

CU ★ PRESENTS

2020-21 Season
Digital program



College of Music
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

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CU ★ PRESENTS is the home of performing arts at the University of Colorado Boulder.



The mission of the **University of Colorado Boulder College of Music** is
to inspire artistry and discovery, together.



As we gather, we honor and acknowledge that the University of Colorado's four campuses are on the traditional territories and ancestral homelands of the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Ute, Apache, Comanche, Kiowa, Lakota, Pueblo and Shoshone Nations. Further, we acknowledge the 48 contemporary tribal nations historically tied to the lands that comprise what is now called Colorado.

Acknowledging that we live in the homelands of Indigenous peoples recognizes the original stewards of these lands and their legacies. With this land acknowledgment, we celebrate the many contributions of Native peoples to the fields of medicine, mathematics, government and military service, arts, literature, engineering and more. We also recognize the sophisticated and intricate knowledge systems Indigenous peoples have developed in relationship to their lands.

We recognize and affirm the ties these nations have to their traditional homelands and the many Indigenous people who thrive in this place, alive and strong. We also acknowledge the painful history of ill treatment and forced removal that has had a profoundly negative impact on Native nations.

We respect the many diverse Indigenous peoples still connected to this land. We honor them and thank the Indigenous ancestors of this place. The University of Colorado pledges to provide educational opportunities for Native students, faculty and staff and advance our mission to understand the history and contemporary lives of Native peoples.



CU Opera alumna Claire McCahan and instructor Jeremy Reger demonstrate proper COVID-19 protocols during rehearsals and coaching, 2020.

The **future, faster**

By Sabine Kortals Stein

Spring semester is fully underway as we continue our commitment to being a COVID-aware college and campus.

According to John Davis, who was appointed the College of Music's new dean as of the first of the year, "While these are uncertain times and the future seems equally uncertain, COVID-19 has pushed us to leverage technologies in impactful ways that will surely outlast this pandemic—through distance learning, collaboration and performing, we've risen to the challenge.

“We’re not only expanding the reach and range of what’s possible as artists and performers, we’re also adding to our students’ skill sets, and paving the way toward greater diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in everything we do.

“Put another way, COVID-19 has accelerated our momentum to leverage various technologies in ways that elevate College of Music offerings. Despite a challenging environment, the college’s continued level of excellence—and evolving, newly emerging academic activities and performance platforms—make me incredibly proud.”

In a recent Q&A, Dean Davis shared his own musical journey, including these excerpts:

When did you first consider music as a career for yourself?

By the time I was in high school. My bachelor’s degree is in music education, from Metropolitan State University here in Colorado. At the University of Denver, I earned a Master of Arts degree in performance. Beginning in my 20s, I played with classical, jazz and commercial groups, and performed with or for some amazing musicians.

After performing for a few years, you joined the military. Why?

I didn't like school in my 20s, and I thought I didn't want to be a teacher. I decided to join the Army at what would be viewed as the lowest level of expertise needed, the infantry. I spent two years in the army during my initial enlistment, 12 months of which was spent in South Korea. When Desert Storm—The Gulf War—began in 1991, my reserve unit was activated and we were sent overseas to Germany for four months. Toward the end of my time in Korea—during the monsoon season, when the infantry would have to fill sandbags with mud and rebuild walls and bridges when the rain would wash them out—I realized that, unlike many of my fellow soldiers, I didn't have to do this for a living. And I realized that the difference between me and most of them was education.

What was your next move?

I got fired up and committed from that day forward to education—opening people's eyes to what's out there for them. Knowing that I wanted to teach at a university level, the shortest path to get there was for me to return to trumpet and jazz and receive a doctoral degree.

You left full-time teaching in 2011 to be an administrator. Why?

I love doing what I can to support the success of others. As an administrator, you're able to see a "bigger picture" and have the opportunity to make an impact that benefits so many others. The challenge is great, but the satisfaction of helping our students and faculty succeed is enormously rewarding.

What excites you about leading the College of Music?

