

THE  
ST · OLAF  
ORCHESTRA

STEVEN AMUNDSON · CONDUCTOR

PRESENTS

*Orchestral Dances*

• FALL TOUR 2012 •







# Performing

A PASSION.FOR

ST. OLAF ORCHESTRA CONDUCTOR

STEVEN AMUNDSON LEADS HIS

STUDENT MUSICIANS WITH HUMOR AND

GRACE, INSPIRING THEM TO FIND THE

JOY IN MAKING MUSIC.



For Steven Amundson, leading the St. Olaf Orchestra is about more than instructing students on the technical aspects of playing — it's about creating a community of musicians who play with passion and verve.

It's why he continually reminds the young musicians to “own the music,” which has become something of a mantra for the orchestra during Amundson's 31 years at the helm. The words signify the responsibility and rewards that come with being a part of such a high-caliber ensemble.

“The better we nurture this orchestral community, the better we'll play,” says Amundson. “We'll more easily connect with our audiences because it's obvious that we enjoy making music together.”

Amundson values the experience of collaborating with his students and appreciates their excitement at discovering an orchestral piece for the first time.

“My students are my inspiration,” he says. “Their enthusiasm and intensity, their strong desire to get it right and create something great and memorable is infectious.”

Amundson encourages his students to invest in the music and perform at the highest level. He also makes a concerted effort to connect with them beyond the rehearsal room and performance stage.

He often chats with students before and after rehearsals and at student recitals and receptions, and is invested in both their artistic and personal growth.

“It’s great to get to know the person behind the instrument,” he says. “My students are endowed with gifts and interests that go far beyond their musical talents, and there is no question that I do a better job of leading them if I understand what makes them tick. I want them to know that they share equally in this orchestral endeavor, and that our success depends on each member’s commitment and contribution.”

### YOUTHFUL TALENT

Amundson joined the St. Olaf faculty in 1981, becoming conductor of the St. Olaf Orchestra at the age of 25. His early life as the fifth child in a musical family prepared him to lead a top college ensemble. He started piano lessons at age 4, eventually learning trumpet, euphonium, and trombone, and studying viola for several years.

Amundson found his calling as an undergraduate at Luther College, where he developed his conducting and leadership skills, directing the college’s jazz ensemble as a senior. He earned a master’s degree in orchestral conducting from Northwestern University. He continued his studies at the University of Virginia and the Aspen Music School, as well as at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria, where he won the coveted Hans Häring conducting prize in the international competition sponsored by Austrian National Radio. His first conducting positions were with the University of Virginia, Tacoma Community College, and the Tacoma Youth Symphony.

Although the St. Olaf Orchestra achieved a reputation for excellence before Amundson took up the baton more than three decades ago, he has helped enhance the ensemble’s acclaim through expanding its domestic and international tours and music festival appearances. The orchestra’s most recent international tour was to China

in June 2012. Others include a 2008 visit to Spain and a 2005 tour of Norway with the St. Olaf Band and the St. Olaf Choir.

Amundson’s dedication to teaching is reflected in the awards he has received for outstanding music instruction, including the Carlo A. Sperati Award from Luther College and the Minnesota Orchestra Educator of the Year award from the Minnesota Music Educators Association.

### BEYOND ST. OLAF

Although conducting the St. Olaf Orchestra is Amundson’s top priority, the Wisconsin native also is an active composer and arranger. He has amassed an impressive conducting career outside St. Olaf as well.

Amundson is the composer of 18 original works for orchestra. His first composition, *Angels’ Dance*, was written in 1995 in honor of his father and premiered at the St. Olaf Christmas Festival. It has received more than 100 performances, including several by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Amundson’s orchestral works have been featured in more than 600 performances by university, civic, and professional orchestras across the United States and in the United Kingdom. Taiwan’s Evergreen Symphony Orchestra commissioned him to write two works, including *Longing for Your Return* and *Dusk, Thoughts of Home*. In 2012 the Tennessee All-State Orchestra commissioned *Serendipities*, and in 2013, the Bloomington (Minnesota) Symphony will give the premiere performance of *Handprints*. Several of Amundson’s compositions are published by Lauren Keiser Music and the Neil A. Kjos Music Company. Tempo Music Resource distributes his self-published works.

Amundson is founding conductor of the Twin Cities-based Metropolitan Symphony, which he led for five years. From 1984 to 1997, he was music director and conductor of the Bloomington Symphony and also has been on the conducting faculty for the Interlochen Arts Camp and the



Lutheran Summer Music Program. He has been a guest conductor for many all-state orchestra festivals throughout the United States and has conducted several of Minnesota’s professional ensembles, including the Duluth-Superior Symphony Orchestra, the Fargo-Moorhead Symphony, and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.

### FAMILY FIRST

Amundson’s family includes his wife, Jane Amundson, who is a math teacher and cellist, and two children: Beret, who is a sophomore at St. Olaf and a violist in the St. Olaf Orchestra (currently studying abroad), and Karl, who is a senior in high school.

“My musical activities are richer and wider because of the wonderful life I have with Jane and the kids,” Amundson says. “I’m also blessed with gifted faculty colleagues who fully support my work with the orchestra.”

Amundson’s ongoing goal is to keep his students focused on the joy of making music and the essential purpose that it serves as a “reflection of our humanity,” he says. “We continue to strive for that mountaintop, pinnacle experience of communicating certain intangibles that impart to people a sense that they have been moved and transformed in some way. My students and I know when those special moments happen, and we never forget them.” 🐼



# A brief history of THE ST. OLAF ORCHESTRA



IN THE EARLY DAYS of the 20th century, F. Melius Christiansen, the renowned founder of the St. Olaf College Music Department, declared that “you cannot make a symphony orchestra on a college campus.” Oh, how times have changed. More than 100 years after that statement, the St. Olaf Orchestra has grown from its humble beginnings in 1906 to today’s 92-member ensemble. The group has been compared to professional orchestras and heralded as one of the best college orchestras in the nation by *Time* magazine.

