

THE ST. OLAF CHOIR

ANTON ARMSTRONG · CONDUCTOR

1912 · *Centennial Tour* · 2012



A Century of Singing

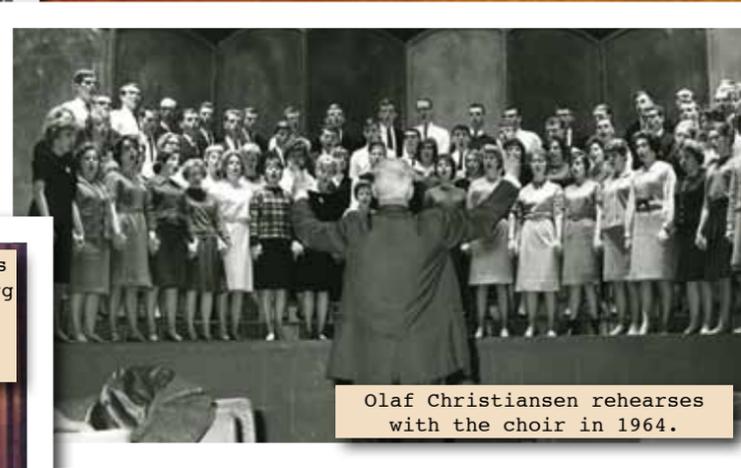
Widely traveled and internationally known, the 100-year-old St. Olaf Choir continues to delight audiences, enrich student musicians, and offer music as a form of worship and praise.



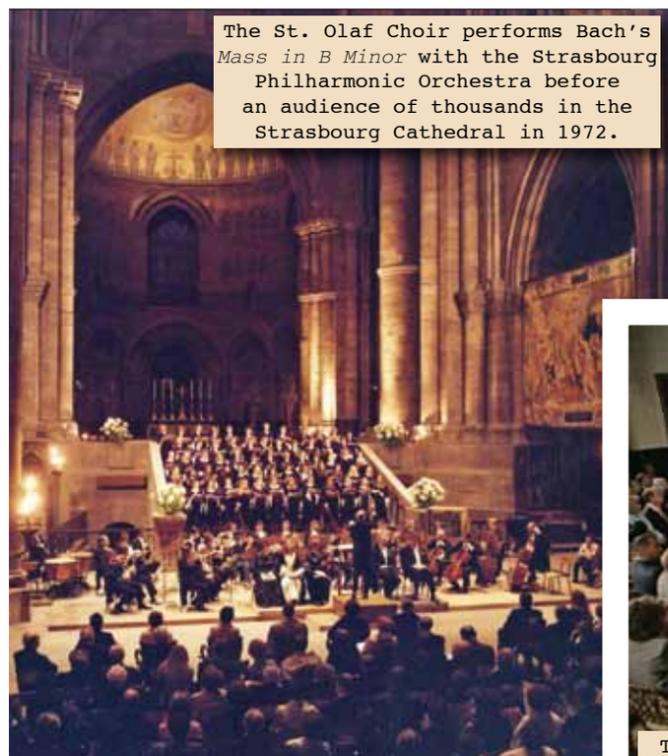
During its 1913 tour of Norway, the St. Olaf Choir established a tradition of bringing its music around the world. Not yet a robed choir, members of the ensemble performed in street clothes and wore black tasseled mortar boards to identify themselves as students from America.



The choir prepares to board a military transport plane on its 1957 tour to Iceland. The tour to Iceland became a matter of foreign relations, as the U.S. wanted to renew its contract to operate the air base at Keflavik and the Russians, also eager to lease the site, had sent the Red Army Chorus and the Russian Ballet to perform.



Olaf Christiansen rehearses with the choir in 1964.



The St. Olaf Choir performs Bach's *Mass in B Minor* with the Strasbourgh Philharmonic Orchestra before an audience of thousands in the Strasbourgh Cathedral in 1972.



The 2005 St. Olaf Choir performs at the White House for the president and guests to commemorate the National Day of Prayer.

More than two decades after taking the reins of the St. Olaf Choir, Anton Armstrong '78 jokes that he's still "the new conductor."

Never mind that later this year he'll match the length of time his predecessor, Kenneth Jennings '50, led the renowned ensemble. Or that, like Jennings, he has guided an organization steeped in tradition into a new era.

In its 100-year history, the St. Olaf Choir has had just four conductors. Each has built upon the foundational ideals of sharing choral music that stirs the souls of listeners. Each has worked tirelessly to expand the choir's outreach and sound, globally and culturally. And all have been deeply beloved, legendary figures on campus.

So Armstrong can understand if some people, especially those who can recall the magic of singing under one of his predecessors, still think of him as "new." After all, he wrote his doctoral monograph on the history of the St. Olaf Choir, a project that enabled him to closely study the repertoire and pedagogy of the first three conductors of the St. Olaf Choir and the ensemble's impact on the world of choral singing. Doing that research meant that when Armstrong was invited to lead the choir, he knew he was inheriting a finely tuned instrument with a firmly rooted legacy.

"Yet it's an instrument that is constantly changing," Armstrong says. "One of the things I gathered from my own research and study of the choir is that each conductor has built on the traditions of those who had preceded him, and then worked to open new doors."

In recent years, the St. Olaf Choir has been flinging those doors wide open. The ensemble has become a leader in the international music community, performing at the White House in 2005, touring extensively abroad, and regularly collaborating with ensembles such as the Minnesota Orchestra, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, VocalEssence, Cantus, the American Boychoir, and Magnum Chorum. Some of the best music schools in the country, Armstrong notes, look to the St. Olaf Choir as a pacemaker in repertoire and vocal pedagogy.

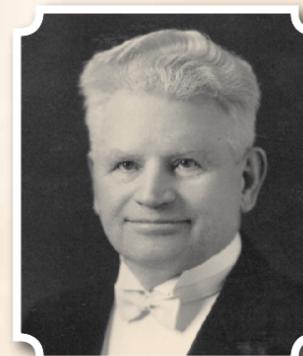
While F. Melius Christiansen established the ensemble's standard of excellence when he founded the St. Olaf Choir and his son, Olaf Christiansen, cemented its legacy, it's the work of Jennings and Armstrong that has taken the St. Olaf Choir into a modern age.

IN THE BEGINNING

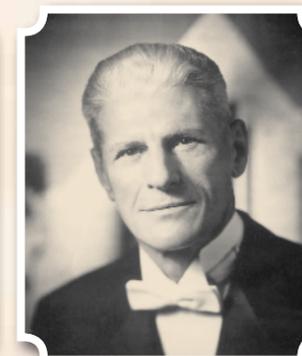
F. Melius Christiansen came to St. Olaf in 1903 with the task not of establishing a choir, but of leading a band. He quickly shaped a group of instrumentalists on campus into a remarkable performing organization that toured Norway in 1906. "It's just really quite amazing that he achieved that in such a short time," says Joseph M. Shaw '49, professor emeritus of religion at St. Olaf and the author of *The St. Olaf Choir: A Narrative*.

While conducting the St. Olaf Band, Christiansen also was asked to lead the choir at St. John's Lutheran Church in Northfield. In addition to his extensive musical training — he had studied music at Augsburg

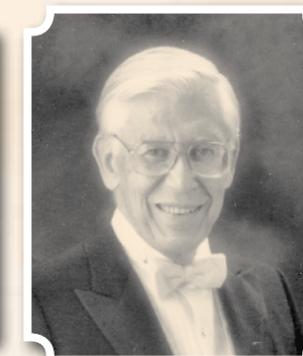
ST. OLAF CHOIR CONDUCTORS: 1912-2012



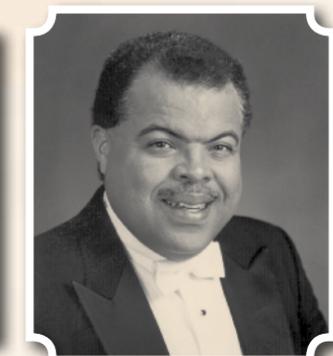
F. MELIUS CHRISTIANSEN
1912-43



OLAF CHRISTIANSEN '25
1941-68



KENNETH JENNINGS '50
1968-90



ANTON ARMSTRONG '78
1990-PRESENT

Members of the 1930 choir on board a ship to Norway, where 40,000 people gathered to welcome them.



Seminary, the Northwestern Conservatory of Music in Minneapolis, and the Royal Conservatory of Music in Leipzig, Germany — Christiansen had led several choral ensembles in Minneapolis.

He put that experience to use and took the reins of the St. John's Church Choir in 1905. As the ensemble prepared to make its first tour across the Midwest in the spring of 1912, it officially changed its name and became the St. Olaf Choir. The following year, the choir toured Norway and established a tradition of bringing its music around the world.

Those early tours, notes Jennings, were part of the genius of F. Melius Christiansen. Few schools at the time toured nationally or internationally, and doing so helped the St. Olaf Choir become a national sensation. "This choir, and repertoire, began to be known all over the country," Jennings says, noting that invitations to perform began pouring in from across the nation.

The other part of Christiansen's genius is that he turned choral singing into a professional endeavor with a purpose that went far beyond entertainment. He chose spiritually profound music and aimed to acquaint listeners with the church's heritage of chorales and a cappella music. Legendary for his high performance standards, Christiansen expected his musicians to rehearse five days a week to perfect a tone that was disciplined, controlled, and free of vibrato. That sound — perfectly in tune, controlled in pitch, smooth in delivery — became the hallmark of the St. Olaf Choir.

