

# CU★PRESENTS

2022-23 Season



College of Music

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

## AT THE PERFORMANCE

- Please refrain from using electronic devices during the performance. Feel free to view this program on your device at any time prior to the performance, during intermission or after the performance ends.
- Photography and video recordings of any type are strictly prohibited during the performance.
- Smoking is not permitted anywhere. CU Boulder is a smoke-free campus.

**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.*

# Faculty Tuesdays

Comedy, Tragedy, Virtuosity and Passion

David Korevaar, piano

7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 30, 2022

Grusin Music Hall

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## Program

### **Sonata in D major, Op. 10, No. 3 (1797-8)**

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Presto

Largo e mesto

Menuetto: Allegro

Rondo: Allegro

### **Sonata in E minor (1932)**

Florence Beatrice Price (1887-1953)

Andante–Allegro

Andante

Scherzo and Finale: Allegro

—Intermission—

### **Polonaise in F-sharp minor, Op. 44, “Tragic” (1841)**

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1847)

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# Six Etudes from Op. 25 (1835)

Frédéric Chopin

- #7 in C-sharp minor (“Cello”)
- #8 in D-flat major (“Sixths”)
- #9 in G-flat major (“Butterfly”)
- #10 in B minor (“Octave”)
- #11 in A minor (“Winter Wind”)
- #12 in C minor (“Ocean”)

## Program notes

*Text that is bold and underlined is a hyperlink and can be clicked or tapped for more information.*

### **Comedy, Tragedy, Virtuosity and Passion**

In assembling this program, I wanted to bring together some of the pieces I’ve worked on over the course of the pandemic, and to sum up for the live audience here in Boulder the themes and projects of that sometimes lonely period. By presenting two sonatas, one from the “canon,” and one by an important composer whose color and gender condemned her music to second-tier status and obscurity both during her lifetime and after, I touch upon two important themes for me of this period.

At the beginning of lockdowns, in the spring of 2020, I gave myself the task of revisiting or learning all of the Beethoven sonatas, and posting homemade video on YouTube—a project that received many views and encouraging comments, and which helped keep me connected to the world during this period of isolation. Those videos, with low production values and limited recording equipment, and no piano tuner for the most part, are an interesting artifact, but also were a tremendous learning experience for me by putting together all of these works (most of them masterpieces) and allowing me to better appreciate and better express the immense variety of Beethoven’s piano writing.



With the murder of George Floyd in May 2020, our previously comfortable classical music bubble was further upended. I personally found myself looking in the mirror differently, as long overdue discussions around structural racism and white privilege percolated through society and into the College of Music. For me, one direct result was to look more carefully at my own assumptions: while I've always been interested in exploring little-known or completely forgotten repertoire, it was stunning to realize that most of those explorations into the obscure were still white men. I had made a recording (*The Negro Speaks of Rivers*) with the bass-baritone Ode Amaize many years earlier that had at least made me peripherally aware of some important African American composers, and the pianist William Chapman Nyaho had also somewhat opened my eyes to some of this repertoire for the piano. It became imperative for me to increase my knowledge of repertoire composed by members of underrepresented groups, including women, and to spread that knowledge in the classroom, teaching studio, and concert hall. Florence Price's E-minor Piano Sonata was one of the first works I learned, and I am pleased to be able to present it on this program.

As the second year of the pandemic dragged on, and performances remained mostly virtual, I decided to revisit the 24 Chopin Etudes and to rethink and refine my approach to them and to practicing and technique in general. Somewhere in there, I also decided to learn the F-sharp minor Polonaise, as this work spoke so deeply to me in these troubling times.

My catch-all title for this program, "Comedy, Tragedy, Virtuosity and Passion," does cover the bases, but I was particularly thinking of the Beethoven sonata that I am opening this program with when I formulated it. The first movement is a virtuosic romp—one of the most technically demanding movements in Beethoven, but also one that is filled with comic turns. The second, with the marking *Largo e mesto* ("Slow and sad") is one of the most heartfelt and expressive movements of his early output, showing the influence of C.P.E. Bach's *empfindsamer Stil* in its contrasts of intimate speech and passionate outbursts. The *Menuetto* and *Rondo* serve to continue the themes of the first movement, but with moments of mystery and pathos subtly interweaved with the generally cheerful and diverting material.

Price's Sonata is beautiful, heartfelt, brilliant, and sings out with full-throated passion. Her music remains firmly rooted in the Romantic style that she learned at the New England Conservatory from George Chadwick in the early years of the twentieth century. Her admiration for Chadwick (who incorporated African American material in his own works) and for Dvořák is evident in this traditionally constructed Sonata. The Sonata also reflects her roots and her life experience, from her upbringing in the African American community of the post-Reconstruction South to her work as a pianist in the silent movie theatres of Black Chicago.

Chopin's F-sharp minor Polonaise is associated in his biography with the Russian takeover of Warsaw (which he learned of with horror from his lifelong exile in Paris). The central Mazurka section is easy to hear as a nostalgic memory of an idyllic past, lost to the deprivations of the invaders.

I have included the traditional subtitles for the Polonaise and Etudes on this program for fun and familiarity. They are evocative, and not necessarily inappropriate; they also could be limiting in terms of directing our appreciation in a particular direction. There is no evidence that Chopin originated these titles or that he would have approved of them. They likely reflect the 19th-century publishers' genius for marketing more than any aesthetic choices on the part of the composer.

## Personnel

*Text that is bold and underlined is a hyperlink and can be clicked or tapped for more information.*

**David Korevaar**, piano

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College of Music

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