

CU ★ PRESENTS



January-February 2024

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



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

CU ★ PRESENTS

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2024

Editors: Laima Haley, Sabine Kortals Stein

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

- ★ Artist Series
- CU Colorado Shakespeare Festival
- 🎷 Takács Quartet
- CU CU Performing Arts, including the **College of Music**, **Department of Theatre & Dance** and the **Holiday Festival**.

The University of Colorado Boulder, Colorado's flagship university, honors and recognizes the many contributions of Indigenous peoples in our state. CU Boulder acknowledges that it is located on the traditional territories and ancestral homelands of the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Ute and many other Native American nations. Their forced removal from these territories has caused devastating and lasting impacts.



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A violin superstar

By Henry Michaels

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

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

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

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

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

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

**RAY CHEN AND
JULIO ELIZALDE**
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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.

CU Macky Auditorium

Good to know for the show:

ACCESSIBILITY

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



For more information, scan this QR code or visit cupresents.org/accessibility.

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

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PHOTOS AND RECORDINGS

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

SMOKING

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

TICKET SALES

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

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

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



Asleep at the Wheel

With the CU Symphony Orchestra

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

CU Macky Auditorium



The Current

April 11-14, 2024

CU Roe Green Theatre



American Stories by American Women

April 25-28, 2024

CU Music Theatre



Takács Quartet

April 28-29, 2024

CU Grusin Music Hall

Streaming April 28-May 6

Joyce Yang, piano with the Takács Quartet

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Presented by the Artist Series

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

Macky Auditorium

Tickets start at \$20

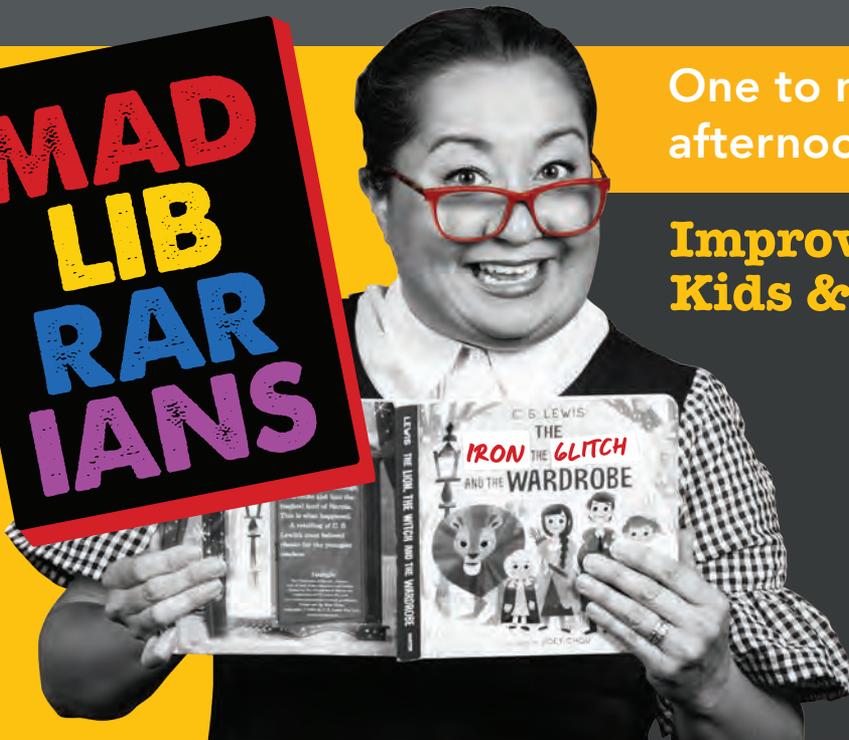
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Step: a joyful act of resistance

By Becca Vaclavik

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

STEP AFRIKA!

Artist Series

Feb. 2, 2024

Macky Auditorium

Starting at \$24



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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.



