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2024-25



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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.

# **Bruce Ekstrand Memorial Graduate Student Performance Competition**

**Competition Finals**

7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 19, 2024

Grusin Music Hall

## **ABOUT THE COMPETITION**

Launched by then Dean Robert Fink at Bruce Ekstrand's suggestion and later renamed to honor the late vice chancellor for academic affairs and psychology professor, the Bruce Ekstrand Memorial Graduate Student Performance Competition awards cash prizes for professional development to outstanding graduate student performers. After preliminaries among individual departments and a semifinal round, up to five finalists are chosen to compete in the grand finale before a panel of judges.

## **SUPPORTING THE EKSTRAND COMPETITION**

The Bruce Ekstrand Memorial Graduate Student Performance Competition is generously supported by the Ekstrand family (Norma Ekstrand, Andrea Ekstrand, Brad & Diana Ekstrand) and other College of Music donors. To support the Ekstrand Competition, the Ekstrand family has generously established a permanent endowment to provide funding for student prizes and associated costs.

To help ensure the continuation of this competition, please make a gift to the Ekstrand Endowment [online](#) or call 303-492-3054.

# 2024 FINALS JUDGES

## Jason Bergman

*Associate Professor of Trumpet at Indiana University Jacobs School of Music*

## Courtney Hershey Bress

*Principal Harpist of the Colorado Symphony; Adjunct Professor of Harp at University of Denver, Lamont School of Music; Lecturer of Harp at the University of Wyoming*

## Cameron Stowe

*Chair of the Collaborative Piano department at the New England Conservatory; Director of the Collaborative Piano program at the Aspen Music Festival and School*

# 2024 SEMIFINALISTS

Julian Bennett, cello

Mark Bennett, trombone

Joel Ferst, saxophone

Harold Gomez-Montoya,  
clarinet

Sidney Grimm, soprano

Sydney Hoehl, trumpet

Connor Johnson, trumpet

Dylan King, saxophone

John-Austin King, piano

Koa String Quartet

Andrew Konopak, baritone

Laura Pérez Rangel, violin

Luca Pompilio, piano

James Robinson, baritone

# 2024 SEMIFINAL JUDGES

Renee Gilliland, Jeremy Reger and Branden Steinmetz

# PROGRAM

Why do the nations so furiously rage together?

From *Messiah*

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

Kogda bi zhizn from *Eugene Onegin*

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

L'invitation au voyage

Henri Duparc (1848-1933)

Four Walt Whitman Songs

Kurt Weill (1900-1950)

Beat! Beat! Drums!

*Andrew Konopak, baritone*

*Runze Li, piano*

Piano Sonata in F minor, Op. 5

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

I. Allegro Maestoso

Gargoyles, Op. 29

Lowell Liebermann (b. 1961)

III. Allegro Moderato

IV. Presto Feroce

*John-Austin King, piano*

## **Blue/s Forms**

Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson (1932-2004)

I. Plain Blue/s

## **Prelúdio No. 1: Batuque**

Flausino Vale (1894-1954)

## **Pampeana No. 1, Op. 16: Rhapsody for Violin and Piano**

Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983)

I. Lento e liberamente ritmato

II. Allegro

*Laura Pérez Rangel, violin*

*Matthew Sebald, piano*

## **Sax Hero**

Phillipe Geiss (b. 1961)

## **Two Preludes**

Dorothy Chang (b. 1970)

Adagio e espressivo

## **Nocturne**

Lili Boulanger (1893-1918)

## **Range of Light**

Stephen Lias (b. 1966)

IV. Clearing Winter Storm

*Joel Ferst, saxophone*

*Hsiao-Ling Lin, piano*

# String Quartet in C Major, Op. 20, “Sun,” No. 2

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

I. Moderato

# String Quartet No. 3 (2014)

Kevin Lau (b. 1982)

I. Gliding

*Koa String Quartet*

*Kisa Uradomo and Leah Pernick, violins*

*Thomas Chafe, viola*

*Heewon Lee, cello*

# THE JUDGES



## JASON BERGMAN

American trumpeter Jason Bergman was appointed associate professor of music in trumpet at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music in 2022.

