
SOUNDS FROM ST. OLAF
DIGITAL CONCERT SERIES

CELEBRATION CONCERT



**ST. OLAF ORCHESTRA
ST. OLAF CHOIR
ST. OLAF BAND**

SUNDAY, MAY 24, 2020

ST. OLAF ORCHESTRA

Steven Amundson, *conductor*

Symphony No. 1
IV. Stürmisch Bewegt

Gustav Mahler (1860–1911)

ST. OLAF CHOIR

Anton Armstrong '78, *conductor*

Gloria (*Mass in G Minor*)

Ralph Vaughn Williams (1872–1958)

Our Father

Alexander Gretchaninoff (1864–1956)

When Memory Fades

Jayne Southwick Cool (b. 1947)
arr. Eric Nelson (b. 1959)

Alleluia

Jake Runestad (b. 1986)

Beautiful Savior

Silesian Folk Tune
arr. F. Melius Christiansen (1871–1955)

ST. OLAF BAND

Timothy Mahr '78, *conductor*

Silver Light!

Benjamin Yeo (b. 1985)

Adoramus Te, Christe

Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)
arr. Timothy Mahr (b. 1956)

Common Threads

Kimberly Archer (b. 1973)

Alleluia! Laudamus Te

Alfred Reed (1921–2005)

Program Notes and Choral Texts

ST. OLAF ORCHESTRA

Symphony No. 1

Gustav Mahler (1860–1911)

IV. Stürmisch Bewegt

For many people, both the name and the music of Mahler evoke a sense of awe due to the immense nature of his works, especially his ten symphonies. Mahler came of age in the waning years of the Austro-German symphonic tradition of the 19th century — a lineage which traces back to Mozart, Schubert, and Beethoven, and continues with Schumann Mendelssohn, Brahms, and Bruckner, among others. Today, Mahler's symphonies are regarded as masterpieces of the genre, but were marginal for a long time because of their complexity. While Mahler was working on his early symphonies in the 1890s, his contemporaries and critics had enormous anxieties about the future of the symphonic tradition. Even Brahms — the most popular symphonist after Beethoven — felt that he couldn't escape the shadow of Beethoven's ninth symphony, which many saw as the pinnacle of the genre. By the time Mahler began composing, many were wondering if the symphony could continue to develop at all, or if the ideal symphony had already been reached.

Amidst the uncertainty of the time, Mahler began working on his first symphony, which he finished in 1888 at age 27. He composed the majority of the piece in only two months. Initially, for both critics and audiences, the symphony was a bit of an enigma. People felt that although there were moments of delicate beauty and masterful orchestration, the symphony was not coherent as a whole. Mahler's initial title for the symphony was *A Symphonic Poem in Two Parts*, which conveys his hesitancy in titling it as a proper symphony. After the first performance, Mahler was disappointed by the lukewarm reception from the audience and critics, and he sought to make major revisions in order to clear up his intentions about the meaning of the work. Mahler couldn't seem to make up his mind about the programmatic nature of his piece. He continued to make revisions after subsequent performances, constantly unhappy with the vague meaning of the symphony. Mahler wrote program notes for the symphony, though he knew that no amount of words could convey to the audience the personal meaning of his music. He ultimately decided against giving any public description of the symphony's personal meaning, hoping that people would understand it better and accept it as a piece of "absolute music."

The fourth and final movement depicts Mahler's imaginary protagonist struggling against the despair of the world and the challenge of overcoming life's difficulties. Mahler originally titled the final movement *Dall' Inferno al Paradiso* (from Hell to Heaven), which seems fitting considering the extreme outburst at the beginning of the movement. Again, the music must make its way through various moods and styles as the long, challenging journey approaches the triumphant fanfare of the closing bars.

Mahler dreamed of making a big impact and "shaking up" the world of symphonic music with his first symphony. Considering his many revisions and the return to a conventional form for the second half of the symphony, he was unable to accomplish all of his goals. His frustration was intensified by the public's lack of interest. He could not completely escape from a conventional symphonic style on his first attempt, and it only ended up confusing his audience. Mahler wanted to give his symphony a programmatic meaning that was deeply personal, but could not be well expressed through music, which led to his eventual renunciation of program music. Mahler found redemption in his second symphony and saw it as the real conclusion to the story he began in the first, as well as his first huge compositional hit. Despite these obstacles, the first symphony has become widely appreciated as the beginning chapter of his brilliant symphonic career.

