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A 'Mity' life: the career of Miles H. Johnson

Matthew David Wanken
University of Iowa

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A 'MITY' LIFE: THE CAREER OF MILES H. JOHNSON

by

Matthew David Wanken

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the
Doctor of Musical Arts degree
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

August 2017

Thesis Supervisor: Professor Richard Mark Heidel

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Graduate College
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

D.M.A. THESIS

This is to certify that the D.M.A. thesis of

Matthew David Wanken

has been approved by the Examining Committee for
the thesis requirement for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree
at the August 2017 graduation.

Thesis Committee:

Richard Mark Heidel, Thesis Supervisor

Kevin Kastens

Christine Getz

William LaRue Jones

Matthew Arndt

To Myrna

The act of trying to create beauty, beauty of sound, is, and should be the only reason for being of a musical organization. That the organization is only partially successful in this endeavor is of secondary importance. The striving for this goal[,] which has always been one of man's most persistent [sic] endeavors[,] should be the aim of any organization or individual dedicated to music. It is the goal of the St. Olaf Band.

Miles Johnson
"The Art of Trying to Create Beauty"

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PUBLIC ABSTRACT

This thesis provides a historical account of the career of Miles “Mity” Johnson. Johnson taught music for thirty-seven years at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. During those years, he led the St. Olaf Band to national and international prominence. Johnson’s professional influences traverse his work as a collegiate band director, and horn recitalist and teacher, as well as his contributions to professional development for conductors and the adult community band movement.

This research draws heavily on archival materials from the Shaw-Olson Center for College History at St. Olaf College along with several personal collections, including Johnson’s own private collection. Oral interviews with family members, colleagues, and former students supplemented archival materials.

Johnson’s career spanned the second half of the twentieth century, a period that witnessed important growth in repertoire, professional development, and other areas in the concert band field, and this thesis highlights his reactions and contributions to those changes. Chapters explore Johnson’s family, education, and military background; followed by details of his public school and St. Olaf College teaching career. Examining the areas of domestic and international touring, concert programming, and horn teaching during Johnson’s tenure at St. Olaf reveals significant contributions to the band field. Also included are Johnson’s numerous guest conducting engagements at All-State band performances and the Vestfold Summer music camp in Norway. Research on Johnson’s establishment of the Minnesota Instrumental Conducting Symposium (MICS) and the Minnesota Symphonic Winds (MSW) adult community band, give further insight into Johnson’s broader contributions to the wind band profession.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Miles H. Johnson – A Biographical Overview

Miles “Mity” Johnson (1929-2004) was proud of the fact that he grew up in Elbow Lake, MN. His sense of pride stemmed from the support the community provided his family. Mity’s father died when he was only nine and afterwards, the people in the town helped to raise him and his two brothers. He also received a strong early musical education in Elbow Lake, first learning the piano, and later the French horn.

Mity graduated from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, in 1951 with both a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Music degree. To avoid the draft, he went directly into graduate school at Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. Because of the arrangement that Mity made with his army recruitment officer, he needed to finish his master’s degree in one year. It was a difficult year with an overloaded class schedule, but he completed all his requirements.

After graduating from Western Reserve, Mity fulfilled his draft duty by serving eighteen months in Korea. While overseas, he played organ for the infantry’s chaplain and horn in the 25th Infantry Band. After finishing his tour of duty, he returned to Minnesota to begin his first teaching position as an elementary and high school music teacher in Hawley, Minnesota. He enjoyed working with the students, and the town’s proximity to Fargo, North Dakota, provided him an opportunity to play horn with the Fargo-Moorhead Symphony.

After Mity had been in Hawley three years, he received a phone call from Olaf Christiansen, the music department chair and choir director at St. Olaf College, offering him a position as conductor of the St. Olaf Band. Initially, Mity wanted to turn down the offer, but eventually Christiansen convinced him to accept it and Mity moved his family to Northfield, Minnesota. He began teaching at St. Olaf College in the fall of 1957.

When he arrived at St. Olaf College, Mity inherited a band that was small and of average quality. Over the next thirty-seven years, the band grew in size, ability level, and reputation. Under Mity's baton, the band toured the United States each year, embarked on eight international tours, and performed at numerous conventions. Highlights of their international tours included the distinction of performing for Norwegian royalty and being the only American college band to perform with the trumpeters of the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall in London.

In addition to his reputation as a band leader, Mity was a respected horn recitalist and teacher. Many of his horn students went on to acquire positions in major orchestras and universities. The title of "master teacher" has been used many times by Mity's students and colleagues to describe his commitment to excellence in teaching. He also received numerous honors and awards, including President of the North Central Division of the College Band Directors National Association (1989-91), "Ten Outstanding Music Educators" (1973), "Music Educator of the Year" (1987) by the Minnesota Music Educators Association, an honorary doctorate from Concordia College, election to the Minnesota Music Educators Hall of Fame, and two days named in his honor by Minnesota governors.

In 1979, Mity founded the Minnesota Instrumental Conducting Symposium, which met annually during the summer at St. Olaf College. At the time, it was one of only a handful of conducting symposia in the United States. Over the years, Mity influenced numerous conductors from around the country who attended his summer workshop. The participants studied with some of the top band conductors of the day; Frederick Fennell, H. Robert Reynolds, Craig Kirchhoff, John Paynter, and Mallory Thompson were among the master conductors who appeared multiple times at the symposium.

After numerous requests from several former students, Mity formed the Minnesota Symphonic Winds in 1979 as an adult community band to serve the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. Originally populated mostly by Mity's former St. Olaf Band students, it has grown to include ninety musicians who represent a variety of professions and come from numerous institutions.

Mity retired from St. Olaf College in 1994, after forty years of teaching. His legacy lives on at St. Olaf through the establishment of the Miles Johnson Endowment, which provides scholarships to current band students, as well as support for various commissioning and recording projects.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide a biographical study of the life and career of Mity Johnson, focusing on his thirty-seven years of teaching at St. Olaf College. The study delivers insight into Johnson's contributions to the band profession. As a band

conductor, Johnson had a direct role in the training of conductors and future music educators. His professional contributions also include his work with conducting symposia and adult community bands, along with his roles as a horn professor and recitalist.

Throughout the study, the following questions were pursued:

1. Why did Johnson establish the Minnesota Instrumental Conducting Symposium, and what were his goals for the event?
2. What were the reasons for starting the Minnesota Symphonic Winds, and what were his goals for the organization?
3. What was Johnson's approach to programming, and did it change over time?
4. How did Johnson impact the instrumental program at St. Olaf College?
5. What did Johnson add to the band field on national and international levels?

Need for the Study

Many biographical dissertations have studied Directors of Bands at major universities. These individuals have contributed significantly to the band field through their highly visible positions.

Though the music department at St. Olaf College does not graduate as many music majors as large universities, its music faculty, such as Mity Johnson, have produced many successful musicians. He influenced several generations of educators who have taught in successful public and private music programs, as well as others who have held college and university appointments. As a horn professor, Johnson mentored

students who later earned positions in the American Symphony, Manhattan Symphony, Indiana Symphony Orchestra, New York City Opera, and American Ballet Theater Orchestra, along with studio positions at major universities.

Mity's teaching career spanned the second half of the twentieth century, a period which witnessed important growth in the band field, particularly in the area of new repertoire. With new and established repertoire, Johnson took a uniquely customized and thematic approach to programming. While other biographical dissertations have studied specific programs, few have delved into the director's programming process or philosophy.¹ Exploring Mity's method, especially his famous themed second half of the concert, provides rare insight into this important process, while highlighting his distinctive programming.

Johnson is remembered for building an internationally renowned ensemble at a small liberal arts college; however, his professional significance goes beyond St. Olaf College. His contributions to horn instruction, concert programming, conducting symposia, and community bands have all had a lasting impact on the band profession. Johnson's professional accomplishments alone merit academic study, but because these achievements have the breadth and accomplishment more typical of major directors at larger institutions, it is worth framing them within the institutional identity and liberal arts context in which he worked.

¹ Myron Welch's dissertation on Leonard Falcone is the exception to this trend, devoting a partial chapter to Leonard Falcone's programming philosophy. Myron Delford Welch, "The Life and Work of Leonard Falcone, With Emphasis on His Years as Director of Bands at Michigan State University, 1927-1967" (Ed.D. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1973), 193-201.

Mity's broader musical interests lay in community engagement. One of these pursuits was the Minnesota Symphonic Winds. Created during a renaissance of community bands, the ensemble expanded Mity's influence as a teacher and musician outside academia. Additionally, the Minnesota Instrumental Conducting Symposium attracted band directors from around the country to St. Olaf College and became a model for similar band conducting workshops at other colleges and universities. The symposium also served as an important resource to hundreds of participating conductors who gained much-needed professional development.

Related Literature

Biographical research on band directors constitutes the largest share of historical research about bands. Of the sources surveyed for this study, the first dates to 1963 with Calvin Weber's dissertation, "The Contribution of Albert Austin Harding and His Influence on the Development of School and College Bands."² It has recently been bookended by Steven Riley's 2015 dissertation, "Gary! The impacts, influences, and innovations of the career of Gary E. Smith."³ The role of the university band director has been well documented, but these studies tend to focus on a specific demographic of directors: nine of the dissertations consulted cover the life and careers of Big Ten band

² Calvin Earl Weber, "The Contribution of Albert Austin Harding and His Influence on the Development of School and College Bands" (EdD diss., University of Illinois, 1963).

³ Steven Robert Riley, "Gary! The impacts, influences, and innovations of the career of Gary E. Smith" (DMA diss., The University of Iowa, 2015).

directors. These include George Cavanagh's "William D. Revelli: The Hobart Years;"⁴ Richard Piagentini's "John P. Paynter, Northwestern University's Second Director of Bands (1928-1996);"⁵ Gregory Talford's "William D. Revelli: An Introspective Study;"⁶ Jaime Titus's "The Professional Life and Pedagogy of Donald E. McGinnis;"⁷ and Myron Welch's "The Life and Work of Leonard Falcone, With Emphasis on His Years as Director of Bands at Michigan State University, 1927-1967."⁸ The remaining documents referenced here concern the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's band directors; in addition to works by Weber and Riley, these include Earle Gregory's "Mark Hindsley: The Illinois Years"⁹ and Carroll Wallace's "The Life and Work of Harry Begian."¹⁰ Other documents that cover major university band directors include John Martin's "WJ Julian: His life and career with emphasis on his tenure as director of bands at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1961 to 1993"¹¹ and Alan Mills's "The Life and Career of James Edwin Croft."¹²

⁴ George Alfred Cavanagh, "William D. Revelli: The Hobart Years" (EdD diss., The University of Michigan, 1971).

⁵ Richard Francis Piagentini, "John P. Paynter, Northwestern University's Second Director of Bands (1928-1996)" (DMA diss., Arizona State University, 1999).

⁶ Gregory L Talford, "William D. Revelli: An Introspective Study" (MM thesis, Central Michigan University, 1985).

⁷ Jaime Titus, "The Professional Life and Pedagogy of Donald E. McGinnis, Ph.D." (DMA diss., The Ohio State University, 2005).

⁸ Welch, "Falcone".

⁹ Earle Suydam Gregory, "Mark H. Hindsley: The Illinois Years" (EdD diss., The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1982).

¹⁰ Carroll Lewis Wallace, "The Life and Work of Harry Begian" (DMA diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1994).

¹¹ John Tilford Martin, "WJ Julian: His life and career with emphasis on his tenure as director of bands at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1961 to 1993" (DMA diss., The University of Southern Mississippi, 2012).

¹² Alan Mills, "The Life and Career of James Edwin Croft" (PhD diss., The Florida State University, 2010).

In surveying these dissertations, aspects of organization, research methodology, and content were analyzed. Chronological order is the most common organizational structure, while some combine chronological and topical organization. Riley's 2015 dissertation uses this blended approach, narrating Smith's life through his position as Associate Director of Bands at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and later into retirement. Between the chapters that deal with Smith's transition to retirement, Riley inserts a chapter on Smith's "Impact of Professional Commercial Activities."

Relying more heavily on topical coverage, Welch's dissertation on Falcone divides the emphasis of the chapters—half chronological and half topical. This approach enables Welch to hold a magnifying glass over certain aspects of Falcone's life and career relevant to his research questions. Titus's dissertation on McGinnis addresses similar philosophical and performance topics, but embeds the topics both within and at the end of the chronology.

Several common research questions emerged in the twelve biographical dissertations above. The role that the director played as a teacher, director, and leader was the most common question to recur among the dissertations. Piagentini subdivides this question into how Paynter's experience and training affected his role as a teacher, director, composer/arranger, and leader. Martin examines the role of the director on music education and professional associations.

Another common thread in the research questions regarded the subject's influences, impacts, and innovations. The dissertations by Riley, Wallace, Gregory, and Weber reviewed aspects of commercial innovations, recordings, instrument innovations and transcriptions, and public school education, respectively. The documents by Young-

Weitzel and Gonzalez—whose subjects were not tied to a specific institution—study their subjects’ achievements within the larger musical profession in terms of scholarly philosophy and influence.

The second category of dissertations reviewed focus on collections of band programs or large associations, such as Eric Bush’s “The History of the Big Ten Band Directors Association (1971-2015)”¹³ and Glen Yarberry’s “An Analysis of Five Exemplary College Band Programs.”¹⁴ Both documents follow the hybrid organizational model, using both chronological and topical strategies. Bush’s document begins with a history of the Big Ten Band Directors Association, and concludes with a chapter on the association’s commissioning project. This strategy enables him to focus on what he deemed a specific way of understanding the significance of the association. Yarberry groups his chapters by topics based on institutions. Within these chapters, he reviews the innovations and influence of specific conductors through chronological development.

The research questions posed by these dissertations echo the aforementioned categories, and explore the significance of particular events or how background and education affect professional development. For example, Yarberry questions the philosophical basis for each director’s development and considers whether the directors’ philosophies are consistent with the work they achieved. He also examines the specific objectives directors carried through their teaching and the ways in which these objectives were accomplished. The synthesis that Yarberry generates from his data appears in a summary at the end of each section.

¹³ Eric Wayne Bush, “The History of the Big Ten Band Directors Association (1971-2015)” (DMA diss., The University of Iowa, 2015).

¹⁴ Glen Allen Yarberry, “An Analysis of Five Exemplary College Band Programs” (EdD diss., The Pennsylvania State University, 1974).

The authors of these dissertations tend to collect information largely through secondary source interviews, especially for Harding. In Weber's case, he interviewed Big Ten band directors and students who knew Harding personally, including Mark Hindsley, who was a student and colleague of Harding at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Other authors consulted family and friends in addition to students and colleagues.

Archival materials consist of the next largest source of information. Archival research corroborated data collected from interviews and filled in research gaps. Depending on the institutional archives, authors were given access to different types of data, such as correspondence, newspaper clippings, and university records. Concert programs appeared in the main document when the author mentioned a specific performance or main event,¹⁵ while others were collected in appendices.¹⁶

Like the band director biographies, historical research on community bands has seen growth in the past several decades. Clayton Howard Tiede wrote the first dissertation surveying the topic in 1970, exploring several community bands in Minnesota during the nineteenth century.¹⁷ Tiede focuses on the civic purpose of community bands, providing community entertainment and social exchange.¹⁸

¹⁵ Peterson, 60; Wallace, 106.

¹⁶ Mills, 211.

¹⁷ Clayton Howard Tiede, "The Development of Minnesota Community Bands During the Nineteenth Century" (PhD diss., The University of Minnesota, 1970).

¹⁸ Jerrold Max Michaelson, "A History of Bands in Marquette, Michigan, 1866-1930" (PhD diss., The University of Florida, 1981); Mary Lou Cowlshaw, *This Band's Been Here Quite a Spell: 1859-1981* (Naperville, IL: Privately Published, 1981); Gordon Wingate Bowie, "R.B. Hall and the community bands of Maine" (PhD diss., University of Maine, 1993); Carl Christian Wilhjelm, Jr., "A Case Study of the Ridgewood Concert Band. A New Jersey Community Band Dedicated to Life-Long Learning" (EdD diss., Columbia University, 1998); James E. Heyroth, "The History and Development of the

Dissertations covering the founding and development of the Northshore Concert Band¹⁹ and the Tara Winds²⁰ consider these criteria along with the ensembles' musical accomplishments. Both the Northshore Concert Band and the Tara Winds have been recognized for their musical excellence with the John Philip Sousa Foundation's Sudler Silver Scroll.

Of the seven different dissertations on community bands, only three focused on bands in the Midwest region of the United States: The Northshore Concert Band, The Municipal Band of Two Rivers, Wisconsin, and Tiede's survey of nineteenth-century Minnesota bands. There is a privately published book on the history of the Naperville (Illinois) Municipal Band,²¹ but the book omits scholarly documentation. The same is true of journal articles in *The Instrumentalist*, *The School Musician/ Director and Teacher*, and *Woodwind World, Brass and Percussion*—they highlight the history and accomplishments of various community bands, but provide no documented research.²²

The topic of large horn ensembles has been written about in several journal articles, but not in a larger monograph or dissertation.²³ Max Pottag, former second horn in the Chicago Symphony and horn professor at Northwestern University, wrote a brief

Two Rivers Municipal Band of Two Rivers, Wisconsin" (master's thesis, Silver Lake College, 2000).

¹⁹ William Stuart Carson, "A History of the Northshore Concert Band, Wilmette, Illinois, 1956-1986: The First Thirty Years" (DMA diss., Arizona State University, 1992).

²⁰ Myra King Rhoden, "A History of the Tara Winds Community Band, Jonesboro, Georgia, 1988-2008" (DMA diss., The University of Southern Mississippi, 2008).

²¹ Cowlshaw, *This Band's Been Here Quite a Spell*.

²² Peter John Martin, "A status study of Community Bands in the United States" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1983), 56-65.

²³ While there is a dissertation written about Lowell Shaw, the subject of large horn ensembles is ancillary. Heather Maureen Leach Lankford, "Lowell Shaw (b. 1930): His musical career and contributions to horn ensemble literature" (DMA diss., The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2000).

history of his horn ensembles, which were the first in the United States.²⁴ Another *Instrumentalist* article written by Eldon Matlick in 1999 also begins with a history of large horn ensembles in the United States. Matlick mentions Pottag and elaborates on other nationally known ensembles found in Los Angeles, Buffalo, and Baltimore.²⁵ In addition to historical background, Matlick discusses early horn ensemble repertoire and publishers, ending with suggested repertoire.

Little scholarly research is devoted to the topic of conducting symposia. In his book *The American Wind Band*, Richard Hansen voices a need for more research in this area of professional development for conductors. Cody Gifford's 2010 dissertation considers this subject, but focuses on the College Band Directors National Association Conducting Symposium.²⁶

Previous research on the subject of band directors, horn ensembles, adult community bands, and conducting symposia provide models for this research on Mity Johnson. By reviewing scholarship on band directors in particular, Johnson's own influence and development in these areas becomes clearer. Johnson's accomplishments both inside and outside higher education highlight his importance within band history, while also acknowledging the need for additional research on understudied topics like horn ensembles, adult community bands, and conducting symposia.

²⁴ Max Pottag, "Reflections on the history of the French Horn Ensemble," *The Instrumentalist*, 13:11 (1959): 36.

²⁵ Eldon Matlick, "The Horn Ensemble Tradition," *The Instrumentalist*, 54:4 (1999): 44-54.

²⁶ Cody Edward Gifford, "The History and Impact of the College Band Directors National Association Conducting Symposium (1968-2008)" (DMA diss., The University of Colorado, 2010).

Methodology

In order to study Johnson's influence on the band profession, the research method included four steps: data collection, organization, classification, and interpretation.

The data collection included two main components: archival research and structured, in-depth interviews. Archival research in the Shaw-Olson Center for College History at St. Olaf College constituted most of the primary source research on Johnson. Among Johnson's personal papers housed at the Shaw-Olson Center are personal correspondence, planning documents for various projects and tours, concert programs, and video and audio recordings. The papers of former staff members and presidents of St. Olaf College in the archive contain additional correspondence with Johnson.

Mity's widow Myrna Johnson also collected pictures, programs, newspaper clippings, and notes into fourteen scrapbooks. The Johnson private collection, along with private collections of materials from Leslie Lueck, Jeffrey and Roxanne Seidel, and William Webb, were also consulted.

Other primary source data included structured, in-depth interviews with Johnson's family, colleagues, and former students. Family members interviewed were his widow, Myrna, and his son, Sigurd. St. Olaf College colleagues consulted included John Ferguson and Paul Niemisto, along with professional colleagues H. Robert Reynolds, Mallory Thompson, Richard Hansen, and William Webb. Interviews with Johnson's students and friends included H. Robert Hanson, Elizabeth Jackson, Leslie Lueck, Timothy Mahr, Sharon Moe, Bruce Perkins, Russell Pesola, Jo Ann Polley,

Kristin Thelander, and Mark Ulmer. Alums who provided an email address at the 2016 St. Olaf College Reunion Weekend's 125th anniversary celebration of the St. Olaf Band were sent a survey with questions about their time at St. Olaf College and their connection to Johnson.

The data collection process used qualitative research strategies to help analyze and interpret data. Several of these strategies included: transcribing interviews; coding information from the interviews to recognize reoccurring themes; and investigating secondary sources, such as newspaper articles, press releases, and other print sources, to corroborate information retrieved from interviews.

Limitations

Analyzing the professional life of Miles Johnson, emphasizing his time at St. Olaf College (1957-94), served as the primary purpose to this thesis. In order to understand his musical background and training, Johnson's childhood and education prior to 1957 were examined only briefly. This thesis does not include a comprehensive history of the St. Olaf Band, the Minnesota Instrumental Conducting Symposium, or the Minnesota Symphonic Winds.

Organization

Chapter 1 contains a brief biographical overview of Johnson's life and career and an outline of the document's organization.

Chapter 2 chronicles significant aspects of Johnson's life before coming to St. Olaf College. This includes his childhood, his time in school at Concordia College and Western Reserve University, his military service, and his first teaching job in Hawley, Minnesota. It also considers how these early experiences began to form his views on touring, programming, student opportunities, and community-driven teaching philosophy in future ensembles.

Chapter 3 examines Johnson's career at St. Olaf College. The chapter opens with an overview of his early years at St. Olaf College, including the state of the St. Olaf Band and additional teaching duties that he undertook. Because touring and programming were specific emphases during his career, these two topics are explored in individual sections within the chapter. In addition to his role with the St. Olaf Band, Johnson's work as a horn teacher and recitalist is covered in this chapter. The chapter ends with sections exploring Johnson's extensive domestic and international guest conducting engagements and his work with professional band organizations in Minnesota and at the national level. The research suggests that his philosophies of touring, programming, and mentoring contributed to the growth in size and quality of the St. Olaf Band, as well as more broadly to the band profession.

Chapter 4 focuses on the Minnesota Instrumental Conducting Symposium. Much like the previous chapter, this one begins with a focus on the need, purpose, and early years of the symposium. Johnson established the organization after his work with the College Band Directors National Association revealed a need for regional professional development opportunities. His goal was to create a space that would cultivate both rigor and support. Over the years, Johnson brought in many nationally recognized band

directors; his ability to attract these guest clinicians is important in understanding the symposium's impact.

Chapter 5 explores Johnson's founding and twenty years of conducting the Minnesota Symphonic Winds. It covers notable performances by the group under his leadership, as well as the growth of the ensemble. Originally conceived to provide a musically challenging and socially supportive community for adult musicians, the ensemble transferred Mity's teaching philosophy from a college to a community ensemble.

Chapter 6 summarizes the influence of Mity's career and highlights aspects of his legacy both on the instrumental education program at St. Olaf College, including the Miles Johnson Endowment, and more broadly in the band field on national and international levels, through his professional leadership. It posits mentoring, as well as a high-level of musicianship and community-building, as central tenets that guided Johnson professionally, from the St. Olaf Band and horn teaching to the Minnesota Instrumental Conducting Symposium and the Minnesota Symphonic Winds. The chapter also includes implications of the study and suggestions for further research.

Appendices with select programs and schedules as well as a bibliography are included at the end of the document.

CHAPTER 2

EARLY LIFE AND MUSICAL TRAINING

Family Background

Margaret Johnson (née Ristad) was a determined child and “could not wait to get started with her life.”²⁷ She knew that she wanted to work as an office worker and convinced her parents to send her to business school rather than high school. Margaret’s self-determined nature also manifested itself in her love of music. As a child, she became fascinated with her parent’s organ and convinced them to arrange private lessons, though it caused some financial strain on the Ristad household. Margaret began studying piano but used the family organ to practice. She was not strong enough to pump the pedals, so she often practiced in silence.

After attending business school, Margaret moved to Binford, North Dakota and continued her love of music by playing piano in the local orchestra and singing in the church choir.²⁸ Although she had studied piano for many years, she had a strong connection to the church and Luther League²⁹ and believed that her main musical interest was singing in the choir. In Binford, Margaret met Melvin C. Johnson.

Melvin and Margaret were married in October 1923, in Detroit, Michigan, where their first son Gordon was born. Soon after, they moved to Cooperstown, North Dakota where Melvin worked at a car shop and they had a second son Ronald. A third son,

²⁷ Margaret Johnson to Sarah Johnson, n.d., Johnson private collection.

²⁸ Margaret Johnson to Sarah Johnson.

²⁹ Luther League is a Lutheran association for youth in the United States.

Miles Harlan Johnson, was born in Cooperstown on February 28, 1929. After seven years in Cooperstown, Melvin made a business deal with a friend, S.A. Rekedal, and bought the Grant Motor Co. garage in Elbow Lake, Minnesota.³⁰

While in Elbow Lake, a string of tragedies befell the Johnson family. The first was the death of their infant daughter, Patricia. The second was Melvin's death on July 7, 1938, from a heart attack.³¹ In the seven years that the Johnsons had lived in Elbow Lake, they became a vital part of the community through Melvin's work and their involvement in church. Melvin's obituary stated that his funeral was the largest in Elbow Lake that anyone could remember.³²

Just two weeks after Melvin's death, Margaret began working again to support the family.³³ She used her office training to get a position at the courthouse. The town members of Elbow Lake, especially the Johnsons' neighbors Ida and Laura Larson, helped raise the three Johnson boys.³⁴

All the Johnson boys took piano lessons from Ida.³⁵ Mity started lessons around first grade. His older brothers quit lessons, but Margaret insisted that Mity continue. In retrospect, Mity was glad that he kept taking lessons and his brothers wished they had persisted.³⁶ Although he studied piano through his freshman year of college, Mity never

³⁰ "Popular Young Business Man Suddenly Stricken," *Grant County Herald* (Elbow Lake, MN), July 14, 1938.

³¹ Margaret Johnson to Sarah Johnson.

³² "Popular Young Business Man Suddenly Stricken."

³³ Myrna Johnson, interview by author, October 31, 2016, Northfield, Minnesota.

³⁴ Myrna Johnson, interview, October 2016.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Myrna Johnson, interview by author, July 23, 2015, Northfield, Minnesota.

became a serious pianist. He used his piano skills to accompany friends in college and, later, his horn students at St. Olaf College.³⁷

Another neighbor had a daughter who was several years older than Mity and who strongly encouraged him to begin the horn in fourth grade.³⁸ Because she was in high school when Mity started learning horn, she was able to help him learn the basics of playing.³⁹

Edward E. Iverson had been teaching band in Elbow Lake for one year by the time Mity began playing the horn.⁴⁰ The band program in Elbow Lake was still in its infancy. Sophus Lund started the program in 1931, but left in 1938 for a job in Tyler, Minnesota. Iverson stayed in Elbow Lake until 1942 when Ray Morrau took over the band.

It was under Morrau that Mity was given many formative musical opportunities, including his appointment as a student director. By the time Mity began high school, he was already first chair in the school system's one band. He also participated in solo and ensemble each year, competing both as a soloist and with a horn quartet.⁴¹

Chamber music played an important part in the Elbow Lake music program, and was featured on each concert. Though mostly vocal sextets and octets appeared, instrumentalists also performed. On a May 3, 1946 concert, Mity performed the solo

³⁷ Timothy Mahr, interview by author, July 22, 2015, Northfield, Minnesota.

³⁸ "There can be no music without emotions," *Eagle Tribune* (Elbow Lake, MN), March 16, 1984.

³⁹ Myrna Johnson, interview, October 2016.

⁴⁰ "25 Years Ago," *Grant County Herald* (Elbow Lake, MN), April 6, 2011.

⁴¹ Solo and Ensemble (program), 1946, Johnson private collection.

“Romance and Allegro” by Scarmolin.⁴² He also participated in the brass sextet that performed “La Fiesta” by Guetzel on the May 13, 1947 concert.⁴³

In addition to his instrumental activities, Mity sang in the choir, was president of student council his senior year, and was the sports editor for the school newspaper. Along with his brother Ronald, Mity was part of Elbow Lake’s first football team.⁴⁴ Mity was a natural athlete and led the team to victories as the quarterback. He also found a spot on the baseball team playing shortstop. Mity’s athletic prowess made him a “Letter Winner” all four years of high school in football, baseball, and basketball.

Concordia College and Western Reserve University

After graduation, Mity attended Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota. At first he was unsure if he would be able to attend Concordia—his father’s alma mater and where his brother Ronald was currently enrolled. Fortunately, a local Elbow Lake man with no special ties to the Johnson family paid for Mity’s education.⁴⁵ The name of the man is lost to history, but he was remembered as someone of modest means who worked construction. Later, when Mity’s wife Myrna went back to repay the man, he refused to receive any money. Rather than paying him back, he requested that the Johnsons do the same for someone else.⁴⁶ This was a promise that the Johnsons kept years later by helping their students.

⁴² Annual Spring Concert (program), May 3, 1946, Johnson private collection.

⁴³ Concert (program), May 13, 1947, Johnson private collection.

⁴⁴ Newspaper clip, n.d., Johnson private collection.

⁴⁵ Myrna Johnson, interview, October 2016.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

While at Concordia, Mity continued to play sports. He began his freshman year as the starting quarterback of the football team. Despite his success, Mity played football for only one year at Concordia. Rehearsals with the Fargo-Moorhead Civic Orchestra conflicted with football practice.⁴⁷ His coach, Jake Christiansen, encouraged Mity to pursue music over football.⁴⁸ Luckily for Mity, Christiansen understood the time commitment required of the music major. His father was the famous choral director F. Melius Christiansen and his brother, Paul J. Christiansen, was the choir director at Concordia. In addition to having an important mentoring influence, these connections with the Christiansen family would play an important role later in Mity's career.

Mity's love of sports did not end with his football career. He continued to participate in intramural basketball and varsity baseball, where he led the Concordia team with the highest batting average during the 1949 season.⁴⁹ As a natural athlete, Mity translated his competitive nature into his music making.⁵⁰ He wanted to be the best athlete, the best horn player, and the best conductor, and pursued these goals relentlessly during his time at Concordia and afterward.⁵¹

During his freshman year, Mity auditioned for the Concordia Choir. Because of the choir's high standards and the paucity of openings each year, most freshman did not make the ensemble. Still, Mity continued to sing in the second choir—the Chapel

⁴⁷ Susan Hvistendahl, e-mail message to author, January 19, 2017.

⁴⁸ Myrna Johnson, interview, October 2016.

⁴⁹ "Baseball Team Closes Season Against MSTC Dragons Today," *Concordian* (Moorhead, MN), May 27, 1949.

⁵⁰ J. Robert Hanson, telephone interview by author, December 6, 2016.

⁵¹ Mity's athleticism continued to play an overt part in his music career. His conducting has been described as strong and athletic, and he often led his conducting students in physical warm-ups similar to ones he learned playing sports.

Choir—and served as president of the organization his junior year.⁵² He also auditioned for the band and was seated first chair horn, a distinction that he held throughout his four years at Concordia. The conductor of the Concordia College Band during Mity's first two years was J.A. Holvik, whose touring practices would be echoed in Mity's own career years later.⁵³

Under Holvik, the Concordia College Band was the first instrumental group from Concordia to travel abroad, going to Norway in 1936.⁵⁴ After that landmark tour, the band continued to tour regionally around the upper Midwest. During Mity's first year, the band took an extended tour to schools in Montana and North Dakota. The pace was tiring, as the band sometimes performed two concerts each day.⁵⁵ Because the tours occurred early in spring semester, the weather was also unreliable. That first year, the temperatures reached -20°F in the evenings.⁵⁶ In retrospect, participants noted that the combination of the demanding schedule and the weather brought the band closer together. These regional tours made an important impact on Mity. After graduation, the tours that he took with his high school band and later with the St. Olaf Band mimicked aspects of the Concordia Concert Band tours, such as the demanding schedule and the combination of school and church performance venues.

When Mity arrived at Concordia, he did not waste time making a name for himself as a dedicated horn player. He constantly volunteered to perform for various events, including informal performances on tour with the Concordia College Band, a

⁵² Hanson, interview, 2016.

⁵³ J.A. Holvik was the father of the band director Karl Holvik.

⁵⁴ J.A. Holvik was part of the 1906 St. Olaf Band that was the first college or university ensemble to travel abroad to Europe.

⁵⁵ Hanson, interview, 2016.

⁵⁶ Hanson, interview, 2016.

farewell performance for Professor Holvik, and the Mondamin social club alumni lunch. Because of his ability level, Mity was also asked to perform at more formal events. Paul J. Christiansen invited Mity to play in a brass ensemble that led the Christmas Concert's hymn signing. This performance was the first time that any instrumental ensemble was asked to accompany the choirs, which generally sang a cappella.⁵⁷ Due to the brass ensemble's success the first year, Christiansen continued to incorporate brass music into the program. The choral conductor wrote and arranged most of the brass music himself and experimented with different ways of using brass. During the 1950 Christmas Concert performance, one innovative strategy was to place Mity and J. Robert Hanson, a trumpet player and Mity's roommate, in different places around the hall to perform horn calls.⁵⁸ Years later, creative staging practices would become a cornerstone of Mity's performance style.

