

# CU ★ PRESENTS

## January-February 2024

- ★ Joyce Yang with the Takács Quartet Jan. 12
- 🎵 Takács Quartet Jan. 14-15
- ★ MOMIX Jan. 20
- ★ Step Afrika! Feb. 2
- 🎵 Jasper String Quartet Feb. 18-19

23/24

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Step Afrika! comes to Macky Auditorium on Feb. 2. Photo by Sekou Luke.

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**CU Presents** is the home of performing arts on the beautiful University of Colorado Boulder campus. With hundreds of concerts, plays, recitals and more on our stages each year, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

★ **Artist Series**

CU **Colorado Shakespeare Festival**

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CU **CU Performing Arts**, including the **College of Music**, **Department of Theatre & Dance** and the **Holiday Festival**.

## CU ★ PRESENTS

**JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2024**

**Editors:** Laima Haley, Sabine Kortals Stein

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Jasper String Quartet: Photo by Lisa-Marie Mazzucco

Takács Quartet: Photo by Amanda Tipton

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.



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# A violin superstar

By Henry Michaels

A Curtis Institute of Music education. First-place wins in some of the most prestigious competitions in classical music. An ambassador for SONY Electronics. 250,000 followers on YouTube.

This eclectic and unmistakably 21st-century resume belongs to Ray Chen, the virtuoso violinist who has charted a distinctive path to success and “[redefined] what it means to be a classical musician” in today’s world. Chen’s classical music bona fides alone would put him in elite company. Born in Taiwan and raised in Australia, Chen won first prize in the Yehudi Menuhin International Competition for Young Violinists in 2008, a feat which he followed up by winning first prize in the Queen Elisabeth Competition the following year. He was a mere 20 years old at the time. Since then, he’s released multiple highly acclaimed albums, toured the globe as a soloist and performed with, among others, the London, Los Angeles and New York philharmonics.

But what sets Ray Chen apart from many of his classical music contemporaries is the way that he has embraced the opportunities presented by an ever-connected, social media-obsessed world. His YouTube channel features music, education and more than a dash of great comedic timing, all with the kind of slick, eye-catching production one would expect from the popular video-sharing platform. He serves as a brand ambassador for SONY Electronics and has consulted for and collaborated with some of the best-known companies in the video game industry. Then there’s Tonic, an app co-founded by Chen that allows musicians to practice and encourage others in real-time.

In a classical music industry marked by frequent discussions about how to reach new patrons, Chen is one of the finest examples of an artist doing just that. Whether in sold-out concerts around the world or through YouTube and other media, he’s introducing classical music to a whole new audience.

Like Paganini, Liszt and other renowned virtuosos, Chen is one of those once-in-a-blue-moon classical musicians who has reached true superstar status. And like those virtuosos of ages past, it’s Chen’s artistry, his infectious personality and his stage presence that have combined to set him apart.

Chen’s glittering artistry will take center stage at Macky Auditorium on March 21, 2024. Alongside renowned pianist Julio Elizalde—himself a past winner (with the New Trio) of both the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition and the Coleman Chamber Competition—this eclectic concert will feature music ranging from J.S. Bach to Chick Corea.

**RAY CHEN AND  
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# CU ★ PRESENTS

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### TICKETED EVENT KEY

- ★ Artist Series
- 🎵 Takács Quartet
- CU CU Boulder Performing Arts



Scan this QR code or visit  
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to explore the full season.



### Takács Quartet

Jan. 14-15, 2024



*Streaming Jan. 14-22*



### MOMIX

Alice

Saturday, Jan. 20, 7:30 p.m.



### Step Afrika!

Friday, Feb. 2, 7:30 p.m.



### Jasper String Quartet

Feb. 18-19, 2024



*Streaming Feb. 18-26*



### The Play That Goes Wrong

March 8-17, 2024



### Takács Quartet

March 10-11, 2024



*Streaming March 10-18*





## Titanic, the Musical

March 15-17, 2024

**CU** Macky Auditorium



## Ray Chen, violin and Julio Elizalde, piano

Thursday, March 21, 7:30 p.m.

