

THE ST. OLAF COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
presents

KOREAN COMPOSERS FESTIVAL
CONCERT NO. 1

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2025 • BOE MEMORIAL CHAPEL • 7 P.M.

PROGRAM

Sanctus from *Missa Brevis for Vocal Ensemble*

Hyun Kook (b. 1967)

The Manitou Singers
Therees Tkach Hibbard, *conductor*

Sanctus is an exuberant a cappella piece with frequent key and meter changes. It starts in dynamic 5/4 time with the layering in of voices. A contrasting legato melody appears with the text of “Pleni sunt caeli et terra,” which is repeated after the key change. In alternating 4/4 and 6/8 time, voices triumphantly shout “Hosanna in excelsis,” which is immediately followed by parallel fifths together with dissonant intervals in contrasting hushed voices. A part of the main theme reappears in a brilliant coda.

Sanctus is the third movement from *Missa Brevis for Vocal Ensemble* (for SATB choir) which contains five movements: Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, Benedictus, and Agnus Dei. The mass was composed for a fifteen- to twenty-five-member choral ensemble. The mass is dedicated to the composer’s friend, maestro Javier Busto (Spain). This work was premiered during a recording by the Gwang Myeong City Choir in Korea, Young Jin Kim, conductor, and is included on the composer’s CD album entitled *Lux aeterna* (2016).

술래돈다 Sul-lae-don-da (“The Circle Spins”)

Hyowon Woo (b. 1974)

April Kim, *piano*

술래돈다 Sul-lae-don-da (“The Circle Spins”) is inspired by Ganggangsullae 강강술래, a traditional Korean circle dance sung by women under the full moon, especially during Chuseok (Korean harvest festival). With ancient roots in ritual, play, and communal song, this art form blends movement, rhythm, and voice to embody a collective hope for abundance and unity.

In this choral piece, the vibrant spirit of the dance is reimagined through layered rhythms, shifting tempi, and a lively antiphonal structure, reflecting the escalating energy of a circle that spins faster as the night deepens. Call-and-response patterns, body rhythms, and subtle traditional vocal colors are woven into the music, while the lyrics, adapted from Korean folk texts, carry the playful ceremonial essence of the original.

The piece begins in stillness, gains momentum through percussive pulse and overlapping textures, and ends in celebratory motion. It is not merely a retelling of tradition but a living transformation – bringing the voices of the past into vibrant resonance today.

강강술래 강강술래 Kang-kang-sul-lae / kang-kang-sul-lae (traditional refrain)

이 술래는 뉘 술랜가 Ee-sul-lae-neun / nwui-sul-laen-ga
Whose turn is it to lead the game?

마당 임자 굴래로다 Ma-dang-im-ja / sul-lae-ro-da
The host of the yard becomes the leader.

하늘에는 별도 총총 Ha-neu-rae-neun / byeol-do-chong-chong
Stars sparkle bright in the sky.

대밭에는 댓잎도 총총 Dae-ba-te-neun / daen-nip-do-chong-chong
Bamboo leaves flutter in the wind.

돈다 돈다 술래가 돈다 Don-da-don-da / sul-lae-ga-don-da
Round and round the leader turns.

마당 간 데 술래가 돈다 Ma-dang-gan-de / sul-lae-ga-don-da
The leader circles around the yard.

술래 소리 잘 맞아라 Sul-lae-so-ri / jal-ma-jeo-ra
Let your voices blend in harmony.

술래 술래 강강술래 Sul-lae-sul-lae / kang-gang-sul-lae
Leader, leader, Ganggangsullae

때만 찾아 잘도 돈다 Ttae-man-cha-ja / jal-do-don-da
 Spinning just at the right moment.

돈다 돈다 술래가 돈다 Don-da-don-da / sul-lae-ga-don-da
 Round and round the leader turns.

어깨는 충칭 다리는 들썩 Eo-kkae-neun-chung / da-ri-neun-deul-sseok
 Shoulders bounce and legs lift high.

달아 달아 밝은 달아 Dal-a-dal-a / bal-geun-dal-a
 Moon, oh moon, bright moonlight

이태백이 놀던 달아 Ee-tae-bae-gi / nol-deon-da-ra
 Where Yi Taebaek once did play

저기 저기 저 달 속에 계수나무 박혔으니 Jeo-gi-jeo-gi / jeo-dal-ssok-e / gye-su-na-mu / bak-hyeo-sseu-ni
 There in the moon, the cassia tree is rooted.