He has performed throughout the United States, South America, Europe and China. In 2008, Bergman was named Associate Principal Trumpet of the Santiago Philharmonic in Chile and more recently has been principal trumpet of the Mobile

Symphony Orchestra and Mobile Opera. He has also performed with the Utah Symphony, Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, Dallas Symphony, Dallas Opera, Fort Worth Symphony and the Dallas Winds, including on their Grammy-nominated album featuring the music of John Williams. Additionally, Bergman has performed in concert with the Canadian Brass, Rhythm & Brass and with conductor David Robertson at Carnegie Hall as part of the Weill Music Institute. He also performed as a fellow at the Music Academy of the West.

Bergman has given recitals and master classes at numerous institutions worldwide and has performed and presented at the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic, College Music Society, International Tuba and Euphonium Conference, Mississippi Bandmasters Association, Mississippi Music Teachers Association, Utah Music Educators Conference, International Trumpet Guild and the Texas Music Educators Association Annual Convention. As a soloist, he has performed with the Royal Belgian Air Force Band, Mahidol Brass Band, Garland Symphony Orchestra, Timpanogos Symphony, and the Beijing Central Conservatory of Music Wind Ensemble among many other groups.



In the United States, he has been a faculty member at the Idyllwild Chamber Fest, Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp and Grand Valley International Trumpet Seminar, and abroad at the Festival Internacional de Inverno da Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, Música nas Montanhas Festival and Festival de Música de Santa Catarina in Brazil and Semana de la Trompeta Peruana in Peru. A committed educator, Bergman previously served on the faculties of Brigham Young University, the University of North Texas and the University of Southern Mississippi. He received the Class of '49 Young Scholar Award from Brigham Young University and the Nina Bell Suggs Endowed Professorship from the University of Southern Mississippi.

He served as president of the International Trumpet Guild from 2021-2023, where he has also served as an elected member of the Board of Directors. He is a regular adjudicator with the National Trumpet Competition and was host of the 2018 National Trumpet Competition. He also served with Irish trumpet artist, David Collins, as co-host of the 2021 Ellsworth Smith International Trumpet Solo Competition in Dublin, Ireland. Committed to research, Bergman is a contributing author for the *Grove Dictionary of American Music* and served as editor of the Orchestra Section Profile in the International Trumpet Guild Journal. He has released three solo albums on the MSR Classics label, each that includes numerous world premiere recordings. Bergman, who earned a MM and DMA at the University of Michigan and a BM at Brigham Young University, is a Yamaha Artist and exclusively plays Yamaha trumpets.



## COURTNEY HERSHEY BRESS

International soloist and principal harpist Courtney Hershey Bress joined the Colorado Symphony in 2001, after a celebrated freelance career that took her all over the world. Her travels took her to engagements in Asia with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, in the United States with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and, as principal harpist with the United States Army Field Band, as soloist and as part of the ensemble, on tour to the 48 continental states. She has been

principal harpist of the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music and guest principal harpist with the Baltimore Symphony. She has played with the Grand Teton Music Festival, the Strings Music Festival and as a guest artist with the Colorado College Summer Music Festival.

Bress has performed for the American Harp Society and the World Harp Congress. She was the soloist in the world premiere of Michael Daugherty's only harp concerto *Harp of Ages*, in May 2023, a piece commissioned by the Colorado Symphony for Bress. She gave the International premiere with the National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia in Bogotá, Colombia in June 2024. She will be performing the piece across the United States starting fall of 2024. The live recording is available on Naxos Records, streaming on all digital platforms.

Bress is also an active teacher in master classes around the world and in her private teaching studio. She is the adjunct professor of harp at Lamont School of Music, University of Denver; harp instructor for the Lamont Summer Academy; and lecturer of harp at the University of Wyoming. She was assistant professor of harp at Colorado State University from 2016–2021 and has been visiting professor of harp at the Eastman School of Music.

Bress is the author of the book *For Love of the Harp*, published by Veritas Musica Publishing. The book gives advice to young musicians and relates stories about her career, then provides a guide to arranging and composing music for the harp.

Bress was a 2005 GRAMMY® nominee for her performance of *Ancient Voices of Children* by George Crumb. Her performances can be heard on recordings with the Colorado Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, the U.S. Army Field Band and on recordings on the Naxos, Bridge and Albany labels. Her duo album, *Night Music and Fantasies*, with violinist Andrés Cárdenes, was released in December 2022.

Bress earned a Bachelor of Music degree and the Performer's Certificate from the Eastman School of Music and received a Master of Music in orchestral studies from the Chicago College of Performing Arts, Roosevelt University. Her teachers include Kathleen Bride, Sarah Bullen and Gretchen Van Hoesen.