One setback that Mity encountered while at Concordia was that he began to develop an issue with his embouchure that limited his playing. As a natural problem-solver, Mity sought out a trumpet professor at Moorhead State Teachers College to help him make major changes in his embouchure setting.⁵⁹ Mity worked at his embouchure change with his usual diligence, and the results paid off in his improved playing.⁶⁰

Guiding this change was Dr. Harold Harmon, who had a PhD in music from the

⁵⁷ Hanson, interview, 2016.

⁵⁸ Ibid. Hanson was another gifted musician who was Mity's age and ended up becoming his best friend and roommate at Concordia College. Hanson also introduced Mity to his sister Myrna, who later became Mity's wife.

⁵⁹ Ibid. Concordia College did not have a trumpet or horn professor on faculty at the time; Moorhead State Teacher's College is now renamed Minnesota State University Moorhead.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

University of Iowa and was deeply knowledgeable about repertoire.⁶¹ He introduced Mity to a great deal of advanced literature that he probably would not have discovered otherwise.

Mity's love for the horn showed in his enthusiastic performances, and it also led him to establish a horn quartet at Concordia. Holvik was supportive of the group, and Leif Christianson, who replaced Holvik as conductor of the Concordia College Band for Mity's final two years, featured the group on a band concert.⁶² As a college student, Mity already had multiple experiences performing chamber music with other horn and brass players, and he never outgrew this early interest in chamber groups.

In addition to performing on campus, Mity joined the Fargo-Moorhead Civic Orchestra his freshman year. Within a few years, he was sitting first chair in the ensemble.⁶³ The conductor of the Orchestra was Concordia professor of cello and theory, Sigvald Thompson. Thompson often used students from the three area colleges,⁶⁴ but was so impressed with Mity's abilities in particular, that he invited him to perform the horn solo in the Brandenburg Concerto No. 1 during the 1951 season.⁶⁵

Thompson, Harmon, and Holvik each played an important mentoring role for Mity, but the teaching, musicianship, and leadership of Paul J. Christiansen provided the greatest influence during Mity's college years. As conductor of the Concordia Choir, Christiansen was Mity's primary conducting professor. Known for demanding high

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Concordia College, Moorhead State Teacher's College, and North Dakota Technical College.

⁶⁵ "Symphony Orchestra Presents Leonard Shure as Guest Artist," *Concordian* (Moorhead, MN), March 29, 1951.

standards from his students, Christiansen also cared for his students on a personal level.⁶⁶ Many attributes for which Mity later became known, including taking a personal investment in his students, can be traced to Christiansen's influence.

In order to practice and improve his conducting, Mity sought out conducting performance opportunities as vigorously as he did with horn. On campus, he served as a guest conductor with the Concordia College Band and with the pep band during basketball games.⁶⁷ Though Mity did not care much for marching bands later in life, the pep band was one early way to combine his interests in sports and music. He also found a job conducting the Olivet Lutheran Church Choir in Fargo, North Dakota, during his senior year of college. Although he conducted the group for only one year, the choir's performances left an impression on audiences, and the experience provided Mity the opportunity to grow in his expressiveness as a conductor and develop a confident presence in front of a group.⁶⁸

Mity's hard work and dedication during his college years earned him several awards. During his sophomore year, he was honored by the international music fraternity, Mu Phi Epsilon, with a certificate of achievement. During his junior year, he earned the top honor from the Concordia chapter of Mu Phi Epsilon, the Hildur Lavine Shaw scholarship.⁶⁹ Later in life he would be awarded an honorary doctorate (1991) and the Concordia Alumni Award (1997).

During Mity's time at Concordia, he received a draft notice to serve in the Korean War. He convinced the draft board to let him finish college at Concordia and

⁶⁶ Myrna Johnson, interview, October 2016.

⁶⁷ Hanson, interview, 2016.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ "17 Students City For Special Honors," *Concordian* (Moorhead, MN), May 26, 1950.

then later to complete his Master's degree. He promised that if the board gave him permission to complete a Master's degree in one year, he would "volunteer" for the draft.⁷⁰ Because of this promise, the board approved Mity's second deferment.

In the summer of 1951, Mity and his wife Myrna moved to Cleveland, Ohio, so Mity could begin a Master's degree in music education at Western Reserve University. A piano professor at the university, Ernest Harris, had been Mity's conductor in the Concordia Chapel Choir.⁷¹ Harris helped Mity earn a scholarship that covered all his tuition.⁷² In order to keep his promise to the draft board, Mity overloaded on classes and completed his degree in the summer of 1952.

During this time, Mity did not conduct an ensemble, with the exception of some class sessions. His coursework (including multiple music education classes from Dr. Kingston) focused on scholarly research, which required him to write many papers that Myrna helped to type.⁷³ He did find a horn performance outlet with the Cleveland Philharmonic Symphony, under its founding director F. Karl Grossman.⁷⁴

Korean War

After graduating from Western Reserve, Mity fulfilled his promise to the Army recruiter and volunteered for the Korean War. He left for basic training at Fort Smith,

⁷⁰ Myrna Johnson, interview by author, January 6, 2016, Northfield, Minnesota.

⁷¹ Concordia College, *Cobber*, (Moorhead, MN, 1948), 142.

⁷² Myrna Johnson, interview, January 2016.

⁷³ Myrna Johnson, interview, January 2016.

⁷⁴ St. Olaf College Band (promotional flier), March 10, 1958, St. Olaf Band 1958 scrapbook, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

Arkansas, on September 1, 1952 and finished training in December of that year. From the beginning of his service, Mity tried to enlist in a service band. He was determined to perform in a band and inquired about the possibility at each place he was stationed; however, the Army discovered his high grade point average from Concordia and Western Reserve and decided that he would serve better as a fire direction control operator.⁷⁵ If the Army had reviewed his grades more closely, they would have seen that his high marks were all in music classes and his general education class grades were in the B to C range.⁷⁶

Mity shipped off from Fort Sheridan, Illinois, shortly after Christmas 1952 to join the 25th Infantry Division in Korea. When he arrived in Korea, the war was winding down and there was no longer a need to serve as a fire direction control operator.⁷⁷ News of his musical training reached the chaplain, who was in need of an organist. Soon Mity was driving the chaplain around the battle field, going from site to site with a small field organ strapped to the back of a jeep. At these different sites, the chaplain conducted worship services and Mity provided music on the field organ. Here Mity's strong church upbringing and knowledge of sacred music—along with the years of piano lessons from Ida Larson—proved important assets.⁷⁸

After the Korean Armistice agreement was signed in July 1953, Mity was finally able to join the 25th Infantry Band.⁷⁹ This was the news that Mity had hoped for since he

⁷⁵ Myrna Johnson, interview, January 2016.

⁷⁶ Concordia College, Miles Johnson report cards, Johnson private collection.

⁷⁷ Myrna Johnson, interview, October 2016.

⁷⁸ An April 16, 1954 bulletin showed that Mity played “Sacred Head, Now Wounded” for the prelude to the Good Friday service. During Mity's tenure at St. Olaf College, he conducted this piece with the St. Olaf Band and honor bands numerous times.

⁷⁹ Myrna Johnson, interview, January 2016.

enlisted. The fact that his brother Ronald and friends from Concordia were able to find positions in service bands always bothered Mity.⁸⁰ During his short time in the band, Mity's duties included performing for special events and boxing matches.

Near the end of his service, Mity received a job offer to teach music and direct the band at Suomi College in Hancock, Michigan.⁸¹ Mity's reputation at Concordia and his professors' recommendations were enough to earn the position without an interview; however, the Johnsons never moved to Michigan. Myrna was teaching high school English in Parkers Prairie, Minnesota while Mity was in Korea and received Mity's contract for Suomi College in the mail. She did some research, which revealed that she could not get a teaching job in Michigan, so she sent the contract back saying that Mity had already found other work. After returning the contract, she contacted Ole Dahl, superintendent for the school in Hawley, Minnesota, about the possibility of both her and Mity teaching in the town. Again, Mity's reputation at Concordia helped him earn a job without an interview. When Mity returned to the states, he was surprised that there was no contract from Suomi College. He was flattered to be asked to lead a college group, but according to Myrna, he was just as happy to teach in Hawley.⁸²

Hawley, MN

When the Johnsons arrived in Hawley in 1954, Mity inherited the entire first-through twelfth-grade public school music program. The Hawley band already had a

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Myrna Johnson, interview, October 2016.

strong regional reputation.⁸³ Musically, the strongest players during Mity's first year at Hawley were predominantly sophomores, who sat in the first chairs of most sections. Because of the band's ability, Mity sought opportunities for the band to compete. The Aquatennial Festival in Minneapolis had both a concert band and marching band competition that Mity thought would suit the ensemble.⁸⁴

Mity's strength was with the concert band. He had no experience with a marching band either growing up in Elbow Lake or while attending Concordia College. In fact, he thought very little of marching bands, and believed that the outcomes did not justify the time put into the practice.⁸⁵ Yet, the Hawley band did march, both for the high school football halftime and at the Aquatennial. Because Mity did not have any formal marching band experience, he relied on his military training to teach the students to march. While the band did perform formations on the field during their halftime performances, Mity's military background focused his attention on lines and diagonals.⁸⁶

The Aquatennial band competition in the summer of 1955 was held at Lake Harriet in Minneapolis. The band performed well in the competition, and winning second place ensured a spot to compete in the Chicagoland Music Festival.⁸⁷ The town of Hawley was excited about this opportunity for the band and helped it raise money to travel to Chicago through bake sales and an auction in the high school gymnasium.⁸⁸

During the trip to Chicago, the Hawley band hauled all its equipment on busses to Minneapolis and then via train to Chicago. The competition took place in a hotel and

⁸³ Myrna Johnson, interview, January 2016.

⁸⁴ Myrna Johnson, interview, October 2016.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Myrna Johnson, interview, January 2016.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

the band earned fourth place in the competition and an opportunity to play at Soldier Field.⁸⁹ When the band arrived back in Hawley, a crowd of townspeople came out to welcome the players.

The band's success in the summer of 1955 earned continued community support, as the Hawley band traveled next to Regina, Saskatchewan to compete in the Regina Exposition. Mity later returned to Minneapolis with the Hawley band to compete in the 1957 Aquatennial band competition. This year the band received first place in the competition and was greeted on its return to Hawley with much excitement.⁹⁰

In addition to his band duties, Mity was in charge of general music and the choir at Hawley. His time at Concordia prepared him to direct the choir; his conducting teacher (Paul J. Christiansen) was the conductor of the Concordia Choir, and he had spent a year conducting the Olivet Lutheran Church Choir in Fargo.⁹¹ Mity was also expected to assume the role of the Lutheran church choir director in Hawley. Although it was not part of his official duties, when Ole Dahl hired Mity, he made it clear that directing the church choir was expected.⁹² Myrna sang in the group all three years he directed the choir, and played the organ for two years.⁹³

Mity's early musical experiences provided a solid foundation for his career. His determined spirit, inherited from his mother, helped to open performance opportunities for himself and led him to seek out opportunities for his students. Mity's mentors at Concordia College imprinted strong musical and leadership models on him by

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Myrna Johnson, interview, October 2016; News clip, *Cook County News-Herald* (Grand Marais, MN), n.d., Johnson private collection.

⁹¹ Myrna Johnson, interview, October 2016.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

emphasizing rigorous touring, diverse repertoire, creative staging, and community-building. He continued to develop these models, especially while teaching at St. Olaf College.

CHAPTER 3

ST. OLAF COLLEGE

Arriving at St. Olaf College

In the summer of 1957, Mity and his wife Myrna were at a church convention in Duluth when a call came from Olaf Christiansen, director of the St. Olaf Choir and music department chair. St. Olaf College was searching for a new band director. Bruce Howden had been the conductor of their band for only five years, but in that time, the students never fully embraced him.⁹⁴

Olaf had heard of Mity from his brother Paul J. Christiansen. While Mity was his student at Concordia, Christiansen recognized his talents and often created opportunities for Mity as a performer.⁹⁵ After he graduated, Mity kept in touch with his old professor and brought his Hawley choir to Concordia for the college's annual choral festival. He also returned to perform a solo with the 1955 Alumni band.⁹⁶

Even though the Johnsons were not home to answer the call, Olaf was persistent in trying to reach Mity. He telephoned so often that the Johnson's neighbor Mona finally answered and took a message.⁹⁷ Once the Johnsons returned from Duluth, Mity

⁹⁴ One criticism of Howden was that he programmed too much contemporary music. Myrna Johnson, interview, July 2015.

⁹⁵ Mity's participation in the brass ensemble at the Concordia College Christmas Concert is discussed more in Chapter 2.

⁹⁶ "Alumni Return For Band," *Concordian* (Moorhead, MN), October 14, 1955.

⁹⁷ Myrna Johnson, interview, January 2016.

contacted Olaf, who offered Mity the job conducting the St. Olaf Band;⁹⁸ however, Mity was initially reluctant to accept the position and asked to visit the college before making a final decision.

In addition to meeting with Olaf Christiansen, the Johnsons met with Donald Berglund, who had briefly conducted the St. Olaf Band before Bruce Howden and who now conducted the St. Olaf Orchestra. Berglund, another Concordia College graduate, grew up in Fergus Falls, which is less than twenty-five miles from Mity's hometown of Elbow Lake, and he had known of Mity growing up. Mity hoped to drop his signature nickname when coming to St. Olaf College—thinking that the name was not dignified for a college professor—but upon meeting in Northfield, Berglund greeted him as Mity and it stuck.⁹⁹

The Johnsons, Christiansen, and Berglund met outside of the Old Music Building and went to lunch at the Stewart House, where Christiansen officially offered Mity the position.¹⁰⁰ The decision was difficult; Mity had a good band in Hawley. It had placed in the Minneapolis Aquatennial Band Competition twice, the school was adding an instrumental music wing, and there was strong support for music in Hawley. In contrast, the St. Olaf Band was struggling to keep players and the quality of its musicianship was weak.¹⁰¹

Despite the band's shortcomings, Mity accepted Christiansen's proposal and the Johnsons moved to Northfield, Minnesota later that summer. Mity and Myrna decided to

⁹⁸ Until 1965, the St. Olaf Band appeared under the name the St. Olaf Concert Band; to avoid confusion, the ensemble's current name is used in this document.

⁹⁹ Myrna Johnson, interview, January 2016.

¹⁰⁰ Jo Ann Polley notes during video interview for college, Accession number 3736, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

¹⁰¹ Myrna Johnson, interview, January 2016.

stay at St. Olaf College for a minimum of five years before they made up their minds whether to stay or leave.¹⁰² As part of his hiring negotiations, Mity asked for one more rehearsal per week, bringing the total up to three.¹⁰³ He also asked the college to support an annual band tour, similar to the one taken by the Concordia College Band. He recognized travel as a necessity for growth and interest in the band—a stimulus to the band and also himself.¹⁰⁴

The St. Olaf Band was in need of rebuilding. Without help from Berglund, who encouraged the wind and percussion players to join the band, Mity believed that there would not have been a band at all that first year.¹⁰⁵ During the 1957-58 school year, the band consisted of only six senior and three junior members.¹⁰⁶ The rest of the sixty-piece band included twenty-nine freshman and twenty-two sophomores.¹⁰⁷ It was a young ensemble, like his first band at Hawley, but one that was open to taking direction from an enthusiastic director.

Mity began by training the band how to operate.¹⁰⁸ He instituted band officers to provide a network of student leadership and began working on fundamentals of playing and sound. He always brought excitement into rehearsal and students recall him

¹⁰² Miles Johnson, video interview by Gordon Wildman, 1992, Accession number 1416.02, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

¹⁰³ Wildman, interview, 1992.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Mary Flood, “Band hits perfection peak in Minnesota tour finale,” *Manitou Messenger* (Northfield, MN), March 21, 1958.

¹⁰⁷ “Large Crowd Hears St. Olaf Concert,” 1958, news clip, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

¹⁰⁸ Russell Pesola, telephone interview by author, January 12, 2017.

barreling into practices at high speed.¹⁰⁹ Mity's energy, organization, and high musical standards pushed the level of the band and raised the musical quality of individual players.¹¹⁰

The first few years Mity taught at St. Olaf College, he had a comparatively light workload. He developed the band and his horn studio grew. In his free time, he directed a variety of ensembles while colleagues were on sabbatical leaves. The first time he filled in for a sabbatical leave occurred during his second year teaching at St. Olaf College. Mity had conducted church choirs since he was eighteen years old.¹¹¹ He implemented his choral conducting experience to conduct the Chapel Choir while its director, Kenneth Jennings, was on leave.¹¹² One of Jennings' Chapel Choir traditions was to perform a large standard choral work with the orchestra during the spring semester. In the spring of 1959 under Mity's baton, the choir and orchestra performed Johannes Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem*. This was the first time Mity had directed a large work for chorus and orchestra and the first time Brahms's *Requiem* had been performed at St. Olaf College.¹¹³

Mity continued to conduct the Chapel Choir during the 1959-60 school year and prepared the choir to sing Zoltán Kodály's *Te Deum*. After featuring more traditional large works—J.S. Bach's *St. Matthew's Passion* and *St. John's Passion*, Mozart's

¹⁰⁹ Pesola, interview, 2017.

¹¹⁰ Wildman, interview, 1992.

¹¹¹ Miles Johnson, Lutheran World Federation Application for Scholarship, 1968, Johnson private collection.

¹¹² "Chapel choir to present German Requiem Sunday," *Manitou Messenger* (Northfield, MN), March 20, 1959.

¹¹³ James Proescholdt and Jonathan Teigland, "Chapel Choir, St. Olaf Orchestra performance of Brahms' Requiem heralded as success," *Manitou Messenger* (Northfield, MN), April 21, 2000.

Requiem, and the previous years' Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem*—he decided to choose more contemporary works. In addition to *Te Deum*, Mity conducted the choir (accompanied by the St. Olaf Band) in a performance of Normand Lockwood's *The Closing Doxology*.¹¹⁴ While the contemporary nature of both the Kodály and Lockwood pieces garnered mixed reviews, the performance was well-received musically.¹¹⁵

In addition to working with the Chapel Choir, Mity conducted the first-year women's choir—the Manitou Singers—while their conductor Alice Larson was on sabbatical, and directed the St. Olaf Orchestra during Donald Berglund's 1960-61 sabbatical. Mity took the orchestra on a November tour of Minnesota, South Dakota, and Iowa, and prepared Bach's *St. Matthew's Passion* for the spring Lenten concert.¹¹⁶ Instead of conducting the joint forces of the Chapel Choir and the St. Olaf Orchestra during the performance itself, he played the organ continuo part.

Later, Mity had the opportunity to conduct the choir and orchestra together for a WCCO TV report on the history of the Minnesota First Regiment during the Civil War.¹¹⁷ For the program, Mity led the groups in a performance of "Battle Hymn of the Republic." Members of the St. Olaf Band also provided bugle calls and percussion effects for the battle scenes.

Mity's early success at St. Olaf drew on his experiences in Elbow Lake, Moorhead, Korea, and Hawley. However, his commitment to building community by

¹¹⁴ Gary Obrecht, "Orchestra, band, chapel choir combine for concert," *Manitou Messenger* (Northfield, MN), April 1, 1960.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Robert Scholz, "Bach's St. Matthew Passion a moving success," *Manitou Messenger* (Northfield, MN), March 24, 1961.

¹¹⁷ "Rebel Oles sing Civil War music," *Manitou Messenger* (Northfield, MN), April 14, 1961.

creating student leadership positions and working collaboratively with students and colleagues across the department is what defined his early career at St. Olaf. His earnest enthusiasm also set the stage for him to undertake the more experimental approaches to programming and the ambitious tour schedules that marked the next stage of his career.

Domestic Tours

When Mity accepted the job at St. Olaf College, one of his negotiating points was that the band tour every year. Mity thought that touring was good for the morale of the band and helped him recruit strong players.¹¹⁸ Many of Mity's touring experiences originated from his time with the Concordia College Band. In the spring of 1958, with manager Frederick Schmidt's help, the St. Olaf Band embarked on its first tour since 1954.¹¹⁹

For Mity, touring was an opportunity to thoroughly learn a program and to see growth and progress over a short time—qualities that contributed to both his students' musicianship and their sense of community.¹²⁰ He believed that “orchestras sound so good on Beethoven's Fifth Symphony because they have done it so often. If amateurs can play music over and over, it can be great too.”¹²¹ Mity saw young musicians as lacking little more than experience, and he thought the best way to gain that experience was by performing the music over and over again. Throughout his life, Mity held to the belief that the best teacher is thoughtful repetition.

¹¹⁸ Myrna Johnson, interview, July 2015.

¹¹⁹ “Band hits perfection peak in Minnesota tour finale.”

¹²⁰ Wildman, interview, 1992.

¹²¹ Wildman, interview, 1992.

Since the band was in a rebuilding stage and was not known outside of southern Minnesota, Mity planned to visit places in Minnesota where he had connections: Bagley (where his brother Ronald taught music), Wadena, Hawley, Concordia College, Elbow Lake, Osakis (where his wife Myrna grew up), Tracy, Fairfax, and Gaylord.¹²² Even on the first tour, Mity began training the band in operations. He divided the students into different crews in charge of managing different aspects of the tour.¹²³ Crews were responsible for loading and unloading the equipment on the truck, setting up and tearing down percussion equipment, handling the bass instruments, the podium, and the programs. Other crews were in charge of counting the attendance at each performance, making sure everyone was on the bus, cleaning out the dressing rooms after performances, taking care of medicine, organizing entertainment, and distributing thank you notes. Dividing the band into crews not only helped the logistics of managing the equipment on tour, but it taught band members to work together and fostered community among them.

Mity's wife Myrna always accompanied him on the tours and taught the band how to behave.¹²⁴ She reminded the band to be grateful and thank their hosts at each stop. One way the band showed its appreciation at its numerous host stays was through handwritten thank you notes. The band also had a table grace that it sang, carried over from the Concordia Band, and a thank you chant for the numerous home cooked meals

¹²² "Band hits perfection peak in Minnesota tour finale."

¹²³ Tour Assignments, 1958, St. Olaf Band 1958 tour book, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

¹²⁴ Pesola, interview, 2017.

at schools and churches.¹²⁵ Before each meal, the band sang the Doxology, also known as *Old Hundredth*:¹²⁶

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

In addition to singing before dinner, the band also sang a thank you song for the cooks at the host churches: “We thank you very kindly for the good, good food.” These words were repeated and sung to the tune of a twelve bar blues riff.¹²⁷ Both the table grace and thank you chant are still part of the St. Olaf Band tour tradition at the time of the writing of this thesis, just one instance of Mity’s (and Myrna’s) lasting influence on the ensemble.

Mity believed in featuring top student performers, and touring became one of the main ways that he gave his students solo and chamber performance opportunities. The first year, Harley Hedger, clarinet section leader, performed a transcription of Carl Maria von Weber’s Concerto for Clarinet.¹²⁸ By the 1959 tour, Mity increased the number of student features. For one slot on the program, a brass quintet performed *Quintet in E minor* by V. Ewald, which alternated evening performances with a woodwind quintet performing *Three Shanties for Wind Quintet* by Malcolm Arnold.¹²⁹ He also alternated Robert Bailey’s performance of the Concerto for Trombone and Band by N. Rimsky-

¹²⁵ Myrna Johnson, interview by author, December 7, 2016, Northfield, Minnesota.

¹²⁶ Old Hundredth is a hymn tune that comes from the second edition of the *Genevan Psalter*.

¹²⁷ Myrna Johnson, interview, December 2016.

¹²⁸ St. Olaf Band Evening Concert Winter Tour (program), 1958, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

¹²⁹ St. Olaf Band Evening Concert Winter Tour (program), 1959, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

Korsakov with Phyllis Monson's performance of Alfred Reed's *Serenade*. Many of the students were seniors—both in the case of Bailey and Monson—which continues to be the St. Olaf Band practice at the time of writing.

Not all the tour soloists were instrumentalists. During the 1963 tour, Irene Gubrud was the featured mezzo-soprano soloist for the second movement of *Three Japanese Dances* by Bernard Rogers.¹³⁰ One year later, a composer and baritone player in the band, Daniel Wilshire, premiered a work called *Child Thoughts*.¹³¹ The work was rescored for a chamber ensemble from an earlier piano composition at Mity's request. Student conductors were also frequently featured. Harley Hedger and Paul Ramsay were the first two student conductors in 1958. The next year, Blanche Kangas conducted *Guadalcanal March* by Richard Rogers. The tradition of student conductors continued throughout and beyond Mity's career at St. Olaf College.

Tours were also an opportunity for Mity to challenge himself. One way he did this was by memorizing his scores. The first time former students remember him not using a score was during the 1964 tour.¹³² Students also recall Mity conducting without a baton; whenever he conducted a Bach chorale or the "Rufford Park Poachers" in *Lincolnshire Posy*, he set down his baton and only used his hands.¹³³ The students noticed the effect of these experiments on Mity's conducting. Without the baton or scores, students reported that Mity projected his entire persona and musical awareness to

¹³⁰ Harold Schumacher, "Standing ovation greets band at impressive home concert," *Manitou Messenger* (Northfield, MN), February 15, 1963; Gubrud was featured as a tour soloist all four years, including on the 1966 European tour.

¹³¹ St. Olaf Band Evening Concert Winter Tour (program), 1964, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

¹³² Ruth Lewis, "Band Goes West; West Goes Wild," *St. Olaf Alumnus* 12:2 (March, 1964), 12.

¹³³ Sigurd Johnson, Video interview by author, January 4, 2017.

the players.¹³⁴ During the 1973 tour, on the night he left all his scores backstage, the students recollect how “everyone was really with him then.”¹³⁵

In addition to evening concerts, the band performed “convocations” at schools during the day. These performances usually included most of the prepared program, but would also substitute some lighter music into the lineup as well. On the 1960 tour, during one of the convocations, Mity gave the downbeat to one piece and the band began performing an entirely different work.¹³⁶ Since he memorized his scores, Mity was able to recover, and he went along with the gag. This switch became an annual event on tour. It became an unwritten rule that the prank was to happen only once each year during a school convocation—never during an evening performance.¹³⁷

The lighter nature of the school convocations led to other practical jokes. In addition to switching pieces on Mity, the band occasionally left out the last note of a work or played an incorrect note.¹³⁸ One of the more memorable pranks occurred during the 1964 tour. During an afternoon convocation, Mity was recalling to the audience one of the band’s previous performances. When he mentioned their performance in Laramie, Wyoming, Daniel Wilshire, a baritone player in the band, walked out dressed in his tuxedo, cowboy boots, and a large cowboy hat that covered his entire face except for two cut-out eyeholes. He stomped all the way back to his seat and took his place, ready

¹³⁴ “Band Goes West; West Goes Wild.”

¹³⁵ “Band,” *Manitou Messenger* (Northfield, MN), March 2, 1973.

¹³⁶ Myrna Johnson journal, February 11, 1960, St. Olaf Band 1960 tour scrapbook, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

¹³⁷ Myrna Johnson, interview, December 2016.

¹³⁸ “Magical musical tours.”

to perform. Students recall that Mity laughed so hard he began to cry.¹³⁹ Mity's ability to welcome jokes was crucial for building a strong sense of community, which in turn allowed him to ask more from students musically.

Mity's community-building went beyond practical jokes with the band. He established traditions of pre-concert devotions, where students volunteered to give a reflective speech about their musical journey that helped to prepare the band members for each upcoming concert. Band tours were also an opportunity for dinnertime social events.¹⁴⁰ Comedy sketches, unusual musical performances, and other forms of light entertainment were presented by members of the band each night. These touring traditions became an important part of how Mity cultivated ensemble bonding in the band.

During the earlier tours, the crowd size at performances varied greatly. In her journal entries, Myrna wrote about crowds of nearly four hundred while other times, such as during the 1958 tour top in Wadena, Minnesota, she noted that the crowd was small.¹⁴¹ If Mity was disappointed, he did not let on to the students, the audience, or even Myrna. He told the band that they were to perform their best every night for the audience they had: "You don't play for the empty chairs or ask why people didn't come out."¹⁴² It took years for the band to build its reputation and have consistently large crowds.

¹³⁹ Unknown student note, 1964, St. Olaf Band 1964 tour scrapbook, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

¹⁴⁰ Pesola, interview, 2017.

¹⁴¹ Myrna Johnson journal, 1958, St. Olaf Band 1958 tour scrapbook, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

¹⁴² Myrna Johnson, interview, December 2016.

It did not take long, however, for the ensemble to earn praise from several well-respected musicians. After the band's fourth tour, Karl Holvik, who was the son of one of Mity's professors at Concordia and director at the Iowa State Teacher's College¹⁴³, wrote a letter to St. Olaf College president Clemens Granskou, praising the tour performance and inviting future visits to Iowa:

Miles has a splendid band, in every way. We enjoyed their concert very, very much and they were an inspiration to us. We hope it will be possible to continue this happy arrangement with St. Olaf in the years to come.¹⁴⁴

Another letter from Butler Eitel, director at Edina-Morningside Senior High School and later president of the American Bandmasters Association, also wrote to President Granskou:

Mr. Johnson has done a remarkable piece of work with this musical organization since I heard them at your Music Festival in May 1960... It is a rare treat to hear a band play with so much attention to musicianship.¹⁴⁵

One of the more interesting letters President Granskou received in regards to the band on tour was from Pastor George Straus of St. Petri Lutheran Church in Story City, Iowa.

Straus writes,

Our people here are simply tired of choirs, etc. who come thru[sic] our church and never have one section of anthems which the local choirs struggle with—they sing too often for the critics. So, it was refreshing indeed to see the selection of numbers by this fine band... This is something new for us, and we appreciated it a great deal.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Iowa State Teacher's Colleges is now known as The University of Northern Iowa.

¹⁴⁴ Karl Holvik to Dr. Granskou, February 18, 1961, Accession number 0, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

¹⁴⁵ Butler R. Eitel to President, St. Olaf College, February 16, 1961, Accession number 0, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

¹⁴⁶ George Straus to Dr. Granskou, March 1963, Accession number 0, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

After nine years at St. Olaf College and nine tours around the Midwest with Mity, the St. Olaf Band had established its reputation as a fine concert band. Following a 1966 concert in Cedar Falls, Iowa, in which composer Alfred Reed attended, Reed wrote the following to Mity and the band:

I hope that neither you nor the band will consider it impertinent of me to send along the enclosed little note, which I hope you will post up on their bulletin board so that they can see for themselves how their poise, ability and sheer music making affected one whose travels have so far taken him to some 32 States and Canada, to hear some hundreds of bands during the past 12 years.

There is an old story: How can you tell a good conductor before you have ever see him lift the baton once, let alone actually conduct even one number? The answer is: by his programming. Enough said, I think.

But one more thing I will say, and that is that the sound of the group I heard that evening is the band sound so far as I am concerned. This is what I hear in my mind as I write...and this is what I hope I shall get when my works are performed.¹⁴⁷

During the 1970s, the annual winter tour became more complex, and Mity established a pre-tour, or a “warm-up” concert as he affectionately called it.¹⁴⁸ This was an opportunity to run the performance and identify areas for improvement before leaving for an eight- or nine-day tour that included a dozen or more performances and little time for rehearsal.¹⁴⁹ The pre-tours were short day trips to schools or churches around southern Minnesota or the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area.

The band was not the only touring musical organization at St. Olaf College. At the time, the St. Olaf Choir was taking more extensive domestic tours. In 1963, the choir

¹⁴⁷ Alfred Reed to Miles Johnson, March 4, 1966, St. Olaf Band 1966 scrapbook, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

¹⁴⁸ “And tour begins...,” 1972, St. Olaf Band 1972 scrapbook, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

¹⁴⁹ Myrna Johnson, interview, December 2016.

embarked on a three-week tour to twelve different states. That same year, the St. Olaf Band's tour visited three Midwestern states over the period of nine days.¹⁵⁰ While the band occasionally visited a wider geographical region, Mity became frustrated with the idea of the band as a second-rate organization.¹⁵¹

When Robert Phelps became the band manager in 1972, he drafted a series of concerns regarding these discrepancies. Principally, he wanted the band to perform in more high-profile venues. Phelps used the example of Estelline, South Dakota, where the population was seven hundred and twenty-two people.¹⁵² He believed the band could still perform in small towns, but not at the expense of larger venues in New York, Washington, Denver, Minneapolis, Kansas City, and Des Moines. The band had outgrown Estelline. He argued that “the level of challenge of the performance venue” impacted student performance, and Phelps questioned if Mity could keep attracting talented musicians unless the “level of band tour and performance situations [was] consistent with the level of talent [of the band].”¹⁵³

Phelps made several other recommendations in his letter, including recommendations to perform with civic music organizations and university artist series, and to stop asking for money at high school convocations.¹⁵⁴ His goal was to change the

¹⁵⁰ “StO spreads music throughout midwest,” *Manitou Messenger* (Northfield, MN), January 18, 1963.

¹⁵¹ For example, in 1964, the band visited six states; in 1970, it visited four states, and in 1990, it visited six states.

¹⁵² Robert Phelps, “St. Olaf Band Tour Management—Impressions,” 1972, Accession number 3736, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

¹⁵³ Phelps, “St. Olaf Band Tour Management—Impressions.”

¹⁵⁴ His fear was that asking for money might alienate schools that already do not have disposable funds. While he prioritized high-profile venues, he also firmly believed in bringing high-quality band music to a variety of communities.

character of the tour: “It is better to have a first-class shorter tour than a marginal longer tour.”¹⁵⁵ He concluded that the college should market the band’s unique programming and performance styles and engage with St. Olaf alumni associations.¹⁵⁶

Although band members made light of their “hardships” compared to the “more comfortable situations” of the choir, the band had a “we’ll win in spite of them” attitude.¹⁵⁷ Phelps attributed these high spirits to Mity’s encouragement. Mity believed that simply by expecting the band to play beautifully, it would.¹⁵⁸

Unfortunately, band tours did not improve in the following years as dramatically as Mity and Phelps had hoped. Continued frustration led Mity to write David E. Johnson, the Vice President of St. Olaf College, six years later. Mity recognized that one of the problems in the music organizations office was that it was not booking venues effectively.¹⁵⁹ It kept recreating the same tour each year, he complained, and “they were never able to think in terms of breaking new ground and starting something new in a new way.”¹⁶⁰ Mity also noted that the office lacked personal contact with each community’s host, and as someone who prioritized relationship-building, Mity wanted a more personal approach to collaborating with the people who planned the on-site concerts.

