

CU ★ PRESENTS

2021-22 Season



College of Music

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

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Fall 2021

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AT THE PERFORMANCE

- Please refrain from using electronic devices during the performance. Feel free to view this program on your device at any time prior to the performance, during intermission or after the performance ends.
- Photography and video recordings of any type are strictly prohibited during the performance.
- Smoking is not permitted anywhere. CU Boulder is a smoke-free campus.

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.



The College of Music acknowledges that the university sits upon land within the territories of the Ute, Cheyenne and Arapaho peoples. Further, we acknowledge that 48 contemporary tribal nations are historically tied to Colorado lands.

College of Music's Faculty Tuesdays series celebrates 22 years of community-focused music making

By Ally Dever

CU Boulder's College of Music has been offering free, live faculty performances to the Boulder community for more than two decades.

As part of the long-running Faculty Tuesdays series, professional musicians in the college play concerts every Tuesday during the fall and spring semesters, offering students and community members the opportunity to experience firsthand the renowned talent housed right here on campus.

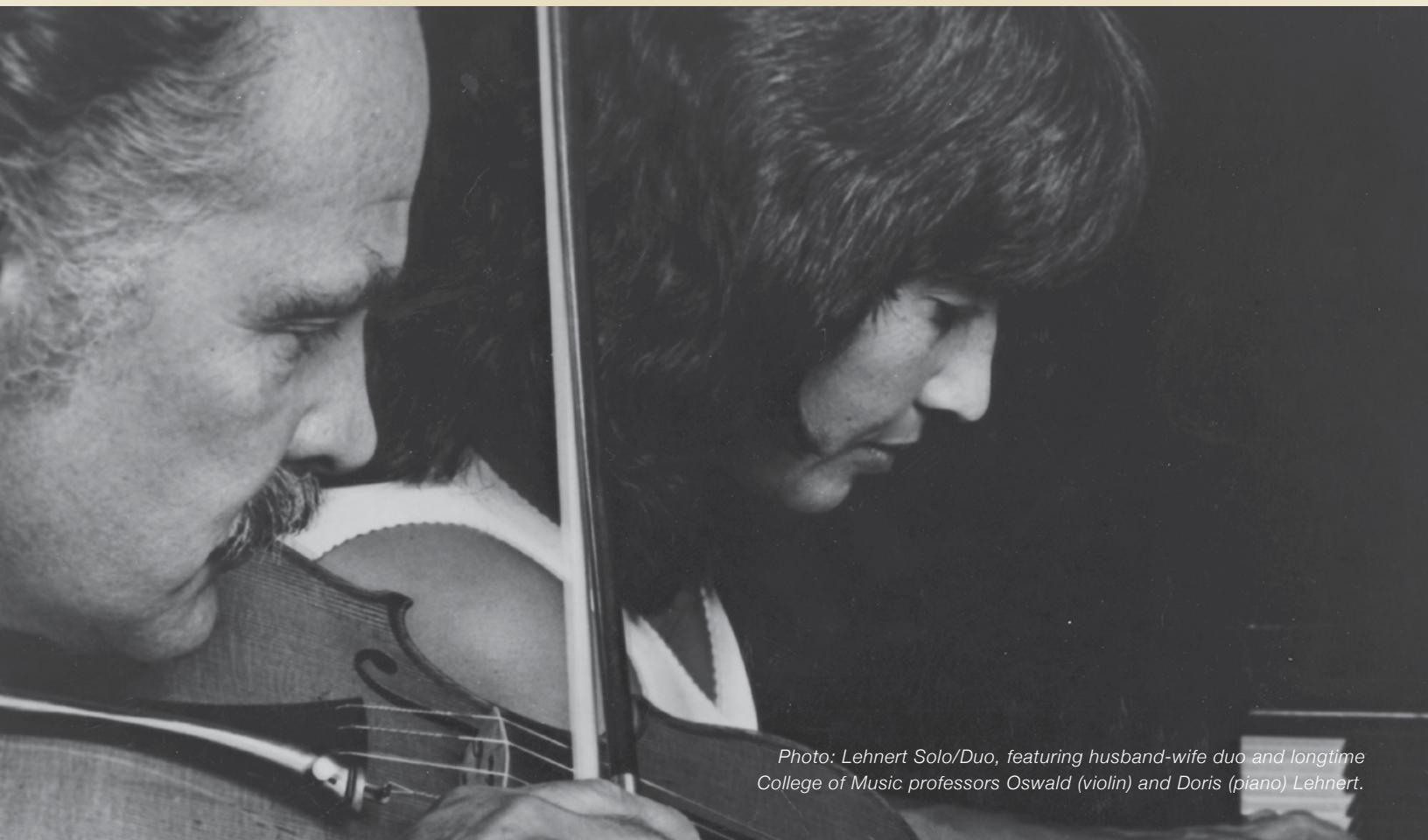


Photo: Lehnert Solo/Duo, featuring husband-wife duo and longtime College of Music professors Oswald (violin) and Doris (piano) Lehnert.

Daniel Sher, former College of Music Dean, and Joan McLean Braun, assistant dean for concerts and communications and executive director of CU Presents, started the popular Faculty Tuesdays series in 1999. “With this series, the College of Music launched something unique,” Sher said. “There really wasn’t a formal approach to faculty recitals at other schools and colleges at the time.”

But word of the first-of-its-kind series quickly spread to other universities. Sher routinely attended several conferences and roundtables for music deans and directors across the country, and found many of his colleagues at other institutions were inspired by Faculty Tuesdays. Some even expressed interest in similar programs of their own.

“Music deans at other schools would ask how we got such a large audience to the concerts and how we got faculty to participate,” he said.

Since then, several music schools across the country have instituted similar programs, like Yale’s Faculty Artist Series, Arizona State University’s ASU in Concert Series and Michigan State University’s Faculty Recital Series.

Craft and collaboration

Distinguished Professor of Piano David Korevaar has been a frequent performer at Faculty Tuesdays since its inception, participating in over 70 individual performances.