Christiansen, a European-trained violinist who emigrated from Norway, was the first director of the orchestra, which has long been an ensemble rich in international artistry and tradition. In the mid-1940s Conductor Donald Berglund and string teacher Beatrix Lien joined forces to lift the ensemble to heightened levels of proficiency. Lien, who was also the orchestra’s concertmistress, was a skilled pedagogue, and Berglund supplemented the training she and others provided by hiring members of the Minnesota Orchestra to support their efforts.

The St. Olaf Orchestra first toured in 1949, traveling through Minnesota and Iowa to encourage the development of high school string programs. Over the next few decades, the orchestra program grew and flourished, adding a second orchestral group — the Philharmonia — in 1975 to provide additional musical opportunities for orchestral students at the college.

Current conductor Steven Amundson took over the helm of the St. Olaf Orchestra in 1981, and under his direction, the group has pursued a more demanding repertoire featuring works rarely performed by undergraduate orchestras, such as Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring*, Strauss’s *Don Juan*, and Bartok’s *Concerto for Orchestra*. The ensemble has become known for its enthusiasm and youthful passion while striving for the highest professional standards.

The St. Olaf Orchestra has toured throughout the United States, Scandinavia, Europe, and most recently, China. It has performed with some of the world’s most noted conductors and artists and appeared in many prestigious concert halls, including Alice Tully Hall in New York City, Chicago’s Orchestra Hall, Nuremberg’s Meistersinger Halle, and the Beijing Concert Hall. It has twice been featured on the National Public Radio program *A Prairie Home Companion*, and participates in the annual St. Olaf Christmas Festival, which is broadcast on PBS and public radio stations nationwide. 🦋



# Fall Tour 2012

## • FEATURED PERFORMERS •



### JENNY ASPARRO '14

#### VIOLIN

Jenny Asparro is a third-year violinist from Portland, Oregon, who is studying music, neuroscience, and premedical studies at St. Olaf. She began playing the piano at age 5 and took up the violin at age 9. Prior to St. Olaf she enjoyed leadership positions in the Portland Youth Philharmonic, as well as in school and regional ensembles. In addition to performing in the orchestra, she enjoys composing, chamber music, and spending time outdoors. She looks forward to conducting biological research in Costa Rica next semester, and after graduation plans to pursue a medical degree.

### ZACH GINGERICH '13

#### TROMBONE

Zach Gingerich is a trombone performance major from Conway, Arkansas. He is the principal trombone in both the St. Olaf Orchestra and the St. Olaf Band, and is the lead trombone in the Jazz I Ensemble. He began his trombone studies at age 12 under the tutelage of Todd Johnson, who facilitated Gingerich's first-place awards in the National MTNA Junior (2006) and Senior (2009) brass competitions. In his spare time, Gingerich enjoys outdoor sports, chamber music, and traveling. After graduation, he plans to pursue a master's degree in trombone performance.

### JULIE ASPARRO '14

#### VIOLA

Julie Asparro is a third-year member and principal violist of the St. Olaf Orchestra from Portland, Oregon. She is pursuing degrees in both music and English. She began studying viola at age 9 and played for seven years in the Portland Youth Philharmonic, including two years as principal violist. Next semester, she will study music in Milan, Italy. She plans to attend graduate school after St. Olaf. Some of her favorite activities include art, reading, studying Japanese, and playing chamber music with friends.



### JESSE BRAULT '13

#### CONDUCTOR

Jesse Brault of Westby, Wisconsin, is an aspiring young conductor pursuing a B.M. degree in music theory and composition. As a junior, he organized a 40-person chamber orchestra to perform Mozart's 41st Symphony. Last summer he attended the International Conducting Workshop and Festival in Zlín, Czech Republic, where he worked with maestros Larry Rachleff and Don Schleicher. Also active as a composer, he will lead the St. Olaf Band in the spring of 2013 in performances of his most recent composition, *Illuminatio*. After graduation, he plans to pursue graduate studies in orchestral conducting.



ST. OLAF ORCHESTRA PRESENTS

*Orchestral Dances*

• FALL TOUR 2012 PROGRAM •

“Dance of the Comedians” from *The Bartered Bride*

BEDRICH SMETANA (1824–84)

\*Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat Major, K. 364

I. Allegro Maestoso

W. A. MOZART (1756–91)

JENNY ASPARRO '14 • VIOLIN AND JULIE ASPARRO '14 • VIOLA

\*Concertino, Op. 45, No. 7 for trombone

III. Allegro Giocoso

LARS-ERIK LARSSON (1908–86)

ZACHARY GINGERICH '13 • TROMBONE

“Fêtes” from *Trois Nocturnes*

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

JESSE BRAULT '13 • CONDUCTOR

Danzón No. 2

ARTURO MÁRQUEZ (B. 1950)

*Intermission*

Sensemaya

SILVESTRE REVUELTAS (1899–1940)

Valse Triste

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865–1957)

Daphnis et Chloé Suite No. 2

MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1937)

*\*The Mozart and Larsson selections will rotate throughout the tour*

# Fall Tour 2012

## • PROGRAM •

### “Dance of the Comedians” from *The Bartered Bride* BEDRICH SMETANA (1824–84)

Amidst the wave of nationalism that swept Europe following the 1848 revolutions, the Czech composer Bedrich Smetana began writing music to celebrate the rich cultural heritage of his homeland. He established his reputation as a cultural and artistic hero with his second opera, *The Bartered Bride*, written in 1865.

*The Bartered Bride* celebrates Czech nationalism both in subject and in musical style. Set in a Bohemian village, the lighthearted story follows two young people whose love is thwarted by their parents. Despite a scheming marriage broker and many misunderstandings, the protagonists finally marry at the opera’s joyful conclusion.