Mity further argued his point by pointing to St. Olaf College’s sister schools: Augsburg, Concordia, Luther, Augustana, Wartburg, and Waldorf. All were expanding

¹⁵⁵ Phelps, “St. Olaf Band Tour Management—Impressions.”

¹⁵⁶ Mity’s signature themed second-half concert was occurring by this time, a topic that will be covered more in-depth later.

¹⁵⁷ Phelps, “St. Olaf Band Tour Management—Impressions.”

¹⁵⁸ John Ferguson, interview by author, January 16, 2017, Northfield, Minnesota.

¹⁵⁹ Miles Johnson to David E. Johnson, July 11, 1978, Accession number 3736, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

¹⁶⁰ Miles Johnson to David E. Johnson, 1978.

tour support for their bands, while the St. Olaf Band continued to be, in Johnson's words, a "second-class operation."¹⁶¹ He reiterated Phelps's 1972 point that "[the tour] should be a good nine-day period."¹⁶² While Mity did not think an effective tour needed to be more than nine days, he also maintained that it should not be limited by distance and should feature a mixture of small towns, large towns, and major concert venues.¹⁶³ He concludes the letter,

St. Olaf College is a first-class operation. I've always felt this and so have you. The St. Olaf Band tour has always been a second-class operation. It is something that has hurt me for years. I have never understood why it had to be that way. Let's make it a first-class operation, also.¹⁶⁴

Despite both Phelps' and Mity's letters, there continued to be inequalities between the band and choir tours; however, despite his frustrations, Mity did not let it hinder the ensemble. He continued to push the ability level of the band and find it unique performance opportunities, particularly on the band's international tours.

International Tours

In addition to the annual domestic tour schedule, the St. Olaf Band traveled abroad eight times during Mity's tenure at St. Olaf College. The first of these tours took place in 1966, which marked the sixtieth anniversary of the first tour to Norway by the St. Olaf Band. The 1906 tour held dual importance, because it was the first time any

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Mity added that the St. Olaf Band tours during his tenure were mostly around the Midwest, while the choir frequently traveled to both the east and west coasts.

¹⁶⁴ Miles Johnson to David E. Johnson, 1978.

ensemble from St. Olaf College had traveled abroad, and it also marked the first European tour by any American college or university music ensemble.¹⁶⁵

The college administration recognized the importance of the 1966 tour and supported the trip to Germany, Denmark and Norway, but with certain conditions:

1. Each member of the band should be in good standing during the second semester of the 1965-1966 school year.
2. The cost must not exceed \$600 per student and include all transportation, lodging, food, concert arrangements, rentals, advertising, printing, and pre-tour expenses.¹⁶⁶
3. The tour shall not exceed 25 days from departure in Minneapolis to return in Minneapolis.¹⁶⁷

Frederick Schmidt, the manager of the St. Olaf Band, arranged the tour details and met the college's criteria with one exception. In planning the schedule, he argued that the trip should be extended by two days. Schmidt convinced Vice President of St. Olaf College, David E. Johnson, that this extension was a necessity and that the price per student would still not exceed six hundred dollars.¹⁶⁸

Once the initial details of the trip had been prepared and presented to the band, all but one student signed the contract agreeing to pay the full cost and participate. Schmidt worked closely with Mity to develop a tour that was satisfactory to him in terms of the geographic area covered, the number of concerts performed, and the amount of free time. Schmidt traveled to Europe in July 1965 to make initial arrangements and

¹⁶⁵ Frederick Schmidt, The 1966 European Tour of the St. Olaf Band, Accession number 3736, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

¹⁶⁶ Mity and Myrna Johnson's costs were also factored in and divided among the students' expenses. Yet, even with these added expenses, student cost could not exceed \$600.

¹⁶⁷ Schmidt, The 1966 European Tour of the St. Olaf Band.

¹⁶⁸ David E. Johnson to Fred Schmidt, Miles Johnson, Jack Laugen, September 13, 1965, Accession number 2700, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

again in April 1966 to “see that everything was in order and to put the finishing touches on the tour.”¹⁶⁹

On the afternoon of May 29, after the commencement exercise concluded, some members of the band brought equipment to the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport to prepare it for loading the next morning.¹⁷⁰ The rest of the band departed St. Olaf College on Monday, May 31, for an 8:00 a.m. flight. Because of the large number of passengers—seventy-seven band members plus another eleven people accompanying the group—the college chartered an airplane with Icelandic Airlines. As the crew from Icelandic Airlines packed the band’s equipment, members of the band’s loading crew tried to explain how it should be loaded (they had practiced in the campus gymnasium), but they were ignored.¹⁷¹ As a result, eleven pieces of equipment were left behind and had to be flown on the next commercial flight.

After landing in Luxemburg, the band traveled thirty miles to Trier, Germany for its first concert. It was welcomed by the town’s mayor at the city’s large Roman gate—Porta Nigra. The first evening concert took place in the six hundred and fifty seat “Buergerverein” concert hall and tickets sold out in advance; however, that did not stop more people from standing in the aisles and in the back of the hall to hear the band. Part of the concert was taped by Germany’s government television station, Channel 2.¹⁷² Later in the week, the footage was broadcast as part of a larger segment about the American band traveling in Germany. At the band’s next stop in Bad Hersfeld, another

¹⁶⁹ Schmidt, *The 1966 European Tour of the St. Olaf Band*.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² *Ibid.*; In advance of the trip, St. Olaf College sent an advanced press release to major news outlets along tour stops.

government television station, Channel 1, heard about the first taping and recorded the band's outdoor performance.

The band was greeted at each venue by mayors and other civic dignitaries, and it attracted large audiences: 1,500-2,000 in Hamburg, 750 in Stavanger, and 2,000 in Bryne.¹⁷³ Many of the performances in concert halls were sold out in advance. When the band arrived in Copenhagen for the Denmark portion of the tour, it was invited to perform at “Radhusplasen,” in the city hall square. The last band to perform in that venue was the United States Air Force Band during a visit by then General Dwight D. Eisenhower, so Mity and the students were honored to perform at such a special venue.¹⁷⁴

Once the band reached Stavanger—its first Norwegian stop—a school band greeted it by performing the St. Olaf College fight song “Um Yah Yah.”¹⁷⁵ Schmidt and Mity had planned this surprise in advance. The St. Olaf Band had its own surprise for its sold-out crowd in Stavanger; it performed the city's song, which resulted in enthusiastic applause, as its final number on that evening's concert.

Halfway through the month-long tour, the band arrived in Oslo. It was invited to the state television station to tape a half-hour concert that was to be rebroadcast on July 4, as part of a celebration program on United States Independence Day.¹⁷⁶ During the long afternoon of recording, composer Egil Hovland stopped by the studio, as seen in Figure 1. Hovland came to hear *Fanfare og Koral*, a piece he wrote for the band. Commissioning a prominent Norwegian composer in celebration of the band's tour was

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

Schmidt's idea. After getting Hovland's name from Jon Embretson, director of the Norwegian Information Services in New York, Schmidt approached Richard Giere, a trustee at St. Olaf College, who agreed to pay the entire commission fee of six hundred dollars.¹⁷⁷



Figure 1. Mity Johnson and Egil Hovland, 1966.¹⁷⁸

Impressed with the St. Olaf Band's performance of his piece, Hovland attended two more performances of the band. One was at the Aula at the University of Oslo and the other was in Hovland's hometown of Fredrikstad. After the concert, Hovland told

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Mity Johnson and Egil Hovland (photo), 1966, Johnson private collection.

the audience that “it was an inspiration to hear whatever the band played.”¹⁷⁹ Mity replied,

The thrill was ours, first to be able to receive Mr. Hovland’s music, then to admire it more and more at each performance and finally to meet the man who was responsible for sending us this most worthy composition.¹⁸⁰

Another highlight on the program was soprano Irene Gubrud, a four-year member of the band who was a featured vocal soloist during all four of her domestic tours, and who sang a *Porgy and Bess* medley.¹⁸¹

Mity carefully programmed a combination of pieces that found local interest (like Hovland’s) and also reflected American music and culture. More pragmatically, Mity’s programming also considered the variety of concert venues: concert halls, churches, and parks. Some music worked in any site, but Mity recognized the need for a diverse and flexible program. As a result, the band prepared forty-three different pieces: fifteen concert works, twelve marches, ten Broadway musical medleys and American folk songs, and six feature solos and small ensembles.¹⁸² Audiences noticed the band’s extensive and tailored repertoire, and newspapers around Germany, Denmark, and Norway praised Mity for his insightful programming.¹⁸³

One particularly special venue in which the band played was the Aula at the University of Oslo. The concert performed there had a small audience because of the

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Examples from each of the three programs are found in Appendix A.

¹⁸³ Schmidt, *The 1966 European Tour of the St. Olaf Band*.



Figure 2. St. Olaf Band, The Aula at the University of Oslo, 1966.¹⁸⁴

intimate hall size, as seen in Figure 2.¹⁸⁵ Nonetheless, the Aula was filled with dignitaries, including United States Ambassador to Norway, Helen Joy Tibbetts, and Norwegian Council General to the United States, Thorgeir Siqveland.¹⁸⁶ Two days earlier, the band had met Ambassador Tibbetts at the American Embassy and the mayor of Oslo on a tour of the city. Mity and band president Ronald Sell were extended an especially generous welcome to the King's palace, where they were granted a private

¹⁸⁴ St. Olaf Band, The Aula at the University of Oslo (photo), 1966, Johnson private collection.

¹⁸⁵ The Aula is one of the most famous musical buildings in Oslo. It hosts some of the country's most prominent musical talent and is decorated by eleven large murals painted by Edvard Munch.

¹⁸⁶ Schmidt, The 1966 European Tour of the St. Olaf Band.

fifteen-minute interview with King Olav. Much of their time was spent discussing the connections between Norway and St. Olaf College, connections which Mity continued to strengthen throughout his career.¹⁸⁷

As the band continued its tour, it was featured in several music festivals. The first was *Olavsdagene*, a celebration led by Lutheran Bishop Tord Godal that brought special musical events to Trondheim's gothic cathedral.¹⁸⁸ Performances took place beneath the Nidaros Cathedral's Rose Window, as seen in Figure 3. Other prominent groups at the celebration included the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra and the Nidarosdomens Guttekor. Mity took advantage of the cathedral space by using antiphonal effects achieved through placing different groups in various naves of the church.¹⁸⁹ Earlier in the tour, he had explored these effects in the Aula by placing trumpets in all four corners of the hall during the performance of Vaclav Nelhybel's *Musica Festiva*.¹⁹⁰

In 1966, *Festspillene i Norge* (a Norwegian arts festival) was still in its infancy, but had already attracted prominent performers, such as the Oslo Philharmonic. The St. Olaf Band was booked to perform a two-concert program there. The first was at 7:00 p.m. and included lighter music—Broadway musicals, marches, solos—aimed at a younger audience. Later that evening, the second concert was promoted as a “formal” concert. Both concerts were popular with audiences and were sold out in advance; in

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Schmidt, The 1966 European Tour of the St. Olaf Band.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ After the Nidaros concert, several members of the band took advantage of the long days and joined the after-midnight gold club in Trondheim, where all games of golf began after midnight.

fact, they drew more people than any other event during the festival.¹⁹¹ As a result, the festival organizers arranged an extra performance the next day for school musicians, in which the band performed an all-requests program.¹⁹²



Figure 3. St. Olaf Band performing in Nidaros Cathedral, 1966.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ Schmidt, The 1966 European Tour of the St. Olaf Band.

¹⁹² Ibid.

In addition to drawing record audiences for the group, the 1966 St. Olaf Band European Tour attracted an unprecedented degree of media coverage for the college.¹⁹⁴ Jack Laugen, director of Public Relations for St. Olaf College, joined the tour to cover publicity. Laugen had established contact with the Associated Press and other American news services, but he also developed contacts in Europe, sending alerts about performances, contacting photographers to cover concerts, and providing newspaper kits with photos and stories of the band.¹⁹⁵ The result was wide television, newspaper, and radio coverage, including the feature programs on German national television and Norwegian newspapers running full-page stories with photos of the St. Olaf Band concerts.¹⁹⁶

This publicity was just one way the band made connections with local musical organizations. The June 16 concert at Haslemoen in Vaaler arose from a contact that Schmidt made with bandleader Egil Nordstjø, who had been working to develop school music programs and quality music education.¹⁹⁷ Nordstjø arranged a special concert for music teachers in the area. Because Norwegian bands at this time were rooted in a military tradition, their repertoire was limited to marches, show tunes, and chorales; as

¹⁹³ St. Olaf Band performing in Nidaros Cathedral (photo), 1966, Accession number 3022, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ The band also provided its own publicity. Before each concert in Norway, it marched down the main street, from the town square to the performance venue, playing music. Ronald Sell, president of the band, served as the drum major. In Stavanger, Sell took a wrong turn and ended up leading the band out of town and to a field full of cows. There they stopped and played to the cows before turning around and marching back. Myrna Johnson, interview, January 2016.

¹⁹⁶ Jack Laugen to David E. Johnson, June 12, 1966, Accession number 2700, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

¹⁹⁷ Schmidt, The 1966 European Tour of the St. Olaf Band.

Norwegian news outlets noted, the concept of the symphonic band was new.¹⁹⁸ The *Namdal Arbeiderblad* in Namsos wrote,

All parts of the [St. Olaf Band] program were performed with supreme certainty and with a personnel distribution which gave great opportunity for a rich variety of sound . . . The concert was an experience, and for the many active musicians in the audience it served as a source of education and inspiration and pointed out new directions for our own bands. It demonstrated how far a youthful band can progress under the leadership of a great conductor in a rich artistic environment.¹⁹⁹

School band directors noted that “the ambitions of their bands had been widened by listening to the extensive repertoire of the Oles.”²⁰⁰ After the Oslo concert, *Aftenposten*, Norway's largest newspaper, reported that the band performed “with catching freshness and a discipline that was worthy of being taken as a model. To Director Miles Johnson must go great honor for presenting a band of such high standard.”²⁰¹ The St. Olaf Band introduced new repertoire and standards for Norwegian players and conductors to investigate and emulate.

The band returned home on a charter plane from Bodø on June 26. This time the band loaded its equipment by itself, all of which fit in the plane's cargo hold, except the bass drum case. The band ended up leaving the case in Norway and tying the drum down in the plane's bathroom.²⁰²

Four years later, Mity brought the band back to Europe. This time it toured Czechoslovakia, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Italy. While the 1970 tour did not last as long as the 1966 tour, it still marked a pivotal moment in the development

¹⁹⁸ Miles Johnson, “St. Olaf's Band in Norway, *Music Journal*, 24:10 (December, 1966): 38.

¹⁹⁹ “Reviews from the St. Olaf Band Tour,” *St. Olaf Alumnus*, 14:5 (July 1966): 23.

²⁰⁰ “Reviews from the St. Olaf Band Tour,” 23.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² Schmidt, The 1966 European Tour of the St. Olaf Band.

of the St. Olaf Band. In the years since the band's previous European tour, Mity had continued to experiment with programming. He crafted three separate programs for this tour—cathedral, formal evening, and informal outdoors. More significantly, 1970 also marked the first year that Mity compiled and edited a “themed second half.”²⁰³ This special half of the program was entitled “Window on America” and involved singing, playing, and a slideshow that represented a cross-section of 1970s American life.²⁰⁴ For this second half, the students changed out of their formal tuxedos and gowns and wore casual clothes. The medley of tunes they performed included an original electric guitar composition and a rock dance number, works that are not traditionally found on a symphonic band program.²⁰⁵ They also formed a Dixieland band and a folk singing group, ensembles that also were unusual for a concert band. Perry Kruse, a St. Olaf College electrician, also traveled with the band to operate the elaborate light effects and slideshow, which featured snapshots of America as the band performed Richard Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra*.

In addition to offering Europeans a glimpse of American life through “Window on America,” the band also served as musical ambassadors, traveling across the Iron Curtain. Negotiating passport control and customs for the June 8 concert in West Berlin was tedious. At each border crossing, the band was stopped for over an hour.²⁰⁶ Once it arrived in West Berlin, it was welcomed by Reverend Guter Phol at Kaiser Wilhelm

²⁰³ More details of the themed second half concerts are covered later in the chapter under programming.

²⁰⁴ “Choir, Band Flying to Europe June 1,” *St. Olaf Alumnus*, 18:3 (May 1970), 24.

²⁰⁵ “Comments from band tour,” 1970, St. Olaf Band 1970 European tour scrapbook, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

²⁰⁶ “Comments from band tour.”

Memorial Church. In his remarks during the concert, Reverend Phol spoke to the power of music during uncertain times: “Music forms bridges between nations. Music brings them closer together.”²⁰⁷ A highlight for the band was when the brass players performed Aaron Copland’s *Fanfare for the Common Man* outside the cathedral to help promote the concert.²⁰⁸

After its West Berlin performance, the band traveled to Prague and experienced its most difficult border crossing, which took three and a half hours.²⁰⁹ Regardless, the band was still excited about its performance in Prague. The band’s formal concert program spotlighted *Music for Prague 1968* by Pulitzer-prize winning composer, Karel Husa. Because the work portrays the tragic nature of the Soviet invasion of Prague, Mity was skeptical that the band would be permitted to perform the work.²¹⁰ The night before their Prague performance, Mity and the tour manager Robert Phelps met at a tavern with Victor Urbanec, director of the Czech army band, and Dr. Miroslav Blaha, an attorney and the band’s host in Prague. During their discussion, Mity inquired about performing *Music for Prague 1968*. Blaha responded that “It would be all right for you and your students, but it would be very bad for us.”²¹¹

The next day, Mity told the students that they would not be performing *Music for Prague 1968*. He did not want to put their guest conductor and host, Urbanec, in an

²⁰⁷ “Europe 1970,” *St. Olaf Alumnus* 18:4 (July 1970): 14

²⁰⁸ “Europe 1970,” 14; The audience also broke tradition and applauded after the performance. Robert Phelps to David E. Johnson, July 1, 1970, Accession number 2700, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

²⁰⁹ “Comments from band tour.”

²¹⁰ Robert Phelps, e-mail message to Susan Hvistendahl, February 6, 2017.

²¹¹ Phelps, e-mail message.

uncomfortable position.²¹² Though the concert went on and Urbanec led the band in *The Florentiner March*, the rainy weather echoed many students' moods.

Except for the concerts in Prague and Zagreb, the band performed *Music for Prague 1968* for its remaining formal evening concerts. Even without its core piece in Zagreb, the band received two encores, three-dozen roses, and a laurel wreath from the Theater Komedija management after its concert.²¹³ The band found similarly enthusiastic responses throughout their tour. As during the 1966 tour, the band attracted record audiences in 1970: 2,000 seated and 500 standing in Bad Salzuflen and 1,500 at Messehalle in Innsbruck.²¹⁴ The concert organizers in Innsbruck invited the band to commence the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Innsbruck Folk Festival. It was scheduled to perform only one hour, but after the festival officials heard the band perform a concert in Igls the day before, they asked for a second concert at the close of the festival, and it attracted an audience of 1,500 people.²¹⁵

Mity and the St. Olaf Band returned to Europe six more times, once back to Norway, once to Great Britain, and three times exclusively to London. For St. Olaf College's 1974 centennial celebration, the band visited both Norway and Great Britain. Like the 1966 tour, the band's 1974 Norway tour brought similar success and praise to the ensemble, but it was invited to perform at more high-profile venues.

²¹² Claire Nelson, note to author, January 18, 2017; Robert Phelps to David E. Johnson, 1970.

²¹³ "Comments from band tour."

²¹⁴ "Touring band wins Innsbruck plaudits," 1970, St. Olaf Band 1970 European tour scrapbook, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

²¹⁵ "Touring band wins Innsbruck plaudits;" Robert Phelps to David E. Johnson, 1970.

As part of the 1974 tour, St. Olaf faculty member Reidar Dittmann coordinated a St. Olaf Band appearance at the International Bergen Festival.²¹⁶ At that time, the festival was celebrating its twenty-second season. The two-week event featured artists and groups performing drama, music, and dance from around the world.²¹⁷ Previous acts included: the British Royal Philharmonic, the Swedish Radio Symphony, the Prague Symphony, the Philadelphia String Quartet, the Stockholm Royal Opera Ballet, the Zagreb String Quartet, and the National Theater of Oslo. In 1974, the Moscow Chamber Orchestra was featured on the program.²¹⁸ The St. Olaf Band was the only amateur group in the schedule.²¹⁹ The festival committee wanted to make special mention of the centennial celebration at St. Olaf College as part of the band's performance.²²⁰ The festival organizers stipulated that it must be the band's first appearance on their tour.²²¹ This condition suited Mity and St. Olaf College, because they were already planning on flying into Bergen to start the tour. For Mity,

This really is frosting on the cake. We were looking forward to playing in Norway during the College's Centennial year, but to perform on the program of the Bergen Festival is a singular honor for us and for St. Olaf.²²²

In addition to performing at the main festival, the band was asked to present a twenty-minute concert as part of a family concert called *Music and Drill*. It was the third year of this concert, which was added to the festival as a way to feature lighter entertainment and local groups. The St. Olaf Band shared the concert with H.M.

²¹⁶ Reidar Dittmann to Dave Johnson, September 7, 1973, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

²¹⁷ "St. Olaf Band to Bergen Festival," *St. Olaf* 22:2 (Winter 1974): 1.

²¹⁸ "St. Olaf Band to Bergen Festival," 1.

²¹⁹ "Band to play at Bergen Festival," *Northfield News* (Northfield, MN), May 23, 1974.

²²⁰ Reidar Dittmann to Dave Johnson, 1973.

²²¹ Reidar Dittmann to Dave Johnson, 1973.

²²² "St. Olaf Band to Bergen Festival," 1.

Kongens Garde; Forsvarets Distriktsmusikkorps, Vestlandet; Midtun School's Brass Band and Drill Troop; Dragefjelkets Brass Band; and Dræggens Boys Brigade Drill Troop.²²³ After the performance, the band members were guests at a reception given by the King's Guards, an elite military musical organization.²²⁴

For Mity, this trip to Norway was as much about providing student performance experiences as it was about educating Norwegian musicians about the symphonic band tradition. During their stop in the town of Larvik, Mity and band members demonstrated tuning and rehearsal procedures to school musicians at the request of Odd Terje Lysebo.²²⁵ In addition, the band performed an evening concert in Larvik to the largest crowd on the tour—approximately one thousand people.²²⁶ Lysebo acted as a consultant and unofficial guide during the 1974 tour, which led to later collaborations between him and Mity.

The second half of the 1974 tour brought the band to Great Britain. While there were several last-minute cancelations and schedule changes by the travel company, the band had a memorable performance in the ruins of Coventry Cathedral.²²⁷ The band performed outdoors in the middle of the ruins for passing visitors, as seen in Figure 4. There they played a sacred program, which went over well with the ad hoc audience.²²⁸

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ "Everything Starts With the Music," *St. Olaf* 22:4 (Summer 1974): 1.

²²⁵ "Everything Starts With the Music," 1.

²²⁶ Bob Phelps to David E. Johnson, Band Tour of Norway and Great Britain, 1974, Accession number 2700, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

²²⁷ Mark Ulmer, letter to author, January 13, 2017. Because of financial difficulties on the part of the travel company, the band's representative in Britain failed to make certain arrangements. Mity and the band members did not find out about the change until June 6—four days before leaving Norway for Britain. Bob Phelps to David E. Johnson, 1974.

²²⁸ Bob Phelps to David E. Johnson, 1974.

A large crowd gathered to hear the group, even though there were no seats except stone ledges.

The return of the band to Norway in 1987 followed the route from previous Norwegian tours. There were performances at The Bergen Festival, school clinics in Larvik, and a concert in Oslo with Prince Harold. That year, the Norwegian National Radio recorded the band's entire concert at the Bergen Festival for a later rebroadcast, and shared it with other countries that requested the tape.²²⁹



Figure 4. St. Olaf Band performing at Coventry Cathedral, 1974.²³⁰

²²⁹ Dan Jorgensen, "Norwegians enthusiastic about the band," *News* (Northfield, MN), June 25, 1987.

²³⁰ St. Olaf Band performing at Coventry Cathedral (photo), 1974, Johnson private collection.

Mity's final international tour took place during the St. Olaf Band's centennial celebration in 1991. While on tour in Great Britain, they performed *Four Scottish Dances* for composer Malcolm Arnold. Arnold was impressed and congratulated the band on its performance: "I can't believe your band. They're fantastic!"²³¹

Additionally, the band was given the honor of performing at the Aldeburgh Festival, which was founded by composer Benjamin Britten. The band was the first college or university ensemble to perform at the festival and the audience was "most receptive."²³² Its performance took place outside in a flower garden, with threatening weather on the horizon. Luckily, the band was almost able to finish the concert before it started to rain.

Perhaps Mity's most creative innovation in international performance first took place during 1977. During the month of January, St. Olaf College had an interim semester, in which students enrolled in one intensive class for the month. Many students used this time to study internationally. In 1977, Mity proposed an interim class titled "Instrumental Music in England 1825-1977."²³³ The concept of the class was to gather an instrumental ensemble of fifty-five to eighty students, selected by audition, to participate in a work-study program.²³⁴ The group was to "study the history, development, musical and instrumental structure, and the literature of the British Wind

²³¹ "Famed British composer praises St. Olaf Band," *News* (Northfield, MN), June 28, 1991.

²³² "Famed British composer praises St. Olaf Band."

²³³ Music IIg: Instrumental Music in England 1825-1977, 1977, St. Olaf Band 1977 London scrapbook, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

²³⁴ The Off-Campus Study department at St. Olaf College called the program "work-study," but it was not paid student work. In this context, the term meant it was a credit-bearing course rather than a tour.

Band.”²³⁵ Lectures and study were supplemented by attending concerts and field trips around England. Ensembles had participated in international tours for quite some time, but no college ensemble is known to have participated in any type of credit-bearing extended residency that Mity was proposing.²³⁶

Major James Howe, MBE, served as Mity’s contact in England. As the former Director of Music for the Scots Guard, Howe had many musical connections in England. He was “key to opening doors (and gates) that others never saw.”²³⁷ Through Howe’s connections, master classes were set up throughout the month. Professional musicians, such as Dick Merreweather (horn), Denis Wick (trombone), John Fletcher (tuba), Jack Brymer (clarinet), and Jimmy Blades (percussion) gave lectures to the students on their various instruments and other topics such as virtuosity.²³⁸ Peter Wilson, secretary of the National British Brass Band Championship and editor of the *British Bandsman*, gave a lecture on the history of the British Brass Band.²³⁹

In addition to guest lectures by British musicians, the St. Olaf students also attended lectures by Charles Forsberg, chair of the St. Olaf music department, and Myrna Johnson. Both helped coordinate and manage the tour. Before attending an evening concert, Forsberg gave a lecture covering the lives and music of Gustav Holst and Sergei Rachmaninoff. Myrna played an important role in founding the Northfield Arts Guild and had directed numerous theatrical productions in the twenty years since moving to Northfield. She used her knowledge of theater to provide background on

²³⁵ Music IIg: Instrumental Music in England.

²³⁶ Timothy Mahr, interview by author, January 4, 2017, Northfield, Minnesota.

²³⁷ Miles Johnson to Off Campus Study, 1977, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

²³⁸ Myrna Johnson journal, 1977, Johnson private collection.

²³⁹ London Interim calendar, 1977, Johnson private collection.

Gilbert and Sullivan's *Mikado* and Verdi's *La traviata* in a pre-concert talk to the students.²⁴⁰

Over the course of the month, the students stayed in two separate hotels, Lexham Lodge and Onslow Lodge.²⁴¹ Both were within walking distance of Chenil Gardens, a former art studio in Chelsea that served as the band's rehearsal hall for the month, and also provided space for guest lectures and master classes.²⁴²

The band rehearsed four days per week from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Mity led most of the rehearsals, but Howe also arranged for several guest conductors to work with the band. The two most significant guest conductors were Lieutenant-Colonel Trevor Sharpe and Imogen Holst. At that time, Sharpe (seen in Figure 5) served as Director of Music of the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall, where his duties included training all Bandmasters and Bandsmen of the army and planning concerts at Kneller Hall.²⁴³ He invited the members of the St. Olaf Band to Kneller Hall for a side-by-side rehearsal with the military musicians.²⁴⁴

Imogen Holst, the daughter of Gustav Holst seen in Figure 6, agreed to conduct her father's First Suite in E-flat for Military Band. As she rehearsed the band on the piece, she explained how her father wanted the music to sound.²⁴⁵ She was gracious during the rehearsal and spent time afterward signing many of the students' sheet

²⁴⁰ London Interim calendar, 1977.

²⁴¹ Band work-study interim to London, 1977, Accession number 715, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

²⁴² Myrna Johnson journal, 1977.

²⁴³ Massed Bands in Concert (program), 1977, Johnson private collection.

²⁴⁴ Mahr, interview, 2017.

²⁴⁵ Mahr, interview, 2017.

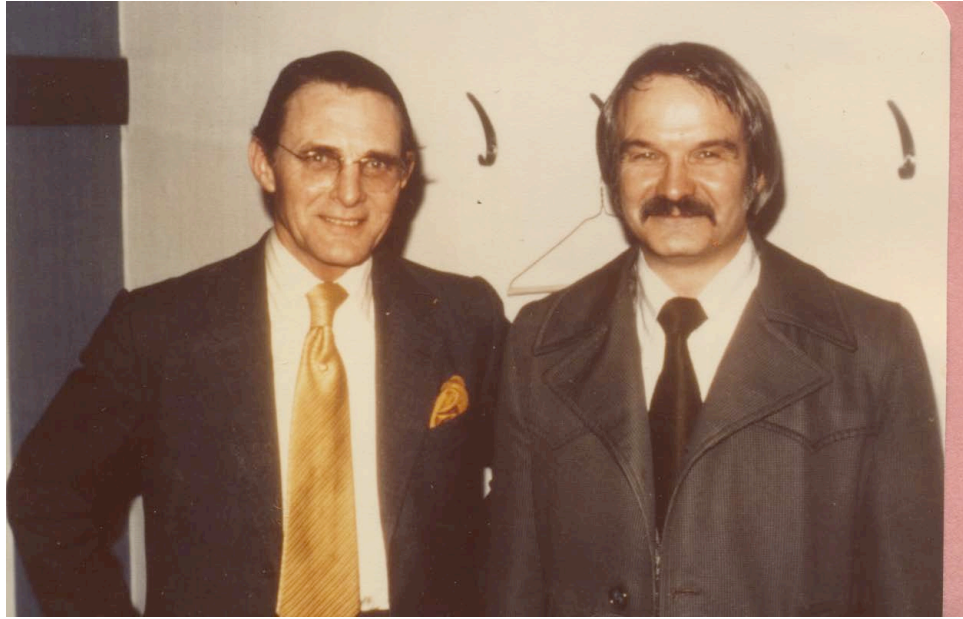


Figure 5. Lieutenant-Colonel Sharpe and Mity Johnson.²⁴⁶



Figure 6. Mity Johnson and Imogen Holst, 1977.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁶ Lieutenant-Colonel Sharpe and Mity Johnson (photo), n.d., Johnson private collection.

²⁴⁷ Mity Johnson and Imogen Holst (photo), 1977, Johnson private collection.

music.²⁴⁸ In thanks for her work with the band, she was presented with a decorative vase, and she later expressed her gratitude for the gift and rehearsal:

Thank you for the beautiful present you have given me! I shall treasure it, and it will always remind me of the great joy of working with you on my father's Eb Suite.²⁴⁹

Despite the length of time the band spent in England, it only performed one concert. Howe had begun a series of massed band concerts with military bands at Fairfield Hall in Croydon. The St. Olaf Band joined the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall Band, along with the Royal trumpeters in a concert titled, "Hands Across the Sea."²⁵⁰ Lieutenant-Colonel Sharpe and Mity shared conducting duties during the concert and invited Major Howe and Imogen Holst to guest conduct one piece each.

At the end of January, the band flew back to Minneapolis; however, Mity did not return with them. Instead, he traveled to Norway to begin a sabbatical, during which he taught horn clinics, led conducting symposia, and guest conducted. In his place, Frederick Fennell was waiting at St. Olaf to lead the ensemble in a home concert performance of the music that it had been preparing in England. Fennell's residency lasted only three days. Both Friday and Saturday the band had double rehearsals.²⁵¹ On Sunday, it had a two-hour dress rehearsal with Fennell before giving the concert.

Mity repeated the London interim program two additional times: once in 1980 and again in 1984. Each time, the format of the work-study trip followed a basic

²⁴⁸ In conversations with students who went on the trip, many still have their autographed piece of music.

²⁴⁹ Imogen Holst to St. Olaf Band, January 22, 1977, Johnson private collection.

²⁵⁰ Mass Bands in Concert (program), 1977.