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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

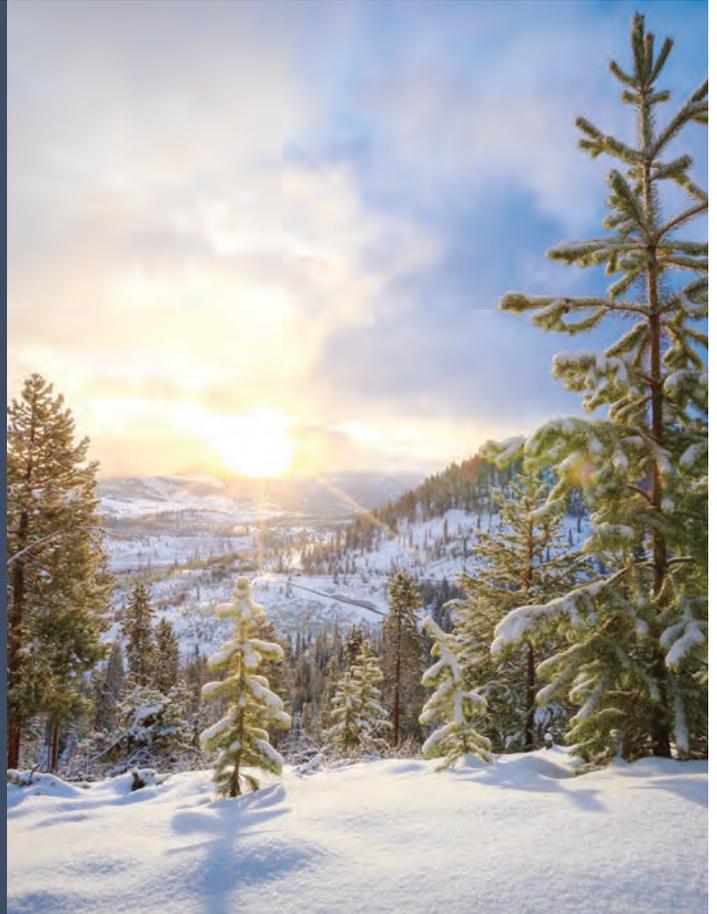
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Ekstrand Competition winners announced

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 well-deserved achievement!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



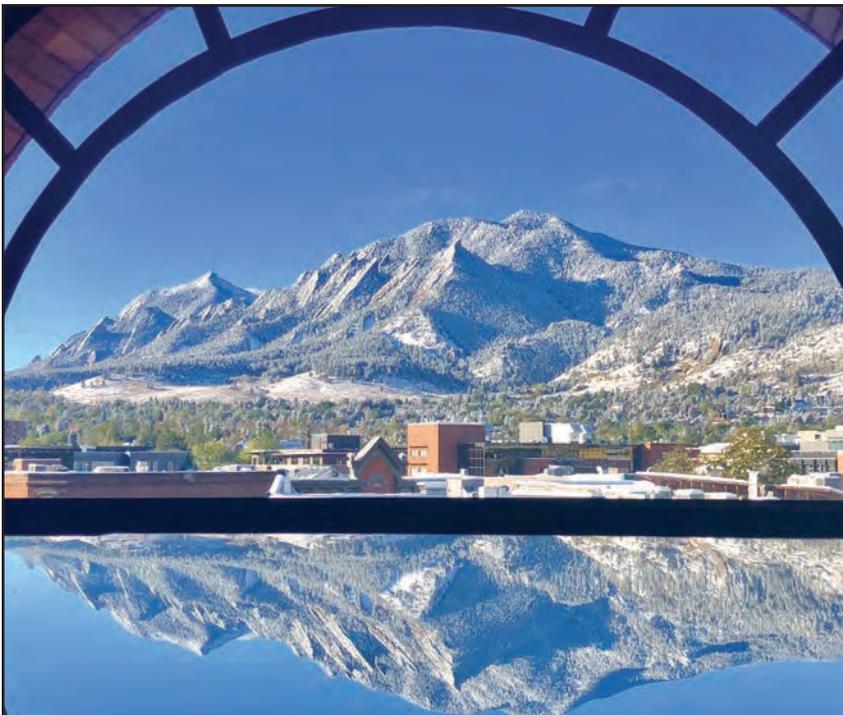


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Jasper String Quartet

J Freivogel and Karen Kim, violins

Andrew Gonzalez, viola

Rachel Henderson Freivogel, cello

4 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 18, 2024

7:30 p.m., Monday, Feb. 19, 2024

Grusin Music Hall

Program

Selections from *Cypresses*, B. 152 (1887)

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

- I. I Know that on My Love to Thee
- II. Death Reigns in Many a Human Breast
- III. When Thy Sweet Glances Fall on Me
- IX. Thou Only, Dear One
- XI. Nature Lies Peaceful in Slumber and Dreaming
- XII. You Ask Why My Songs

String Quartet No. 4 (1951)

Grażyna Bacewicz (1909-1969)

Andante – Allegro molto

Andante

Allegro giocoso

— Intermission —

String Quartet No. 1 in A minor, Op. 41, No. 1 (1842)

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Introduzione. Andante espressivo – Allegro

Scherzo. Presto – Intermezzo

Adagio

Presto

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suonoartistmanagement.com
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- See Page 9 of this publication for additional show and venue policies.