“Dance of the Comedians” (Act III) depicts a traveling circus that visits the village. The piece imitates a traditional Czech *skočná*, a duple meter dance characterized by athletic leaping. Playful woodwind solos and racing scales in the strings result in a whirling dance that exudes the joy and comedy of Smetana’s opera.

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### Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat Major, K. 364 W. A. MOZART (1756–91) I. Allegro Maestoso

JENNY ASPARRO '14 • VIOLIN AND JULIE ASPARRO '14 • VIOLA

In 1777 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart left his native Salzburg to tour Europe, performing for royalty and encountering luminaries of the musical world. Surrounded by optimism and excitement, he composed his *Sinfonia Concertante* (1779) for violin and viola. This distinct genre features a delicate musical balance between the symphonic orchestra and the “concertante” solo duo. After a sprightly orchestral introduction, the solo instruments make their entrance, soaring above the accompaniment. The many melodies, inimitably characteristic of Mozart, appear first in the violin and then receive an answer in the viola. This musical dialogue reaches its apex in the cadenza, during which the soloists have the opportunity to transform the musical themes and display their virtuosity. Uplifting and joyous, the work truly counts among Mozart’s masterpieces.

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### Concertino, Op. 45, No. 7 for trombone LARS-ERIK LARSSON (1908–86) III. Allegro Giocoso

ZACHARY GINGERICH '13 • TROMBONE

Swedish composer Lars-Erik Larsson composed a series of 12 concertinos, all for different instruments, between 1955 and 1957. His *Concertino* for trombone epitomizes his synthetic style, comprised of late Romantic, Neoclassical, and popular film music elements. The third movement features a quick, jaunty melody introduced by the strings-only orchestra. The solo trombone answers with the same melody, played in continuous canon by the orchestra. In a contrasting middle section, the tempo slows significantly, allowing the soloist to showcase the instrument’s expressive capabilities in a noble new theme reminiscent of the original melody. The trombone slows into a tonally unsettled cadence at the end of the slow section, after which the orchestra restates the fast first theme and the work crescendos to a playful finish.



# Fall Tour 2012

## • PROGRAM •

### “Fêtes” from *Trois Nocturnes*

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

JESSE BRAULT '13 • CONDUCTOR

In describing his Nocturnes, French composer Claude Debussy explained that he concerned himself not with “the usual form of the Nocturne, but rather all the various impressions and the special effects of light that the word suggests.” They are inspired by American Impressionist James McNeill Whistler’s painting series of the same name. The work premiered in Paris in 1900.

Debussy imitates the paintings’ remarkable ability to evoke a feeling or aura for the audience. The middle movement (Fêtes) features a lively dance rhythm, brass fanfares, and shimmering string and woodwind melodies that blend to create a vivid festival atmosphere. A stately procession interrupts the dance midway through the movement, but the original dance returns after the short interlude. Debussy described the movement as a “festival with its blending of music and luminous dust participating in the cosmic rhythm.”



### Danzón No. 2

ARTURO MÁRQUEZ (B. 1950)

Arturo Márquez inherited from his father and grandfather a rich tradition of Mexican folk music. He began studying music at the National Conservatory of Music of Mexico at the age of 16. He then traveled to Paris and California, and finally back to Mexico, where he now lives and works in Mexico City.

In the 1990s, Márquez began writing a series of danzones, a genre inspired by the elegant dance native to Cuba and popularized in Mexico in the first part of the 20th century. The composer described his *Danzón No. 2*, premiered in 1991, as an endeavor “to get as close as possible to the dance, to its nostalgic melodies, to its wild rhythms . . . [as a] very personal way of paying my respects and expressing my emotions toward truly popular music.” The slow introductory theme, first presented in solo clarinet, accelerates into a fast, rhythmic dance. The sweeping, cinematic style and memorable melodies of the piece have earned it the status as an unofficial national anthem in Mexico.

“These young United States performers presented perfectly balanced sounds, an impeccable rhythm, and a musical discipline that could be envied by any symphonic orchestra of our country.”

— FROM A SPANISH REVIEW IN *MÚSICA EN ALCALÁ* AFTER THE ORCHESTRA  
PERFORMED AT THE UNIVERSIDAD DE ALCALÁ DE HENARES NEAR MADRID IN 2008



# Fall Tour 2012

## • PROGRAM •

### Intermission

#### Sensemaya

SILVESTRE REVUELTAS (1899–1940)

The inspiration for Silvestre Revueltas's tone poem *Sensemaya* (1938) came from a poem of the same title by the Cuban revolutionary Nicolás Guillén. The poem describes the Afro-Cuban religious ritual killing of a snake, emphasizing the snake's dangerous, elusive slithering and its eerie glass-like eyes. Revueltas's musical adaptation of the poem repeats melodic cells over a driving 7/8 time signature, giving the work a relentless, unsettled energy. A prolonged tuba solo introduces the snake's theme, followed by an assertion of the poem's refrain in the violins (listen for "mayombe-bombe-mayombe" rhythm). A third pentatonic theme in the upper woodwinds represents the humans, and provides a strong contrast to the snake theme in the lower registers. Measures of 7/16 interrupt the regular rhythm as the snake appears and slithers out of view. When the humans find and attack the snake, crashing cymbals and sliding strings represent the reptile's dizzying death throes. Finally, the themes combine into a dissonant climax, escalating in intensity until the work's forceful conclusion. Guillén's original poem follows:

Mayombe-bombe-mayombe!  
Mayombe-bombe-mayombe!  
Mayombe-bombe-mayombe!

The snake has eyes of glass,  
The snake coils on a stick,  
With his eyes of glass on a stick,  
With his eyes of glass.

The snake cannot move without feet,

The snake can hide in the grass,  
Crawling he hides in the grass,  
Moving without feet.

Don't hit him with your foot or he'll get away.