²⁵¹ St. Olaf Band Rehearsal Schedule: Spring 1977, 1977, St. Olaf Band 1977 scrapbook, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

structure. The band rehearsed in the morning and had the afternoon free to explore London and attend museums, theater productions, and music concerts.²⁵² Mity purposefully kept the schedule open because he wanted the students to experience London.²⁵³

As in 1977, the 1980 and 1984 ensembles presented concerts at Fairfield Hall in Croydon; however, in 1980, the band had an additional opportunity to play at the Royal Albert Hall. In 1977, the band had attended an all-Tchaikovsky concert that the Royal Albert Hall hosted monthly on Sunday nights.²⁵⁴ The organizers of the series used one of the military guard bands to supplement the orchestra for the grand finale and expressed interest in bringing the St. Olaf Band next time it was in London. Unfortunately, during the planning stages of the 1980 trip, Howe noted possible issues that might arise from the Musicians' Union work permits when trying to set up the St. Olaf Band's appearance on the series.²⁵⁵ Although the band did not appear on the all-Tchaikovsky program, Howe still arranged for the band to perform with the New Symphony Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall on January 27. The concert was titled "Viennese Evening." It featured

²⁵² Many of the master class guests returned again: Jimmy Blades, Dick Merewether, Jack Bryner, Denis Wick, and John Fletcher. There were new guest clinicians too: Tony Halstad, Gerald Ruddack, Adrian Brett, and Trevor Wye. Absent from the 1980 and 1984 interims was Imogen Holst. Mity did request her to guest conduct the band, but she was in ill health during the 1980 interim and passed away shortly after the 1984 trip [March 9, 1984]. Mity had flowers sent to Holst during the 1980 trip. Itemization of monies spent on Music IIa interim, January 1980, Accession number 715, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

²⁵³ Sigurd Johnson, interview, 2017.

²⁵⁴ Miles Johnson to Off Campus Study, 1977.

²⁵⁵ Jim Howe to Miles Johnson, April 5, 1979, Accession 715, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

the works of Johann Strauss II, as well as Johann Straus I, Franz van Suppe, and Franz Lehar.²⁵⁶

Howe arranged for Mity to conduct the finale of the performance, which combined musicians from the New Symphony Orchestra and the St. Olaf Band in Ludwig van Beethoven's *Wellington's Victory*.²⁵⁷ Mity split the musicians into French and British contingents and placed them on either side of the stage, as seen in Figure 7. Sigurd Johnson, Mity's son, performed one of the snare drum solos during the work.²⁵⁸ The finale calls for canons, shotguns, and fireworks and members of the Musketeers of the Royal Artillery provided assistance. After the massive climax of the piece, there was reportedly so much smoke in the hall that members of the ensemble could no longer see the podium.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁶ Viennese Evening (program), January 27, 1980, Johnson private collection.

²⁵⁷ Sigurd Johnson, interview, 2017.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.



Figure 7. Mity Johnson conducting, Royal Albert Hall, 1980.²⁶⁰

²⁶⁰ Mity Johnson conducting, Royal Albert Hall (photo), 1980, Johnson private collection.

Programming

There is an old story: How can you tell a good conductor before you have ever seen him lift the baton once, let alone actually conduct even one number? The answer is: by his programming. Enough said, I think. –Alfred Reed²⁶¹

During the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, the concert band experienced many changes, including a growth in quality repertoire. Mity embraced and sometimes propelled these changes, commissioning new music and featuring student composers, activities which helped to establish an identity for the band on the cutting edge of new music. He also had a strong sense of St. Olaf College as a liberal arts college and a college of the church, which directly impacted his programming as well.²⁶² In hindsight, Mity was the right person at the right time to lead the St. Olaf Band through these decades. The balance of featuring new compositions, while also programming more traditional works, became one of Mity's programming touchstones.

This balanced approach to programming was one of the many musical lessons that Mity learned from Paul J. Christiansen. Even though Christiansen conducted a choir, he taught Mity how to program a concert.²⁶³ Early on Mity learned that “a band is a band is a band is a band.”²⁶⁴ A band director cannot and should not program the same way as an orchestra or a choir, because the band's strength is in its variety of repertoire. Mity believed that a conductor should be conscious of the perspectives of both the

²⁶¹ Alfred Reed to Miles Johnson.

²⁶² Ferguson, interview, 2017.

²⁶³ Wildman, interview, 1992.

²⁶⁴ Miles Johnson and Ric Hansen, “Programming for High School and College,” (clinic presented at the Minnesota Band Directors Association conference, Northfield, Minnesota, August 7, 1992), VHS, Timothy Mahr private collection.

audience and the musicians, but also know that everyone cannot be reached by all music all the time.²⁶⁵ He subscribed to the idea that the program can reach everyone, both performers and audiences, some of the time—with the right mix of pieces. The one person that the music and program needed to reach all the time, however, was the conductor.²⁶⁶

This early lesson in the band repertoire's fundamental variety stayed with Mity. Although his programming became more conservative toward the end of his career,²⁶⁷ he was often searching for something new.²⁶⁸ However, this middling approach to programming meant that while Mity was a strong advocate for contemporary music, he argued that "There is not a set of ears in the world that can listen to an all contemporary concert."²⁶⁹ To seek out varied repertoire, Mity spent ample time during summer breaks collecting music for the upcoming year's programs.

As chairman of the original compositions committee for the North Central Division of the College Band Directors National Association, Mity was on the forefront in promoting new and original works for symphonic band.²⁷⁰ During his time as chairman, Mity carried these new trends into his own programming, seeking new angles to build a program, acquiring new pieces to premiere, and advocating for new

²⁶⁵ Johnson and Hansen, "Programming for High School and College."

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Sigurd Johnson, interview, 2017.

²⁶⁸ Pesola, interview, 2017. There is a sense of irony in Mity's successful programming of contemporary music, because his predecessor Bruce Howden struggled to engage students with new music. Mity's success may have been in how and where he placed new music within the program.

²⁶⁹ Wildman, interview, 1992.

²⁷⁰ Miles Johnson biography, 1966, Accession number 3736, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

composers.²⁷¹ He regularly sent out questionnaires during the Minnesota Instrumental Conducting Symposium and to the Minnesota Symphonic Winds asking for recommendations about what new pieces were being written and which ones people enjoyed performing.

As early as Mity's third year at St. Olaf College, he had begun seeking out composers to write new pieces for the band to perform. Without funds for a commission, Mity asked G. Winston Cassler, a colleague in the music department, to write a piece, which resulted in Cassler's *A Lenten Trilogy for Brass Choir*.²⁷² Impressed by Cassler's writing, Mity asked him to arrange a concert band version of an organ work, *Passacaglia*, for the 1962 tour.²⁷³ Throughout his career, Mity's concerts featured the compositional talents of colleagues and students. Mity was a particularly strong advocate for student Timothy Mahr, giving numerous premieres of Mahr's works.

In addition to promoting colleagues and students' compositions, Mity arranged several works for band himself. The only one published was an arrangement of *Psalm 50* by F. Melius Christiansen. The St. Olaf Choir had long sung this piece, but Mity believed that Christiansen intended to score an instrumental version of the work.²⁷⁴ He

²⁷¹ Bruce Perkins, e-mail message to author, January 14, 2017.

²⁷² St. Olaf Band Evening Program Winter Tour (program), 1961, Accession number 0, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

²⁷³ St. Olaf Band Evening Program Winter Tour (program), 1962, Accession number 0, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

²⁷⁴ F. Melius Christiansen was the first director of the St. Olaf Department of Music and also served as the conductor of the St. Olaf Band. He composed three known works for the ensemble: *First Norwegian Rhapsody*, *Second Norwegian Rhapsody*, and *Manitou Heights March*.

scored all three movements of the work for band and programmed it for several early international tours.²⁷⁵

The music of Vaclav Nelhybel played an important role in Mity's programming. For Mity, Nelhybel's music in the 1960s was on the cutting edge of modern.²⁷⁶ On the 1965 tour, Mity gave the Midwest regional premiere of *Trittico*, playing from a manuscript score and parts.²⁷⁷ This collaboration initiated a long friendship between Mity and Nelhybel that later extended into performances of Nelhybel's brass choir and horn music.

Though Mity was an advocate of new music, he was careful not to push performers and audiences beyond a saturation point.²⁷⁸ Mity believed that music should be effective, not waste anyone's time, and not wear someone out by listening to it. During the 1964 tour, Mity noted before performing *Symphony for Band* by Vincent Persichetti that this "is about as far out as we can go."²⁷⁹ He acknowledged to the students and audiences that the piece challenged their musicianship and comprehension, but not beyond their limits.

Mity's efforts to create balanced, varied programs became a lifelong pursuit. He viewed it as a "privilege and obligation" to put contemporary music in front of the band and audience, especially music by composers who lived in the surrounding area.²⁸⁰ Each program was a statement and an opportunity to educate and edify the audience and

²⁷⁵ "Band Slides Around Wisconsin," *St. Olaf Alumnus* 13:2 (March 1965): 6.

²⁷⁶ Myrna Johnson, interview, December 2016.

²⁷⁷ "St. Olaf Band to Perform Concert Here," 1965, St. Olaf Band 1965 tour scrapbook, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

²⁷⁸ Pesola, interview, 2017.

²⁷⁹ Lewis, "Band Goes West; West Goes Wild," 12.

²⁸⁰ Wildman, interview, 1992.

musicians, and new music was an important part of this statement.²⁸¹ For Mity, how a conductor bookends a contemporary piece of music in a program can make or break a concert.²⁸² Mity recalls “sweating buckets trying to find music [to program] before and after *and the mountains rising nowhere*... [by Joseph Schwantner,] or else it won’t get the consideration that it deserves and the music before and after will be disastrous.”²⁸³ For new works especially, the quality of an individual work was only as good as what was programmed around it; for Mity, a good program was above all a question of fit.

Mity’s ability to balance the new with the familiar was perhaps one reason why the band drew audiences on tour.²⁸⁴ He put a great deal of time and effort into programming, but cared more about helping the audiences and musicians find an emotional connection to the music than performing the most avant-garde music or the newest piece with the latest compositional techniques. He quickly established a reputation of organizing concert programs that were creative and accessible.

This reputation was meaningful for Mity, because he believed that programming is a philosophy of self.²⁸⁵ Conductors are their programs, he once said: “it is my responsibility and it is me.”²⁸⁶ For Mity, a program is a reflection of a conductor’s inner being: who they are, what they stand for, and their knowledge of music.²⁸⁷ Mity advocated for listening to great works of music and often told students, “you are what

²⁸¹ H. Robert Reynolds, telephone interview by author, July 6, 2016.

²⁸² Johnson and Hansen, “Programming for High School and College.”

²⁸³ Wildman, interview, 1992.

²⁸⁴ Ferguson, interview, 2017.

²⁸⁵ Johnson and Hansen, “Programming for High School and College.”

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

you eat.”²⁸⁸ Mity lived this philosophy; his concerts were highly imaginative, every piece had a purpose, and the overall program had a shape.²⁸⁹

Because Mity prioritized the role of programming so strongly, he believed that it should be fifty percent or more of a music educator’s work. He took off several weeks in the summer, then dove into programming for the next year.²⁹⁰ He sought out new scores exhaustively, consulting music libraries, programs, publications, and even making phone calls.²⁹¹ After assembling fifty to seventy scores, his next step was to create piles on his office floor that represented every performance that he had in the upcoming year; many years, he had up to fifteen piles.²⁹² His floor was covered in different stacks and sequences “like he was playing chess against himself.”²⁹³

To create balance, he created spots for soloists and student conductors, and weighed masterworks against reflective pieces.²⁹⁴ True to Christiansen’s lesson about the band’s fundamental variety, Mity attempted to showcase all the shades and colors of the band. As he learned from his mentor, the band’s strength was in its diverse repertoire; variety was what a program needed above all else.²⁹⁵

Mity compared a program to a dinner atmosphere that a conductor must create. There were cocktails, appetizers, soups, salads, a main dish, bread, vegetables, dessert, coffee, and after dinner drinks.²⁹⁶ The opener was like an appetizer—light—which thrust

²⁸⁸ Richard Hansen, telephone interview by author, January 6, 2017.

²⁸⁹ Hansen, interview, 2017.

²⁹⁰ Johnson and Hansen, “Programming for High School and College.”

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Hansen, interview, 2017.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Johnson and Hansen, “Programming for High School and College.”

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

audiences into their meal and left them eager for what was coming next.²⁹⁷ A lyrical piece was akin to a soup that flows. He wanted every part of the meal to taste good, and also set up the next course, so that the whole “meal” had a shape.²⁹⁸

Mity categorized band compositions as openers, quiet tunes, biggies, suites, dances, Broadway/show tunes, closers, marches, and solos. He centered each program around a “biggie,” though sometimes there was one biggie on the first half and another on the second half. Although he had a recipe for creating a program from these categories, Mity did not follow it to the letter all the time. He often opened with a slow tune or a Bach chorale instead of an overture or a march, if a specific program theme or site offered him that flexibility.²⁹⁹

While he argued each meal should have a kind of holistic integrity, Mity also recognized each concert as unique and deserving of a different flavor.³⁰⁰ To draw out this unique flavor, Mity carefully tailored programs to the occasion and venue. When Mity arrived at St. Olaf in 1957, the band had few performance opportunities; under his predecessor Bruce Howden, the ensemble performed during the Homecoming festivities along with one formal concert each year.³⁰¹ Mity quickly established a variety of concerts that provided opportunities to program a broad range of repertoire. For instance, he resurrected the pop concert (which had started during Donald Berglund’s

²⁹⁷ Hansen, interview, 2017.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Sigurd Johnson, interview, 2017.

³⁰⁰ Wildman, interview, 1992.

³⁰¹ “Howden Presents Band in Concert,” *Manitou Messenger* (Northfield, MN), February 6, 1953.

short tenure as director of the St. Olaf Band³⁰²) during Homecoming in the fall of 1959.³⁰³ By 1960, the pop concert was moved to Parent's Day weekend and Mity began experimenting with the format and featuring soloists, chamber ensembles, and the Repertory singers.³⁰⁴

Over time, the Parent's Day concert became a performance that included several of the college's ensembles: the St. Olaf Band, along with both first-year choirs—the Manitou Singers and the Viking Chorus. The pop concerts were later moved to a March program, and evolved into elaborate productions with decorations, food and drinks, lighting, and staging, as seen in Figure 8.³⁰⁵ The concerts became a collage of ensembles, mostly made of student soloists and groups. Although the pop concert was no longer exclusively a St. Olaf Band event, the solo and ensemble features of the pop concert remained essential to Mity's programming repertoire. Mity capitalized on this variety during tour, featuring chamber ensembles and soloists (sometimes even vocalists) throughout the programs.³⁰⁶

While the St. Olaf Band had the large instrumentation of a symphonic band, Mity frequently experimented with smaller chamber ensembles in his programs. Through his connections to CBDNA and Frederick Fennell, Mity was well aware of

³⁰² "Gala Homecoming Planned for Weekend," *Manitou Messenger* (Northfield, MN), October 17, 1947.

³⁰³ "Queen Sharon reigns over Oledom," *Manitou Messenger* (Northfield, MN), October 9, 1959.

³⁰⁴ Lorraine Paulson, "Concert band schedules Saturday pops concert," *Manitou Messenger* (Northfield, MN), October 21, 1960.

³⁰⁵ "Pirates of Penzance," (Pop concert program), 1963, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

³⁰⁶ Wildman, interview, 1992. Irene Gubrud played flute and piccolo in the St. Olaf Band for four years and was a tour soloist each of those four years as a vocalist, including a featured soloist on the 1966 European tour.

Highlights from "Porgy and Bess" George Gershwin arr. Robert Russell Bennett	Five of Four playing Three (each) Nancy Vang Ann Piltingsrud Sharon Moe Jim Kerns Sharon Kerfoot Ron Sell Judy Eide Irene Gubrud Phyllis Rogotzke Paul Nelson Linda Swenson Peder Berdahl	
Four Stick Joe Joe Breuer		
Relax! Cheryl Prihoda-Marimba Paul Yoder		
Childhood Thoughts Dan Wilshire		
Five Mellow Winds Dan Wilshire David Schanke Chuck McGee, Effie Gryting, Jan Weist, Mile Holtz, Curt Rue	Kari Wappula Mary Emmons Karen Strand Lois Tangjerd	
<u>Ten Minute Intermission</u> (Refreshments served at this time by the waiters)		
Carnival of the Animals C. Saint-Saens arr. Robert Cray	Chuck McGee Rolf Stepperud Carol Hustad Bill Western Lynn Brooks John Thompson Virginia Maas Merlin Simonson	
Narrator-Dan Wilshire	Paul Anderson	
Soon-Ah Will be Done Willian Dawson		
Ride the Chariot arr. Wm. Henry Smith Viking Male Chorus Bob Frisbie-Director	Dan Wilshire-piano, John Tendall-Bass, Bryce Risser-Guitar, Dave Neilson-Drums	
Come, Let Us Start a Joyful Song Hassler	<u>Ten Minute Intermission</u> (Refreshments served at this time by the waiters.)	
Suabian Folk-Song arr. by Brahms	Holiday for Winds Glen Osser	
The Sewing-Girls Villa-Lobos Manitou Singers Miss Alice Larson-Director	Octet for Percussion Frank Ward	
Highlights from the "Pirates of Penzance" Gilbert & Sullivan arr. Robert Russell Bennett	Cheryl Prihoda Steve Gilmer Dan Wilshire Dave Nielsen Yvonne Kickhafer Jan Zeltins Bryce Risser Dean Speidel Jim Syverud	
Viking Chorus - Manitou Singers - Chamber Band		
<u>Ten Minute Intermission</u>		
Ars Nova Four Mr. Donald Hoines - Tenor	West Side Story Leonard Bernstein arr. W.J. Duthoit	
Miss Marian Walker-Piano John Tendall-Bass Bryce Risser-Drums	----- Director of the St. Olaf College Band Miles H. Johnson	

Figure 8. "Pirates of Penzance," Pop Concert program, 1963.³⁰⁷

Fennell's innovative Eastman Wind Ensemble at the Eastman School of Music. He created his own version of the wind ensemble, but called it the "chamber band."³⁰⁸ The chamber band offered Mity an opportunity to challenge his top musicians with difficult literature. By sitting one player per part, the ensemble also created additional variety within the band's programs.³⁰⁹ Mity often used the chamber band at least once per concert. There were no auditions for the ensemble; Mity chose the musicians in the chamber band, and students considered it an honor to be selected.³¹⁰

³⁰⁷ "Pirates of Penzance," (Pop Concert program).

³⁰⁸ While there are various names for wind ensemble, it is believed that St. Olaf College is the only place to have used the term chamber band.

³⁰⁹ Jo Ann Polley, interview by author, July 22, 2015, Northfield, Minnesota.

³¹⁰ Ulmer, letter.

Featuring the chamber band, chamber ensembles, and soloists was part of how Mity saw programming as a creative endeavor. The most important aspect of Mity's programming was imagination. He often reminded his students "not to leave imagination at home when starting the process of programming."³¹¹ Imagination helped to avoid the "great grey sound of the band"—all musicians playing *mezzo forte* to *forte* at once, which Mity believed was "the most unmusical sound there is:"³¹²

[The] great mistake that is made in programming for concert band is that there is too much loud boisterous music that is not set off, too much contemporary music that is not set off and not prepared for both before and after. When we think of a band concert, it is loud and boisterous. It does not always have to be that way. It can be as soothing as a choir or orchestral concert.³¹³

For Mity, the remedy did not lie with only different instrument combinations; he looked for contrast and variety within works, as well as between them. Establishing a variety of concerts offered him the imaginative challenge of programming for both diverse genres and audiences.

In addition to the pop concert, Mity established many other annual concerts and performance traditions for the band. Each spring, St. Olaf College featured the arts during "Fine Arts Week" with a series of events. Already long established in the program was Choral Day,³¹⁴ in which dozens of school and church choirs came to St. Olaf to hear the college's choirs and sing in a mass choir. During his first year, Mity volunteered band members to accompany the choirs' pieces, similarly to how his brass

³¹¹ Wildman, interview, 1992.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Professors. P. M. Glasoe, P. G. Schmidt and F. Melius Christiansen began this tradition in 1904 as a choral festival, which later grew to include the orchestra, band, art and theater – fine arts week; "Festival Culminates Fifty Years of Music," *Manitou Messenger* (Northfield, MN), May 14, 1954.

ensemble had accompanied the choirs at Concordia College. During Mity's second year, he created the instrumental equivalent to Choral Day—Instrumental Day. On Instrumental Day, Mity and St. Olaf Orchestra director Donald Berglund invited top high school students to participate in a festival band and a festival orchestra. The mass band gave its performance in the afternoon, appearing on the same concert as the St. Olaf Band. Later in the evening, the St. Olaf Orchestra performed its equivalent.³¹⁵ Over time, the St. Olaf Orchestra and Festival Orchestra stopped appearing and only the St. Olaf Band, the Chamber Band, and the Festival Band participated in Instrumental Day.

In the spring of 1973, 1975, and 1976, St. Olaf hosted the “Phi Beta Mu Festival of Bands.” The premise was similar to Instrumental Day—concerts featuring a festival band and feature bands. The difference was the scope. The Festival of Bands presented three to four different concerts over the course of the day. Two to three high school bands were featured during afternoon concerts, and the Festival Band and the St. Olaf Band performed an evening concert.³¹⁶ In 1976, Henry Charles Smith, associate conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra, participated as guest conductor and guest euphonium soloist.

In 1979 both Instrumental Day and the Phi Beta Mu Festival of Bands concerts were discontinued and replaced by St. Olaf College's own Festival of Bands. The festival, with which the former activities had been associated, moved from a spring performance affiliated with Fine Arts Week to a freestanding event in November, and

³¹⁵ “Artists, musicians, dramatists meet for St. Olaf's 55th annual Fine Arts Festival,” *Manitou Messenger* (Northfield, MN), May 15, 1959.

³¹⁶ Phi Beta Mu Festival of Bands (program), 1975, Accession number 0, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota; Phi Beta Mu Festival of Bands (program), 1976, Accession number 0, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

featured a new guest conductor each year.³¹⁷ Between 1982 and 1988, the popularity of the festival led Mity to create two festival bands—one that he conducted and another that the guest conducted. This was yet another way that Mity was able to showcase the band program at St. Olaf College to the state of Minnesota.

An additional way of broadcasting instrumental music to (and recruiting talent from) the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area was through the annual Cathedral Concert that Mity established at Central Lutheran Church in downtown Minneapolis, Minnesota. The first domestic Cathedral Concert took place in 1975, but the idea was one with which Mity had been experimenting since the 1966 European tour.³¹⁸ During that tour, Mity created a unique program—separate from the formal evening program—that was tailored to a place of worship. He used this creative programming technique again during the 1970 European tour in Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church and the 1974 Norway and Great Britain tour in Nidaros Cathedral and Coventry Cathedral, and domestically for the first time on the 1975 tour. Over the course of these tours, the band had begun to develop a repertoire of sacred music.

Central Lutheran Church had a tradition of providing an evening event every Sunday, so it enthusiastically welcomed Mity’s request to have the St. Olaf Band perform.³¹⁹ Built in a neo-Gothic style, the church is a large structure built in a cruciform shape, which mimicked the European cathedrals in which Mity developed the cathedral concert idea. Mity was already familiar performing in the space; during the

³¹⁷ In the ten Instrumental Day programs, Karl Holvik served as the only guest conductor in 1963. Henry Charles Smith was the only guest conductor during the March Phi Beta Mu Festival of Bands programs.

³¹⁸ Cindy Young, “Band Completes Western Tour...,” *Manitou Messenger* (Northfield, MN), February 21, 1975.

³¹⁹ Ferguson, interview, 2017.

1960s and 1970s, he brought the St. Olaf Horn Club to Central Lutheran one Sunday a year to provide music for a service.³²⁰

During John Ferguson's second year as Music Director at Central Lutheran, Mity called him with an idea to "screw around with a few hymns" during the 1979 Cathedral Concert.³²¹ Collaboration was key to many of Mity's elaborate plans. Ferguson was enthusiastic about the idea of bringing more exegesis to hymn texts.³²² Their "screwing around" resulted in placing different musicians around the space and changing the hymn accompaniment. In the resulting arrangement, stanza one of the hymn "Holy Holy Holy" was sung by men in the audience and accompanied by the brass choir, stanza two by women and the flute choir, stanza three by men and the horn club, and stanza four by all voices and instruments.³²³ Mity's familiarity with the church as a performance space enabled him to experiment with the placement of musicians in the various spaces of the hall, which led to more interaction between the students and the audience. Mity often featured chamber ensembles in these experiments with the space.

During the 1977 concert, for instance, Mity offset full band works with chamber ensembles placed around Central Lutheran. On the concert, the woodwind choir performed *The Last Spring* by Edvard Greig, the trombone choir performed the *Allegro Antiphonal* by Franz Schubert and *Holy is God the Lord* by Felix Mendelssohn, the flute choir performed *Wintertime* by Robert Schumann and an Old English tune *The*

³²⁰ Kristin Thelander, telephone interview by author, October 20, 2016.

³²¹ Ferguson, interview, 2017.

³²² Ibid.

³²³ The Annual Cathedral Concert (program), 1979, Accession number 0, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

Greenwood Tree, and the horn club performed *Jagerchor* from *Der Freischutz* by Carl Maria von Weber and *Amazing Grace*.³²⁴

The choirs included students from different instrumental ensembles at St. Olaf. Students did most of the conducting, but faculty members Jo Ann Polley (clarinet) and Paul Niemisto (low brass) also led various groups. They rehearsed during the evenings and occasionally were featured during additional concerts throughout the year. Mity saw these groups as particularly well suited to creative placement in the church. The instrumental choirs often performed from the different naves and the aisles. In 1981, Mity staged the antiphonal brass choir in the balconies and both sides of the church for the closing work—an arrangement of the hymn “Lift High the Cross.”³²⁵

The holiday season at St. Olaf College afforded Mity another opportunity to perform sacred music. He and the band students were chagrined that they were never asked to participate in the college’s annual Christmas Festival. Kenneth Jennings, the director of the St. Olaf Choir and the Musical Director of the Christmas Festival, opposed the band’s formal participation.³²⁶ Regardless, Mity held a concert he called “Christmas for Winds” the Sunday before the Christmas Festival at 4:00 p.m. in the Women’s Gym. The inaugural event in 1972 featured the trombone choir, woodwind quintet, brass and woodwind choirs, chamber band, horn club, and Norseman Band.³²⁷

³²⁴ Paula White, “St. Olaf Band to play Cathedral Concert,” *Manitou Messenger* (Northfield, MN), April 3, 1981.

³²⁵ Julie Chuba, “Cathedral resounds with band sounds,” *Manitou Messenger* (Northfield, MN), April 10, 1981; The Seventh Annual Cathedral Concert (program), 1981, Accession number 0, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

³²⁶ Myrna Johnson, interview, July 2015.

³²⁷ Christmas for Winds (program), 1972, Accession number 0, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota. The growth of the St. Olaf

The appearance of the smaller ensembles and the Norseman Band offered another collaborative opportunity, and modeled the ways that Mity gave students diverse performance opportunities.

By the mid-1970s, the St. Olaf Band was the featured ensemble at “Christmas for Winds,” and it accompanied hymn sings with the audience. Between 1979 and 1985, “Christmas for Winds” appears to have been held only twice. It is unknown what caused the hiatus. In 1983, John Ferguson left Central Lutheran Church to join the faculty of St. Olaf College. He remembered Mity’s frustration at being excluded from Christmas Festival activities. After an opportune meeting with Jennings, Ferguson advocated for Mity and the band, and helped secure them a performance at Sunday chapel during the Christmas Festival weekend.³²⁸ The “Christmas for Winds” title was dropped and, at the time of writing, the band continues to perform a chapel concert during the second Sunday in Advent each year.

Ferguson was not Mity’s only collaborator for church performances. During the 1980s until his retirement from St. Olaf in 1994, Mity worked closely with St. Olaf pastor Bruce Benson to augment Benson’s chapel sermons with band accompaniment, particularly during Advent.³²⁹ Benson wanted the musicians to contribute to the exegesis of the sermon text, and Mity enjoyed working in collaboration with the pastor’s office. During Benson’s sermon, the band responded through performance. Benson also

College band program under Mity necessitated the need for a second band. The Varsity Band formed in 1964 and was renamed the Norseman Band in 1966; “College greets parents with event-filled day,” *Manitou Messenger* (Northfield, MN), November 12, 1965.

³²⁸ Ferguson, interview, 2017.

³²⁹ Ibid.

incorporated short sections of the band's repertoire within the sermon.³³⁰ The message was reliant on the accompaniment of the band, and Mity's programming was deeply entwined with the space and the season.

Among the concerts that Mity conducted during his time at St. Olaf College were several performances that showcased Mity's programming skills. One occurred during the spring of 1972. The early 1970s were a tense time at St. Olaf College and around the United States. St. Olaf students protested the war in Vietnam, and Mity joined the students during many sit-ins and protests.³³¹ After the school shootings in 1970 at Kent State University and Jackson State University, then St. Olaf sophomore Kurt Westerberg began composing a twenty-minute work for vocal solo, choir, instrumental ensemble, and dance. The work was based on Psalm 130, which Westerberg heard at a memorial service for the shooting victims.³³²

Westerberg approached St. Olaf Chapel Choir director Robert Scholz about the work, and Scholz sent him to Mity, who agreed to conduct the piece on the 1971 Homecoming Concert.³³³ Mity was enthusiastic about the piece.³³⁴ He thought that the performance was the "right thing to do," and that it was a good outlet for both him and the students. Mity was determined in describing the work not as a protest piece but "an

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Myrna Johnson, interview, December 2016.

³³² Jeff Sauve, "A Musical Prayer for Peace," *St. Olaf Magazine* 60:1 (Winter 2013): 52.

³³³ Ann Wagner in the dance department found a student, Dell Grant, to choreograph the dance accompaniment. Sauve, "A Musical Prayer for Peace," 52.

³³⁴ Bob Schultz, Cora Schultz, Myrna Johnson, interview by Jeff Sauve, October 4, 2012, Accession number 1321, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

expression of peace.”³³⁵ He wanted the work to be seen as positive rather than reactionary.

The tenor of the Friday night Homecoming Concert had traditionally been light. Mity kept with this tradition at the beginning the program. There were a mix of Broadway show medleys, student soloists featured in *The Carnival of Venice* and *Flight of the Bumblebee*, as well as Percy Aldridge Grainger’s *Australian Up Country Tune* and Ottorino Respighi’s *Pines of the Appian Way*.³³⁶ Bridging the lighter first half with Westerberg’s *De Profundis* was a sketch by St. Olaf College student James Rohrbaugh entitled “A Rough Sketch of Things to Come (An Evening of the Young Mark Twain).” Rohrbaugh used the sketch and Twain’s readings to transition from light humor to more serious thoughts—an eloquent bit of programming to set up Westerberg’s premiere.

After the powerful and positive reaction of the audience at the Homecoming performance, students advocated to perform the work in Washington D.C. They held fundraisers around Northfield until President Sidney Rand approved four thousand dollars to send the faculty and students to Washington.³³⁷ Minnesota First District Congressman Albert Quie and Minnesota Senator Walter Mondale were influential in arranging performances on Capital Hill. On their way out east, the group performed at the Lutheran Church of the Reformation in Washington D.C., where they slept that night in the church’s basement. The following day, May 26, the group gave a 10:00 a.m. performance in the rotunda of the Cannon House of the Representatives and a 1:00 p.m.

³³⁵ Sauve, interview, 2012.

³³⁶ Kurt, Jim, and Others concert (program), October 15, 1971, St. Olaf Band 1971 scrapbook, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

³³⁷ Sauve, “A Musical Prayer for Peace,” 52.

performance in the rotunda of the Russell Senate Office Building.³³⁸ There were an estimated two hundred people in attendance at the performances, and the group received enthusiastic applause.³³⁹

During this era, peaceful protest statements on college campuses, like the *De Profundis* performance, were unique.³⁴⁰ To emphasize the performance's peaceful and positive tone, Mity told the students to walk around and shake hands with the audience members after the performance and thank them for coming; they dutifully followed his instructions.³⁴¹ It was important to Mity for the students to connect with the audience members and shake their hands.³⁴² Representative Fred Schwengel from Iowa commented, "most congressmen feel that this kind of demonstration is more influential than the usual kind of protest."³⁴³ He also promised to praise the St. Olaf College group in the official Congressional Record.

Westerberg's *De Profundis* was performed three additional times—once with the St. Olaf ensemble at a 1982 Cathedral Concert and twice at Northwestern University. The two Northwestern performances took place while Westerberg worked on his Master's degree, which he described as "more professional and less meaningful."³⁴⁴ For Westerberg, the 1982 Cathedral Concert was the last meaningful performance of the

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ Jeff Sauve, *De Profundis* notes, Accession number 1321, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

³⁴⁰ Sauve, interview, 2012.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Sauve, *De Profundis* notes.

³⁴⁴ Kurt Westerburg, e-mail to Jeff Sauve, 2012, Accession number 1321, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

work. It was only there that the community aspect of the work, which Mity worked so hard to cultivate, was alive.

Mity's creativity and experimentation in programming culminated in 1970, in the form of a themed second half of the concert. The task of creating emotional connections between the performers and the audience resulted in a potpourri of acts performed by the band members along a theme: for instance, British Band Classics, An Afternoon in the Park, or A Bicentennial Celebration. The themed second half drew on many of Mity's programming ideals: using a mix of new and familiar repertoire; featuring student performers; selecting site-appropriate works; creatively placing musicians in a space to facilitate performer-audience interactions; integrating instrumental music with vocal, visual, and textual media; and most importantly, the idea of a holistic program shaped like a "meal." However, the origins of the themed second half can be traced back to Mity's wife Myrna.

Myrna accompanied the band on every tour and often gave suggestions on how to improve its performances. One proposal she suggested was to include more theatrical elements in the band concerts, and Mity went along.³⁴⁵ Myrna's background was in theater. She founded the Northfield Arts Guild shortly after the Johnsons moved to Northfield, and was active in acting and directing theater productions. For over ten years, Mity slowly began incorporating Myrna's advice with the St. Olaf Band pop concerts, which had become increasingly theatrical by including Broadway show themes, staging, and lighting. Lighter concert elements soon began to bleed into the tour performances. By 1968, the St. Olaf Band tour started to show signs of a distinction

³⁴⁵ Myrna Johnson, interview, December 2016.

between a more traditional first half and a lighter second half concert, as shown in Figure 9.