옥도끼로 찍어내어 Ok-do-kki-ro / da-deum-eo-seo
 Cut with a jade axe,

금도끼로 다듬어서 Geum-dok-ki-ro / da-deum-eo-seo
 Shaped with the golden axe

초가 삼간 집을 지어 Cho-ga-sam-gan / ji-beul-ji-eo
 Build a jumble thatched-roof house,

양친 부모 모셔다가 Yang-chin-bu-mo / mo-syeo-da-ga
 Invite beloved parents to live inside,

천년만년 천년만년 Cheon-nyeon-man-nyeon / cheon-nyeon-man-nyeon
 For a thousand, ten thousand years,

천년만년 살고지고 살고지고 Cheon-nyeon-man-nyeon / sal-go-ji-go / sal-go-ji-go
 To live and live for many long years.

강강술래 강강술래 Kang-kang-sul-lae / kang-kang-sul-lae (traditional refrain)

술래 돈다! Sul-lae-don-da!
 The leader spins!

Melancholy Hour

Hee Yun Kim (b. 1971)

from *Here You Are* for Piano and Wind Ensemble

Chee Hyeon Choi, *piano*

Drawn from the larger work *Here You Are* for Piano and Wind Ensemble, “Melancholy Hour” reflects a deeply introspective moment shaped by early experiences. As a teenager, music offered a space of refuge and expression—a way to navigate the complexities of the world and the emotions that often felt too large for words. This piece revisits that time with a spirit of quiet reflection. Lyrical and contemplative, it captures the sense of reaching inward—acknowledging the past, while finding a renewed sense of connection and healing through music.

한오백년 (Five Hundred Years)

Ja-Young Choi (b. 1974)

Mikyung Park, *voice* • Soojin Lee, *gayageum*

Five Hundred Years is a beloved Korean folk song, renowned for its poignant and lyrical melody. In this new arrangement, the song is presented for the first time with a gayageum accompaniment and soprano voice, offering a fresh yet respectful take on a classic that evokes deep emotion and cultural memory.

한 많은 이 세상 야속한 님아 정을 두고 몸만 가니 눈물이 나네
 아무렴 그렇지 그렇구 말구 한 오백년 살자는데 웬 성화요
 아무렴 그렇지 그렇구 말구 한 오백년 살자는데 웬 성화요

O, this world full of han* O, my heartless lover
 You gave me love and took off so soon I am overcome with grief and tears
 It is what it is, surely it is. I say ‘let us live five hundred years’ But why so impatient?
 It is what it is, surely it is. I say ‘let us live five hundred years’ But why so impatient?

뒷동산 후원에 칠성단을 짓고 우리 부모님 만수 무강을 빌어 빌어보자
 아무렴 그렇지 그렇구 말구 한 오백년 살자는데 웬 성화요
 아무렴 그렇지 그렇구 말구 한 오백년 살자는데 웬 성화요
 Let us build an altar at the back garden And pray for our parents’ long life and prosperity
 It is what it is, surely it is. I say ‘let us live five hundred years’ But why so impatient?
 It is what it is, surely it is. I say ‘let us live five hundred years’ But why so impatient?

*Han is a Korean emotion that is hard to translate. It could be described as a form of grief, resentment or lament.
 It is an essential element of Korean identity and one of the basis of Korean post-colonial identity.

태평가와 군밤 타령에 의한 민요 연곡 (Korean Folk Song Cycle)

Young-Sang Kim (b. 1993)

Mikyoung Park, *voice* • Micheal Min, *piano* • Soojin Lee, *gayageum*

Korean Folk Song Cycle is based on two well-known Korean folk songs: Taepyeongga (Song of Peace) and Gunbam Taryeong (Roasted Chestnuts Song) and highlights the creativity, adaptability, and expandability of traditional Korean music. It opens with wind-like sounds, created through the repeated use of a piano motif, while the gayageum introduces both regular and irregular rhythmic patterns. Over this texture, the soprano sings, "The wind blows..." The piece demonstrates how Korean folk songs can be reimagined and reinterpreted through different musical lenses.