Sensemaya, the snake, Sensemaya.  
Sensemaya, with his eyes, Sensemaya.  
Sensemaya, with his tongue, Sensemaya.  
Sensemaya, with his mouth, Sensemaya.

The dead snake cannot eat,  
The dead snake cannot hiss,  
He cannot move,

He cannot run!  
The dead snake cannot look,  
The snake can hide in the grass,  
Crawling he hides in the grass,  
Moving without feet.

Mayombe-bombe-mayombe!

Hit him with an ax and he dies,  
Hit him! Go on, hit him!  
Don't hit him with your foot or he'll bite,  
The dead snake cannot drink,  
He cannot breathe,  
He cannot bite.

Mayombe-bombe-mayombe!  
Sensemaya, the snake...  
Mayombe-bombe-mayombe!  
Sensemaya, does not move...  
Mayombe-bombe-mayombe!  
Sensemaya, the snake...  
Mayombe-bombe-mayombe!  
Sensemaya, he died!

*Trans. Willis Knapp Jones*



# Fall Tour 2012

## • PROGRAM •

### Valse Triste

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865–1957)

Jean Sibelius's *Valse Triste* (Sad Waltz) is a bittersweet dance written as incidental music for the play *Kuolema* (Death). The Finnish composer wrote *Valse Triste* to accompany a scene in which an old woman on her deathbed dreams that dancers fill the room around her, and that she joins them in the swirling waltz. As she dances, there is a knock on the door, and Death, in the form of the woman's late husband, comes to claim her.

*Valse Triste* conveys a haunting beauty that emphasizes the juxtaposition of the woman's happy memories with her imminent death. The singing melodies oscillate between major and minor modes, all the while lilting in a traditional triple meter waltz tempo. The work ends with four solo violins, playing a series of anguished chords as Death leads the woman away.

### Daphnis et Chloé Suite No. 2

MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1937)

Maurice Ravel intended to portray in *Daphnis et Chloé* “a vast musical fresco in which I was less concerned with archaism than with reproducing faithfully the Greece of my dreams.” The French composer received a commission for the ballet from Sergei Diaghilev and the Ballet Russes, the company that famously premiered Stravinsky's *Firebird* and *Rite of Spring* in Paris.

Ravel began composing the music in 1909, but the ballet did not premiere until 1912 due to squabbles between him, Diaghilev, the choreographer Fokine, and the ballet's star, the legendary Vaslav Nijinsky, that nearly resulted in a shutdown of the production. An instance of this tension is evident in Ravel's recollection that “Fokine doesn't know a word of French, and I know only how to swear in Russian.” Despite the tribulations, the ballet was a success that Ravel later adapted into two orchestral suites, the second of which premiered in 1914 in Paris.

The Greek legend of Daphnis and Chloé tells of two young people who grow up together in a pastoral paradise and gradually discover their mutual love. However, a band of raiders separates the couple by capturing Chloé. Daphnis appeals to the faun-god Pan, who intervenes to save Chloé. Although Ravel set the whole saga to music, the orchestral *Daphnis et Chloé Suite No. 2* depicts Daphnis and Chloé's gift of thanks to Pan, a tableaux of the god's seduction of the nymph Syrinx. The work begins with a glimmering musical depiction of the sunrise, followed by a solo flute imitating the mythical Panpipes. The pipe song accelerates into a wild dance in 5/4 meter, as the work gallops to an ecstatic finish.

#### PROGRAM NOTES BY SONJA WERMAGER '14

“It is obviously unfair to compare this orchestra with the established and professional. But it is fully possible.”

— FROM A REVIEW IN THE NORWEGIAN NEWSPAPER *VÅRT LAND*  
DURING THE ORCHESTRA'S TOUR OF NORWAY IN 2005



# THE ST. OLAF ORCHESTRA 2012–13

STEVEN AMUNDSON, CONDUCTOR · TERRA WIDDIFIELD '95, MANAGER

## VIOLIN I

- Jenny Asparro, *Lake Oswego, Ore.*  
music/neuroscience
- †† Greta Bauer, *Minneapolis, Minn.*  
music/chemistry
- Katelyn Berg, *Fircrest, Wash.*  
music
- Lars Berggren, *Lindsborg, Kan.*  
economics
- Sophia Butler, *Burnsville, Minn.*  
music
- † ◇ Seiji Cataldo, *St. Paul, Minn.*  
music performance/economics
- ~ Becca Hanson, *Minnetonka, Minn.*  
economics/psychology
- Lindsie Katz, *Boulder, Colo.*  
music/psychology
- Stephen Lee, *Delran, N.J.*  
music/computer science
- Daniel McDonald, *Chesterfield, Mo.*  
political science
- † Emily Mullaney, *Gilbert, Iowa*  
music performance
- Jonathon Peterson, *Grand Forks, N.D.*  
music
- ◇ Amanda Secor, *Fort Dodge, Iowa*  
music
- Arthur Sletten, *Osceola, Wis.*  
biology/chemistry
- Hannah Sorrells, *Weaverville, N.C.*  
music performance
- Sonja Wermager, *Northfield, Minn.*  
music/history

## VIOLIN II

- Madeline Brumback, *Blacksburg, Va.*  
music performance/mathematics
- Kristian Cardell, *Lund, Sweden*  
music/philosophy
- Francesca Crutchfield-Stoker, *Iowa City, Iowa*  
political science/Spanish
- Eden Ehm, *Decorah, Iowa*  
mathematics/biology
- \* Elizabeth Fairfield, *DeKalb, Ill.*  
music
- Sally Gildehaus, *Red Lodge, Mont.*  
psychology/neuroscience
- Britta Hoiland, *Park Ridge, Ill.*  
music/sociology/anthropology
- Erik McCoy, *Iowa City, Iowa*  
biology/Spanish
- Hanieh Nejadriahi, *Northbrook, Ill.*  
mathematics/physics
- Emily Reeves, *Rapid City, S.D.*  
chemistry
- Christina Solensten, *Woodbury, Minn.*  
music/English
- Britta Stjern, *Roseville, Minn.*  
music
- \*\* Karen Van Acker, *St. Charles, Ill.*  
music
- Katherine Wilhelm, *Barrington, R.I.*  
history

