

THE
ST · OLAF
CHOIR
ANTON ARMSTRONG · CONDUCTOR

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**The St. Olaf Choir and conductor Anton Armstrong present regional premiere of
“This House of Peace” during 18-concert national tour, including Carnegie Hall in
New York, Verizon Hall in Philadelphia and Severance Hall in Cleveland**

This poignant and beautiful work by Ralph M. Johnson was commissioned for the opening of the Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend in Springfield, Oregon, and melds words of patients and families with verses of “A Gaelic House Blessing”

As the St. Olaf Choir and conductor Anton Armstrong travel through the nation’s Great Lakes states to the East Coast during their 2010 national tour, they are taking with them a poignant and beautiful new eleven-minute work that speaks to healing ... a timely theme as the world responds to the devastating earthquake in Haiti.

Premiered at the 2008 Oregon Bach Festival in Eugene, Oregon, under the direction of Anton Armstrong and commissioned for the opening of Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend in Springfield, Oregon, “This House of Peace” by Ralph M. Johnson (a 1978 graduate of St. Olaf College) will receive its regional premiere by the St. Olaf Choir during the 18-concert tour, including performances at Cleveland’s Severance Hall (Monday, Feb. 1), Carnegie Hall in New York City (Sunday, Feb. 7), Verizon Hall in Philadelphia (Monday, Feb. 8), and Heinz Hall in Pittsburgh (Tuesday, Feb. 9). *See below for complete program and itinerary.* “This House of Peace” is scored for chorus, soprano and tenor soli, strings and oboe.

The text was drawn from actual quotes from Sacred Heart caregivers, patients and their families. “These words demonstrate the dynamic relationship between healer and patient,” says composer Ralph Johnson. “The soloists sings verses of a ‘healer’s prayer’ adapted from an old Gaelic house blessing which unifies the work.”

Sacred Heart Medical Center’s new hospital along the banks of the pristine McKenzie River creates a healing environment where patients and their families are surrounded by nature and art. According to the organization’s website, www.peacehealth.org, “research shows that patients cared for in a calm setting that incorporates natural light, the sight and sound of water, and exterior views of green spaces experience less stress and pain and lower blood pressure and have a faster recovery. The RiverBend site, with its untamed river, wildlife, trees and wildflowers, is the quintessential healing environment.”

The new medical center has made a significant investment in healing artwork, and it is incorporated into the architecture of the new hospital. Jenny Ulum, the facilities’ Director of Public Affairs, says they

wanted a musical work for last year’s dedication that would speak to healing. The work was premiered July 3, 2008, as part of the Oregon Bach Festival by The Stangeland Family Youth Choral Academy conducted by Anton Armstrong (who has served as the ensembles founding conductor since 1998). The soloist was soprano Maria Jette.

One of the voices featured in the work is that of a young, single mother who gave birth to a pre-mature baby at the facility, and wrote to those in charge of Sacred Heart’s guesthouse, where the mother stayed while the baby was in the neonatal intensive care unit at the hospital. “As I read through transcripts of patient and family stories and thank-you notes to the PeaceHealth caregivers, this young woman’s words jumped off the page with their rough-hewn honesty and pathos. I knew as soon as I read the first sentence that I’d found the dramatic and emotional center of the piece.”

*I want you to know that my little girl
was conceived under a bridge.
I have never lived in a house before
that is clean, all the time;
where people talk nice to each other, all the time;
We feel at home here.
I learned I can be here.
I want this; I want this for my baby.*

Text from “This House of Peace”

Following this winter’s national tour, the St. Olaf Choir and Armstrong will present the work on May 1 at the 21st annual international “partners for HEALTH” conference sponsored by the Society for the Arts in Healthcare, which takes place in Minneapolis.

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ST. OLAF: A TRANSFORMATIONAL CHOIR

After F. Melius Christensen founded the St. Olaf Choir in 1912, he was credited with contributing to the transformation of American choral music. He and the St. Olaf Choir transcended America’s limited early 20th century choral tradition with the introduction of a cappella singing of the highest level, creating a model for the widespread choral growth that followed.

