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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
- Colorado Shakespeare Festival
- Takács Quartet
- 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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Sharen Bradford

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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 21stcentury 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 mediaobsessed 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 Fischoff 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 JULIO ELIZALDE

Artist Series March 21, 2024 Macky Auditorium Starting at \$20





CU > PRESENTS

UPCOMING EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

TICKETED EVENT KEY

- Artist Series
- Takács Quartet
- CU Boulder Performing Arts



Scan this QR code or visit cupresents.org/performances to explore the full season.



Takács Quartet
Jan. 14-15, 2024
Grusin Music Hall

Streaming Jan. 14-22



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

Macky Auditorium



Step Afrika!
Friday, Feb. 2, 7:30 p.m.

Macky Auditorium



Jasper String Quartet
Feb. 18-19, 2024

Grusin Music Hall Streaming Feb. 18-26



The Play That Goes Wrong
March 8-17, 2024

CU Roe Green Theatre



Takács Quartet
March 10-11, 2024

Grusin Music Hall

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.

Macky Auditorium



Asleep at the Wheel With the CU Symphony Orchestra Friday, April 5, 7:30 p.m.

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

Grusin Music Hall

Streaming April 28-May 6

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.

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.

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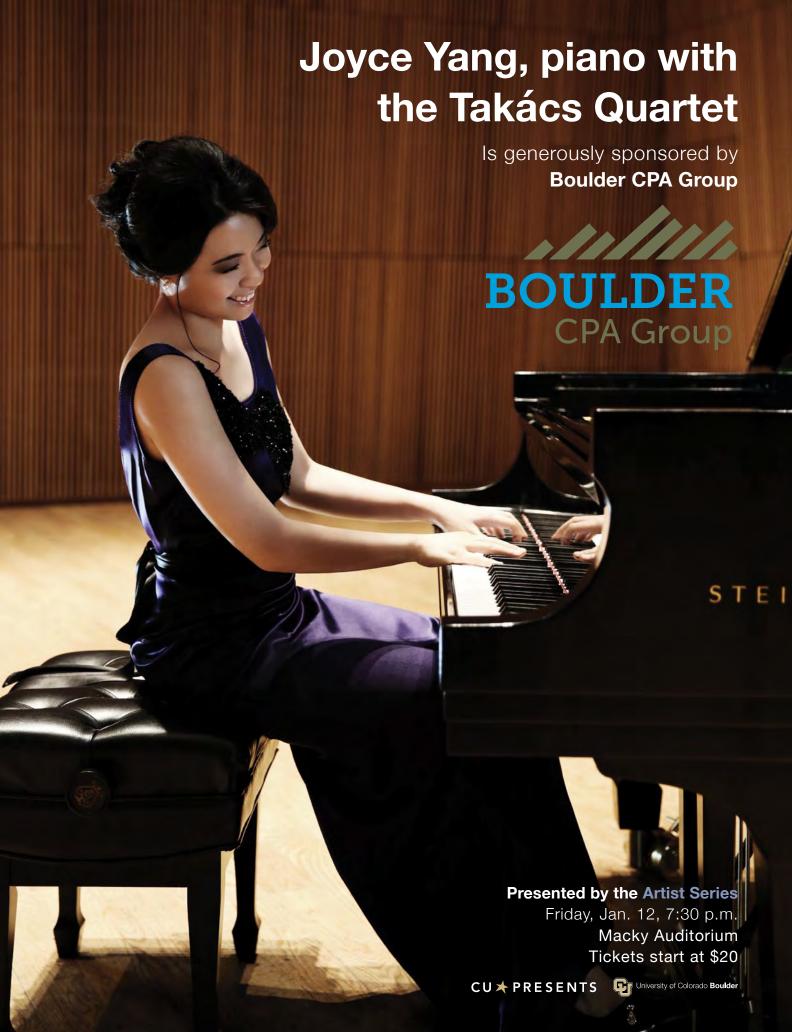
Smoking is not permitted anywhere. CU Boulder is a smoke-free campus.

