

CU ★ PRESENTS

2023-24 Season



College of Music

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

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# SoundWorks

Featuring Alicia Svigals + Donald Sosin, and Duo Cortona

7:30 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023

Grusin Music Hall

## Program

### Dybbuk HongaBulgar

Alicia Svigals, composer

arr. Max Wolpert

*CU Cross Genre Strings Ensemble*

*Sam Jarvis and Alisa Johnson, violin*

*Madeline Guyer and Len Eppich, viola*

*Alex Englehardt, cello*

*Asher Dobrin, bass*

*Enion Pelta, director*

### Kale Baveynen II

### Kronos Shers

### Octatonic Presto

Alicia Svigals, composer

arr. Max Wolpert

*CU Cross Genre Strings Ensemble*

### Cine-Concert excerpts medley

Alicia Svigals and Donald Sosin



## **In Space**

Josie Arnett

*Duo Cortona*

## **A Spirit in the Suwannee**

Asher Dobrin

*Duo Cortona*

## **Mon Lave-Linge**

Jonah Stern

*Duo Cortona*

## **Morning**

Ryan Flat

*Duo Cortona*

## **Sawmill Elegy**

Alan Mackwell

*Duo Cortona*

## **hotflash**

Gracie Fagan

*Duo Cortona*

# Program notes

## Dybbuk HongaBulgar

Alicia Svigals, composer

arr. Max Wolpert

The *Dybbuk HongaBulgar* was among the pieces Svigals' wrote for playwright Tony Kushner's *The Dybbuk*. It didn't quite fit in there, but later came back to life in bits and pieces, in singer-songwriter Chava Albershteyn's *Velkhes Meydl* from her album *The Well*. Arranged for this concert by Max Wolpert, it has finally found its home.

## Kale Baveynen II

### Kronos Shers

### Octatonic Presto

Alicia Svigals, composer

arr. Max Wolpert

*Kale Baveynen II* takes its title from the old-world klezmer practice of playing a sad song for a bride to encourage her to cry before the wedding and “get it out of her system,” in a form of folk *gestalt* therapy. Along with the *Kronos Shers*, it was commissioned by the Kronos Quartet. The final movement in this suite, *Octatonic Presto*, was originally written for the Scorchio Quartet.

Svigals and Sosin will bring their cine-concert *Man Without a World* to the Dairy tomorrow, Nov. 9; here, they perform a short suite of their original music from this and their other scores, *City Without Jews* and *The Ancient Law*.

# February Twilight

JC Maynard

**Poem by Sara Teasdale**

I stood beside a hill  
Smooth with new-laid snow,  
A single star looked out  
From the cold evening glow.

There was no other creature  
That saw what I could see—  
I stood and watched the evening star  
As long as it watched me.

## ontario

Abby Kellems

**Text by Veda Hingert-McDonald**

the hummingbird finds desert nectar  
the wren hollows a nest where it can  
the lizard scurries to shady crags  
even still I return like a salmon up stream

## Thunk

Holly McMahan

*Thunk* is about losing a ski to a rock while absolutely shredding down an exceptionally long and steep ski run and finding oneself tumbling down it instead. The piece depicts running into rocks, holding onto a branch for stability that eventually breaks, and falling off a small cliff.

# Pangea

Luka Vezmar

*Pangea* is a short work written for Duo Cortona. It explores the whole range of both the violin and voice, creating wondrous colors. The meaning of this piece is up to the listener, which is why the lyrics are in no particular language. Just like Pangea brought together our continents, music brings us together. I hope you enjoy.

# A Spirit in the Suwannee

Asher Dobrin

*A Spirit in the Suwannee* takes on an alternate interpretation of a famous folk tradition in North Florida. Inspired by the Suwannee River and the music festival that takes place in the state park, the piece follows the river's spirit as it flows and interacts. Be careful and gentle, and you will not anger her.

# Sawmill Elegy

Alan Mackwell

*Sawmill Elegy*, inspired by an abandoned sawmill described in Craig Johnson's bluegrass song *Damned Old Piney Mountain*, seeks to emulate the sawmill's deteriorating structure by deconstructing a bluegrass tune, giving opportunity for new material to burst forth from the cracks.

# hotflash

Gracie Fagan

**Text by Caitlin McDonnell**

They come early for us.

Skinny, stressed women, the flame  
that burns twice bright.

My sister calls them honey badgers.

On the subway, wrapped in winter wools,  
the sudden fever; a sharp descent  
to the hothouse inside

where vines and fungi grow:



Pink early flower, Scrambling Clematis.  
Wood Ear, Inky Pot, Stinkhorn.  
I trust the hypothalamus to mediate  
body and brain. Like city apartments in winter,  
the heat overcompensates for chill.  
Here's a house full of bees.  
Do you think the honey badger cares?  
Like riding a wave, the rhythm like labor,  
which taught me to surrender to pain.  
I loosen my scarf, wonder if it's visible.  
Her face is so red, a student said aloud,  
as if I couldn't hear or it didn't matter.  
I close my eyes and wait, breathe  
into all that dies or rots in musty  
ferments. Let it go, let it go.  
Honey Badger don't give a shit.

