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College of Music

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2025



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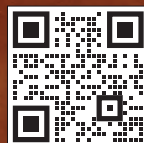




Stayin' Alive: The Bee Gees  
and Beyond with Rajaton  
**SEP 27**



The Four Seasons of Buenos  
Aires with Soyoung Yoon  
**NOV 21-23**



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Home Alone 2:  
Lost in New York  
**NOV 28-29**



A Holiday Evening with  
Ingrid Michaelson  
**NOV 30**



# WELCOME



*In addition to the many inspiring events featuring our students, faculty and guest artists every year, the University of Colorado Boulder College of Music is pleased to bring the world-class Artist Series to our campus and community since 1937.*

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## CU ★ PRESENTS

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2025

**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:

- The **College of Music** including the Artist Series; Takács Quartet; Eklund Opera Program; Holiday Festival; Musical Theatre Program; and hundreds of free events featuring faculty, students and guest artists.
- The **Colorado Shakespeare Festival**.
- The College of Arts and Science's **Department of Theatre & Dance**.

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*“Culture does not create humanity; humanity creates culture and our humanity is embodied in what we create and share, not in what we consume.”*

—Ted Gioia

Friends,

For almost 90 years, the Artist Series has been a beacon for global artistry at Macky Auditorium, enriching our cultural landscape. As director and curator of the series now entering a second season, I am thrilled to bring you our 2025-26 season—one that celebrates the cultural fabric of Boulder and our university community.

The season begins with **Aristo Sham**, this year’s Cliburn Piano Competition Gold Medal winner, followed by **Ballet Hispánico**’s *CARMEN.maquia* on Oct. 9, a powerful reimagining of the classic tale through Latin and flamenco culture. On Nov. 7, **Cirque Kalabanté** presents *Afrique en Cirque*, a stunning blend of acrobatics, West African rhythms and dance. The holiday season heats up with the **Bria Skonberg** Sextet’s *Jingle Bell Swing* on Dec. 11, bringing jazz joy to Boulder.

In 2026, we welcome Baroque ensemble **Ruckus** on Jan. 23 performing *The Edinburgh Rollick* with violinist **Keir GoGwilt** and featuring folk music from the Niel Gow Collections. **Versa-Style Street Dance** from Los Angeles pays tribute to the guardians of street dance on Feb. 11. On March 11, by popular demand, **Danú** returns to share the traditional music of Ireland.

On March 28, **Bang on a Can All-Stars** perform Ryuichi Sakamoto’s *1996*, a rare live performance of the legendary composer’s works for film. The season concludes on April 11 with **Michael Feinstein and the Carnegie Hall Ensemble** in *Big Band Broadway* celebrating the *Great American Songbook*.

I invite you to join us and be part of these transformative experiences this season. Please consider becoming a subscriber or supporting the Artist Series with an additional gift as ticket sales cover only a portion of the costs of bringing these world-class artists to Boulder.

