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2024-25

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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

Featuring the Sphere Ensemble

7:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 15, 2025

Grusin Music Hall

PROGRAM

Nature Scenes

Ryan Flat

- I. The Forest
- II. The Creatures
- III. The Moon and Stars
- IV. The Mountain

Samuel Nixon, flute/piccolo

Aria Henson, flute

Emilie Feve, oboe/English horn

Luka Vezmar, oboe

Caden Craig, clarinet

Benjamin Rathje, clarinet

Larissa Harrison, bassoon

Isabel Goodwin, contrabassoon

Holly McMahon, piano

Invention in E minor

Prelude to a Forest Fugue in A minor

Forest Fugue in A minor

Glenda Luck

Andrew Todd, piano

What's the Matter?

Luka Vezmar

- I. Grenadilla Blues
- II. Brass Ballad
- III. Maple Wood Rag

Grace Stringfellow, oboe

Gleyton Pinto, B-flat clarinet

Joel Ferst, alto sax

Juan Vargas, bass clarinet

Sam Macken, bassoon

Intermission

Chromatic Abyss

Nicholas Felder

Nicholas Felder, voice

Joel Ferst, soprano saxophone

Nathan Mertens, alto saxophone

Colin Crake, tenor saxophone

Ian Gunnarschja, baritone saxophone

Music for Motion

Carter Pann

- I. Beneath the Wheel
- II. Kleiner Morganwanderer
- III. Falling
- IV. John's Runaway Yacht Rock Vibes

Sphere Ensemble

Alejandro Gómez Guillén, conductor

Violin 1: Evan De Long, Veronica Sawarynski, Nina Fronjian, Sarah Whitnah

Violin 2: Autumn Pepper, Mary Evans, Brune Macary

Viola: Aimée McAnulty, Alex Vittal, Ally Stibbards

Cello: Jake Saunders, David Short

Bass: Forest Greenough

PROGRAM NOTES

Nature Scenes

Ryan Flat

Nature Scenes portrays four scenes from the natural world and describes one's journey through them. The first movement represents the humble, noble forest that stands strong and guards the landscape within. The second movement represents creatures: the vibrant fluffy and feathery friends of the forest that are filled with energy and whimsy. The third movement represents the moon and stars as a peaceful ballad. Finally, the fourth movement represents a mountain, imposing, unmoving, and majestic.

Invention in E minor

Prelude to a Forest Fugue in A minor

Forest Fugue in A minor

Glenda Luck

These three piano works are inspired by my longing to visit Sintra, Portugal, particularly the enchanting Pena Park and its lush forests, written about by Eurydice da Silva. For me, these works are about the essence of yearning and a profound desire for experiences yet to be realized. Drawing on emotions tied to new possibilities and unfulfilled dreams, these compositions explore the delicate interplay between hope and longing.

It is my desire to inspire the listener and performer to connect with their own aspirations and dreams. Through the invention, the prelude and the fugue, I hope to evoke a whimsical sense of potential and beauty, encouraging listeners to embrace the unknown and find inspiration in their own creative journeys.

What's the Matter?

Luka Vezmar

What's The Matter? is a piece for reed quintet (oboe, clarinet, saxophone, bass clarinet and bassoon) which consists of three movements titled: *Grenadilla Blues*, *Brass Ballad* and *Maple Wood Rag*, in order. Each movement highlights a different material each instrument is made out of. The oboe, clarinet and bass clarinet are all made out of Grenadilla wood, which is the dark wood that basically looks black. The saxophone is made out of metal, specifically brass. Last but not least, the bassoon is made out of maple wood, a lighter wood than grenadilla because of the size of the instrument. Each movement showcases it's respective instrument(s), so listen out for some great solos!

Chromatic Abyss

Nicholas Felder

Growing up Black and queer, I experienced a lifetime of censoring myself. Not allowing myself to live into certain parts of my being, out of survival. Only recently have I gradually started to unlearn some of those socializations and thoughts. I took this composition as an opportunity to imagine what it would be like if I were to just strip away all the censoring and constraints. What I asked myself and what I now ask the listeners: What would it be like if, in this moment, you could do and say what feels most natural to you? What would that feel like?

To the listeners, I encourage you to give yourself permission to explore and then own it.