## **CAMERON STOWE**

Pianist Cameron Stowe is a leading specialist in the study and performance of song recital repertoire. He has appeared in concert venues and music festivals in the Far East, Europe, South America and throughout the United States and Canada, playing with some of the most prominent singers of his generation, including Randall Scarlata, Denyce Graves, Measha Brueggergosman, Susan Graham, Danielle DeNiese, Faith Esham, Vinson Cole, Sari Gruber and Jesse Blumberg.

Stowe is director of the collaborative piano program at Aspen Music Festival and chair of the collaborative piano department at New England Conservatory. Until last year, he was also a member of the faculty at The Juilliard School for fifteen years. Formerly a professor at University of Toronto, his festival teaching includes residencies at Toronto Summer Music Festival, Vancouver International Song Institute and the Placido Domingo Festival, and he has given masterclasses for singers and pianists in the United States and abroad.

Recent educational projects include the creation of the innovative Song Lab at NEC and extensive work with musicologist Benjamin Binder, with whom he has designed song workshops and summer courses for performers, musicologists, theorists and literary scholars. Together, they led the Scholarship in Song Performance summer festival at University of British Columbia for four years, assembling students and professionals, including Susan Youens, Jane Brown, Richard Kramer, Michael Musgrave, Graham Johnson, Thomas Allen, Ann Murray and Margo Garrett, to encourage cross-disciplinary approaches in the study of song. In addition, Stowe served as keynote speaker and artist-teacher at the first Chinese National Conference on Collaborative Piano.

Stowe holds a doctorate from Juilliard with a specialized focus in song and vocal chamber music, as well as degrees from Peabody Conservatory and Oberlin College Conservatory.

# THE FINALISTS



## **ANDREW KONOPAK**, baritone

Andrew Konopak is working toward a Master of Music degree at the University of Colorado Boulder, studying with Professor Andrew Garland. Before starting at CU Boulder, Konopak graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree from Cal State Long Beach and worked professionally in Southern California for seven years, where he became known for his “rich clarion baritone” (San Diego Story), singing with both San Diego Opera and Los Angeles Opera Chorus and performing in

concerts around the area. He has worked as a baritone soloist with the San Diego Master Chorale, La Jolla Symphony, San Diego Festival Chorus and Artes Vocales of Los Angeles. With San Diego Opera, Konopak performed Il Commisario in *Madama Butterfly*, Grégorio in *Romeo et Juliette*, and acted as both a soloist and a pitch pipe in *All is Calm*. Outside of California, Konopak has performed in New York, Germany, Austria and Italy.



## **RUNZE LI**, piano

Pianist Runze Li is a second-year MM student in collaborative piano at the College of Music at the University of Colorado Boulder. He has extensive experience collaborating with singers and instrumentalists through art song, opera, musical theater, choir and chamber music. Currently studying with Margaret McDonald and Alexandra Nguyen, Li has participated in master classes with renowned pianists Anne Epperson, Margo Garrett, Graham Johnson, Lydia Brown, and

Roger Vignoles, as well as instrumentalists Charles Castleman, Terry King, and Csaba Erdélyi. Additionally, Li has had the privilege of working with esteemed composers Libby Larsen and John Musto, performing their works in various settings.

# PROGRAM NOTES

## Why do the nations so furiously rage together? From *Messiah*

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

Handel's *Messiah* is the best-known piece in the oratorio repertoire. He composed the entire piece over three weeks and premiered it in a charity concert the next year. It is not difficult to find a performance of Part I plus the "Hallelujah" chorus every year around the winter holidays or Easter. This aria, however, comes from the lesser performed Part II. The bass soloist has not been heard since Part I's ominous "The people that walked in darkness," and Handel gives the soloist a powerful introduction with fiery tremolo strings. Handel features a couple lines of blistering triplet coloratura for the soloist, and then goes straight to a recitative that summarizes the points of the rest of the aria.

Text:

Why do the nations so furiously rage together: why do the people imagine a vain thing?

The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together: against the Lord, and His annointed.

## Kogda bi zhizn from *Eugene Onegin*

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Tchaikovsky composed his great *Eugene Onegin* in 1877-1878 at the suggestion of mezzo-soprano, Yelizaveta Lavrovskaya. He mostly organized the libretto himself, drawing from the original Pushkin novel. At this point in the opera, Onegin has received a letter from the young country girl, Tatyana, in which she confesses her love for him. Through this aria, Onegin lets Tatyana down, telling her that he is unworthy of her virtues. He says that no matter how much they loved each other, he would grow bored of her quickly, and that matrimony for them would be a torment.