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.

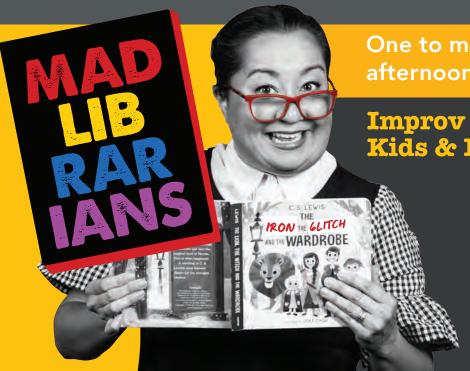
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Denver

Mar. 20 and May 15 Boulder



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THE AWARD-WINNING BOULDER ENSEMBLE THEATRE COMPANY



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, hiphop, 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 or contact us at caaas@colorado.edu.



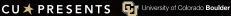


MOMIX Alice

Is generously sponsored by Dick Dunn:

For all of the people at CU Presents and Macky Auditorium who make the arts possible. Thank you to Joan Braun for 30 years of dedication to the Artist Series.

Presented by the Artist Series Saturday, Jan. 20, 7:30 p.m. Macky Auditorium Tickets start at \$24



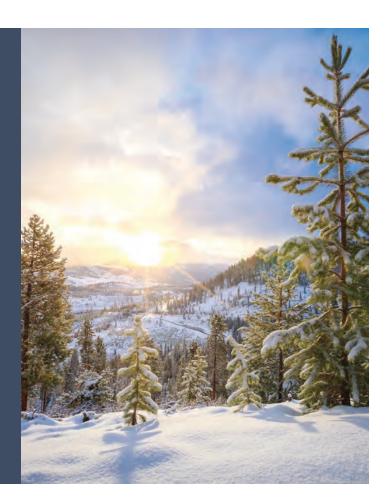




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Ekstrand Competition winners announced

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 Dusinberre, 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 welldeserved 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 Noves. 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 Ekstrandlater 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.

Make a gift to the Ekstrand **Endowment Fund** at this QR code.





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Serving the West from Boulder since 1972



Step Afrika!

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

Administrative and Creative Team

C. Brian Williams, Founder & Executive Producer
Lamar Lovelace, Executive Director
Mfoniso Akpan, Artistic Director
Conrad R. Kelly II, Assistant Artistic Director
Artis Olds, Director of Arts Education and Community Programs
Stacy Burwell, Director, Administration and Special Projects
Margo Cunningham, Marketing Manager
Vanessa Hall, Company Manager
Dana Weinstein, Manager, Institutional Relations and Research
Marianne Meadows, Production Manager/Lightning Supervisor
Melissa Brown, Production Manager

Company

Kenneth L. Alexander Ericka Still Nepri James Nva Christian **Brie Turner** Terrence Johnson Jerod Coleman Conrad Kelly II Joseph Vasquez Ariel Dykes Isaiah O'Connor Pelham Warner Jr. Keomi Givens Jr. Na'imah Ray Robert Warnsley Kamala Hargrove Valencia Springer

Learn more about Step Afrika!



Share your experience! #StepAfrika www.stepafrika.org Facebook @stepafrika1994 Twitter / X @StepAfrikaHQ Instagram @stepafrika YouTube @StepAfrikaInfo

Tonight's show is generously sponsored by:
CU Boulder's Center for African & African American Studies



NEED TO KNOW FOR THE SHOW

- Step Afrika! appears by arrangement with IMG Artists.
- 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.

Program

TRIBUTE Choreographed by Jakari Sherman

Tribute pays homage to the African American step show. The work combines the distinct stepping styles from different fraternities and sororities and blends them to showcase the incredible variety of stepping. Tribute includes all the exciting elements of the step show—the use of props, ripples and floor work, creative formations, and audience participation.