바람이 분다
니나노 nilniriya 니나노 nilniriya
nilniriya 니나노
Feel the wind blowing
Ninano Nilniriya Ninano Nilniriya
Nilniriya Ninano

짜증을 내어서 무엇하나
성화를 받치어 무엇하나
속상한 일이 하도 많으니
놀기도 하면서 살아가세
Why so irritated
Why so impatient
So much to be upset about
Why not live with a little amusement

니나노 nilniriya nilniriya 니나노
얼싸 좋아 얼씨구 좋다
벌 나비는 이리 저리 펄펄 꽃을 찾아서 날아든다
Ninano Nilniriya Nilniriya Ninano
Eolssa! It feels good! Eolssigu! I feel good!
Bees and butterflies flying around here and there seeking out flowers

바람이 분다 바람이 불어
연평 바다에 어허어 얼싸 바람이 분다
어허어 얼싸 저 달이 밝아
Feel the wind blowing
The wind is blowing in the shores of Yeonpyeongdo
Eoheoeo Eolssa! Eoheoeo Eolssa! See how bright the moon is!

바람이 분다 바람이 불어
연평 바다에 어허어 얼싸 바람이 분다
얼싸 좋네 아 좋네 군밤이요 에헤라 생를 맘이로구나
얼싸 좋네 아 좋네 군밤이요 에헤라 생를 맘이로구나
Feel the wind blowing. Feel it blowing
The wind is blowing in the shores of Yeonpyeongdo Eoheoeo Eolssa!
Hooray! Let's enjoy roasted chestnuts Ehera! Chestnuts indeed!
Hooray! Let's enjoy roasted chestnuts Ehera! Chestnuts indeed!

달도 밝다 달도 밝다
우주 강산에 어허어 얼싸 저 달이 밝아
얼싸 좋네 아 좋네 군밤이요 에헤라 생를 맘이로구나
얼싸 좋네 아 좋네 군밤이요 에헤라 생를 맘이로구나
생를 맘이로구나
The moon is so bright, bright and shiny
The moon is so bright in this whole world
Hooray! Let's enjoy roasted chestnuts. Ehera! Chestnuts indeed!
Hooray! Let's enjoy roasted chestnuts Ehera! Chestnuts indeed!
Chestnuts indeed

Fingerdance for Solo Piano

Jean Ahn (b. 1976)

April Ryun Kim, *piano*

Jean Ahn's *Fingerdance*, originally written for piano four hands, is inspired by the traditional Korean dance 강강술래 (Ganggangsulrea). In this dance, women form a circle, hold hands, and sing, typically during the Korean Thanksgiving 추석 (Chuseok) under the full moon. Rather than focusing on the exact melody, Ahn captures the essence of the dance, using the piano to reflect its movement and energy as the fingers "dance" across the keys.

Qae-si-na Ching-ching

HyeKyung Lee (b. 1959)

Chapel Choir
Joseph Kemper, *conductor*
Leif Olsen, *piano* • Abby Schroeder, *percussion*

The work is based on five syllables: Qae-si-na-ching-ching. It is the refrain from folk songs from the south-east region of Korea, where most popular and highly artistic folk music genres came from. “Qae-si-na ching-ching” was sung (and danced) by everyone together in response to a lead soloist. It is not exactly known what the meaning is, but it is often interpreted as “bright moon” and is associated with celebratory mood. Through various rhythmic and harmonic variations, the piece tries to capture the different energy of emotions.

Fresh Breath of Hope

Nicky Sohn (b. 1992)

The Kobayashi/Gray Duo
Laura Kobayashi, *violin* • Susan Keith Gray, *piano*

According to Sohn, this work...

...was inspired by the conversations that [she] had [in the spring of 2021] with the people at the Houston Women’s Home, a place that strengthens women and supports them as they reclaim their stability. Entropy and disorder are everywhere... however, in this community, everyone shared one common theme—shining in a place of darkness, a hope for the future. One client described the home as a ‘fresh breath of hope,’ breathing color into what was once a bleak outlook...

Selected as one of the “Cool 100” by Houston CityBook Magazine, composer Nicky Sohn stands as a versatile and sought after talent across the United States, Europe, and Asia. Career highlights include the premiere of her Symphony No. 1 by the Annapolis Symphony, commissions and performances by St. Louis Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Annapolis Symphony, Orchestra of St. Luke’s, ROCO, Bergamot Quartet, Isidore Quartet, and WindSync. Sohn’s music debuted at number one on the Billboard Traditional Classical Albums chart in 2023 with Kinetic Ensemble’s album. A highlight of the 2024-25 season was a guitar concerto premiere and recording with guitar virtuoso, Bokyoung Byun, and the Albany Symphony.