As a world-renowned professional musician who has performed throughout the United States, Europe, Asia, and Central and South America, Korevaar believes Faculty Tuesdays offers something special.

“This is one of the best audiences I play for anywhere in the world,” Korevaar said. “And as performers, that’s what musicians are all about.”

For faculty, the series has served as a platform to practice their craft. It provides them with an appreciative audience and a free venue to try out their material before they take it on the road—an opportunity that’s not offered to most professional musicians.

And, by allowing performers to schedule their slots in advance, it also inspires faculty to plan collaborative performances with colleagues in different departments, bringing a new dimension to the weekly performances.

“With the introduction of Faculty Tuesdays, our professors were less siloed and began to appreciate one another, and learn more about the artistry and abilities of their colleagues,” Sher said.

“It contributed significantly to the climate of collaboration that the college enjoys today and elevated the mutual respect and admiration between our faculty members.”

Unlike other concerts, attendees don't have to drive far and pay expensive fees to hear professional quality music.

Chris Brauchli, a violinist and longtime donor to the College of Music, has attended Faculty Tuesday performances since the series' inception.

“The quality and level of the talent continues to blossom, and it makes the concerts superb,” he said. “It’s a real treat for people who live here to be able to hear these performances for free on a weekly basis.”

The College of Music relies on community donations to continue to host Faculty Tuesdays.

To encourage others to donate, Brauchli has been known for his “magic envelope” bit on occasional Tuesday events. Formerly inserted in each hardcopy program, there was an envelope for voluntary donations.*

“As a joke, I’ve pointed out that attendees can tear it off, throw it away and it becomes trash,” he said. “Or, they can put money inside, mail it back to the college and it becomes gold.”

With the College of Music’s move to digital programs, **give here to add your support for the Faculty Tuesdays series.*

Faculty Tuesdays

1919: Viola Sonatas of Hindemith and Clarke

Richard O'Neill, viola

Margaret McDonald, piano

7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 21, 2021

Grusin Music Hall

Program

Sonata in A minor for Arpeggione and Piano, D. 821

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

I. Allegro Moderato

II. Adagio

III. Allegretto

Sonata for Viola and Piano, Op. 11, No. 4 (1919)

Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)

I. Fantasie: Ruhig

II. Thema mit Variationen: Ruhig und einfach wie ein volkslied

III. Finale (mit Variationen) Sehr lebhaft

(movements played without pause)

Sonata for Viola and Piano (1919)

Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979)