Rudy Betancourt  
Director, CU Artist Series and Macky Auditorium



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# THE THIN



## PLACE

*By Lucas Hnath*

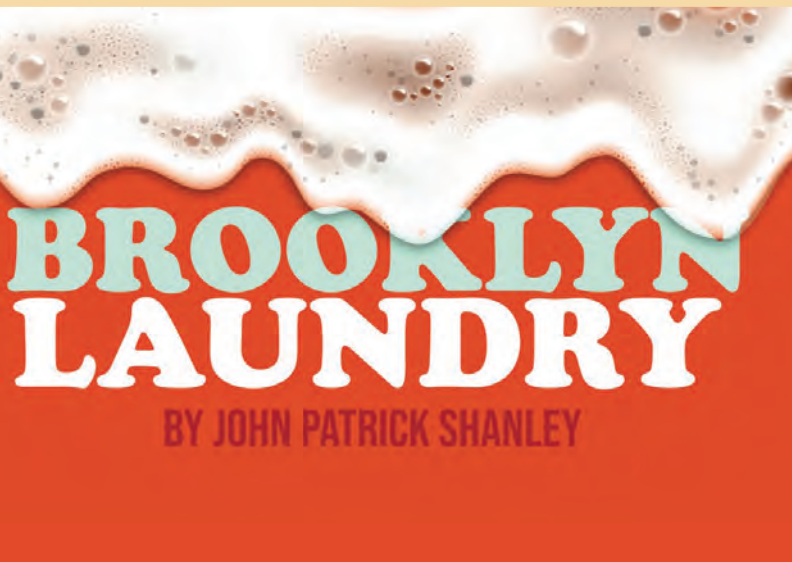


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# CU ★ PRESENTS

## UPCOMING EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

### ARTIST SERIES

*Macky Auditorium*

Sept. 26: **Aristo Sham**, piano

Oct. 9: **Ballet Hispánico**

Nov. 7: **Cirque Kalabanté**

Dec. 11: **Bria Skonberg**

Jan. 23: **Ruckus Early Music and Keir GoGwilt**

Feb. 11: **Versa-Style Street Dance Company**

March 11: **Danú**

March 28: **Bang on a Can All-Stars**

April 11: **Michael Feinstein in Big Band Broadway**



*Bria Skonberg.  
Photo by Shervin Lainez.*



*Photo by Ken Jacques.*

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March 8-9 • April 26-27

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*Fall 2025 • Macky Auditorium  
and the Music Theatre*

Oct. 24 and 26: **Dead Man Walking**

Music by Jake Heggle, Libretto by Terrence McNally

Nov. 13-16: **Cabaret**

Book by Joe Masteroff, Music by John Kander, Lyrics by Fred Ebb

DEAD MAN WALKING: Based on the novel by Sister Helen Prejean; commissioned by the San Francisco Opera. CABARET: Based on the play by John Van Druten and Stories by Christopher Isherwood; presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Tams-Witmark LLC. [concordtheatricals.com](https://concordtheatricals.com).







# TICKETS AND MORE AT **CUPRESENTS.ORG**

## **THEATRE & DANCE EVENTS**

*Fall 2025 · University Theatre Building*

Oct. 3-12: **Pride and Prejudice**

By Kate Hamill

Oct. 17-19: **An Offering in Time**

MFA Thesis Works

Nov. 7-16: **The Olive Tree**

By Satya Chávez

Nov. 14-15: **Revel**

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*Holiday Festival (2023).  
Photo by Glenn Asakawa.*

## **HOLIDAY FESTIVAL**

*Macky Auditorium*

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

Saturday, Dec. 6, 1 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 6, 4 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 7, 4 p.m.

## **FREE EVENTS AT THE COLLEGE OF MUSIC**

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*Latin American Ensemble (2023).  
Photo by Erika O'Connor.*

# Cabaret

## to Examine Questions of Creative Expression

By Adam Goldstein

The power of art, expression and self-acceptance underlies the historical cues in *Cabaret*.

The 1951 musical by John Kander, Fred Ebb and Joe Masteroff is set in Berlin in the waning days of the Weimar Republic as the Nazi party rose to power and violently shifted the course of German culture and world history. Many of the show's main characters are the final refugees of the Jazz Age, artists condemned and crushed under the weight of authoritarianism and fascism.

It's a very specific moment in time, one brought to life by Masteroff's richly drawn character—the cabaret performer Sally Bowles, the American writer Clifford Bradshaw and the anonymous Master of Ceremonies of the Kit Kat Club—a larger-than-life narrator whose arc in the show neatly sums up the tragic arc of German history in late 1929 and early 1930.

While the musical operates in a distinct historical moment, its timeless themes have made it a mainstay of the musical theatre genre. The story captures important questions about the value of self-expression and art's importance in the face of censorship, brutality and iron-fisted rule. *Cabaret* is about Germany in the throes of a violent transformation, but it's also about artists who stay committed to their craft—no matter the price.

"The artist raises a mirror to society, the arts have power," says Kristel Jelinek Brown, who is directing the University of Colorado Boulder Musical Theatre Program's production of *Cabaret* Nov. 13 to 16. "It's a show that's very on the nose about fascism—and what that does to artists. It's also about a

freewheeling, wild, hedonistic celebration of self and sexuality and identity."

