

Magnum Chorum, carrying on the tradition

BY ANNA STEVENS '10

ST. OLAF COLLEGE'S superior choral tradition made a profound and lasting impression on St. Olaf Choir alumni Jin Kim '90 and Martha Kunau '90 and Chapel Choir alumnus Peter Haugen '90, so much so, that in 1991 they founded Magnum Chorum, an *a cappella* choir rooted in artistry and faith. Now in its 18th season, Magnum Chorum presents concerts and commissions and premieres new sacred works, performing in cathedrals and sanctuaries throughout the Midwest. For these alumni — and the many Oles who sing with the choir — Magnum Chorum provides meaningful opportunities to create music for others in a tradition they love and admire.

While a majority of the 40 to 45 singers are St. Olaf alumni (from the classes of 1968 to 2008), in recent years, Magnum Chorum has welcomed singers from sister colleges such as Luther and Concordia. The singers are diverse in their careers: some are teachers and music professionals, while others work in finance or law.

"When we came together, we sought fellowship and a shared passion for music-making," says Martha. "We wanted to sing for the sheer joy of it and partner with congregations to bring music into worship. Since then, we've brought inspired music to thousands of listeners and dozens of churches, released five recordings and commissioned several new choral works. It has been incredibly rewarding."

NEW DIRECTOR, SAME FOCUS

In 2008, Christopher Aspaas '95, assistant professor of choral and vocal music at St. Olaf and conductor of Viking Chorus and the Chapel Choir, was named Magnum Chorum's new music director. He is delighted to lead the choir and enjoys the sense of fellowship at its foundation.

"The connection among singers in Magnum Chorum is very special," says Chris. "What a great opportunity for me to



lead an adult chorus and program full concert seasons in the rich choral landscape of the Twin Cities."

Magnum Chorum serves as Choir-in-Residence at Westwood Lutheran Church in St. Louis Park, Minn., and offers concerts throughout the year. Its next performance, *Requiem: There Shall Be Rest*, will be at Cathedral Church of St. Mark in Minneapolis on Feb. 28, 2009.

"For Twin Cities alumni, our programs reflect the musical and spiritual ideals that we've all come to love [at St. Olaf]," says Chris. "Magnum Chorum is another opportunity to experience that and put our musical gifts to work."

www.magnumchorum.org