The college has been fortunate to have great leadership over many years. Supporters of the college are among the most passionate and caring people I have known. And the students, faculty and staff are truly outstanding. At the same time, all of us realize there is even more we can accomplish toward the betterment of society through music.

*Enjoy Jessie Bauters' **complete interview with Dean Davis here.***

Pendulum Movie Night

Annika K. Socolofsky, artistic director

Virtual performance streaming April 16-30, 2021

impermanence (2020) – 12:00

Marco Corvo, film and artwork

Nelson Walker, composer and cello

Lost in the Dark (2019) – 15:00

Sleepless Dreamer Studios

in affiliation with Guildhall at Southern Methodist University, video game

Sam C Henderson, composer

Justin Loar, commentary and gameplay, LitD level design and audio design

Enmeshed (2018) – 10:00

Jacob Landis-Eigsti, film

Conor Abbott Brown, composer, recording and audio design

Leslee Smucker, violin and voice

Program notes

impermanence

The short film *impermanence* is part of a larger project centered on the concept of time.

Citing the contemporary philosopher Byung-Chul Han, Marco thinks that time has never been so fleeting as it is today and today's hyperactivity is causing a temporal crisis. Time is lacking a direction: the present is no longer framed by the past and the future therefore we lost duration and continuity.

impermanence aims to reclaim a slower time, where time regains its structure and its rhythm. And to engage in a contemplative life where the passing of time is once again meaningful.

Lost in the Dark

Please **visit this link for a YouTube playlist** featuring musical selections from Lost in the Dark, **this link** for more information on the game itself, and **this link** to download the game.

Personnel

Conor Abbott Brown

Conor Abbott Brown is a composer, clarinetist, synth programmer and producer. Brown's eclectic output defies genre delineation, reflecting a life-long engagement with numerous musical traditions. Surveying the ensembles that Brown performs with provides a window into the traditions that inform Brown's compositions: as the clarinetist of the Boulder Altitude Directive, Brown premieres compositions centered in the tradition of Western art music; as the clarinetist of Egemen Kesikli's band Turkish Massage Owl, Brown performs folk and pop music with roots in Asia Minor and the Balkans; as a synth programmer in the collective Pink Mage, Brown engages with realms of noise and dark ambient. Brown is also active as a performer of klezmer music for weddings and other events. Brown's works for orchestra have been performed by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the Albany Symphony, the Aspen Festival Orchestra, the Longmont Symphony, and many others. Brown also has credits as a producer of film music, including arranger and choral producer for the film *Uncut Gems* and music co-producer for the documentary *The Social Dilemma*. Brown is currently pursuing a doctorate in music composition at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Marco Corvo

Marco Corvo is an artist, photographer and filmmaker who lives and works in Nederland, Colorado. He was born in Milan, Italy where he studied filmmaking and cinematography. He's been living in Colorado for about twenty years. Corvo uses a large format camera and a slow 19th-century photographic process to create images that function as an exploration of ways to counter today's atomization of time and our compulsive desire for instantaneous satisfaction.

Sam C Henderson

With a Bachelor of Music in both composition and vocal performance from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, Sam C Henderson exhibits a fervent passion for making music in both senses of the phrase. Henderson's history with choral music—starting in 2005 with the then-named Conspirare Children's Choir—has introduced him to the worlds of singing, composing, arranging and even beatboxing!

Inspired by the versatility of vocal production, Henderson's compositional voice emphasizes timbral interaction and textured sonority within and between individual voices. This is most prevalent in his dense yet intimate choral works *Quarantine Bagatelle* and *Twofold Silence*, his playfully ambient two-piano piece *Interstices of Moonlit Trees*, and his ventures into electro-acoustic music, including his operetta *Coming to This*. Henderson supplements his work with arranging and transcription services, primarily assisting choirs, chamber ensembles and vocalists over the years.

Presently, Henderson lives in Colorado pursuing a Master of Music in composition at University of Colorado Boulder. Unable to escape music even in his extramusical ventures, Henderson also works for the Grammy® award-winning choral ensemble *Conspirare* as gift processing and database coordinator.