NDLAMU Choreographed by Jackie Semela

Ndlamu is a traditional dance of the Zulu people and for more than 25 years, Step Afrika! has studied the dance form through the Company's long-standing partnership with the Soweto Dance Theater. Step Afrika! makes this Ndlamu uniquely its own featuring solos created by each dancer as well as the addition of contemporary movement.

ISICATHULO Choreographed by Jackie Semela

Isicathulo or "the gumboot dance" is a tradition created by South African workers who labored in the oppressive mining industry of then-apartheid South Africa. Isolated from their families for long periods, the miners transformed their rubber boots into percussive instruments to not only entertain but to share secret messages with each other. Isicathulo has become one of the most popular dance forms in South Africa and has striking similarities to the African American tradition of stepping.

SOLO

Traditionally, stepping is performed by groups, big and small. In this Solo, Step Afrika! investigates the form at its most intimate level.

CHICAGO Choreographed by Jakari Sherman

Chicago finds the rhythm in everyday situations. It is a percussive symphony using body percussion and up to five complex polyrhythms performed simultaneously in order to narrate a percussive dance "story." Inspired by a summer spent in the Windy City, this ground-breaking work transforms the 100+ year old, folkloric tradition of stepping into contemporary performance art.

SPECIAL NOTE: Audience participation has been a part of the step tradition since its inception in the 1900s. Members of the audience are invited to clap, stomp, cheer and participate in call and response with the Artists.



The Story Of Step Afrika!

Founded in 1994 by C. Brian Williams, Step Afrika! is the first professional company dedicated to the tradition of stepping. Under Williams' leadership, stepping has evolved into one of America's cultural exports, touring more than 60 countries across the globe and ranking as one of the top 10 African American Dance Companies in the US.

Step Afrika! blends percussive dance styles practiced by historically African American fraternities and sororities; traditional African dances; and an array of contemporary dance and art forms into a cohesive, compelling artistic experience. Performances are much more than dance shows; they integrate songs, storytelling, humor, and audience participation. The blend of technique, agility, and pure energy makes each performance unique and leaves the audience with their hearts pounding.

Step Afrika! promotes stepping as an educational tool for young people, focusing on teamwork, academic achievement and cross-cultural understanding. The Company reaches tens of thousands of Americans each year through a 50-city tour of colleges and theaters and performs globally as Washington, DC's one and only Cultural Ambassador.

Step Afrika! has earned Mayor's Arts Awards for Outstanding Contribution to Arts Education, Innovation in the Arts, Excellence in an Artistic Discipline, and was inducted into the National Association of Campus Activities (NACA) Hall of Fame, the first Dance Company to earn this honor. Step Afrika! headlined President Barack Obama's Black History Month Reception and performed at the first ever Juneteenth Celebration at the White House. The Company is featured prominently at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History & Culture with the world's first stepping interactive exhibit.

Photo by Lindsay Stayton Photography

Creative Team

C. BRIAN WILLIAMS (Founder and Executive Producer) is a native of Houston, Texas, and a graduate of Howard University. Williams first learned to step as a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. - Beta Chapter, in the Spring of 1989. While living in southern Africa, he began to research the percussive dance tradition of stepping, exploring the many sides of this exciting, yet under-recognized American art form, and founded Step Afrika! in 1994. Williams has performed, lectured, and taught in Europe, Central and South America, Africa, Asia, the Middle East, the Caribbean and throughout the United States. Through Williams' leadership, stepping has evolved into one of America's newest cultural exports and inspired the designation of Step Afrika! as Washington, DC's official "Cultural Ambassador."

In 2022, the National Endowment of the Arts designated Williams as a National Heritage Fellow, the nation's highest honor in folk and traditional arts. He is the recipient of numerous Artist Fellowships: the World Alive! Distinguished Artist Award by Arts Emerson; the Mayor's Arts Award for Visionary Leadership from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities; Distinguished Arts Award from the Coalition for African Americans in the Performing Arts; and the Pola Nirenska Award for Contemporary Achievement in Dance. He is also featured in Soulstepping, the first book to document the history of stepping. He also earned the Mayor's Art Award for Innovation in the Arts and has led the company to multiple Metro DC Dance Awards for "Outstanding New Work," "Excellence in Stage Design/Multimedia" and "Outstanding Group Performance." Williams has been cited as a "civic/community visionary" by NV Magazine, a "nation builder" by the National Black Caucus of State Legislators and a "minority business leader" by the Washington Business Journal. His work is featured prominently at the Smithsonian Museum of African-American History and Culture in Washington, DC.

