

# COLLEGE OF MUSIC

2024-25



CU ★ PRESENTS



College of Music  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

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The University of Colorado Boulder, Colorado's flagship university, honors and recognizes the many contributions of Indigenous peoples in our state. CU Boulder acknowledges that it is located on the traditional territories and ancestral homelands of the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Ute and many other Native American nations. Their forced removal from these territories has caused devastating and lasting impacts. While the University of Colorado Boulder can never undo or rectify the devastation wrought on Indigenous peoples, we commit to improving and enhancing engagement with Indigenous peoples and issues locally and globally.

# SoundWorks

7:30 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024

Grusin Music Hall

## PROGRAM

### **Fantasy Arabesque (6')**

Blake Clawson

*Renova New Music Ensemble*

*Aric Vyhmeister, piano*

*Blake Clawson, conductor*

### **Midnight Mountain (2')**

Ryan Flat

*Renova New Music Ensemble*

### **chimes (4')**

Leah Tracy

*Renova New Music Ensemble*

### **Existing Within (7')**

Josie Arnett

I. In Context

II. Gentle Shapes

*Koa String Quartet*

*Kisa Uradomo, violin*

*Leah Pernick, violin*

*Thomas Chafe, viola*

*Heewon Lee, cello*

### 3 Improvisations

- I. Floating
- II. Silk Road
- III. Savory

### Clarinet and Piano (10')

Indigo Farmer

*Harold Gomez-Montoya, clarinet*

*Indigo Farmer, piano*



# PROGRAM NOTES

## Fantasy Arabesque (6')

Blake Clawson

Sara Teasdale's poem "A Fantasy" is densely packed with beautiful and evocative imagery. Writing a melody and development of harmony that mimics the beauty of a lush natural environment seemed the most appropriate way to infuse the text into the music and is the source of the Arabesque portion of the title. An Arabesque is a design containing many interweaving, flowing lines which create a rhythmic, dense texture resembling the growth of vines or foliage. The flowing, colorful, dense textures of this piece are intended to reflect a deep and intrinsic human connection to nature. The piano accompaniment is both fluid and dynamic, helping to support the choral material and provide embellishment and contrast.

### Poem by Sara Teasdale

Her voice is like clear water  
That drips upon a stone  
In forests far and silent  
Where Quiet plays alone.

Her thoughts are like the lotus  
Abloom by sacred streams  
Beneath the temple arches  
Where Quiet sits and dreams.

Her kisses are the roses  
That glow while dusk is deep  
In Persian garden closes  
Where Quiet falls asleep.

## **Midnight Mountain (2')**

Ryan Flat

*Midnight Mountain* is an SATB rendition of a piece originally written for solo piano. The piece is a simple hymn about the strength of love even in the face of adversity, told through the story of the moon and the sun.

## **chimes (4')**

Leah Tracy

When reading the poem, “Chimes” by Alice Meynell, I was immediately taken back to childhood summer evenings in small-town Ohio, where one could hear multiple churches marking the hour with their carillon hymns. I remember stopping whatever I was doing to listen to the sound; sometimes it seemed the songs would complement each other, while other times, they seemed to compete with one another. As I’ve gotten older, I realize I don’t often hear church bells anymore, and on the rare occasion that I do, I always stop in my tracks to take in the sound and remember the smell of freshly cut grass, sticky hands from blowing bubbles, and knees dusty with sidewalk chalk. This piece, a setting of Alice Meynell’s poem, is inspired by both the sound of church bells, and the carefree nature of youth.

### **Poem by Alice Meynell**

Brief, on a flying night,  
From the shaken tower,  
A flock of bells take flight,  
And go with the hour.

Like birds from the cote to the gales,  
Abrupt—O hark!  
A fleet of bells set sails,  
And go to the dark.

Sudden the cold airs swing.  
Alone, aloud,  
A verse of bells takes wing  
And flies with the cloud.

### 3 Improvisations

#### Composer

This set of pieces is a representation of what brings me the most joy when playing music: improvisation. Movements I and III are notated melodies that will be surrounded by improvisation. Movement II is a complete improvisation based on a work painted by my great-uncle Chucky. All three movements are meant to evoke a spectrum of emotions beginning and ending with warmth, beauty and comfort. My desire for this performance is to be in darkness, creating an intensity and depth in the listening experience.