Pansori Fantasy for Solo Piano

Texu Kim (b. 1980)

Koeun Grace Lee, *piano*

“Pansori Fantasy” is primarily inspired by pansori (판소리), a 17th-century Korean epic vocal tradition performed by a solo vocalist who both narrates and sings, accompanied by a barrel drum player. Although the piece does not directly quote any pansori excerpts, it draws upon key characteristics of the genre, including expressive vocal delivery, distinctive drum timbres, traditional rhythmic patterns, and the embellishment and vibration of notes.

In addition to conventional competition evaluation criteria such as accuracy and artistry, the piece invites interpretation through the lens of traditional Korean musical aesthetics. It also emphasizes thoughtful technical considerations, including effective fingering and hand distribution.

The piece pays homage to Alberto Ginastera, recognized for his innovative incorporation of non-Western influences, and to Unsuk Chin—an influential mentor to the composer Texu Kim and an exemplary composer for the keyboard—whose legacy continues to inspire this work.

“Pansori Fantasy” was commissioned by the Seoul International Music Competition for the semi-final round of its 2024 edition (December 9–10).

Gloria score: WW 1577

Hyo-won Woo (b. 1974)

III. Cum Sancto Spiritu

St. Olaf Choir
Anton Armstrong, *conductor*

Cum Sancto Spiritu is the third movement from Hyo-won Woo’s Gloria which combines both western musical concepts and the traditional Korean musical scale, along with rhythmic patterns called Jangdan (meaning long-short). Cum Sancto Spiritu repeats the text and theme from the first movement of Gloria, but this time set to a lively homophony, which emphasizes the joy and praise for the glory of God. The “Amen” section is expanded into a call and response often found in the western contrapuntal practice of imitation. Gloria is one of Woo’s most popular works as it draws from many recognizable western musical elements such as development, imitation, counterpoint, antiphonal singing, melisma, and ornamentations which are modified to imitate their Korean counterparts to achieve a synthesis of traditions, creating new vocal sonorities and effects.

Cum Sancto Spiritu

Gloria in excelsis Deo
et in terra pax hominibus
Bonae voluntatis.
Laudamus te, benedicimus te,
Adoramus te, glorificamus te,
Gratias agimus tibi
Propter magnam gloriam tuam,
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus,
tu solus Dominus,
tu solus Altissimus,
Jesu Christe, Amen.

With the Holy Spirit

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace
to people of good will,
We praise you, we bless you,
we adore you, we glorify you,
we give you thanks
for your great glory.
For you alone are the Holy one,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ, Amen

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The Manitou Singers

Comprised of select alto and soprano voices from the first-year class, the Manitou Singers is one of the most popular music organizations on the St. Olaf College campus. Despite a complete turnover in personnel each year, the 100-voice choir sings at the opening worship service of the college as well as at various campus functions throughout the year such as daily chapel and church services, the annual St. Olaf Christmas Festival, Family Weekend Concert and its own Spring concert in April. With a repertoire that ranges from sacred to secular to popular ballads, the Manitou Singers have broad appeal both on and off campus.

Therees Tkach Hibbard

Dr. Therees Tkach Hibbard is the director of the Manitou Singers and St. Olaf Chamber Singers, and teaches conducting, choral literature and voice at St. Olaf College. She has served as conductor, adjudicator, choreographer and clinician for numerous music and arts organizations throughout Great Britain, Europe and North America, as well as in Greece, Hong Kong and Muscat, Oman. Her work as a voice and movement specialist in the training of choral singers and conductors has created unique opportunities for her to collaborate with choirs and conductors from around the world. In addition to her work as a conductor and teacher, she has also performed professionally as vocal soloist, dancer and choral singer in London, UK and throughout the United States.

Chee Hyeon Choi

Chee Hyeon Choi, Assistant Professor of Piano Pedagogy at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, has appeared at national and international conferences such as the College Music Society, Music Teachers National Association, National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy, Association for Technology in Music Instruction, Korea Piano Pedagogy Conference, and Canadian Federation of Music Teachers Association. Previously, Dr. Choi held teaching positions at Bradley University, Millikin University, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her contributions to music education have been recognized through the 2020 Teacher of the Year award from the Illinois State Music Teachers Association, where she also served as Vice President and President-Elect. Choi has performed at the Composers in Asia Symposium, Pablo Center at the Confluence, the Central Florida Composers Forum, the Music by Women International Festival, and the Carnegie Weill Recital Hall. She served as the principal keyboardist with the Heartland Festival Orchestra and Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra.

