conference honorees, all of whom will be back to contend this fall.

The winter looks promising as well and will be led off by the swimming and diving programs. The men’s team won the conference crown last year behind Swimmer of the Meet and 200 Individual Medley NCAA Division III National Champion Nelson Westby ’09. The women’s team, which won the MIAC title in 2005–06, was second.

The hockey programs, too, have plenty to build on. The women’s team had its best finish in Ole history with a second-place nod in the MIAC. The men’s team advanced to the MIAC playoffs semi-finals for the fourth straight season, and All-America defenseman John Paulson ’08 is back for his final season.

The men’s basketball program won its first post-season game in Ole history last season and has a core group to build around in 2007–08. Steve Banick ’08, who had a career-high 10 assists in the MIAC playoffs first-round win over Bethel, will lead the way.

“One of the great aspects about college athletics is that every year is a new and different experience,” says St. Olaf Director of Athletics Matt McDonald ’89.

ST. OLAF COLLEGE PASTOR BRUCE BENSON, wearing a propeller-topped beanie and speaking from the base of the college’s wind turbine, asked the outdoor congregation to raise their pinwheels during the service that dedicated the new structure last fall. “Northfield can now be known as the city of cows, colleges and common sense,” noted Director of American Studies Jim Farrell. The Danish-built turbine directly supplies the campus with up to one-third of its electricity.
“YOU’RE HEROES,” Minnesota Rep. John Kline (above, far right) told St. Olaf College students (L–R) Pa Kou Vang ‘09, James Barnett ‘08 and Mai Nhia Thao ‘08 after hearing their stories of overcoming class, social and cultural barriers to higher education by attending St. Olaf with the support of the federally funded TRiO programs.

Kline, a member of the House Education Committee and a strong supporter of the programs, visited St. Olaf to gain first-hand experience of TRiO’s effectiveness.

“It’s very clear that this is a program that’s doing what it’s supposed to be doing,” said Kline.

IT’S EVEN BETTER than phoning home! Beginning this fall, Oles can plant themselves in front of a new webcam located on the ground level of Buntrock Commons and connect with family members back home.

**Christmas Festival NEWS**

**TV BROADCAST**
PBS will air a one-hour version of this year’s St. Olaf Christmas Festival several times throughout the holiday season. Check local listings for details.

**SIMULCAST**
For the first time, the Christmas Festival performance on Sunday, Dec. 2, will be simulcast — live from the St. Olaf campus — to some 160 movie theaters around the country. Visit stolaf.edu for tickets (on sale Nov. 2).

**RADIO BROADCAST**
The Sunday, Dec. 2, performance of the Christmas Festival will be broadcast live by Minnesota Public Radio stations and streamed at minnesota.publicradio.org.

**Digital STREAM**

NOT SO LONG AGO, the only way to reconnect with St. Olaf was to return to campus for class reunions or homecoming. Now, the web gives everyone an instant portal into what’s happening on the Hill and offers live online streaming of events that can be seen and heard in real time by anyone, anywhere.
ON THE ROAD AGAIN

A BEHIND-THE-SCENES LOOK AT THE OFF-STAGE JOBS OF BANDIES ON TOUR.

By John Douglass ’07

The classic vision of a band’s road crew involves a famous rock-and-roll band heading out on tour with an entourage of “roadies” — large, burly beasts of men carrying heavy equipment from city to city, from venue to venue.

The St. Olaf Band has no such retinue, but the same essential tasks must be performed every night that it’s on tour. The job falls to band members in divisions known as crews. Each crew is a cog in the well-oiled machine that sets up the St. Olaf Band to perform and tears things down when it is finished. The machine is what a casual observer will see, but the cogs are what are worth investigating.

**Truck Crew**
The St. Olaf Band travels with a big cargo truck that hauls most of the heavier instruments, chairs, risers, wardrobes and other equipment. The truck crew’s job is to unpack and repack this truck at every stop. The truck is big, but the equipment is all irregularly shaped, and at first it is like working a large-scale Rubik’s Cube just to get every little piece to fit securely and then get the door to close. After a few nights of tour, the truck crew is, most of the time, an example of optimum efficiency. The members are the first ones to work and the last ones to finish. It is also widely suspected that the truck crew has the most fun of all of the crews, a theory given credence by the truck crew cheer sung after a successful load.

**Stand Crew**
Cries of “Stand Line!” sound during unloads, setups and teardowns. The stand line is one of the most well-known setup rituals practiced by the ensemble. The music stands get packed in the truck on top of everything else, and unloading them is a long, drawn-out process. When a stand line has been called for, band members line up from the truck to the stage about an arm’s length apart, passing each stand down one or two at a time. It is unclear as to whether this method is actually efficient, but it is generally agreed to be fun, and so it is a regular occurrence. Legend has it that when the band was traveling in Mexico in 2004, stand lines occasionally stretched up to a quarter-mile long, with most of the children of the village lending their hands. The only other duty of the stand crew is to set up the stands on the stage.