Program notes

By Marc Shulgold

Selections from *Cypresses*, B. 152 (1887)

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

“Just imagine a young man in love—that’s what they’re all about!” In a letter to a friend, the 24-year-old Dvořák gave this description of his collection of 18 love songs written in response to his youthful crush on a piano student named Josefina Čermáková. The songs for voice and piano used texts by Gustav Pflieger-Moravský (1833-75), titled *Cypresses*. Things didn’t work out with that piano student (they rarely do, of course). Flash forward 22 years. Dvořák is now happily married—to Čermáková’s younger sister Anna, by the way—when he revisited those songs from his blushing youth, turning 12 of them into settings for string quartet. His editor, Joseph Suk, titled the new collection *Cypresses*, of course—but Dvořák preferred another, more evocative name: *Echo of Songs*. Suk’s title has stuck, however.

But what’s in a name? Whether heard in total or, as in today’s program, in excerpts, these delightful, endlessly tuneful little treats show us the youthful composer brimming with warm, folksy, often danceable melodies that each last barely two or three minutes. They retain the poet’s original titles, ones that must have inspired the composer as he set aside the words while retaining their musical subtexts and moods. Pflieger-Moravský’s poems carry such dreamy titles as “Oh, it was a lovely, golden dream”; “Around the house now I stagger”; “Pensively through my whole soul” and “In that sweet power of your eyes.” Those archly romantic sentiments must have traveled straight to the heart of a young man still in his 20s, desperately in love and so inspired as to turn his passion into song. And, we should add, wise enough, two decades later, to convert those songs into these charming little instrumental remembrances. One can only imagine the wistful smile on his face as he worked, transcribing a dozen love songs into settings for string quartet, re-reading each poem, pausing perhaps to recall those innocent days of his youth.

String Quartet No. 4 (1951)

Grażyna Bacewicz (1909-1969)

A woman lauded during her lifetime with numerous awards and honors by her Polish countrymen, Grażyna Bacewicz (pronounced Grah-jheena Bah-shay-vich) was a brilliant violinist and prolific composer, having studied at the Warsaw Conservatory and, thanks to Jan Paderewski’s support, with Nadia Boulanger in Paris. Most of her instrumental music centered on the violin, including seven concertos for that instrument and seven string quartets. The Fourth Quartet, written in 1950 and premiered the following year, was commissioned by the Polish Composers’ Union and was awarded first prize, gaining international praise and performances. Reportedly a woman of strength and courage (as World War II raged, she gave clandestine concerts in Warsaw during the Nazi occupation), Bacewicz was unfazed, working in a field dominated by men. Her revered colleague Witold Lutoslawski called her “a distinguished Polish composer of the 20th century and one of the foremost women composers of all time.”

Following a dark, tense introduction, the *Allegro molto* of the Fourth Quartet unfolds as a captivating, unpredictable series of mood swings between angry episodes of slashing alternating chords and lyrical, folklike passages of solo melodies from the cello, violin and, later on, viola. What may seem like an unkempt opening is, in fact, a compact, disciplined work in barely visible sonata form. Rather than search for its structure, one need only marvel at the composer’s command of creating massive orchestral sonorities from her four instruments and her mastery of transitions from agitating moments to calming ones, all without upsetting the movement’s cohesiveness.

An inescapable sense of longing drifts through the *Andante*, as one thematic idea emerges and then fades away, taken up by one or more players before another is introduced elsewhere. The mood changes, then changes again—but as in the opening movement, always with the steady hand of a composer who is in full control. Occasionally a fugal idea is introduced, but only briefly. At last, the violin brings a new possibility, taken up by the cello, then expanded cheerily by the viola—but it all quickly ends in silence.

