






# CU ★ PRESENTS

## September-November 2023

-  Takács Quartet Sept. 17-18
-  Lila Downs Sept. 22
-  When You Wish Upon a Star Oct. 6
-  Falstaff Oct. 27 and 29
-  Nobuntu Nov. 2

# —Julez Bryant

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*Nobuntu performs Nov. 2 as part of the Artist Series.*

# CU ★ PRESENTS

SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 2023

**Editors:** Laima Haley, Sabine Kortals Stein

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**Covers:**

**Artist Series:** Lila Downs performs on Sept. 22.  
*Photo provided by artist's management*

**Takács Quartet:** *Photo by Amanda Tipton*

**College of Music:** The Eklund Opera's 2012-  
13 season production of *Falstaff*.  
*Photo provided by Eklund Opera*

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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**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**
- CU **Takács Quartet**
- CU **CU Performing Arts, including the College of Music, Department of Theatre & Dance and the Holiday Festival.**

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# Artist Series and Center for African and African American Studies Forge Dynamic Partnership

CU Presents Staff

The University of Colorado Boulder's cultural landscape is set to receive a vibrant and enriching boost as CU Presents' Artist Series and the Center for African and African American Studies (CAAAS) join forces in an exciting new partnership. This collaboration will support an inspiring array of performances and events that celebrate the richness of African and African American arts and culture.

The CAAAS's dedication to promoting awareness and understanding of the African diaspora unites with the Artist Series' mission to bring world-class performances to the campus community. As part of this collaboration, the CAAAS will proudly co-sponsor two Artist Series events in Macky Auditorium during the 2023-24 season: the electrifying harmony of Nobuntu on Nov. 2 and the captivating movement of Step Afrika! on Feb. 2.

"The Center for African & African American Studies is thrilled to partner with CU Presents' Artist Series. "This partnership means that the Boulder campus and Boulder community will be able to witness wonderful performing artists from Africa and throughout the African diaspora on a regular basis," according to the CAAAS founder and director Reiland Rabaka.

"I am excited by this partnership and the opportunity to engage more deeply with the communities we wish to serve. As one of our renowned faculty experts, Rabaka's expertise will help inform future Artist Series programming and outreach activities," adds Joan McLean Braun, Executive Director of CU Presents.

**Nobuntu**, an all-female a cappella quintet hailing from Zimbabwe, promises to mesmerize audiences with their harmonious melodies and

powerful storytelling on the stage. This unique group embodies the resilience and creativity that characterizes so much of African and African American cultural expressions.

**Step Afrika!**, the renowned dance company rooted in the traditions of stepping, will grace the CU Boulder campus with a performance that fuses percussive dance, engaging choreography and vibrant rhythms. Their captivating show not only celebrates the dynamism of African American dance but also invites audiences to partake in an exhilarating interactive and cross-cultural experience.

As part of their joint efforts, the Artist Series and the CAAAS are also thrilled to announce an interactive workshop with Ghanaian musician and storyteller **Okaidja Afroso** on September 26 at CU Boulder's Center for Community. Through the collaborative efforts of both organizations, Afroso will welcome participants on a journey including stories, songs, dances and a Q&A. This workshop is also made possible by Denver's Newman Center for the Performing Arts, where Afroso will perform live on Sept. 27.

The partnership between the Artist Series and the CAAAS exemplifies CU Boulder's commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive campus environment. By bringing together the power of performance and the rich cultural expression of African and African American studies, this collaboration promises to enrich the university community and beyond.

*(Photo: Okaidja Afroso)*







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## Song of Pueblo

**Thursday, Oct. 26, 7:30 p.m.  
Grusin Music Hall, CU Boulder**

Join us for "Song of Pueblo," a folk oratorio by Daniel Valdez. World premiere performances of the orchestrated version of "Song of Pueblo"—created by College of Music alumni—will feature the CU Boulder Chamber Orchestra alongside Pueblo musicians.

*A second performance of "Song of Pueblo" will be held Oct. 21, 2 p.m. at Memorial Hall, Pueblo. Performances are free + open to the public. [colorado.edu/amrc/pueblo](http://colorado.edu/amrc/pueblo).*

**These performances are made possible through The Roser Visiting Artist Endowment.**



# CU ★ PRESENTS

## UPCOMING EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

### TICKETED EVENT KEY

- ★ Artist Series
- 🎵 Takács Quartet
- CU CU Boulder Performing Arts



Scan this QR code or visit  
[cupresents.org/performances](https://cupresents.org/performances)  
to explore the full season.



### Lila Downs

Friday, Sept. 22, 7:30 p.m.

★ Macky Auditorium



### When You Wish Upon a Star

A Jazz Tribute to 100 Years of Disney

Friday, Oct. 6, 7:30 p.m.

★ Macky Auditorium



### Falstaff

An opera by Giuseppe Verdi

Oct. 27 and 29, 2023

CU Macky Auditorium



### Nobuntu

Thursday, Nov. 2, 7:30 p.m.