Music for Motion

Carter Pann

Lately, the inspiration to commit musical ideas to any kind of permanence has come from the artists for whom I'm lucky enough to write. The musicians themselves become the fuel that keeps me burning. When I heard Sphere perform in spring 2024, they presented a program of many brilliant

arrangements by Alex Vittal and others, followed by Tchaikovsky's celebrated *Serenade for Strings*. At that time, my piece had already been commissioned by Christine Harbison, but I had no concrete ideas just yet. After hearing and watching them perform Tchaikovsky's serenade I came to grips with just how privileged and lucky I was ... that anything and everything was fair game. I could feel my own engine start to rev up even as I walked to my car after that concert. *Music for Motion* strives to show off these 13 fluent and flexible musicians in the best way possible. Each of these four movements is set to a different kind of motion (by tempo and character).

I. Beneath the Wheel takes its name from the tragic novel by Hermann Hesse. This book, like *Damien* and his others, imprinted itself on my memory as an admonition against arrested development at a young age. Ominous at first, the music's twisted motif wends its way through more elegant and lighter moments, however there is a Slavic-type despondency (with a question) at the conclusion.

II. Kleiner Morganwanderer (Little Morning Wanderer), like the seventeenth piece from Robert Schumann's *Album for the Young*, depicts a young boy on a morning excursion through the woods. There is both innocence and confidence in this music, and even some marching.

III. Falling is sad but hopeful music. A continuous series of sinking and ever-drooping chorale phrases with unfulfilled promises of breaking its own spell combine to make music of great heartache. Grand, non vibrato "Cathedral music" appears as an antidote to the multitude of valleys and depressions, only to conclude on the very lowest note of the lowest instrument.

IV. John's Runaway Yacht Rock Vibes fuses two ideas into one: 70s and 80s soft rock dance music with John Adams' older brand of minimalism (from nearly the same period). Like mixing two colors together, the result here was always something I thought about exploring in the future. And here we are!

PERSONNEL

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Annika Socolofsky, faculty coach

Nicholas Felder, community outreach coordinator

Gracie Fagan, social media coordinator

Keenan Powell, stage manager

Carter Pann, Christoffersen Faculty Fellow in Composition;
professor of composition; chair, composition department

Nicholas Felder

Nicholas Felder (he/him) is a Black queer artist, composer-vocalist, activist and educator who creates art around identity, communal joy and healing, and youth empowerment. He builds community in artmaking, unlocking truths around self-identity, and creating space for embodied expression. Felder has led educational programs and workshops with numerous arts organizations, such as the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra and the Denver Young Artists Orchestra. He loves to encourage young adults to express their social and political views through artmaking.

An active composer and collaborator, Felder has had his works performed nationally by ensembles, such as the Hawaii Youth Symphony, Mivos Quartet, Kennesaw State University Symphony Orchestra, DC Youth Orchestra Program and University of Michigan Converge Quartet.

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 the CU Boulder Philharmonia, Renova New Music Ensemble, Platt Middle School Music Program and the CU Buffoons. He has also featured many works on the CU Boulder 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 Westview Church and the CU Buffoons: the oldest acapella group at CU Boulder. He has also played trombone and percussion in CU Boulder's symphonic and campus bands, sang in Chamber Singers, and acted as drum major in the "Golden Buffalo" Marching Band for two seasons.

Glenda Luck

In the relentless pace of modern life, Glenda Luck's music creates a sanctuary for you—an intimate invitation to pause, breathe and reconnect with the emotions and stories that celebrate your humanity. Rooted in a deep bond with nature, inspired by a childhood spent dancing barefoot through the forest in upstate New York, her compositions offer you a moment of warmth and stillness, a chance for transformation and meaning.

Luck brings you a unique voice in classical music—one that speaks directly to your heart. This music invites you to feel your own authenticity. It draws you into an intimate community of shared experience, offering a powerful connection that transcends time and place. In a world where genuine connection often feels lost, Luck's compositions compel us to remember who we are. Through refined craftsmanship and curated orchestrations, she will enrapture you with an honesty that will inspire you to clarity, and introspection. The experience of losing yourself in this music, is a journey for you to reclaim the beauty and meaning woven into every moment of your 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 as well as in 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.

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Photo credit: Glenn Asakawa.