



Carl Schroeder with "The Minnesota Portraits," a three-movement composition he recently wrote for a Twin Cities music ensemble.

Photo by David Gonnerman '90

CARL SCHROEDER '05

Student composer hits high note with compositions, leadership.

By Anna Palmer '04

Always a storyteller, student composer Carl Schroeder '05 has combined his musical talent and ambitious nature into an impressive tale of success.

"I have always loved stories," Schroeder says, "reading, writing, telling. Music is just another way to tell stories. It's really natural to think of it as another language."

For Schroeder, a junior composition/theory major from Minneapolis, this desire to express a compelling tale produced "Christine's Lullaby," Schroeder's orchestral response to the Sept. 11th attacks on the World Trade Center.

While reading about the tragedy in *Newsweek*, Schroeder was drawn to the story of its youngest victim, Christine Lee Hanson, a 2-year-old girl on United Airlines Flight 175, en route to Disneyland with her parents.

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"The story stuck with me," Schroeder says. "It came to mind whenever I heard about the attacks."

Schroeder spent the next three days in the music studio, composing his first work for full orchestra, "Christine's Lullaby." His work encapsulated Christine's journey through life and death, evoking contrasting emotions with strong woodwinds, violin lines doubled by flutes and soft trumpet calls.

"It was a way for me to reconcile my own feelings about Sept. 11th as well as capture the story in music that would affect people and make them think about the enormity of what happened on that day," he explains.

Last May, more than 1,000 people — including Christine's paternal grandparents, Lee and Eunice Hanson — experienced the fullness of Schroeder's orchestration and the resurgence of emotion from the Sept. 11th attacks when the Minnesota Youth Symphonies performed "Christine's Lullaby" at Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis.

Since then, the piece has been performed at a 9/11 tribute concert in Minneapolis as well as in Boston and at the annual St. Olaf Summer Music Camp.

Schroeder's creativity began emerging in elementary school, when his mother encouraged him to take piano lessons. A precocious child, Carl was not interested in practicing someone else's music, preferring instead to write his own. These short pieces turned into more involved works as he picked up the saxophone in middle school.

At Minneapolis Southwest High School, which Schroeder attended, band instructor Keith Luizzi allowed the high school band to try out some of the young composer's works. Persistence paid off when the Minnesota Music Educators Association named Schroeder "High School Composer of the Year" and "Composer With Most Potential."

Schroeder's ambitions led him to invigorate Muziko Nova at St. Olaf, a student-run music organization that sponsors recitals and concerts of student compositions. Under his direction as president during his sophomore year, Muziko Nova obtained a Finstad Grant to cover costs of producing, marketing and professionally recording student compositions. The project yielded *Music From the Hill 2003*, the first CD by 16 St. Olaf student composers, showcasing the collaborative efforts of those composers with more than 60 student, faculty and alumni performers.

"It's not just his music that sets Carl apart from others," says Professor of Music and Composition and St. Olaf Band Director Timothy Mahr '78. "His ground-breaking work as the president of Muziko Nova has been borne by his vision for bringing dreams into reality through tireless effort."

Schroeder also began writing and publishing *Nova Notes*, a quarterly music newsletter for the organization. In conjunction with St. Olaf and the Southern Theater in Minneapolis, he recently helped orchestrate the Leap Day 2004 concert featuring new music by St. Olaf student and alumni composers.

"Carl not only has exceptional talent as a composer, but he's a terrific student leader who has been generous and helpful to many others," says Associate Professor of Music and Theory Composition Peter Hamlin. "He's written some extraordinary music at St. Olaf, and he has also been engaged with the larger campus community life and important concerns in the world beyond St. Olaf."

Schroeder performs with the St. Olaf Jazz Ensembles II & III, the St. Olaf Norseman Band and the Valhalla Band. He also writes for the student newspaper, the *Manitou Messenger*, and writes, designs and lays out the newsletter for the student-led Peace and Justice Resource Network.

After "Christine's Lullaby" was performed at Orchestra Hall, an anonymous benefactor donated money to the Calhoun-Isles Community Band last May to commission a work from Schroeder. The result was "The Minnesota Portraits," a three-movement work, with each movement depicting a different aspect of Minnesota life.

In coming months Schroeder plans to independently release a CD, *The Minnesota Portraits and Other Music by Carl Schroeder*, featuring large-ensemble compositions and piano works. It is only one of many Schroeder stories to come.

Anna Palmer '04 is majoring in English and political science with a media studies concentration. She plans to pursue a career in journalism.