Leslee Smucker

Leslee Smucker is committed to inter-media project performances, sound experimentation, creative academic research writing, teaching and artistic collaboration. As a performer, Smucker's solo and chamber projects have taken her to international and national venues including Association Philomuses in Paris, Auditorium Clarisse in Italy for the International Pound and T.S. Eliot Conference, Center for New Music in San Francisco, Muse Performance Space, The Dairy Arts Center, ATLAS black box, Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia, The Scottish Library (presented by University of Edinburgh's Cantos Project) and eTown hall. Her recording of *Enmeshed* by Conor Abbott Brown was shown at New Music Gathering in 2020. Her solo projects often take the form of inter-media and employ the use of film, poetry, electronics, singing and commissions.

Her performance project and recording—called *Personae*—was released by Gega New and Naxos direct on the unknown solo violin music of poet Ezra Pound. Of *Personae*, David Saemann of *Fanfare* magazine writes, “Smucker's *Personae* represents its own world, seducing the listener into its sources of contemplation and reverie.” She has performed *Personae* internationally at the Auditorium Clarisse in Italy, as well as several national performances. She has performed selections of Pound's works at the Scottish Poetry Library, at a poetry reading even sponsored by the University of Edinburgh Cantos Project. The live

performance of *Personae* includes a commissioned film in which Smucker acted and co-directed, as well as two commissioned musical works and a poem for the project. Smucker's sound collage and sound experimentation is featured on her album "hypnotic traces" along with Cage's *Six Melodies* played on violin and organ, as well as Henry Brant's *Quombex* for viola d'amore, organ, and antique music boxes. Her experimental sound project called *mixed messages* employs violin, voice, two answering machines and a 0-coast synth processed through ableton live. Smucker's recording of *The Logical Conclusion* from *Personae* was featured on KGNU Denver/Boulder's "The Present Edge," a contemporary music radio show. Music from *Personae* and *Meshes* has also been featured on Sarah Cahill's program "Revolutions per minute" on KALW San Francisco, where she was interviewed and played live in the studio. She has played her own composition *Mechanic* live in the KGNU studio.

Committed to chamber music endeavors, Smucker was one of 20 fellows in the debut performance of the Barnes Ensemble at the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia with conductor Robert Whalen, co-artistic director Katherine Skovira, and Artists-in-residence JACK Quartet. Smucker's creative research has lead to two publications including her essay entitled "Renaissance Man" which was published in the Ezra Pound Edinburgh Companion to the Arts, as well as a co-authored essay with Carlo Caballero in the Cambridge Press publication Fauré Studies set for publication in June 2020. She has presented her research at the 20th Biennial International Conference on Nineteenth-Century Music in Huddersfield, UK. As a teacher, Smucker has held positions as Visiting Violin Faculty at University of South Florida, Teaching Assistant at University of Colorado Boulder and Teaching Assistant at University of South Florida. She has also served as a faculty member in the ACORN program, a teaching initiative that provides instruments and lessons to children.

Nelson Walker

As a composer and performer, Nelson Walker (b. 2000, he/him/his) values honest expression over all. Through his impassioned performance and composition style, he aims to foster human connection, promote vulnerability and honesty, and generally tell a good story to his audiences. He currently studies composition with Carter Pann (a finalist for the 2016 Pulitzer Prize in Music) at the University of Colorado, and has previously worked with Annika Socolofsky, Nathan Hall and Michael Theodore.

In 2019, Walker's work *Shadows of Clouds* was selected for performance by the Carpe Diem String Quartet at the Accademia Chigiana in Siena, Italy. Walker's compositions have also been selected for performance three times for the Colorado Composers Concerts by the Playground Ensemble in Denver, and have been featured numerous times on the Pendulum New Music concert series at CU Boulder.

As a performer, Walker has experience both in traditional orchestral and chamber settings, as well as music for theater (both scripted and improvised forms), and has also collaborated with a number of singer-songwriters around the Front Range area.

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A music student practices COVID-safe protocols in Profesor Donald McKinney's Wind Symphony class, 2020.

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College of Music

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

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As of Feb. 23, 2021

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2020-21 Digital Programs

March-May 2021

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