# Personnel

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

## CU Boulder SoundWorks

[Egemen Kesikli](#), artistic director

[Annika Socolofsky](#), faculty coach and SoundWorks committee head

Nicholas Felder, outreach coordinator

Rain Michael, stage manager

Abby Kellems, Gracie Fagan, Josie Arnett, social media

## Josie Arnett

Josie Arnett is a composer, pianist, singer and overall instrument enthusiast. She grew up playing a variety of instruments including piano, upright and electric bass, ukulele, banjo, cello, guitar and any other instrument she could get her hands on. Arnett started piano lessons at four years old and grew up playing the music of Bruce Hornsby, Billy Joel, The Beatles and countless pop and rock songs. As a composer, she has been inspired by film music, minimalism, jazz, and rock. She is currently based in Boulder, Colorado, and pursuing a Bachelor of Music in composition at the University of Colorado Boulder. She has written for a variety of ensembles and has performed as a pianist and a singer. Several of her pieces have been performed at CU Boulder's Pendulum New Music Concerts (now called SoundWorks). Arnett's music often centers around the emotional gesture of the music in order to encourage the audience to connect with the music on an emotional level, and she often incorporates ideas of psychology, visual art, film and nature into her music.

## Rachel Calloway

Rachel Calloway brings versatility and compelling insight to stages worldwide. Her work has been praised by the New York Times for "penetrating clarity" and "considerable depth of expression," and by Opera News for her "adept musicianship and dramatic flair."

This season's highlights include Janacek's *The Diary of One Who Disappeared* at the University of Binghamton, The Castleton Festival and the University of South Carolina, the music of John Zorn at the Elbphilharmonie (Hamburg), a world premiere by Robert Xavier Rodriguez with the Amernet Quartet, *The Messiah* with the Charleston Symphony and the Aiken Symphony, new works with the vocal ensemble Ekmeles in Chicago, Duo Cortona in residence at the Vermont College of Fine Arts and concerts of Jewish art music with Shir Ami in Charleston and Columbia, South Carolina.

She has appeared in concert with the Orlando Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Series, the New York Philharmonic, Berkeley Symphony, Ojai Festival, San Francisco Girls' Chorus, BAM Next Wave Festival, Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival, Cal Performances and Lincoln Center Festival. Calloway made her European operatic debut as Mrs. Grose in *The Turn of the Screw* at Opéra de Reims, Athénée Théâtre Louis-Jovet (Paris) and Opéra de Lille. She has performed with Lorin Maazel at the Castleton Festival in Virginia, Opera Philadelphia, Tulsa Opera, Central City Opera, Gotham Chamber Opera, The PROTOTYPE Festival and the Glimmerglass Festival.

Calloway serves on the faculty of the University of South Carolina as assistant professor of voice and director of Spark: Music Leadership at Carolina. She joined the faculty of the Cortona Sessions for New Music (Italy) in 2014 and Summer Performing Arts with Juilliard (Switzerland) in 2016. Calloway holds degrees from The Juilliard School (BM) and Manhattan School of Music (MM) and can be heard on Albany Records, Tzadik Records, BCMF Records and Toccata Classics.

## **Asher Dobrin**

Asher Dobrin is a composer and bassist based in the Denver Metropolitan Area. Dobrin's compositions and creative processes are deeply influenced by Southern folk culture and a passion for environmentalism. He composes in a cinematic style with marks of traditional blues and pentatonic harmonies. Dobrin intends to transport the listener to a different environment.

## **Gracie Fagan (she/her/hers)**

Gracie Fagan is a multimedia artist hailing from Lincoln, Nebraska. She has written for acoustic, electroacoustic and data-driven mediums in conjunction with dance, theatre, visual projection and lighting. Her works hinge upon examining the difference between human perception and reality, and comment on social and political justice. As a stark feminist and lover of psychology, Fagan's work drives forward a climate of collaboration beyond the arts and rests between the intersectionality of identity with heavy pop culture influences.

## **Alan Mackwell**

Described as “an original composer with new ideas and a command of complex symphonic writing” (BroadStreet Journal), New Zealander-American Alan Mackwell (b. 1998) is an award winning young composer and banjo-player based in Boulder, Colorado. In his work, Mackwell seeks to explore a unique blend of atmospheres inspired by his experiences in the Permian Basin, northern New Mexico and Appalachian North Carolina using a highly resonant and bluegrass-influenced musical language, as well as the utilization of original field recordings and interactive/generative digital interfaces. Mackwell is also the recipient of a BMI Student Composer Award, which he won in 2022 for his string trio *Remains of a Permian Gas Station*.

## **Holly McMahon**

Holly McMahon is a sophomore at the University of Colorado Boulder, pursuing a degree in music composition. She is currently studying composition with Micheal Theodore and piano performance with Andrew Cooperstock. She has studied piano performance, jazz piano, clarinet performance, piano accompaniment and composition with various other instructors.