Mikyong Park

Dr. Mikyong Park began teaching voice and piano at MacPhail in 2014. She has over 35 years' experience teaching in the United States and Korea. She believes education is a lifelong process, that all students have individual talent, and that the role of the teacher is not just to impart knowledge, but to serve as a mentor.

Dr. Park holds her Bachelor's and Master's of Music degrees from Seoul National University. Additionally, she completed 3 years of Opera Studying at the Opera Institute of Seoul National University. She received her Doctor of Musical Arts degree and Voice Pedagogy Certification at the University of Minnesota, and completed the Mastered Sacred Music program in choral conducting at Luther Seminary. Recently, Dr. Park has completed the Vocal Teacher Training and Certification Program from New York Vocal Coaching, which has undoubtedly enhanced her pop specialty.

She served as a trainer and leader of musicians for Global Mission Events offered by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America for ten years, along with being a long-time church musician. Dr. Park has also been an associated member of the National Association of Teachers Singing (NATS).

As an Opera performer, her operatic repertoire includes: Albert Herring, Ariadne auf Naxos, Il Barbiere di Siviglia, La Traviata, Lucia di Lammermoor, Cavalleria Rusticana, Un Ballo in Maschera, La Bohème, Rigoletto, The Magic Flute, and Don Giovanni.

Soojin Lee

Dr. Soojin Lee is a professional performer on the gayageum (a traditional Korean string instrument, pronounced /ka-ya-kum/). Dr. Lee is much sought-after by educational and arts institutions for lecture demonstrations on gugak and the gayageum in Minnesota and the states. She presented Korean music sessions multiple times at MMEA (Minnesota Music Educators Association) to help teachers find accessible ways to learn and teach gugak. She has been selected as a Teaching Artist in Residence of MacPhail Center for Music every year since 2021 and has met nearly over 2,800 students through her residencies.

She received the MacPhail Artist Development Grant, funded by The McKnight Foundation in 2018 and 2020 and Minnesota State Arts Board Creative Individual Grant in 2023.

Dr. Lee holds a bachelor's and a master's degrees in gugak (specializing in gayageum performance) from Seoul National University, South Korea. She also received a master's degree (specializing in ethnomusicology) from the University of California, Irvine, then her doctorate at the University of Minnesota, focusing on multicultural music education and indigenous music education. Currently, she is a faculty member at MacPhail Center for Music and Jang-mi Arts.

Michael Min

Michael D. Min is a Korean-American pianist known for his versatility as a soloist, chamber musician, and tenor. He has performed at venues including Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, Merkin Concert Hall, and the KEPKO Art Center in South Korea.

Min is a prize winner at competitions such as the Venusto Music Competition (Seoul), The American Prize, Franz Liszt Center International Piano Competition, Carles and Sofia International Piano Competition, among others.

Min is noted for his work in contemporary music, including recordings of *A Richer Dust* by Nigel Clarke and performances of music by David Maslanka and Yan Pang.

He earned his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Piano Performance from the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities, where he also completed his Master's degree in Collaborative Piano and Coaching.

April Ryun Kim

A native of Minnesota, Dr. April Ryun Kim is currently Associate Professor of Practice in Music at St. Olaf College. Dr. Kim has given numerous performances as a soloist, collaborative pianist, and chamber musician, showcasing a broad range of repertoire. She has been a featured guest pianist in the "Rhapsody and the Blues" Tour led by trumpeter Jens Lindemann, performing George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* arranged by Matt Catingub, featured guest artist with the St. Olaf Band, a soloist in the MasterWorks Festival Honors Recital, and with the St. Olaf Orchestra as senior soloist. She has collaborated with artists Micah Wilkinson, principal trumpet of the Pittsburgh Symphony, mezzo-soprano Katherine Rohrer, baritone Emery Stephens, percussionist Eri Isomura, pianist William Chapman Nyaho, and more.

