

THE ST. OLAF
Philharmonia



J. Robert Hanson, conductor

Laura Groggel '08, violin
Molly Sell '07, piano

Saturday, May 5, 2007
Trinity Lutheran Church
Brainerd, Minnesota
7:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 6, 2007
Osakis High School Auditorium
Osakis, Minnesota
3:00 p.m.

Monday, May 7, 2007
Boe Memorial Chapel
Northfield, Minnesota
7:30 p.m.

PROGRAM

Nocturnes

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

II. *Fêtes* (“Festivals”)

Debussy spent most of his life being influenced by new artistic and literary thoughts. “Impressionism, symbolism, poetic realism were all merged in a great current of enthusiasm, curiosity, and intellectual passion,” wrote the composer-critic Dukas. The paintings of Monet and Degas were spoken of as symphonies and suites of light, and the music of Debussy as impressionist paintings. Debussy describes this middle movement of his three “Nocturnes” as follows:

“It reflects the movement, the restless dancing rhythms of the atmosphere, interspersed with brusque bursts of light. There is the episode of a procession—a dazzling and wholly visionary pageant—passing through the festival and blended with it.” The procession begins in the middle of the movement when we hear the rhythm of a distant march and a fanfare of muted trumpets. The procession passes by and disappears in the distance at the end of the movement.

Elegy

J. Robert Hanson

Elegy is the last movement of *Reflections for Symphony Orchestra*, commissioned by the Fargo-Moorhead Symphony in 1976 in commemoration of our nation’s bicentennial celebration. The work is dedicated to Sigvald Thompson, a 1929 graduate of St. Olaf College, who served as a conductor of the symphony for 37 years (1937-1974). Sigvald Thompson played a very important role in my development as a musician. During my first two years as a student at Concordia College he was my music theory teacher, and later gave me the opportunity to play trumpet in the Fargo-Moorhead Symphony.

Elegy is set in the traditional form of a chorale prelude, *i.e.* an existing tune is interspersed with original material by the composer. The tune is attributed to Hans I. Hassler, 1564-1612, and was evidently a great favorite of J. S. Bach, for he left eleven harmonizations of it, five of which are found in the “St. Matthew Passion.” We know it in many hymnals as “O Sacred Head Now Wounded.” The original German title is “*Herlich tut mich verlangen*” (I desire sincerely *a blessed ending*). It has long been a favorite of mine and was, along with so much important music, an integral part of the study of harmony with Sigvald Thompson. *Elegy* is presented on the program in his memory.

notes by J. Robert Hanson

Symphonie Espagnole for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 21 *Edouard Lalo (1823-1892)*

I. Allegro non troppo

Laura Groggel '08, *violin*

Symphony Espagnole was dedicated to the great Spanish virtuoso Pablo de Sarasate and received its first performance by him in Paris in 1875. Even though the piece is in a suitelike form of five movements it is considered to be a full-fledged violin concerto. Sarasate was a close friend of Lalo and they shared their Spanish ancestry although both received their musical training in France.

This movement opens with a fragment of the principle theme by the orchestra, which is immediately echoed by the solo violin. The structure follows traditional symphonic sonata form as both the principle theme and a contrasting lyrical second theme are fully developed and return to end the movement. In characteristic virtuosic style the solo violin is constantly soaring from the brilliant high range to the sonorous low register.

Piano Concerto No. 12 in A Major, K. 414 *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)*

I. Allegro

Molly Sell '07, *piano*

Mozart's output of over 600 compositions includes works considered to be pinnacles of symphonic, concertante, chamber, piano, operatic, and chorale music. Piano Concerto No. 12 in A Major was written in 1782 in Vienna and is scored for solo piano, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, and strings. It was the first of a set of three piano concertos that Mozart performed at his Lenten concerts in 1773. This concerto stands out in Mozart's early compositions as a forerunner of works that followed in terms of its strong musical effect.

~ **INTERMISSION** ~

Variations on an Original Theme, “Enigma,” Op. 36

Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

When Elgar named his original theme “Enigma” he caused a great deal of speculation as to its origin. He stated that the melody was based upon an existing well-known tune, but refused to identify the source. In spite of the mystery and perhaps in part because of the speculation, this score, dated 1899, is generally thought to be Elgar’s greatest composition.

The score is dedicated “To my friends pictured within.” Variations 2-13 bear the initials of the friends described in the music. Their identities were revealed only after Elgar’s death. The first variation is a portrait of Elgar’s wife and the final variation is a self-portrait.