## VIOLA

- \*\* Julie Asparro, *Lake Oswego, Ore.*  
music/English
- James Bell, *Potomac, Md.*  
music
- Jared Brown, *Oak Park, Calif.*  
music/mathematics/physics
- Lauren Culver, *Salem, Ore.*  
music
- \* Abi Enockson, *Fargo, N.D.*  
music/management studies
- Claire Folts, *Hershey, Pa.*  
music education/religion
- ◇ McKinley Green, *Butler, Ohio*  
English
- Britt Nance Letcher, *West Lafayette, Ind.*  
music/American racial and multicultural studies
- Kelly McNeilly, *Iowa City, Iowa*  
computer science
- John Ondich-Batson, *Duluth, Minn.*  
music
- Emma Ritter, *Omaha, Neb.*  
English
- Joshua Wareham, *West St. Paul, Minn.*  
music performance

## CELLO

- \*\* Benjamin Arbeiter, *Rapid City, S.D.*  
chemistry
- Benjamin Bruce, *Midland, Mich.*  
mathematics/philosophy
- Katherine Canon, *Madison, Wis.*  
music/Spanish
- Isabel Carman, *Iowa City, Iowa*  
psychology/Hispanic studies
- \*\* Sara Cattanach, *Lake Elmo, Minn.*  
English/management studies
- Kelly Halpin, *Algonquin, Ill.*  
music/biology/environmental studies
- Bjorn Hovland, *Iowa City, Iowa*  
economics/mathematics/statistics
- Omar Macias, *Plymouth, Minn.*  
music performance
- Isaac Maier, *Forest Lake, Minn.*  
music
- Keegan O'Donald, *Greenville, Mich.*  
music performance
- \*\* Audrey Slote, *Meadville, Pa.*  
music performance
- Andrew Wyffels, *Plymouth, Minn.*  
chemistry/music

## BASS

- \*\*◇ Evan Anderson, *Golden, Colo.*  
chemistry/mathematics
- Theo Brackee, *Northfield, Minn.*  
physics
- Grant Gordon, *Katy, Texas*  
Asian studies
- \* Daniel Meyers, *Waverly, Iowa*  
music performance
- Henry Roe Ramsey, *Bellevue, Wash.*  
physics
- Kara Lynn Sajeske, *Elmhurst, Ill.*  
studio art
- Micah Stoddard, *Omaha, Neb.*  
music performance

## FLUTE

- \*\* Tirzah Blair, *Jefferson, Wis.*  
music performance
- \*\* Chappy Gibb, *Oak Park Heights, Minn.*  
music performance
- \*\* Molly Schull, *Hayward, Wis.*  
exercise science
- Joshua Weinberg, *St. Peter, Minn.*  
music performance

## PICCOLO

- Chappy Gibb, *Oak Park Heights, Minn.*  
music performance
- Molly Schull, *Hayward, Wis.*  
exercise science

## OBOE

- \*\* Rosanna Egge, *Lincoln, Neb.*  
music performance
- Hannah Femling, *Vancouver, Wash.*  
music performance
- ◆ Mariah Johnston, *Minnetonka, Minn.*  
music

## E-FLAT CLARINET

- Erinn Komschlies, *Appleton, Wis.*  
music

## CLARINET

- \*\* Sara Baumbauer, *Bozeman, Mont.*  
music education
- Kayla Kaml, *Bemidji, Minn.*  
psychology
- Erinn Komschlies, *Appleton, Wis.*  
music

## BASS CLARINET

- Jonathan Sanchez, *Columbia, S.C.*  
music performance

## BASSOON

- Ethan Boote, *Columbia, Mo.*  
art/environmental studies
- Joshua Kosberg, *Wildwood, Ill.*  
music performance
- \*\* Conor Mackey, *St. Charles, Ill.*  
music theory/composition
- ▼ Linnea Pierson, *San Jose, Calif.*  
music/mathematics

## HORN

- Nicole Danielson, *Watertown, Minn.*  
music/biology
- Megan Dunlap, *Albuquerque, N.M.*  
chemistry
- Tyler Johnston, *Long Lake, Minn.*  
music/computer science
- \*\* Ellan Krubsack, *Maple Grove, Minn.*  
mathematics
- Kira Seidel, *Minneapolis, Minn.*  
music performance

## TRUMPET

- Gregory Dean, *Apple Valley, Minn.*  
biology
- Neil Hulbert, *Tacoma, Wash.*  
music performance
- \*\* Tim McCarthy, *Brush Prairie, Wash.*  
music performance
- Will Wertjes, *Olympia, Wash.*  
music/chemistry

## TROMBONE

- Jesse Brault, *Westby, Wis.*  
music theory/composition
- \*\*◇ Zach Gingerich, *Conway, Ark.*  
music performance
- Ramsey Walker, *Vashon, Wash.*  
music

## BASS TROMBONE

- Robinson Schulze, *Santa Monica, Calif.*  
music performance

## TUBA

- Lucas Sletten, *Osceola, Wis.*  
physics/mathematics

## PERCUSSION

- Isaac Behrens, *Cedar Rapids, Iowa*  
music/English
- \*\* Michael Betz, *Mason City, Iowa*  
music theory/composition
- Soren Docken, *Chatfield, Minn.*  
music/mathematics
- Tommy Dolan, *Edina, Minn.*  
mathematics/biology
- Neil Gleason, *Buffalo, Minn.*  
psychology/film studies
- Tim O'Grady, *Fort Collins, Colo.*  
music/mathematics
- Ramsey Walker, *Vashon, Wash.*  
music