### Clarinet and Piano (10')

#### Indigo Farmer

In *Clarinet and Piano* I started with a strange, creepy sounding theme which stuck in my head for a long time, and tried to introduce and develop it, basing the whole piece on one idea. This was inspired by advice I received from Mable Bailey on composing. The first movement of Brahms' violin concerto inspired the form of this piece, because I like the suspense he created by setting up the catchy second theme and sometimes fulfilling the expectation to hear it and sometimes not.

*Clarinet and Piano* is dedicated to my grandma Peggy, who turned 90 this year. She has always been someone who I can talk to and who will get excited with me about dramatic music.

# PERSONNEL

*Hyperlinks are bold and underlined; click or tap for more information.*

**Egemen Kesikli**, artistic director

## **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, 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 SoundWorks concerts. 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.

## **Blake Clawson**

Blake Clawson is a composer, performer, conductor and educator based in Boulder. Clawson's music spans many genres, but he specializes in music for choir, chamber ensembles and jazz. He has collaborated with both filmmakers and choreographers, and his award-winning pieces *Matara* and *Fantasy Arabesque* have received performances around the state of Washington, including a performance and award by Seattle-based Opus 7 Vocal Ensemble. Clawson is currently pursuing a dual master's in music composition and choral conducting at the University of Colorado Boulder,



where he teaches aural skills and directs Renova New Music Ensemble. In 2020, Clawson received a Bachelor of Arts in music composition from Whitworth University, where he studied with Brent Edstrom.

## **Indigo Farmer**

Indigo Farmer is a composer who enjoys old and new music — she particularly likes long, dramatically structured pieces with plenty of triumphant and lurky moments. She first fell in love with classical music after hearing the third movement of Beethoven’s “Pathetique” sonata, and her mom bought her a CD set of all 32 sonatas, which she listened to over and over again. She liked these pieces because they were exciting and she could listen to a single one many times, and there were always new details to notice. In college, Indigo worked on the Hidden Voices project, recording/researching music by Black women composers, where she explored music by Black women composers such as Lettie Beckon Alston and Mable Bailey. Some of her favorite music right now is pieces by her friends, Beethoven, Brahms and Mable Bailey.

## **Ryan Flat**

Ryan Flat is a composer, instrumentalist and vocalist studying music and geology at CU Boulder. Greatly inspired by the music of movies, television and video games, he embraces musical storytelling and imagery in his writing, often crafting his music in support of a greater narrative and artistic experience. Flat has had works premiered by ensembles such as Philharmonia, Renova New Music Ensemble, the Platt Middle School Music Program, and the CU Buffoons. He has also featured many works on the Soundworks New music series. In 2023, Flat won first place in the collegiate chamber division of the NAfME Student Composers’ Competition with his piece *Springtime*.

As a performer, Flat currently performs with the Chamber Singers, Westview Church and CU Buffoons: the oldest acapella group at CU. He also played trombone and percussion in CU's symphonic and campus bands and acted as drum major in CU's "Golden Buffalo" Marching Band for two seasons.

## **Leah Tracy**

Leah Tracy (she/they) (b. 1999) is a composer and vocalist currently pursuing a Master of Music in composition at the University of Colorado Boulder, where she studies with Annika Socolofsky. Tracy draws inspiration from the people and places around her, basing her compositions on current events, childhood recollections, vibrant stories and nature. She has a particular interest in introducing beginner or intermediate singers to contemporary techniques, and often writes with a wide range of ability levels in mind. Tracy was a 2023 Composer Fellow for the Choral Arts Initiative PREMIERE|Project Festival, and her choral music has been chosen for honors such as the San Francisco Choral Artists New Voices Project and the Chicago A Cappella HerVoice Competition. Her works have been performed by ensembles including Grammy Award-winning Kansas City Chorale, and by church, school, college and community choirs throughout the United States. Tracy is also an active performer, singing soprano with Denver-based choir Kantorei, and with CU Boulder's contemporary music choir, Renova. She earned a Bachelor of Music in composition from Bowling Green State University in 2021, where she studied with Elaine Lillios.

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