

CU ★ PRESENTS

2023-24 Season



College of Music

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER



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# Song of Pueblo: an oratorio

## World Premiere

2 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 21, 2023

## Pueblo Memorial Hall

Pueblo, CO

## Boulder Premiere

7:30 pm, Thursday, Oct. 26, 2023

Grusin Music Hall

University of Colorado Boulder College of Music

Renee Gilliland, conductor

El Pueblo Ensemble and the CU Boulder Chamber Orchestra

Daniel Valdez, composer and visiting artist

Deborah Espinosa, producer and book narration writer

Juan Espinosa, artistic director and video and photography producer

Mireya Rinna, El Pueblo Ensemble music director

Max Wolpert, head orchestrator

Ilan Blanck, orchestrator

Susan Thomas, Soundscapes of the People principal investigator, CU Boulder American Music Research Center former director

Austin Okigbo, Soundscapes of the People co-principal investigator, CU Boulder American Music Research Center interim director

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*This event was made possible through the support of the Roser Visiting Artist Endowment, the CU Boulder American Music Research Center and the CU Boulder Office of Outreach and Engagement.*

*Song of Pueblo: an oratorio was commissioned by History Colorado.*

# Program

## Song of Pueblo: an oratorio

Daniel Valdez (b. 1949)

Overture

Song of Pueblo

Ballad of Cuerno Verde

The Old Trading Post

Founders' Fandango

Mississippi Saints

Come, Come, Ye Saints

Song for Teresita

El Corrido de Tierra Blanca

Death at Sand Creek

## — Intermission —

Paddy on the Railway

Colorado Gold

Nine Pound Hammer

Goodnight Trail

Ludlow Field

Headlines

Union Avenue

They Came to Pueblo

The Flood of '21

Memories of Elm Street

Bojon Town

Song of Pueblo (reprise)

# Program notes

## Song of Pueblo

The opening song sets the scene of this special city—Pueblo. As the stories unfold, the vitality, the diversity, the stamina and the energy of the people comes through.

## Ballad of Cuerno Verde

Depicts the hard-fought battle between the Spanish General Juan Bautista de Anza and Comanche Chief Cuerno Verde.

## The Old Trading Post

A fast-moving piece that takes us into an old adobe trading post where a variety of goods—animal pelts, cloth, cooking utensils, tobacco, food staples and weapons—are sold.

## Founder's Fandango

Continues the theme of the social life at El Pueblo. With so many people coming and going, it is hard to identify a single founder.

## Mississippi Saints

Mormon followers of Brigham Young struggled westward in search of their Promised Land. The sick and weary Mormon Battalion and the Mississippi Saints wintered at El Pueblo in 1846.

## Song for Teresita

One woman among the early settlers at Fort Pueblo, Teresita Sandoval, is remembered above all for her independence.

## Corrido de Tierra Blanca

Christmas 1854: El Pueblo is the scene of a great tragedy when two young Sandoval boys and Chepita Miera were taken captive by raiding warriors.

## **Death at Sand Creek**

On Nov. 29, 1854, Colonel John Chivington and his men attacked a peaceful Cheyenne and Arapaho encampment.

## **Western Medley**

These songs take the audience through the challenging times of the Gold Rush, cattle drives, mining and steel making.

## **Ludlow Field**

The composer wrote the haunting music to a poem by union official Frank J. Hayes, written after the militia fired on a tent city of striking miners.

## **Headlines**

This lively song is a nostalgic piece about the city's diverse newspaper, The Pueblo Chieftain, and the young newsies who hawked the papers.

## **Union Avenue**

Recalls an era of prosperity evident in the bustling atmosphere of shoppers, vendors and trolleys.

## **They Came to Pueblo**

Immigrants from more than a dozen countries brought their music, foods and traditions as they came to work and raise families here.

## **Flood of '21**

At a most prosperous time for Pueblo, a tragedy strikes quickly in the form of a flood which devastates the town. Hundreds are killed in the city's worst disaster.

## **Elm Street**

In the shadow of the giant blast furnaces, new arrivals brought a taste of Italy to Elm Street that remains to this day.