The show explores the underground cabaret culture that flourished in Berlin at the end of the Jazz Age, an environment full of experimentation, expression and creativity. It's a setting that offers stark comparisons during a time when creative expression in the United States is facing its own defining moment as venues and media outlets face seismic shifts in funding and creative control.

The students' choice to stage *Cabaret* in this modern moment seemed purposeful, says Jelinek Brown, who'll bring her training in "guerrilla theatre" to bear in a production set to feature experimentation.

"This show will explore questions like, what happens when we take art away? What happens when students take art into their own hands? We're going to play a lot with found material. It won't look like a traditional *Cabaret* staging," she says, adding that the cast will number in the dozens. "Universities are an excellent place to be experimental and try different things."

The score, the book and the characters won't change from the 1951 original, she adds. *Cabaret* will still feature the beloved tunes and familiar plot points that have long delighted audiences. Even so, present-day realities may make the 70-plus-year-old musical take on a new relevance.

The CU Boulder College of Music Musical Theatre Program presents **Cabaret** in the Music Theatre from **Nov. 13 through 16, 2025.**







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Saturday, November 15, 7:30 pm, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Denver

Sunday, November 16, 3:00 pm, Mountain View UMC, Boulder



For more information: [seicentobaroque.org](http://seicentobaroque.org)



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# Spoiler Alert: She Dies.

By Lisa Kennedy

At a time when classics continue to be reimagined, renovated, downright torn down and rebuilt, this may come as something of a surprise: In Ballet Hispanico's *CARMEN.maquia*, choreographer Gustavo Ramirez Sansano's take on Georges Bizet's opera, the woman who riled the besotted soldier Don José and pursued the matador Escamillo still meets a brutal end.

"I went to see a *Carmen* where Carmen is not the one who dies. And I'm like umm, okay ..." Eduardo Vilaro, the company's artistic director and CEO, shared during a video call. "It's improbable because we have a world that's dominated by men. It's misogynistic, mostly. You know, sometimes stories are meant to be told the way they were crafted to teach us lessons. We just have to show it and have people talk about it and say, 'Wow, that was wrong.'"

*Carmen* is in the midst of its sesquicentennial. Before Bizet made the heroine indelible 150 years ago, she appeared in Prosper Mérimée's novella, the basis for Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy's libretto. In the 20th century, a Spaniard who likened himself to a bull began evoking Carmen in his paintings. Ironically, Pablo Picasso lived in France at the time.

From the start, *Carmen* has embodied the tensions between cultural appropriation and embrace. How could anything but intriguing happen when the nation's preeminent Latiné dance company presents *Carmen*?

"It's not just a ballet that's performed externally or gesturally—it's something we feel in our bodies," Vilaro has said. "That level of authenticity gives our version a unique, nuanced energy that's distinctly ours."

And this production comes with its own feints, its own Veronicas, to borrow a bit of bullfighting patois. "There's no flamenco, no castanets," says Vilaro. "There is no" ... cue a gasp ... "red." As for Carmen, well, "This Carmen is very demure," Vilaro says. And yet, she is more aware of exploring her power and her passion. As if thinking, "Yeah, I know the danger I'm living in, but I'm still going to play with it," he says. "And that's empowering in its own way."

Set designer Luis Crespo and costume designer Delfin lean into Picasso's white, black and gray palette and his abstractions. But, "There's a moment of color," Vilaro promises, with a knowing smile.

For years, he would tell Sansano that he had to find a way to connect Carmen's passion to both men. Now, he thinks, the choreographer has.

How? "I won't tell you," he says—and then relents. But you'll get no spoiler here.

Photo credit: Laura Fuchs

**Ballet Hispanico** performs on the Artist Series at Macky Auditorium on **Oct. 9, 2025.**





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# Cirque of the Diaspora

By Lisa Kennedy

As a boy, multidisciplinary performer Yamoussa Bangoura didn't have to run away from home to join the circus. At least not initially. Home—the West African nation of Guinea—has a tradition of acrobatics and a legendary circus of its own: Circus Baobab. After Sundays spent captivated by television broadcasts of European circus acts, Bangoura and other kids would head to the nearby beach in the capital city of Conakry to emulate what they'd witnessed. There, acrobatics were being performed and taught, and it's where Bangoura landed his first coaches.

