The St. Olaf Orchestra

Steven Amundson, Conductor

with guest artists:
Scott Anderson, clarinet
Eliza Block ’17, trumpet
Tristan Frank ’16, trumpet
Will Wertjes ’15, trumpet
Josh John ’12, bassoon
Josh Kosberg ’16, bassoon
Luke Varland ’08, bassoon

Saturday, October 4, 2014 • 7:30 p.m.
Skoglund Center Auditorium • St. Olaf College
**The Program**

**Norwegian Dances, Op. 35**  
*Edvard Grieg* (1843–1907)

I. Allegro moderato  
II. Allegretto tranquillo e grazioso  
III. Allegro moderato all Marcia  
IV. Allegro molto

When Grieg met Richard Nordraak, a Norwegian nationalist, in 1864, he adopted a zeal for Norwegian folk music and a desire to compose with a uniquely Norwegian style. Grieg’s *Norwegian Dances, Op. 35*, originally composed in 1880 for four-hand piano duet, encompass the essence of his Norwegian spirit. Hungarian violinist and composer, Hans Sitt later arranged them for symphony orchestra. Consequently, the first violins often have the melody, with an occasional detour to the flute, oboe, or bassoon.

All four movements, with the exception of the second, have a lively opening dance melody that is intercepted by a more lyrical melody before the first returns. Often, the lyrical melody is closely related to – if not just a slowed down version of – the lively dance melody. The Norwegian folk influence can be heard in the rustic drones, played by the lower strings and tuneful melodies driven in a strong duple meter. While the structures and dance rhythms are fairly predictable, the occasional offbeat accent or lingering phrase keeps both listener and performer on their toes.

**Première Rhapsodie for Clarinet and Orchestra**  
*Claude Debussy* (1862–1918)

Scott Anderson, clarinet

The *concours* at the Paris Conservatory were designed not only as a judged competition, but also an evaluation of the enrolled clarinet students. Debussy composed *Première Rhapsodie* for the 1909 *concours*, which explains the chromatic, disjunct melodies and frequent high register written for the clarinet. He wrote to his editor before the competition, “Sympathize with me, next Sunday I shall hear the Clarinet Rhapsodie 11 times; I’ll tell you about it if I survive.” Despite his concern, however, he ultimately liked it so much that he orchestrated the piano part.

The beginning is marked “dreamily slow,” where the descending chromatic line of the clarinet and the shimmering accompaniment paint a pastoral image, one fairly common in Debussy’s work. The dreamy slow sections alternate with virtuosic solo passages for the clarinet that almost sound improvisatory or rhapsodic, hence the title of the piece. Debussy’s light scoring combined with the complex rhythms and harmonies in the accompaniment create a transparent texture true to his impressionist style. The clarinet’s melody builds off four main motives: a descending chromatic figure, an ascending pentatonic line, a turn that comes back to the same note, and a descending disjunct figure. These motives are the basis for the melodic material of the whole piece, elaborated and extended to show the clarinet’s exquisite color.
The composer has provided the following notes for his score:

As my title hints, this piece has much to do with rhythm, the time element in music. It is an exploration of the many interesting, quirky, off-kilter rhythms that can be derived by “stealing” tiny bits of time from a normal 4/4 measure.

The piece begins with a relatively regular 4/4 meter. Very soon, however, a syncopated bass line and dance-like melody in the clarinet and harp begin to fight with the downbeat. Eventually the strings emerge with a passage in 7/8 time. In other words, one eighth-note beat has been “stolen,” and the music continues in that new meter.

Another eighth-note disappears for a waltz section in 3/4 time, then to 5/8 (as if the waltzers have let one shoe become untied!), and finally to 4/8 leading back to the pattern that began the piece. Next, the opening pattern is presented in two simultaneous rhythms in the ratio of 3:2, eventually effecting a tempo change that leads to the next section.