## Bojon Town

An Eastern European neighborhood sprang up around Eiler's Smelter whose constituents were called "Bojons." It is said that when they emigrated through France, they were called *beaux gens*, or beautiful people. No other community uses the term, and there is no other community quite like "Bojon Town."

## Personnel

*Text that is bold and underlined is a hyperlink and can be clicked or tapped for more information.*

### El Pueblo Ensemble

**Felicia Gallegos Pettis**, vocalist

**Mireya Rinna**, vocalist

**Carlos Crull**, vocalist and instrumentalist

**Avalajj Wiggins**, percussion

**Michael Beck**, keyboard

**Wayne Wilkinson**, guitar



### J. Michael Beck

J. Michael Beck is keyboardist on *Song of Pueblo*. He was in the original band with *Song of Pueblo* when it premiered in its original version in 2008. Beck is a Pueblo native and has instructed at various incarnations of Colorado State University at Pueblo. He retired from the university in 2007 as chairman and professor of the music department. He was awarded a Doctor of Arts in music, piano pedagogy and performance from the University of Northern Colorado at Greeley in 1986. He is a frequent performer at community events, area churches and has performed with groups ranging from the Pueblo Symphony Orchestra to "The Art of Sound" with Alex Craciun and Camarada320. He is the owner of Elledge Music.





## Ilan Blanck

Ilan Blanck is a musician currently based in Fort Collins, Colorado. As a composer, songwriter and arranger, he has written notes and words for pop stars, podcasts, high school choirs, orchestras and a LOT of bands. As a guitarist, he has toured across the country in '97 Toyota Highlanders and ugly purple Sprinter vans with no AC, opening for Grammy winners and mummies, singing songs about spreadsheets and playing in odd time signatures. Active in making music on stage as well as helping others behind the scenes, he is the associate manager of artist development at the Music District in Fort Collins and works as assistant to Minneapolis super-producer Lazerbeak (Dessa, Lizzo). He holds a Master of Music degree in music composition from CU Boulder and a Bachelor of Music degree from Lawrence University.



## Carlos Crull

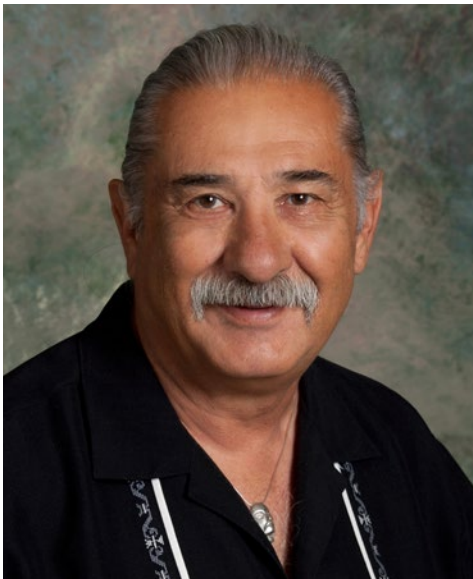
Carlos Crull plays tenor sax, sings and has been a professional musician for more than 45 years. His background includes contracts with Disney World, Universal Studios and several luxury cruise lines. Musicians from every genre have featured his voice or sax on their CDs or DVDs as well as two of his own, and DVD *A Passport To Jazz* on which he performed and directed. He has opened for Smokey Robinson, Johnny Winter, Asleep At The Wheel and Sheila E., and recently performed with the Drifters. Crull plays locally with seven different groups and gigs most every night.





## Deborah Espinosa

Deborah Espinosa is producer of *Song of Pueblo*, a live concert featuring 15 original songs written by Daniel Valdez. She is the former director of El Pueblo History Museum in Pueblo, and in that capacity contracted Valdez to write songs about the history of Southeastern Colorado. During her tenure with History Colorado, the museum expanded to the city-block complex that it is today. Since her retirement from History Colorado after 25 years, in 2015, she has continued to produce live concerts of *Song of Pueblo* mostly in the Pueblo area. For the first time since it was created in 2008, the multimedia production will be accompanied by the CU Boulder Chamber Orchestra. She earned a BA in history from Colorado State University Pueblo and a master's degree from Regis University as a Colorado Trust Fellow.