The 1969 tour continued the previous year's trend of a lighter concert ending. However, rather than two halves, the program was divided into three sections.³⁴⁶ The chamber band provided music during the middle portion before the full band returned.³⁴⁷ The lighter last third of the 1969 concert began with *Hail to the Fleet* by Richard Meltby. After the march, the horn club performed *Frippery No. 8 (Barbershop- Down Home)* by Lowell Shaw, which was paired with the full band's performance of *An American in Paris* by George Gershwin. Finishing the concert was the clarinet choir's performance of *Three Norwegian Folk Songs* arranged by Mity and paired with the full band's performance of *Fanfare and Koral* by Egil Hovland. The pairing of two popular American music pieces and two Norwegian pieces showed early signs of thematic groupings during Mity's formal concerts.

By 1970, the themed second half had become formalized with "Window on America." "Window on America" was a compilation of singing, playing, and multimedia that reflected a cross-section of 1970s America.³⁴⁸ The music was not traditional band repertoire or arrangements of popular music; instead, the students changed clothes and performed different acts around the stage. Jo Ann Polley, a freshman clarinet player, stood on a stepladder in a red dress

³⁴⁶ The 1969 tour was not the first tour divided into three segments. The 1967 tour also had the same organization with three and ten-minute intermissions that separated the different sections. St. Olaf Band Evening Program Winter Tour (program), 1967, Accession number 0, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

³⁴⁷ St. Olaf Band, In Concert (program), 1969, Accession number 0, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

³⁴⁸ "Choir, Band Flying to Europe June 1," 24.

The Program

ST. OLAF BAND

Ceremonial Music Vaclav Nelhybel

Andante Vaclav Nelhybel

Symphonic Movement Vaclav Nelhybel

(Played without interruption)

Vaclav Nelhybel, born in Czechoslovakia, now an American citizen, makes his home in New York City. He studied composition and conducting at the Prague Conservatory and musicology at universities in Prague and Fribourg.

Mr. Nelhybel has also written works for opera, ballet, oratorio, orchestra, and chamber groups. His impact on music for winds in general and the band movement in particular has been felt in this country in the last five years to an amazing degree. His warm personality and genuine enthusiasm for the art of music make him much sought after as a clinician, conductor, and lecturer throughout the country.

CHAMBER BAND

Introduction and Capriccio

John Barnes Chance

Paula Quale, Piano

Introduction and Capriccio is the third work that Mr. Chance has written for wind instruments. His *Incantation and Dance* and *Variations on a Korean Folk Song* have met with great success as major contributions to band literature.

Introduction and Capriccio features a delightful interplay between the solo piano and the wind instruments. Starting with a slow, rich chorale-like beginning, the work moves into a fast and driving presto which features brilliant technical work for both the piano and the winds.

Psalm 50 F. Melius Christiansen

transcribed for band by Miles H. Johnson

Andante

Offer unto God the sacrifice of thanksgiving
And pay your vows unto the Lord,
And call upon me in the day of trouble
I will deliver you and you shall glorify me.

Carmina Burana

Carl Orff

arr. by John Krance

"O Fortune, Variable as the Moon"

"I Lament Fortune's Blows"

"Behold the Spring"

"Dance—On the Lawn"

"I Am Suspended between Love and Chastity"

"I Am the Abbot"

"When We Are in the Tavern"

Carl Orff derived the inspiration and text for his score from a thirteenth century collection of songs and poems written by the "goliards"—the vagrant scholars, vagabond poets, and wandering monks of 700 years ago.

Since the goliards tempered their Christianity with secular beliefs, the subjects with

which the poems deal are as evident today as they were when the poems were written. They are frank avowals of earthly pleasures: eating, drinking; the beauty of life and springtime; the irony and cruelty of fortune.

The whole range that reflects the goliards' way of life—its immense gusto and color, its unaffectedness—has likewise been depicted in musical terms by Carl Orff. He exhilarates us with throbbing rhythms and battering-ram tunes, and moves us with chaste tenderness and heartfelt simplicity. This is music which mirrors the timeless qualities of human aspiration and foible; music unique in substance and impact, resplendent with the color and imagination of a truly creative mind.

INTERMISSION TEN MINUTES

Selections from "West Side Story"

Leonard Bernstein

arr. by W. J. Duthoit

The gifted Mr. Bernstein adds to his successes on the Broadway stage his fourth (and greatest) musical in *West Side Story*. Add to this the almost unbelievable success of this musical as a movie production and you have a composer who must stand, along with Gershwin and Cole Porter, as one of America's finest in this field. The Broadway musical is felt by many to be the most distinctive and uniquely American contribution to the world of music.

Seterjentens Søndag

Ole Bull

arr. by Glen Cliff Bainum

Solo for Multiple Flutes

In Norwegian cultural history Ole Bull occupies a dominant position. Through him and his artistic contribution in the second half of the nineteenth century Norway emerged from obscurity into world-wide attention. As a composer his fame is limited to the hauntingly nostalgic song on this program, the lament of a shepherd girl who spends the summer months in the mountain pasture land, surrounded by an infinite loneliness. It was, however, as a violinist that Ole Bull attained fame. His concert tours took him throughout Europe and America and, in the days when the Midwest was pioneer territory, he came all the way out here to entertain his countrymen.

—Program notes by Reidar Dittmann

Guadalcanal March

Richard Rodgers

from *Victory at Sea*

Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral

Richard Wagner

transcribed for band by Lucien Calliet
from the opera *Lohengrin*

The St. Olaf Band dedicates this selection with pride and respect to Dr. Olaf C. Christiansen on the occasion of his final year as director of the St. Olaf Choir. As chairman of the St. Olaf Department of Music and chairman of the College's Division of Fine Arts, Dr. Christiansen created an environment in which music plays a rich role in campus life and an atmosphere in which the St. Olaf Band could grow and flourish.

For his unflinching, enthusiastic encouragement of its efforts, the St. Olaf Band expresses appreciation through the performance of this work which Dr. Christiansen has often called one of his favorites.

The Personnel

PICCOLO

Carole Kluczny, '69—Minneapolis, Minn.

FLUTE

Louise Draeger, '70—Janesville, Wis.

Judy Gerant, '70—Geneseo, Ill.

Paul Jacobson, '69—Rapid City, S. D.

Jane Leland, '70—Bricelyn, Minn.

Titi Lukk, '69—Prior Lake, Minn.

*Cynthia Oppen, '68—Minneapolis, Minn.

Barbara Otto, '71—Havre, Mont.

Paula Quale, '68—Bismarck, N. D.

Cynthia Schrader, '68—Anoka, Minn.

Elisabeth Sovik, '69—Northfield, Minn.

ENGLISH HORN

Jan Ulring, '69—Decorah, Iowa

OBOE

Sandra Jones, '68—Park Rapids, Minn.

*Carole Ann Peterson, '68—Canby, Minn.

Jan Ulring, '69—Decorah, Iowa

E♭ CLARINET

Jan Andresen, '68—Bismarck, N. D.

B♭ CLARINET

Gary Anderson, '71—Northfield, Minn.

*Stephan Anderson, '69—Northfield, Minn.

Geraldine Field, '68—Osage, Iowa

Sylvia Flo, '71—Bricelyn, Minn.

Mary Jacobson, '69—Roland, Iowa

G. Allan Johnson, '69—Rantoul, Ill.

Meredith Lee, '68—Bloomington, Minn.

Ann Melrose, '71—Anoka, Minn.

Louise Mithyng, '71—Montevideo, Minn.

Stephen Mueller, '70—Winside, Neb.

Pamela Nesseth, '69—Hopkins, Minn.

Carolyn Ostlund, '70—Sacred Heart, Minn.

Joan Taylor, '69—Yankton, S. D.

Robin Tombers, '68—Minneapolis, Minn.

Joann Warner, '68—Waseca, Minn.

ALTO CLARINET

Javan Johnson, '71—Minneapolis, Minn.

BASS CLARINET

Wendy Amundson, '69—Bagley, Minn.

*Margaret Dwyer, '68—Alexander, N. D.

Robert Elder, '70—Yankton, S. D.

CONTRA BASS CLARINET

Margaret Dwyer, '68—Alexander, N. D.

BASSOON

*Raymond Erickson, '68—Havre, Mont.

Shirley Lindberg, '70—Anoka, Minn.

ALTO SAXOPHONE

*William Gervasio, '69—Yonkers, N. Y.

Ott Lukk, '68—Prior Lake, Minn.

L. Dana Petersen, '70—Northfield, Minn.

Carol Zelin, '69—Cambridge, Wis.

TENOR SAXOPHONE

Merrill Morse, '70—Dell Rapids, S. D.

BARITONE SAXOPHONE

Jonathan Holmquist, '68—Benson, Minn.

COBNET

Donald Beckman, '70—Grand Marais, Minn.

William Brown, '69—Marshall, Minn.

Georgina Dixon, '71—New Brighton, Minn.

James Gillis, '70—Osakis, Minn.

John Laithen, '68—Tracy, Minn.

Donald Lee, '68—Minnetonka, Minn.

Susan Palmer, '68—Fond du Lac, Wis.

*D. Robert Saeter, Sp.—Bagley, Minn.

TRUMPET

Gregory Brown, '69—Marshalltown, Iowa

Vaughn Johnson, '70—Clara City, Minn.

Paul McIby, '71—Albert Lea, Minn.

Timothy Schutz, '70—Menomonie, Wis.

FRENCH HORN

*Stephen Coates, '70—Springfield, Minn.

John Christopherson, '69—Mason City, Iowa

Russell Janke, '68—Storrs, Conn.

Suzanne Lilla, '70—Comfrey, Minn.

Martha Mitchell, '69—Minnetonka, Minn.

Judy Olson, '69—Galesburg, Ill.

Marty Oyen, '68—Montevideo, Minn.

Stephen Solum, '70—Northfield, Minn.

TROMBONE

*Craig Brue, '69—Dodgeville, Wis.

George Groves, '70—Osceola, Wis.

Jeffrey Hein, '70—Gifford, Ill.

William Nielsen, '70—Gaylord, Minn.

Mark Williams, '71—Bloomington, Minn.

Kirk Wolter, '70—Arlington Heights, Ill.

BARITONE

David Luehr, '71—Preston, Minn.

Brent Orton, '71—Mason City, Iowa

*Richard Ukena, '69—Ames, Iowa

TUBA

Curtis Bottem, '70—St. James, Minn.

Eric Saffell, '69—Richland Center, Wis.

John Skovbroten, '70—Owatonna, Minn.

*Sig Soli, '68—Granite Falls, Minn.

TIMPANI

*John Goeppinger, '70—Boone, Iowa

PERCUSSION

Paul Burnett, '71—Minneapolis, Minn.

Carol Ittel, '69—Norwood, Minn.

Donald Rollins, '69—Mitchell, S. D.

James Stengel, '70—Lake City, Minn.

*Section Leaders

Figure 9. St. Olaf Band, On Tour program, 1968. ³⁴⁹

³⁴⁹ St. Olaf Band, On Tour (program), 1968, Accession number 0, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

singing a folk song as a fellow student accompanied her on guitar.³⁵⁰ There was also a Dixieland band, an original electric guitar composition, a rock band dance number, and a folk singing group.³⁵¹ Each musical act was set apart by different lighting cues. For the tour, Perry Kruse, a St. Olaf College electrician, went along to manage the lighting.³⁵²

The full band only assembled twice during “Window on America”: once in the opening when the members marched up and down the aisles performing Meredith Wilson’s *76 Trombones*, as seen in Figure 10, and the other at the conclusion with Richard Strauss’s *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. The Strauss featured a slideshow with different scenes of American life.³⁵³

This programming experiment appeared to be “going over well” on tour; however, the St. Olaf student body seemed less enthusiastic.³⁵⁴ In a review of the final tour concert at St. Olaf College, a writer for the school newspaper commented,

From a musical standpoint, the band made quite an effective use of a series of projected color art works and pictures to bring their real point home... The spatial effect created by the use of antiphonal brass³⁵⁵ in this band arrangement is reminiscent of the “Dies Irae” of the Grande Messe der Morts of Berlioz, the band’s performance was truly gripping, providing an apt close to their concert... The closing section of the concert was difficult to assess, apparently meant to contain a message, but was obscured by the dramatic reading about America’s tragedies and successes.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁰ Polley, interview, 2015.

³⁵¹ “Europe 1970,” 16.

³⁵² “Band is well received,” 1970, St. Olaf Band 1970 Europe scrapbook, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

³⁵³ “Europe 1970,” 16.

³⁵⁴ Myrna Johnson journal, 1970, St. Olaf Band 1970 Europe scrapbook, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

³⁵⁵ The writer is speaking to the use of antiphonal brass during *Also Sprach Zarathustra*.

³⁵⁶ John Bernsten, “‘Zarathustra’ theme aptly ends St. Olaf band’s home concert,” *Manitou Messenger* (Northfield, MN), February 20, 1970.



Figure 10. *76 Trombones*, “Window on America,” European Tour, 1970.³⁵⁷

As Mity continued to compile and edit second half themes, he invited interested band members to help determine and plan the program. Normally around six to ten members of the band, both music majors and non-majors, helped. Meetings generally began early in the fall semester and started with a germ of an idea that Mity brought to the group. It was the students’ job to help brainstorm and develop the idea.³⁵⁸ This strategy drew on Mity’s collaborative nature while also providing mentoring in the art of programming to his students.

³⁵⁷ *76 Trombones*, “Window on America,” European tour (photo), 1970, Johnson private collection.

³⁵⁸ Ulmer, letter.

While any idea was conceivable during the second-half of the program, there were several elements that became hallmarks of a performance by the St. Olaf Band. Singing, while novel for a band at the time, has been proven a strong pedagogical tool in instrumental music education. For Mity, having the band sing during a performance was a natural outgrowth of his own teaching background. He had conducted a choir every year since he was eighteen years old, and Paul J. Christiansen, the director of the Concordia Choir, was his first conducting teacher.³⁵⁹ He also understood the wealth of choral experiences that his students brought to the St. Olaf Band from singing in choirs at school or church.³⁶⁰ For Mity, there was no question; if band students could play their instruments, then they could also sing.

One band student recorded the first instance of the ensemble singing as a group in the band's 1964 scrapbook: "Our band put on a new coat and became a 69 piece choir for the service part of the program under Mr. Johnson's direction."³⁶¹ The band sang the hymn, "God of Our Fathers" while on tour that year. This performance does not seem to have been part of the concert, but a pre-performance before dinner. The first time that an official source identifies the band singing during a concert was during the themed second half of the 1970 tour program—"Window on America."³⁶²

Mity continued to incorporate signing into the St. Olaf Band's programs and often arranged works to incorporate both vocal and instrumental performance, or reintroduced vocals to an existing instrumental arrangement. One such instance of this integration of vocal music to instrumental music occurred during the band's 1978 winter

³⁵⁹ Johnson, Lutheran World Federation Scholarship application.

³⁶⁰ Myrna Johnson, interview, July 2015.

³⁶¹ Unknown student note, 1964.

³⁶² "Choir, Band Flying to Europe June 1," 23.

tour. The second half theme was titled, “A Tchaikovsky Evening.”³⁶³ For the final piece on the concert, *1812 Overture*, the band sang the opening twenty-two measures in Russian. Over the following eleven measures Mity gradually added brass in a call and response with the voices, until the voices discontinued in measure thirty-four and the rest of the piece was performed on instruments.³⁶⁴

Through his choral directing background, Mity had some experience getting his musicians to “spin a lyrical line.”³⁶⁵ The fact that the band could sing so well astonished many audiences, not only because they were a band, but also because Mity’s own voice was unremarkable.³⁶⁶ Despite the quality of his voice, he often sang the character of the line and then left the rest to the students.³⁶⁷ Sometimes students helped teach the singing, or Mity went to the piano to play the notes, but usually he gave the music to the students and just told them to sing it.³⁶⁸

Mity’s philosophy of trust worked well in getting the band to sing. He made the students believe that as musicians, they were all singers.³⁶⁹ And as audiences noted, they not only sang, they sang well. Many top directors, such as John Paynter, H. Robert Reynolds, and Craig Kirchhoff, said the St. Olaf Band sang at a higher quality than most

³⁶³ The St. Olaf Band, In Concert (program), 1978, St. Olaf Band 1978 scrapbook, Accession number 19730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

³⁶⁴ Tchaikovsky-Lake, *1812 Overture*, conducted by Miles Johnson, performed by the St. Olaf Band, recorded, February 12, 1978, CD, Johnson private collection.

³⁶⁵ Ferguson, interview, 2017.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Elizabeth Jackson, interview by the author, July 18, 2016, Plymouth, Minnesota.

³⁶⁸ Jackson, interview, 2016.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

university choirs.³⁷⁰ Singing also became a source of pride for the band, as noted on a poster in the 1972 band scrapbook, “We sing better than the choir plays.”³⁷¹

Another creative technique that Mity often employed during the themed second half of the concert was performing and singing in the round, seen in Figure 11. In 1974, the second half began with the band entering the auditorium from the back and surrounding the audience on the back and sides of the hall. The band members continued to stand and perform a ten-minute medley, arranged by Mity, spread across the hall and without a conductor.³⁷² Mity was confident in his students’ talents, and he wanted to show that the students could perform at a high level without him there to conduct them.³⁷³

Bringing the students off the stage and into the audience was another way that Mity encouraged engagement between the musicians and the audience. He utilized this unique staging throughout the 1980s and 1990s and in a variety of places. During the St. Olaf Band’s 1993 performance at the Minnesota Music Educators Convention, Mity instructed the band members to encircle the audience while it sang *Amazing Grace*.³⁷⁴ During the 1987 tour to Norway, the second half of the program was entitled “From Our Scandinavian Heritage” and included all Norwegian music. The band surrounded the

³⁷⁰ Hansen, interview, 2017.

³⁷¹ “We sing better than the choir plays” (note), 1972, St. Olaf Band 1972 scrapbook, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

³⁷² Ulmer, letter.

³⁷³ Myrna Johnson, interview, December 2016; Wildman, interview, 1992.

³⁷⁴ Polley, interview, 2015.

crowd to perform Mayhew Lake's arrangement of Edvard Grieg's *In the Hall of the Mountain King*, which thrilled audiences at each venue.³⁷⁵



Figure 11. St. Olaf Band performing in the round, 1970.³⁷⁶

Other second half themes included: “Color Contrast Plus One” (1971), which focused on the contrasting moods and instrumental timbres; “Stain Glass Window”

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ St. Olaf Band performing in the round (photo), 1970, Johnson private collection.

(1972), which featured sacred music;³⁷⁷ “Celebrations” (1974), which used the recorded voice of St. Olaf College’s oldest living alumna reminiscing about her days at St. Olaf; “An Afternoon in the Park”(1975), which recreated an old-fashioned, turn-of-the-century park concert complete with an easel displaying the current piece; and “Bicentennial” (1976), a patriotic program of works about America.

For the 1978 tour, Mity featured the music of Tchaikovsky in the second half. A year earlier on the first London Interim work-study, Mity attended a concert where the New Philharmonia Orchestra performed Tchaikovsky’s *1812 Overture* complete with small explosive charges firing from the balconies to simulate cannon fire.³⁷⁸ This effect inspired Mity, who thought that the St. Olaf Band could do something similar on its next tour. He discussed various electronics and percussive effects with members of the percussion section, but he was not satisfied. He wanted the cannon and church bell sounds at the end of the piece to be “big” and “real.” The percussion section leader, Stephen Bergen, located a working civil war cannon that the band was able to borrow for tour. Finally, Mity was satisfied.

Because the cannon could only be fired once during the duration of the piece, Stephen knew it “was very important that I had the correct mixture of gunpowder, etc. and could safely execute the shot.”³⁷⁹ With help from the St. Olaf College maintenance department, and through several trial and error tests, he found an authentic explosive

³⁷⁷ The St. Olaf student newspaper stated that “the program was a more cohesive than before, and also a bit more sedate. But the direction was there, and the band played each piece with conviction and assuredness.” Kurt Westerberg, “Presents meaningful statement,” *Manitou Messenger* (Northfield, MN), February 18, 1972.

³⁷⁸ Stephen Bergen, e-mail to Susan Hvistendahl, January 29, 2017; Tchaikovsky Evening (program), February 13, 1977, Johnson private collection.

³⁷⁹ Bergen, e-mail.

sound. However, more than one explosion sound was needed for the piece, so for the remaining cannon shots, another percussionist, Dave Halvorson, while wearing ear protection, fired several twelve-gauge shotgun blanks into an oil drum located off stage. During the actual performance, Bergen wore full revolutionary military regalia, as shown in Figure 12, and stood motionless by the cannon until it was time to light the fuse.

On the band's stop in Harlan, Iowa, the cannon shot set off the fire alarm system. With Mity's encouragement, the band continued to perform and Halvorson continued shooting blanks into the oil drum through the sound of the alarm, which was barely audible above the clanging church bells and chimes being played by other percussionists.³⁸⁰ The cannon not only set off the fire alarm in Hastings, Nebraska, but also set the stage curtains on fire.³⁸¹ Nonetheless, Bergen thought the final concert back at St. Olaf College was the appropriate moment to give the cannon an extra dose of gunpowder. The shot blew through the tin-reinforced protective shield and filled Skoglund auditorium with a cloud of gray smoke.³⁸²

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ Perkins, e-mail.

³⁸² Bergen, e-mail.



Figure 12. Stephen Bergen with cannon, St. Olaf Band tour, 1978.³⁸³

Mity's unique programming was spotlighted when the band was chosen to perform at the 1987 CBDNA national convention at Northwestern University. Rather than use a theme for the second half of the concert only, he chose themes for both halves. The first half honored Minnesota composers, but was presented in a traditional concert approach.³⁸⁴ The second half of the concert featured the medley, "From Our Scandinavian Heritage," which Mity had edited and compiled for the band's Norway tour later that spring. During the second half, band members assembled on the balcony

³⁸³ Stephen Bergen with cannon, St. Olaf Band tour (photo), 1978, St. Olaf Band 1978 tour scrapbook, Accession 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

³⁸⁴ The program included: J. Robert Hanson, *Fanfare Prelude: O How Shall I Receive Thee*; Vincent Persichetti, *Chorale Prelude: O God Unseen*; F. Melius Christiansen, *Manitou Heights*; Timothy Mahr, *Passages and Fantasia in G*; Charles Forsberg, *Simsbury Dances*; and John Zdechlik, *Prelude, Intermezzo, and Passacaglia*.

of Pick-Staiger Auditorium, as seen in Figure 13, and performed the concert without Mity on stage.³⁸⁵ Mity was proud of the band's performance, and it earned praise from prominent band directors in the audience. Donald Hunsberger, who served as President of CBDNA during the convention performance, wrote,

Your concert presentation was certainly one of the high points in the program and the commentary of the membership was indeed enthusiastic and strong. I particularly enjoyed From Our Scandanavian[sic] Heritage on your program. The use of the band as a choir was so expressive and really provided a wonderful finale to your concert.³⁸⁶

Robert Winslow reacted similarly,

I cannot remember any other time in my musical career that I have been so moved musically and personally with a performance. It was simply splendid.³⁸⁷

John Paynter, in his congratulatory letter to Mity, pointed out that one of the elements that made the performance and the St. Olaf Band special was its high-quality performance of Mity's creative programming:

All of us were impressed so favorably with the St. Olaf Band, not only for the way that they played with great expert quality, but for representing themselves just as they are and without pretension. The very special quality that you bring to the tour program of your outstanding organization was a delightful ingredient in the CBDNA Convention and offered the members of this group a chance to see another way of doing something productive and impressive with college bands. It was a great program, beautifully played.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁵ Mahr, interview, January 2017.

³⁸⁶ Donald Hunsberger to Miles Johnson, March 12, 1987, St. Olaf Band 1987 scrapbook, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

³⁸⁷ Robert Winslow to Miles Johnson, 1987, St. Olaf Band 1987 scrapbook, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

³⁸⁸ John Paynter to Miles Johnson, April 7, 1987, St. Olaf Band 1987 scrapbook, Accession number 1730, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.



Figure 13. St. Olaf Band, CBDNA National Convention, 1987.³⁸⁹

For all the theatrics, Mity's programming was grounded in featuring quality musicianship and arranging works strategically. Back in his office, surrounded by his carefully selected and organized stacks of scores, the final step in Mity's programming process was to sit down and sing through each program. He listened to the music as if he were an audience member experiencing to the emotional journey through which the

³⁸⁹ St. Olaf Band, CBDNA National Convention (photo), 1987, Johnson private collection.

program took him.³⁹⁰ He observed the impact of the whole program, and made adjustments tailored to what he perceived would be the audience's experience.

In his early days at St. Olaf College, Mity struggled to sit a balanced band. It was after he helped build up the St. Olaf Band's ability level and could anticipate instrumentation for the upcoming year—feeling confident in the band's abilities to take on difficult programs, and knowing which sections or soloists to feature—that his programming became more creative and artistic, integrating the elements of sound and space that culminated in his themed second halves. Toward the end of his career, Mity said that the St. Olaf Band students could now perform whatever he could conduct. He humbly recognized himself as the only thing limiting the students' intellect and talent.³⁹¹

French Horn and Brass Ensembles

In addition to conducting, Mity taught French horn at St. Olaf College. When Mity arrived at St. Olaf in 1957, there were five horn players in the St. Olaf Band.³⁹² By 1961, the section grew to include eight players, a number which has been maintained to the present. Mity quickly began establishing himself not only as a band director, but also as a horn teacher. Through annual appearances at regional summer music camps, such as the International Music Camp and Arrowhead Music Camp, along with appearances of his horn ensembles on tour and at conventions, Mity built a regional reputation as a horn teacher and performer. By the 1970s, students began attending St. Olaf College

³⁹⁰ Hansen, interview, 2017.

³⁹¹ Wildman, interview. 1992.

³⁹² St. Olaf Band Evening Program Winter Tour (program), 1958.

specifically to study horn with Mity, and his studio had grown to over twenty horn students.³⁹³

Mity met each of his students at her or her own ability level. He adjusted his teaching style to fit what he thought would accomplish the most for each student.³⁹⁴ The approach helped to give students of all ability levels confidence in their own performance. This emphasis on building students' confidence became a touchstone in his approach to mentoring horn students, as well as student composers, student performers, and fellow conductors. Mity's philosophy was not to have a single standard—a standard of asking students to do things his way or sound exactly like him.³⁹⁵ Instead, he taught his students good habits, good rhythm, and good musicianship.³⁹⁶ Many of his students describe his teaching as structured, but not controlling.

Most students received half hour lessons.³⁹⁷ Mity always began with the same warm up: start on middle C, play up five notes to G and back down to C, followed by an arpeggio down.³⁹⁸ The sequence was repeated to D-flat, D, and all the way to the upper octave. Mity believed that horn players should develop both the upper and lower ranges at the same time. He emphasized the importance of warm-ups and etudes, and had his

³⁹³ Ulmer, letter. Two of the many students who came to specifically study with Mity were Mark Ulmer (winner of the 1974 Minnesota Orchestra Young Artists Competition) and Kristen Thelander (Professor Emeritus, The University of Iowa).

³⁹⁴ Sharon Moe Miranda, telephone interview by author, February 7, 2017.

³⁹⁵ Mark Ulmer remembers Mity's horn sound as a bit more brassy and not as mellow as one would expect from a horn. Ulmer, letter.

³⁹⁶ Thelander, interview, 2016.

³⁹⁷ More advanced students like Sharon Moe and Kristin Thelander received one-hour lessons.

³⁹⁸ Leslie Lueck, interview by author, February 10, 2017, Mahtomedi, Minnesota.

students study out of the standard horn etude books: Alfonz, Kopprasch, and sometimes Reynolds.³⁹⁹

Mity wanted his students to be well-grounded in fundamentals: breathing, embouchure, scales, and use of the right hand, exercises for which the etude books provided, but he also included excerpts and solo literature. He did not see himself as training orchestral horn performers, per se, but he was still knowledgeable of orchestral excerpts.⁴⁰⁰ He was not as familiar with the orchestral repertoire as faculty with advanced degrees in horn performance, but he knew which ones were important and how to teach them.

Mity had excellent sight-reading skills. He performed with students to help teach concepts of intonation and phrasing, but at times he also performed duets during lessons.⁴⁰¹ Although Sharon Moe arrived at St. Olaf College early in Mity's tenure, she was considered the best horn student he ever taught.⁴⁰² To challenge Sharon, Mity pulled out difficult duets, which they sight-read together during lessons. Despite Sharon's high level of performance and her hard work to outplay her teacher, she remembers Mity always playing better.⁴⁰³

Mity was known as a fine horn performer.⁴⁰⁴ He reportedly had wonderful musicality in his conducting that he carried over to his horn performances. His recitals

³⁹⁹ Thelander, interview, 2016.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ Lueck, interview, 2017.

⁴⁰² Leslie Lueck sat next to Sharon for three years in the St. Olaf Band, and in that time he remembers her making only one mistake in either rehearsals or performances. Sharon was one of Mity's students who went on to a successful career as a professional horn performer; Lueck, interview, 2017.

⁴⁰³ Moe Miranda, interview, 2017.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

were filled with “lots of phraseology and dynamics,” as well as intensity and control.⁴⁰⁵ The public television station based in St. Paul, Minnesota, KTCA-TV, had a program that featured faculty and students from private liberal arts colleges in Minnesota. The programs often spotlighted drama, art, and music. Assisted by pianist Carolyn Henderson and tenor Donald Hoiness, both colleagues at St. Olaf College, Mity presented a live horn recital as part of the “Private College Hour.”⁴⁰⁶ He continued to perform both on and off campus while teaching at St. Olaf College. Extant recital programs reveal that Mity performed a mix of solo and joint faculty recitals every year from 1959 to 1989 and a final recital in 1993, his last year teaching at St. Olaf College.⁴⁰⁷

Mity organized several horn workshops during the 1980s as part of his outreach to high school students, college students, and teachers. The first workshop featured former student, Sharon Moe, and her husband Anthony Miranda. The workshop, free and open to anyone interested, was held January 17-18, 1981. It included master classes with coaching by Moe and Miranda, as well as clinics presented by the two performers.⁴⁰⁸ Mity did not restrict the topics of the clinic; he gave Moe and Miranda the freedom to talk about whatever they thought was most important for developing horn players.

As part of the workshop, Moe and Miranda presented two recitals. The first took place on Saturday evening, accompanied by the St. Olaf Wind and Percussion

⁴⁰⁵ Paul Niemisto, interview by author, November 2, 2016, Northfield, Minnesota.

⁴⁰⁶ “Faculty Kudos,” *St. Olaf Alumnus*, 10:3 (May 1962): 16.

⁴⁰⁷ Recital program collection, Johnson private collection.

⁴⁰⁸ Moe Miranda, interview, 2017.

Ensemble.⁴⁰⁹ The program featured *The American Fanfare*, which was written by Moe and premiered by the American Symphony under Leopold Stokowski; the Horn Concerto No. 3 in E-flat Major by Mozart; the Horn Concerto No. 1, Opus 11, by Strauss; and the *Collage for Band* by Jim Curnow.⁴¹⁰

On Sunday, Moe and Miranda performed with the St. Olaf Orchestra on the final event of the workshop weekend. The program featured the Overture to *The Impresario* by Mozart; the Suite in F Major for Two Horns and Strings by Telemann; the Horn Concerto No. 2 in E-flat by Mozart; the Horn Concerto No. 4 in E-flat by Mozart; and the Concerto in D Major for Three Horns and Orchestra by Telemann. For the final Telemann selection, Mity joined Moe and Miranda as the third horn in the concerto.⁴¹¹

The workshop was well received and attracted a large number of attendees.⁴¹² Moe described it as one of the best events in which she or Miranda had participated, and Miranda praised Mity as a “great guy and musician” in a thank you letter written after the event.⁴¹³ Mity built on the success of this first horn workshop by scheduling another one the following year.

The second horn workshop with Moe and Miranda took place from June 16-19, 1982. The scope of the event was larger, taking advantage of the flexibility that summer offered with a longer schedule and on-campus housing for participants. The format of the second workshop was similar to the first: a mix of master classes and recitals. The

⁴⁰⁹ A Horn Workshop (flier), 1981, Johnson private collection. The Wind and Percussion Ensemble and Chamber Band were interchangeable terms Mity used to refer to a smaller chamber ensemble. Both terms were used on programs where wind and percussion instruments were used.

⁴¹⁰ Two Concerts (program), 1981, Johnson private collection.

⁴¹¹ Two Concerts (program), 1981.

⁴¹² Moe Miranda, interview, 2017.

⁴¹³ Sharon Moe Miranda to Miles Johnson, January 26, 1981, Johnson private collection.

length of the workshop enabled Moe and Miranda to explore a wider range of topics: solo performance, ensemble performance, technique, as well as instruction in instrument care, and strategies for controlling stage fright.⁴¹⁴ In addition to the clinic topics, attendees were also given ample opportunity to perform solos and ensembles each night throughout the week. On the final day, the recital was open to the public and performed by a horn ensemble made up of all the participants.⁴¹⁵ Though Moe returned numerous times to perform solo recitals and horn features with the St. Olaf Orchestra and St. Olaf Band, these were the only horn workshops she led at St. Olaf College.

Several years later, Mity revived the horn workshop and arranged another event in 1985. After traveling around the country observing horn professors teach, Mity invited another alumna, Kristen Thelander, to lead a workshop. At the time, Thelander taught at the University of New Mexico, and Mity wanted to give her an opportunity to showcase her teaching.⁴¹⁶

The schedule of Thelander's workshop relied on the two-day model used in the first workshop in January 1981. Mity extended the same type of freedom as before and let Thelander choose topics that interested her.⁴¹⁷ The workshop's first day focused on high school musicians, music education students, band directors, and horn teachers.⁴¹⁸ The second day featured more advanced topics that were designed for college and advanced musicians. Although each day's topics were presented with a different audience in mind, all participants were welcome to attend both days.

