

CU ★ PRESENTS

2021-22 Season



College of Music
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

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Spring 2022

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CU Boulder Photography

AT THE PERFORMANCE

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CU ★ PRESENTS is the home of performing arts at the University of Colorado Boulder.



The mission of the **University of Colorado Boulder College of Music** is to inspire artistry and discovery, together.



The College of Music acknowledges that the university sits upon land within the territories of the Ute, Cheyenne and Arapaho peoples. Further, we acknowledge that 48 contemporary tribal nations are historically tied to Colorado lands.

CU Symphony Orchestra

Gary Lewis, conductor

Kedrick Armstrong, conductor

Maximillian McNutt, trumpet

Grace Stringfellow, oboe

7:30 p.m., February, Feb. 10, 2022

Macky Auditorium

Program

Blue Hour Skyline

Kevin Day (b. 1996)

Kedrick Armstrong, conductor

Concerto in C minor

Alessandro Marcello (1684-1750)

I. Allegro moderato

II. Adagio

III. Allegro

Maximillian McNutt, trumpet

Oboe Concerto

David Mullikin (b. 1950)

I. Allegro Moderato quasi pastorale

II. Allegro Molto

III. Adagio

IV. Cadenza

V. Allegro Giocoso

Grace Stringfellow, oboe

—Intermission—

Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1860-1911)

I. Andante sostenuto - Moderato con anima

II. Andantino in modo di Canzona

III. Scherzo. Pizzicato ostinato. Allegro

IV. Finale. Allegro con fuoco

Gary Lewis, conductor

Program notes

Blue Hour Skyline

Kevin Day (b. 1996)

Blue Hour Skyline is a symphony orchestra composition that depicts a city that comes alive once the “blue hour” approaches. The “blue hour” often refers to the darker stages of evening twilight, when the skyline transitions from day and becomes fully night. For the city, this is the moment when the lights start to come on, from the buildings, to bridges, to billboards and cars, and people begin to enjoy the bustling nightlife with their family and friends.

—Note by Kevin Day

Concerto in C minor

Alessandro Marcello (1684-1750)

Mystery and misattribution surround this frequently performed concerto and staple of the repertoire. One of the most well-known works of the Baroque era, its rightful author went unrecognized for centuries—a subject that still today is a source of confusion and debate. The Concerto in C minor must have made an impression on Johann Sebastian Bach as it was one he preserved by arranging it in the early eighteenth century. He included the arrangement in a collection of works by other composers including Antonio Vivaldi. Published in Weimar circa 1713, Bach’s mistaken attribution to “A. Vivaldi” is only one component that masked the real composer’s identity.

As interest in the source material for Bach’s collection grew, a copy of the concerto surfaced in Germany’s Schwerin Library. The copy, signed “Marcello,” was cataloged as a creation of Benedetto Marcello (1686-1739). It was not until a copy of the concerto was discovered in the British Library as part of collection published in 1717 that Alessandro Marcello is clearly identified as the composer.

While this discovery has largely put to rest the question of authorship, the concerto’s pedigree is far from clear. The concerto was originally composed sometime between 1708 and 1713 in the key of D minor and was arranged by

Bach in the same key. Alessandro's far more prolific brother Benedetto took it upon himself to make a new edition of the work, transposing it to C minor in the process. It is this C minor version of the concerto that is most often performed and will be heard today.

Between Alessandro's original work, Benedetto's alterations in his edition, and Bach's arrangement with his own ornamentations and imprint, it is very difficult to make concrete attributions of common performance practice. It is clear, however, that this justly celebrated work is one that has left an indelible impression on all who have encountered it. —*Note by Ryan J. Nowlin*

Oboe Concerto

David Mullikin (b. 1950)

Mullikin's Oboe Concerto was commissioned by Colorado Symphony board member Erna Butler. Mullikin began work on the composition in early 1999, and by the end of the year, the piece was complete. He had never composed a work for solo oboe before but drew upon his tenure as a symphony musician for inspiration. The compositional process was collaborative between Mullikin and Peter Cooper, CSO principal oboist and teaching professor of oboe at the University of Colorado. Mullikin also dedicated the work to Cooper, who premiered the concerto with the Colorado Symphony in 2000. It was recorded in 2001 by Cooper, along with Neville Marriner and the Academy of Saint Martin In The Fields. The Oboe Concerto has garnered many favorable comments from oboists and teachers, including former Cleveland Orchestra principal oboist John Mack.

Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1860-1911)

Between 1877-1878, while writing his Fourth Symphony, Tchaikovsky wrote in his diary: "There is no doubt that for some months I was insane, and only now, when I am completely recovered, have I learned to relate objectively to everything which I did during my brief insanity. That man, who in May took it into his head to marry Antonina Ivanovna, who during June wrote a whole opera as though nothing had happened, who in July married, who in

September fled from his wife, who in November railed at Rome and so on—that man wasn’t I, but another Pyotr Ilyich.” He did not mention that he had also tried to commit suicide and the stress of a divorce. Recovery was largely due to the loyal encouragement of his widowed patroness Nadezda von Meck, who was instrumental in encouraging him to complete this work. She was the one bright spot in the terrible year of 1877. He acknowledged her support by dedicating the Fourth Symphony to her, calling her only “my best friend” to insure her privacy, and noted, “I thought of you in every bar.”

He also thought about the role of Fate in life: “The introduction to the first movement is the kernel, the quintessence, the chief thought of the whole symphony. This is Fate, the fatal power that hinders one in the pursuit of happiness from gaining the goal, which jealously provides that peace and comfort do not prevail, that the sky is not free from clouds—a might that swings, like the sword of Damocles, constantly over the head that poisons the soul. There is nothing to do but to submit and vainly to complain.” The music begins with a fanfare theme from horns and bassoons, repeated by trumpets with a heavy motif, which recurs over and over again, circling like a vulture, dropping in throughout this movement and subsequent ones as well. Two main themes occupy the first movement—an anxious first idea, and a waltz (in 9/8 meter) for solo clarinet, followed by a tertiary idea, which is produced by strings and timpani as a counterpoint to the second idea. As the movement unfolds in general sonata-allegro format, the ending is clearly a victory for the Fate motif, which triumphs in the coda.

The second movement continues the melancholia and depression. “Life has you tired out,” Tchaikovsky wrote. “Many things flit through the memory ... there were happy moments when young blood pulsed warm and life was gratifying. There were also moments of grief and of irreparable loss. It is all-remote in the past. It is both sad and somehow sweet to lose oneself in the past. And yet, we are weary of existence.” An oboe reflects this sad perspective, singing a mournful tune accompanied by pizzicato strings. A second theme comes from the strings as a response; and he also adds a dance-like tune for momentary relief. However this is short-lived, and his depression and anxiety return until Violins finally sing the opening oboe tune.

By the third movement, a “series of capricious arabesques”, the music gains a brighter perspective. This music, Tchaikovsky wrote, is that “heard after one has begun to drink a little wine, and is beginning to experience the first phase of intoxication.” This condition Tchaikovsky knew well, surviving his grave drinking problem later in life by means of hypnosis. Pizzicato strings generate the main theme and a trio section features a lively Russian dance, brass and piccolo provide marching music, oboes have a piquant duet. At all times there is lightness and almost incoherent gaiety. Note that strings play pizzicato continually, keeping lightness and agility at the forefront. “You are not thinking of anything,” the composer wrote. “The imagination is completely free and for some reason has begun to paint curious pictures ... disconcerted images pass through our heads as we begin to fall asleep.”

By the fourth movement (marked *allegro con fuoco*) we find ourselves elevated to a euphoria. The music becomes a virtuoso spree for orchestra, opening with a main subject for strings and winds. Tchaikovsky was determined to be happy. “If you cannot discover the reasons for happiness in yourself, look at others. Upbraid yourself and do not say that the entire world is sad ... Take happiness from the joys of others. Life is bearable after all,” he wrote. In this movement we are treated to a musical quote from a charming Russian folksong titled *In the Fields There Stands a Birch Tree* displayed by oboe and bassoon, and continued exuberance in a majestic march. The Fate motif intrudes toward the end, but an insistent frenzy intervenes, cymbal crashes ring out, as the symphony roars to its conclusion. —*Note by Marianne Williams Tobias*

Personnel

Click or tap on bold and underlined text to view biographies or websites.

