Presenting the St. Olaf Orchestra  
by Allison DeWaard

Steven Amundson, the conductor of the St. Olaf Orchestra asserts that the orchestration of *Roman Carnival Overture* is “brilliant.” He is looking forward to performing Matthew Peterson’s original composition as well. Peterson explains the inspiration behind *Hyperborea*:

One summer night in July, 2010, I was out watching the sky darken over the lake Skedviken. The sun never set to the North, and a pink glow remained on the horizon all night. Seeing that glow inspired thoughts of the imaginary Hyperborea. It is said mortals can’t reach the land where there is no suffering. But what if we briefly glimpsed that shore, and saw that it does exist? *Hyperborea* is a musical and spiritual journey inspired by the horizons of the far North, especially the sea and sky of my home near Sweden’s Baltic coast.

This piece alone will make the concert worth attending.

Amundson has been a part of the faculty of St. Olaf College for the past thirty years, and he is greatly looking forward to this tour. Coming to Northwest Iowa “has always been a highlight for the orchestra,” remarks Amundson. Amundson is proud of his students, explaining that the trademark of the St. Olaf Orchestra is the students’ investing themselves “fully and passionately in the performance.” This is sure to be an inspiring concert that takes its listeners on a musical journey.

The concert will be held in the B.J. Haan Auditorium at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa at 7:30 p.m. Tickets may be purchased at stolaftickets.com, True Vine in Sioux Center, Prairie Moon Books in Sheldon, Dove Christian Bookstore in Orange City, and Something Special in Rock Valley. Tickets will be available at the door, or by calling 712-722-6230.

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NISO NOTES
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Closing the Gaps  
by James Koldenhoven, General Manager

Reflecting on the value of NISO, board member Marilyn Dean recently observed, “In good times and bad, there is a soothing joy that comes from music, and we are ever so fortunate to have had a symphony orchestra at our doorstep for the past twenty-five years.” She also acknowledged the importance of NISO donors: “The symphony has only been possible with the help of businesses and individuals who have provided funding to help meet expenses.”

With this season’s music about to begin, we step back and evaluate our finances. In summary, we have a total cash budget need of approximately $60,000, half of which depends on our annual campaign. Thanks to over 100 donors, the campaign is within $6,000 of our $30,000 fundraising goal for the 2011-12 Season. We are, once again, within reach of closing the gap.

To help close this financial gap, the board plans to conduct an entertaining project in connection with the Pops Concert in January, when aspiring conductors from different towns will collect “votes” (dollars) from friends and neighbors to conduct a short number in the program. Whoever secures the highest number of “votes” gets the baton.

We also have a gap on the board of directors. At present, we have three vacancies that need filling by January in order to have a full-strength board of 10-12 members. You can help close this gap by sending us a name or two. To serve on the board, you do not have to be a musician or a fundraiser. You should serve first of all because you agree with Marilyn Dean: we are ever so fortunate to have a symphony orchestra at our doorstep, and we want to keep it that way. For more information, email niso@dordt.edu. I will gladly send you information and answer any questions.
From NISYO to NISO by Shirley Matheis

Three of the current NISO violinists began by playing with the Northwest Iowa Symphony Youth Orchestra (NISYO) under the direction of Mr. Bradley Miedema. Erica Wiersma and Jenna Rylaarsdam were sixth-grade charter members of NISYO, and Kinza Brue began the following year, also as a sixth-grader.

After playing with NISYO for two or three years, each of the violinists auditioned for NISO. (This is an annual process for student members of the orchestra). Jenna is now a junior in high school, Eric a senior, and Kinza a sophomore.

Reasons for having chosen the violin when they were elementary school students varied for the three. Jenna was influenced by her father, an accomplished violinist who has been playing with NISO for many years. Her brother played bass violin, as did Erica’s older sister. For Kinza, size was the determining factor: her first violin was a tiny instrument!

Much as they enjoy playing with NISO today, none of the three have always liked to practice. They agree that it is much more enjoyable now that the music is more difficult and more interesting. They appreciate the challenge of playing a variety of music with an ensemble of mature musicians.

All three young women have also studied piano. In addition, Jenna is taking organ lessons, and Erica plays viola. Jenna and Kinza intend to major in music in college and expect to teach music in some capacity in the future, but Kinza is also interested in English. Erica thinks that she may also have private students some day, but she has set her sights on the fashion industry – beauty school and journalism.

While music plays a huge role in their lives, the three have a variety of other interests. Jenna plays soccer and is involved in school plays; Kinza runs cross country and track and enjoys scrapbooking; Erica rides a unicycle. Last summer, Erica spent a month with a touring ensemble that performed in various European countries.

In spite of late rehearsals that interfere with homework, music that is sometimes almost overwhelmingly difficult, and high-priced gas (if you have to drive from Orange City), all three agree that the advantages far outweigh the inconvenience. They are very grateful for the opportunities available to them here in Northwest Iowa.

We anticipate that many current NISYO players will follow in their footsteps and join NISO as well.

A New Administrative Assistant by Shirley Matheis

When Mary Hulstein saw the newspaper ad for someone to fill NISO’s administrative assistant position, she knew the job was right for her. Hulstein, NISO’s new administrative assistant, earned a BA in Music Education from Central College in Pella, Iowa. She has enjoyed teaching music for almost twenty years, including thirteen years at MOC-Floyd Valley High School. With a busy family of four children, a part-time job that involved music seemed to be the perfect fit.

NISO is not new to Mary, however. She played horn with NISO before she had children, and on three occasions she brought the MOC-Floyd Valley jazz band to perform at NISO pops concerts.

Mary was a farm girl from Eastern Iowa, and she met her husband, Brent, while participating in The Music Man, a Tulip Festival production. Now, they and their children--eight-year-olds Heather and Hannah, six-year-old Amanda, and five-year-old Gerrit--are the third and fourth generation to live on the Hulstein family farm in rural Orange City.

Mary’s interest in music began early on and has been extensive. She sings, plays piano and horn, and knows percussion. She gives private lessons; has been a clinician for marching, concert, and jazz bands; plays with her church orchestra; and sings and plays piano with the praise team.

In addition to all of these activities, Mary is a Sunday School teacher, and she has several hobbies: she loves to travel, garden, scrapbook, and collect Boyds Bears.

Mary can be found at the NISO desk in the Dordt College Music Department from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Thursday. She can be reached at niso@dordt.edu or 722-6230 during those hours.