## HARP

- \*\* Kelsey Fleming, *Austin, Minn.*  
music education
- Joy Gunderson, *Phoenix, Ariz.*  
church music

## PIANO/CELESTA

- Isaac Behrens, *Cedar Rapids, Iowa*  
music/English

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**Darrin Thomas**, gospel choir\*

**John Tranter**, instructor, low brass\*; B.M., University of Kansas; M.M. Florida State University; D.M.A., University of Minnesota

**William Webb**, instructor\*, band; B.A., College of St. Thomas; M.A., VanderCook College of Music

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

\* part-time

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St. Olaf Orchestra, *Steven Amundson*

Norseman Band, *William Webb*

St. Olaf Philharmonia, *Martin Hodel*

Collegium Musicum, *Gerald Hoekstra*

Jazz Ensembles, *David Hagedorn*

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St. Olaf Chapel Choir, *Christopher Aspaas* '95

St. Olaf Cantorei, *James Bobb*

Manitou Singers, *Sigrid Johnson*

Viking Chorus, *Christopher Aspaas* '95

Early Music Singers, *Gerald Hoekstra*

Collegiate Chorale, *Anton Armstrong* '78

Gospel Choir, *Darrin Thomas*

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Handbell Ensembles, *Jill Mahr*

Pep Band, *Student-Directed*

Percussion Ensembles, *David Hagedorn*

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Trombone Choir, *Larry Zimmerman* '86

Tuba-Euphonium Ensemble, *Larry Zimmerman* '86



# travelers

**THE ST. OLAF ORCHESTRA SPREADS ITS WINGS WITH A TOUR OF CHINA**

**I**n the 30 years Steven Amundson has been conducting the St. Olaf Orchestra, he has taken the ensemble on seven international tours, all of which have been to countries in Europe and Scandinavia. But this past spring, the orchestra moved into new territory with a two-week concert and cultural tour of China, performing at universities and in the country's pristine concert halls while enjoying an enthusiastic reception among the Chinese people.

Amundson says it was the most enjoyable and interesting tour of his career. "We often talk about music as the international language, which is absolutely true, but it was crystal clear to me that our music was able to break down those natural barriers and help us connect with people who otherwise have a very different existence and life experience," he says.

The orchestra gave five performances throughout China, on a tour that included stops in Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Xi'an, Jiaozuo, and Zhengzhou. Before a joint concert with Jiaotong University's orchestra in Shanghai, St. Olaf Orchestra members ate dinner with the Chinese student musicians, which was a memorable experience for bass player Evan Anderson '13. "We did our best to communicate about music making and about being students," he says. "They are similar to us in many ways, so it was fantastic to spend time with them, and then enjoy giving a concert together."

To forge further connections, Amundson and bass player Grant Gordon '14 introduced the ensemble in Chinese before several of their pieces. Amundson says their efforts to speak Chinese were well received among audience members. "They often clapped vigorously after every sentence, smiling with delight."

The orchestra received standing ovations — a rare thing in China — after each of their concerts and always played both of their encores. Although cultural differences in concert etiquette were apparent (Chinese audience members tend to talk during performances), cellist Audrey Slote '13 says the expressions of appreciation

were genuine. "The cheering was so loud it was like we were at a sporting event!"

At the Beijing Concert Hall, the audience responded emotionally to the orchestra's performance of "Tribal Dance of Yao," which is based on well-known Chinese folk songs. "There was an audible collective sigh of approval and then the audience burst into sustained applause," Amundson says. "When I turned to acknowledge them, they were obviously moved and delighted. I saw some people wiping tears from their eyes. It was a very special moment. We connected on a level we always dream about but rarely experience."

In addition to exquisite musical performances, the orchestra had ample time to explore China's great cities and experience Chinese culture. Highlights included visits to the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square, and the Terra Cotta Warriors. On their own, students explored markets, gardens, and Chinese nightlife while savoring the trip of a lifetime.

"It was an amazing experience," Slote says. "It felt like paradise." 🐉





“THE SUPERB QUALITY AND PASSION THAT THE ST. OLAF ORCHESTRA DEMONSTRATED WAS VERY IMPRESSIVE. THE ORCHESTRA SHOWED A BALANCED STRENGTH IN EACH SECTION WITH GREAT MASTERY OF RHYTHM AND HARMONY. THEY DID ALL OF THIS WITH GRACE AND ACCURACY.”

— FROM A REVIEW PUBLISHED ON THE UNIVERSITY WEBSITE AFTER THE ORCHESTRA PERFORMED AT JIAOTONG UNIVERSITY IN SHANGHAI IN 2012

**CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT:**

The St. Olaf Orchestra in performance at Jiaotong University in Shanghai; orchestra members enjoy a bicycle ride on the city wall in Xi'an; a stop at the Bird's Nest, the stadium made famous by the 2008 Beijing Olympics; the five Sara(h)s of the orchestra pose for a photo after enjoying lunch together; Steven Amundson poses with audience members after the concert in Hangzhou; Assistant Professor of Music Catherine Ramirez receives flowers after her featured solo flute performance with the orchestra.



# WELL-ORCHESTRATED LIVES

There's no doubt that St. Olaf Orchestra members are high caliber musicians. They also tend to be some of the most well-rounded students you'll find at St. Olaf. Many of them major in music. But many others major in another field, ranging from economics to biology to Asian studies. And while they are passionate about music, they're also engaged in other pursuits, such as scientific research, athletics, study abroad, and community service.

To give you a clearer picture of this diverse group, we asked a handful of Orchies to tell us a bit about themselves, including their favorite orchestra moments. They also shared some stories about Steven Amundson, their well-regarded conductor, whom they call SMA (rhymes with Mah).