As a teenager, Bangoura auditioned for a film about Circus Baobab, got the role and stayed on. While performing and traveling with the troupe in Spain, he was recruited by Cirque Éloize which led him to the capital of the circus arts world: Montreal.

In 2007, Bangoura founded Cirque Kalabanté (before launching his own troupe, he also performed with Cirque du Soleil, the equestrian troupe Cavalia and ArtCirq).

For years, the Kalabanté and its founder have been delivering a mix of African-infused storytelling, acrobatic feats and more to the beats and rhythms of Afro-Jazz music. In 2023, Bangoura received Canada's inaugural Circus Arts Recognition Award. In *Afrique en Cirque*, Bangoura—along with some of his siblings who are part of his company of artists—return home by immersing audiences in a vision of daily village life in Guinea. The show captures “the strength, agility and life's joys of young

Africans,” Cirque Kalabanté promises. In addition to performing, the company has a studio dedicated to teaching African and circus arts.

“The circus reminds us that it takes a community to make something truly beautiful,” wrote the late fantasy writer and circus aficionado Terry Pratchett. *Afrique en Cirque* honors the community that fed Bangoura's circus dreams and, not to be understated, its discipline.

The physical rigor required of the circus is irrepressible: From performers drumming djembes to contortionists pretzeling to acrobats constructing pyramids of sinew and muscle. In addition to his other roles, Bangoura drums and plays the tall, hybrid, 21-string instrument known as the kora. A few injuries—a strained meniscus in his shoulder and a torn Achilles—attest to the risks of the work and underline the focus required to consistently deliver joy and bravado.

“When I do circus, all the bad things go away, you're just living in the present moment,” Bangoura says in *Circus Without Borders*, a 2015 documentary detailing the work Kalabanté and Guillaume Saladin's ArtCirq were doing to bring circus arts to their communities of origin: Guinean and Inuit. “It's like when I'm drumming, all the energy changes. It becomes positive,” he adds. It's an energy Cirque Kalabanté shares show after show.

***Cirque Kalabanté performs on the Artist Series at Macky Auditorium on Nov. 7, 2025.***



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# ABOUT THE CLIBURN

The **Cliburn** advances classical piano music throughout the world. Its international competitions, education programs, and concert series embody an enduring commitment to artistic excellence and the discovery of new artists. Established in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1962, the quadrennial Van Cliburn International Piano Competition (seventeenth edition, May 21–June 7, 2025) remains the most visible expression of that mission and is, as always, committed to its original ideals of supporting and launching the careers of emerging artists, ages 18–30. It shares the transformative powers of music with a wide global audience, through fully produced webcasts and by providing comprehensive career management and concert bookings to its winners. Rounding out its mission, the Cliburn also produces the Cliburn International Junior Piano Competition and Festival (fourth edition, June 2027) for exceptional 13- to 17-year-old pianists and the Cliburn International Amateur Piano Competition (ninth edition, June 2028) for outstanding non-professional pianists age 35 and older.

Over a four-year cycle, the Cliburn contributes to North Texas' cultural landscape with over 170 classical music performances for 150,000 attendees through competitions, free community concerts, and its signature Cliburn Concerts series. Cliburn in the Classroom—the Cliburn's music education program and recipient of D CEO Magazine's 2024 Innovation in Education Award—presents 1,000 free, in-school, and interactive concert experiences for more than 200,000 area elementary students over a four-year cycle. During the same time period, the Cliburn garners the world's attention with more than 60 million views from 177 nations for competition webcasts; 300 concerts

# ARTIST SERIES

## Aristo Sham, piano

2025 Cliburn Gold Medalist

**Sept. 26** 2025

Macky Auditorium

## PROGRAM

### **Toccata in C minor, BWV 911**

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

### **Suite from Violin Partita in E Major**

Johann Sebastian Bach

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873–1943)

### **Holberg Suite, Op. 40**

Edvard Grieg

### **Intermission**

### **Chaconne in D minor, BWV 1004**

Johann Sebastian Bach

Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924)

### **Six Organ Chorale Preludes**

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

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Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

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**Aristo Sham** appears by arrangement with:

**The Cliburn**, 201 Main Street, Suite 100  
Fort Worth, TX 76102. [cliburn.org](http://cliburn.org)

**Intermusica**, 10 Ely Place, London EC1N 6RY.  
[intermusica.com](http://intermusica.com)

worldwide booked for competition winners; more than 10,000 news articles about the Cliburn and its winners; and regular national radio broadcasts to 245 public radio stations.