The ensemble's 1920 tour of the East Coast was a critical turning point for the St. Olaf Choir. As critics in early stops such as Chicago took note of the choir's unique, disciplined sound, manager Paul

G. Schmidt sent copies of their glowing reviews ahead to venues along the East Coast. "By the time they got to places like New York and Washington, the people out there had already heard something about the choir," Shaw notes.

The ensemble's rich sound did not disappoint the sophisticated listeners who gathered in cities like New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C. In some of the country's greatest performance halls, the St. Olaf Choir impressed audiences and critics alike. "It was a great success, and it certainly did put the choir — and the college — on the map," says Shaw.

By the time the choir toured Norway again in 1930, an estimated 40,000 people gathered to welcome the ensemble to Trondheim.

A LASTING LEGACY

F. Melius Christiansen remained at the helm of the St. Olaf Choir until 1943. Several years before he retired, he chose his successor: his son, Olaf Christiansen, who had built a career of his own as a conductor at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

The younger Christiansen left Oberlin to become his father's assistant conductor in 1941, a position he held for two years before taking full leadership of the St. Olaf Choir. And while it's tempting to say that Olaf Christiansen simply continued what his father had begun,

Shaw says that's not entirely true. Olaf Christiansen was an accomplished musician in his own right, having studied sacred music at Union Theological Seminary and founding the a cappella choir at the Oberlin Conservatory, where he taught for several years.

"It wasn't just that he was riding on the reputation and fame and the practices

of his father," Shaw says. "In having studied voice extensively, he was actually more broadly trained as a singer than F. Melius was."

While Olaf Christiansen remained deeply committed to ensuring the St. Olaf Choir retained the purity of tone it had become known for — some critics of the time described the choir's tone under his direction as "an icy blue" — he also began to explore new genres and interpretations of music. He added contemporary songs, more Renaissance music, and American folk hymns to the repertoire of traditional church chorales.

Like his father, Olaf Christiansen believed in the

educational potential of music and stressed the communal power it possessed. "The St. Olaf Choir goes beyond the members and includes both singers and listeners," he once said, noting that he wanted audience members to leave the ensemble's concert "with a different attitude toward themselves, toward others, and toward God."

"We had some spellbinding moments under his direction, in concerts all over the country," says Ronald Nelson '49, who sang in the choir for three-and-a-half years during Olaf Christiansen's reign as conductor. "Olaf could communicate, in very inconspicuous ways, every bit of emotion and tempo and any other dynamic that he was wanting. It was a fantastic experience to sing under him."

And it was an experience Nelson shared with none other than Jennings, a second tenor who would return to St. Olaf in 1953 — just three years after he graduated — to join the music faculty. Jennings returned to St. Olaf not only to accept a faculty position, but also with the understanding that Olaf Christiansen was looking ahead to the choir's 1955 tour of Norway and would need him to serve as the ensemble's assistant conductor.

THE CHOIR EVOLVES

Like Olaf Christiansen, Jennings was a product of the St. Olaf Music Department. He earned his M.M. degree from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, his D.M.A. from the University of Illinois, and conducted both the Manitou Singers and Chapel Choir during his early years on the Hill. When Olaf Christiansen retired in 1968, the process of choosing a successor was as simple as when his father had chosen him to lead the ensemble.

"Olaf got to the point that he thought that he would be ready to retire, and he just called me into the office and said 'We'd like you to become the new conductor of the St. Olaf Choir,'" Jennings recalls, noting that the offer was "a bit of a shock." When he said he needed time to think it over, Olaf Christiansen said that was fine — so long as he'd have his answer ready for a meeting with President Sidney Rand the next day.

Jennings, of course, accepted. And with that came the end of the Christiansen era. "When a musical genius and his highly talented son have given the world 65 years of exquisite music under the Christiansen name, one cannot but speak of the end of an era," Shaw wrote in his history of the choir.

Yet Jennings was ready for the challenge of building a new era. Although he had been a member of the St. Olaf Music Department for 15 years and had worked alongside Olaf Christiansen, he had his own ideas on how to shape the sound of the choir.

"I thought that the repertoire had been a little bit narrow, and there was a lot

more music — interesting music — around, and I looked for it," Jennings says.

Under the Christiansens, the St. Olaf Choir had largely performed a smaller, art song-like repertoire, with shorter pieces such as motets and anthems. When Jennings became conductor, he believed the time had come to start performing larger choral works, including oratorios, masses, and passions. He also included more 20th-century works, with a focus on historically informed renditions.

And while Jennings retained much of the a cappella repertoire the Christiansens had established, he also appreciated the combination of voices and instruments. In 1969 he introduced musical instruments to one of the choir's selections. Though only a flute and guitar, the instruments opened the door for full orchestral accompaniment in the future.

While Olaf Christiansen remained deeply committed to ensuring the St. Olaf Choir retained the purity of tone it had become known for ... he also began to explore new genres and interpretations of music.



Olaf Christiansen with the choir in New York's Philharmonic Hall during his final tour in 1968.

In addition to expanding the ensemble's repertoire and using instruments, Jennings also favored a "freer tone," Shaw says, that allowed the choir to really soar. Under Olaf Christiansen, members of the choir sang tightly and close together, standing on U-shaped risers

that meant most of them sang toward other members of the ensemble. Jennings ordered wider and deeper risers that enabled singers to hear themselves better, sing more freely, and direct their energy toward the audience. “I opened it up because I thought we needed to sing to the people, not to ourselves,” he says.

Under Jennings, the choir developed what one reviewer described as “a more vibrant, warm tone — a resonant, lively, brilliant sound that rings with vitality and conviction.” Jennings coaxed his students to reach their highest musical potential with a quiet leadership style and a graceful form of conducting that almost looked like he was “sculpting the sound with his hands,” Shaw says.

“He was a soft-spoken conductor. You had to be almost silent to hear what it was he wanted from you,” says former choir member Martha Kunau ’90. “He was able to bring very young voices together, knowing what it was we could do and then inspiring us to a higher level,

Under Jennings, the choir developed what one reviewer described as “a more vibrant, warm tone — a resonant, lively, brilliant sound that rings with vitality and conviction.”

“He inherited a treasured musical tradition from the Christiansens, respected it and let it sing, and added his own musical artistry to the growth and enrichment of the St. Olaf Choir,” Shaw wrote. “What he accomplished will live on through his compositions, recordings of the St. Olaf Choir under his direction, and especially through the hundreds of students he inspired.”

A NEW CENTURY

Jennings also paved the way for Armstrong, who has further expanded the choir’s repertoire and added even more flavor to its signature sound.

The first of the St. Olaf Choir’s four conductors to actually apply for the position and compete with others for the honor of leading the ensemble, Armstrong’s interview — which included leading the choir through several pieces — actually got off to a rocky start. The choir had already had a long week of singing under several other candidates by the time Armstrong stood before them for his audition. Members of the ensemble went through the motions of the first piece with little emotion. Then Armstrong handed out copies of Ralph Manuel’s *Alleluia*. As members of the choir struggled to sight-read the unfamiliar piece, the singing faltered and Armstrong worried the audition was heading toward failure. He stopped the choir and asked an alto what the word “alleluia” meant. “A word exuding praise and joy,” she answered.

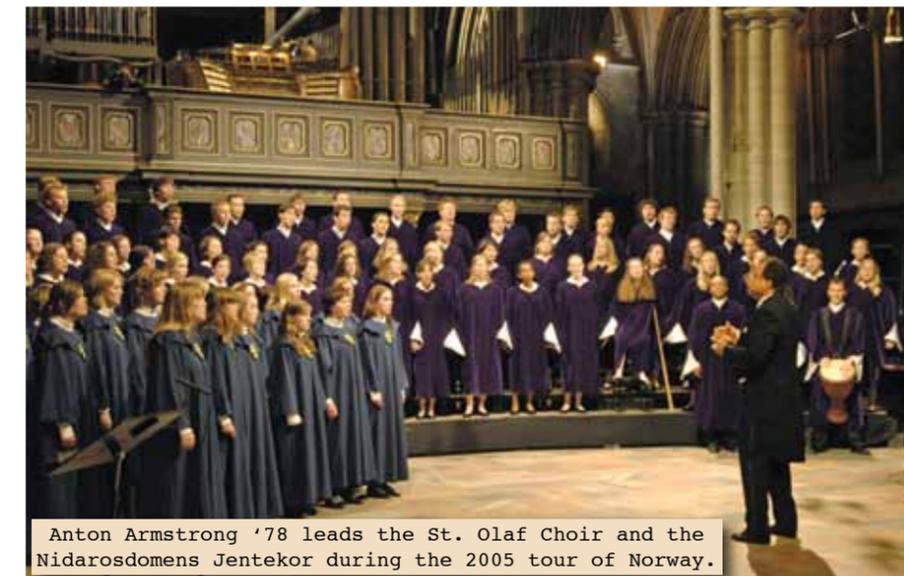
“Well, you could have fooled me by the way you all are singing this,” Armstrong told the students before him. He knew he needed a better connection with these young singers in order to elicit the sound they were capable of, and he took a few moments to give them a pep talk and encourage them to put their full energy into the song of praise he had chosen.

It was a gamble, and it paid off. “The choir took hold of the piece, and it leaped off the page,” Shaw wrote.

Not only did that experience propel Armstrong to the top of the search committee’s list, but it illustrated one of the fundamental principles of his leadership: his belief that it’s not enough for audiences to simply hear and understand the lyrics. They have to feel them. And that means the singers must understand and feel them first.