“F. Melius opened a whole new paradigm that never existed before,” Anton Armstrong says. “Prior to the St. Olaf Choir, glee clubs and oratorio societies were the choirs of the day. A cappella singing in America was new for its time. The St. Olaf Choir helped establish what we know today as the parish choirs that are now a regular part of many worship services across the nation.”

The St. Olaf Choir became one of the first to tour the nation regularly ... starting in 1920. It started recording in the 1920s and performed on air when radio was in its infancy. The annual “St. Olaf Christmas Festival” has aired on national and international radio and television for more than 20 years ... and continues to serve as a prototype for these types of holiday broadcasts.

In 2007 it achieved another major milestone when *Christmas at St. Olaf: Where Peace and Love and Hope Abide* was simulcast to more than 180 movie theaters across the nation on December 2, 2007. The

PBS premiere of the one-hour highlights program produced by Twin Cities Public Television aired on Wednesday, December 19, 2007, and reached 2.5 million people, according to Nielsen Media Research.

The St. Olaf Choir is the premier choral ensemble of Minnesota’s St. Olaf College, and is best known today for its performances in the annual internationally broadcast “St. Olaf Christmas Festival” on PBS. The St. Olaf Choir is comprised of full-time undergraduate students at St. Olaf College, a liberal arts institution in Northfield, Minnesota, which currently enrolls about 3,000 students.

The singers commit to balancing full course loads with rehearsals five days a week, choir members perform concerts entirely from memory. Anton Armstrong has conducted the St. Olaf Choir since 1990. There have been only three other conductors of the St. Olaf Choir since its inception 98 years ago: Kenneth Jennings, Olaf Christiansen and the founder and first conductor F. Melius Christiansen.

The St. Olaf Choir has also been featured in a number of symphonic collaborations, including the Minnesota Orchestra and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, under the batons of Osmo Vänskä, Sir Neville Marriner, Neemi Jarvi, Sir David Willcocks, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, Andreas Delfs, Helmuth Rilling and the late Robert Shaw. Touring, recording and broadcasts are all major components in the artistic life of the St. Olaf Choir. The St. Olaf Choir has performed for capacity audiences in major concert halls across the nation and overseas since 1920. Annual tours attract audiences totaling 25,000. Recent tours have included a 2005 tour of Norway, a 2001 European tour including Paris, Prague, Vienna and Berlin, and a 1997 tour to Australia and New Zealand. The St. Olaf Choir toured England, Wales and Ireland this past summer, and will be performing with the Minnesota Orchestra and Music Director Osmo Vänskä in April 2010.

The St. Olaf Choir’s ever-expanding discography now features 25 discs following the 2007 release of *Repertoire for Mixed Voices, Volume 1*, which is the first of a two-disc compilation of “home concert” recordings from the 2001 to 2006 national tours recorded in Boe Memorial Chapel on the campus of St. Olaf College. *Repertoire for Mixed Voices, Volume 2* will be released in 2010. All recordings are available through St. Olaf Records at www.stolafrecords.com or 1-888-232-6523. To learn more about the St. Olaf Choir, log on to www.stolafchoir.com.

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ABOUT SACRED HEART MEDICAL CENTER

Sacred Heart Medical Center, one of the largest hospitals between Portland, Ore. and San Francisco, Calif., is a regional referral center serving as a Level II trauma center for an 8 county region in western Oregon. Key services for the nonprofit hospital include the Oregon Heart & Vascular Institute, Neurosciences Institute with a Gamma Knife Center, Gerontology Institute, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and specialized surgical services. Sacred Heart Medical Center has two campuses: University District in Eugene, Ore., and a state-of-the-art second campus, Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend, located in neighboring Springfield, Ore.