Now the rhythmic pattern is transformed and accompanied by a rather funky bass line in one of my favorite meters, 15/16 - that is, a sixteenth note has been “thieved” from the 4/4 measure. As this section subsides, a large chord strikes repeatedly, once per measure. But each successive measure is one sixteenth-beat shorter, counting down from 16 to 15 to 14, and so on until finally reaching zero!

And here, there are indeed, no beats. Familiar patterns are played, but all in their own tempos, producing a wash of color and texture, or perhaps a sense of time suspended. A final reprise brings back the opening music in 4/4 time. But ultimately, with the tick-tock of the wood block marking time, the music loses a half-beat in each of a short series of progressively plundered measures, concluding finally in silence.

The title may bring to mind the old saying, “Procrastination is the thief of time.” This reference is not meant in any way to reflect on the work habits of the artistic personality!

*The Thief of Time* was commissioned and premiered by the Dubuque Symphony under the direction of Nicolas Palmer, and is dedicated to them. The music was composed in the summer of 1991, performed in November of that year, and final revisions were completed in the summer of 1992.

Peter Hamlin started his professional life as a broadcaster, hosting and producing radio programs in San Diego in the 70’s. At that time, he was also a member of the Harry Partch Ensemble. He produced and hosted a classical music radio program in Iowa from 1980–90 and also appeared as fine arts host for many programs on Iowa Public Television. After doctoral work in composition at the Eastman School of Music, he began teaching composition, theory, and electronic music at St. Olaf College, where he taught from 1992–2004. (And he sends along a big hello to all his St. Olaf friends! He is very honored to have Steve Amundson and the St. Olaf Orchestra performing this piece again!) In 2004, he joined the music faculty at Middlebury College in Vermont, his alma mater, and where he and his wife met many years ago as students. His music
includes orchestral and chamber pieces, works for choir, and electronic music. He is currently at work on an orchestra piece for the Des Moines Symphony that is scheduled for a September 2015 premiere.

**Vocalise, Op. 34, #14**

**Sergei Rachmaninoff** (1873–1943)

In 1912, writer Marietta Shaginyan wrote to Rachmaninoff suggesting numerous Russian poems for him to set as songs. The song collection that he composed in response became his Op. 34 – however, the final song in the collection was wordless. When the singer to whom it was dedicated asked why there were no words, he answered, “what need is there of words, when you will be able to convey everything better and more expressively than anyone could with words by your voice?” With this wordless song, Rachmaninoff set a precedent for other composers to explore a new genre. *Vocalise* soon became the most popular song of the collection and Rachmaninoff arranged this orchestral version.

The melody in *Vocalise* rarely spans more than five notes with the occasional romantic leap. True to its name, this makes the melody very simple and singable. While the accompaniment isn’t complex in rhythm or texture, the interest comes in some chromatic harmonies, characteristic of Rachmaninoff’s style. The first violins float with the melody and occasionally a response comes from the lower strings, oboe, English horn, or clarinet, giving a melancholy feeling to this short and sweet *Vocalise*.

**Bugler’s Holiday**

**Leroy Anderson** (1908–75)

Eliza Block ’17, Tristan Frank ’16, and Will Wertjes ’15, *trumpets*

Imagine three military buglers celebrating their time off by playing anything and everything they were prohibited from playing at their post, and you have an idea what *Bugler’s Holiday* is about. When Leroy Anderson was discharged from the military after WWII, he was determined to make a career in music and so began composing for the Boston Pops Orchestra at Arthur Fielder’s request. By 1954, the world upheld Leroy Anderson for his light concert music and composition of orchestral miniatures, such as *Bugler’s Holiday*. It features our fabulous trumpet section as the three buglers, repeating a demanding rhythmic figure at a spritely pace.