Tchaikovsky: *Eugene Onegin* “Onegin’s Aria”

Kogda bi zhizn domashnim krugom  
ya ogranichit zakhotyel,  
kogda b mnye bit otsom, suprugom  
priyatni zhrebi povelyel,  
to, vyerno b, krome vas odnoi,  
nevyesti ne iskal inoi.

No ya ne sozdan dlya blazhenstva,  
yemu chuzhda dusha moyaya.

Naprasni vashi sovershenstva,  
ikh ne dostoyin vovse ya.

Povyerte, sovest v tom porukoi,  
supruzhestvo nam budet mukoi.

Ya skolko ni lyubil bi vas,  
priviknuv, razlyublyu totchas.

Sudite zh vi, kakiye rozi  
nam zagotovil Gimenyei,  
i, mozhet bit, na mnogo dnei!

Mechtam i godam nyet  
vozvrata! ne obnovlyu dushi moyei!

Ya vas lyublyu lyubovyu brata,  
lyubovyu brata,

il, mozhet bit, yeshcho nezhnyei!

il, mozhet bit yeshcho,  
yeshcho nezhnyei!

Poslushaite zh menya bez gnyeva,  
smenit ne raz mladaya dyeva  
mechtami lyogkiye mehti.

If I wished to spend my life  
in a close-knit family,  
and if it were my fate  
to be a husband and a father,  
then, probably, you would be the  
bride that I would choose.

But I wasn’t made for married bliss,  
it is a foreign concept to my soul,  
your perfections are not for me;  
I am quite unworthy of them.

Believe me, I swear to you,  
marriage would be torturous for us.

No matter how much I loved you,  
routine would kill that love.

Think, then, what a thorny bed of  
roses

Hymen would prepare for us,  
to, perhaps, be endured for a  
lifetime!

One cannot return to dreams and  
youth,

No, return is impossible:

I cannot change my soul!

I love you with a brother’s love,  
a brother’s love

or, perhaps, more than that!

Perhaps, perhaps more than that!

Listen to me without getting upset,  
often a young girl will exchange one  
dream for another.

## L'invitation au voyage

Henri Duparc (1848-1933)

Duparc is best known for his sixteen songs, of which “L'invitation au voyage” is one of the best known and loved. In this song, Duparc uses the piano to create hazy, shimmering textures as the singer describes to their loved one all the peaceful and luxurious calm of the country of Holland. The singer imagines the two of them living and dying together in a land where everything is perfect and beautiful.

Duparc: L'invitation au voyage

Mon enfant, ma sœur,  
Songe à la douceur  
D'aller là-bas vivre ensemble!  
Aimer à loisir,  
Aimer et mourir  
Au pays qui te ressemble!  
Les soleils mouillés  
De ces ciels brouillés  
Pour mon esprit ont les charmes  
Si mystérieux  
De tes traîtres yeux,  
Brillant à travers leurs larmes.

Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,  
Luxe, calme et volupté!

Vois sur ces canaux  
Dormir ces vaisseaux  
Dont l'humeur est vagabonde;  
C'est pour assouvir  
Ton moindre désir

Text. Charles Pierre Baudelaire

Translation: Richard Stokes

My child, my sister,  
Think how sweet  
To journey there and live together!  
To love as we please,  
To love and die  
In the land that is like you!  
The watery suns  
Of those hazy skies  
Hold for my spirit  
The same mysterious charms  
As your treacherous eyes  
Shining through their tears.

There - nothing but order and beauty  
dwell,  
Abundance, calm, and sensuous  
delight.

See on those canals  
Those vessels sleeping,  
Vessels with a restless soul;  
To satisfy  
Your slightest desire



Qu'ils viennent du bout du monde.

Les soleils couchants  
Revêtent les champs,  
Les canaux, la ville entière,  
D'hyacinthe et d'or;  
Le monde s'endort  
Dans une chaude lumière.

Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,  
Luxe, calme et volupté!

They come from the ends of the  
earth.

The setting suns  
Clothe the fields,  
Canals and all the town  
With hyacinth and gold;  
The world falls asleep  
In a warm light.

