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2024-25



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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. While the University of Colorado Boulder can never undo or rectify the devastation wrought on Indigenous peoples, we commit to improving and enhancing engagement with Indigenous peoples and issues locally and globally.

SoundWorks

7:30 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 18, 2024

Grusin Music Hall

PROGRAM

Homeland (7')

Allison Loggins-Hull

Mallory Wood, flute

East Wind (8')

Shulamit Ran

Natalie Trejo, flute

Thistle (6')

JC Maynard

Bebe Seidenberg, violin

Len Eppich, viola

Everlin Roark, cello

To Climb a Mountain (15')

Holly McMahon

I. Introduction: At a Trailhead

II. The Chipmunk

III. The Butterfly

IV. Building a Fairy Garden

V. Conclusion: At the Summit

Holly McMahon, piano

— Intermission —

l o o k i n g g l a s s (8')

Gracie Fagan

Visuals by Phu Le

Gracie Fagan, Playstation DUALSHOCK controller

Joel Ferst, tech assistant

Jeu de Lumière (9')

Blake Clawson

J. David Reid, piano

Selected Works (8')

Enion Pelta-Tiller

Enion Pelta-Tiller, fadolin and voice

PROGRAM NOTES

Hyperlinks are bold and underlined; click or tap for more information.

Homeland (7')

Allison Loggins-Hull

Homeland (2018) was written shortly after Hurricane Maria stormed through Puerto Rico in 2017. Maria represented the increasing strength of natural disasters and the intense, sometimes deadly, repercussions of climate change. While this was going on, there was also a rise of political and social turmoil in the United States, and global unrest throughout the world, including the Civil War crisis in Syria. For weeks, the news was flooded with these stories. With so many people throughout the world dealing with tragic domestic issues, I began to think about the meaning of home during a crisis. What does home mean when the land has been destroyed? What does it mean when there's been a political disaster, or a human disaster? How does a person feel patriotic when they feel unwelcomed at the same time? *Homeland* is a musical interpretation and exploration of those questions. The flute opens with timbral trills representing troubled waters, then transitions into passages that are anxious and distorted. There is a moment of hope and optimism, a remembrance of past struggles that have been overcome, followed by an off-putting play on the *Star Spangled Banner*, representing an unraveling of patriotism. In the end we come full circle, still with unanswered and unresolved questions.

East Wind (8')

Shulamit Ran

"Ran's music contains traits from both Shapey's compositional style and the New Complexity, a genre marked by atonality, complex and ametric rhythmic notation, extended techniques, microtonality, disjunct melodic contour and detailed articulation realized through acoustic instruments

and live performers. *East Wind* (1988) for solo flute embodies many of these characteristics in addition to a high sense of drama. The title appears to reference the Biblical ‘east wind’ of the Old Testament, a probable source of inspiration.

Both Ran’s *East Wind* and the Biblical “east wind” imply this juxtaposition of tragedy and epic content. In the Bible, the east wind first appears in the Book of Genesis as the subject of the Pharaoh’s premonition dream. In the Book of Exodus, this premonition is realized as the powerful east wind brings the plague of locusts and parts the Red Sea. Ran’s *East Wind* exploits the full range of the flute (B3-D#7), employs extended techniques such as pitch bends, key clicks and the percussive “spit tongue” articulation, and contains complex, non-metered rhythms with angular melodies that push the technical capabilities of the performer.”

—Amanda Cook, *Between the Ledger Lines*

Thistle (6’)

JC Maynard

Thistle by JC Maynard is a contemplative string trio that tugs at the heart—a vulnerable and delicately powerful cry of emotion. Altered and expanded into a fully tonal piece from its beginnings as a more mathematical series of post-tonal rows, this piece constantly swells and decays, ebbing like a heavy fog over a cool morning. The composer feels this trio draws out both the most precious and somber memories in its players and listeners, as a thistle symbolizes themes of protection from harm and resilience through pain.

To Climb a Mountain (15')

Holly McMahon

This piece was written in collaboration with Front Range Classical Ballet Academy. In writing this ballet, I aimed to create a piece that was inclusive, fun, and full of character. The ballet depicts two friends who embark on a hiking adventure and encounter different characters and obstacles along the way.

This collaboration was very unique and meaningful, and I can't wait to see how this piece evolves as it is put to choreography.

l o o k i n g g l a s s (8')

Gracie Fagan

Visuals by Phu Le

l o o k i n g g l a s s is a performance metaphor examining the loss of childhood innocence over time. As I have grown up and matured, my inner child remains strong. She is enchanted by the world around her, and looks to me with hope and wonder in her eyes.

There are times when I look at her with hope and wonder back, however, I am most often overwhelmed and torn between the feelings of allowing my inner child to be confronted with the harsh reality of growing up, and masking her eyes from the outside to preserve her playfulness and curiosity. As humans (and artists) we are constantly evolving and processing our world in ways that make sense to us. It's what shapes us into our unique beings. *looking glass* personifies the nuanced nature of this phenomenon.

Jeu de Lumière (9')

Blake Clawson

Jeu de Lumière was commissioned by my dear friend, the exceptional pianist J. David Reid, for his DMA recital. The title, which translates to “play of light”, draws a connection to Ravel’s *Jeux d’eau* (“water play”), also featured in the recital. *Jeu de Lumière* weaves together the many characters of light—its softness, warmth, harshness and brilliance. Throughout the work, the musical motifs are scattered, refracted, and tossed about, much like light through a prism, creating playful and unexpected shifts. The piece culminates in a striking contrast, capturing the duality of light as both majestic and subtle.