That last little hint of a smile spills over into a final movement that is accurately titled *Allegro giocoso*—joking. The mood here never strays far from one of smiles, and occasionally bubbles into chuckles. The short little main theme is bouncy and catchy, returning in all manner of guises, as Bacewicz reminds us of her considerable skills as a violinist. There's a dizzying display of such sonic techniques as playing by the bridge (*sul ponticello*), extended harmonics, comical pizzicatos and a full-speed-ahead coda. Along the way, one is reminded of the composer's devotion to her Polish roots and its rich heritage of folk music and dance. Living through and witnessing the horrors of Nazi occupation of Warsaw, then able to write music filled with episodes of reflection, anger, sadness and, inevitably, joy, captures the strength and triumph of one of Poland's finest composers.

String Quartet No. 1 in A minor, Op. 41, No. 1 (1842)

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

It's no secret that Schumann's manic personality impacted his personal life as well as his musical one. (It's now thought that he was bipolar.) His intense desire to stretch his fingers further across the keyboard by using a dangerous contraption resulted in permanent injury, ending his playing career. As his emotions—and, perhaps, the effects of syphilis—took hold late in life, his troubled mind sent him attempting suicide by drowning, leading to permanent confinement in an asylum. We tend to accept such personality quirks as the curious patterns of his compositional output, observing how they fell into so-called “years.” There was his “year of songs (and piano music)” (1840), his “year of symphonies” (1841) and his “year of chamber music” (1842). As for the latter, within a period of nine months, he wrote the three String Quartets of Opus 41, the Piano Quintet and Piano Quartet. Yes, the Piano Trios and other lesser works emerged later—but you know those musicologists, always looking to lump things together. Truth be told, he had been occupied with chamber music his entire life. Still, it remains a mystery how his manic nature compelled him to put so much focus on this genre in a single year, producing those five major works, and the *Fantasiestücke* for piano trio.

That year of 1842 had begun with frustration for Schumann, as he traveled on tour with Clara, gaining little attention or respect. Feeling snubbed

and depressed, he returned home to Leipzig and began reading scores, intent to learn all there was to know about the string quartet. He absorbed the works of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert and even his contemporary and dear friend, Mendelssohn. Years earlier, he had studied the master's music and came away overwhelmed: “I am now living through some of Beethoven's quartets in the truest sense,” he wrote to a friend, “and feel even the love and hate in them.” But now, something clicked, because the next nine months were filled with the sketching and completion of his first String Quartets and those two chamber masterpieces with piano. On Sept. 13, Clara's 23rd birthday, the three Quartets of Opus 41 were first performed, bearing a dedication to Mendelssohn.

With Opus 41, Schumann found himself at a sort of crossroads. In a short time, the string quartet had gone through quite an evolution, from the charming elegance of Haydn and Mozart through the intense, intellectual other-worldliness of Beethoven. Now what,? he must have wondered. In the first of Opus 41, we hear echoes of what came before, and perhaps the possibilities of what lie ahead. The moody opening of the A-minor Quartet (composed, incidentally, *after* the body of the first movement) reminds one of late Beethoven, while the cascading entry of all those themes shows how Schumann had learned the art of counterpoint from his predecessors. The lightning-quick *Scherzo* is right out of the Mendelssohn playbook, with its quick little gallop, which suddenly switches gears for the Trio section. Once again, the spirit of Beethoven returns in the heavenly *Adagio*, a heartfelt melody sung first by the violin and taken up by the cello, perhaps written with the composer's beloved Clara in mind. The closing *Presto* is a radiant burst of sunshine, unstoppable in its energy—that is, until something quite unexpected happens. Suddenly, the cello introduces a quiet drone that stops the music in its tracks, leading to a quiet little solemn hymn, as if the composer had become momentarily distracted. But not for long—just as quickly, we're back just in time for a quick coda. Leaving one to ask why we never hear Schumann's String Quartets more often ...

About the performers

Celebrating its 18th season in 2024, the **Jasper String Quartet** is hailed as “flawless in ensemble and intonation, expressively assured and beautifully balanced” (Gramophone). The Quartet’s “programming savvy” (clevelandclassical.com) evocatively connects the music of underrepresented and living composers to the canonical repertoire in thought-provoking programs.

A recipient of Chamber Music America’s prestigious Cleveland Quartet Award, the Quartet’s playing is “sonically delightful and expressively compelling” (The Strad). The ensemble has released eight albums, including *Unbound*, named by the New York Times as one of the year’s 25 Best Classical Recordings.