**CU** Macky Auditorium

## Good to know for the show:

### ACCESSIBILITY

The University of Colorado is committed to providing equal access to individuals with disabilities.



For more information, scan this QR code or visit [cupresents.org/accessibility](https://cupresents.org/accessibility).

### LATE SEATING

Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the house manager.

There is no late seating in the Music Theatre (Imig Music Building) or Loft Theatre (University Theatre Building).

### PHOTOS AND RECORDINGS

Photography and video recordings of any type are strictly prohibited during the performance.

### SMOKING

Smoking is not permitted anywhere. CU Boulder is a smoke-free campus.

### TICKET SALES

Ticket sales are final; no refunds. Exchanges are subject to availability and must be made at least one business day prior to the day of performance.

Subscribers may exchange tickets for free. Single-ticket exchanges are subject to a \$3 exchange fee. Upgrade fees may apply in all cases.

Please return your tickets to the box office prior to the performance if you are unable to use them.



## Asleep at the Wheel

With the CU Symphony Orchestra

Friday, April 5, 7:30 p.m.

**CU** Macky Auditorium



## The Current

April 11-14, 2024

**CU** Roe Green Theatre



## American Stories by American Women

April 25-28, 2024

**CU** Music Theatre



## Takács Quartet

April 28-29, 2024

**CU** Grusin Music Hall

Streaming April 28-May 6

# Joyce Yang, piano with the Takács Quartet

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**Presented by the Artist Series**

Friday, Jan. 12, 7:30 p.m.

Macky Auditorium

Tickets start at \$20

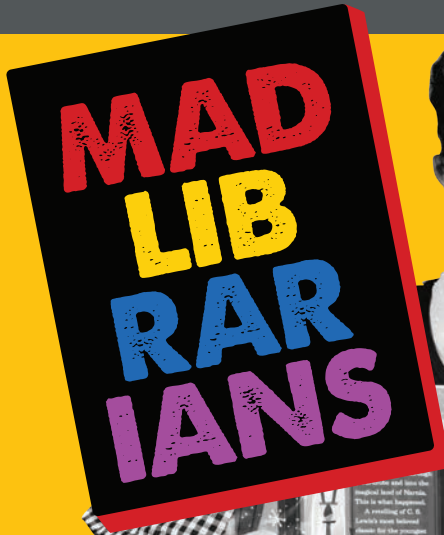
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# Step: a joyful act of resistance

By Becca Vaclavik

It's fitting that Step Afrika!, one of the top 10 African-American dance companies in the United States, will perform on a university stage when it comes to Boulder this winter. It's part of the form's history after all.

Stepping—a high-powered, dynamic art form where the body is both dancer and instrument—uses stomping, clapping, and spoken word to create complex sonic choreography.

Modern step was developed by fraternities and sororities, primarily at historically Black colleges. In the 20th century, as American universities slowly opened their doors to Black students, those students launched Greek organizations as a space for support, community and pride. Stepping became part of their group ritual and eventually evolved into performances and shows. Today, it borrows inspiration from jazz, tap, hip-hop, cheerleading and more.

“As much as they are dancers, they also are musicians,” says Step Afrika! Founder C. Brian Williams. “They are

both the movement and the music, and that’s the unique challenge for any percussive dancer.”

But stepping as a cultural practice has roots that run much deeper than campus communities.

Percussive movement and chanting have been part of West African folk dance for centuries and became a cultural feature of the African diaspora during the rise of slavery.

Some historians link this past to its present art form by way of the 1739 Stono Rebellion when a large group of enslaved Africans armed themselves and revolted in Charleston, South Carolina. Following the rebellion, enslaved people were stripped of the few rights they previously held, including the right to use drums. In the aftermath, they began to create music with all that remained: their histories and their bodies.