**Chair Crew**
For a description of the duties of the chair crew, see the paragraph about the stand crew, subtract all the stuff about a “line,” substitute chairs for stands, and there you have it.

**Riser Crew**
The setup of the St. Olaf Band is unique, and in an ideal concert venue it involves a multi-level stage set with risers. The duty of the riser crew is to know how to set up these risers, or at least to be able to follow the directions of the managers, and then to assemble them. This is kind of tricky, and definitely important, as the safety of most of the brass section, as well as some woodwinds, rests on the security of the risers. Occasionally, creativity must prevail (as on the 2007 Pacific Northwest Tour, when one riser was inexplicably left in Northfield). But overall the duties remain pretty constant.

**Percussion Crew**
The percussionists of the St. Olaf Band, as well as a few ringers each year, comprise the percussion crew. This is perhaps the most highly specialized crew, as it involves the assemblage of the various percussion instruments, the subsequent arrangement of them in the performance space, and the tearing down and packing up of the same instruments after a concert. Percussion crew also has a cheer that marks the finishing of their work, but by general consensus it is simply a half-hearted attempt to cash in on the success of the truck crew song.

**The Other Crews**
The crews that have already been mentioned are the prestigious crews, the hard-working crews, the “real” crews. That’s not to diminish the following crews, which one could argue are just a bit more specialized. And they do less work.

**Thank-You Note Crew:** Band members on tour need places to stay every night on the road. People corralled from all sorts of exploited connections donate their houses to host from two to sometimes tens of band members. These people deserve to be thanked in some way, and this is where the thank-you note crew comes in. Each morning they pass out thank-you notes so that everyone can leave a small, heartfelt token of their gratitude.

**Program Crew:** These crew members unload a box or two of programs from the bus and carry them to the lobby where they will be handed out. Obviously quite strenuous.

**Wardrobe Crew:** This crew’s key duty is to make sure that every member’s “concert black” attire is in the wardrobe crates after each concert. This often involves much standing around.

**Room and Bus Checkers:** These are really two different crews, but because there is so little actual work involved, it’s fine to combine them. The room checkers find the areas that will serve as dressing rooms for the day, lead the band there, and make sure nothing is left in the rooms afterwards. The bus checkers read roll call on the buses before they take off. This is perhaps a difficult job, as it is hard not to incur the wrath of 80 sleepy band members when screaming their names early in the morning.

**Dr. Mahr’s Valets:** This crew in spring 2007 included two people, although the duties simply entailed bringing Dr. Mahr’s luggage to his dressing room each night. [Dr. Mahr’s left thumb was broken and in a cast. — ed.]

Every production involves a fair amount of work behind the scenes to make the show happen, and a St. Olaf Band tour is no different. Though their duties range from intense to, well, not so intense, each band member also is a crew member. And each crew is vital (more or less) to a successful production.

A four-year band member, John Douglass ’07 majored in English and education at St. Olaf. He was a member of the truck crew.
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Fall 2007 Tour

Featuring Dr. Timothy Mahr, Conductor, and the St. Olaf Band
St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota

Weekend Tour

Sunday, Oct. 7, 4 P.M.
Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Main Tour

Saturday, Oct. 13, 7 P.M.
Central High School Auditorium
La Crosse, Wisconsin

Sunday, Oct. 14, 7 P.M.
Wheaton – Warrenville South H.S. Auditorium
Wheaton, Illinois

Monday, Oct. 15, 7:30 P.M.
East Lansing H.S. Center for the Performing Arts
East Lansing, Michigan

Tuesday, Oct. 16, 7:30 P.M.
Corson Auditorium
Interlochen Center for the Arts
Interlochen, Michigan

Wednesday, Oct. 17, 7:30 P.M.
Lake Superior State University Arts Center
Sault Sainte Marie, Michigan

Thursday, Oct. 18, 1:30 P.M.
K–12 event at Rozsa Center for the Performing Arts
Michigan Technological University
Houghton, Michigan

Friday, Oct. 19, 7:30 P.M.
Orlyn Zieman Auditorium
North High School
Appleton, Wisconsin

Saturday, Oct. 20, 7:30 P.M.
Denfeld High School Auditorium
Duluth, Minnesota

Sunday, Oct. 21, 3:30 P.M.
Centennial High School Auditorium
Circle Pines, Minnesota

Monday, Oct. 22, 7:30 P.M.
Home Concert
Skoglund Center Auditorium
St. Olaf College
Northfield, Minnesota