⁴¹⁴ Horn workshop (flier), 1982, Johnson private collection.

⁴¹⁵ Horn workshop (flier), 1982.

⁴¹⁶ Thelander, interview, 2016.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ "Horn concerts, workshops are scheduled," unknown newspaper, 1985, Johnson private collection.

Each day ended with a recital. Sunday's recital featured solo horn repertoire performed exclusively by Thelander. Saturday's recital featured Thelander, Mity, the St. Olaf Horn Club, and the Mass Horn Choir made up of the workshop participants.⁴¹⁹ The Horn Choir performed several works on the program: *Voce mea ad Dominum* by Gracian Baban, the "Pilgrims Chorus" from *Tannhauser* by Wagner, several folk songs by Brahms, and *Frippery No. 2* by Lowell Shaw.⁴²⁰

By the time of the horn workshops, the St. Olaf Horn Club was a well-established group. Horn ensembles at St. Olaf College were established soon after Mity arrived. In the late 1950s, large horn choirs were seldom found in the United States.⁴²¹ Max Pottag, second horn of the Chicago Symphony and professor of horn at Northwestern University, popularized the idea of a large horn ensemble with a 1947 performance at the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic. After the initial appearance of the horn ensemble at the clinic, other horn ensembles began forming around the country. But by the mid-1960s, there were at most five in the United States.⁴²² Of those five, only two were nationally recognized—The Buffalo Horn Club and the Los Angeles Horn Club. The St. Olaf College Horn Club has often been promoted as the third such ensemble in the country; however, articles by Pottag suggest it may have been fifth or sixth. Regardless, the presence of such an ensemble at St. Olaf College during the early days of the horn ensemble movement—along with its continued longevity—shows

⁴¹⁹ Gala Horn Concert (program), January 5, 1985, Johnson private collection.

⁴²⁰ Gala Horn Concert (program), 1985.

⁴²¹ Pottag, "Reflections on the history of the French Horn Ensemble," 36.

⁴²² "Horn students play in Cities," *Manitou Messenger* (Northfield, MN), December 1, 1967.

Mity's position on the "cutting edge" of instrumental music practices, and his commitment to creating performance opportunities for his students.⁴²³

The story of the St. Olaf Horn Club began with the Wind Jammers. The Wind Jammers were a student horn quartet made up of St. Olaf College students Sharon Moe, Leslie Lueck, Robert Frisbie, and Joanne Eggert. The ensemble emerged out of the desire to perform at Glacier National Park.⁴²⁴ At that time, many St. Olaf students worked at Glacier National Park during the summer. Frisbie had worked there during the summer of 1960 and told the other students that the park wanted to hire students, and if they had performance abilities, there was a good possibility of being selected.⁴²⁵

Since horn quartet literature was limited at the time, each of the musicians—all music majors—arranged a variety of classical and popular pieces themselves. Mity was busy with a full studio of horn students at the time, so he was minimally involved in preparing the group for the park audition. Their hard work paid off, and the group was selected to provide entertainment around the park during the summer of 1961.

After the Wind Jammers' success at Glacier National Park, Mity found more venues for them to perform. While the St. Olaf Band toured in the winter of 1962, Mity often asked the group to perform during high school convocation performances, which were informal and more varied than the evening performances.⁴²⁶ The following school year, Mity featured the ensemble on two concerts. The first concert was during Parent's Day weekend. The Wind Jammers performed *Horns A'Plenty* by Weldon Wilber.

⁴²³ It should also be noted that many of the early horn clubs have not continued because of waning interest; however, the St. Olaf Horn Club has been in continued existence since 1967 to the writing of this document.

⁴²⁴ Lueck, interview, 2017.

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

During the 1963 winter tour, they were featured on *The Four Hornsmen* by David Bennett.⁴²⁷

In the spring of 1963, three of the four members of the Wind Jammers graduated and the group disbanded. However, Mity's horn studio continued to grow in size and ability level. Mity began the St. Olaf College Horn Club several years later, and the group presented their first performance at the MacPhail School of Music in Minneapolis on December 2, 1967.⁴²⁸ The inaugural season featured sixteen horn players from the St. Olaf Band and the Norseman Band.

Under Mity's direction, the horn club grew quickly. Within five years, the group included approximately thirty students.⁴²⁹ Students in the St. Olaf Band, Norseman Band, St. Olaf Orchestra, and horn players uninvolved in major ensembles all performed in the group. Because of the students' diverse ability levels, Mity chose repertoire carefully. He was committed to cultivating community among the horn students on campus, so despite varied abilities, all the musicians performed all the time.⁴³⁰

The ensemble met every Monday night. The students arranged themselves in either semi-circles or a large rounded "L" shape.⁴³¹ In the L shape, the first horns sat on the short side and the second, third, and fourth horns sat on the long side. Mity always performed fourth horn and sat on the end. As he was performing, Mity bobbed up and down to show the beat. His position on the end allowed him to be seen by all the students.

⁴²⁷ St. Olaf Band Evening Program Winter Tour (program), 1963, Accession number 0, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

⁴²⁸ "Horn students play in Cities."

⁴²⁹ Thelander, interview, 2016.

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

⁴³¹ Ibid.; Ulmer, letter.

Most of the horn club arrangements were written for horn quartet. Because horns always perform in sections of four, Mity thought this was a great vehicle for teaching section playing.⁴³² During rehearsals, Mity frequently had the students switch parts, which gave everyone experience performing in different registers.⁴³³ Many favorite arrangements were performed each year, such as collections of Brahms and Mendelssohn folk songs.⁴³⁴ Students also contributed arrangements to the horn club library. Jeffrey Agrell, now a horn professor at the University of Iowa, wrote seven arrangements as a student that are still in the horn club library.⁴³⁵ Mity also frequently arranged music, mostly hymns and spiritual music, for the horn club.⁴³⁶

While most of the horn club music consisted of transcriptions, several original works were written for the group. Mity asked Vaclav Nelhybel, whose compositions he had premiered before, to write a piece for the Horn Club's performance at the 1981 Music Educators National Conference convention. At the time that the performance programs were printed, Nelhybel had not yet named the piece. It is listed as "Unnamed Work in Eight Parts for Horns."⁴³⁷ The Horn Club performed the music in manuscript, which Nelhybel later retitled *French Suite* and dedicated to Mity.

In addition to the 1981 performance at the Music Educators National Conference convention, the Horn Club performed at several other conventions. One notable performance took place at the 1969 Music Educators National Conference, North

⁴³² Thelander, interview, 2017.

⁴³³ Ulmer, letter.

⁴³⁴ Thelander, interview, 2017.

⁴³⁵ Horn Club Library (database), electronic format, in author's possession.

⁴³⁶ Horn Club Library (database).

⁴³⁷ The St. Olaf Horn Club (program), April 22, 1981, Johnson private collection.

Central Division. The group was featured during the conference in Fargo, North Dakota, only two years after its debut performance.

Conferences were not the only off-campus performances of the Horn Club. Annually, the ensemble traveled to Minneapolis and performed at Central Lutheran Church. The performances took place on a Sunday and the group led music during the worship service. Because there were no chairs and Mity knew that the horns needed to get their sound up and out into the space, the group sat on top of the pews when performing.⁴³⁸ After they were finished, they turned back around and sat down. Later when the St. Olaf Band began traveling to Central Lutheran Church to perform the Cathedral Concerts, Mity took the Horn Club to different regional churches to perform.⁴³⁹ Throughout this time, the ensemble also presented recitals and provided music for worship services at St. Olaf College, as seen in Figure 14.

The St. Olaf Horn Club and Mity's teaching brought numerous horn students to St. Olaf, many of whom went on to successful careers in music. Both John Paynter and George Regis sent their daughters Megan and Margaret to St. Olaf to study with Mity in the 1970s. Many of Mity's horn students became music educators, such as Bill Henry at Apple Valley, Minnesota, and Jim Buzza. Kristen Thelander and Jeffrey Agrell pursued advance degrees in horn performance and taught at the University of Iowa. Karl Overby, who was one of Mity's first horn students at St. Olaf College, taught horn at Montana

⁴³⁸ Ulmer, letter.

⁴³⁹ Two churches that the ensemble visited were Bethel Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota and St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Aurora, Illinois; Bethel Lutheran Church (bulletin), November 19, 1989, Johnson private collection; St. Olaf College Horn Club (program), November 20, 1993, Johnson private collection.

State University. Kathryn Krubsack currently teaches at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, Concordia University Wisconsin, and Wisconsin Lutheran College.



Figure 14. St. Olaf College Horn Club, date unknown.⁴⁴⁰

Several of Mity's former students perform in professional symphony orchestras, including Jerry Montgomery with the Indiana Symphony Orchestra and John Feider with the Göttinger Symphonie Orchester in Germany. Although he decided to pursue a career in computer technology rather than horn performance, Mark Ulmer made his

⁴⁴⁰ St. Olaf College Horn Club (photo), n.d., Johnson private collection.

professional debut with the Minnesota Orchestra after winning their Young Artist's competition in 1974.

Perhaps the two most notable horn students to come out of Mity's studio were Ronald Sell and Sharon Moe. Both performed professionally in New York City. Sell performed in more than thirty-five Broadway shows during his lifetime, including the premieres of four musicals by Stephen Sondheim.⁴⁴¹ He also performed in several professional orchestras, became the personnel manager for the American Symphony Orchestra, and served as the musical contractor for several large events, including the "Music for Life" concerts at Carnegie Hall conducted by Leonard Bernstein and James Levine from 1988-90.⁴⁴²

Sharon Moe made her professional debut after winning the Women of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra Young Artists Competition.⁴⁴³ After moving to New York City, she held positions with the American Symphony Orchestra, the Long Island Philharmonic, the New York Chamber Soloists, the Colonial Symphony, the New Philharmonic of New Jersey, the New York City Opera, and the Bronx Arts Ensemble.⁴⁴⁴ In 1971, Leonard Bernstein asked her to perform first/solo horn for the premiere of his *Mass* at the opening of the John. F. Kennedy Center for the Performing

⁴⁴¹ The shows were: "Sunday in the Park with George," "Into the Woods," "Passion," and "The Assassins;" Susan Hvistendahl, "Historic Happenings," *Northfield Entertainment Guide*, June 29, 2008: 31.

⁴⁴² Hvistendahl, *Historic Happenings*, 31.

⁴⁴³ Sharon was the first student from St. Olaf College to win the Young Artists Competition. As the winner, she was invited to solo with the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, play a recital on television, won a cash prize, and received a four-year scholarship to study at the Manhattan School of Music; Moe Miranda, interview, 2017.

⁴⁴⁴ Hvistendahl, *Historic Happenings*, 32.

Arts in Washington D.C.⁴⁴⁵ Moe also was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in music for her 1995 composition, *Windows*. Despite all her success, she still continued to consider Mity one of the biggest influences on her career and among the important people in her life.⁴⁴⁶

In addition to teaching horn and developing the St. Olaf College Horn Club, Mity also cultivated brass ensemble performances at St. Olaf. As an active arranger, he published three collections of *Hymns for Brass* through Augsburg Publishing House.⁴⁴⁷ He also composed a brass fanfare—*Dedicatory Fanfare*—for the dedication of the Christiansen Hall of Music at St. Olaf College.⁴⁴⁸ During the premiere performance, student musicians performed from half a dozen rooftops around campus.

In 1969, Mity received a sabbatical to travel to Germany and research instrument use in the church. His studies allowed him to compile music from German music publishers, attend lectures to broaden his knowledge of German music, and make connections to three music scholars: Dr. Karl Ferdinand, Dr. Fritz Langhans, and Dr. Wilhelm Ehman. Ehman was a renowned Bach expert and proponent of brass music in church services.⁴⁴⁹ Once he returned to the states, Mity presented workshops on his research findings and led brass performances during St. Olaf College's chapel services.

With the sponsorship of Schmidt Music, Mity presented a "Sacred Instrumental Music Clinic" on September 16, 1978. During the clinic, Mity presented his sabbatical research, as well as Vaclav Nelhybel's sacred music arrangements. Mity brought a brass ensemble from St. Olaf College to perform the following Nelhybel works:

⁴⁴⁵ Moe Miranda, interview, 2017.

⁴⁴⁶ Sharon Moe Miranda to Mity and Myrna, faxed letter, April 16, 1994, Johnson private collection.

⁴⁴⁷ Johnson, Lutheran World Federation Scholarship application.

⁴⁴⁸ "A Dream Realized," *St. Olaf Alumnus*, 25:1 (Fall 1976): 1.

⁴⁴⁹ Johnson, Lutheran World Federation Scholarship application.

A Mighty Fortress
All Creatures of Our God and Kind
All Glory, Laud, and Honor
Blessed is the Man (SATB)
Crown Him with Many Crowns
Festival Hymns and Processionals
Gloria Patri
Hymn Cantatas I,II, III (SATB)
Morning is Broken (SATB)
Now Thank We All Our God
Prelude and Toccata
The Hallelujah Chorus (SATB and Brass)
Toccata and Fugue⁴⁵⁰

In addition to Nelhybel's arrangements, Mity included a selected list of concerts and events in the area that used instrumental music in a church setting, in which St. Olaf College ensembles appeared three times.⁴⁵¹ There were also five pages devoted to listing a wide range of sacred band music.

Soon after Mity arrived at St. Olaf College, his reputation as a horn recitalist and teacher began to grow. Television and radio performances helped him to reach a wider audience and attract high-level musicians. Many of his former students went on to have successful performance and teaching careers. Mity's enthusiastic teaching and mentoring led to multiple performance opportunities for his students. The widest reaching and longest lasting was the St. Olaf College Horn Club. This ensemble served as an important early model for horn ensembles in the United States and has been in existence from 1967 to the present.

⁴⁵⁰ Sacred Instrumental Music Clinic (handout), September 16, 1978, Johnson private collection.

⁴⁵¹ Sacred Instrumental Music Clinic (handout).

Guest Conducting

Over the course of his career, Mity conducted thirty All-State bands in twenty-five different states, in addition to numerous summer camps and band festivals.⁴⁵² He served as a frequent conductor at particular festivals, including the AA Band Festival in Montana and the Fox Valley Music Festival in Aurora, Illinois.⁴⁵³ Twice he led the Senior Concert Band at the Illinois Summer Youth Music Camp at the University of Illinois, and he appeared as a guest conductor with the Northshore Concert Band during their 1978 performance at the American Bandmasters Association Convention.⁴⁵⁴

One highlight in Mity's early guest conducting career was at the Peninsula Arts Festival in Fish Creek, Wisconsin.⁴⁵⁵ Each summer, the conductor and director of the festival, Thor Johnson, invited several promising conductors to guest conduct the festival orchestra, and he chose Mity in 1963.⁴⁵⁶ The Wisconsin connection opened another door for Mity when two years later he conducted at the University of Wisconsin's Summer Music Clinic. At the time, the clinic celebrated its thirty-sixth year as one of the "best-known" summer music programs.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵² Miles Harlan Johnson Concordia honorary doctorate proclamation with Johnson's notes, 1991, Johnson private collection.

⁴⁵³ Collection of programs, Johnson private collection.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁵ The St. Olaf College Band (promotional flier), 1960, Accession number 0, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

⁴⁵⁶ Thor Johnson became the youngest American-born conductor of a major American orchestra with his appoint to the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra in 1947. He also served as professor at Northwestern University and director at the Interlochen Arts Academy.

⁴⁵⁷ "Faculty Kudos," *St. Olaf Alumnus*, 13:5 (July 1965), 10.

In addition to individual guest conducting appearances, Mity established himself at several summer music camps. For seventeen summers, Mity traveled to Barnum, Minnesota to teach at Arrowhead Music Camp.⁴⁵⁸ Ruben Haugen, a clarinet and saxophone instructor at St. Olaf College, introduced Mity to the camp. In addition to teaching horn lessons there, Mity conducted the Arrowhead Band, which featured the senior high school campers. The camp ran for several weeks during the summer with a new band each week. Depending on the week, the Arrowhead Band contained between sixty-five and ninety-five musicians.⁴⁵⁹

Mity stopped teaching at Arrowhead music camp in 1975, because that summer Odd Terje Lysebo (who had hosted the St. Olaf Band during the previous year's international tour) invited Mity to guest conduct at the Vestfold Summer Music Camp in Norway.⁴⁶⁰ Mity felt conflicted about leaving Arrowhead. He had a strong connection with the camp after teaching there for so many years, but could not pass up the opportunity to work with Norwegian bands.⁴⁶¹

The Vestfold Summer Music Camp was founded by Lysebo in the Vestfold area of Norway, southwest of Oslo. Modeled after the International Music Camp in the North Dakota/Manitoba Peace Gardens, it drew in students from thirty to forty different area school band programs.⁴⁶² In addition to performing in the band, the students took classes in music theory, aural skills, and chamber music. Mity mainly worked with the advanced

⁴⁵⁸ Polley notes, video interview.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁰ Sigurd Johnson, interview, 2017.

⁴⁶¹ Myrna Johnson, interview, December 2017.

⁴⁶² Sigurd Johnson, interview, 2017.

students, but because of the Norwegian school system, his students varied in age from thirteen to nineteen years old.⁴⁶³

The format of the camp included three different sessions for ten days each—a full thirty days of uninterrupted teaching. In the early years, the teachers received no break between sessions. As the bands were presenting the final concert, the rest of the faculty members were auditioning the next camp’s students.⁴⁶⁴ This practice later changed to give the faculty a twenty-four hour break before starting the next session.

Mity continued to teach at the camp until shortly after his retirement from St. Olaf College. It gave him opportunities to work with Norwegian band students and provide clinics to conductors, but he also practiced horn, studied scores, and assembled programs.⁴⁶⁵ Teaching at the camp provided him time to disconnect from distractions and focus on music.

Summers in Norway were also a special time for Mity because each year he brought one of his sons with him on the trip. Since Mity was busy during the school year, he spent extra time with family during the summer. He tried hard to be a good father because he did not have a father for most of his life.⁴⁶⁶ Eventually, Mity’s second child, Sigurd, began working at the Vestwald camp too. Sigurd remembers his time with Mity in Norway with fondness: Mity’s attempts at speaking Norwegian, the endearment felt between the students and Mity, and afternoon drives in the countryside with Mity to find ice cream and strawberries. “Mity loved his strawberries.”⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵ Miles Johnson to St. Olaf Band members, 1988, Johnson private collection.

⁴⁶⁶ Sigurd Johnson, interview, 2017.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.

Professional Organizations

Mity was well connected to the band profession through his membership in numerous national and regional organizations. He earned membership to Kappa Kappa Psi in 1964 and to the prestigious American Bandmasters Association in 1968.⁴⁶⁸ Also in 1968, Mity served as a charter member of the Minnesota Chapter of Phi Beta Mu, the international bandmasters fraternity.⁴⁶⁹ Mity was one of eight initial members, the only college band director elected to the group, and was chosen as the first president of the chapter.

Soon after arriving at St. Olaf College, Mity became involved in CBDNA. He served the organization in various capacities, starting in 1966 as the chairman of the original composition committee for the North Central Division.⁴⁷⁰ This position provided exposure to new works for band and emerging composers, both of which influenced his teaching and programming. During the 1970s, Mity sat on the national conductors' symposium committee, serving as chairman during 1975.⁴⁷¹

For the 1989-91 Biennium, Mity was elected as the President of the North Central Division of CBDNA. His duties included hosting the 1990 North Central Divisional Conference. Held on the campus of the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis from February 23-25, the conference was devoted to "Celebrating Our

⁴⁶⁸ Kappa Kappa Psi (honorary membership certificate), December 17, 1964, Johnson private collection; The American Bandmasters Association (active membership certificate), March 7, 1968, Johnson private collection.

⁴⁶⁹ "Wisconsin Team Scores 29 in Minnesota," n.d., Johnson private collection.

⁴⁷⁰ Biography (1966), 1966, Accession number 3736, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

⁴⁷¹ "Miles Johnson honored at St. Olaf," *Grant County Herald* (Elbow Lake, MN), April 1, 1982.

Young Musical Heritage.”⁴⁷² It was organized in conjunction with the National Band Association (NBA) and coordinated by Mity and Frank Bencriscutto at the University of Minnesota with help from Richard Hansen and Russell Pesola.⁴⁷³ Schmitt Music sponsored the event, which enabled the group to add more components to the convention.

One extra feature, which became a convention highlight, was a lecture, open rehearsal, and performance of Richard Strauss’s *Serenade in E-flat Major*, op. 7. Frederick Fennell presented a lecture titled, “Time and Winds Revisited: The Eastman Wind Ensemble.”⁴⁷⁴ He also led the open rehearsal and performance of the Strauss Serenade. Schmitt Music’s sponsorship funded professional musicians, many from the Minnesota Orchestra, to perform in the ensemble. When Rhadames Angelucci, principal oboe for the Minnesota Orchestra, was asked to perform, he replied, “Fred Fennell, Strauss, Serenade...you don’t need to pay me!”⁴⁷⁵

Other highlights of the conference included a panel discussion on “Crisis in Our School Music Program: Identifying the Problems—Exploring the Solutions,”⁴⁷⁶ a composers forum with lectures and analyses led by Libby Larson, Timothy Mahr, Sharon Moe, and Soichi Konagaya; and a lunch “Bull Session” led by John Paynter in

⁴⁷² Mity was exploring the theme of heritage during his programming at this time. During the 1987 tour, the themed second half centered on music “From Our Scandinavian Heritage.” In 1991, the tour theme was “Mostly British: The Heritage of the Concert Band.”

⁴⁷³ Hansen, interview, 2017.

⁴⁷⁴ “Celebrating Our Young Musical Heritage” CBDNA-NBA North Central Division Convention (handout), 1990, Johnson private collection.

⁴⁷⁵ The organizers still paid all the musicians. Several of the players had played under Fennell when he was the Associate conductor of the Minnesota Symphony. Hansen, interview, 2017.

⁴⁷⁶ “Celebrating Our Young Musical Heritage” CBDNA-NBA North Central Division Convention (handout).

which CBDNA members could ask questions, make a statement, or argue a point on any relevant subject. The convention also featured performances by:

The Greater Milwaukee Youth Wind Ensemble
Southern Illinois University – Edwardsville Symphonic Band and Chamber Winds
University of Kanagawa Concert Band from Tokyo, Japan
University of Minnesota Symphonic Wind Ensemble
University of Nebraska – Lincoln Wind Ensemble
Youngstown State University Symphonic Wind Ensemble

In addition, conducting clinics were led by four master conducting teachers from Mity's professional circles:

Craig Kirchhoff—The Ohio State University
John Paynter – Northwestern University
H. Robert Reynolds – University of Michigan
Mallory Thompson – University of South Florida

Each conductor led one work with a different collegiate band, and also conducted the “Golden Oldies” band made up of music educators and conductors from around Minnesota. Although planning was a joint effort, the convention highlights read like a list of causes that Mity championed throughout his life. Everything from the guest conductors, who were all repeat clinicians at Mity's Minnesota Instrumental Conducting Symposium (MICS), to sessions with composers talking about their own works, most of whom Mity personally championed in his own programming.

The topic of the panel discussion at the 1990 CBDNA North Central Division Conference dealt with another issue for which Mity advocated, namely supporting music in the schools. By the mid 1980s political and financial pressures had begun threatening music in the Minnesota school system.⁴⁷⁷ Mity recognized the need for greater support of band programs in the state. The Minnesota Music Educators Association (MMEA)

⁴⁷⁷ Pesola, interview, 2017.

focused broadly on school music, but Mity thought that band directors required a state-wide organization to address concerns that faced their programs.⁴⁷⁸

At a CBDNA convention in Kansas City, Mity gathered Russell Pesola (Concordia College), Douglas Nimmo (Gustavus Adolphus College), Timothy Mahr (University of Minnesota-Duluth), Richard Hansen (St. Cloud State University), and Frank Bencriscutto (University of Minnesota) to discuss the state of affairs in the Minnesota public school band programs.⁴⁷⁹ Mity affectionately branded them the “Minnesota mafia.” Once the group returned to Minnesota, they held meetings in centrally located St. Cloud, Minnesota.⁴⁸⁰ The meetings took place at both restaurants around town and at St. Cloud State University and their purpose was to brainstorm about ideas to support public school bands.⁴⁸¹ Mity facilitated the discussions; through former students and guest conducting engagements, he had a pulse on what was happening in the public schools at the time.⁴⁸²

The group collectively put forward the idea of a Minnesota Band Directors Association (MBDA) modeled on the Iowa Bandmasters Association organization, which was comprised of different divisions around the state. The initial organizers (all college band directors) knew that if they wanted to make sure MBDA did not become another college organization, they needed to reach out and gather support at all levels:

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid.; MMEA began as an outgrowth of an earlier band association, and broadening the focus to include a wider scope of music in the schools made sense at the time; however, the pressures during the 1980s led to the need of an organization whose mission focused solely on school band programs; Timothy Mahr, e-mail message to author, February 15, 2017.

⁴⁷⁹ Pesola, interview, 2017.

⁴⁸⁰ Hansen, interview, 2017.

⁴⁸¹ Mahr, e-mail.

⁴⁸² Hansen, interview, 2017.

grade school, secondary school, and the collegiate level.⁴⁸³ Pesola became the first president of the organization and William Webb, director at Edina High School, became the Vice-President.⁴⁸⁴

Although he did not have an official role, Mity sat in on early meetings to make sure the group did not stray from its initial vision.⁴⁸⁵ He knew that, despite his commitment to the issue, he needed to delegate leadership roles; many colleagues consider this ability one of his strengths as a professional. One of the first documents drafted by the MDBA was a statement for superintendents, principals, and school boards that supported athletic bands, but asked the administrators to limit the number of performances.⁴⁸⁶ This was the organization's first attempt to advocate for student time and balanced band programs.

Mity also played a role in the emergence of the MBDA conference. In 1992 Mity opened St. Olaf College's doors for MBDA's annual conference. The date of the conference coincided with the Minnesota Instrumental Conducting Symposium (MICS) that Mity had begun in 1979. MICS already had established itself as a summer meeting place for band directors. By hosting the MBDA conference at the same time, Mity helped to "strengthen each of the programs. Although the programs aren't really combined, they feed one another."⁴⁸⁷ The partnership between MICS and MBDA lasted one more year, which marked the final year of MICS and also Mity's retirement from St. Olaf College.

⁴⁸³ William Webb, interview by author, November 1, 2016, Edina, Minnesota.

⁴⁸⁴ Hansen, interview, 2017.

⁴⁸⁵ Webb, interview, 2016.

⁴⁸⁶ Hansen, interview, 2017.

⁴⁸⁷ "Musicians to gather at St. Olaf Aug. 1-7," *Northfield News* (Northfield, MN), July 28, 1993.

Over his thirty-seven year career at St. Olaf College, Mity brought national and international recognition to the St. Olaf Band. Through domestic and international tours, he carried the sounds of the American concert band to many towns in the United States and Europe, particularly Norway. He created unique performance and study opportunities for students while on tour, including the month-long work-study program in London. Mity's musicality and leadership, combined with his ability to develop a supportive community within the group, pushed the abilities of student musicians in the band. As the band improved, Mity pressed their musical boundaries and experimented with more artistic programming. The variety of programs that Mity pursued with the St. Olaf Band eventually led to the themed second half concert, which drew on the musical strengths of students in the band and demonstrated Mity's programming philosophies and practices.

Mity's success as a well-known recitalist and horn teacher led to the growth of the St. Olaf's horn studio and the birth of the St. Olaf College Horn Club, which has been in continuous existence from 1967 to the present. His leadership extended outside St. Olaf College through his guest conducting and his involvement in state and national associations, including MBDA and CBDNA.

CHAPTER 4

MINNESOTA INSTRUMENTAL CONDUCTING SYMPOSIUM

In the 1960s, the College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA) began exploring the possibility of hosting a national conducting symposium, to provide band conductors with professional development opportunities. While no such programs for band conductors existed at the time, the initial proposal was modeled on orchestral workshops that CBDNA members had attended. Pierre Monteux's "l'ecole Monteux" and workshops held by the America Symphony Orchestra League in the mid-1950s, which included a major conductor and well-organized administration, served as templates.⁴⁸⁸ The core teaching tool at these symposiums was a lab experience, where conductors worked with a live ensemble and received coaching from a "master" conductor.

The first CBDNA Conducting Symposium was held in 1968. The chair of the conducting symposium committee, William Revelli, agreed to host the event at the University of Michigan.⁴⁸⁹ Revelli had the necessary infrastructure and was able to offer the workshop in conjunction with the National Band Conductors Conference, which was already scheduled to take place at the University of Michigan. At the first symposium, all the participants were college band directors.⁴⁹⁰ This trend continued during the second symposium in 1969, with the exception of five high school band directors who were hand-selected and invited to participate by the selection committee.

⁴⁸⁸ Gifford, 8.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

After 1969, CBDNA agreed to continue co-sponsoring the conducting symposium, but without financial contributions.⁴⁹¹ The conducting symposium committee recommended that regional divisions of CBDNA organize symposia within their own division. Several such symposia were held during the 1970s under this regional model at Fresno State University (1971), the University of Wisconsin (1974, 1975), and the West Coast Conducting Symposium at Saddleback College in Mission Viejo, California.⁴⁹²

During the CBDNA 1977-79 Biennial, President Robert Vagner instructed the conducting symposium committee to “help sponsor one or more of the conducting seminars in various parts of the United States and to seek out campuses that might offer extended workshops on conducting and literature.”⁴⁹³ It is unknown how many of the committee chairpeople assisted in developing seminars; however, Mity, who served on the conducting symposium committee during that time, began developing his own symposium at St. Olaf College.

Mity had served on the CBDNA conducting symposium committee for several years and had chaired the committee in 1975. During that time, he helped coordinate the 1975 symposium at the University of Wisconsin with Frederick Fennell.⁴⁹⁴ In addition to the conducting lab experience, there were clinic sessions held in the morning by the master conductor. Topics covered at the 1975 symposium included contemporary music

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., 20.

⁴⁹² Ibid., 25. The West Coast Conducting Symposium began in 1974 and continued through at least 1982. No documentation has been discovered determining how long the symposium continued.

⁴⁹³ Ibid., 26-27.

⁴⁹⁴ CBDNA Conducting Symposium (flier), 1975, Accession number 1528, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

performance techniques, the interpretation of march styles, the basic repertory of the wind band, common errors in terminology and calligraphy, and films of exemplary conductors at work.⁴⁹⁵

When Mity began his own conducting symposium at St. Olaf College, he drew on his experiences with the conducting symposium committee and the successful model that had been developed through CBDNA. In June of 1979, the first annual Minnesota Instrumental Conducting Symposium (MICS) was founded.⁴⁹⁶ Based on observations he made during his time on the CBDNA committee, Mity made several notable changes when developing MICS. Unlike previous symposia, Mity opened his symposium to directors at all levels and actively supported early-career conductors. Mallory Thompson, current Director of Bands at Northwestern University, first attended MICS as a participant. She remembers that it “was a place where normal people could go and it was fantasy camp. [There were] big figures in the profession that you respected and your friends, and you would all hang out.”⁴⁹⁷ During the first years, participants were mainly Minnesotan, but as the event grew, and as more conductors began seeking mentoring and professional development, it began attracting directors from around the country.⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹⁵ CBDNA Conducting Symposium (flier).

⁴⁹⁶ Several different titles appear for the symposium: Minnesota Instrumental Conducting Symposium, Minnesota Instrumental Conductors Symposium, and Minnesota Symposium on Instrumental Conducting. The majority of the archival documents consulted use the first version, Minnesota Instrumental Conducting Symposium, which is used in this document.

⁴⁹⁷ Mallory Thompson, telephone interview by author, January 6, 2017.

⁴⁹⁸ There were also limited opportunities during the early years of conducting symposia for band conductors to get together for an extended time. The Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic provided an opportunity for people to come together for a common reason, but MICS offered a venue for people to gather and work toward a common goal in a smaller, more intimate setting than the Midwest Clinic.

Mity also observed that the CBDNA master conductors, at times, were overly critical in previous symposia, and he wanted to create an environment in which conductors were encouraged to take risks without the fear of being judged harshly.⁴⁹⁹ This is not to say that participants did not receive criticism, but Mity intentionally guided master conductors to provide constructive criticism along with specific praise for each participant. Mity's enthusiasm for learning, along with his commitment to community building, helped to create this encouraging environment, which caused participants to return year after year.

The late seventies were an ideal time in Mity's career to begin MICS. St. Olaf College's music building, the Christiansen Hall of Music (CHM), was just five years old and provided the space needed to house the quickly growing symposium. Directors were searching for professional development opportunities and there were no other conducting symposia in Minnesota at that time. At professional conferences such as the Minnesota Music Educators conference and the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic, MICS's reputation spread by word of mouth, with directors asking each other if they were planning on attending the symposium that year.⁵⁰⁰

The buzz surrounding MICS was largely due to the high-profile master conductors that Mity featured. Through his CBDNA connections, he was able to attract top musicians such as Frederick Fennell, John Paynter, H. Robert Reynolds, and Craig Kirchoff. MICS's reputation was also driven by the sense of camaraderie that participants built during the week-long symposium. In addition to formal gatherings in clinics and lab settings, Mity structured a nightly get together at the Rueb 'N' Stein pub

⁴⁹⁹ Reynolds, interview, 2016.

⁵⁰⁰ Webb, interview, 2016.

in downtown Northfield. In Mity's mind, these informal gatherings were just as important to the education of the conductors as the clinics. They offered participants the opportunity to gather after a long day and reflect on the sessions together. They facilitated conversations between band directors and the master conductors every night.⁵⁰¹ And they allowed band directors to connect with each other, network, and share tips and ideas.