Although he expects his singers to strive for excellence, “it’s not about being perfect,” Armstrong says. “It’s about eliminating the distractions so that the infinite power can shine through and transform the lives of those who make and hear it.”

Armstrong offers his singers the mantra he learned from mentor Helen Kemp, professor emerita of voice and church music at Westminster Choir College: “Body,



Anton Armstrong ’78 leads the St. Olaf Choir and the Nidarosdomens Jentekor during the 2005 tour of Norway.

“The palate is more colorful and broader now,” Armstrong says. “It retains the characteristic sound it had under the Christiansens, but now it’s not just salt and pepper. There are a lot of spices in it.”

Under Armstrong, the St. Olaf Choir has also begun to move. “I mean, they really move,” says Shaw, describing how members of the ensemble sway back and forth with the music during certain pieces. Sometimes it’s choreographed, and other times it’s simply an expression of what they’re feeling. “If Kenneth freed up the voice, maybe Anton freed up the body,” Shaw notes.

mind, spirit, voice — it takes the whole person to sing and rejoice!”

“When I first began conducting and teaching, I had a take-charge attitude, the notion that the young people in front of me were there to do my bidding,” Armstrong says. “I see myself as a catalyst now, someone who helps bring out the best in them, as musicians and as individuals.”

Armstrong’s vast knowledge of the music he works with and his ability to articulate his vision to singers and audiences alike has enabled him to take the St. Olaf Choir to the next level. “He gets beyond what’s on the page, what the texts are, and elevates it so that you’ve made art,” says Karin Laine McMillen ’94, who sang in the choir for three years under Armstrong.

Like Olaf Christiansen and Jennings, Armstrong is a product not only of the St. Olaf Music Department, but also the choir itself. He sang in the ensemble for two years under Jennings before moving on to graduate school at the University of Illinois and, later, Michigan State University. He returned to Northfield in 1990 to lead the St. Olaf Choir after a decade at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The choir’s repertoire under Armstrong has become increasingly multicultural. He has included music of the Pacific Rim, Africa, and Latin America in the choir’s catalog and added Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and Ireland to its tour annals, while also emphasizing a more historically informed interpretation of musical origins. At the same time, he maintains the cultivation of the choir’s rich traditions, most notably with a 2005 tour to Norway, during which the PBS special *A St. Olaf Christmas in Norway* was filmed.

With its annual national tour and trips abroad every four years, the St. Olaf Choir continues to bring its message of hope and faith to listeners around the world. Armstrong acknowledges that while he is the current link in a chain of strong leaders who have guided the choir and shaped its sound, it is really the students who have carried the ensemble’s legacy from one generation to the next.

“The conductor gives inspiration, but also receives it from the choir. You hear no sound from my hands,” he says, waving them in the air. “It comes from all those wonderful souls who have been part of the choir and who have contributed in some way.”

For many of those students, singing in the St. Olaf Choir served as a transformative experience that will remain with them for a lifetime.

“Singing with a group of musicians at such a high level allowed

us to transcend the music on the page, to reach out to the audiences, to convey a message of faith, and to use our gifts in a joyful, incredibly moving manner,” says former choir member Kunau. “When you sing with a community like that, you understand the power music has to convey things that the spoken word doesn’t.”

Kunau says singing with the St. Olaf Choir changed her in a fundamental way and helped shape the path of her adult life — a sentiment echoed by many former members of the ensemble. And that shared experience gives members of the St. Olaf Choir a unique connection that lasts long after they leave the Hill.

“As a member of the St. Olaf Choir, you become part of a larger community,” McMillen says. “You have a shared experience with everyone who’s been in the choir over the years.”

“If Kenneth freed up the voice, maybe Anton freed up the body.”

— JOSEPH M. SHAW ’49



The choir’s 75th anniversary tour of Asia in 1986 helped expand its global reach.

producing a sound as a choir that perhaps none of us thought was possible.”

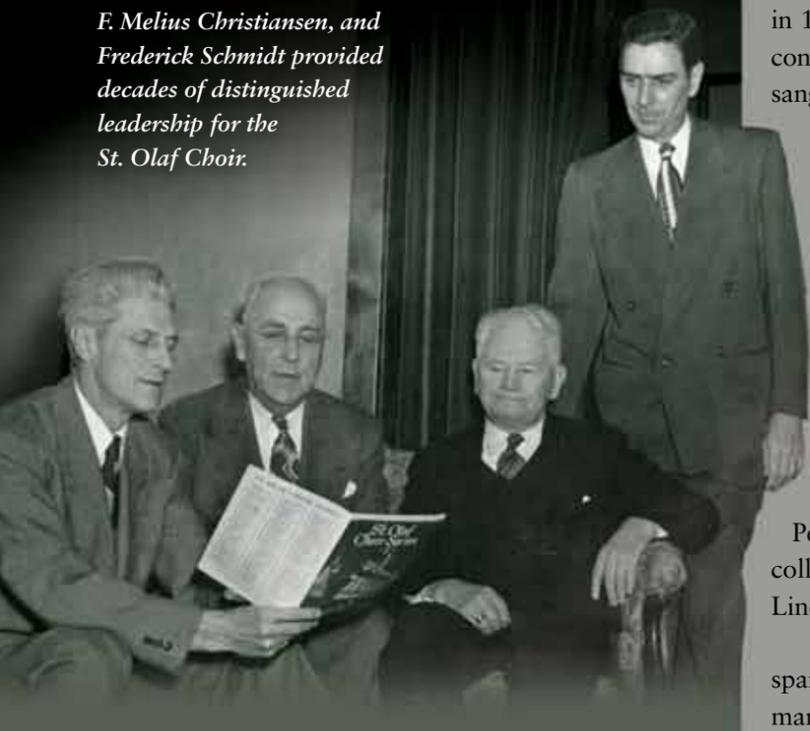
Jennings also expanded the choir’s global reach. The St. Olaf Choir celebrated its 75th anniversary with a tour of Asia in 1986, and in 1988 it was one of only five choirs in the world invited to participate in the Olympic Arts Festival in Seoul, South Korea.

Throughout his tenure, Jennings affirmed his belief that art does not stand still. He exposed the choir to the oral-based musical traditions of Asia and the cultures of Eastern Europe at a time when the Berlin Wall was coming down.

DETAILS

For as long as there has been a St. Olaf Choir, there has been a manager who makes it all come together by taking care of the details.

St. Olaf Choir conductors and managers (from left) Olaf Christiansen, P.G. Schmidt, F. Melius Christiansen, and Frederick Schmidt provided decades of distinguished leadership for the St. Olaf Choir.



DETAILS

When the St. Olaf Choir receives an invitation to perform in one of the country's finest concert halls or entertain audiences halfway around the world, it's up to the conductor to accept. And then it's up to the choir's manager to make it happen.

For more than three decades, that manager has been Bob "B.J." Johnson, who takes care of everything from figuring out how to pay for tours to making travel arrangements for the ensemble to negotiating the contract details for venues. He often has to plan two or three years in advance to book concert sites while simultaneously putting the finishing touches on performances taking place next week.

It's important work that has enabled the conductors of the St. Olaf Choir to focus all of their energy on making great choral art. "With his leadership, I am able to achieve something much bigger, much more significant than I could otherwise," St. Olaf Choir Conductor Anton Armstrong '78 says of Johnson.

This partnership between conductor and manager has been a key component of the St. Olaf Choir's formula for success since the founding of the ensemble. Standing beside St. Olaf Choir founder F. Melius Christiansen for many years was Paul G. Schmidt, a St. Olaf mathematics professor who became the first manager of the choir in 1912. Schmidt planned and executed every tour and concert, traveled with the choir as its manager, and even sang in the bass section.

In 1948, his son, Frederick Schmidt '31, who sang in the St. Olaf Choir while majoring in chemistry and biology, took over the management of music organizations at St. Olaf and worked closely with the St. Olaf Choir's new conductor, Olaf Christiansen '25. This second-generation Christiansen-Schmidt team provided distinguished leadership until Christiansen retired in 1968. Because of Fred Schmidt's efforts, the St. Olaf Choir was the first college choir to appear on the concert stage of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., and the first college choir to perform in Philharmonic Hall in Lincoln Center.

After Fred Schmidt retired in 1972, there was a span of six years when the choir was without a full-time manager. The college's director of information services,

Frederick Gonnerman, managed the choir on top of his other duties for several years, and music faculty member Sigurd Frederickson acted as manager during the choir's tour of Vienna and Rome in 1975.

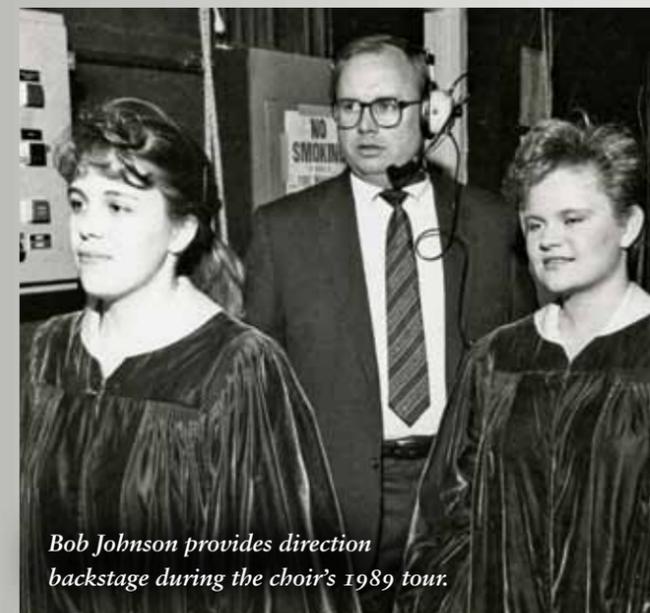
In 1978, at the suggestion of St. Olaf Choir Conductor Kenneth Jennings '50, the Music Department appointed Johnson, who had been on the staff of the University Musical Society at the University of Michigan, as the full-time manager of the Office of Music Organizations.