For more information visit www.peacehealth.org. Contact: Jenny Ulum, Director of Public Affairs, PeaceHealth, Phone: 541-686-7136 or julum@peacehealth.org.

Commissioned for the 2008 opening of Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend, Springfield, Oregon and dedicated to the Caregivers of PeaceHealth.

This House of Peace

Ralph M. Johnson

Solo text adapted from the words of PeaceHealth patients

Choral text adapted from a Gaelic House Blessing by Ralph M. Johnson

Solo:

She is sleeping well.
I am so grateful for every breath...
I was scared, but you seemed to change all that,
Thank you for your prayers.
She is sleeping well.
Thank you.

Choir:

Bless Thou this house from roof to floor.
Bless Thou each pilgrim seeking refuge at our
door.
Fill every room with peace and grace,
that all who sojourn here find healing in this
place.

Solo:

I want you to know that my little girl
was conceived under a bridge, under a bridge.
I have never lived in a house before
that is clean, all the time;
where people talk nice to each other, all the
time;
We feel at home here.

I learned I can be here.
I want this; I want this for my baby.

Choir:

Bless Thou this house with fire and light;
Bless Thou each child who cries for comfort in
the night;
And by your healing gift imbued,
may every wounded one we touch see life
renewed.

Solo:

We live moment-to-moment now,
not knowing what next will be.
And in this unknown, I live in peace.
She is sleeping well.
Thank you...

Guide Thou our hands to heal and bless.
Touch all who meet here,
With Thy love and gentleness.
Soothe all our hearts, let grieving cease.
May we find wholeness
Within this house of peace.
And in this unknown, I live in peace.

WEEKEND TOUR:

Rochester, Minnesota

Saturday, January 23 • 7:30 p.m.
Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist

Tickets: \$20 adults & \$10 students • General admission • www.stolaftickets.com or 800-363-5487
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Mankato, Minnesota

Sunday, January 24 • 3p.m.
Bethlehem Lutheran Church

*Tickets: \$20 adults & \$10 students • General admission
www.stolaftickets.com, at the church office or 800-363-5487.*
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MAIN TOUR:

La Crosse, Wisconsin

Friday, January 29 • 7:30 p.m.
St. Paul's Lutheran Church

*Tickets: \$20 adults & \$10 students • General admission
www.stolaftickets.com, at the church office or 800-363-5487*
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Chicago, Illinois

Saturday, January 30 • 4 p.m.
Fourth Presbyterian Church

Tickets: \$35 general admission; \$20 student rush only www.stolaftickets.com or 800-363-5487
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Kalamazoo, Michigan

Sunday, January 31 • 4 p.m.
Chenery Auditorium

*Tickets:
\$25 / \$18 adults & \$5 students
Reserved Ticketing available by calling Bach Festival of Kalamazoo 269-337-7407 or Miller Auditorium
269-387-2300*
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Cleveland, Ohio

Monday, February 1 • 7:30 p.m.
Severance Hall

*Tickets: \$50 - \$30 adults, \$20 student rush • Tickets available at Severance Hall Box Office on-line
www.clevelandorchestra.com, or by calling 216-231-1111 or 800-686-1141*

Rochester, New York

Tuesday, February 2 • 7:30 p.m.
Hale Auditorium
Roberts Wesleyan University

Tickets: \$22 adults & \$10 students • Reserved seating - tickets available at Roberts Cultural Arts Center, on-line at www.roberts.edu/clc, or by calling 585-594-6008.

Worcester, Massachusetts

Wednesday, February 3 • 7:30 p.m.
Mechanics Hall

*Tickets: \$30 reserved, \$20 students
Reserved seating-tickets available at Mechanics Hall Box Office, on-line at www.stolaftickets.com or by calling 508-752-0888.*

New Haven, Connecticut

Thursday, February 4 • 7:30 p.m.
Battell Chapel, Yale University

Tickets: \$35, \$15 student rush at the door - General admission www.stolaftickets.com or 800-363-5487.