— Notes by William Beimers '20

ST. OLAF CHOIR

Gloria (*Mass in G Minor*)

Ralph Vaughn Williams (1872–1958)
(G. Schirmer, Inc.)

SUNG IN LATIN

Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.

And on earth peace, goodwill toward all.

Laudamus te. Adoramus te.

We praise you. We adore you.

Benedicimus te. Glorificamus te.

We bless you. We worship you.

Gratias agimus tibi

We give thanks to you

Propter magnum gloriam tuam.

because of your great glory.

Domine Deus, Rex coelestis,

Lord God, king of heaven,

Deus Pater omnipotens.

God the father almighty.

Domine fili unigenite, Jesu Christe.

Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.

Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.

Qui tollis peccata mundi,

Who takes away the sins of the world,

miserere nobis.

have mercy upon us.

suscipe deprecationem nostram.

hear our prayer.

Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,

Who sits at the right hand of the Father,

miserere nobis.

have mercy upon us.

Quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus Dominus,

For you alone art holy, you alone art God,

tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe.

you alone art most high, Jesus Christ.

Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris.

With the Holy Ghost in the glory of God the Father.

Amen.

Amen.

— *Ordinary of the Mass*
trans. Anton Armstrong

Our Father

Alexander Gretchaninoff (1864–1956)
(Theodore Presser)

Holy, holy, holy, Lord of Sabaoth,
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.

Thine are kingdoms, thrones, dominions,
might and majesty.

Thy name be hallow'd on earth,

As it is hallow'd in heav'n.

Thou givest strength to the weak;

Thou rememb'rest the poor and the distressed.

And upon them that fear Thy name

Showers of blessings unnumbered shall fall;

peace shall follow them.

By still waters their path shall be.

Sing then of mercy, of judgment, of kingdoms,

Of thrones, dominions and power for evermore.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts;

Come to us, O Lord, in splendor bright,

Fill our hearts with everlasting light. Amen.

— *Adapted from the Bible*
Arthur S. Kimball

When Memory Fades

Jayne Southwick Cool (b. 1947)

arr. Eric Nelson (b. 1959)

(Morningstar Music Publishers)

When memory fades and recognition falters,
When eyes we love grow dim, and minds confused,
Speak to our souls of love that never alters;
Speak to our hearts by pain and fear abused.
O God of life and healing peace,
Empower us with patient courage, by your grace
infused.

As frailness grows, and youthful strengths diminish,
In weary arms, which worked their earnest fill.
Your aging servants labor now to finish
Their earthly tasks as fits your mystery's will.
We grieve their waning, yet rejoice, believing,
Your arms, unwearied, shall uphold us still.

Within your spirit, goodness lives unfading.
The past and future mingle into one.
All joys remain, un-shadowed light pervading.
No valued deed will ever be undone.
Your mind enfolds all finite acts and offerings.
Held in your heart, our deathless life is won.

— *Mary Louise Bringle*

Alleluia

Jake Runestad (b. 1986)
(Jake Runestad Music)

Beautiful Savior

Silesian Folk Tune
arr. F. Melius Christiansen (1871–1955)
(Augsburg Fortress)

ST. OLAF BAND

Silver Light! (2019)

Benjamin Yeo (b. 1985)

Benjamin Yeo is a composer-conductor gaining international recognition for his original works for band. His experience as a band director in his native Singapore enabled him to approach the medium with confidence. His works have been featured on both national and international platforms such as the locally held Singapore Youth Festival Arts Presentation for Brass/Concert Bands and the prestigious Midwest Clinic, an annual International Band and Orchestra Conference held in Chicago, Illinois. Most recently, his *Winds of Niagara* won the Dallas Wind Symphony Fanfare Competition.