Gary Lewis, conductor

Kedrick Armstrong, conductor

Praised by the Chicago Tribune for his ability to “simply let the score speak for itself,” conductor Kedrick Armstrong enjoys a wide range of work spanning early music to premiering new works. This season, he returned to the Knox-Galesburg Symphony to conduct Handel’s *Messiah* after his debut performance conducting the orchestra in 2020. Armstrong is an alum of the Chicago Sinfonietta Project Inclusion Freeman Conducting Fellow program, where he served as assistant conductor during the 2018-2019 season. He made his subscription debut conducting on the orchestra’s annual MLK Tribute Concert in 2019. Applauded for his “knack for balancing orchestral-choral forces,” he was invited back the following season, where he led the Chicago premiere of Joel Thompson’s *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed*. Armstrong shares his time between the concert stage and the opera pit. He will debut in 2022 with the DePaul Opera Theater conducting Leonard Bernstein’s *Candide*. Armstrong also returns to Lyric Opera of Chicago in 2023 to premiere a new opera, *The Factotum*, by Will Liverman and K Rico. He made his Chicago Opera Theater debut in 2021, leading the premiere of Matthew Recio’s *The Puppy Episode*. Kedrick holds a BM in history and literature from Wheaton College and is currently pursuing an MM in orchestral conducting from the University of Colorado-Boulder with teacher and advisor Gary Lewis. Armstrong uses his voice and platform as a Black conductor to advocate for classical music’s performance, publication and preservation of minority voices. This advocacy has led to various speaking engagements and his current research into Black women composers within CU Boulder’s Helen Walker-Hill collection.

Maximillian McNutt, trumpet

Maximillian McNutt graduated with his DMA from the University of Colorado in the spring of 2021. He is currently the adjunct assistant professor of music at St. Olaf College and principal trumpet of the Boulder Symphony. McNutt holds a bachelor's degree from Indiana University and a master's degree from Western Michigan University. His primary teachers include Ryan Gardner, Justin Bartels, Scott Thornburg, Robert White and John Rommel.

Grace Stringfellow, oboe

American oboist Grace Stringfellow is an active chamber musician, teacher, and orchestral musician based primarily in Denver, Colorado. In addition to her roles as second oboist of the Boise Philharmonic and principal oboist of the Stratus Chamber Orchestra in North Denver, Stringfellow is often a featured artist in the CU Boulder Pendulum New Music Series. In March of 2020, Stringfellow joined the Dad Village Symphony Orchestra (a virtual symphony orchestra) as principal oboe, broadening her scope of performance across new digital landscapes and aiming to bring classical music to new audiences in a more accessible way. In February 2020, Stringfellow won the University of Colorado's Undergraduate Concerto Competition and in April 2021, she was named a finalist in the Army Band's Collegiate Solo Competition. Stringfellow studied oboe with Peter Cooper and Jason Lichtenwalter at the University of Colorado Boulder, graduating with a degree in oboe performance and minor in political science in May 2021.

CU Symphony Orchestra

Violin

Greg Abrell *
Ingrid Anderson
Payton Andrews
Dmitri Ascarrunz
Victor Avila-Luvsangenden
Laena Batchelder
Alan Chan +
Jordan Grantonic
Larina Gray
Veda Hingert-McDonald
Sam Jarvis
Alisa Johnson
Hannah Kennedy
MarieFaith Lane
Zhiqi Liu
Anna Lugbill
Lucy Rissman
Rosalee Walsh
Inga Well-Off-Man
George Willis
Jonathon Winter
Brandon Wu
Joy Yamaguchi

Viola

Finn Cruit
Aaron Lockhart
Elizabeth Macintosh
Daniel Moore +
Emma Reynolds
Ashley Santore
Andy Sprinkle
Gina Stonikas
Regina Vendetti

Cello

Ethan Blake +
Nicole Chung
Alex Engelhardt
Peyton Magalhaes
Louis Saxton
Sophie Stubbs
Eric Vasquez
Matthew Wiest

Double bass

Victoria Bakewell
Alex Bozik
Maeve Celedon
Isaiah Holt
Kurt Melendy +
Jake Thurston

Flute

Lauren Flaten
Madison Hardick
Yuna Langehennig

Oboe

Sophie Oehlers
Taysia Petersen
Lisa Read

Clarinet

Charles Burnside
Randel Leung
Gleyton Pinto
Julian Ruiz

Bassoon

J.T. Holdbrooks
Jacob Webb
Victor Zhang

Horn

Abbie French
Kira Goya
Annika Ross
Michael Sgrecci
Olivia Walt
Ethan Watson

Trumpet

Christopher Boulais
Noah Mennenga
Isaac Ponce Urbina
Michael Winkler

Trombone

Sebastian Alvarez Piras
Riley Bahin
Jack Holoman

Tuba

Dylan Silverstein

Percussion

Christian De La Torre
Chris Eagles
Euijin Jung
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Rowan Woodbury

Harp

Shelby Roberts

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+ *Principal*

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UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

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