Princeton, New Jersey

Friday, February 5 • 7:30 p.m.
Princeton University Chapel

*Tickets: \$35 general admission, \$15 students
Available at Frisk Campus Center through Princeton University Ticketing, 609-258-9220, utickets@princeton.edu or online at www.stolaftickets.com.*

New York City, New York

Sunday, February 7 • 3 p.m.
Stern Auditorium/Perelman Stage at Carnegie Hall

*Tickets: \$75 - \$35
Reserved seating available at Carnegie Hall Box Office, CarnegieCharge 212-247-7800 and on-line at www.carnegiehall.org (\$10 off tickets priced between \$45 and \$65 through Metro New York Lutheran Synod 212-665-0732 x222).*

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Monday, February 8 • 7:30 p.m.
Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts • Verizon Hall

Tickets: \$84-\$24 • Students with ID \$5 off any ticket price • Tickets available at the Kimmel Center Box Office, www.kimmelcenter.org or by calling 215-893-1999.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Tuesday, February 9 • 7:30 p.m.
Heinz Hall

Tickets: \$35 - \$28 & \$15 student rush • Heinz Hall Box Office 412-392-4900 or www.pgharts.org.

Ft. Wayne, Indiana

Wednesday, February 10 • 7:30 p.m.
First Presbyterian Church

*Tickets: \$25 & \$15 student rush • General admission
Tickets available at www.stolaftickets.com, at the church office or by calling 800-363-5487.*

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Thursday, February 11 • 7:30 p.m.
Fountain Street Church

*Tickets: \$25 & \$15 student tickets at the door
Tickets available www.stolaftickets.com, the Calvin Music Department or by calling
616-526-6253. Student tickets not available online.*

Palos Heights, Illinois

Friday, February 12 • 7:30 p.m.
Ozinga Chapel, Trinity Christian College

*Tickets: \$30 & \$15 seniors
Tickets available at www.stolaftickets.com, at the Trinity Music Department, 708-239-4877. Student
tickets not available on-line*

Owatonna, Minnesota

Saturday, February 13 • 7:30 p.m.
Trinity Lutheran Church

*Tickets: \$15 adults, \$5 students
www.stolaftickets.com, at the church office
or 800-363-5487*

St. Olaf Choir 2009 National Tour Program

I.

<i>With the Voice of Praise (Chandos Anthem No. 6)</i>	George Friedrich Handel (1685-1759)
<i>If Ye Love</i>	Thomas Tallis (c. 1505-1585)
<i>Fürchte dich nicht (BWV 228)</i>	Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

II.

<i>Talismane (Op. 141, No.4)</i>	Robert Schumann (1810-1856)
<i>Enosh</i>	Louis Lewandowski (1821-1894)
<i>Bar xizam (Upward I rise)</i>	Abbie Betinis (b. 1980)
<i>Dilexi, quoniam exaudiet Dominus</i>	Roberto Caamaño (b. 1923)
<i>Praise to the Lord</i>	arr. F. Melius Christiansen

INTERMISSION

III.

<i>All This Night</i>	Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)
<i>Ubi Caritas</i>	Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978)
<i>Prayer of St. Francis</i>	Charles Forsberg (b. 1942)
<i>This House of Peace</i>	Ralph M. Johnson (b. 1955)
<i>For the Sake of Our Children</i>	Jeffery L. Ames (b. 1969)

IV.

<i>Jesus Christ the Apple Tree</i>	Stanford E. Scriven '11 (b. 1988)
<i>Glory Hallelujah to the New Born King</i>	arr. Mark Butler
<i>We Shall Walk Through the Valley</i>	arr. Moses G. Hogan
<i>Ride on King Jesus</i>	arr. Moses G. Hogan

Optional Selections:

<i>My Good Lord's Done Been Here</i>	arr. André J. Thomas
<i>Beautiful Savior</i>	arr. F. Melius Christiansen