The format of the symposium broke up the participants into two different categories—Active Conductors and Observer Participants. After the first year, the titles were changed to Principal Conductor and Conductor-Performer, respectively.⁵⁰² The titles reflected a change in the format, which included giving the conductor-performers podium time in front of the lab band. In addition, the conductor-performers participated in all the clinics and shared meals, though their main role during MICS was to perform in the lab band. Since members of the band performed for close to nine hours each day, the musicians rotated through solos and split parts.⁵⁰³

The principal conductors received the most time with the lab band and the number of spots was limited to a total of fifteen participants (in contrast, there were twenty-four slots for the conductor-performers).⁵⁰⁴ The principal conductors also received a brief critique after their lab session. These critiques were given in front of the

⁵⁰¹ Participant Jo Ann Polley remembers the group of participants teaching Frederick Fennell "Um Ya Ya," the St. Olaf College fight song. Fennell stood up on the table and sang it at the top of his lungs; Polley, interview, 2015.

⁵⁰² The Second Annual Minnesota Symposium on Instrumental Conducting (flier), 1980, Johnson private collection.

⁵⁰³ Miles Johnson to MICS participants, June 1993, Accession number 3047, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

⁵⁰⁴ Minnesota Symposium on Instrumental Conducting (flier), 1984, Johnson private collection.

band with the master conductor. The public critique not only provided the conductor with helpful feedback, but also permitted the conductor-performers in the ensemble to hear helpful comments that they could apply to their own conducting.

After the lab session concluded, the principal conductor brought a VHS copy of his or her performance to review with a second guest director. In the early years, this private critique was done with another regional band director that Mity had selected to help.⁵⁰⁵ In later years, as MICS continued to grow, two master conductors were brought in and alternated responsibilities, working with conductors on the podium for one session and then reviewing videotapes during the second session.⁵⁰⁶

After the slots for principal conductors and conductor-performers were filled, directors and students were encouraged to come to the symposium as observers. These musicians helped to fill out the large symphonic band that was needed to give the lab sessions authenticity. While many musicians returned every year just to perform in the ensemble, there were times when it was difficult to find the number of musicians needed to create a balanced band, so Mity encouraged his St. Olaf College students to volunteer their time to perform in the ensemble. Many students were on campus during the summer or lived nearby and were able to help. Mity believed that performing in the ensemble and observing the master teachers working with the participants gave his students valuable lessons that supplemented their formal music education. Mity himself performed on horn in the ensemble for this very reason. He was always observing and trying to become a better musician and conductor, even after twenty years of teaching at

⁵⁰⁵ Elizabeth Jackson was one of the guest reviewers.

⁵⁰⁶ Lydia Quanbeck, Minnesota Instrumental Conducting Symposium (residential work order), 1988, Accession number 1589, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

St. Olaf College.⁵⁰⁷ For the more difficult-to-fill instrument spots, Mity provided a small stipend. In the 1988 MICS budget summary, for instance, he spent one hundred dollars on bassoonists. The next year, he paid an oboe student and a bassoon student one hundred fifty dollars each, plus room and board, to perform in the band. Four flutes, four clarinets, and a string bass were also provided room and board to join the ensemble.

The MICS schedule was exhausting.⁵⁰⁸ The day began with a general technique session in the morning led by the master conductors, which varied based on the clinician's interests. Some topics, such as contemporary performance techniques, interpretation of march style, basic repertoire of the wind band, and common errors in terminology and calligraphy, grew out of the workshops at early CBDNA conducting symposia.⁵⁰⁹ The program evolved to include additional topics, such as reading and evaluating new music and how to mark a score.⁵¹⁰ One of Mity's presentations during the early years was basic conductor calisthenics as aids to technique, which grew out of Mity's sports background.⁵¹¹ He led participants in stretches and activities like arm circles; participants remember Mity circling his arms faster and in larger circles than anyone else, while encouraging others to keep up.⁵¹²

⁵⁰⁷ Miles Johnson to MICS participants, 1993.

⁵⁰⁸ Reynolds, interview, 2016.

⁵⁰⁹ Minnesota Symposium on Instrumental Conducting (flier), 1979, Johnson private collection.

⁵¹⁰ The Third Annual Minnesota Symposium on Instrumental Conducting (flier), 1981, Johnson private collection; The Tenth Annual Minnesota Symposium on Instrumental Conducting (flier), 1987, Johnson private collection.

⁵¹¹ The Third Annual Minnesota Symposium on Instrumental Conducting (flier), 1981.

⁵¹² Webb, interview, 2016.

Next, sessions from 9:45-11:45 a.m. and 1:00-3:00 p.m. devoted time to the principal conductors working with the lab band.⁵¹³ After a short break, the lab band was reassembled from 3:30-5:00 p.m. for work with the conductor-performers. The last official session lasted from 7:30-9:30 p.m. and consisted of a final session with the master conductor. After the evening session ended, Mity, the master conductor, and the participants socialized in downtown Northfield. Mity wanted everyone to participate and insisted that they attend.⁵¹⁴ He observed guest conductors leaving other symposia when the official events were done for the day, but he wanted to give the MICS participants an opportunity to informally mingle with each other and the clinicians. During this time, participants continued to talk and ask questions, as well as network with each other. It was another way that Mity went about building community.

The master conductors that Mity brought to MICS traveled from all over the country and were some of the best band conductors in the field. The first master conductor at the 1979 symposium was Frederick Fennell.⁵¹⁵ Fennell's name, energy, and innovative teaching techniques were important in establishing MICS as a leading symposium in its early years. One of the unique teaching techniques that Fennell brought to MICS took place in the swimming pool.⁵¹⁶ All the participants got into the campus pool and practiced their conducting technique, as seen in Figure 15. By using the resistance of the water, participants got a better feel for their arm movements.

⁵¹³ MICS Daily Schedule, 1989, Accession number 3047, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

⁵¹⁴ Webb, interview, 2016.

⁵¹⁵ Minnesota Symposium on Instrumental Conducting (flier), 1979.

⁵¹⁶ Gareth Hiebert, "Maestro pools orchestral experience," *St. Paul Dispatch*, June 1979, Johnson private collection.

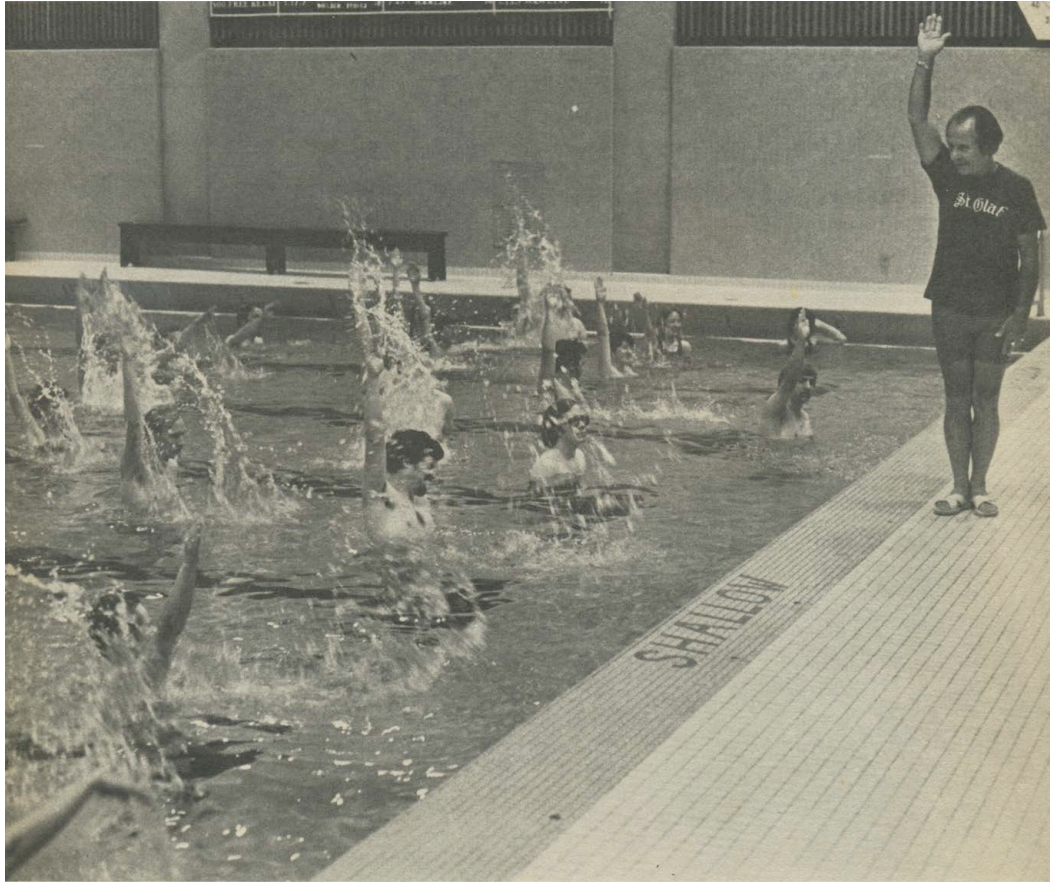


Figure 15. Frederick Fennell, Minnesota Instrumental Conducting Symposium, 1979.⁵¹⁷

Fennell returned as the master conductor for the symposium's second year, and then Mity introduced a rotation of several top wind conductors, including John Paynter at Northwestern University and H. Robert Reynolds at the University of Michigan. Mity knew that these two, along with Fennell, provided the best possible instruction at MICS.⁵¹⁸ They formed the core of the rotating guest conductors; however, when all three were unavailable in 1985, Mity invited Craig Kirchhoff from The Ohio State

⁵¹⁷ Mark Gonnerman, "Cover photo," *St. Olaf*, 27:4 (Summer, 1979).

⁵¹⁸ Jackson, interview, 2016.

University.⁵¹⁹ At the time, Kirchhoff was just beginning to make a name for himself as a conducting teacher, and Mity wanted him at MICS while he was on his professional ascendency.⁵²⁰ Mity had an eye for up-and-coming talent and also saw MICS as a way to help emerging conductors establish their careers.

Over time, the master conductors became overwhelmed by the pace of MICS, with its nonstop schedule of teaching twelve hours a day followed by evening gatherings for a solid week. Reynolds remembers telling Mity that it was just too exhausting, and that he needed someone else to help him.⁵²¹ To lighten the schedule for the master conductor, Mity reached out to Mallory Thompson.⁵²² Thompson had participated in MICS in 1982, 1983, and 1986, and Mity recognized her talent.⁵²³ To show his confidence in her, and to alleviate the master conductor's rigorous schedule, he invited Thompson to be a master conductor alongside Reynolds in 1989, and again with Paynter at the 1993 symposium. The invitation to teach at MICS marked the first time Thompson had been invited to be a guest at a conducting symposium.⁵²⁴

In addition to Thompson, Reynolds brought his colleague and former conducting teacher from the University of Michigan, Elizabeth Green, to help guest teach the 1986 symposium. Reynolds recommended Green because he felt that he had "the best

⁵¹⁹ Minnesota Symposium on Instrumental Conducting (flier), 1985, Johnson private collection; Jackson, interview, 2016.

⁵²⁰ Sigurd Johnson, interview, 2017.

⁵²¹ Reynolds, interview, 2016.

⁵²² Ibid.

⁵²³ Thompson, interview, 2017. During a sabbatical in 1988, Mity traveled around the United States to observe conducting teachers. One stop was at the University of South Florida, where Thompson was teaching at the time. After his visit, he spread the word that Thompson was an exceptional conducting teacher.

⁵²⁴ MICS proved to be a good model for Thompson to build her own conducting symposia. Over the past twenty-eight years, she has personalized her program, but MICS was the paradigm with which she began. Thompson, interview, 2017.

conducting teacher in the world” as a student.⁵²⁵ Green was already known as a master conducting teacher through her tenure at the University of Michigan and her best-selling conducting textbooks. As Reynolds said, “she could teach anybody the grammar of conducting.”⁵²⁶

Bud Beyer’s long association with conducting symposia began at MICS in 1988. Beyer was a professor of acting at Northwestern and specialized in mime. At MICS, he worked with participants on nonverbal communication, including facial expressions and body carriage. His first year, Beyer joined Kirchhoff and returned in 1990 with Paynter.

Each master teacher brought his or her own specialties to the symposium, and these strengths shaped the clinics. Various topics were explored over the years, including group analysis of scores, contemporary performance techniques, and basic repertoire of the wind band, which appeared repeatedly. Others, such as interpretation of march style and common errors in terminology and calligraphy, were offered during the first few years with Fennell (following the CBDNA model), but did not appear in later years.⁵²⁷ In 1981, MICS added reading and evaluation of new music as a symposium topic, coinciding with the initial appearance of Paynter.⁵²⁸ Like Mity’s other communities of music, MICS drew on the strengths and talents of its participants, pulled together by his inclusive and affirming personality.

⁵²⁵ Reynolds, interview, 2016.

⁵²⁶ Ibid.

⁵²⁷ Minnesota Symposium on Instrumental Conducting (flier), 1979.

⁵²⁸ The Third Annual Minnesota Symposium on Instrumental Conducting (flier), 1981. Paynter served as the new music critic for *The Instrumentalist* magazine and a prolific composer and arranger.

As the symposium evolved, Mity's role as a conducting clinician diminished, especially once MICS had two master teachers.⁵²⁹ However, he always performed in the ensemble. While playing, Mity's true colors as a horn player emerged, as he egged on the other hornists to play louder.⁵³⁰ When told to play softer, Mity jokingly heckled the conductor. He injected his humor and enthusiasm into all aspects of the week as a way to shape the tone of the symposium, and make it a place to which participants wanted to return.

Mity considered MICS as an opportunity to recharge his and other director's "batteries."⁵³¹ Even though the guest conductors seemed like the main draw to MICS, several participants note that they really were coming for Mity. Reynolds remembers his inspiring presence, and that people looked for his energy and spirit to be rejuvenated during the summer.⁵³² He was the spiritual center of the symposium, the one circling the room at the Rueb 'N' Stein to make everyone feel welcome and supported.⁵³³ Participants found his personality magnetic, but they were also drawn to his strong musicianship and resolute enthusiasm.⁵³⁴

Over the fourteen years that MICS was held at St. Olaf College, it built a reputation as a sanctuary in which a conductor could get solid conducting advice in a healthy, noncompetitive and supportive environment.⁵³⁵ As with his horn teaching, Mity's philosophy for MICS was to receive people where they were and help them

⁵²⁹ Jackson, interview, 2016.

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

⁵³¹ Reynolds, interview, 2016.

⁵³² Ibid.

⁵³³ Thompson, interview, 2017.

⁵³⁴ Webb, interview, 2016.

⁵³⁵ Jackson, interview, 2016.

improve.⁵³⁶ This approach helped to build a sense of collegiality and community, which was a primary goal in all Mity's ensembles and projects.

MICS also echoed elements of Mity's programming philosophy. Participants discovered new music and learned to appreciate the core repertoire.⁵³⁷ During the week, each participant and guest conductor submitted a list containing their favorite opener, closer, biggie, quiet tune, dance, march, suite, musical, best new work, and solo with band.⁵³⁸ On the last day, a student helper compiled the lists and handed out a copy to everyone, in order that participants (including Mity) left with extensive repertoire lists.

Mity also used the reputation of MICS and the guest conductors featured there to help launch the Minnesota Band Director's Association Conference in the summer of 1992. This joint venture continued for a second year in 1993, which also coincided with the final year of MICS.

MICS filled a professional development void for band directors. Continued attempts were made by CBDNA to establish a national conducting symposium, but eventually the association favored supporting regional symposia. MICS found success in the upper Midwest region as a venue in which conductors received high-level coaching in a supportive and welcoming environment, and it eventually began attracting participants nationally. By opening up MICS to conductors teaching at all levels, Mity helped to connect the larger music community in Minnesota and the Midwest at a time when there were few venues for conductors to gather and share ideas.

⁵³⁶ Thompson, interview, 2017.

⁵³⁷ Bruce Perkins, e-mail to author, January 21, 2017.

⁵³⁸ These categories reflected Mity's own programming.

CHAPTER 5

MINNESOTA SYMPHONIC WINDS

Mity always kept his ear to the ground for innovations in the band world; he was inquisitive and wanted to be involved. As school band programs grew during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, he noticed that more and more instrumentalists were left without a place to perform after they graduated high school or college. Mity often remarked,

A vocalist in the same situation can go sing in a church choir, but most churches, as a rule, do not have bands, and the opportunities to play in other places are few.⁵³⁹

In the late 1970s, there were only a handful of community bands in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area: Robinsdale, St. Louis Park, Roseville, and the Medalist Concert Band of Bloomington.⁵⁴⁰ (In contrast, there are now well over two hundred community bands in the state of Minnesota).⁵⁴¹ It was during this time that community bands started growing in popularity. Directors and musicians began rediscovering the medium as an outlet to perform, and Mity (of course) wanted in on the action.

The most notable community band during the time was the Northshore Concert Band, directed by John Paynter. Mity became familiar with the Northshore Concert Band through his connections to Paynter, and the band was the model from which he built his own community band in Minnesota.⁵⁴²

⁵³⁹ Sharon Schmickle, "Symphonic Winds waft over Richfield," *Minneapolis Star*, October 29, 1981.

⁵⁴⁰ Webb, interview, 2016.

⁵⁴¹ Oliver Towne, "St. Olaf's 'Mity' Johnson still beats drum for community bands," unknown newspaper, Johnson private collection.

⁵⁴² Miles Johnson to members of Minnesota Symphonic Winds, 1982, William Webb private collection.

Mity was not the only one who had an interest in starting a community band. In the late 1970s, a group of St. Olaf Band alumni got together in each other's basements to play because they missed performing in a group.⁵⁴³ Requests from former students to start an official ensemble, combined with Mity's own sense of obligation to facilitate performance opportunities for adult instrumentalists, led to a series of meetings to explore the possibility of forming a community band.⁵⁴⁴

At these early meetings, it was decided that the group would establish an ensemble that "is high class and plays high class music."⁵⁴⁵ In other words, the ensemble would explore serious repertoire rather than light entertainment music and novelty pieces, which were more typical of community bands at the time. The ensemble would serve to both challenge musicians and provide them with a supportive music-making community.⁵⁴⁶ For the former St. Olaf Band members, the ensemble would be the closest thing they could get to the band of their college days.

On March 6, 1979, after months of planning, the Twin Cities Adult Band gathered for their first rehearsal at Burnsville High School with forty-seven musicians.⁵⁴⁷ During the early years, the band faced many difficulties in finding practice and performing venues, keeping a consistent roster of musicians, and finding funding. There were musicians who attended rehearsals and were quickly driven away by how serious the ensemble was about the music.⁵⁴⁸ The other difficulty that the band faced was what to call itself. In the planning meetings, Mity did not want the group to be

⁵⁴³ Schmickle, "Symphonic Winds waft over Richfield."

⁵⁴⁴ Webb, interview, 2016.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁶ Schmickle, "Symphonic Winds waft over Richfield."

⁵⁴⁷ Webb, interview, 2016.

⁵⁴⁸ Schmickle, "Symphonic Winds waft over Richfield."

limited to only a Minneapolis-St. Paul group, particularly because Mity did not even live in the Twin Cities.⁵⁴⁹ Instead he wanted to broaden the scope and reach of the ensemble in the state. He also did not like the name “concert band” or even “band” because he felt it was not specific enough. William Webb, band director at Spring Lake Park High School, suggested the name Symphonic Winds—a title used infrequently during the late 1970s. Because of Mity’s inclination to be forward-looking, he liked it and the group became the Minnesota Symphonic Winds (MSW).

Finding a rehearsal space was the ensemble’s next challenge. Mity was able to secure Burnsville High School as a rehearsal spot for the first two seasons. However, the onerous drive down to Burnsville (an outer-ring suburb) led to inconsistent attendance. To make sure seats were filled, Mity found himself making calls for last-minute replacements.⁵⁵⁰ In order to build the ensemble and achieve high-quality musicianship, Mity needed to change the venue.

In September of 1981, just in time for the beginning of their third season, MSW moved its rehearsals to Richfield Middle School—a much more accessible venue.⁵⁵¹ In January of 1981, Richfield began exploring the possibility of funding a community band and community theater through the city recreation department.⁵⁵² Claude and Debi Benson, residents of Richfield and members of MSW, brought this information to Mity. It seemed like the perfect solution—MSW needed a rehearsal space, and Richfield wanted a community band. The terms of the contract were that MSW would be provided

⁵⁴⁹ Webb, interview, 2016.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁵¹ Schmickle, “Symphonic Winds waft over Richfield.”

⁵⁵² Ibid.

with a free practice space and a five hundred dollar stipend from the city recreation budget. In return, the band would provide two free concerts each winter.⁵⁵³

The ensemble performed concerts around the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area in addition to their two Richfield concerts, including their annual season opener at Grace Lutheran Church in Wayzata, Minnesota. Mity hoped that the facilities at Richfield (both at the middle school and high school) would provide acoustics to suit the ensemble's needs; however, by the beginning of the 1983-84 season, the ensemble was already searching for alternative rehearsal sites.⁵⁵⁴ Because the band director at Richfield did not participate in MSW, there were numerous miscommunications regarding rehearsals and equipment. In addition, the city of Richfield revoked the ensemble's funding stipend amidst budget cuts.

Mity turned to William Webb, who had been serving as the ensemble's president starting in 1984, to find a new rehearsal space. Fortunately, Webb was hired as the band director at Edina High School in 1986, and with permission from the superintendent, opened the doors of the Edina High School band room to MSW.⁵⁵⁵ With the move to Edina, Webb could help Mity manage all the equipment needs, provide full use of the Edina band's music library, and set up the space for Wednesday night practices.⁵⁵⁶ In thanks for Webb's generosity, Mity made him the Associate Conductor of MSW.

Funding was another early challenge for the band. Each band member paid ten dollars in dues, which barely covered the director's stipend, music purchases, rehearsal

⁵⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁴ Mike Morris to members of Minnesota Symphonic Winds, 1983, William Webb private collection.

⁵⁵⁵ MSW continues to rehearse at Edina High School today.

⁵⁵⁶ Webb, interview, 2016.

hall maintenance, and costs of moving equipment to performance sites.⁵⁵⁷ During its debut year, the band found funding from the Selmer Corporation, as part of a brief pilot program that provided one thousand dollar startup grants to community bands.⁵⁵⁸ The Selmer grant was modest, but it was enough to get the band up and running.⁵⁵⁹ Unfortunately, the ensemble was unable to renew this grant and struggled to continue to find other sources of funding; yet somehow, under Mity's leadership, they continued to end each season in the black.⁵⁶⁰

After losing funding from the city of Richfield, Mity asked the band for solutions. In response, two members (Gregg Isaacson and Roxanne Seidel) stepped forward with a plan. Isaacson used his background as an attorney to compile the legal papers to make MSW a charitable organization in 1985.⁵⁶¹ Seidel created a multipage fundraising strategy. By becoming a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, the ensemble could begin exploring alternative fundraising strategies. In the end, while the group received some corporate donations over the years through their non-profit status, most funds were raised from ticket sales and requests for donations during concerts.⁵⁶²

In the 1984-85 season, as funding began to stabilize, a new audition policy was put into place to help stabilize the personnel of the band. Initially, the group had been non-auditioned. The new policy required an audition, but also asked for a full-year

⁵⁵⁷ Becky Monson to members of Minnesota Symphonic Winds, August 14, 1982, William Webb private collection; MSW Fundraising Package, 1985, William Webb private collection.

⁵⁵⁸ "Community bands to play here," *Northfield News* (Northfield, MN), November 22, 1979.

⁵⁵⁹ Webb, interview, 2016.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶¹ MSW Fundraising package.

⁵⁶² Minnesota Symphonic Winds Spring Concert (program), May 10, 1987, William Webb private collection.

commitment from musicians rather than a per concert commitment, with seventy-five percent or better concert attendance required.⁵⁶³ The personnel management was handed off to the section leaders and a personnel committee was established to help fill vacant seats with input from Mity and the section leaders. The personnel needs of the band were made known to the rest of the band, so they could recruit by word-of-mouth, along with advertisements in local bulletins.⁵⁶⁴

Initially MSW started with just forty-seven musicians—most of whom were St. Olaf Band alumni. By the time the group moved to Richfield two years later, the group had expanded to seventy-six musicians with more than half unaffiliated with St. Olaf.⁵⁶⁵ Mity was the draw for the group; his statewide reputation associated him, and the group, with high-quality music.⁵⁶⁶

Mity plugged into the existing St. Olaf Band alumni network and the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area music community to build a reputable community band and fulfill an area need. He believed the ensemble was more than just a group to make music; it was a community.⁵⁶⁷ This point was reiterated in his 1984 letter to the band in which he asks the band to “look around and help to find members that would fit into our ensemble, not only from a musical standpoint but also from a personal and social standpoint.”⁵⁶⁸ Similarly to MICS, band directors in the area joined MSW as a

⁵⁶³ William Webb & Miles Johnson to 1985-1986 Minnesota Symphonic Winds members, 1985, William Webb private collection.

⁵⁶⁴ Minnesota Symphonic Winds: Participation Policies and Practices, Feb 16, 1983, William Webb private collection.

⁵⁶⁵ Schmickle, “Symphonic Winds waft over Richfield.”

⁵⁶⁶ Webb, interview, 2016.

⁵⁶⁷ “[Mity] insisted on [MSW] being fun, sometimes to the detriment of being good.” Jeff Seidel, e-mail to author, January 31, 2017.

⁵⁶⁸ Miles Johnson to MSW members, 1984, William Webb private collection.

way to recharge themselves and get a weekly conducting lesson from watching Mity lead the band.⁵⁶⁹

Mity needed the band as much as they needed him to keep MSW running. With his commitments at St. Olaf College and numerous guest conducting engagements, he became unable to manage the administrative tasks of MSW. Mity's solution was to establish band officers who also served as the ensemble's board. These members took care of the week-to-week operations of the band and drew on the diverse talents of the ensemble's members.

Mity valued the band members' opinions and often took their recommendations into account.⁵⁷⁰ He believed in the community aspect of the band, which is what he trusted would motivate members to invest meaningful time and effort. On multiple occasions, he sent a questionnaire to the band along with an end-of-the-year letter asking members to list "music that you've always wanted to play."⁵⁷¹ The list broke the choices into Mity's usual programming categories: openers, closers, biggies, quiet tunes, dances, marches, musicals, suites, solos with band, best new works, and small ensemble works. This was Mity's way of not only involving the band in the programming and decision-making, but also finding new music that excited them.

In the early years of the band, Mity pursued concert opportunities that served to establish the ensemble in the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Until it built name recognition, it often performed with another ensemble or at churches or schools where

⁵⁶⁹ Webb, interview, 2016.

⁵⁷⁰ William Webb to Minnesota Symphonic Winds members, 1984, William Webb private collection.

⁵⁷¹ Miles Johnson to MSW members, 1984.

there was a built-in audience.⁵⁷² The ensemble's first performance occurred on May 5, 1979, at the St. Olaf College Band Day—only two months after the first rehearsal.⁵⁷³ Performing on the same concert as the St. Olaf Band and the Festival Band, the Twin Cities Adult Band's debut (the group had not yet decided on its official name) was well attended by an enthusiastic audience.

For the group's next concert on December 2, 1979, it shared the stage with Earl Benson and the Medalist Concert Band of Bloomington, Minnesota. Formed in 1968, the Medalist Concert Band was one of the oldest community bands in the Twin Cities.⁵⁷⁴ For this concert, both groups traveled to St. Olaf College and performed in the college's chapel, Boe Memorial Chapel.

Because of Mity's friendship with Earl Benson, the two adult community bands continued to collaborate throughout the years. In addition to a second joint concert the following year, Mity and Benson developed a community band retreat at Cragun's Conference Center/Resort in Brainerd, Minnesota. The retreat was an opportunity for several community bands to gather, socialize, and share music with each other. The first conference was held April 19-20, 1986.⁵⁷⁵ In addition to MSW and the Medalist band, the Lakewood Jazz Band directed by John Zdechlik attended the retreat. The event was such a success that it was held two additional times, in 1987 and 1990.

As the reputation of MSW began to grow, more performance opportunities arose. In 1985, the ensemble was featured on Minnesota Public Radio's program "Live from

⁵⁷² Webb, interview, 2016.

⁵⁷³ Band Day (program), May 5, 1979, Accession number 0, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

⁵⁷⁴ "Community bands to play here."

⁵⁷⁵ Cragun's Band Retreat: Schedule of Events, 1986, William Webb private collection.

the Landmark.”⁵⁷⁶ The performance proved so successful that MSW was invited back in 1986. In 1991, the band was asked to perform at the Luzern Community Band Festival in Switzerland. In celebration of Luzern’s seven hundredth anniversary, the city worked with Don Caneva and the World of Music Festivals to plan a festival of American community bands.⁵⁷⁷ Caneva originally heard of MSW through William Webb, and with Mity’s permission, Webb helped put together a viable ensemble to travel to Switzerland. During the five-day international festival, MSW joined the Allentown Band, the Arlington Wind Symphony, the Coastal Communities Concert Band, and the San Jose College Wind Ensemble in performances around Luzern.

As was the case with the St. Olaf Band, Mity’s creative concert programming carried into MSW. One example was the Minnesota Composers Concert in February 1994. Mity was proud of local composers and actively performed their music and promoted their careers.⁵⁷⁸ For this concert, he contacted six composers from around Minnesota: John Zdechlik, Timothy Mahr, Frank Bencriscutto, John Paulson, Libby Larson, and J. Robert Hanson.⁵⁷⁹ The ensemble reserved O’Shaughnessy Auditorium—one of Minneapolis-St. Paul’s premier arts venues—for a concert that was broadcast by Minnesota Public Radio.⁵⁸⁰ Mity did not appear on stage at all during the performance, instead inviting the composers to conduct their own pieces.

⁵⁷⁶ Webb, interview, 2016.

⁵⁷⁷ Webb, interview, 2016; Luzern Community Band Festival program, 1991, William Webb private collection.

⁵⁷⁸ Webb, interview, 2016.

⁵⁷⁹ Minnesota Composers Concert (program), February 20, 1994, Accession number 1528, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

⁵⁸⁰ Webb, interview, 2016.

To celebrate MSW's 20th anniversary, Mity commissioned a substantial work for band. He sought out Daniel Kallman, a Minnesota composer and a fellow resident of Northfield. Kallman wrote "Yankee Doodling: A Young Person's Guide to the Concert Band." This piece served as the concert band equivalent to Benjamin Britten's "Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra." It was a substantial work of almost thirty minutes, for which Kallman was paid seven thousand dollars. MSW premiered the piece at its May 8, 1999 concert, which also served as Mity's retirement concert.

Though the piece was written for Mity as much as for MSW, the effects of Alzheimer's were beginning to manifest in Mity's life. The markings on the score showed that he had studied it with incredible detail. There were even Mity's characteristically comical markings: "Speed up, Mity!" and "Don't you dare let them drag here."⁵⁸¹ But regardless of how much he studied the score, each time he stepped on the podium, he seemed to be seeing the music for the first time.⁵⁸² For the premiere, Mity turned to Associate Conductor, William Webb, to lead the band. Webb had seen Mity's Alzheimer's symptoms appearing more frequently, and though he was initially reluctant to conduct the premiere of a piece that was written for Mity, he eventually recognized it as the best way to support him.⁵⁸³

At Mity's retirement celebration, he passed the baton to Timothy Mahr, who had also followed Mity as the conductor of the St. Olaf Band after Mity's recent retirement. By establishing MSW, Mity created a high-level performance opportunity for adult musicians in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Building strong musical communities was

⁵⁸¹ Ibid.

⁵⁸² Ibid.

⁵⁸³ Ibid.

one of Mity's gifts, and MSW was no exception. Mity drew on the individual abilities and interests of the ensemble's members, and collaborated with other community ensembles (through joint concerts and retreats) to bolster the regional musical community. Under Mity's leadership, MSW became an ensemble that was respected around the Minneapolis-St. Paul area and by bandleaders across the United States. During the first twenty years of the ensemble, Mity laid the foundation for the group's continued success under Mahr.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Legacy

Over the course of his career, Miles Johnson received numerous recognitions for excellence in music education. He was named one of America's Ten Outstanding Music Educators (1973) by *School Musician Magazine*,⁵⁸⁴ honored by Minnesota governors twice with "Miles Johnson Day" (May 22, 1987 and April 17, 1994),⁵⁸⁵ named Minnesota Music Educators Association's Music Educator of the Year (1987),⁵⁸⁶ awarded an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts, honoris causa, from Concordia College (1991),⁵⁸⁷ granted honorary membership in Phi Beta Kappa, Delta of Minnesota (1992),⁵⁸⁸ recognized with a Certificate of Appreciation by Luther College for contributions to liberal arts colleges (1994),⁵⁸⁹ and awarded the Concordia College Alumni Achievement Award (1997).⁵⁹⁰ He was also appointed to the chairs of the new music committee and conducting symposium committee in the CBDNA, as well as elected President of the North Central Division of the organization from 1989-91. As a

⁵⁸⁴ "Miles Johnson honored at St. Olaf."

⁵⁸⁵ "Miles 'Mity' Johnson directed St. Olaf Band for 37 years," 2001, Accession number 3736, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

⁵⁸⁶ "1987 MMEA Music Educators of the Year," unknown magazine, October 1987, Johnson private collection.

⁵⁸⁷ Paul J. Dovre to Miles Johnson, October 16, 1991, Johnson private collection.

⁵⁸⁸ A nomination of Professor Miles H. Johnson for honorary membership in Phi Beta Kappa, Delta of Minnesota, March 30, 1992, Johnson private collection.

⁵⁸⁹ Certificate of Appreciation, April 27, 1994, Johnson private collection.