Silver Light! was commissioned by the Rocky Mountain Commissioning Project for the 11th Annual Colorado State University-Pueblo Festival of Winds. The St. Olaf Band Endowment provided the funding for participation in this project. Yeo states:

Silver Light! is dedicated to Dick Mayne for his illustrious life as a conductor and educator. This work opens with an energetic fanfare, featuring a lyrical trombone solo representing Dick's influence before flowing into the theme from "Where the Columbines Grow," one of the two official state songs of Colorado. The word "Silver" was specially chosen to celebrate Mayne's retirement, and "Light" was inspired by the biblical verse Matthew 5:14: "You are the light of the world..."

Adoramus Te, Christe (1620)

Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)
arr. Timothy Mahr (b. 1956)

Composers have often favored this well-known Latin passage offering adoration to Jesus Christ. Held dear by worshippers for centuries, one can find settings of variants of this text by Palestrina, Gesualdo, Gasparini, Byrd, and Brahms, among many others. It presents an opportunity for tender, lyrical expression.

Monteverdi stood astride the transition between the Renaissance and the Baroque periods, creating music that maximized the contemporary practice of the former while anticipating the new directions of the latter. His seminal composition, *La Favola d'Orfeo* in 1607, is the earliest work in the operatic repertoire still receiving regular performances today. Monteverdi was the maestro di cappella in Venice at the San Marco Basilica (St. Mark's) for the final 30 years of his life. It was there, while on a visit as part of the St. Olaf Band's 2014 international concert tour, that Mahr sensed the potential for an instrumental setting of Monteverdi's *Adoramus Te, Christe*. Mahr has dedicated this setting to his mother and father.

Monteverdi chose to set the work for six voices, and the piece was often performed with light instrumental accompaniment. The work was first published in 1620 as part of Giulio Bianchi's *Libro primo de motetti in lode d'nostro signore*.

Common Threads (2016)

Kimberly Archer (b. 1973)

Kimberly K. Archer is currently serving as Professor of Composition at Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville, Illinois. She holds degrees from Florida State University, Syracuse University, and the University of Texas at Austin. A specialist in music for winds and percussion, Archer's compositions have been performed throughout the United States and featured at major music conferences, including the international conventions of the World Association of Symphonic Bands and Ensembles and The Midwest Clinic. She writes about *Common Threads*:

It's amazing, but true, that nothing shuts off my creativity spigot faster than the word "commission." It can be so much pressure!

After many false starts on this piece, I found myself sitting at a piano, banging repeatedly on an F and growling, "If I play this F long enough, something has to come out of it!" What ultimately came out was a work that meanders through many keys, meters, and styles, but is unified by the common thread of a repeated pitch. Usually it's that F, finally making good on its potential.

As the larger form and character of this music began to take shape, I realized its goofy humor, carefree spirit, and unabashed joy exactly reflected what I have seen for myself and love about the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Wind Ensemble and their conductor, the commissioning party. Indeed, I can't recall a premiere performance where the musicians and the audience shared such fun and energy!

Alleluia! Laudamus Te (1973)

Alfred Reed (1921–2005)

Alleluia! Laudamus Te is a celebration hymn of praise that has implanted itself firmly into the traditions of St. Olaf College. Commissioned by Richard S. Mountford and the Malone College Concert Band, it was premiered at its third annual band festival in February 1973. Composer Alfred Reed, known internationally for his numerous major works for the band medium, led this premiere performance.

The St. Olaf Band first performed *Alleluia! Laudamus Te* upon its publication the following year and the work has been the postlude of the St. Olaf College Baccalaureate service ever since. It is the final work presented in a concert setting on campus each academic year and, because the seniors walk with their class during the afternoon Commencement, it is also the last composition that the senior members of the band perform with the ensemble.

The presentation of this work on this concert is a virtual performance. Conductor Timothy Mahr sent out a video to the members of the St. Olaf Band of him conducting the work, recorded in his living room. Around 80 of the musicians were able to submit a recording of their performance of their part (while watching the conducting) and then two band members, Ella Harpstead '20 and Robb Hallam '22, combined these efforts into a virtual performance video. It was a challenge to find percussion instruments during the quarantine, so a few substitutions were made (e.g. taping paper clips to the bottom of a tom-tom to make a snare drum, using typically mounted hi-hat cymbals as hand-held crash cymbals). All of these efforts enabled the seniors to perform with the band one last time, albeit in a new and different way, and thereby allowed for a performance of this traditional work once again on this very important day.

— Notes by Timothy Mahr '78