**Three’s Company**

**Steven Amundson** (b. 1955)

Josh John ’12, Josh Kosberg ’16, and Luke Varland ’08, *bassoons*

The composer has provided the following notes:

Back in my student days, I had the opportunity to play bassoon for the first and only time in my undergraduate woodwind methods class. I’ll never forget the challenge of trying to make a good sound and figuring out the array of silver keys, many of which were to be operated only by the thumbs! I quickly discovered that mastering the bassoon would take
years of devoted patience and fortitude. It certainly wasn’t my cup of tea. Hearing the bassoon played well has always been a special treat and, as I began conducting orchestras, I became more and more enamored by its fascinating array of colors and raspy tone.

Designed to highlight the fun-loving personality of the bassoon, *Three’s Company* was composed in 2002 and revised in 2006. The three bassoon solos each explore the entire 3-plus-octave range of this wonderful, jocular instrument. The syncopated character of the opening allegro, which seems to suit this clown of the woodwind section, is contrasted with a ballad in 6/8 in which the most famous of all orchestral bassoon solos, from Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring*, is hinted at and later, more fully realized, in a loving bassoon trio gently accompanied by solo strings. Next, there is a short development based on the tunes and rhythms of the first section, followed by a return of the opening material and a lively coda. This piece pays tribute to all those bassoonists who have taken the time and care to learn how to play this complicated, colorful, and amazing instrument.

**España**

Emmanuel Chabrier (1841–94)

When Chabrier and his wife traveled to Spain in 1882, he was especially impressed with the local music and dance – the gypsy dancers’ finesse, the persistent clapping and stomping with the music, and especially the blend of contrasting rhythms. In *España*, Chabrier captures two of his favorite gypsy dance tunes, opening with a Jota, a vigorous and fiery dance in 3/8, and followed by a Malagueña in the violins. The Malagueña is the more sensual of the two Spanish dances, usually accompanied by castanets or tambourine. The trombones then introduce a new melody, this time of his own creation. Underneath these dances, many syncopated rhythms converge to create a driving vitality to the very end.

While Chabrier is only well known for *España*, many French composers, such as Maurice Ravel, were impressed and influenced by the colors in his musical style. From the rustic Norwegian folk music of Grieg, to the transparency of Debussy’s impressionism, and the reedy resonance of Amundson’s bassoon trio, this program has given a tour of a diversity of timbres and textures. Now, we end with Spanish-inspired, vibrant colors from *España*.

-program notes compiled by Sophia Butler ’15
• Our Guest Artists •

Scott Anderson joined the St. Olaf music faculty in the fall of 2012. Previously, he had taught at the University of California at Berkeley and Davis, Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and California State University Sacramento. For many years he was principal clarinetist with the Honolulu Symphony, a position he also held with the Grand Rapids Symphony, the Oakland Symphony, and several summer festival orchestras, including the Carmel Bach Festival, Glimmerglass Opera, and Colorado Music Festival. Scott was a member of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and worked frequently as a recording studio musician during his time in L.A. He has played as an extra or substitute musician with the Chicago and San Francisco Symphonies, the Minnesota Orchestra, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and the San Francisco Opera and Ballet Orchestras. He has recorded on the CRI, Albany, Well-Tempered and Marco Polo labels and has performed as a concerto and chamber soloist at several venues across the United States and Mexico. Scott also currently serves on the summer faculty at the Interlochen Center for the Arts. He is happy to return to Minnesota, where he was born and raised, after 40(!) years, and can think of no better place to teach than St. Olaf.

Trumpet Soloists

Eliza Block is a sophomore trumpet performance major from Tacoma, Washington. In addition to her membership in the St. Olaf Orchestra and the Jazz 1 Ensemble, she played for one year in the St. Olaf Band. This past summer, she studied and performed at Eastern Music Festival in Greensboro, North Carolina. In the future, Eliza looks forward to pursuing graduate study in performance and playing professionally.

Tristan Frank is a junior from Mount Horeb, Wisconsin, pursuing degrees in trumpet performance and mathematics. He is a second-year member of the St. Olaf Orchestra and third-year member of the St. Olaf Band. After graduating from St. Olaf, Tristan plans to attend graduate school for trumpet and eventually hopes to perform with a professional orchestra.