⁵⁹⁰ Paul J. Dovre to Miles Johnson, May 15, 1997, Johnson private collection.

guest conductor, he conducted thirty All-State Bands in twenty-five different states, in addition to numerous summer camps and band festivals.⁵⁹¹

Mity had a pulse on bands in Minnesota and across the country. He wanted to be at the forefront of the concert band movement, regionally, nationally, and internationally. Through his connections to professional organizations and the longevity of his career at St. Olaf College, Mity contributed to the evolution of the concert band through his tours, programming, conducting pedagogy, and adult community band support. Mity had the freedom to create novel programs, experiment with performance spaces and styles, and design the course that the St. Olaf Band would follow.⁵⁹² He acknowledged the influence of the Christiansen family in his musical career: Paul J. gave him needed training at Concordia, and Olaf gave him support at St. Olaf College.

Mity's legacy continues in St. Olaf Band rehearsals and MSW warm-ups. Timothy Mahr shares stories about Mity to both ensembles to maintain a connection to the bands' histories. He built a sense of tradition and pride in the St. Olaf Band that has been a driving force in the ensemble since he began in 1957.⁵⁹³ One of Mity's greatest contributions to the St. Olaf Band was increasing support for both domestic and international tours. Until Mity arrived at St. Olaf College, the band had traveled internationally only once in 1906. After Mity led the band to Norway in 1966, the band has continued to travel internationally every four years. By bringing the St. Olaf Band to various sites during the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, Mity also extended his influence to school bands internationally. Mity introduced musicians around the world to

⁵⁹¹ Miles Harlan Johnson Concordia honorary doctorate proclamation.

⁵⁹² "Band, Johnson hear tributes," *Northfield News* (Northfield, MN) May 26, 1987.

⁵⁹³ Pesola, interview, 2017.

the sound of a musical and virtuosic concert band, with rich programming that featured new music at a time when the band repertoire was expanding and changing rapidly. In Norway alone, Mity's influence on concert bands is significant. Odd Terje Lysebo credits Mity with contributing to the transformation of Norwegian bands: "With your guest conducting and lecturing, you have added a new dimension to the Norwegian band movement."⁵⁹⁴

In his concert programming, Mity achieved a balance that promoted and featured new works for concert band while respecting the traditional band repertoire. He worked to say something unique with each program, taking musicians and audiences on a musical and emotional journey.⁵⁹⁵ His signature themed second halves blended other art forms, including theater and dance, into the traditional band concert—just another way Mity created connections between his musicians and the audience. His unique approach to programming, as John Paynter wrote after the St. Olaf Band's performance at the 1987 CBDNA national conference, "offered the members of this group a chance to see another way of doing something productive and impressive with college bands."⁵⁹⁶

His exploration of different musical avenues led to the founding of MICS and MSW. Mity's legacy in MICS is rooted in the supportive atmosphere that he created as much as quality teaching he recruited from nationally recognized clinicians. The non-competitive, nurturing environment helped to create a space where band conductors, from all teaching levels, wanted to come back to year after year. MICS contributed to the band profession by giving space and time for conductors to develop technical skills

⁵⁹⁴ Odd Terje Lysebo to Miles Johnson, May 7, 1982, Johnson private collection.

⁵⁹⁵ Jackson, interview, 2016.

⁵⁹⁶ John P. Paynter to Miles Johnson, April 7, 1987, Johnson private collection.

and musicianship, but also a sense of collegiality and community at a time when there were few such opportunities.

At the time of writing, many MSW charter members continue to perform with the ensemble. In these musicians, as well as many of Mity's former St. Olaf College students, there is a reverence for their teacher. Some members of MSW played under Mity's baton for more than two decades.⁵⁹⁷ The success of MSW after Mity's retirement reflects the strength of the ensemble he founded. In 2008, MSW performed at the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic. The following year, the John Philip Sousa Foundation recognized the ensemble's excellence by awarding it the Sudler Sliver Scroll. Without Mity's leadership, these two accomplishments would not have been possible.

Except for three years in Hawley, Mity spent his entire career at St. Olaf College. At one point, John Paynter asked Mity to apply for the University of Wisconsin-Madison Director of Bands position, but Mity had no interest.⁵⁹⁸ He knew that he had a special "gig" at St. Olaf. He loved his students and colleagues.⁵⁹⁹ His position at St. Olaf provided him with the opportunity to travel nationally and internationally with the St. Olaf Band. It also offered him the flexibility he needed to serve as a guest conductor. Besides the professional benefits of staying at St. Olaf, Mity also thought of his family. The Northfield community was a good place to raise three children. Myrna had founded the Northfield Arts Guild and wanted to carry on its mission, as well as continue to

⁵⁹⁷ Webb, interview, 2016.

⁵⁹⁸ Sigurd Johnson, interview, 2017.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid.

direct and act in local theater productions. It was clear to Mity that going to a bigger school could not guarantee to improve his life.⁶⁰⁰

Despite the awards and innovations that Mity brought to the band profession, his greatest legacy is the support that he provided to students and fellow conductors. He inspired students to pursue their dreams and become their best selves, even if they only recognized it in retrospect.⁶⁰¹ These moments abound in recollections about Mity's teaching and his contributions to clinics, festivals, and summer camps. He demonstrated unwavering concern for the developing talents of young musicians. For Mallory Thompson, it "always meant so much to her that he as an elder statesman was a champion of younger talent."⁶⁰²

His support for the early career of Timothy Mahr is another exemplary instance of his mentoring. Mity not only influenced Mahr through their teacher-student relationship, but also by championing Mahr's compositions. Mahr's first wind band composition, *Fanfare and Grand March*, received its premiere under Mity's baton. Mity went on to premiere three other works by Mahr during the 1980s and early 1990s, and he featured them at several high-profile convention performances of the St. Olaf Band, including their 1987 performance at the CBDNA national conference. Mity also invited Mahr to guest conduct the St. Olaf Band at Homecoming, the Festival of Bands, and once while Mity took a sabbatical before Mahr took over the St. Olaf Band himself following Mity's retirement.⁶⁰³

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁰¹ Moe Miranda, interview, 2017.

⁶⁰² Thompson, interview, 2017.

⁶⁰³ St. Olaf Band concert program collection, Accession number 0, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

Mity's leadership style at times resembled an athletic coach calling the plays.⁶⁰⁴ As a teacher, Mity gave instructions that motivated students to not only fix technical problems, but dig deeper and find more understanding and meaning, more purpose in their music-making. His charisma made him seem larger than life.⁶⁰⁵ He would walk into a room and the spirit of the room changed immediately. H. Robert Reynolds remembers that "you couldn't be in the same room as him and not feel great."⁶⁰⁶ Never afraid to extend a hand in greeting, Mity introduced himself to strangers not because he wanted anything out of it, but rather because "he just wanted to connect. There wasn't an agenda."⁶⁰⁷

As a young conductor, Mallory Thompson admired Mity's ability to care for others and his desire to keep learning. He walked around gatherings like the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic and spent "serious, focused, very intense time" with each person he met, learning everything he could about them.⁶⁰⁸ This attention to people, in addition to his high-level musicianship, inspired many young conductors.⁶⁰⁹

Mity knew who he was, he didn't apologize for who he was. He knew what his priorities were. He always wanted to learn, he stayed true to his roots, and his priorities as a human and his interest in people and I cannot think of a more powerful model of those things in this business.⁶¹⁰

Though energetic and enthusiastic, Mity also showed sincerity and humility both on and off the podium. He believed that sincerity on the podium produced sincere

⁶⁰⁴ Webb, interview, 2016.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁶ Reynolds, interview, 2016.

⁶⁰⁷ Webb, interview, 2016.

⁶⁰⁸ Thompson, interview, 2017.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid.

musicmaking.⁶¹¹ As for humility, Mity believed that people should just do the “right stuff.”⁶¹² He once told William Webb, “What an incredible world this would be if we could just do things and it wouldn’t matter who got the credit.”⁶¹³ Selflessness in his teaching and music making characterized Mity throughout his life.

Mity’s career would not have been what it was without his wife Myrna.⁶¹⁴ They acted as a duo. Together they built the St. Olaf Band into a community. Russell Pesola notes that “it became a family thing.”⁶¹⁵ In addition to welcoming band members into the Johnson home and making countless lasagnas, Myrna also modeled how the band should behave.⁶¹⁶ She traveled along on every tour and sat at the front of the bus knitting sweaters for the band students. She also talked with the band members about what she observed, what she liked or disliked about their performances, and gave advice about making the music better.⁶¹⁷

Mity influenced not only his students but also the broader band world through various means, including his unique programming, his horn performances and teaching, and his leadership in MICS and MSW. As a professional horn performer and former student of Mity’s, Sharon Moe includes both Johnsons amongst the list of people who have been the great influences in her life: “[her] husband, Leonard Bernstein, [her] family, Leopold Stokowski, and Mity and Myrna.”⁶¹⁸ Professionally, Mity received congratulations and accolades from top musicians and educators including Harry

⁶¹¹ Jackson, interview, 2016.

⁶¹² Webb, interview, 2016.

⁶¹³ Ibid.

⁶¹⁴ Ferguson, interview, 2017.

⁶¹⁵ Pesola, interview, 2017.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid.

⁶¹⁸ Moe Miranda, interview, 2017.

Begian, Frank Bencriscutto, Henry Charles Smith, Frederick Fennell, Karl Holvik, Imogen Holst, James Howe, Neil Kjos, Jr., Odd Terje Lysebo, Timothy Mahr, James Neilson, Vaclav Nelhybel, John Paynter, H. Robert Reynolds, Trevor Sharpe, Nels Vogel, and John Zdechlik.

To celebrate Mity's legacy at St. Olaf College, a steering committee gathered in 1988 to begin planning an endowment. The committee scheduled the launch of the endowment to coincide with the St. Olaf Band's 100th Anniversary celebration at the 1990 St. Olaf Band Homecoming concert.⁶¹⁹ They believed that it should be named after Mity and called it the Miles Johnson Endowment. Initially the committee set the goal at one hundred thousand dollars,⁶²⁰ but they increased the amount after an anonymous donor agreed to match any endowment and capital gifts given to St. Olaf College after May 1, 1989 and before December 31, 1990.⁶²¹ In order to maximize giving, the committee of twenty-six alumni and friends of the band each contacted twelve band alumni over the phone and wrote many more letters.⁶²²

Before the official launch of the endowment, twenty-seven thousand dollars had already been raised from non-band alumni who wanted to support the cause.⁶²³ After the launch, fundraising for the endowment found success with alumni contributing at all

⁶¹⁹ Dan Jorgensen to Roxanne Seidel, July 11, 1988, Accession number 1556, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

⁶²⁰ The Miles Johnson Endowment Fund (flier), 1990, Johnson private collection.

⁶²¹ Sharon Moe Miranda to St. Olaf Band Alumni and Friends, January 15, 1990, Johnson private collection.

⁶²² Sharon Moe Miranda to Miles Johnson Steering Committee, October 17, 1989, Accession number 1556, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

⁶²³ Minutes for Miles Johnson Endowment Committee, September 22, 1989, Accession number 1556, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

levels. By the end of August 1990—just shy of the one-year launch anniversary—\$251,689.80 had been raised for the Miles Johnson Endowment.⁶²⁴

Because the committee set up the endowment to honor Mity, it supports many of the causes he championed during his career. Approximately half the endowment's earnings provide scholarships to sophomore, junior, and senior members of the St. Olaf Band, based on talent and merit as recommended by the conductor of the St. Olaf Band.⁶²⁵ In the fall of 1993, the first recipients of the Miles Johnson Endowment Scholarship received their awards. Claire Lorence and Michelle VanDesteege both received awards in the amount of two thousand five hundred dollars.⁶²⁶ Today, thirty students receive awards each year that vary in amount.⁶²⁷ Other funds from the endowment have been used to commission new works for band, pay for professional recordings of the St. Olaf Band, and provide library materials, such as scores, recordings, textbooks, videos, and magazine subscriptions.

Implications of the Study

This research has focused on a historical and biographical study of Miles “Mity” Johnson and the impact his career made on the band and music education professions.

⁶²⁴ Jim Enestvedt to Dan Jorgensen and Jim Erickson, August 14, 1990, Accession number 1556, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

⁶²⁵ The Miles Johnson Endowment, Accession number 1556, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

⁶²⁶ Carolyn Jennings to Claire Lorence, October 12, 1993, Accession number 2480, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota; Carolyn Jennings to Michelle VanDesteege, October 12, 1993, Accession number 2480, Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

⁶²⁷ St. Olaf Band Winter Tour (program), 2017, in author's possession.

Mity's early life influenced his teaching at St. Olaf College and his other professional pursuits. His determined nature, inherited from his mother, manifested in Mity seeking out a variety of performance opportunities for himself. He continued to seek out performance experiences for his students at St. Olaf College including Horn Club, Chamber Band, Pop Concerts, and Cathedral Concerts, along with featuring student conductors, composers, and soloists.

The community support that he received both in Elbow Lake and at Concordia College planted the seeds for Mity's community-driven teaching philosophy. His own experience playing in a college band shaped his thoughts on student leadership and touring. Paul J. Christiansen's influence led Mity to establish a culture of singing with the St. Olaf Band, and to experiment with programming and spatial placement of musicians around the performance space.

By keeping a pulse on new ideas in the field (especially through his involvement in CBDNA), Mity recognized a need for more conducting training opportunities, which led him to establish the Minnesota Instrumental Conducting Symposium. Mity's goal was to create a rigorous musical experience in a non-competitive, supportive environment. Bringing in nationally-recognized clinicians attracted conductors teaching at every level from around the country to Minnesota each summer. Yet, it was Mity's enthusiasm and energy that kept conductors returning each year and that helped to bring recognition to MICS as a major early conducting symposium.

Mity found similar success establishing the Minnesota Symphonic Winds. He saw a need for an adult community band committed to quality music making, for both audiences and musicians in the St. Paul-Minneapolis metropolitan area. In addition to

serving as a socially-supportive community to members of the ensemble, the group provided a high-level concert band experience at a time when such groups did not widely exist. In just over ten years, MSW was featured multiple times on Minnesota Public Radio and made its international debut performing at the Luzern Community Band Festival.

Mity's unique style of programming revealed a high-quality artistry that evolved throughout his career. When he arrived at St. Olaf College, Mity followed a more traditional approach to programming concerts, with an emphasis on variety; he included multiple genres and styles, along with a mixture of full band pieces and student soloist features. As he sought additional performance opportunities for his students, his programming adjusted to fit specific venues. Eventually, Mity's innovations in programming culminated in the themed second half program. These programs pushed the boundaries of how a band concert should look and sound, and Mity developed new approaches to engage both the musicians and audience with the music and each other. Through clinic presentations, as well as tours and conference performances with the St. Olaf Band, Mity spread his programming ideas throughout Minnesota and nation-wide.

During his tenure as conductor of the St. Olaf Band, Mity increased the technical and musical abilities of the band. A combination of his high-level musicianship, enthusiasm, and community-building pushed students in the band to improve. Annual domestic tours gave students an opportunity to thoroughly learn a program and see growth over time. Mity used additional performance venues, more challenging programs, and solo features to highlight the strengths of the band.

Mity's reputation as a horn recitalist and teacher attracted top student musicians to St. Olaf College. As his horn studio grew, Mity founded the St. Olaf Horn Club before large horn ensembles were common. Like the band, the Horn Club provided students with unique performance experiences, touring opportunities, and mentoring from Mity.

The St. Olaf Band tours left a mark on the places it performed through formal evening concerts, school convocations, and state and national conventions. The band's international tours to Europe exposed many countries to the high-level of performance and new music of the American concert band. Of the countries visited on the band's eight international and work-study tours, Norway felt the greatest influence. In addition to the tours, Mity's work guest conducting and providing clinics raised the level of performance of Norwegian concert bands.

Furthermore, Mity contributed to the band profession through his work with state and national organizations. His work with CBDNA helped establish conducting symposia for band conductors, which eventually led to MICS. His service as the North Central Division President benefited band directors more regionally. Within Minnesota, Mity's work in establishing the Minnesota Band Directors Association serves as one of his lasting contributions to music education in the state.

This study highlights many of Mity's professional career developments in the field of instrumental music, but it also serves to emphasize the quality of his character. Mity's influence in building community, supporting students and colleagues, and selflessly giving his time and expertise enabled him to attract people to MICS, MSW,

and St. Olaf College, where he provided students and colleagues meaningful learning experiences through music.

Suggestions for Further Study

Historical biographies that chronicle the life and accomplishments of collegiate band directors have grown over the past several decades. More work remains to be done as this research expands to include significant leaders at a variety of institutions, including liberal arts colleges.

While a comprehensive history of MSW was beyond the scope of this study, a study focusing on the ensemble would add to the history of adult community bands in the country. MSW's history has almost doubled in years since Mity's retirement from the group. Under Timothy Mahr's leadership, the ensemble has continued to receive recognition as a leading community music ensemble.

Mity's programming method and philosophy served as another theme in this study, but a more in-depth exploration of his programming would add to the growing body of repertoire studies. Analysis of Mity's programming alongside that of collegiate directors at different types of institutions around the United States could reveal a range of programming trends during a period of great change in the wind band field.

Since the 1960s, conducting symposia have grown to serve an increasing need in band conductor training. Cody Gifford's 2010 study on the history of the CBDNA conducting symposium serves as a major study on the subject. More research focusing on the general scope, guest conductors, and clinic topics of early regional symposia, like

MICS, would help chronicle the movement's expansion to the wide offerings found today on college campuses.

APPENDIX A

European Tour Programs, 1966⁶²⁸

CONCERT WORKS

Variations on a Shaker Melody – Aaron Copland
Psalm 50 – F. Melius Christiansen, transcribed for band by Miles H. Johnson
Incantation and Dance – John Barnes Chance
Fantasia in G Major – Johann Sebastian Bach
Come, Soothing Death – Johann Sebastian Bach
O Sacred Head Now Wounded – Johann Sebastian Bach
Saterjentens Sontag – Ole Bull
Vaaren – Edvard Grieg
When Jesus Wept – William Schuman
Chester Overture for Band – William Schuman
Fanfare and Choral for Band – Egil Hovland
Festive Overture, Op. 96 – Dmitri Shostakovich
Lincolnshire Posy – Percy Grainger
Variants on a Medieval Tune – Norman Dello Joio
Concerto No. 4 in Eb for French Horn – Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

MARCHES

Stars and Stripes Forever – John Philip Sousa
Semper Fidelis – John Philip Sousa
Valdres – Johannes Hansen
Old Comrades – C. Teike
Colonel Bogey – Kenneth Alfred
The Wee MacGreegor – H.G. Amers
National Emblem – E.E. Bagley
Invercargill – Alexander Lithgow
Riders to the Flag – John Philip Sousa
March of Olympians – Walker
High School Cadets – John Philip Sousa
“76 Trombones,” from *Music Man* – Meredith Wilson

BROADWAY MUSICALS AND AMERICAN FOLK MUSIC

Cowboy Rhapsody – Morton Gould
My Fair Lady – Lerner and Loewe

⁶²⁸ Italics are the author's to follow modern conventions. All names, titles, and spellings are as they appear (with a few silent corrections) in the 1966 European Tour of the St. Olaf Band report by Fred Schmidt found in the Shaw-Olson Center for College History, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

The Irish Suite – Leroy Anderson
Porgy and Bess – George Gershwin
West Side Story – Leonard Bernstein
Sound of Music – Rodgers and Hammerstein
Mary Poppins – Richard and Robert Sherman
River Jordan – Maurice Whitney
Five American Folk Songs – Elie Siegmeister
“Hillbilly,” from *Americana* – Morton Gould

SOLOS AND ENSEMBLES

Irene Gubrud, soprano, with band accompaniment
Trumpet Trio
Brass Choir
Clarinet Choir
Jack Laumer, trumpet
Ronald Sell, French horn

MUSIC FOR THE CHURCH CONCERT

Fantasia in G Major – Johann Sebastian Bach
When Jesus Wept – William Schuman
Chester Overture for Band – William Schuman
Concerto No. 4 in Eb Major for French Horn, K. 495 – Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Vaaren – Edvard Grieg
Variants on a Medieval Tune – Norman Dello Joio
Music Festiva for Trumpets – Vaclav Nelhybel
Choral and Danza for Clarinet Choir – Vaclav Nelhybel
“Come Unto Me” from *The Messiah* – George Frederick Handel
Psalm 50 – F. Melius Christiansen, transcribed for band by Miles H. Johnson

MUSIC FOR THE AUDITORIUM CONCERT

Festive Overture, Op. 96 – Dmitri Shostakovich
When Jesus Wept – William Schuman
Chester Overture for Band – William Schuman
Concerto No. 4 in Eb Major for French Horn, K. 495 – Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Vaaren – Edvard Grieg
Lincolnshire Posy – Percy Grainger
Music Festiva for Trumpets – Vaclav Nelhybel
Choral and Danza for Clarinet Choir – Vaclav Nelhybel
Porgy and Bess – George Gershwin
Fanfare and Choral for Band – Egil Hovland

APPENDIX B

European Tour Programs, 1970⁶²⁹

CATHEDRAL CONCERT

Fantasia in G Major – Johann Sebastian Bach
When Jesus Wept – William Schuman
Chester Overture for Band – William Schuman
Two Chorales – Sigfrid Karg-Elert, arranged by Ross Hastings
Variations on a Medieval Tune – Norman Dello Joio

Intermission

Music for Posaunechor – written, arranged and edited for the church by German Baroque and contemporary composers – Bach, Franck, Praetorius, Schein, Ehmman, Kock, Zipp, Baudach, Schauss-flake and St. Olaf composers and arrangers – G. Winston Cassler and Miles H. Johnson
Toccatto and Fugue in D Minor – J.S. Bach, arranged by Erik Leidzen
Chorale: *O Bread of Life* – H. Isaak
Canzona per Sonare #3 – G. Gabrieli

FORMAL EVENING CONCERT

Overture for Band – Felix Mendelssohn
or
Festive Overture – Dmitri Shostakovich
When Jesus Wept – William Schuman
Chester Overture for Band – William Schuman
Music for Prague 1968 – Karel Husa
Introduction and Fanfare
Aria
Interlude
Toccatto and Chorale

Intermission

Variations on "America" – Charles Ives
Meditation – Gunther Schuller
Carmina Burana – Carl Orff, arranged by John Krance

Three Minute Intermission

⁶²⁹ Italics are the author's to follow modern conventions. All names, titles, and spellings are as they appear (with a few silent corrections) in a program draft found in the Johnson private collection.

“Window on America”

plus

Alte Kameraden – C. Teike

The Stars and Stripes Forever – John Philip Sousa

INFORMAL OUTDOOR CONCERT

American Salute – Morton Gould

Meditation – Gunther Schuller

Solo Number

Horn, piano, flute, or trombone (with band accompaniment)

Cowboy Rhapsody – Morton Gould

Lincolnshire Posy – Percy Grainger

Intermission

Bugler’s Holiday – Leroy Anderson

The Irish Suite – Leroy Anderson

plus

“Music from Broadway”

Porgy and Bess

West Side Story

Oliver

Hair

Music Man

State Fair

Oklahoma

plus

Dixieland Band

plus

“Marches of”

America

Germany

Austria

Czechoslovakia

Hungary

Italy

(Sousa, Teike, Blankenburg, Smetana, Strauss, etc.)

APPENDIX C

Themed Second Half Programs⁶³⁰

1970 – Window on America

Get Together
76 Trombones
Porgy and Bess
West Side Story
Leyenda
Big Spender
State Fair
2001: Space Odyssey

1971 – Color Contrasts Plus One

Fanfare for the Common Man – Aaron Copland
St. Anthony Chorale and Rondo – Joseph Haydn, arr. Robert Pearson
The Letter – Wayne Curson Thompson, arr. Steve Solum
Prelude and Fugue in C Minor – J.S. Bach, arr. Edward Volz
The Solitary Dancer – Warren Benson
The Fourth of July Pavanne – Maurice Ravel, arr. James Ployhar
Trittico (Allegro Marcato) – Vaclav Nelhybel

1972 – Stain Glass Window

Created – Kurt Westerberg, arr. for percussion by Bill Monson
Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor – Johann Sebastian Bach, arr. Erik Leidzen
Statement – Brent Heisinger
Prayer of Saint Gregory – Allan Hovhaness, arr. Miles H. Johnson
Selections from *Jesus Christ Superstar* – Tim Rice and Andrew L. Webber, arr.
Fredric J. Lewis
“Elsa’s Procession to the Cathedral,” from *Lohengrin* – Richard Wagner

1973 – Tis the Gift to Be Simple

Opening [Medley]
An American Folk Suite – Charles Gross
Variations on a Shaker Melody – Aaron Copland
Tiger Rag – Bob Haggart-Ray Bauduc
Black Is the Color of My True Love’s Hair – Elie Siegmeister
Four Scottish Dances – Malcolm Arnold, arr. John Paynter
Closing [Medley]

⁶³⁰ Italics are the author’s to follow modern conventions. All names, titles, and spellings are as they appear in the St. Olaf Band programs (with a few silent corrections).

1974 – Celebration

Opening – Music for the opening sequence selected from the following
composers: Edvard Grieg, George Gershwin, Jerry Bilik, Johannes
Brahms, Alec Wilder, Claude Debussy, Vaclav Nelhybel, Flor Peeters,
Gershwin Kingsley, John Philip Sousa, Scott Joplin, P. Tchaikowsky, H.
Owen Reed, Miles Johnson

Children's March – Percy Grainger

“Morning,” from *Peer Gynt Suite* – Edvard Grieg

Jubilee – Michael Hennagin

“Pines of the Appian Way,” from *Pines of Rome* – Ottorino Respighi, arr. Erik
Leidzen

1975 – An Afternoon in the Park

March: *American Patrol* – F. Meacham

March: *Ragged Rozey* – K. King

Waltz: *Tales from Vienna Woods* – J. Strauss

Ballad: *Danny Boy* – P. Grainger

Operetta: *H.M.S. Pinafore* – W. Gilbert and A. Sullivan

Overture: *The Barber of Seville* – G. Rossini

1976 – A Bicentennial Reflection [full concert program]

American Fanfare – Sharon Moe Miranda

New England Triptych – William Schuman

I. Be Glad Then, America

II. When Jesus Wept

III. Chester

Five Minute Intermission

Music of Stephen Foster

I. Camptown Races

II. My Old Kentucky Home

III. Oh, Susannah

Lincoln Portrait – Aaron Copland, trans. Walter Beeler

Five Minute Intermission

Chimes of Liberty – Edwin Franko Goldman

King Cotton – John Philip Sousa

Derivations for Clarinet and Jazz Band – Morton Gould

IV. Ride-Out

Interlude

Statement – Brent Heisinger

Interlude

Closing [Medley]

1978 – A Tchaikovsky Evening

March Slav, Op. 31 – Tchaikovsky-Laurendeau

None But the Lonely Heart – Tchaikovsky-Smith

Dance of the Mirlitons – Tchaikovsky-Hindsley

“Waltz of the Flowers,” from the *Nutcracker Suite* – Tchaikovsky-Hindsley

Overture: 1812 – Tchaikovsky-Lake

1979 – A Wagner Festival

1980 – British Band Classics [full concert program]

Moorside March – Gustav Holst

Ye Banks and Braes o’ Bonnie Doon – Percy Grainger

Lincolnshire Posy – Percy Grainger

Country Gardens – Percy Grainger

Irish Tune from County Derry – Percy Grainger

Shepherd’s Hey – Percy Grainger

Intermission

Jupiter, The Bringer of Jollity – Gustav Holst

First Suite in Eb from Military Band – Gustav Holst

Rhosymedre (Prelude on a Welsh Hymn Tune) – Ralph Vaughan Williams, arr.

Beeler-Johnson

Mars, The Bringer of War – Gustav Holst

1981 – [Untitled]

Opener: Music selected from the following composers: Wagner, Hindemith,
Berlioz, Tchaikovsky, Nelhybel, Reynolds, Bartok, Grandjany, Stright,
Johnson

March: *The Duke of Cambridge* – Malcolm Arnold

Variations on a Shaker Melody – Aaron Copland

Valdres-Marsj – Johannes Hanssen

Sweet and Low – Joseph Barnaby

“Rag,” from *Suite of Old American Dances* – Robert Russell Bennett

“Pines of the Appian Way,” from *The Pines of Rome* – Respighi-Leidzen

1982 – Music to Move By

Marches and Dances, Opening: selected from music by John Philip Sousa,
Johann Strauss, Edvard Grieg, Kenneth Alford, Johannes Hanssen,
Meredith Wilson

March, Op. 99 – Sergei Prokofieff

Spoon River – Percy Grainger

“Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy,” from the *Nutcracker Suite* – Tchaikovsky-
Hindsley

The Fairest of the Fair – John Philip Sousa

“Jasper’s Dance,” from the *Pineapple Poll Ballet* – Arthur Sullivan, arr. Charles Mackerras
Finale, from Symphony No. 4 – Peter I. Tchaikowsky, arr. V.B. Safranek

1987 – From Our Scandinavian Heritage, edited and compiled by Miles Johnson
Astri, mi Astri – traditional Norwegian folk song
Entry March of the Boyars – Johannes Halvorsen, arr. Clifford Barnes
Saterjentens Sontag – Ole Bull, arr. Glenn Cliffe Bainum
“In the Hall of the Mountain King,” from *Peer Gynt Suite* – Edvard Grieg, arr. Mayhew Lake
Asti, mi Astri – traditional Norwegian folk song
“Huldungungsmarsch,” from *Sigurd Jorsalfar* – Edvard Grieg, arr. Mayhew Lake
The Last Spring (vaaren) – Edvard Grieg, arr. Robert Bardeen
“Anitra’s Dance,” from *Peer Gynt Suite* – Edvard Grieg, arr. St. Olaf Band Percussion Section
“Praeludium,” from *Holberg’s Time* – Edvard Grieg, trans. for woodwind choir Karl Holvik
Astri, mi Astri – traditional Norwegian folk song

1988 – Mostly Russian
**Athletic Festival March*, Opus 69, No. 1 – Serge Prokofieff, arr. Richard Franko Goldman
*“March,” from *The Love of the Three Oranges*, Opus 33 – Serge Prokofieff, arr. Robert Cray
*March, Opus 99 – Serge Prokofieff, arr. Paul Yoder
**selections are alternated during tour*
None But the Lonely Heart – Peter Tchaikowsky, arr. Elinor Niemisto
Selections, from the Ballet *The Nutcracker* – Peter Tchaikowsky, arr. Mark Hindsley
March
Danse Russe Trépak – arr. St. Olaf Band Percussion Section
Dance of the Flutes
Waltz of the Flowers
Overture: 1812 – Peter Tchaikowsky, arr. Mayhew Lake

1989 – A Musical Mosaic: Folk Songs Around the World
“The Irish Washerwoman,” from *The Irish Suite* – LeRoy Anderson
Simple Gifts – Shaker Melody
Variations on a Shaker Melody – Aaron Copland
Ye Banks and Braes o’ Bonnie Doon – Scottish Folksong, set Percy Grainger
Color – Bob Margolis
II. Stingo
Deep River – Folksong, arr. H.T. Burleigh
Folk Song – William Grant Still, ed. Miles Johnson
II. Deep River
Festival Variations – Claude T. Smith

1990 – Music: Sacred & Profane

Excerpts, from *Carmina Burana* – Carl Orff, arr. John Krance

1. O Fortuna, Velut Luna
2. Fortune Plango Vulnera
3. Tanz – Uf dem Anger
4. Amor Vola Undique
5. In taberno quando sumus
6. In Trutina
7. Dulcissime
8. Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi

My Hope is Built on Nothing Less – John Dyke

Melita – Thomas Knox

Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit – Spiritual, arr. William Dawson, arr. for Percussion
Ensemble by St. Olaf Band Percussion Section

My God, How Wonderful Thou Art – Scottish Psalter, arr. Miles Johnson

Sinfonia Festiva – Arne Running

1991 – Mostly British: The Heritage of the Concert Band, edited and compiled by Miles Johnson

Colonel Bogey – Kenneth Alford

I'm Seventeen Come Sunday – Percy Grainger

First Suite in E-flat – Gustav Holst

Country Gardens – Percy Grainger

Rhosymedre – Ralph Vaughan Williams, arr. Walter Beeler

Suite, from the *Water Music* – George Frederick Handel, arr. W.J. Duthoit
I. Allegro

Londonderry Air – Irish Folk Melody, arr. Percy Grainger, ed. John Ferguson

Shepherds Hey – Percy Grainger, arr. Corey Desens

Colonel Bogey – Kenneth Alford

1992 – Spotlight on Mozart, Spotlight on Fun

1993 – Favorite Hymn Tunes

Bringing in the Sheaves – George Minor, ed. Miles H. Johnson

My God, How Wonderful Thou Art – Scottish Psalter, arr. Miles H. Johnson

Fanfare Prelude in "Lancashire" – James Curnow

Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound – Virginia Harmony, arr. Anton

Armstrong

O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright – Philipp Nicolai, arr. John Ferguson

Rejouissance, "Fantasia" on Ein Feste Burg – David Holsinger, ed. Miles H.
Johnson

On A Hymnsong of Philip Bliss – David Holsinger, ed. Miles H. Johnson

Just a Closer Walk With Thee – ed. Calvin Custer

Bringing in the Sheaves – George Minor, ed. Miles H. Johnson

APPENDIX D

List of MICS guest conductors

- 1979 – Frederick Fennell
- 1980 – Frederick Fennell
- 1981 – John Paynter
- 1982 – H. Robert Reynolds
- 1983 – Frederick Fennell
- 1984 – John Paynter
- 1985 – Craig Kirchhoff
- 1986 – H. Robert Reynolds and Elizabeth Green
- 1987 – John Paynter
- 1988 – Craig Kirchhoff and Edwin ‘Bud’ Beyer
- 1989 – H. Robert Reynolds and Mallory Thompson
- 1990 – John Paynter and Edwin ‘Bud’ Beyer
- 1991 – Frederick Fennell
- 1992 – Craig Kirchhoff
- 1993 – John Paynter and Mallory Thompson

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