## BRITT NANCE LETCHER '14

Viola

**MAJORS:** American Racial and Multicultural Studies and Music

**ACTIVITIES:** Co-president of Hybrid Vigor, a group that supports multiracial members of St. Olaf's community; cutter on the women's Ultimate Frisbee team; member of Women of Color, Cultural Union for Black Expression, and Gospel Choir

**WORLD TRAVELER:** Letcher interned at the Dagara Music and Arts Center in Medie, Ghana, this past summer. She played Djembe (hand percussion) and Gyii (ancestor to the xylophone) every morning and then had dance and singing lessons every evening. "The middle of my day was dedicated to exploring the nooks and crannies of the village, playing as much soccer as my legs could take, learning how to weave colorful kente cloths and dye batik fabrics, and falling in love with Ghana," she says. "On the weekends I traveled with a group of 10 fierce women to the slave castles on the coast, monkey sanctuaries, and anywhere else that promised adventure." After graduation, she plans to attend graduate school in ethnomusicology, focusing on music of the African Diaspora.

**FAVORITE ORCHESTRA TRADITION:** Winking. "It's a subtle way to connect with someone who is sections away from you during a juicy moment of a piece. And it's a great way to creep out the first-year members who haven't yet caught on to all of the orchestra's eccentricities."



## LUCAS SLETTEN '15

Tuba

**MAJORS:** Mathematics and Physics

**ACTIVITIES:** Member of the St. Olaf Band, math tutor, and physics lab assistant

**BROTHERLY LOVE:** Both Arthur and Lucas are involved in scientific research at St. Olaf. Arthur has worked with Professor Laura Listenberger to study the mechanisms by which human cells store fat and Lucas spent last summer studying friction on a microscopic scale. They both have experience tutoring other students as well. "Arthur tells me I am following in his footsteps, but my feet are bigger than his, both literally and metaphorically, so that just doesn't make sense," Lucas says. Although they both were involved in the Minnesota Youth Symphonies, the St. Olaf Orchestra is the first music ensemble they've played in together. After graduation, Arthur will spend a year doing research at the National Institutes of Health before starting an MD/PhD program. Lucas's current aspiration is to become a professor.

**ARTHUR'S FAVORITE MUSICAL MOMENT IN THE ORCHESTRA:** The home concert after the fall 2010 tour. "SMA couldn't go with us that year because of an injury, so we performed the entire tour program with a guest conductor. At our final concert, we all knew SMA would be in the audience and we dedicated the concert to him. The level of energy in the orchestra was incredible."

**LUCAS'S FAVORITE ORCHESTRA TRADITION:** New member skits. "On tour, new members are required to form small groups and present a short skit. Watching others be ridiculous (and usually hilarious) is fun, but it's a little more than entertainment. It's a way to get to know new members and to all coalesce into one big trusting ensemble. The music we make depends on trust and friendship."



## ARTHUR SLETTEN '13

Violin

**MAJORS:** Biology and Chemistry

**ACTIVITIES:** Member of the St. Olaf Chemistry Society and organic chemistry lab assistant



**TIM MCCARTHY '14**  
Trumpet

**MAJOR:** Music Performance

**ACTIVITIES:** Member of the St. Olaf Band, Jazz I Ensemble, and Scholarship Brass Quintet

**OUTDOOR ENTHUSIAST:** McCarthy is an avid fisherman and has recently taken up the challenging sport of bow hunting. He says that being a student at St. Olaf has taught him to prioritize. "I have had the opportunity to try all the activities I enjoy, and decide which are the most important to me," he says. "I have given up rugby and soccer, but have found an interest in chamber music." He has taken classes in archery, fly fishing, and canoeing. McCarthy attended the National Symphony Orchestra's Summer Music Institute and plans to attend graduate school in trumpet performance, eventually going on to play in a professional orchestra or military band.

**FAVORITE ANECDOTE ABOUT**

**AMUNDSON:** "SMA made an important announcement during our devotional before we performed Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* on April 1st last spring. He told us that he had taken some medicine for a headache earlier that day. He accidentally took sleeping pills. Upon realizing his mistake, he drank a few Red Bulls. He assured us he would still be able to conduct the concert. We were all silent for a few minutes before he shouted, 'April Fools!'"



**GRETA BAUER '13**  
Violin

**MAJORS:** Chemistry and Music

**ACTIVITIES:** President of St. Olaf's Catholic Student Association; studied French in Morocco; freelance musician and member of chamber groups

**STUDENT RESEARCHER:** Bauer has studied the mechanisms of cellular lipid storage with Professor Laura Listenberger. She also has worked in an endocrinology research lab at the Mayo Clinic, developing a method to measure the diabetes treatment drug, Metformin, in patients' blood plasma. "Research allows me to learn scientific material not just for a test, but to apply it to real scientific questions," she says. She is applying to graduate programs in cellular biology and biomedical research, but also is contemplating a gap year for travel, work, and further musical opportunities.

**FAVORITE MUSICAL MOMENT IN THE**

**ORCHESTRA:** The performance of Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* with the St. Olaf Choir and the Chapel Choir in St. Olaf's Boe Chapel. "The whole symphony was wonderful, but my favorite — and most chilling — moment came at the very end of the 5th movement when the orchestra and choirs all reached a glorious crescendo and the organ joined in, literally shaking the floor."



**JARED BROWN '14**  
Viola

**MAJORS:** Mathematics, Music, and Physics

**ACTIVITIES:** Having triple majors doesn't leave a lot of room for extras, but Brown finds time for cooking, chatting with friends, and "nerding out over some exciting new piece of music."

**ACADEMIC AT HEART:** With triple majors, Brown experiences St. Olaf's community in several disciplines, from the interactions in the physics lounge — or *phlounge*, as it's known — to the team dynamics in the computer science and math departments. As an academic assistant with St. Olaf's Academic Support Center, Brown tutors other students in the subjects he loves. "I get to talk with students about Newtonian mechanics, advanced calculus, and music theory," he says. "I hope to learn just as much from them as they learn from me. I gain insights that render previously 'old hat' material into something new and unfamiliar." After graduation, Brown hopes to pursue graduate study in engineering technology.