(Step Afrika! examines this history and relationship in a piece in its repertoire titled “Drumfolk.”)

It’s a near-miraculous evolution that stepping has gone from an act of resistance to one of community ritual to a professional cultural export, courtesy of Step Afrika! and groups like it.

Founded in 1994, it’s the first professional company dedicated to the tradition of stepping. The company has toured internationally to 50 countries and creates works that combine stepping with live music, technology and storytelling.

*The performance is proudly sponsored by the Center for African and African American Studies (CAAAS), partnering with CU Presents to celebrate the richness of African and African American arts and culture.*

**STEP AFRIKA!**  
Artist Series

Feb. 2, 2024  
Macky Auditorium  
Starting at \$24








The Center for African and African American Studies (acronym: the CAAAS, and commonly called the Cause) is the focal point for Black community and Black culture at the University of Colorado Boulder. It is a co-curricular and community-building space where students, staff, faculty, alumni, artists, activists, allies, and community members come together to critically study the historical, cultural, and artistic experiences of Africans, African Americans, and the African diaspora.

The Center has three major programs: the CAAAS Research Program, the CAAAS Visual and Performing Arts Program and the CAAAS Student Services Program. As a result, it is simultaneously a research center, cultural arts center, and student services center.

For further information and/or to join the CAAAS/the Cause community visit our website at [colorado.edu/center/caaas](http://colorado.edu/center/caaas) or contact us at [caaas@colorado.edu](mailto:caaas@colorado.edu).



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# MOMIX

## Alice

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Saturday, Jan. 20, 7:30 p.m.  
Macky Auditorium  
Tickets start at \$24

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# Ekstrand Competition winners announced

By MarieFaith Lane

We're pleased to share that violinist Rinat Erlichman ('25) won first prize in the 2023-2024 Bruce Ekstrand Memorial Graduate Student Performance Competition! Under the mentorship of Associate Professor of Violin and Artist in Residence Harumi Rhodes and Artist in Residence Edward Dusingber, Erlichman prepared a program featuring works by Ernest Bloch, Paul Ben Haim and George Gershwin.

Erlichman (pictured above) was awarded \$2,000—plus the audience favorite prize (\$250). "Winning first prize and audience favorite for this year's Ekstrand Competition is incredibly meaningful to me," she says. "Preparing for the competition has helped me expand my repertoire

and develop my skills. I was honored to play the program in the final round with pianist Max Randal and all the wonderful finalists.

"I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the Ekstrand family. Your generosity means I can devote more of my time to develop my career and share my music."

Congratulations, Rinat, on this well-deserved achievement!

Cellist Chas Barnard—a student of Associate Professor of Cello David Requiro—won second prize (\$1,000). Other finalists (\$500 each) include Maggie Brady, violin (student of Harumi Rhodes); Jenna Clark, mezzo-soprano (student of Associate Professor of

Voice Abigail Nims); and Allyson Kreider, flute (student of Professor of Flute Christina Jennings).

We applaud all performers as well as their teachers and collaborative pianists, including Jude Markel, Barbara Noyes, Max Randal and Christine Teng!

Our gratitude goes to the college's Ekstrand competition co-chairs: Professor of Music Education and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies Margaret Berg and Postdoctoral Lecturer in Collaborative Piano Barbara Noyes. We're also deeply appreciative of this year's adjudicators: Philip Hembree, Assistant Principal Trumpet, Colorado Symphony and Instructor, University of Northern Colorado; Wilbur Lin, Assistant Conductor, Colorado Symphony and Music Director, Denver Young Artists Orchestra; and Seoyoen Min, Principal Cellist, Colorado Symphony.

The Bruce Ekstrand Memorial Graduate Student Performance Competition was established by then-Dean Robert Fink at the suggestion of Bruce Ekstrand—later renamed to pay tribute to the late vice chancellor for academic affairs and psychology professor. An ardent supporter of our College of Music, Ekstrand was also a member of the CU Boulder Golden Buffalo Men's Chorus.