LAMAR LOVELACE (Executive Director) is responsible for the organization's strategy and operations, leading its staff, programs and the execution of its mission. Working closely with Step Afrika!'s board of directors, he spearheads fundraising, marketing, operations and long-range planning for the organization. He brings deep

expertise from academia and has managed the organization's humanities-based partnerships.

In July 2017, Lovelace joined Step Afrika! as deputy executive director, where he oversaw the dance company's communications and marketing strategy, fundraising efforts and financial operations. Previously, Lovelace spent 8 years at Columbia University as assistant director in the Office of Community Outreach and Education and director of public programs and events. At the New York City-based campus, he managed community-based partnerships and special events and produced large-scale, humanities-based programming opportunities to engage students, faculty, and staff.

At Broward College in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Lovelace was director of cultural affairs and student engagement, where he created artsbased social justice programs and exhibitions. He holds master's degrees in arts management and oral history from Carnegie Mellon and Columbia, respectively, and a BA in speech and hearing science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Lovelace is a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

MFONISO AKPAN (Artistic Director) has trained extensively in tap, ballet, jazz, modern, African dance and step. While attending the State University of New York at Stony Brook, she majored in biochemistry and cultivated her stepping skills as a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Akpan began her training at the Bernice Johnson Cultural Arts Center and has performed at Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, the Apollo Theater, the Brooklyn Academy of Music and Lincoln Center. Akpan toured with the off-Broadway show Hoofin' 2 Hittin, where she was a featured stepper and dancer.

MARIANNE MEADOWS (Lighting Designer/ Production Manager) is a member of United Scenic Artists local 829 with a BA from Sarah Lawrence College, MFA from the University of Washington with additional training at Lester Polakovs' Studio and Forum of Stage Design, NYC.

The Company

KENNETH L. ALEXANDER is a native of Savannah, Georgia with a BFA in interior design from Valdosta State University. First introduced to stepping through the Sigma Beta Club, Alexander went on to become a proud member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. He has taught and performed in and around Tampa Bay, and most recently had the honor of performing at the Super Bowl LV Halftime Show. This is Alexander's first season with the Company.

NYA CHRISTIAN is a native of Cleveland, OH with a Bachelor of Arts in political science, sociology and dance arts from Howard University. A member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, she has served as the Alpha Chapter parliamentarian, step mistress and stroll captain. Christian has choreographed works for Taste of Howard, the White House Initiative on HBCU Step performance, Howard University's 2022 Homecoming Step Show performance, DCbased Black History Month performances, and the 2023 North Atlantic Regional Step Show's winning number. She has also represented the Howard University National Panhellenic Council and her Sorority on Good Morning America for "The story of 9 historically Black fraternities and sororities" segment during Black History Month. This is Christian's first season with the Company.

JEROD COLEMAN is a native of Columbus, Georgia with a BA in history from the University of South Alabama. A member of the Theta Delta chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., he has served as both step and stroll master. Coleman has performed with the Atlanta Braves, Atlanta Falcons, Redbull Dance Your Style and DreamHack ATL entertainment teams. He taught at Thomas H. Brewer Elementary School in Columbus, Georgia, where he also ran an all-boys step team called the B.L.U.E. Steppers. This is Coleman's first season with the Company.