## Juan Espinosa

Juan Espinosa retired from The Pueblo Chieftain after 22 years where he was a reporter, columnist and night city editor. He is artistic director for *Song of Pueblo* and producer of the video/photo aspect of the show. Through a vast collection of historic images, video reenactments and contemporary photography he has created a visual backdrop to the live performances. His photographs are archived in the collections of University of Colorado Boulder's Norlin Library, History Colorado and Colorado State University Pueblo. Many of his photographs have appeared in numerous documentaries. He was awarded an honorary doctorate in humane letters from the CU Board of Regents in 2022.



## **Austin Okigbo**

CU Boulder Associate Professor of Ethnomusicology Austin Okigbo is interim director of CU Boulder's American Music Research Center (AMRC) and co-principal investigator on the AMRC's Soundscapes of the People project. He also serves on the AMRC Advisory Board as well as the editorial committee for the AMRC journal, *Americas: A Hemispheric Music Journal*.



## **Felicia Gallegos Pettis**

Felicia Gallegos Pettis, born and raised in Pueblo and currently residing in Denver, is honored and privileged to be part of the *Song of Pueblo* production. Having worked with Daniel Valdez for a more than a decade, nothing could be more satisfying to her than singing the music Valdez wrote in honor of her hometown. Pettis has been performing professionally for more than 30 years. She started as a vocalist and added acting to her resume in 2007. She recorded a 10-song EP with Acequia (*Ah-seh-key-ah*) in 2013, and has appeared in more than 20 productions in the Denver area, two movies, various streaming public service videos and was an assistant theater educator to K-12 students in Denver and surrounding areas. She had the honor of portraying Lupe Briseño in Su Teatro's production of *War of the Flowers* and was La Profesora in Su Teatro's *Interview with a Mexican*, based on the writings of Gustavo Arellano (LA Times), which toured in 2018 and 2022.

Pettis is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame with a BA in Anthropology, and she has worked towards a Master's degree in Counseling

Psychology from the University of Colorado at Denver. Pettis would like to thank her husband Chris for his tireless support of her performance career and their three children.



## Mireya Rinna

Mireya Rinna is music director for *Song of Pueblo*. She began her love affair with music and harmony at age 5. She is a beloved band leader, music director, vocal director and vocal coach. She has led bands in the Denver area for the last 22 years and has worked with some of Denver's finest musicians, (including Felicia Gallegos Pettis!) both as a band leader and vocal coach. Rinna has had the honor of having worked side by side with Daniel Valdez and Anthony J. Garcia as vocal director. She and Pettis are working on an album. She currently has a vocal studio and offers voice lessons via Skype. Rinna lives in Arvada with her husband Dennis and their dog Joey.



## Susan Thomas

Susan Thomas is the director of the Ernst and Sarah Butler School of Music at the University of Texas at Austin. Until July 2023, she directed CU Boulder's American Music Research Center. She is the lead investigator on the Pueblo Soundscapes project, a multiyear study of the music and music histories of Pueblo and southern Colorado supported by grants from the National Endowment of the Humanities and the CU Boulder Office of Outreach and Engagement.





## Daniel Valdez

Daniel Valdez is a legendary figure in Chicano Theater. In 1965, he joined the United Farm Workers movement, prompted by Cesar Chavez's call. He and his brother Luis Valdez formed the world-famous El Teatro Campesino. ETC toured Europe, Mexico and Latin America working with Peter Brook and Agosto Boal. ETC developed musically based folk dramas including *La Pastorela* ("the Shepherd's Play"), and *La Virgen de Tepeyac*. Valdez was music director for the stage and film adaptation *Zoot Suit*, and associate producer for the film *La Bamba*. He recorded the Grammy Award-winning album *Canciones de mi Padre* with Linda Ronstadt. Stanford University produced his opera, *Ollin*. Valdez collaborated with Anthony J. Garcia in the creation and production of *Westside Oratorio* and *El Sol Que Tu Eres*.



## Aavalajn Wiggins

Aavalajn Wiggins has been a professional percussionist since the age of 13, touring with local and national acts on drum set, Latin percussion, symphonic percussion as well as marching percussion. Wiggins has been a studio musician for many different styles of music including, rock, funk, pop, country, jazz and classical genres. He continues to play local shows, festivals and studio recordings as well as with the local symphony, and runs a private percussion school—Colorado Percussive Arts Performance Conservatory; for performing percussionists and highly committed artists.