The competition grants cash prizes for professional development to outstanding graduate student performers. After preliminaries among individual departments and a semifinal round, five finalists are selected to compete before a panel of judges.

*Partially funded by the Ekstrand Competition Endowment Fund, this annual event is the premier performance competition for the College of Music's most outstanding graduate students.*

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# Joyce Yang, piano with the Takács Quartet

## Dvorák's Piano Quintet

Friday, Jan. 12, 7:30 p.m.

Macky Auditorium

### Program

**The Seasons, Op. 37a** (selections)

**Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)**

January: By the Fireside

February: Carnival

April: Snowdrop

May: May Nights

June: Barcarolle

August: Harvest

### Three Preludes

**Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)**

Op. 32, No. 10 in B minor: Lento

Op. 32, No. 12 in G-sharp minor: Allegro

Op. 23, No. 4 in D Major: Andante



Tonight's show is generously sponsored  
by **Boulder CPA Group**.

#### NEED TO KNOW FOR THE SHOW

- Joyce Yang appears by arrangement with Arts Management Group, Inc., 130 W. 57th St., NY, NY 10019. [artsmg.com](http://artsmg.com). STEINWAY PIANO. Discography: AVIE
- The Takács Quartet appears by arrangement with Seldy Cramer Artists, 200 Lakeshore Dr., #802, Oakland, CA 94612. [seldycramerartists.com](http://seldycramerartists.com). Discography: HYPERION
- Photography and video recordings of any type are strictly prohibited during the performance.
- See Page 9 of this publication for additional show and venue policies.

## *The Firebird Suite*

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

arr. Guido Agosti (1901-1989)

L'oiseau de Feu – danse infernale du roi Katchei

Berceuse

Finale

### — Intermission —

*With the Takács Quartet:*

## **Piano Quintet in A Major, Op. 81**

Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904)

Allegro ma non tanto

Dumka: Andante con moto

Scherzo; (Furiant): Molto vivace

Finale: Allegro

## **Joyce Yang**

Blessed with “poetic and sensitive pianism” (The Washington Post) and a “wondrous sense of color” (San Francisco Classical Voice), Grammy-nominated pianist Joyce Yang captivates audiences with her virtuosity, lyricism, and interpretive sensitivity.

She first came to international attention in 2005 when she won the silver medal at the 12th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. The youngest contestant at 19 years old, she took home two additional awards: Best Performance of Chamber Music (with the Takács Quartet), and Best Performance of a New Work. In 2006 Yang made her celebrated New York Philharmonic debut alongside Lorin Maazel at Avery Fisher Hall along with the orchestra’s tour of Asia, making a triumphant return to her hometown of Seoul, South Korea. Yang’s subsequent appearances with the New York Philharmonic have included

opening night of the 2008 Leonard Bernstein Festival—an appearance made at the request of Maazel in his final season as music director. The New York Times pronounced her performance in Bernstein’s *The Age of Anxiety* a “knockout.”

In the last decade, Yang has blossomed into an “astonishing artist” (Neue Zürcher Zeitung), showcasing her colorful musical personality in solo recitals and collaborations with the world’s top orchestras and chamber musicians through more than 1,000 debuts and re-engagements. She received the 2010 Avery Fisher Career Grant and earned her first Grammy nomination (Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance) for her recording of Franck, Kurtág, Previn and Schumann with violinist Augustin Hadelich “One can only sit in misty-eyed amazement at their insightful flair and spontaneity” (The Strad).



Other notable orchestral engagements have included Chicago Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, The Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Hong Kong Philharmonic, BBC Philharmonic, as well as the Toronto, Vancouver, Sydney, Melbourne and New Zealand symphony orchestras. She was also featured in a five-year Rachmaninoff concerto cycle with Edo de Waart and Milwaukee Symphony, to which she brought “an enormous palette of colors, and tremendous emotional depth” (Milwaukee Sentinel Journal).