I. Impetuoso

II. Vivace

III. Adagio

Program notes

Program notes by Henry Michaels

Arpeggione Sonata

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

1824 was a difficult year for Franz Schubert. Sure, it was the year that he composed, among other works, both his A minor (D804) and D minor (D810) string quartets, as well as the one during which he witnessed the premiere of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. But it was also a year filled with health struggles, as he dealt with the unpleasant symptoms of secondary syphilis. In a melancholy letter written in March, Schubert quoted the words of Goethe he had earlier set to music in *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, "My peace is gone, my heart is sore, I shall find it nevermore." Seeking both a regular paycheck and a change of scenery, Schubert spent the summer months tutoring children on the rural estate of a Hungarian noble family. Finding nothing but isolation, however, he returned to his native Vienna, where in an imminently relatable move the 27-year-old composer saved money by taking up residence in his parents' house.

It was against this contextual backdrop that Schubert took on a very different compositional project: a commission for a strange new instrument called the arpeggione. Also called the bowed guitar, the arpeggione was six-stringed and tuned like a guitar but held between the legs and bowed like a cello. In a somewhat less consequential version of the Isaac Newton/Gottfried Leibniz who-discovered-calculus-first story, it seems that the arpeggione was simultaneously invented in 1823 by instrument makers in both Vienna and Pest, and by the time Schubert got to the instrument in late 1824, it was enjoying a bit of novelty-driven popularity.

Given his financial situation, it is perhaps no surprise that Schubert would take on such a project. But if Schubert's motivation was almost certainly financial, that of the man writing the check was of a more purely musical nature. The commission for the sonata came from arpeggione virtuoso—and author of the instrument's sole method book—Vincenz Schuster, a man intent on elevating the arpeggione beyond the level of a mere musical curiosity. Schubert set to work on the sonata in November of 1824 and finished it in short order. It was

premiered at a private concert with Schuster playing the arpeggione, after which time the work fell into obscurity. It was published posthumously in 1871 in a version that included an arrangement for cello and piano, a necessity given that by that time the arpeggione had long since gone the way of the dodo.

So, it would seem Vincenz Schuster's best efforts at championing the arpeggione came to naught. Or did they? As the only real work written during an extinct instrument's briefest of vogues, Schubert's Arpeggione Sonata is among the nichest of niche pieces. And yet while the arpeggione is no more, the *piece* continues to enjoy a high degree of popularity with both audiences and performers as an arrangement for a variety of instruments (although there are a handful of modern arpeggionists who also perform it). Would the same be true if Schuster had chosen another composer for his venture, or if Schubert hadn't been primed by timing and financial situation to accept such an odd commission? While Schuster's choice of composer ultimately didn't ensure the instrument's survival, it did ensure that the end result would be beautiful music. And when all is said and done, you just read 500 words about the arpeggione. That has to count for *something*, right?

Sonata for Viola and Piano, Op. 11, No. 4

Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)

The end of World War I saw Paul Hindemith ready for a change. Before the war he had been a professional musician, serving as leader of the first violins in the Frankfurt Opera Orchestra and playing second violin in the Rebner Quartet. But his professional musical trajectory was put on hold when he was conscripted into the Imperial German Army in late 1917. (Fortunately for him, he was given the relatively safe posting of bass drum player in a regimental band.) With the war ended and Hindemith safely home, however, he increasingly devoted himself to the art of composition.

While still serving in the army, Hindemith had written to a friend about a project he had started while still posted at the front—a set of sonatas for different instruments:

Each of them is to be completely different from the preceding ones—also in form. I want to see whether I can't, in a whole series of such pieces, increase the expressive possibilities ... and extend the horizon. It will take me quite a number of years to finish the job, if I ever do, but I feel it's an interesting task.

It is evident from the tone of his letter that Hindemith viewed these works as part of his education—or at least as a way of continuing to explore his compositional voice. But if he viewed the five resulting Op. 11 sonatas as an act of self-exploration, they were also a savvy form of self-*promotion*. Completed in 1919—the composer sold him quite a bit short, it turns out, when speculating the project would take him “a number of years”—Hindemith arranged for several of them to be performed on a 2 June 1919 showcase of his own works. It was at this concert that the Op. 11, No. 4 Sonata for Viola and Piano received its premiere with the composer himself serving as soloist. (Another important post-war change in Hindemith's professional life was his switch of instrument; although he continued as a violinist in the opera orchestra, he asked his quartet to move him to viola and continued primarily as a violist for the remainder of his life.)