The Jasper String Quartet is the founder and artistic director of Jasper Chamber Concerts, the director of the Saint Paul Chamber Music Institute and the professional quartet-in-residence at Temple University’s Center for Gifted Young Musicians.

Current Activities

Upcoming performance highlights include the premiere of Vivian Fung’s *Songs for the Next Generation* with tenor Nicholas Phan and pianist Myra Huang at the Kaufman Music Center, as well as collaborations with soprano Maria Brea and the Jupiter String Quartet. In the 2024-2025 season, the Quartet returns to The Kennedy Center, Market Square Concerts and Chamber Music Society of the Carolinas, among others.

In October 2023, the Quartet released the premiere recording of Vivian Fung’s String Quartets 1-4 for the Sono Luminus label and will release Reinaldo Moya’s *Pájaros Garabatos* with soprano Maria Brea in 2024. Critics praise the Quartet’s recordings as “artistically nuanced, executed with gorgeous technique and plenty of personality” (Music City Review).

The Jasper Quartet also continues in its eighth season as artistic director of Jasper Chamber Concerts, a series founded by the Quartet and dedicated to encouraging curiosity, community, and inclusivity through world-class chamber music performances.

Community Engagement and Teaching

The Jasper Quartet is passionate about connecting with audiences beyond the concert hall and has performed hundreds of outreach programs in schools and community centers.

Through JCC Community Connections, the Quartet fosters love and passion for music among underserved audiences with multiple days of educational programming in Philadelphia public schools and multiple

performances at senior living facilities in the greater Philadelphia region each year.

Additionally, the Quartet continues its long-running residency at Arlington High School, now in its 14th year. Generously supported by the Howland Chamber Music Circle, the Quartet performs and works with the AHS orchestras and chamber music ensembles over four residency days each year.

The Quartet has received multiple Chamber Music America Residency Partnership grants and numerous Picasso Project grants from Public Citizens for Children and Youth to support its ongoing work with public schools. The Fischhoff National Chamber Music Association recognized the Quartet’s “outstanding and imaginative programming for children and youth in the United States” with their 2016 Educator Award. The Quartet regularly serves as featured artists-in-residence for Swarthmore College and is the director of the Saint Paul Chamber Music Institute.

Our History

Formed at Oberlin Conservatory, the Jasper Quartet launched their professional career in 2006 while studying with James Dunham, Norman Fischer, and Kenneth Goldsmith as Rice University’s graduate quartet-in-Residence. In 2008, the Quartet continued its training with the Tokyo String Quartet as Yale University’s graduate quartet-in-Residence. In 2008, the Jaspers swept through the competition circuit, winning the Grand Prize and the Audience Prize in the Plowman Chamber Music Competition, the Grand Prize at the Coleman Competition, First Prize at Chamber Music Yellow Springs, and the Silver Medal at the 2008 and 2009 Fischhoff Chamber Music Competitions. They were also the first ensemble honored with Yale School of Music’s Horatio Parker Memorial Prize, an award established in 1945, and selected by the faculty for “best fulfilling... lofty musical ideals.” In 2010, they joined the roster of Astral Artists after winning their national auditions.

The Quartet was the 2010-12 Ensemble-in-Residence at Oberlin Conservatory and, from 2009-2011, was the Ernst C. Stiefel String Quartet-in-Residence at the Caramoor Center for Music and Arts (Katonah, New York).

The Jasper String Quartet is named after Jasper National Park in Alberta, Canada and is represented by Artist Manager Marianne LaCrosse of Suòno Artist Management. For more information, please visit jasperquartet.com.