## ABOUT ARISTO SHAM

In 2025, **Aristo Sham** was awarded both the Gold Medal and Audience Prize at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. Praised by critics as “a marvel of deft characterization,” “consistently authoritative,” and by the *The New York Times* as a pianist “whose playing combines clarity, elegance and abundant technique,” Sham has dazzled audiences across five continents. His performance of Brahms’s Piano Concerto No. 2 in the final of the Cliburn was lauded for its “purpose, direction, structural awareness, technical finesse and mature artistry” by Gramophone.

In previous seasons, Sham has appeared with the London Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, English Chamber, Orchestre Chambre de Lausanne, Utah Symphony and Minnesota orchestras with conductors including Sir Simon Rattle, Marin Alsop, Edo de Waart and Sir Raymond Leppard. His

2025-26 debut season as Cliburn winner includes a major tour of Asia through South Korea and China, and U.S. recitals for Aspen Music Festival, La Jolla Music Society/The Conrad, UCSB Arts and Lectures, and the Skyline Piano Artist Series at Northwestern University.

In 2009, Sham was featured in the documentary *The World’s Greatest Musical Prodigies*, broadcast by Channel 4 in the U.K.. He has also performed for royalty and dignitaries such as King Charles and the Queen of Belgium. In 2024, he recorded and hosted the complete Brahms solo piano music on RTHK4, Classical Radio in Hong Kong.

Sham first gained international recognition when he won First Prize in the Ettlingen International Piano Competition in Germany in 2006, and First Prize in the Gina Bachauer International Junior Piano Competition in 2008. He is the First Prize Winner of the 2018 Young Concert Artists Susan Wadsworth International Auditions and in 2023, he won the Grand Prix at the Monte-Carlo Music Masters. He is also the recipient of top prizes at the Casagrande, Vendome Prize at Verbier Festival, Dublin, Clara Haskil, New York, Saint-Priest and Viotti International Piano Competitions.

Sham holds a Bachelor of Arts from Harvard University and a master's in piano performance from New England Conservatory. He continued his studies at the Ingesund School of Music in Sweden with Julia Mustonen-Dahlkvist before returning to the States to earn an artist diploma at The Juilliard School with Robert McDonald and Orli Shaham.

*Photo credit: Brandon Wade*



# CU ★ PRESENTS

## Takács Quartet

Sunday, Oct. 5, 4 p.m.

Monday, Oct. 6, 7:30 p.m.

Grusin Music Hall

Streaming available through Oct. 13.

Tickets start at \$22 for digital  
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*Jingle Bell Swing*



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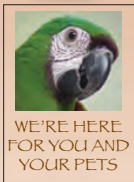


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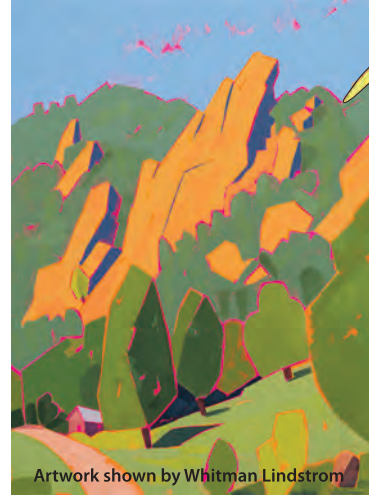
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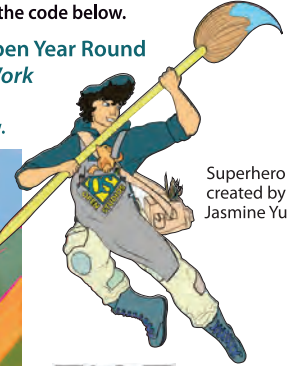
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Joy Redstone is a licensed therapist, a member of Denver's D'art 360 Gallery, and serves on the boards of both Next Gallery and the Colorado Women's Art Museum. This exhibition is an invitation to witness healing in visual form.