Johnson has encouraged the leaders of the St. Olaf Choir to think big. He was instrumental in getting St. Olaf into the recording business, contracted for the St. Olaf Choir to perform one of the first choral concerts in Philadelphia's Verizon Hall, and has led the choir on tours to nearly every corner of the world. His work has ensured that the St. Olaf Christmas Festival is aired on Twin Cities Public Television every four years, and he has been the driving force behind simulcasting the event in movie theaters across the country.

"In many ways, this is an entrepreneurial enterprise," says Johnson. "We can only live on our history and tradition for so long before it becomes a dinosaur. Our musical legacy is only as good as the next concert."

And for 100 years the choir's manager has made those concerts happen, seeing to all of the details and sharing the conductor's vision of a final production.

"While we have guided the choir artistically, it's because of Bob's entrepreneurial sense that many of the innovations in the last 34 years have come about," Armstrong says. "He's always pushing us, always asking what we can do not just to advance the St. Olaf Choir, but what great choral music can do in the lives of other human beings." 🐦



Bob Johnson provides direction backstage during the choir's 1989 tour.

THE ST. OLAF CONFERENCE ON WORSHIP, THEOLOGY, AND THE ARTS

Confluence

Gathered in God's Grace

JULY 16-20, 2012

St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN



Confluence

the meeting of two or more streams.

When streams of water join together it calls to mind something almost primordial — the first words of creation, turbulence and chaos becoming orderly and purposeful. Water is the essential element of all life, necessary for bodies and land. Water is the gift of baptism, our strong identity carrying us through this world like the powerful flow of a river that has emerged from many streams.

Confluence

the meeting of two or more streams.

When different streams of thought, associations, or loyalties convene, often, like water, turbulence occurs. And in this time in our history, tempest and division feel like the general way of being. So confluence is a prayer, a longing to be gathered from our separate places, to come together in communion with Christ and with one another, as God's whole, cherished people.

Confluence

the meeting of two or more streams.

When we begin this conference at opening worship we are confluent, a collection of people from all across this church joining together for learning, listening, and nourishment. May it be so.

THE ST. OLAF CHOIR

ANTON ARMSTRONG, CONDUCTOR ~ B.J. JOHNSON, MANAGER

SOPRANO I

Kathryn Baber, Phoenix, Ariz.
nursing/women's studies
Maggie Burk, Lawrence, Kan.
music performance/education
Jane Burton, Coralville, Iowa
psychology/neuroscience
Rachel Dahlen, Northfield, Minn.
economics/biomedical studies
Annie Deering, University Place, Wash.
music performance
Heather Eikenbary, Waupaca, Wis.
music performance
Erin Fox, Brownsburg, Ind.
music education
Joy Gunderson, Phoenix, Ariz.
church music
Sarah Krolak, Rochester, Minn.
Norwegian/English
Marin Werdahl, Chaska, Minn.
music education

SOPRANO II

Kerry Auer, Savannah, Ga.
music performance
Katie Burk, Lawrence, Kan.
music performance/education
Claire Drevets, Taichung, Taiwan
music education
Julida Kochanowski, Junction City, Wis.
music/ESL education
Erin Schmidt, Fargo, N.D.
music education
♦ Anna Shevik, White Bear Lake, Minn.
music performance
Coraine Tate, Columbus, Ga.
music
Margaret von Bibra, Pasadena, Calif.
history/ancient studies
Megan Welle, St. Cloud, Minn.
philosophy

ALTO I

Jessica Ballard, Los Angeles, Calif.
history/American racial and multicultural studies
Cassandra Bogh, Coralville, Iowa
physics/chemistry
Marissa Burkey, Mukilteo, Wash.
music education
Kira Fenstermacher, Dayton, Ohio
art history/studio art
Katharine Jenks, Huntington, N.Y.
nursing/biomedical studies
Laura Kyle, St. Paul, Minn.
English
Kirsten Newlin, Augusta, Ga.
music/women's studies
Kristin Sandness, Export, Pa.
English/biology
Becca Tobin, Greenfield, Minn.
biology/English
Emily Vite, Titusville, N.J.
music theory/composition

ALTO II

Amanda Balgaard, St. Louis Park, Minn.
English education
Maren Beckman, Excelsior, Minn.
history
Alice Berry, Atlanta, Ga.
music performance
Kelsey Fahy, Gig Harbor, Wash.
physics/mathematics
Rosa Haxton, Portland, Ore.
undecided major

Allison Hennessy, Park Ridge, Ill.
music education
Siri Jorstad, Golden Valley, Minn.
psychology/women's studies
Kate Nesbit, Northfield, Minn.
English/women's studies
♦ Eliza Snortland, Fargo, N.D.
music education

TENOR I

Riley Bruce, Wichita, Kan.
political science
Phinehas Bynum, Salt Lake City, Utah
music/computer science
Gus Connelly, New Brighton, Minn.
theater/Norwegian
♦ Nathan Dougherty, Lakewood, Colo.
music performance
William Goforth, Vancouver, Wash.
music performance
Devin Hair, Prosper, Texas
music performance
James Ribe, Chicago, Ill.
computer science
Bryan Wells, Cambridge, Minn.
political science

TENOR II

Ben Dulak, Red Wing, Minn.
music education
Sam Engelsgerd, Sartell, Minn.
chemistry/mathematics
Aaron Holmgren, Willmar, Minn.
religion
Michael Jeffrey, Larwill, Ind.
music
Robert Kelly, Mendota Heights, Minn.
music theory and composition/management studies
James Marshall, Plymouth, Minn.
music education
Paul Mori, Bergen, Norway
political science/economics
Karl Robson, Baxter, Minn.
music performance/church music

BASS I

David Anderson, Charlotte, N.C.
music performance/church music
Benjamin Andreae, Marshfield, Wis.
music performance/English
Brett Eisenbeis, Freeman, S.D.
music
Zebulon Frantzich, Stillwater, Minn.
biology
Paul Henderson, Chicago, Ill.
physics/music
Jeremy Krahn, Brandon, Manitoba
music performance
James Leavell, St. Cloud, Minn.
English
Shawn Miller, Massillon, Ohio
music education
Zachary Rygiel, Largo, Fla.
music performance/church music

BASS II

Jordan Boucher, Overland Park, Kan.
music performance
♦ Andrew Bourgoin, Conway, Ark.
music performance
Mark Donlin, Andover, Minn.
psychology/neuroscience
Rudyard Dyer, Mount Pleasant, Iowa
mathematics/economics
Will Esch, Stillwater, Minn.
music

Jon Erik Haines, Golden Valley, Minn.
English
Chris Mode, Edina, Minn.
music/biology
Mitchell Rennie, Spring Lake, Mich.
history/media studies
Benjamin Simmons, Sheboygan, Wis.
mathematics
Chris Southard, Erie, Pa.
mathematics/music
Karl Turnlund, Owatonna, Minn.
sociology/anthropology/social studies education

PIANO

Andrew Bourgoin, Conway, Ark.
music performance

VIOLIN

Greta Bauer, Minneapolis, Minn.
music/chemistry
Madeline Brumback, Blacksburg, Va.
music performance/mathematics
Rebecca Hanson, Minnetonka, Minn.
economics/psychology
Lindsie Katz, Boulder, Colo.
music/psychology
Catherine Monson, Austin, Minn.
religion/ancient studies
Emily Mullaney, Gilbert, Iowa
music performance

VIOLA

Abigail Enockson, Fargo, N.D.
music/management studies
Charles Gray
St. Olaf music faculty

CELLO

Sara Cattanach, Lake Elmo, Minn.
English/management studies

BASS

Daniel Meyers, Waverly, Iowa
music performance

OBOE/ENGLISH HORN

Rosanna Egge, Lincoln, Neb.
music performance
Hannah Femling, Vancouver, Wash.
music performance
Katherine Heilman, Lutherville-Timonium, Md.
music theory/composition

BASSOON

Conor Mackey, St. Charles, Ill.
music theory/composition

PERCUSSION

Katie Burk, Lawrence, Kan.
music performance/education
Maggie Burk, Lawrence, Kan.
music performance/education

♦ Denotes section leader

OFFICE OF MUSIC ORGANIZATIONS

B.J. Johnson, *manager*
Terra Widdifield, *assistant manager*
Kevin Stocks, *marketing specialist*
Mary Davis, *performance librarian/mechanical rights administrator*
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THE ST. OLAF CHOIR · CENTENNIAL TOUR · 2012

ANTON ARMSTRONG, CONDUCTOR · B.J. JOHNSON, MANAGER

Program

~ I ~

Sicut cervus Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525–94)
Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied (BWV 225) Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

~ II ~

For God Commanded Angels to Watch Over You Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809–47)
Selig sind die reines Herzens sind (Blessed Are the Pure of Heart) Woldemar Voullaire (1825–1902)
Our Father Alexander Gretchaninoff (1864–1956)
On Horizon's Brim (*premier performance*) Ralph M. Johnson '78 (b. 1955)
Psalm 50 (Movements II and III) F. Melius Christiansen (1871–1955)