Will Wertjes is a senior chemistry major from Olympia, Washington. During his time at St. Olaf, Will has played in the St. Olaf Band and the St. Olaf Orchestra. After graduation, Will plans to attend graduate school in organic chemistry with the goal of teaching at the university level.

Bassoon Soloists

Josh Kosberg is a junior bassoon performance/physics double major from Wildwood, Illinois. As a member of the St. Olaf Orchestra, St. Olaf Band, Collegium Musicum, and several chamber ensembles, he spends a lot of his time in a practice room or rehearsing. This summer, he received a fellowship to study and perform at the National Symphony Orchestra’s Summer Music Institute in Washington D.C. After graduation, he hopes to pursue an advanced degree in physics while taking auditions for major orchestras.

Josh John is a 2012 graduate of St. Olaf College, where he was a four-year member of both the St. Olaf Orchestra and the St. Olaf Band. After completing his undergraduate studies, Josh went
on to gain his master’s degree in bassoon performance from the University of Minnesota. While completing his degree, he continued to nurture his private studio of bassoonists from both Northfield and Rochester. His students have won local competitions and gone on to continue their music education at Iowa, UW-Madison and UMN-Twin Cities. He continues to perform regularly as a member of the Mankato Symphony and with many groups in the Twin Cities. In addition to his music career, Josh is a yoga instructor for the YMCA and is part of the management and training team for a coffee roasting company in Minneapolis.

For the past six years, Luke Varland has been an active freelance musician in Boston, Massachusetts. He is currently principal bassoon of the Glens Falls Symphony, second bassoon of the Plymouth Philharmonic, a regular substitute for the Boston Philharmonic, and a founding member of Discovery Ensemble, the premier chamber orchestra in New England. Luke is an alumnus of the New England Conservatory, where he received a master’s and graduate diploma, both with highest honors. While at NEC, Luke studied with Boston Symphony Orchestra principal bassoonist Richard Svoboda and contrabassoonist Gregg Henegar. He was also a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center in 2010, performing alongside the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Luke graduated from St. Olaf in 2008 with a bachelor’s degree in bassoon performance.

Don’t miss the next St. Olaf Orchestra concert on Sunday, Nov. 16 at 3:30 p.m. in Skoglund Auditorium, presenting a program designed especially for the young and young at heart. Special guests Louis Epstein, Gary Gisselman, and Kevin Kling will join the orchestra to perform Benjamin Britten’s delightful Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra, Victor Zupanc’s and Kevin Kling’s entertaining piece for orchestra with bagpipe, The Burning Wisdom of Finn McCool, and Prokofiev’s timeless musical tale Peter and the Wolf. Families with children are invited to come a little early for a special “instrument petting zoo” near the stage from 3:00–3:25 p.m.
THE ST. OLAF ORCHESTRA
STEVEN AMUNDSON, CONDUCTOR • TERRA WIDDIFIELD, MANAGER

VIOLIN I
Edward Barnes, Mayflower, Ark.
Rinnah Becker, Port Townsend, Wash.
Sm Claire Belisle, Mahtomedi, Minn.
Katelyn Berg, Fircrest, Wash.
Jared Brown, Gordonville, Va.
†† Seiji Cataldo, St. Paul, Minn.
William Gibb, Oak Park Heights, Minn.
Abigail Ham, Duluth, Minn.
Britta Hoidland, Park Ridge, Ill.
Sofia Kaut, Des Moines, Iowa
Daniel McDonald, Chesterfield, Mo.
Anna Perkins, Amherst, Mass.
Emily Reeves, Rapid City, S.D.
† Karen Van Acker, St. Charles, Ill.
Alanna Vollands, Spring, Texas
Anna Wolle, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