As an advocate for new music, Dr. Kim regularly performs works by living composers. She has performed in the Musica Nova ensembles at the University of Missouri - Kansas City and the St. Olaf Faculty Chamber Ensemble. Furthermore, she is a pianist in 10th Wave Chamber Collective and the director of the Korean Composers Festival.

Dr. Kim holds a DMA in Piano Performance from the University of Missouri - Kansas City, an MM in Solo and Collaborative Performance from the Cleveland Institute of Music, and a BM in Piano Performance with a Collaborative Emphasis from St. Olaf College. Her former teachers include Diane Helfers Petrella, Kathryn Brown, Anita Pontremoli, and Kent McWilliams.

Chapel Choir

Founded in 1925, the St. Olaf Chapel Choir began as one of two mixed choruses at St. Olaf College following the dissolution of the Choral Union. Specializing in the performance of oratorio and larger works, the St. Olaf Chapel Choir frequently collaborates with the St. Olaf Orchestra as well as instrumentalists and soloists from the St. Olaf community.

Each fall, the Chapel Choir leads a service of Vespers, sometimes in collaboration with high school and community ensembles like the Northfield Youth Choirs Chorale and Troubadours, Elements of Sound from Shattuck-St. Mary's, and the Northfield High School Concert Choir. The St. Olaf Chapel Choir is conducted by Joseph Kemper, and performs on the annual St. Olaf Christmas Festival, and has been broadcast nationally in movie theaters, television and radio. Additionally, the Chapel Choir leads worship for the St. Olaf Student Congregation several Sundays per semester.

Joseph Kemper

Dr. Joseph Kemper is a conductor and composer with experience leading ensembles in collegiate, secondary, and correctional settings across the country. He is an Assistant Professor of Music at St. Olaf College, where he conducts the Chapel Choir and Viking Chorus. He also directs the Cantanti Singers and Treble Singers with Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs. He is dedicated to music-making that cultivates understanding and inspires lifelong musicians who use their gifts for societal impact.

From 2023–2025, Kemper served as Assistant Professor of Music at Concordia College, where he was nominated for the 2025 Flaatt Distinguished Teaching Award. Earlier roles include Visiting Assistant Professor of Music at Whitman College from 2021–2023, and Assistant Director of Choral Activities at Winter Park High School from 2011–2016, where his advanced treble ensemble was selected to perform at the 2014 Florida ACDA Conference.

Kemper has presented at conferences, led workshops, and directed honor choirs nationwide, including the 2024 Florida ACDA High School Honor Choir. At Concordia, he created "Singing, Incarceration, and Restorative Justice," a course serving incarcerated residents at the Clay County Jail; the course was named the 2025 Dave Grant Program of the Year. As a champion of new and diverse music, Kemper has led premieres of works by Mari Esabel Valverde, Evelyn Simpson Curenton, Arianne Abela, and Ronja Mokráňová.

He holds degrees from the University of Michigan (D.M.A. '21), Yale University (M.M. '18), where he received the inaugural Robert Shaw Prize, and St. Olaf College (B.M., '11), where he was awarded departmental distinction.

The Kobayashi/Gray Duo

The Kobayashi/Gray Duo made their international concert debut as winners of the prestigious United States Information Agency Artistic Ambassador auditions. The Duo has presented at the International Conferences on Women's Work in Music in the UK, the International Workshops in Norway, and conferences of the Music Teachers National Association, the American String Teachers Association, the College Music Society and the Society of Composers, Inc. The Duo has toured in Thailand, South Africa, South America, and the West Indies. Notable US performances include the Dame Myra Hess Series and museums in Omaha, Toledo, Detroit, and Washington, D.C. The Duo has three CDs of works by women composers on the Albany Records (PARMA Recordings) label. Sixteen of these recorded works are world premiere recordings, including *Grande Sonate*, Op. 8 by 19th century French composer Marie Grandval, which the Duo edited for Hildegard Publishing Company.

Laura Kobayashi

Violinist Laura Kobayashi leads a varied career as a performer and pedagogue. She is a founding member of the Main Street Music Studios in Fairfax, VA where she maintains a private studio and performs with the Main Street Chamber Players. She has served on the faculties at West Virginia University, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the University of Georgia and the University of Nebraska at Omaha. In addition, she has played as a member of the second violin section in the San Francisco Opera Orchestra. She earned her degrees from The Juilliard School, Yale University and The University of Michigan.