Intermission

~ III ~

Light Everlasting Olaf C. Christiansen '25 (1901–84)
Ave Rosa (*premier performance*) René Clausen '74 (b. 1953)
A Hymn of the Nativity Kenneth Leighton (1929–88)
Before I Go My Way Peter Hamlin (b. 1951)
Antiphon (Spiritual Songs) Kenneth Jennings '50 (b. 1925)

~ IV ~

A TAPESTRY OF FOLK AND SPIRITUAL SONGS

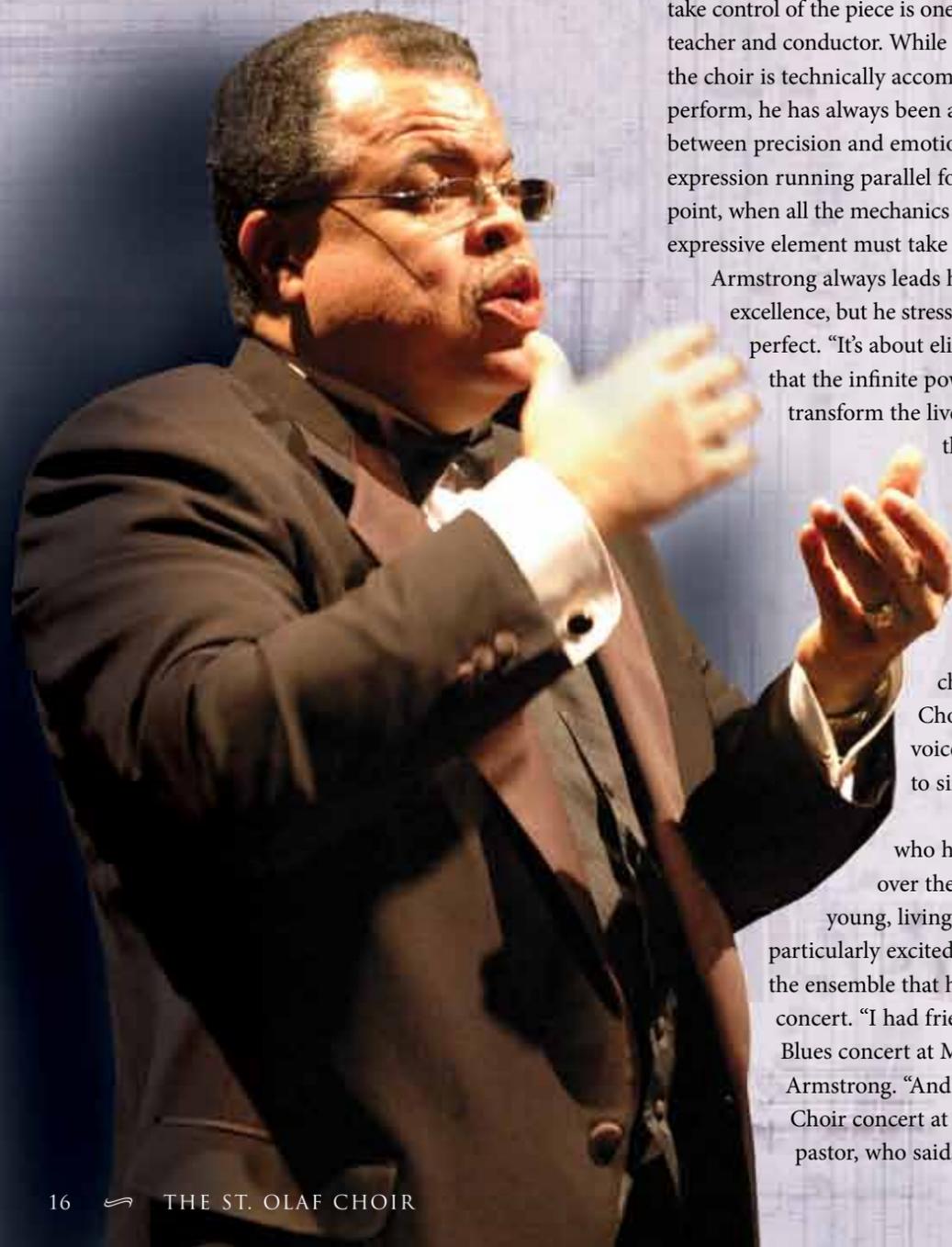
Norge, mitt Norge Alfred Paulsen (1849–1936)
arr. Kenneth Jennings '50
Shenandoah arr. James Erb
The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want arr. John Ferguson
It Is Well with My Soul Philip P. Bliss (1838–76)
arr. Yu-Shan Tsai
My Soul's Been Anchored in the Lord arr. Moses G. Hogan Jr.

~ OPTIONAL SELECTIONS ~

Beautiful Savior arr. F. Melius Christiansen

creating *whole* musicians

An unconventional teacher and mentor, Anton Armstrong '78 produces passionate singers and extraordinary music



Nearly 15 years ago, Anton Armstrong '78 was conducting the St. Olaf Choir as they sang one of his favorite Bach motets, *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied*, when suddenly he lowered his hands.

As his students looked at him in confusion, wondering what would prompt him to stop conducting in the middle of a concert, he simply said "Sing."

And they did, singing with a passion that carried the piece to a new level. "They didn't need me at that point," Armstrong says. "And it was exciting."

That ability to recognize when to allow the ensemble to take control of the piece is one of Armstrong's strengths as a teacher and conductor. While he meticulously ensures that the choir is technically accomplished on each piece they perform, he has always been aware of the important balance between precision and emotion. "It's always technique and expression running parallel for me," he says. "At a certain point, when all the mechanics are basically in place, then that expressive element must take the lead."

Armstrong always leads his singers to strive for excellence, but he stresses that it's not about being perfect. "It's about eliminating the distractions so that the infinite power can shine through and transform the lives of those who make and hear the music," he says.

Now in his 22nd year of conducting the St. Olaf Choir, Armstrong offers his singers the mantra he learned from his mentor Helen Kemp, professor emerita of voice and church music at Westminster Choir College: "Body, mind, spirit, voice — it takes the whole person to sing and rejoice."

And Kemp isn't the only person who has influenced Armstrong over the years. He remembers being young, living in New York, and not being particularly excited about the prospect of seeing the ensemble that he would one day conduct in concert. "I had friends going off to a Moody Blues concert at Madison Square Garden," recalls Armstrong. "And I was dragged off to a St. Olaf Choir concert at Lincoln Center by my assistant pastor, who said, 'You'll love this choir.'"

That concert, combined with a visit to the St. Olaf College campus, had a profound effect on Armstrong. He eventually enrolled at St. Olaf, which had a campus community warm enough to outweigh his distaste for Minnesota winters. A member of the St. Olaf Choir as a student, Armstrong knows both the commitment it takes to sing in the choir and the investment it takes to lead those singers as a conductor.

He's learned a lot since taking the reins of the ensemble in 1990. "When I first began conducting and teaching, I had a take-charge attitude, the notion that the young people in front of me were there to do my bidding," he says. "I see myself as a catalyst now, someone who helps bring out the best in them, as musicians and as individuals."

Armstrong strives to create whole musicians, not just musical moments. "People ask me if I wouldn't rather work with 'professional' musicians." He shakes his head. "I'd rather turn out 10,000 amateurs who love their art at the highest level, both as performers and as active, engaged listeners, than turn out 10,000 professionals."

Achieving that goal won't be hard. Armstrong's work as a teacher, a teacher of teachers, a conductor, and a music editor influences thousands of singers every year.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

A graduate of the American Boychoir School, St. Olaf College, the University of Illinois, and Michigan State University, Armstrong returned to Northfield in 1990 after a decade at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He teaches vocal pedagogy for the young singer and conducting classes at St. Olaf. He mentors students at Luther Seminary who are studying in the Master of Sacred Music conducting program. He conducts the St. Olaf Choir and the Collegiate Choral (a non-auditioned women's ensemble composed of students, faculty, and staff), and is in his 21st year as conductor of the Troubadours, the boys' ensemble of the Northfield Youth Choirs. He serves as artistic director of the St. Olaf Christmas Festival, an event that involves year-round planning. In addition, Armstrong serves each summer as music director of the Stangeland Family Youth Choral Academy (SFYCA) of the Oregon Bach Festival.

Armstrong's gifts as a teacher and mentor have been recognized by Baylor University in Waco, Texas, which awarded him the 2006 Robert Frost Cherry Award for Great Teaching. It is the single largest monetary award given in the United States to an individual for teaching, and Armstrong was selected from a field of 118 distinguished nominees.

"I've always seen the St. Olaf Choir as a microcosm of the St. Olaf community, part of the mission of the college: it's a rigorous academic institution; grounded in a community of faith; with a global perspective. I want those three aspects to be reflected in the work and the singing of the choir."

— Anton Armstrong

For Armstrong, a choir rehearsal can be a learning experience that transcends musical theory or academics. "I can sit in a church, but the times I have been closest to my Creator is when I've sung and I've conducted that choir," he says. "I know for a fact that the St. Olaf Choir has revealed to me God in all of God's infinite wisdom, beauty, love, and compassion."

Armstrong connects with his students on multiple levels. While he knows that he has the technique and the training required to

instruct them properly, he also understands the power that an amateur ensemble like the St. Olaf Choir can instill upon himself and others. "They give back to me; they energize me, they energize an audience," he says.