## **Donald Sosin**

Pianist/composer Donald Sosin grew up in Rye, New York, and Munich, and has performed his scores for silent films, often with his wife, singer/percussionist Joanna Seaton, at Lincoln Center, MoMA, BAM, the National Gallery, at major film festivals in New York, San Francisco, Telluride, Hollywood, Pordenone, Bologna, Shanghai, Bangkok, Berlin, Vienna, Moscow, and

Jecheon, South Korea and many college campuses. He has worked with Alexander Payne, Isabella Rossellini, Dick Hyman, Jonathan Tunick, Comden and Green, Martin Charnin, Mitch Leigh and Cy Coleman, and has played for Mikhael Baryshnikov, Mary Travers, Marni Nixon, David Alan Grier, Howie Mandel, Geula Gill, Donna McKechnie and many others. He records for Criterion, Kino, Milestone, Flicker Alley and European labels, and his scores are heard frequently on TCM. Sosin has had commissions from MoMA, the Chicago Symphony Chorus, the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra and the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra. He lives in rural Connecticut with his family.

## **Ari Streisfeld**

Violinist Ari Streisfeld has garnered critical acclaim worldwide for his performances of diverse repertoire and has established himself as one of the foremost interpreters of contemporary classical music. Praised for his “dazzling performance” by the New York Times and “scintillating playing” by New York Classical Review, Streisfeld is a founding member of the world renowned JACK Quartet. Recent season highlights include performances at Wigmore Hall (London), La Salle Pleyel (Paris), Teatro Colon (Argentina), Suntory Hall (Tokyo), Bali Arts Festival (Indonesia), Carriage Works (Sydney, Australia), Venice Biennale (Italy), Carnegie Hall, The Library of Congress, The Morgan Library (New York), the Lucerne Festival (Switzerland) and the Salzburg Festival (Austria). He has collaborated with many of today’s most prominent composers including John Luther Adams, Caroline Shaw, Julia Wolfe, Helmut Lachenmann, Matthias Pintscher, Georg Friedrich Haas, Steve Reich and Salvatore Sciarrino.

Together with his wife, mezzo soprano Rachel Calloway, Streisfeld formed Duo Cortona, a contemporary music ensemble dedicated to the creation of new works for the unique instrumentation of mezzo-soprano and violin. Recent and upcoming performances include the Resonant Bodies Festival, SONiC Festival, The Stone (NY), Contemporary Undercurrents of Song Project (Princeton, NJ), New Music on the Point (VT) and The Cortona Sessions for New Music (Italy). He is also a member of Shir Ami, an ensemble dedicated to the performance and preservation of Jewish art music. Streisfeld frequently collaborates with some of today’s leading ensembles, including Ensemble Signal, Worldless Music Orchestra, Weekend of Chamber Music and the Cortona Collective.

Hailed as “imaginative” by the Los Angeles Times, Streisfeld’s arrangements of madrigals and motets for string quartet by Machaut and Gesualdo have been performed to acclaim both at home and abroad. A recipient of the Morton Gould Young Composer Award, Streisfeld most recently premiered his Machaut arrangements for voice and violin at The Stone (New York).

A passionate and committed music educator, Streisfeld serves on the faculty of New York’s Special Music School, Face the Music, New Music on the Point and the Cortona Sessions for New Music (Italy). He will join the faculty of the University of South Carolina School of Music as Assistant Professor of Violin Pedagogy this fall.

Streisfeld attended the Eastman School of Music (Bachelor of Music), Northwestern University (Master of Music), and Boston University (Doctor of Musical Arts). He has recorded for Mode, Albany, Carrier, Innova, Canteloupe, and New World Records.

## **Alicia Svigals**

Fiddler Alicia Svigals is a founder of the Grammy-winning Klezmatics, who she co-directed for 17 years. She has worked with violinist Itzhak Perlman, the Kronos Quartet, playwrights Tony Kushner and Eve Ensler, Robert Plant and Jimmy Page of Led Zeppelin and many others. She has received commissions and awards for her compositions including her score to the 1918 film *The Yellow Ticket* and was an NEA Macdowell Fellow. Her most recent album is *Beregovski Suite*, a duo with jazz pianist Uli Geissendoerfer exploring klezmer melodies collected in the early 20th century by Soviet Jewish ethnomusicologist Moshe Beregovski. Svigals currently collaborates with pianist/composer Donald Sosin on original scores for newly-restored silent films, including *The Ancient Law* and *City Without Jews*, and Elinor Antin’s faux-20’s silent *Man Without a World*. They tour these programs live internationally. In May 2023, Svigals was awarded the honorary degree Doctor of Humane Letters by the Jewish Theological Seminary for “extraordinary contributions to the arts and Jewish life.

## Luka Vezmar

Luka Vezmar is a composer, oboist, accordionist and all around music lover. Since he was 9 months old, he has gone to many concerts with his family and friends which always inspires him to write more music. He grew up playing the piano and various other instruments throughout schooling like the trumpet, saxophone and oboe. He decided to continue with the oboe and is pursuing a BM in oboe performance and composition. While Vezmar's music encompasses many different fields, he specializes in classical music, with the hopes of getting accordion into the main stream classical music world. Vezmar always has a very distinct character in his music, which to him makes the music seem alive. He hopes that the audience can connect with his music and hopefully leave feeling just a little better than when they came in.

## Upcoming Events

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