PERSONNEL

Hyperlinks are bold and underlined; click or tap for more information.

Egemen Kesikli, artistic director

Blake Clawson

Blake Clawson is a composer, performer, conductor, and educator from the Pacific Northwest. His music weaves contemporary classical, jazz and folk influences into colorful and expressive pieces that captivate listeners. He draws inspiration from poetry and nature, and while choral works on the pensive and Arcadian poems of Sara Teasdale are central to his output, he also writes chamber works that range from scintillating and groovy to introspective and serene. Clawson is currently pursuing a dual master’s in music composition and choral conducting at the University of Colorado Boulder. He has studied composition with Annika Socolofsky, Carter Pann and Brent Edstrom, and choral conducting with Elizabeth Swanson, Coreen Duffy, Karen Grylls and Marc Hafso. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in music composition from Whitworth University and has studied at the University of Auckland.

Gracie Fagan

As one of the country's youngest emerging multimedia artists, Gracie Fagan (she/her) experiments with human perception to comment on the intersectionality of identity and pop culture. Fagan combines audio, projection, performance art, theatre and dance to create immersive performances and environments not typically found in the traditional concert hall setting.

Her pieces continue to be selected for showcase in national conferences, including the SHE Festival for Women in Music, Electronic Music Midwest Festival, the International Women Composer's Festival of Hartford, the Eugene Difficult New Music Ensemble, and completing a residency with the Walden school. She has received multiple grants to further her work, including the Ida M. Vreeland Award, the Vada Kinmann Oldfield grant for academic and artistic advocacy of minorities, the John Phillips Sousa Band Award and the 2018 Nebraska Young Artist award.

Her most recent projects include completing a residency at the TANK Center for the Sonic Arts in Rangely Colorado, as well as performing on the CU Boulder SoundWorks series. She is also collaborating with Coral Douglas, Joel Ferst and Phu Le on a number of upcoming projects, installations and improvisations.

Fagan currently teaches composition and music technology at the University of Colorado Boulder while pursuing a Master of Music, and received a Bachelor of Music in composition from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln in 2023.

Joshua Carter (JC) Maynard

Joshua Carter (JC) Maynard is a composer and conductor from Colorado Springs who specializes in bringing passion for choral and chamber music to a new generation of musicians. Currently studying composition at CU Boulder, Maynard never allows himself to be confined to one artistic box—instead, blending genres and disparate sources of inspiration in all his works. He was recently named ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award Semi-Finalist and Orpheus Chamber Singers Competition 2nd Place Finalist. In addition to composing for mediums like choir and orchestra to electronics and jazz combos, Maynard is the founder and president of the Renova New Music Ensemble—CU Boulder’s premier contemporary choral group. Prioritizing collaboration and musician ownership in all his projects, Maynard has conducted and had pieces commissioned by groups such as the Colorado Vocal Arts Ensemble, the University of Wyoming Bel Canto Choir, the Colorado Springs Philharmonic, the CU Boulder Chamber Singers, Lírios String Quartet, the Denver Playground Ensemble, the Eklund Opera, and more. Maynard also has experience as a producer and recording technician, an audio editor and mixing engineer, a private lesson instructor, a musical theater performer, and an ensemble administrator.

Holly McMahon

Throughout her life, Holly McMahon has worked with and connected countless musicians and artists across several genres including film, theater, dance and performance art. She continues to explore the use of new instrumentations and stylistic choices through her studies of music composition, music technology, and piano performance at the University of Colorado Boulder. She is most celebrated for her works for solo piano, which typically feature carefully sculpted, running lines and evocative yet comfortable rhythmic textures.

Enion Pelta-Tiller

Enion Pelta-Tiller is a versatile five-string violinist, singer, composer and arranger based in the Rocky Mountain foothills of Colorado. With 25 years of performing and 17 years of working as a booking agent, publicist and designer, she is deeply experienced. She is a founding member of pioneering progressive folk band Taarka, and also plays with Elephant Revival. Pelta-Tiller began performing classical music as a child, in venues from San Francisco's Davies Symphony Hall to Wagner's famed Gewandhaus in Bayreuth, Germany to China Television Station theater in Shenzhen, China. Concurrently, she played folk and jazz music, and harbored a deep appreciation for world music, pop, and rock, and at last made a break with the classical world, joining a band led by Hungarian art rock star Menyhart Jenő (of Europa Kiado) and edgy bluegrass band Brooklyn Browngrass. She has performed and recorded with notable artists and conductors including Michael Tilson Thomas, Herbert Blomstedt, Linda Ronstadt, Bobby McFerrin, Yoyo Ma, Ron Miles, Darrell Scott, John Cowan, Darol Anger and members of the Grateful Dead and Phish.

As an internationally touring violinist, composer, and singer, Pelta-Tiller is widely recognized for her elegant playing and thoughtful teaching in styles ranging from gypsy jazz, bluegrass, classical music and everything in between. She shares her knowledge gathered from almost four decades spent playing and exploring music, and enjoys teaching students of all ages and all levels—from 3 year-olds just starting out on their journey with music to seasoned performers looking for help with improvisation, fiddle styles, jazz theory, technique and comfort while playing.

Pelta-Tiller attended the San Francisco Conservatory of Music Pre-College program and holds a BA in English literature from the Johns Hopkins University with a minor focus on viola performance from the Peabody Institute.

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