There - nothing but order and beauty  
dwell,  
Abundance, calm, and sensuous  
delight.

## Four Walt Whitman Songs

Kurt Weill (1900-1950)

Weill was a German-born composer who eventually settled in America. After he was denounced as a composer by the Nazis in 1933, he fled to Paris, before moving to the United States in 1935. In 1942 Weill published a set of three Walt Whitman songs: "Beat! Beat! Drums!" "Oh Captain! My Captain!" and "Dirge for Two Veterans." Whitman's subject matter clearly resonated with Weill, as it did for many people during the Second World War. As someone who had his entire life uprooted by war and the hatred leading up to the war, one hears how much this text meant to him in his composition. The left hand of the piano always comes back to the slow ominous march of coming war, and the right hand sounds the bugles between verses. As the singer lists the disruption, destruction and despair that war will bring, the piano interjects dissonant, wordless responses.

Text:

Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!

Through the windows—through doors—burst like a ruthless force,

Into the solemn church, and scatter the congregation,

Into the school where the scholar is studying,

Leave not the bridegroom quiet—no happiness must he have now with his  
bride,

Nor the peaceful farmer any peace, ploughing his field or gathering his  
grain,

So fierce you whirr and pound you drums—so shrill you bugles blow.

Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!

Over the traffic of cities—over the rumble of wheels in the streets;

Are beds prepared for sleepers at night in the houses? no sleepers must  
sleep in those beds,

No bargainers' bargains by day—no brokers or speculators—would they  
continue?

Would the talkers be talking? would the singer attempt to sing?

Would the lawyer rise in the court to state his case before the judge?

Then rattle quicker, heavier drums—you bugles wilder blow.

Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!

Make no parley—stop for no expostulation,

Mind not the timid—mind not the weeper or prayer,

Mind not the old man beseeching the young man,

Let not the child's voice be heard, nor the mother's entreaties,

Make even the trestles to shake the dead where they lie awaiting the  
hearses,

So strong you thump O terrible drums—so loud you bugles blow.



## **JOHN-AUSTIN KING**, piano

John-Austin King is a classical pianist, teacher and composer from Clover, South Carolina. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees in classical piano performance from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in piano performance at CU Boulder under the tutelage of Andrew Cooperstock. In addition to his orchestral debut as soloist with the Bohuslav Martinu Philharmonic at age

18, King's performances have taken him across the globe to venues in Germany, Iceland and various regions of the continental United States. Most recently, King was the first prize winner in the Colorado MTNA young artist competition. He is passionate about delivering engaging performances to inspire audiences of all kinds to seek out the hidden treasures to be found in classical music. When he is not practicing or performing, King composes music of his own and stays involved in independent film-scoring projects.

## **PROGRAM NOTES**

### **Piano Sonata in F minor, Op. 5**

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Composed in 1853 when he was barely 20 years old, the titanic third sonata in F minor by Johannes Brahms spans approximately 35 minutes in its entirety, so packed with musical ideas that its scope was expanded to five movements instead of the conventional three or four. Following a visit by Brahms that same year to Robert Schumann in Dusseldorf, the famed composer and music critic wrote the following in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* only a month after initially hearing the work:

“sooner or later ... someone would and must appear, fated to give us the ideal expression of times, one who would not gain his mastery by gradual stages, but rather spring fully armed like Minerva from the head of Jove. And he has come, a young blood at whose cradle graces and heroes mounted guard. His name is Johannes Brahms ...”

By the middle of the 19th century, the piano sonata as a genre had already begun its decline from popularity in favor of other modern forms. The young Brahms, however, remained preoccupied with the sonata, admiring and drawing inspiration from those of Ludwig Van Beethoven. The first movement, whose opening measures encompass nearly the entire keyboard, is symphonic in proportion and conception, repeatedly referencing the three note “fate” theme from Beethoven’s fifth symphony. The stark contrasts of this movement, ranging from the explosive and warlike in its principal theme to serene and placid in the second, were typical of Brahms. This tendency also drew criticism from many detractors, claiming a lack of coherence in his works. Nevertheless, this work remains a staple of the genre and stands as an important testament to the way by which a composer of immense skill can breathe new life into a once antiquated form.