Theme: *Andante*

- I. (C. A. E.) *L’istesso tempo*. A warmhearted, lyric variation, an eloquent portrait of Lady Elgar.
- II. (H. D. S-P) *Allegro*. H.D. Stuart-Powell, a pianist friend of Elgar’s.
- III. (R. B. T.) *Allegretto*. Richard Bazter Townshend, an amateur actor who could suddenly shift from a deep voice to falsetto.
- IV. (W. M. B.) *Allegro di Molto*. William M. Baker, a vigorous English country squire.
- V. (R. P. A.) *Moderato*. Richard P. Arnold, said to have mixed dreaminess and vivacity in his character.
- VI. (Ysobel) *Andantino*. Isabel Fitton, an amateur viola player.
- VII. (Troyte) *Presto*. Arthur Troyte Griffith, a stormy, argumentative friend of Elgar’s.
- VIII. (W. N.) *Allegretto*. Winifred Norbury, a gracious elderly patrician.
- IX. (Nimrod) *Adagio*. August Jaeger; Elgar writes, “a memory of a long summer evening talk, when my friend grew noble eloquent (as only he could) on the grandeur of Beethoven, and especially of his show movements.”
- X. (Dorabella) *Intermezzo. Allegretto*. “Dorabella” (after the character in Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*) was Elgar’s affectionate nickname for Dora Penny, (later Mrs. Richard Powell), whose talk was marked by a fetching hesitation of speech.
- XI. (G. R. S.) *Allegro di molto*. Dr. George Robinson Sinclair, organist of Hereford Cathedral. The musical portrait, however, is chiefly of the doctor’s bulldog, Dan.
- XII. (B. G. N.) *Andante*. Basil Nevinson, a cellist who joined Elgar in chamber music sessions.
- XIII. (***) *Romanza, Moderato*. Lady Mary Lygon, who, when the music was written, was aboard an ocean liner en route to Australia.
- XIV. (E. D. U.) *Finale. Allegro; Presto*. “Edu” was Lady Elgar’s name for Sir Edward. The Finale is said to portray the struggles and ideals of the composer, ending with a suggestion of triumph.

Optional Selections

Theme from “Band of Brothers”

Michael Kamen (1948-2003)

Hoe-Down from “Rodeo”

Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

The St. Olaf Philharmonia, formerly the St. Olaf Chamber Orchestra, was founded in 1975 as a 12-member string ensemble and led for the first two years by the late Professor Emerita, Beatrix Lien. Associate Professor Dr. Andrea Een served as conductor from 1977-1994. During this period the size of the string ensemble grew, and eventually, winds and percussion were added to the ensemble. In 1996, the name was changed from Chamber Orchestra to Philharmonia when it became a full-sized symphony orchestra. Dr. Jo Ann Polley assumed the leadership of the Philharmonia in fall 1994 and retired in spring of the 2005-2006 academic year.

The orchestra performs music from all periods including repertoire for string orchestra, chamber orchestra, and symphony orchestra. Rehearsing twice weekly, membership consists of first year through senior year students. Members of this musical organization pursue virtually every academic major offered on campus. The Philharmonia complements the 90-member St. Olaf Orchestra, directed by Professor Steven Amundson. In 1998, the ensemble accepted an invitation to perform at the Minnesota Music Educator's Association Mid-Winter Clinic. The concert season of the Philharmonia consists of a Family Weekend concert, a fall concert, a chapel service, and a spring concert with a weekend concert tour.

Visiting Professor of Music, J. Robert Hanson, is serving as Interim Conductor of the St. Olaf Philharmonia for the 2006-2007 academic year. Dr. Hanson is a native of Osakis and a graduate of Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota. His graduate study at the University of Iowa includes the completion of a Master of Arts in Music Education, a Master of Fine Arts in Trumpet Performance and Ph. D. in Composition. He taught at the University of Iowa and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee before joining the music faculty at Concordia College in 1966. He conducted the Concordia College Band for eight years and was the founder and conductor of the Concordia College Orchestra from 1967 until his retirement in 1995.

Dr. Hanson was also the conductor of the Fargo-Moorhead Symphony Orchestra from 1974 to 1990. During his tenure the symphony received four ASCAP awards for "Adventuresome Programming of Contemporary Music." An accomplished trumpet player, Dr. Hanson has an extensive background in performance, which includes playing trumpet with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. As a composer, he has written works for orchestra, band and other instrumental and vocal ensembles. Hanson continues to be active as a composer and conductor and is in his 10th year as a part-time trumpet teacher at St. Olaf College.



L to R: Molly Sell, Laura Groggel

Laura Groggel is a junior music and women's studies major with a concentration in Africa and the Americas and ARMS (America Racial and Multicultural Studies). She has been a member of Philharmonia Orchestra for three years on both violin and viola. Laura began her musical studies as a Suzuki violin student at a young age and from then on has continually attempted a life of balance between music and numerous other endeavors. She is currently president of Amnesty International at St. Olaf College and was recently elected Political Awareness Coordinator with the Student Government Association for the '07-'08 school year. She is passionate about International human rights and music and hopes to incorporate both in her future.

Molly Sell is a senior at St. Olaf College. She will be graduating with a B.A. music major and a concentration in management studies. As well as being a three-year member of Philharmonia, Molly has participated in the St. Olaf Band, Orchestra and Choir, as well as participating in several other St. Olaf ensembles and activities. This past fall, Molly received the Rimbach Award, giving her the opportunity to teach English in Germany next year. After finishing out the school year in Europe, she plans to return to the states and continue her career in arts management.