The track record of composers organizing showcases for their own music is mixed at best. Concerts are expensive to produce and promote, and new music, especially by unknown composers, is not often a lucrative financial venture. Hindemith was clearly confident, though, and although he hadn't yet composed all that many pieces, works like the Viola Sonata and some of its Op. 11 brethren also featured on the concert served as a demonstration of what he *could* do. Hindemith's plan came off without a hitch. So successful was the concert, in fact, that German publishing firm B. Schott's Söhne expressed interest in serving as his publisher. His relationship with Schott—a giant in the industry, to put it mildly—was certainly a productive one; they would go on to publish Hindemith's works for the remainder of his life.

The Op. 11 sonatas were written by a man at a crossroads—a violinist embracing the switch to viola, a professional performer exploring his creativity as a composer, a musician challenging himself to go for it. A performance of the Viola Sonata, then, is more than simply good music (and it is that); it's a record of a young composer betting on himself—both creatively and professionally—and winning.

Sonata for Viola and Piano

Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979)

The rules for Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge's 1919 composition competition were simple enough: each entry had to be a suite or sonata for viola and piano, it couldn't have yet been published or performed, and it had to be submitted anonymously. The anonymity part was important as it would ensure a fair and impartial judging of the submissions, and to preserve it each composer was instructed to enclose their real name and address in an envelope marked with either a nom de plume or a chiffre (French for cipher). After a first cut (narrowing 73 pieces down to 10) and then a second, two pieces remained for the judges to review—one a suite for viola and piano, the other a sonata. Only the winning composer's name was to have been revealed to the judges and the world, with the other name forever remaining a mystery. There was just one problem. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge had arranged for an even six judges, and the vote for the winning piece was *tied*.

First the judges inquired about leaving the result a tie, but Coolidge wasn't keen on the idea of splitting the \$1,000 prize money. The judges voted again, and the count remained 3 votes apiece. In the end, Coolidge herself was forced to cast the deciding vote, and the winning composer's envelope was torn open to reveal the name ... Ernest Bloch. The judges were curious about the other composer's name, though (at least one judge is said to have been sure that the second envelope would contain the name Maurice Ravel). Shouldn't they open it, too, they wondered, especially since the results were *this* close.

English composer and violist Rebecca Clarke had worked on her Sonata for Viola and Piano throughout the spring and summer of 1919 in the hopes of submitting it to a competition sponsored by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, a powerful art patron with whom she was acquainted. She finished the sonata in early July and dropped it in the mail on July 11, writing in her diary, "I put in final marks on my Sonata, & sent it off. Can hardly believe I really have got it done." She was happy with her work. After a read-through with friends just a few days earlier, she wrote, "Expected to hate it after all that work, but really am rather pleased with it."

The name in the second envelope was, of course, Rebecca Clarke's. The moment the judges read it must have been a dramatic one; Clarke would later write that Coolidge told her, "You should have seen their faces when they saw it was by a woman!" The dramatic moment was also a defining one in the career of Rebecca Clarke, who ended up being treated more as co-winner than runner-up. Although she didn't receive any monetary prize, she was pleasantly surprised by the news of Coolidge's decision to feature the Viola Sonata at the same festival as Bloch's winning work, where it received high praise. There was also much discussion in musical circles and the press of Clarke's near win, with some news outlets even relating the story that one judge had thought the piece to have been written by Ravel!

Small details can sometimes have enormous impacts. That was certainly true of Coolidge's seemingly inconsequential decision to engage six judges for her 1919 competition, a decision that ultimately led to the dramatic Bloch-Clarke tie. The highly public second-place finish was a defining moment for Rebecca Clarke, who was as skilled a promoter as she was a composer and violist. In the years that followed, she got the sonata published by a major publisher, performed it on three continents, and used its popularity to boost awareness of her other music. It remains a beloved mainstay of the repertoire to this day. And as for Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, she never again used an even number of judges for a competition.

About the performers

Click or tap on bold and underlined text to view biographies or a performer's website.

Richard O'Neill, viola

Margaret McDonald, piano

CU ★ PRESENTS



Upcoming events at the College of Music

Event details are subject to change, but the CU Presents website will always be up-to-date.

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