In solo recitals, Yang’s innovative program has been praised as “extraordinary” and “kaleidoscopic” (Los Angeles Times). She has performed at New York City’s Lincoln Center and Metropolitan Museum, The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., Chicago’s Symphony Hall, Zurich’s Tonhalle, and all throughout Australia on a recital tour presented by Musica Viva.

As an avid chamber musician, Yang has collaborated with the Takács Quartet for Dvořák — part of Lincoln Center’s Great Performers series — and Schubert’s “Trout” Quintet with members of the Emerson String Quartet at the Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center. Yang has fostered an enduring partnership with the Alexander String Quartet and together released three celebrated recordings under Foghorn Classics.

As a champion of new music, Yang has premiered and recorded a World Premier discography of Michael Torke’s Piano Concerto with Albany Symphony and David Alan Miller (Albany Records) in 2015, Jonathan Leshnoff’s Piano Concerto with Kansas City Symphony (Reference Recordings) in 2019, and premiered Reinaldo Moya’s Piano Concerto with Bangor Symphony in 2021.

Yang’s discography includes celebrated solo discs (*Collage* and *Wild Dreams*, Avie Records), where she “demonstrated impressive gifts” (The New York Times). Yang also released a live-performance recording of Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No. 1 with Denmark’s Odense Symphony Orchestra (Bridge Records), which International Record Review called “hugely enjoyable, beautifully shaped ... a performance that marks her out as an enormous talent.”

In recent years, Yang has focused on promoting creative ways to introduce classical music to new audiences. She served as the Guest Artistic Director for Laguna Beach Music Festival in California, curating concerts that explore the “art-inspires-art” concept — highlighting the relationship between music and dance while simultaneously curating outreach activities to young students. Yang’s collaboration with the Aspen Santa Fe Ballet of *Half/Cut/Split* — a “witty, brilliant exploration of Robert Schumann’s *Carnaval*” (The Santa Fe New Mexican) choreographed by Jorma Elo — was a marriage between music and dance to illuminate the ingenuity of Schumann’s musical language. The group toured nationwide, including five performances at The Joyce Theater in New York.

Yang began the 2023/2024 season as Artist-in-Residence for Grant Park Music Festival and as guest artist with Aspen Music Festival among others, followed by performances in New Zealand with New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and in Australia with Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. This season, Yang continues to present her wide range of repertoire in more than 30 cities playing 10 different piano concerti, solo recitals and chamber music.

Born in Seoul, South Korea, Yang received her first piano lesson from her aunt at the age of 4. She quickly took to the instrument, which she received as a birthday present. Over the next few years she won several national piano competitions in her native country. By the age of 10, she had entered the School of Music at the Korea National University of Arts, and went on to make a number of concerto and recital appearances in Seoul and Daejeon. In 1997, Yang moved to the United States to begin studies at the pre-college division of The Juilliard School with Dr. Yoheved Kaplinsky. During her first year at Juilliard, Yang won the pre-college division Concerto Competition, resulting in a performance of Haydn’s Keyboard Concerto in D with the Juilliard Pre-College Chamber Orchestra. After winning The Philadelphia Orchestra’s Greenfield Student Competition, she performed Prokofiev’s Third Piano Concerto with that orchestra at just 12 years old. She graduated from Juilliard with special honor as the recipient of the school’s 2010 Arthur Rubinstein Prize, and in 2011 she won its 30th Annual William A. Petschek Piano Recital Award. She is a Steinway artist.

# The Takács Quartet

The world-renowned **Takács Quartet** is now entering its 49th season. **Edward Dusinberre**, **Harumi Rhodes** (violins), **Richard O'Neill** (viola) and **András Fejér** (cello) are excited about the 2023-2024 season that features varied projects including a new work written for them. Nokuthula Ngwenyama composed *Flow*, an exploration and celebration of the natural world. The work was commissioned by nine concert presenters throughout the USA. July sees the release of a new recording of works by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and Dvořák for Hyperion Records, while later in the season the quartet will release works by Schubert including his final quartet in G major. In the Spring of 2024 the ensemble will perform and record piano quintets by Price and Dvořák with long-time chamber music partner Marc-Andre Hamelin.