ARIEL DYKES is a native of Gainesville, Florida with an Associate of Arts degree in musical theatre from Santa Fe College and a BFA in dance from the University of Florida. Dykes was introduced to stepping and strolling as a member of the lota Lambda Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., where she choreographed step routines for the chapter and UF's National Panhellenic Council. She has trained in traditional and post-modern

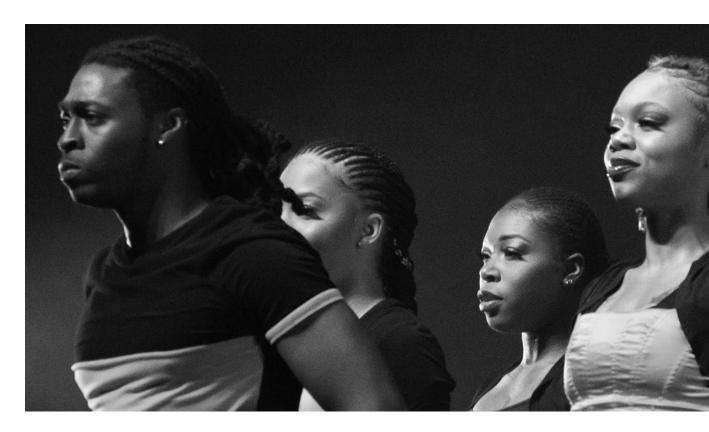
dance, jazz, voice and acting, and has worked with such artists as Ailey Dancers' Nathaniel Hunt and Samantha Barriento, Tony Award winner Scott Coulter and Galen Hooks. This is Dykes' second season with the Company.

KEOMI GIVENS JR. is a native of Miami FL where he trained with Ricardo Dume, Traci Young-Byron, Jakari Sherman, Conrad Kelly II, Tanisha Cidel, Maribel Trujillo and Robert Battle. He has studied at the New World School of the Arts and The Mahogany Dance Theatre, where he served as a Rehearsal Director and choreographer. Givens has danced with Gravity Dance Troupe and Young Contemporary Dance Theatre (YCDT) and has previously toured nationally with Step Afrika! as a guest artist. In addition to his exceptional work as a dancer, Givens has choreographed for the legendary 100 Of Florida A&M University, RickyDanco and Booker T Washington Lady Twisters. This is Givens' first season with the Company as a full-time artist.

KAMALA HARGROVE is a native of the Bronx, with a BA in mathematics, theater and dance from Trinity College. Hargrove studied with the Alvin Ailey School and Dance Theater of Harlem, has appeared in various music videos and live performances. She has performed with artists including Estelle, Mr. Vegas, Wizkid, and French Montana. Hargrove has also worked as a Teaching Artist in New York City, teaching elementary, middle and high school students. This is Hargrove's second season with the Company.

NEPRI JAMES is a native of Atlanta, Georgia with a BA from North Carolina A&T State University. Step master for her Alpha Phi Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., she is known for bringing her step team to victory at the 2018 Homecoming Step Show. James has worked for the Thurgood Marshall College Fund Rise and Contra Tiempo and has previously toured nationally with Step Afrika! as a guest artist. This is James' first season with the Company as a full-time artist.

TERRENCE JOHNSON is a native of Broward County, Florida with a BA in general studies from the University of Central Florida. Johnson has previously stepped with the ADIMU: Men of Excellence Step Team, and served as a cofounder, president and performer with the Hazard Step Team. He is also a 2015 inductee of the UCF



Chapter of Progressive Black Men, Inc. This is Johnson's first season with the company as a fulltime artist.