## **Gargoyles, Op. 29**

Lowell Liebermann (b. 1961)

Commissioned by the Tcherepnin Society for pianist Eric Himy and debuted in Alice Tully Hall in 1989, Lowell Liebermann’s *Gargoyles* is “... a diabolical set of four études ... by the young Juilliard-trained composer Lowell Liebermann, whose neo-romantic idiom is dramatic and, to judge by the audience response, highly appealing.” (Gramophone). Each movement of this set evokes through many different means the imagery of cathedral gargoyles which display grotesque faces in an often humorous way. The *Allegro Moderato* is dominated by crystalline textures through which an innocent, almost childlike melody is woven. In combination with Liebermann’s harmonic design, however, this unassuming melody often morphs into a haunting chant, later transforming once more into a

chilling duet. The unrelenting finale, marked *Presto Feroce*, or “very fast and ferociously”, is a relentless, apocalyptic perpetuum mobile, offering no respite for the performer or listener. Galloping rhythms dominate the movement as the gargoyles become steadily more ferocious, culminating in a blistering finale in which the pianist’s hands fly and leap over one another, swarming upwards until the music comes tumbling down with a final bang. Interspersed throughout this movement are many moments of humor, however, where the gargoyles seem to interrupt one another or fly up and down erratically through the piano’s register.



## **LAURA PÉREZ RANGEL**, violin

Laura Pérez Rangel is a Venezuelan violinist, born in Maracaibo where she started in El Sistema, developing her musical studies as an orchestral musician and violin instructor. Pérez began studies in ethnomusicology in 2018, and in 2019 she transferred to Bard College and Conservatory where she graduated with a BM in violin performance and a BA in human rights studies with a focus on anthropology.

Pérez has studied under the guidance of Carmit Zori, Yi-Wen Jiang, Erica Kiesewetter, Rubén Cova, Rhio Sánchez, Luis Miguel González and Sergio Celis, and has participated in masterclasses with Claude Sim, Ray Chen, Adele Anthony, Gil Shaham, Movses Pogossian, Daniel Phillips and Luosha Fang. As an orchestra musician, she has performed with several orchestras, such as The Orchestra Now, Classical Music Institute of San Antonio and Boulder Chamber Orchestra, participating in tours to Austria, China, Italy and Mexico.

Pérez is currently pursuing a master's degree in violin performance at CU, serving as a teaching assistant and studying with professors Harumi Rhodes and Edward Dusinberre, violinists of the Takács Quartet.



## **MATTHEW SEBALD**, piano

Known for his bold performance presence and praised as a dedicated musician, Matthew Sebald is very active as a collaborative pianist and vocal coach. Sebald's professional engagements have included continuo player for the NMPAS performance of Bach's *St. John Passion* and a trip to the XVIII World Saxophone Congress in Croatia where he collaborated with Scott Sandberg (UND) in the premiere of Catherine McMichael's *Duality* for tenor saxophone and piano. Sebald has also

proven himself to be an accomplished solo pianist; accolades include winner of the 2016 Bismarck-Mandan Symphony Orchestra Concerto competition and UND's 2015 Mozart Piano Concerto competition, and runner-up for the 2017 Greater Grand Forks Concerto Competition. He holds a Master of Music degree in collaborative piano from CU Boulder and is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in this field. Sebald's research in the doctoral program will provide practical tools for beginning vocal coaches, specifically through a written guidebook that compliments the literature available for this fascinating field. Sebald is a student of Margaret McDonald and Alexandra Nguyen.

## **PROGRAM NOTES**

### **Blue/s Forms**

Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson (1932-2004)

African American composer Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson dedicated *Blue/s Forms* to violinist Sanford Allen, the first African American violinist to join the New York Philharmonic. This solo violin piece is inspired by blues, jazz and spirituals and showcases deep lyricism combined with intricate technique. *Plain Blue/s* is the first of three movements, which focuses on the challenge of keeping the "swing" spirit of the music while playing constant double-stops. A combination of repetition and variation are a feature of this music. The other two movements are named *Just Blue/s* and *Jettin' Blue/s*.

## Prelúdio No. 1: Batuque

Flausino Vale (1894-1954)

Flausino Vale was a lawyer, educator, poet, self-taught violinist, composer and ethnomusicologist. *Batuque* was one of his earliest works, one of 26 Preludes Characteristics and Concertantes for violin solo, which are virtuosic miniatures that reference Brazilian folk music. The batuque is a genre of Afro-Brazilian music and dance that was popular in certain regions of Brazil during the 19th century.