CHORAL CONNECTIONS

Committed to sharing the experience that comes from making truly beautiful choral art, Armstrong has traversed the globe with engagements in locations such as New Zealand to Israel, and from South America to Scandinavia. Along with St. Olaf Artist in Residence Sigrid Johnson, Armstrong lectured at two consecutive World Symposiums on Choral Music.

Armstrong's experience with international music has greatly influenced the St. Olaf Choir. "We are constantly examining repertoire from a global perspective, but the core of our being is still a proclamation of the Christian Gospel — a message of faith, of love, of truth."

He also has made ongoing collaborations with other ensembles a priority. The choir has repeatedly partnered with ensembles that include VocalEssence, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and the American Boychoir. And the opportunities keep coming.

As editor of the Anton Armstrong Multicultural Series of Earthsong Publications and co-editor (with faculty colleague John Ferguson) of the St. Olaf Choral Series, Armstrong also provides choirs with exciting new music to sing.

For Armstrong, these collaborations and connections are a way to ensure that the music he helps create — with its powerful message of faith and hope — has ripple effects that reach beyond the boundaries of St. Olaf College and its choir.

"When I was younger, I used to be embarrassed sometimes to say I was a musician," recalls Armstrong. "I know I can't change the world, but I know I can bring beauty to the world through these young people. And the older I get and the longer I'm in this business, I realize what an incredible opportunity and a blessing that I have." 🐦

THE CELEBRATION OF A CENTURY

Alumni and friends of the St. Olaf Choir gathered last summer to celebrate the ensemble's 100th anniversary

As Karin Laine McMillen '94 took her place among the more than 700 St. Olaf Choir alumni who had gathered to sing as part of the ensemble's centennial reunion last summer, she felt like she had been transported back in time.

Standing there with other members of the St. Olaf Choir, eagerly awaiting the instruction of St. Olaf Choir Conductor Anton Armstrong '78, felt just as natural, just as familiar, as it had nearly two decades before.

And then, on cue, members of the massed ensemble began to sing.

"I was immediately pulled into the present as I heard the sound all around me of hundreds of voices

singing the same vowel, with the same warm tone," McMillen says. "It was miraculous."

Alumni and friends of the St. Olaf Choir gathered on campus last June to kick off a two-year celebration of the internationally renowned ensemble's 100th anniversary. The weekend's events included smaller reunions of choir members grouped by decade, a centennial gala banquet, and, of course, a centennial reunion concert featuring hundreds of alumni singing together.

The centennial celebration will culminate with the choir's June 2013 tour of Norway.

Yet for many St. Olaf Choir alumni who attended last summer's reunion, that event itself was a culmination

of everything that made singing in the ensemble such a special experience. "I stood next to some women that I had sung with in the choir and others from different generations, and at the concert we were able to drop our music as we spontaneously joined hands to sing together," McMillen says. "I felt pure joy and gratitude as I sang that concert, and I was happy that we could all share it together with each other and with an audience."

David Jorstad '77 says singing great choral works at the reunion alongside his wife, Dede Hokanson Jorstad '78, and daughter, Siri Jorstad '13 — and under the direction of Armstrong, who he stood beside during his senior year in the choir — was an unforgettable experience.

"It was thrilling, in both rehearsal and performance, to join forces with generations of singers who share the compassion and commitment that have helped maintain the St. Olaf Choir tradition," Jorstad says.

Jorstad notes how wonderful it was to also have former St. Olaf Choir Conductor Kenneth Jennings '50 lead the massed ensemble. "To once again sing *Beautiful Savior* under his direction, and to follow one more time

what are quite possibly the most elegant hands in the business, was an experience I'll treasure for years to come," he says.

As alumni and friends of the St. Olaf Choir celebrated the ensemble's first 100 years, they also began making plans to support the next 100 years by establishing the St. Olaf Choir 100th Anniversary Fund. They aim to raise \$1 million for the fund, which will allow the choir to accept prestigious invitations to perform across the country and abroad, continue its recording projects, and pursue special tours. (Visit stolaf.edu/giving to make your gift.)

Doug Greene '88, one of the choir alumni helping to get the word out about the fund, says many of its members over the years found their experience with the ensemble to be both musically and spiritually rewarding. "We made lifelong friends, toured all over the country and beyond, and experienced the height of choral singing with conductors who were able to draw out the best from each of us — culminating in extraordinary music," he says. "What a gift we received!" 🐦



From one generation *to the next*

For some members of the St. Olaf Choir, singing in the ensemble is a family tradition.



When it came time for **Rachel Dahlen '13** to choose a college, she made a point of leaving St. Olaf off the list.

Both of her parents are alumni, and her mom sang in the St. Olaf Choir under Conductor Kenneth Jennings '50. Everyone assumed that Dahlen, herself a talented vocalist, would follow the same path. But she was determined to find her own way.

"I visited many schools around the country, trying to find a St. Olaf in another state. Trust me, it can't be found," Dahlen says. "None could match the level of choral music offered at St. Olaf. This ensemble operates like a professional music group but does not require its members to be music majors."

So three decades after her mom, St. Olaf Professor of Social Work and Family Studies Mary Carlsen '79, sang her last song with the St. Olaf Choir, Dahlen sang her first.

And she's far from the only member of the century-old St. Olaf Choir to carry on a family tradition of singing with the ensemble. This year nine members of the choir are continuing a legacy begun by a family member.



Cassie Bogh '12

Family Members in the Choir: Her mom, Lisa Curry Bogh '85, and aunt, Sara Curry Stevenson '97

Interesting Tidbit: Her mom and aunt both majored in chemistry and pursued careers in science, and she's doing the same — proof that you don't need to major in music to sing in the St. Olaf Choir.



Kira Fenstermacher '12

Family Member in the Choir: Her sister, Elyse Fenstermacher '09

Interesting Tidbit: This is the final of six consecutive years that one of the Fenstermacher sisters has been a member of the St. Olaf Choir.



For **Laura Kyle '13**, a second-year member of the choir, that legacy began nearly 90 years ago when her great-grandmother, Laura Stumley Mikkelson, joined the ensemble that was then led by legendary founder and conductor F. Melius Christiansen. Mikkelson sang in the St. Olaf Choir for three years before graduating in 1924, and Kyle is now following in her footsteps.

"I've wanted to sing at St. Olaf for as long as I can remember," Kyle says. "I come from a long line of Oles and have been surrounded by CDs and recordings of all the St. Olaf ensembles. St. Olaf and music have always been a huge part of



my life, and I feel so lucky to be able to experience it myself as a member of the choir."

Others followed the lead of family members who have more recently been a part of the choir. **Kerry Auer '13**, a first-year member of the St. Olaf Choir, remembers watching her sister, Ellen Auer Salatino '04, perform with the ensemble at a concert in Savannah, Georgia, less than a decade ago. "I was amazed at the musicianship and so jealous of my sister for being a part of it all," she says. "It was then that I knew I wanted to be a part of the St. Olaf Choir."

Marin Werdahl '12

Family Members in the Choir: Her dad, Scott Werdahl '82; mom, Kari Peterson Werdahl '82; and aunt, Kristi Peterson Gerry '84

Interesting Tidbit: Her favorite piece in this program — Bach's *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied* — is one that her dad also sang during his first year in the St. Olaf Choir.



Sam Engelsgjerd '13

Family Members in the Choir: His dad, Mark Engelsgjerd '87; uncle, Michael Engelsgjerd '93; and cousin, Joshua Engelsgjerd '10

Interesting Tidbit: During his dad's first year in the St. Olaf Choir, the ensemble's national tour included a stop at Calvin College, where a young alumnus named Anton Armstrong '78 was a faculty member. "Little did I know that 26 years later, my son would be singing in his choir," Mark Engelsgjerd says.

Kristin Sandness '12

a third-year member of the St. Olaf Choir, learned that lesson firsthand from her brother, David Sandness '10. They sang in the choir together for a year before he graduated, and she says she could feel his absence — and how much he missed singing in the ensemble — when he attended a concert in Denver last year. "I remember watching him when the audience was invited to sing the final verse of Ode to Joy with us and being absolutely overwhelmed with a sense of missing David," she says. "I real-



Siri Jorstad '12

Family Members in the Choir: Her dad, David Jorstad '77; mom, Dede Hokanson Jorstad '78; aunts, Mona Hokanson Grote '73 and Cindy Hokanson Chapman '76; and great-uncle, Curtis Jorstad '47

Interesting Tidbit: Her great-uncle served as valet to St. Olaf Choir founder F. Melius Christiansen.



ized that time is passing and I don't have an infinite amount of time to sing in this incredible ensemble with my friends."