Susan Keith Gray

Pianist Susan Keith Gray is professor emerita of the University of South Dakota where she taught piano and piano pedagogy, founded the MM degree in collaborative piano, and performed and recorded with the faculty Rawlins Piano Trio for twenty-nine years. As a specialist in collaborative arts, Dr. Gray has performed nationally and internationally with a number of singers and instrumentalists and served on the collaborative piano faculty of summer festivals and competitions. Her former teachers and mentors include George Lucktenberg, Ian Hobson, Martin Katz, Eckart Sellheim, Edward Parmentier, Penelope Crawford and Barbara Lister-Sink.

Koeun Grace Lee

South Korean native Dr. Koeun Grace Lee is a versatile pianist, educator, and lecturer. She holds a DMA in Piano Performance and a Post-Master's Certificate in Music Theory Pedagogy from UNC Greensboro, as well as MM and BM degrees in Piano Performance from the UMKC Conservatory of Music and the University of Tennessee–Knoxville. She has performed at venues including the Composition in Asia International Symposium and Festival at the University of South Florida, Roosevelt University, College Music Society international and national conferences, and many others. Her performance of Jean Ahn's *Folksong Revisited* was broadcast on WFMT's Music in Chicago in 2021 and 2023. Her 2023 album, *Variations on a Theme by Stefan Wolpe and Other Selected Piano Works*, has been featured on WWFM, WMBR, and WFMT.

Dr. Lee was a 2024 recipient of the American Musicological Society Career Development Grant in American Music. She recently presented at the 2024 ISMTA Conference, the 2025 MTNA National Conference, and the 2025 NCKP: The Piano Conference.

She teaches at Harper College Community Music and Arts Center, serves as pianist at Community Church of Barrington, and adjudicates numerous piano competitions and festivals. As an advocate for new music, she actively promotes piano works by living composers that explore a dual identity of East and West.

St. Olaf Choir

For more than a century, the St. Olaf Choir, conducted by Dr. Anton Armstrong, has set the gold standard for choral singing, performing for millions around the world. Composed of 75 mixed voices, the St. Olaf Choir is hailed as one of the nation's premier a cappella ensembles, renowned for its artistry and beauty of sound.

The St. Olaf Choir was founded in 1912 by F. Melius Christiansen, whose work established the ensemble's standard of excellence and its tradition of bringing music to audiences outside of campus. Christiansen chose spiritually profound music and pushed student musicians to perfect a tone that was disciplined, controlled, and free of excessive vibrato. That sound – securely in tune, controlled in pitch, smooth in delivery – became the choir's hallmark.

When Armstrong took the helm in 1990, his vast knowledge of music and his ability to articulate a vision to singers and audiences alike took the St. Olaf Choir to the next level, adding more flavor to its signature sound and further expanding its repertoire to include music of the Pacific Rim, Africa, and Latin America.

Under Armstrong's leadership, the choir continues to expand its touring horizons, engaging capacity audiences in major concert halls throughout the United States and worldwide. The ensemble has toured internationally 16 times. Most recently the St. Olaf Choir toured South Africa for three weeks in 2024, performing alongside Tuks Camerata, Quava Vocal Group, and other standout choral ensembles.

Anton Armstrong

Anton Armstrong, Tosdal Professor of Music at St. Olaf College, became the fourth conductor of the St. Olaf Choir in 1990. He is a graduate of St. Olaf College and earned advanced degrees at the University of Illinois and Michigan State University. He is editor of a multicultural choral series for Earthsongs Publications and co-editor (with John Ferguson) of the revised St. Olaf Choral Series for Augsburg Fortress Publishers. In June 1998, he began his tenure as founding conductor of the Oregon Bach Festival Stangeland Family Youth Choral Academy.

In January 2006, Baylor University selected Anton Armstrong from a field of 118 distinguished nominees to receive the Robert Foster Cherry Award for Great Teaching and spent February–June 2007 in residency at Baylor University as a visiting professor. In October 2009, he received the Distinguished Alumni Award from Michigan State University. In June 2013, Dr. Armstrong received the Saltzman Award from the Oregon Bach Festival. The festival's highest honor, the Saltzman Award is bestowed upon individuals who have provided exceptional levels of leadership to the organization. Dr. Armstrong is a highly sought-after clinician and guest conductor, and works with many of the world's most prestigious organizations and ensembles.