## Pampeana No. 1, Op. 16: Rhapsody for Violin and Piano

Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983)

Ginastera composed his *Pampeanas* during his “objective” nationalistic period when he directly incorporated elements from Argentinian folk music into his compositions. The word *Pampeana* means “of the *pampas*,” a region of South America characterized by fertile low grasslands that extend through parts of Uruguay, Brazil and Argentina.

The piano’s opening arpeggio introduces Ginastera’s *gaucho* chord, which evokes a guitar tuning. This chord can be found throughout his compositions, especially those of this early period: this is his way of communicating the imagery of the pampas and the *gauchos*, the “cowboys” of the pampas. The writing for the violin, on the other hand, focuses on more lyrical and improvisatory material, with little cadenzas throughout the opening section.

The exciting and virtuosic *Allegro* that follows combines references to *El gato* and *Bailecito* folk music and dance genres which, although transformed each time they appear, still remain recognizable. Ginastera uses these same dances to build up momentum until a brief cadenza-like passage abruptly interrupts the dance. Nonetheless, the dance keeps re-starting with a sense of instability, saturation and wildness, driving forward to an explosive ending.





## **JOEL FERST**, saxophone

Joel Ferst is a multi-disciplinary experimental performance artist, improviser, composer, and educator, pushing the boundaries of both the saxophone and technology. A native of Florida, he is currently a doctoral student and graduate teaching assistant at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Ferst feels comfortable performing in any musical genre. As co-founder and co-artistic director, he has helped establish SoundMap in Austin, now recognized as Texas' premier contemporary chamber ensemble. He has performed as an improviser and soloist at Brazil's Plurisons Music Festival and recently completed artistic residencies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the Federal University of Paraíba in João Pessoa, Brazil, and the University of California, Santa Barbara. A dedicated advocate for new music, he has premiered over forty new works for saxophone.

Ferst would like to thank his current teacher, Nathan Mertens, for all his help. Ferst also holds degrees from the University of Texas at Austin under Stephen Page and Januibe Tejera, and from Florida State University under Geoffrey Deibel.



## **HSIAO-LING LIN**, piano

Pianist Hsiao-Ling Lin joined the keyboard department faculty at the University of Colorado Boulder in 2011. Praised for her versatility and sensitive style, Lin enjoys an active career as a soloist, chamber musician and educator. Her performances have been broadcasted live over the TV and radio stations, and she has performed with musicians including members of the Takács Quartet, Stefan Jackiw, Carol Wincenc, Christoph Hartmann, Toyin Spellman-Diaz and Peter Steiner,

among others. Lin has held staff pianist positions at Vivace International Music Festival, Meadowmount School for Strings, the International Festival-Institute at Round Top, the Chicago College of Performing Arts, Northwestern University, the International Horn Competition of America and the International Double Reed Society. Outside of the University, she is rehearsal pianist for Colorado Symphony Chorus and regularly performs with the Colorado Symphony. Lin received her Doctor of Music Degree in piano performance and collaborative arts at Northwestern University, additionally, she holds degrees from the New England Conservatory and DePaul University. Her teachers and mentors include Victor Rosenbaum, Eteri Andjaparidze, James Giles, Elizabeth Buccheri, Anne Epperson and Jonathan Feldman.

# PROGRAM NOTES

## Sax Hero

Phillipe Geiss (b. 1961)

Philippe Geiss is saxophonist, composer and professor at the Strasbourg Conservatory and Superior Academy of Music / HEAR. Lecturer at the Paris National Superior Conservatory of Music for Hybrid learning.

His work, *Sax Hero*, published in 2015, was commissioned by the French virtuoso saxophonist Nicolas Prost. The work is based on electric guitar solos, specifically *Asturias* from Issac Albéniz and the metal guitar hero's melodic lines.

## Two Preludes

Dorothy Chang (b. 1970)

Described as “evocative and kaleidoscopic” and “beautiful and gripping,” the music of composer Dorothy Chang reflects an eclectic mix of musical influences ranging from popular and folk music to elements of traditional Chinese music. Written in 1993, *Two Preludes* was originally conceived as short movements to precede an intended more substantial piece for saxophone and piano. The larger work was never written, and the preludes now stand as a complete work on their own. The movements are contrasting in character, written to highlight the saxophone's range of expression. *Adagio e espressivo* is gentle and lyrical, with an emphasis on creating a sense of spaciousness and transparency. The saxophone melody, supported by a sparse piano accompaniment, unfolds slowly and has a very free and improvisatory feel.