What she will always have, though, is a unique bond with not only her brother, but all those who have sung in the St. Olaf Choir — a musical family as strong and steeped in tradition as any other — during its 100-year history. 🍷

ST. OLAF COLLEGE MUSIC DEPARTMENT FACULTY

Steven Amundson, professor, orchestra, conducting, theory; B.A., Luther College; M.M., Northwestern University

Kathryn Ananda-Owens, associate professor, piano, piano literature, chamber music; B.A., Oberlin College; B.M., Oberlin Conservatory; M.M., D.M.A., Peabody Institute

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Christopher Aspaas, (sem I) associate professor, choir, choral literature, conducting, voice; B.M., St. Olaf College; M.M., Michigan State University; Ph.D., Florida State University

Christopher Atzinger, (sem I) associate professor, piano, piano literature; B.M., University of Texas-Austin; M.M., University of Michigan; D.M.A., Peabody Institute

Linda Berger, (sem II) professor, music education; B.A., St. Olaf College; M.A., Ph.D., University of Minnesota

Kirsten Broberg, visiting assistant professor, theory; B.A., Concordia College; M.A., University of Minnesota; D.M.A., Northwestern University

David Carter, professor, cello, string methods, string literature and pedagogy, music appreciation, chamber music; B.F.A., University of Minnesota; M.M., Indiana University; D.M.A., University of Illinois

David Castro, assistant professor, theory, counterpoint, advanced analysis; B.M.E., Pacific Union College; M.M., University of Arizona; Ph.D., University of Oregon

Laura Caviani, instructor*, jazz piano; B.M., Lawrence University; M.M., University of Michigan

Beth Christensen, professor, music librarian; B.M., M.S., University of Illinois; M.A., University of Minnesota

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David Hagedorn, artist-in-residence, jazz band, percussion, percussion methods, world music, aural skills; B.S., University of Minnesota; M.M., New England Conservatory; D.M.A., Eastman School of Music

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Dennis Johnson, piano technician; B.A., Luther College

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Mary Martz, instructor*, voice; B.S., Minnesota State University-Moorhead

Harriet McCleary, instructor*, voice; B.M., B.M.E., Texas Christian University; M.M., Westminster Choir College; D.M.A., University of Minnesota

James McKeel, professor, voice, lyric theater; B.M.E., Westminster College; M.M., University of Minnesota

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Elinor Niemisto, instructor*, harp; B.M., M.M., University of Michigan

Paul Niemisto, associate professor, band, low brass, brass methods, chamber music; B.M., M.M., University of Michigan; Ph.D., University of Minnesota

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Nancy Paddleford, professor, piano; B.M., M.M., Indiana University; D.M.A., University of Minnesota

Michael Petruconis, instructor*, french horn; B.S., University of Nebraska-Lincoln; M.M., University of Minnesota

Jun Qian, assistant professor, clarinet, chamber music; B.M., Baylor University; B.M., Shanghai Conservatory; M.M., D.M.A., Eastman School of Music

Catherine Ramirez, assistant professor, flute and theory; B.A., Occidental College; M.A., Queens College; M.M. Yale, D.M.A. (ABD), Rice University

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Ray Shows, instructor*, violin, viola, chamber music; B.M., Florida State University; M.M., Boston University

Robert C. Smith, associate professor, voice, vocal literature; B.M., St. Olaf College; M.M., Yale University; D.M.A., University of Texas-Austin

Darrin Thomas, gospel choir*

Paul Westermeyer, visiting professor*, church music; B.A., Elmhurst College; B.D., Lancaster Theological Seminary; S.M.M., Union Theological Seminary; Ph.D., University of Chicago

Karen Wilkerson, instructor*, voice; B.A., California State Northridge; M.M. Westminster Choir College

Herbert Winslow, instructor*, french horn; B.M., Curtis Institute of Music

Larry Zimmerman, instructor*, low brass; B.A., St. Olaf College; M.M., Boston University

* part-time

PRINCIPAL INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLES AND CONDUCTORS

St. Olaf Band, *Timothy Mahr* '78
St. Olaf Orchestra, *Steven Amundson*
Norseman Band, *Paul Niemisto*
St. Olaf Philharmonia, *Martin Hodel*
Collegium Musicum, *Gerald Hoekstra*
Jazz Ensembles, *David Hagedorn*

PRINCIPAL CHORAL ENSEMBLES AND CONDUCTORS

St. Olaf Choir, *Anton Armstrong* '78
Chapel Choir, *Christopher Aspaas* '95
St. Olaf Cantorei, *John Ferguson*
Manitou Singers, *Sigrid Johnson*
Viking Chorus, *Christopher Aspaas* '95
Early Music Singers, *Gerald Hoekstra*
Collegiate Chorale, *Anton Armstrong* '78
Gospel Choir, *Darrin Thomas*

OTHER MUSIC ENSEMBLES AND CONDUCTORS

Clarinet Choir, *Jun Qian*
Handbell Ensembles, *Jill Mahr*
Pep Band, *Student-Directed*
Percussion Ensembles, *David Hagedorn*
St. Olaf Brass, *Martin Hodel*
Trombone Choir, *Paul Niemisto*
Tuba-Euphonium Ensemble, *Paul Niemisto*

About ST. OLAF COLLEGE

One of the nation's leading four-year residential colleges, St. Olaf offers an academically rigorous education with a vibrant faith tradition. Founded in 1874, St. Olaf is a liberal arts college of the church in the Lutheran tradition (ELCA). Committed to the liberal arts and incorporating a global perspective, St. Olaf fosters the development of the whole person in mind, body, and spirit.

Academic excellence informs St. Olaf College's identity and characterizes its history. Through its curriculum, campus life, and off-campus programs, St. Olaf hones students' critical thinking and nurtures their moral formation. The college encourages and challenges its students to be seekers of truth, to lead lives of unselfish service to others, and to be responsible and knowledgeable citizens of the world.

Widely known for its world-class programs in mathematics and music, St. Olaf is also recognized for its innovative approaches to undergraduate science education and its commitment to environmental sustainability as evidenced in such initiatives as the adoption of green chemistry principles across the science curriculum.

For nearly half a century, St. Olaf has been at the forefront of global education and a pioneer in study abroad. Today, with 110 distinct off-campus programs in 46 countries, St. Olaf students enjoy a world of opportunities when pursuing their studies.

St. Olaf is an inclusive community that welcomes people of differing backgrounds and beliefs, a community that embraces spirituality and cultivates compassion. Conversations about faith are part of campus life, and numerous opportunities are provided for students to grow in their faith and discover how they are called upon to serve others.

St. Olaf takes pride in its record of academic excellence. A leader among undergraduate colleges in producing prestigious Rhodes Scholars, Fulbright Fellows, and Peace Corps volunteers, St. Olaf ranks ninth overall among the nation's baccalaureate colleges in the number of graduates who go on to earn doctoral degrees, with top 10 rankings in the fields of mathematics and statistics, religion and theology, arts and music, medical sciences, education, social service professions, chemistry, physical sciences, life sciences, engineering, and foreign languages.



SUMMER MUSIC CAMPS AVAILABLE AT ST. OLAF

Young musicians who want to hone their performance skills under the guidance of some of the best music faculty in the nation don't have to wait until the first day of college. The St. Olaf Summer Music Camp provides students who have completed grades 9-12 with conservatory-style musical training.

The camp, which will be held June 17-23, 2012, is a performance-based experience that challenges participants to expand and improve their musical abilities. Everyone participates in at least one of the three large ensembles — band, choir, or

orchestra — and takes elective classes each day.

Serious young pianists also may enroll in St. Olaf College's Summer Piano Academy, a camp-within-a-camp that offers piano students an opportunity to work with the college's renowned piano faculty.

More information about the Summer Music Camp and Piano Academy is available by calling 800-726-6523 or visiting stolaf.edu/camps.

Composed for the Choir

Three pieces have been composed specifically for the centennial of the St. Olaf Choir, including two by alumni who have gone on to develop successful careers as composers

Several years ago, St. Olaf Professor Emeritus of Art Mac Gimse '58 gave composer Ralph Johnson '78 a poem he had written. The poem — written by Gimse to accompany a sculpture he had created for the Nobel Peace Prize Forum — had special meaning, and he hoped the two could collaborate on a musical setting.

"I wasn't able to work on it immediately, so I set it on my music stand to simmer," Johnson says.

It remained there until Johnson got a call this year from St. Olaf Choir Conductor Anton Armstrong '78, who asked him to write a piece for the ensemble that reflected a heart for justice and the human condition. Johnson instantly thought of Gimse's poem, titled *Striving for Peace on Horizon's Brim*. As students at St. Olaf, Johnson and Armstrong had put together a choir to sing at the opening of a major exhibit of Gimse's bronze pieces. Working with Gimse's poem gave Johnson the chance to bring the three together for yet another collaboration.

Johnson's piece, *On Horizon's Brim*, is one of three compositions crafted specifically for the St. Olaf Choir's

centennial. Armstrong also asked René Clausen '74, an associate professor of music at Concordia College and conductor of the Concordia Choir, and André Thomas, director of choral activities and professor of choral music education at Florida State University, to compose pieces for the centennial year.

Clausen's *Ave rosa* aims to display the musical abilities of the St. Olaf Choir while engaging both the singers and audience members alike. The commission by Thomas is a new arrangement of the West Indian carol *The Virgin Mary Had A Baby Boy* and was premiered at the 2011 St. Olaf Christmas Festival.

Both Johnson and Clausen sang in the St. Olaf Choir under Conductor Kenneth Jennings '50, and both have had other pieces they've composed performed by the ensemble. "There's that connection with St. Olaf — it's like you're working with your family," says Johnson, whose wife, Laurie Richardson Johnson '78, and son, Matthew Johnson '05, also sang in the ensemble.

Being able to reach out to alumni who have a deep understanding of the St. Olaf Choir is one of the gifts of the college, Armstrong says. Often these composers will not only write the requested piece, but can draw upon their own experiences with the ensemble to tailor a piece specifically to the unique style of the choir. "All of my sense of musicality, phrasing, the things you look for, arise out of having been in those St. Olaf Choir rehearsals where you think about the smallest of details," Johnson says.