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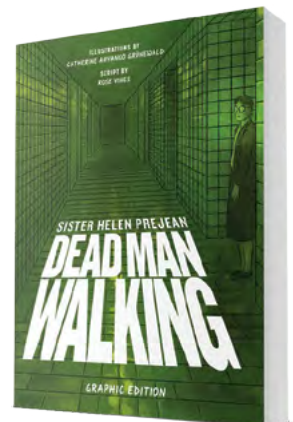


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# Global Seminar livecasts piano recital from Paris to **Denver**



*By Kathryn Bistodeau*

Professor of Piano Andrew Cooperstock loves all things French—the art, music, food and language—and this summer he combined that passion with his love for teaching and performing.

In partnership with CU Boulder Education Abroad, a brand new Global Seminar—Chamber Music Performance—engaged a dozen student participants in Aix-en-Provence, Marseille and Paris, France. From July 24 to Aug. 7, the seminar offered students opportunities to perform chamber music across France—including a unique occasion for a local audience to experience the performers from half a world away.

“One of the concerts in Paris is going to be at the new Steinway & Sons gallery there,” explained Cooperstock before the group’s departure. “The students will perform chamber music and then—in the second half of the program—just the pianists will each play a short piece on the Spirio Steinway.

“A signal will be livecast from Paris to the Spirio piano in the new Steinway & Sons Denver location where audience members can hear the sound actually coming out of another Spirio piano, like a player piano—not from a speaker like a Webcast or Zoomcast or something.”





He added, “The sound is extremely accurate, so it should sound pretty much exactly like the Paris concert.”

In addition to the technologically remarkable Steinway recital, participating students performed in a Baroque church in Aix-en-Provence and the American Church in Paris, among other venues, and rehearsed great chamber music by American and French composers with talented peers. Students also engaged in guest master classes, studio classes and private lessons.

The students’ cultural immersion further included French language lessons, a boat ride along the Seine, a trip to Notre Dame, a tour of the Institute for Research and Coordination in Acoustics/Music (IRCAM) and more.

*Photos: Steinway & Sons Spirio, “the world’s highest resolution player piano.” Photo credit: Steinway & Sons; College of Music students Juhyun Hwang (MM ’26, piano) and James Morris (DMA ’25, piano) rehearse for their Spirio piano duet at CU Boulder before traveling to France for a two-week Global Seminar. Photo credit: Andrew Cooperstock*

# Lynn-Craig Living Music Award recipients announced

By Kathryn Bistodeau

The American Music Research Center (AMRC) awarded the 2025 Alex Craig and Christina Lynn-Craig Living Music Award to **Kristina Butler** (MM ’25, voice) and **Katiann Nelson** (MM ’25, voice). The awardees each received a \$1,000 scholarship.



Nelson’s project—“Making a Composer: Alex Craig”—involves presenting a recital of Craig’s works alongside works by composers that Craig found inspirational. “I’m really looking forward to diving into the music itself,” says Nelson. “For me, getting to know a new composer through their work is like getting to know a new friend—I’m excited to start this process with a composer who is completely new to me.”



Butler will also be organizing a recital and hopes to record the music she prepares. Her project—“Seasons of Life: Music of Alex Craig”—will explore the seasons of life in the context of the four weather seasons.

“I’m most excited to work artistically from a relatively blank slate as there isn’t a wealth of recordings of Professor Craig’s music,” explains Butler. “Learning music without a recording is an exciting challenge that frequently comes with learning contemporary works.”

*The Lynn-Craig Living Music Award is open to both undergraduate and graduate students and supports the performance of works by the late composer Alex Craig, housed in the Rare and Distinctive Collections at the CU Boulder Libraries.*

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