**FAVORITE ANECDOTE ABOUT**

**AMUNDSON:** "We all love the energy and spirit SMA puts into his work. This does, however, have at least one unintended consequence when he is on the podium. In his enthusiasm, the very tip of his baton will catch on the edge of his stand, it will fly from his grasp, and soar out over the orchestra, usually toward the violas. Veteran Orchies know to duck and cover."



# A KEILLOR COLLABORATION

The St. Olaf Orchestra was featured live on Garrison Keillor's *A Prairie Home Companion* this past fall.

"IT WAS WONDERFUL TO  
EXPERIENCE GARRISON'S GENIUS  
UP CLOSE, AND TO SHARE THE FUN,  
THE LAUGHTER, AND THE POIGNANT  
MOMENTS FOR WHICH THIS SHOW  
HAS BECOME SO WELL KNOWN."

— STEVEN AMUNDSON  
ST. OLAF ORCHESTRA CONDUCTOR

Broadcasting live in front of an audience packed into St. Olaf College's Skoglund Center Auditorium, radio personality Garrison Keillor brought his beloved mix of satire, storytelling, and Americana music to campus on November 19, 2011. Millions of radio listeners had the pleasure of hearing the St. Olaf Orchestra, together with the St. Olaf Choir, contribute musical selections to a pre-Thanksgiving episode of *A Prairie Home Companion*, one of the nation's most iconic radio shows. The appearance marked the second time the orchestra has been a featured guest on the program, and the third time the ensemble has collaborated with Keillor.

The St. Olaf Orchestra made its first appearance on *A Prairie Home Companion* in November 2001. That show also was broadcast live from campus and featured performances by the orchestra, the St. Olaf Choir, and several other ensembles. Following the performance, Keillor remarked on collaborating with the college's musical ensembles. "I don't expect this to happen again in this life, but hope for it in the next," he says.

Keillor didn't have to wait quite that long to get his wish. During the 2011 broadcast, he once again melded his signature musical styling with that of the orchestra, which was featured prominently as both a solo ensemble and as an accompanist. Their selections included *The Turtle Dove*, a traditional English folk tune; the second movement of Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 5*; and "Mambo" from Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story*.

"The opportunity to collaborate with Garrison is something the students and I won't soon forget," says St. Olaf Orchestra Conductor Steven Amundson. "Although it was difficult to feel fully prepared for a show that is so often free flowing and improvised, it was wonderful to experience Garrison's genius up close, and to share the fun, the laughter, and the poignant moments for which this show has become so well known."

Other musical guests included Philip Brunelle, founder and artistic director of the Twin Cities-based choral group VocalEssence, and vocalist Heather Masse. Pastor Bruce Benson, recently retired as chaplain at St. Olaf, made his acting debut as a Christian hypnotist in the radio skit "The Adventures of Guy Noir, Private Eye."

Audrey Slote, the orchestra's principal cellist, recalled listening to the show with her parents every week while growing up in Pennsylvania. "Just being able to be a contributor to it was so thrilling," she says. "It was probably one of the most fulfilling musical things I've ever done."

Musical ensembles from St. Olaf have been popular guests of the program. Prior to its two appearances on campus broadcasts of the show, the St. Olaf Orchestra collaborated with Keillor in 2001 for a concert featuring Randall Davidson's "The Young Lutheran's Guide to the Orchestra." In August 2012 *A Prairie Home Companion* aired "Holy Oles," a showcase of St. Olaf-centered performances and stories. 🦉

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## SHOWCASE AMERICA

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## CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL 2011

The centennial St. Olaf Christmas Festival is available on a two-CD set, DVD, or a DVD Blu-Ray combo pack. Video formats include the entire two-hour program, a one-hour PBS version, a live radio broadcast with slideshow, and a 100-year retrospective documentary.

## A WONDROUS GIFT

The St. Olaf Orchestra will perform in the 2012 St. Olaf Christmas Festival, "The Wondrous Gift is Given," November 29–December 2.

The Christmas Festival has been aired nationally on the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) since 1975. A new one-hour special of the concert is recorded every four years, and viewers can enjoy the program on PBS throughout the Christmas season. The most recent recording was done in 2011. Check your local listings for broadcasting dates and times.

The Christmas Festival concerts reach millions through annual broadcasts on National Public Radio, the European Broadcasting Union, and broadcasts in Australia. Minnesota Public Radio regularly streams broadcasts of the concert via the Internet.

St. Olaf Records offers recordings of Christmas Festivals throughout the years, available on CD and DVD. The 2012 recording can be pre-ordered after November 1 at [stolafrecords.com](http://stolafrecords.com). Expected delivery date will be after January 1, 2013.

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# THE ST. OLAF ORCHESTRA

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Coralville Center for the Performing Arts  
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*Upper St. Clair, Pennsylvania*

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19, 7:30 P.M.**

Goshen College  
*Goshen, Indiana*

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14, 4 P.M.**

Oak Park and River Forest High School  
*Oak Park, Illinois*

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 7 P.M.**

Hershey High School  
*Hershey, Pennsylvania*

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20, 7:30 P.M.**

Middleton High School  
Joint concert with the Wisconsin Youth  
Symphony Orchestra  
*Middleton, Wisconsin*

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 15, 7 P.M.**

Kettering Fairmont High School  
*Dayton, Ohio*

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18, 7 P.M.**

Allegheny College  
*Meadville, Pennsylvania*

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21, 7:30 P.M.**

Home Concert  
Skoglund Center Auditorium  
St. Olaf College  
*Northfield, Minnesota*

*[stolaftickets.com](http://stolaftickets.com)*

## 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 international and 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 11th 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 religion and theology; social service professions; arts and music; education; medical sciences; life sciences; mathematics and statistics; chemistry; engineering; foreign languages; biological sciences; and physical sciences.

Visit [stolaf.edu](http://stolaf.edu) for more information.