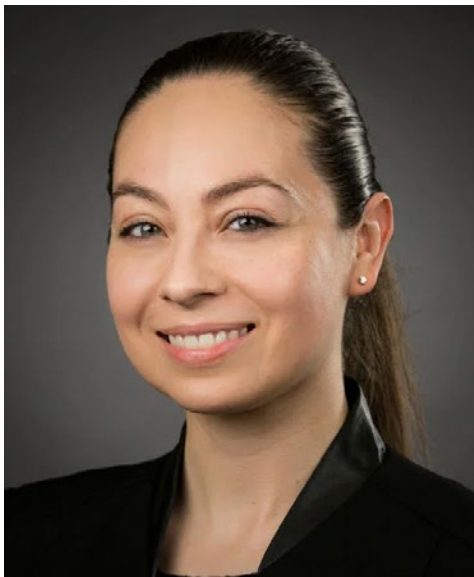
## Wayne Wilkinson

Wayne Wilkinson is a headliner jazz guitarist who performs and tours across the country and internationally. Throughout his over four-decade career, Wilkinson has shared the stage with iconic jazz musicians, world class performers and a President of the United States. An artist with Benedetto guitars, GHS strings and Jim Dunlop picks, Wilkinson is known for his high-octane melodic playing which world-renowned jazz trombonist Bill Watrous described as “the greatest guitar playing I’ve ever heard.” In addition to concerts, festivals, jazz clubs, recital series, jazz and swing societies and private venue events, recent performances have included the London, Tel Aviv, and Vail Jazz Festivals, and tours in the United Kingdom and Hawaii. Wilkinson has played at the White House, Carnegie Hall and at major jazz and music festivals with the premier Air Force Jazz Ensembles “The Airmen of Note” in Washington, D.C. and the “Falconaires” in Colorado Springs, Colorado.



## Max Wolpert

Fiddler, composer and storyteller Max Wolpert conjures up monsters and myth where the traditional, classical and theatrical meet. Built on his extensive background as a fiddle player and enthusiast of the macabre, Wolpert’s pieces are crafted with taut detail and a flair for the dramatic honed over years as a pit musician, conductor and orchestrator for theatrical productions. Wolpert’s work has been performed by the Colorado Symphony, Bismarck-Mandan Symphony Orchestra, La Jolla Symphony and Chorus, Pro Musica Chamber Orchestra, Musique sur la Mer Chamber Orchestra and Breckenridge Music Festival Orchestra. Wolpert earned doctoral and master’s degrees from CU Boulder, and a bachelor’s degree from the Berklee College of Music. His work appears on Naxos Records and Yellow Sound Label.



# CU Boulder Chamber Orchestra

## Renee Gilliland, conductor

*Renee Gilliland is associate director of orchestras, conductor of the CU Philharmonia Orchestra and instructor of music education at the University of Colorado Boulder College of Music. Her research topics and lectures focus on diverse repertoire, sensory-friendly concerts and models as well as selected works by Emilie Mayer. Recent guest lecture appearances include at the CU Boulder Summer MME conducting course, the Nat King Cole Generation Hope Music Educators Conference and the Colorado ASTA Conference. Concurrently, she is assistant conductor of the Boulder Philharmonic.*

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### **Viola**

Becky Donoho  
Devin Cowan  
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Finn Cruit  
Zoe Fernandez  
Madeline Guyer

### **Cello**

Elise Cole  
Julia Emery  
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Alex Engelhardt  
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### **Bass**

Joey Aigner  
*Principal*  
Ella Bajcsi

Jack Turner  
Clara Griffey

### **Flute**

Joeli Schilling  
Ayla Lantz

### **Oboe**

Zane Holland

### **Clarinet**

Carson Conley  
Caden Craig

### **Bassoon**

Madison Triplett

### **Horn**

Stacey DeGarmo  
Dane Burton

### **Trumpet**

Noah Solomon

### **Trombone**

Wesley Shores

### **Percussion**

Anil Ambrosi  
Lily Manzanares

### **Orchestra Librarians**

Alyssa Byrne  
Lenn Eppich

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