As Associate Artists at London's Wigmore Hall the Takács will perform four concerts featuring works by Hough, Price, Janacek, Schubert and Beethoven. During the season the ensemble will play at other prestigious European venues including Berlin, Geneva, Linz, Innsbruck, Cambridge and St. Andrews. The Takács will appear at the Adams Chamber Music Festival in New Zealand. The group's North American engagements include concerts in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington DC, Vancouver, Ann Arbor, Phoenix, Berkeley, Los Angeles, Portland, Cleveland, Santa Fe and Stanford. The ensemble will perform two Bartók cycles at San Jose State University and Middlebury College and appear for the first time at the Virginia Arts Festival with pianist Olga Kern.

The members of the Takács Quartet are Christoffersen Fellows and Artists in Residence at the University of Colorado Boulder. For the 23-24 season the quartet enter into a partnership with El Sistema Colorado, working closely with its chamber music education program in Denver. During the summer months the Takács join the faculty at the Music Academy of the West, running an intensive quartet seminar.

In 2021 the Takács won a Presto Music Recording of the Year Award for their recordings of string quartets by Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn, and a Gramophone Award with pianist Garrick Ohlsson for piano quintets by Amy Beach and Elgar. Other

releases for Hyperion feature works by Haydn, Schubert, Janáček, Smetana, Debussy and Britten, as well as piano quintets by César Franck and Shostakovich (with Marc-André Hamelin), and viola quintets by Brahms and Dvořák (with Lawrence Power). For their CDs on the Decca/London label, the Quartet has won three Gramophone Awards, a Grammy Award, three Japanese Record Academy Awards, Disc of the Year at the inaugural BBC Music Magazine Awards, and Ensemble Album of the Year at the Classical Brits. Full details of all recordings can be found in the Recordings section of the Quartet's website.

The Takács Quartet is known for its innovative programming. In 2021-22 the ensemble partnered with bandoneon virtuoso Julien Labro to premiere new works by Clarice Assad and Bryce Dessner, commissioned by Music Accord. In 2014 the Takács performed a program inspired by Philip Roth's novel *Everyman* with Meryl Streep at Princeton, and again with her at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto in 2015. They first performed *Everyman* at Carnegie Hall in 2007 with Philip Seymour Hoffman. They have toured 14 cities with the poet Robert Pinsky, and played regularly with the Hungarian Folk group Muzsikás.

In 2014 the Takács became the first string quartet to be awarded the Wigmore Hall Medal. In 2012, Gramophone announced that the Takács was the first string quartet to be inducted into its Hall of Fame. The ensemble also won the 2011 Award for Chamber Music and Song presented by the Royal Philharmonic Society in London.

The Takács Quartet was formed in 1975 at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest by Gabor Takács-Nagy, Károly Schranz, Gabor Ormai and András Fejér, while all four were students. The group received international attention in 1977, winning First Prize and the Critics' Prize at the International String Quartet Competition in Evian, France. The Quartet also won the Gold Medal at the 1978 Portsmouth and Bordeaux Competitions and First Prizes at the Budapest International String Quartet Competition in 1978 and the Bratislava Competition in 1981. The Quartet made its North American debut tour in 1982. Members of the Takács Quartet are the grateful beneficiaries of an instrument loan by the Drake Foundation.