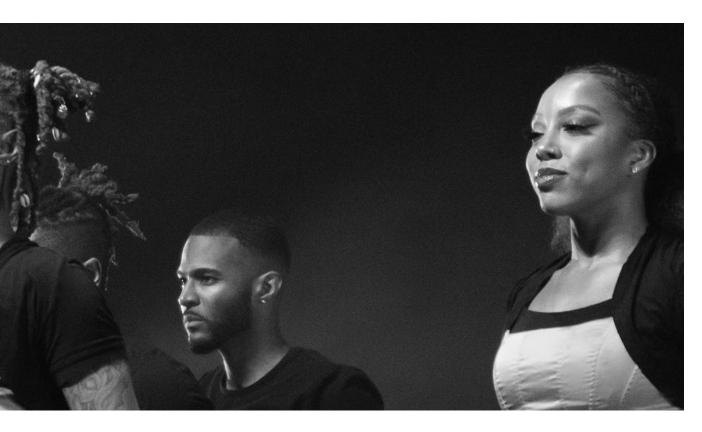
CONRAD R. KELLY II is a native of Fort Lauderdale, Florida who studied criminal justice at Florida A&M University. Following his time with A&M's Marching 100 and The Strikers, Kelly became a soloist for The Rolle Project in Las Vegas and a dance instructor with Studio 305, where he regularly taught classes in hiphop, contemporary, and jazz. Kelly has won numerous awards as a choreographer and dancer, and is namely a two-time recipient of the DC Commission on Arts and Humanities' prestigious Arts and Humanities Fellowship Program. A longstanding member of the Company, Conrad serves as Step Afrika!'s Assistant Artistic Director and most recently choreographed The Movement, an epic tribute to Black Lives Matter and the domino effect of activism experienced in 2020. This Kelly's seventh season with the Company.

ISAIAH O'CONNOR is a native of Miami with a BS in biology from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University. A student of hip-hop, modern, and urban soul, O'Connor has previously stepped with the Strikers Dance Troupe under the direction of Shepiro Hardemon. This is Isaiah's second season with the Company.

NA'IMAH RAY is a native of Brooklyn, NY with a BFA in dance from Montclair State University. Ray performed as a Centennial Stepper with her sorority, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Incorporated, at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. She has trained with Dwana Smallwood, Earl Mosley, Christian Von Howard and Beatrice Capote, and participated in dance programs at The Ailey School and Earl Mosley Institute of the Arts. This is her second season with the Company.

VALENCIA ODEYKA EMONNI SPRINGER

is a native of Brooklyn, New York with a BA in elementary education from Virginia Union University. Springer is a proud member of the Nu Chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. and the Eta Psi Chapter of Tau Beta Sigma National Honorary band sorority and served as the first "Stand Queen" (captain) with the Ambassadors of Sound Marching Band. Previously a student of Restoration Youth Arts Academy, Springer has performed with Forces of Nature, Dance Africa (Brooklyn) and as part of a live installation entitled "A Primordial Place." She has also worked as a social studies and science teacher, dance teacher/ coach, guest choreographer for local New York/ Virginia majorette teams and as a model for New York and Richmond, Virginia fashion weeks. This is Springer's fifth season with the Company.



ERICKA STILL is a native of St. Petersburg, Florida with a BA in health science, pre-occupational therapy and rehabilitation management from Florida A&M University. Still previously stepped with AKAdemy Exquisite Gems and studied under the direction of Paulette W. Johnson and Shepiro Hardemon as a member and co-assistant artistic director of Mahogany Dance Theatre. This is Still's second season with the Company.

BRIE TURNER is a native of Lithonia, Georgia with a BA in strategic, legal and management communications from Howard University. *Magna cum laude* graduate, Turner was a member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Incorporated's Quintessential Alpha chapter where she served as the chapter president and stroll mistress, in addition to serving as the co-captain and captain of the Howard University Bisonettes Dance Ensemble. This is Turner's second season with the Company.

JOSEPH VASQUEZ is a native of Guttenberg, New Jersey with a BS in exercise science from Rutgers University in New Brunswick where he served as a member of Lambda Sigma Upsilon Latino Fraternity Incorporated. Vasquez has led and choreographed for the Bachata Performance Team, and previously performed with The Revels, a stroll team led by Francisco Pozo and Carlos Zapata. This is Vasquez's second season with the Company.

PELHAM WARNER JR. is a native of The Bronx and has a BA from Dutchess Community College. Warner is a member of The Order of the Feather Fraternity where he served as the team's step master and captain for five years, and has previously danced with The Players Club Steppers. Warner has worked as a dance instructor in the greater New York City area, and recently performed in the a capella musical *The Movement* by Kathy D. Harrison at The National Black Theater Festival. This is Warner's fifth year with the Company.