Clausen says he, too, learned a lot about choral sound from being in the St. Olaf Choir. Now he's looking forward to hearing the ensemble perform his work — at a concert just a few blocks from his house, no less. "I am very much looking forward to hearing it 'outside my head,'" he says. 🍷



Charles Gray

Charles Gray is a professor of music at St. Olaf College, where he has taught violin, viola, and chamber music since 1986.

He is a substitute performer with the Minnesota Orchestra and director of the St. Olaf Summer Music Camp. In 2008 the American String Teachers Association named him the Minnesota Master String Teacher of the Year.

Gray attended Wheaton College, the University of Michigan, and the Eastman School of Music. He was violist of the Casella String Quartet that won the Cleveland Quartet Competition and earned the top prize at the Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition.

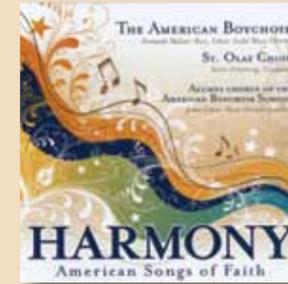
He has performed as a soloist with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, as a recitalist at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago, and as a chamber musician at the Aspen, Steamboat

Springs, and Breckenridge music festivals in Colorado.

Gray has delivered solo performances at the national conventions of the American Choral Directors Association and the American Guild of Organists. He also has appeared on NBC's *Today* show, National Public Radio's *Performance Today* program, and on PBS as a soloist. In December 2007, a recording in which he played the violin and viola parts earned a Grammy nomination in the Rhythm and Blues category. He recently performed a viola solo as part of the 2011 St. Olaf Christmas Festival that was simulcast live to nearly 300 movie theaters nationwide.

This is the 14th time Gray has toured with the St. Olaf Choir, with which he has performed more than 275 concerts as a violin/viola soloist.

SIX RELEASES FROM ST. OLAF RECORDS



HARMONY: AMERICAN SONGS OF FAITH

The American Boychoir School (ABS) of Princeton, New Jersey, and the St. Olaf Choir have shared the common goal of pursuing choral excellence. The conductor emeritus of the American Boychoir, James Litton, has been a close colleague of ABS alumnus and current St. Olaf Choir Conductor Anton Armstrong throughout the span of his career. The two have collaborated with the current conductor, Fernando Malvar-Ruiz, in this recording project that includes singers from the ABS alumni choir, the American Boychoir, and the St. Olaf Choir. *Harmony: American Songs of Faith* features choral arrangements of well-known hymns and spiritual songs like *This Little Light of Mine*, *Amazing Grace*, and *America the Beautiful*.



REPERTOIRE FOR MIXED VOICES VOLUMES I AND II

A series of recordings from live concerts of St. Olaf's distinct repertoire is now available.

Volume 1:

Missa Brevis in B-flat Major, Mozart; *Schaffe in mir, Gott*, Brahms; *Mass for Double Choir*, Martin; *A Boy and a Girl*, Whitacre; *O My Love's Like a Red, Red Rose*, Clausen

Volume 2:

Jubilate Deo, Lassus; *Elohim Hashivenu*, Rossi; *Singet dem Herrn*, Bach; *Light's Glittering Morn*, Parker; *Conversion of Saul*, Stroepe; *Arroz con Leche*, Guastavino



NEW

CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL 2011: REJOICE, GIVE THANKS, AND SING

The 100th St. Olaf Christmas Festival: Rejoice, Give Thanks, and Sing. The centennial celebration of the St. Olaf Christmas Festival seen on PBS stations and movie theaters across the country is available in a 2-CD set, and on DVD and Blu-Ray. The recording features the St. Olaf Choir, St. Olaf Orchestra, Chapel Choir, Cantorei, Manitou Singers, Viking Chorus and the St. Olaf Handbell Choir. Recorded on the St. Olaf campus in December 2011.



NEW

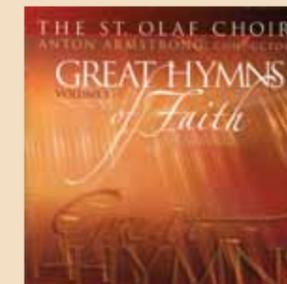
GREAT HYMNS OF FAITH: VOLUME III

The most recent volume in the popular series, released November 2011. Features John Ferguson, organ. Includes: *O Praise Ye the Lord*, *Gather Us In*, *Oh, Sing to the Lord*, *Guide Me Ever*, *Great Redeemer*, *Built on the Rock*, *Thee We Adore*, *The Lord's My Shepherd*, *I'll Not Want, Come, Ye Disconsolate*, *Jesus Christ is Risen Today* and *Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee*.



MY SOUL'S BEEN ANCHORED IN THE LORD

This CD features a sweeping array of hymns, sacred songs, and spirituals sung with the passion and musicality for which the St. Olaf Choir is known. Songs include: Bach's *Der Geist hilft unsrer Schwachheit auf*, Gretchaninof's *Our Father*, Forsberg's *Fairest Lord Jesus*, Penderecki's *Stabat Mater*, Whitacre's *Water Night* and Hogan's *My Soul's Been Anchored in the Lord*.



GREAT HYMNS OF FAITH: VOLUMES I AND II

The repertoire for which the St. Olaf Choir is best known. **Volume 1** includes: *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*, *Praise To The Lord*, *Rise Up*, *O Men Of God*, *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*, *O Day Full Of Grace*, *Beautiful Savior*, *Blessed Assurance*, *What A Friend We Have In Jesus* and *Here I Am Lord*. **Volume 2** includes: *All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name*, *How Can I Keep from Singing*, *My Faith Looks Up to Thee*, *The Church's One Foundation*, *Amazing Grace* and *This Little Light of Mine*.

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HEAR THE MUSIC OF ST. OLAF ONLINE

Do you want to hear more St. Olaf music? With just a few clicks of the mouse, you can access live and archived audio and video of a variety of campus events.

It's as simple as visiting stolaf.edu/multimedia, where you'll find live broadcasts of concerts and recitals, daily chapel services, athletic events, academic presentations, and *Sing For Joy*, a weekly radio program of sacred music. This instant portal to life at St. Olaf College allows anyone, anywhere, to see and hear what's happening on campus.

Web viewers can connect to the live stream of an event 10 minutes before it begins. Any common variety of high-speed connection (DSL, cable, WiFi, or satellite) should be sufficient to view the streams. The broadcast features a high-quality audio and video presentation that uses two or three cameras to capture the action. Athletic broadcasts have a real-time updating score display and some games also have play-by-play commentary.

A list of upcoming events that will be streamed — including the home concerts that will conclude the national tours of the St. Olaf Choir and St. Olaf Band — is available on the multimedia site.

Streamed events are available "on demand" online instantly after an event has concluded. These events will be archived on the site and available for viewing indefinitely. Some of the music events currently available for on-demand viewing include this fall's Choral Festival and the home concert that concluded the St. Olaf Orchestra's recent national tour. You can search the archives to find specific events.

You can also subscribe to an RSS feed to receive updates when new streaming archives are available. This is a great way to stay connected without the need to check in to see new events. More information about how to sign up for the RSS feed is available on the multimedia website.

The St. Olaf Choir is also featured on the college's YouTube site (youtube.com/stolaf). You can also add yourself to the 1,100 fans the choir has on Facebook or join those who follow the ensemble on Twitter (twitter.com/thestolafchoir).



THE ST. OLAF CHOIR

ANTON ARMSTRONG · CONDUCTOR

1912 · Centennial Tour · 2012

WEEKEND TOUR

Saturday, Jan. 21, 4 p.m.

Fergus Falls, Minnesota
Life Church

Sunday, Jan. 22, 3 p.m.

Moorhead, Minnesota
Trinity Lutheran Church

MAIN TOUR

Saturday, Jan. 28, 8 p.m.

Madison, Wisconsin
Luther Memorial Church

Sunday, Jan. 29, 3 p.m.

East Lansing, Michigan
Michigan State University
Wharton Center for Performing Arts

Monday, Jan. 30, 7:30 p.m.

Indianapolis, Indiana
St. Luke's United Methodist Church

Tuesday, Jan. 31, 7:30 p.m.

Charleston, West Virginia
Clay Center for the Performing Arts

Wednesday, Feb. 1, 7:30 p.m.

Charlotte, North Carolina
First United Methodist Church

Thursday, Feb. 2, 7:30 p.m.

Raleigh, North Carolina
Meymandi Concert Hall

Friday, Feb. 3, 8 p.m.

Newport News, Virginia
Christopher Newport University
Ferguson Center for the Arts

Monday, Feb. 6, 7:30 p.m.

North Bethesda, Maryland
Music Center at Strathmore

Tuesday, Feb. 7, 7:30 p.m.

Cleveland, Ohio
Mary Queen of Peace Catholic Church

Wednesday, Feb. 8, 7:30 p.m.

Grand Rapids, Michigan
Calvin College
Covenant Fine Arts Center Auditorium

Thursday, Feb. 9, 7:30 p.m.

Urbana, Illinois
University of Illinois
Krannert Center

Friday, Feb. 10, 7:30 p.m.

Chicago, Illinois
Fourth Presbyterian Church

Saturday, Feb. 11, 2 p.m.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Marcus Center for the Performing Arts

Sunday, Feb. 12, 3 p.m.

Minneapolis, Minnesota
Orchestra Hall

Monday, Feb. 13, 7:30 p.m.

Northfield, Minnesota
St. Olaf College
Boe Memorial Chapel

Ticket information available at stolaftickets.com