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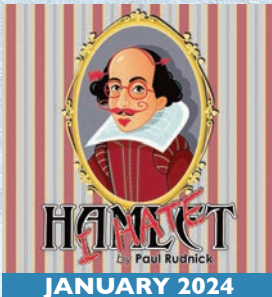
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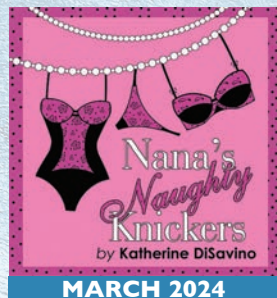
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## ***Titanic* explores human side of one of history's most famous tragedies**

By Adam Goldstein

Even though *Titanic, The Musical* bears the name of one of history's most famous ships in its title, it's really a story about people.

The subject of this show, penned by composer Maury Yeston and librettist Peter Stone, is hardly unfamiliar to pop culture. The 1912 sinking of the Titanic has become the stuff of legend. The tragedy at sea has spawned countless books, plays, films and songs over the past century; it's found a rare status as a modern parable about human hubris.

While the broad outlines of the story may be familiar to many, the critically acclaimed musical has flown under the radar for many musical theater fans. The show earned a slew of Tony Awards after its debut in 1997; it toured

theaters across the world and even recently received a revival in the form of simulcasts in movie theaters across the country, including in Boulder. Still, Yeston and Stone's musical retelling of the Titanic story never achieved the notoriety or popularity of the film of the same name that also debuted in 1997 (for the record, no Celine Dion songs figure into this stage show). For many, the musical remains a hidden gem, which is one of the reasons the work felt like the perfect fit for the biannual collaboration between the College of Music's Eklund Opera and Musical Theatre programs.

"In this show, we get a very diverse group of different kinds of songs, from Irish reels to big rousing ensemble numbers to poignant solo numbers,"

said CU Boulder Musical Theatre Director Matthew Chellis. "With the ensemble nature of the show, you can have a large number of people in different roles bringing this story to life."

In this case, that sizable cast represents the broad spectrum of engineers, workers, passengers and magnates who represent the story behind the Titanic that's often overlooked. This isn't the story of famous passengers like "the unsinkable" Molly Brown or the imagined star-crossed lovers Jack and Rose; Yeston and Stone focus on the people who brought the Titanic to sea, from its initial planning phases to its ill-fated journey in 1912.

Chellis continued, "This musical is about all the diverse people who were involved in the ship and who were on that journey. We have the people who are working—the stokers, the officers. We have the designer, the architect, the man who designed the Titanic and the people who backed it financially. We see their stories and the music follows them."

The production will draw on the expertise of a Broadway veteran to bring that vision to life. Tony Award-nominated Robert Westenberg—whose credits include Broadway runs of *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Les Misérables*, *Into the Woods* and *The Secret Garden*—will direct.

Westenberg will bring a deeper dimension to the storytelling element and musical facets of the material, Chellis said; he'll help the true-to-life, inescapably personal side of the shipwreck come to life.

"The audience will really come to care about these characters," added Chellis, noting a strange contradiction about the music. "Despite the tragedy of it all, this show is uplifting in a very human sense."

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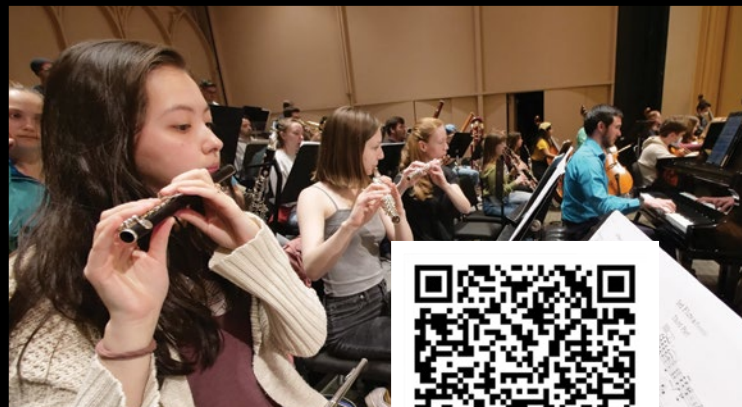
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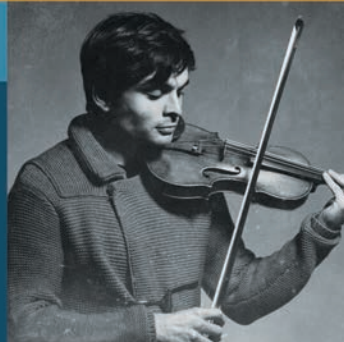
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## Alumnus Dylan Fixmer— composer with a cause