VIOLIN II
Olivia Ararestad, Menomonie, Wis.
Genevieve Akins, Topeka, Kan.
** Sophia Butler, Burnsville, Minn.
Francesca Crutchfield-Stoker, Iowa City, Iowa
Wesley Douglas, Missoula, Mont.
* Eve Grabau, Northfield, Minn.
Maya Lehmann, Rapid City, S.D.
Erik McCoy, Iowa City, Iowa
Anja Pruim, Grand Rapids, Mich.
Marja Ronnholm-Howland, Minneapolis, Minn.
Kayleigh Shaffer, Tacoma, Wash.
Christina Solenstein, Woodbury, Minn.
Katherine Wald, St. Paul, Minn.
Valerie Wilk, Caledonia, Wis.

VIOLA
Beret Amundson, Northfield, Minn.
James Bell, Wayzata, Minn.
William Bice, Henrico, Va.
Emily Bristol, Webster, Minn.
Lauren Culver, Salem, Ore.
Ethan Johnson, Austin, Minn.
Cameron Judge-Becker, Northfield, Minn.
Kelly McNeily, Iowa City, Iowa
Emma Ritter, Omaha, Neb.
** Joshua Wareham, West St. Paul, Minn.
* Kyle Wasson, Woodinville, Wash.

CELLO
** Andrew Altmaier, Riverside, Iowa
~ Kelly Halpin, Algonquin, Ill.
Omar Macias, Plymouth, Minn.
Isaac Maier, Forest Lake, Minn.
Wille Munde, Grand Rapids, Mich.
** Keegan O’Donald, Greenville, Mich.
Brenna Peterson, Grand Forks, N.D.
Serena Tenenbaum, Boulder, Colo.
Samuel Vignier, Atlanta, Ga.
~ Andrew Wyffels, Plymouth, Minn.

BASS
Zoe Barlow, West Hartford, Conn.
Tiller Martin, St. Paul, Minn.
Kelsey Peterson, Grand Forks, N.D.
** Micah Stoddard, Omaha, Neb.
Kirsten Vezina, Stillwater, Minn.

FLUTE/PICcolo
Margaret Schenk, Madison, Wis.
** Joshua Weinberg, St. Peter, Minn.

OBOE
Rebecca Accettura, Gurnee, Ill.
** Luke Simonson, Morrisville, Minn.
~ Elizabeth Townsend, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

CLARINET
Rachel Berg, Shorewood, Wis.
** Erinn Komschlies, Appleton, Wis.
** Jacob Meyer, St. Paul, Minn.
Jonathan Sanchez, Columbia, S.C.

BASS CLARINET
Jonathan Sanchez, Columbia, S.C.

BASSOON
** Joshua Kosberg, Wildwood, Ill.
~ Eliza Madden, Burlington, Vt.

HORN
Andrew Chang, Aiea, Hi.
Kelsi Cox, Columbia, S.C.
Nathan Crowe, Wheaton, III.
Megan Dunlap, Albuquerque, N.M.
** Madeleine Folkerts, Port Orchard, Wash.

TRUMPET
Eliza Block, Tacoma, Wash.
Rebecca Cooper, Florence, Mass.
** Tristan Frank, Mount Horeb, Wis.
William Wertjes, Olympia, Wash.

TROMBONE
** Antonio Patrick, Tacoma, Wash.
Richard Stahl, Waseca, Minn.

BASS TROMBONE
Adam Sanders, Brentwood, Tenn.

Tuba
** Lucas Sletten, Osceola, Wis.

PERCUSSION
Natalie Anderson, Chanhassen, Minn.
** Michael Betz, Mason City, Iowa
Soren Docken, Chatfield, Minn.
John Kronloken, Eden Prairie, Minn.
Tim O’Grady, Fort Collins, Colo.

HARP
** Jennelle Allen, San Diego, Calif.
Grace Clark, Lawrence, Kan.

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◊ Officers and management
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◊ English Horn
▼ Contrabassoon