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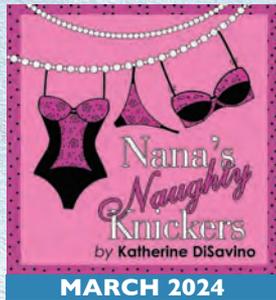
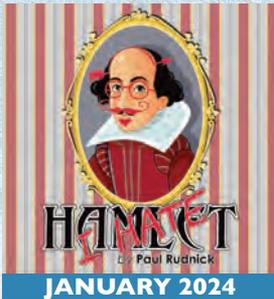


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Titanic explores human side of one of history’s most famous tragedies

By Adam Goldstein

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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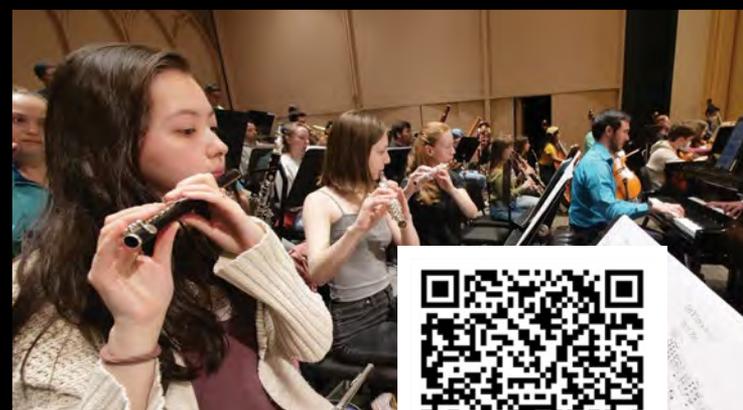
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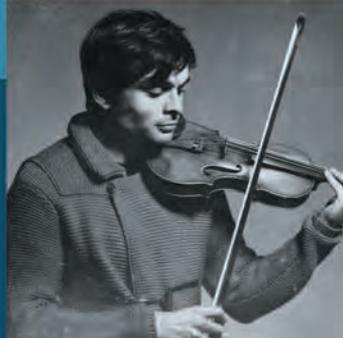
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Alumnus Dylan Fixmer— composer with a cause

By Marc Shulgold

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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By Sabine Kortals Stein

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"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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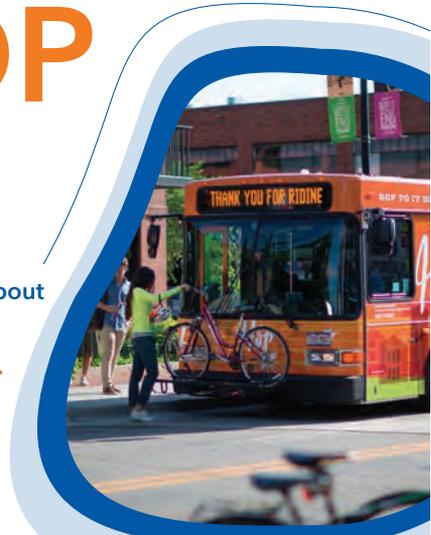


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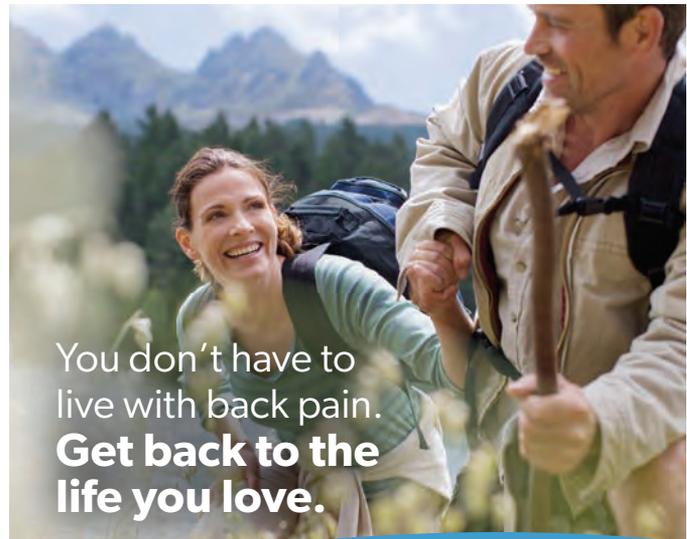
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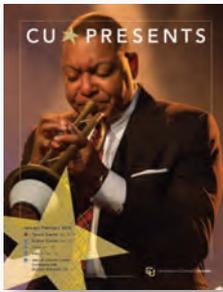
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You'll be surrounded by the amazing outdoors when you live in this Boulder County location, but your indoors will be just as spectacular:

- Open-concept floor plans, flex spaces and optional elevators
- Rooftop entertainment decks with scenic views
- Walk out to a quiet lake and Boulder County open space
- Near retail centers, restaurants and theaters
- Easy commuter access to employment hubs

Come tour our new models today and ask about our generous incentives!



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