## Nocturne

Lili Boulanger (1893-1918)

Marie-Juliette Olga “Lili” Boulanger was a French composer and the first female winner of the Prix de Rome composition prize. She was considered at a young age to be a musical prodigy. This was perhaps not too surprising for the Boulanger family, since her mother and grandmother were singers, her father, Ernest, was also a composer, and her older sister being the famed composer and composition teacher Nadia Boulanger. *Nocturne* was composed in 1911, and was originally scored for solo violin and piano accompaniment. As the title suggests, the night time was the basis and inspiration for this short work for violin. It should also be noted that Lili was very close to her father, who she lost at the age of six. It is suggested that many of her works touch on themes of grief, as she was greatly affected by his passing and it would not be out of character to say that *Nocturne* fits into this category. The work was later arranged for flute and this current arrangement was prepared by the performer himself.

## Range of Light

Stephen Lias (b. 1966)

The music of adventurer-composer Stephen Lias is regularly performed in concerts and recitals throughout the United States and abroad by soloists and ensembles. He currently resides in Nacogdoches, Texas, where he is Professor of Composition at Stephen F. Austin State University. Written in 2014, *Range of Light* is a tour-de-force for the advanced saxophonist. Each of the four movements is based on selected photographs of Yosemite National Park by Ansel Adams. The fourth movement gets its name from Adams’ photo titled “Clearing Winter Storm,” which was taken in 1937, just as a rain turned snow storm was beginning to clear away.



## KOA STRING QUARTET

The Koa String Quartet is composed of violinists Kisa Uradomo (Maui, Hawai'i) and Leah Pernick (Metro Detroit, Michigan), violist Thomas Chafe (Annapolis, Maryland), and cellist Heewon Lee (O'ahu, Hawai'i). The quartet originated in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where they were mentored by University of Michigan faculty Matt Albert, Caroline Coade, and Kathryn Votapek. In the fall of 2024, Koa started their fellowship at the University of Colorado Boulder as the Graduate String Quartet-in-Residence, studying with the Takács Quartet.

Koa is invested in fostering musical engagement with students and presenting high quality classical music for community audiences. In addition to performing classical string quartet repertoire together, Koa also performs diverse repertoire such as film scores, pop covers, and folk music. During their time as a quartet, they have prioritized their goals through their work as the Quartet-in-Residence at the Hana Hou Music Program and by presenting free performances at concert halls and public spaces.

The name “Koa” comes from the tree in the Hawaiian Islands, and the wood symbolizes strength and courage.

# PROGRAM NOTES

## String Quartet in C Major, Op. 20, “Sun,” No. 2

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Joseph Haydn was an Austrian composer who was often hailed as the “Father of the String Quartet” for his considerable contributions to the style and form during the 18th century. Haydn’s innovative Opus 20 quartets are nicknamed the “Sun Quartets” as a result of the sun illustration which appeared on the cover of the first edition. However, this name is also fitting figuratively as these quartets brought with them the dawn of a new era in chamber music. Here, Haydn introduces a new style that equally features all four voices and blends them together into a balanced texture. Whereas in his earlier quartets, the first violin is responsible for stating the main theme of the opening movement and taking on a leading role throughout, in this quartet, the movement begins with the cello singing out the theme in its higher register, while the viola assumes the cello’s customary role of providing the bass line. The cello continues this melodic role throughout the movement, with the first violin uncharacteristically joining last, setting up this inventive new quartet.

## String Quartet No. 3 (2014)

Kevin Lau (b. 1982)

Kevin Lau is one of Canada’s most versatile and sought-after composers. He is a prolific composer known for his orchestral, chamber, ballet, opera, and film music that is often inspired by the fantastical and surreal. In his String Quartet No. 3, we see Lau’s creativity and ability to bend genres breathe new life into the traditional string quartet repertoire. He describes this work as “a broad attempt to weave some of my cherished musical influences into a coherent whole. In an effort to explore the roots of my musical identity, I have tried to find common ground among a diverse array of perspectives.”

The first movement, *Gliding*, follows a structure in which the lyrical melody, inspired by Far East folk songs and Renaissance chorales, bookends a middle section suggestive of the percussive rhythms of heavy metal. These differing elements are brought together by constantly changing metrical elements, which creates a sense of freedom and spontaneity in the music. Like the Haydn opus 20, this is another imaginative work that celebrates the versatility of the genre.

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