By Marc Shulgold

Not one to mince words, College of Music alumnus Dylan Fixmer gets right to the point: “I want music to have a purpose,” he says. But finding his purpose didn’t come right away.

Fixmer earned a bachelor’s degree in music education in 2010 and went straight into teaching. Which was fine. Still, he admits, “I’d been composing my whole life. I was always noodling on some sort of piece.

“Five years ago, my mom showed my wife [alumna Sarah Off] and me a song I’d written many years ago. I guess I’ve always been a composer.”

But first things first: With an undergrad diploma from CU Boulder in hand, he spent a decade teaching in small

Colorado towns such as Hotchkiss and Rifle, also serving as a counselor at the YMCA of the Rockies. Along the way, he earned a master’s in music education from Indiana University. Truth be told, Fixmer got his biggest kick out of time spent in Hotchkiss, population 875.

“I put together a little 8th-grade jazz band,” he reminisces, somehow managing to keep a straight face as he listed the instrumentation: “We had two tubas, a bass clarinet and drums. I played piano and there were some other instruments. But the best part was, they played my compositions.”

Are we starting to see a pattern here? Fixmer, 35, recalls that, yes, while pursuing his degree at our College

of Music, he studied composition and theory with noted Professor of Composition Carter Pann. Even as he pursued his graduate degree in music education and found work in the classroom, life as a composer continued to beckon. “I was always going through textbooks on composing,” says Fixmer, exemplifying the college’s universal musician mission. “I wanted to expand my vocabulary.”

And so it came to pass, in a big and meaningful way. Fixmer not only found life as a composer, but he found a way of writing music with a purpose. “I’m not sure I’d ever want to write a piece of absolute music,” he admits, referring to a composition that is simply a collection of melodies with no storyline or subtext. Instead, Fixmer creates for a *reason*.

Consider his Violin Concerto, premiered by the Greeley Philharmonic in September 2022—in partnership with the Greeley Family House and other homelessness assistance organizations to increase support for the unhoused. This work has such an extraordinary backstory that it deserves a movie treatment. Off performed the premiere on an instrument once owned by Terri Sternberg—an accomplished musician who had fallen on hard times, became homeless and died in 2013. Learning her story propelled Fixmer to create a heartfelt concerto that generated critical raves, a radio broadcast on Colorado Public Radio and eventually helped bring attention to the cause of homelessness as far away as London and Paris.

His deep concern about people goes beyond writing a thoughtful piece of music, he stresses. “In Greeley, I’m on a homelessness task force. That’s part of my desire in identifying topics to write about—ones that focus on human connections.”

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By Sabine Kortals Stein

We're proud and delighted that longtime Senior House Manager Rojana Savoye is one of just four recipients of the Chancellor's 2023 Employee of the Year award!

Savoye—who manages all front-of-house operations at Macky Auditorium and within the College of Music, including Artist Series, Takács Quartet, Eklund Opera and other College of Music performances—was nominated for the award by CU Presents Executive Director Joan Braun, Operations Director Andrew Metzroth and Box Office Manager Adrienne Havelka.

"For so many people in our community, Rojana is literally the face of the college when they attend our events—of which there are hundreds each year," says College of Music Dean John Davis. "The moment they walk in the door to one of our venues, they see her—and she sees them. Her heart is so huge, she makes sure everyone feels attended to."

"Rojana is eager, willing and quick to solve problems, and we all love working with her. She's so deserving of this award for her important role that is sometimes overlooked. I couldn't be happier for her."

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