ROBERT WARNSLEY is a native of Chicago, IL with a BS in Information Technology from Illinois State University. A member of the Eta Tau chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Warnsley served as the step and stroll master and has organized, competed in and placed first in numerous step shows. He has taught stepping to the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, and actively participates in community service projects in the city of Chicago, teaching dancehall and various Afro styles in the DMV and NYC areas. This is Warnsley's fifth season with the Company.

Photo by Robbie Sulzer



Ray Chen, violin and Julio Elizalde, piano

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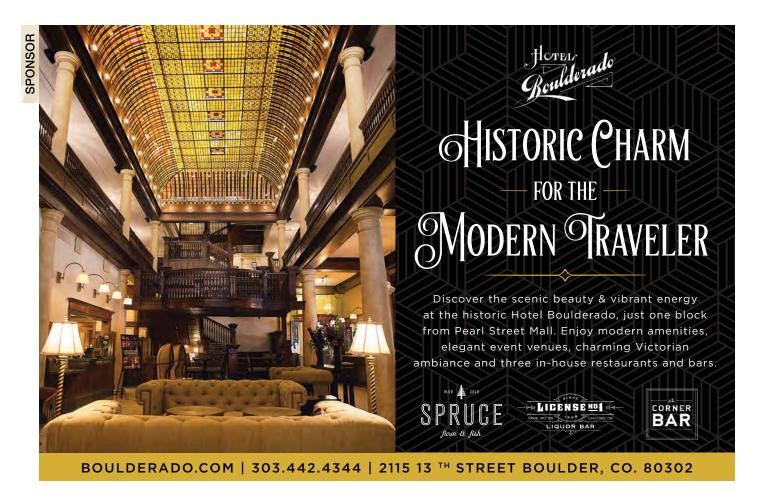
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Titanic explores human side of one of history's most famous tragedies

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."

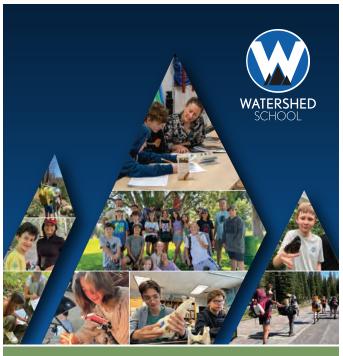
The production will draw on the expertise of a Broadway veteran to bring that vision to life. Tony Awardnominated Robert Westenberg—whose credits include Broadway runs of Sunday in the Park with George, Les Misérables, Into the Woods and The Secret Garden—will direct.

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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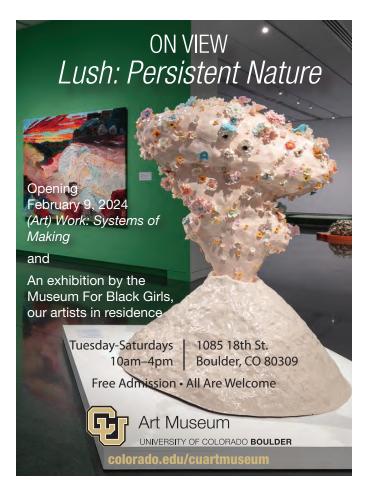


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Alumnus Dylan Fixmer composer with a cause

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."

Learn more at this QR code.



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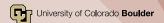
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Senior House Manager Rojana Savoye named 2023 Chancellor's **Employee of the Year!**

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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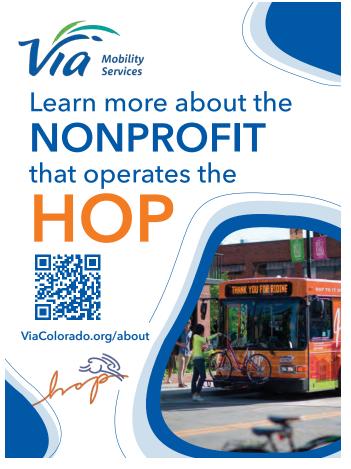
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