★ Macky Auditorium



### Working, A Musical

A musical from the book by Studs Terkel

Nov. 3-12, 2023

CU Roe Green Theatre



### Takács Quartet

Nov. 5-6, 2023

🎵 Grusin Music Hall

Streaming Nov. 5-13





## 9 to 5, The Musical

Nov. 9-12, 2023

**CU** Music Theatre



## Holiday Festival 2023

Dec. 8-10, 2023

**CU** Macky Auditorium



## Christmas with the Canadian Brass

Wednesday, Dec. 13, 7:30 p.m.

**★** Macky Auditorium



## Joyce Yang, piano with the Takács Quartet

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

**★** Macky Auditorium



## Takács Quartet

Jan. 14-15, 2024

**🎻** Grusin Music Hall

*Streaming Jan. 14-22*



## MOMIX

**Alice**

Saturday, Jan. 20, 7:30 p.m.

**★** 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](https://cupresents.org/accessibility).

### Late Seating

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

There is no late seating in the Music Theatre (Imig Music Building) or Loft Theatre (University Theatre Building).

### 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.



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](http://colorado.edu/center/caaas) or contact us at [caaas@colorado.edu](mailto:caaas@colorado.edu).



Center for African and  
African American Studies  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

## CU ★ PRESENTS

“Nobuntu”—an expression meaning feminine familial love, humility and kindness—is a female a cappella quintet from Zimbabwe that draws international acclaim for its breathtaking performances of traditional Zimbabwean songs, afro jazz and gospel.

### **Nobuntu**

**Thursday, Nov. 2, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Mackey Auditorium**

★ Tickets and more at [cupresents.org](http://cupresents.org).



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# Verdi's Falstaff is a comic masterpiece

By Henry Michaels

The name Giuseppe Verdi is likely to conjure up in the mind of the opera lover images of intense—even gritty—dramas. But his final masterpiece, *Falstaff*, comes from a far different realm: the world of comedy.

The titular character of Verdi's compositional coup de grâce is Sir John Falstaff, a loud, drunken buffoon of a man who features in three Shakespeare plays: *Henry IV* parts one and two, as well as *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Although his appearances are always played for a laugh, Falstaff is a character with real human dimension, something at which Shakespeare excelled and that Verdi and librettist Arrigo Boito carried through into the opera. Macky Auditorium will play host to that signature blend of comedy and depth on October 27 and 29. This production of the College of Music's Eklund Opera Program is overseen by Director Leigh Holman and Music Director Nicholas Carthy.

Verdi's *Falstaff* is based primarily on *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, although it does draw a few scenes from *Henry IV, Part 1* and *Part 2*. "Falstaff is a knight who needs more money for food and beer," says Eklund Opera Program Director Leigh Holman. "What does he do? He decides to woo Alice Ford, a very wealthy woman in hopes of securing some dough for food and wine."

Deciding two women are better than one, Falstaff additionally sets his sights on Alice's friend, Meg. "Comedy ensues when Falstaff mistakenly thinks he's as smooth as Don Juan and he goes after these rich women," says Holman. "These women are sick and tired of being hit on and they make a game out of getting their revenge. It's a comedic commentary on misogyny, power dynamics and girl-power! You've gotta love that."

It's a work that has much to offer for seasoned operagoers and newbies,

alike. "For operatic veterans, you will see one of the most brilliant operas written by Verdi," says Holman. "For newcomers to opera: You are going to have fun. You will have a rollicking good time, hear beautiful voices with athletic magnitude, a student orchestra that rivals any collegiate orchestra, lights, colors, and hilarity culminating in an epic experience. No other live performance genre can rival opera, and this is a great one to cut your teeth on."

"In this comedy, Verdi's last opera before his death, you will experience the brilliance of his musical magic and theatrical acumen come together in one comedic work. It is not to be missed."

## FALSTAFF

Oct. 17 and 19  
Macky Auditorium  
Tickets at  
this QR Code:





# CU ★ PRESENTS

Comfort and joy? ☒

Twinkling lights? ☒

Seasonal greenery? ☒

Beautiful music? ☒

**CU Boulder's Holiday Festival:**  
an enchanting annual tradition  
for all ages.

**2023 Holiday Festival**

**Dec. 8-10, 2023**

**Macky Auditorium**

★ Tickets and more at [cupresents.org](https://cupresents.org).



# CU ★ PRESENTS

Joyce Yang captivates audiences with her virtuosity, lyricism and interpretive sensitivity. The first half of this concert features Yang in a solo recital. Local favorites, the Takács Quartet, join her on the second half to perform Dvorák's lyrical Piano Quintet in A Major.

**Joyce Yang, piano with  
the Takács Quartet**  
**Friday, Jan. 12, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Macky Auditorium**

★ Tickets and more at [cupresents.org](https://cupresents.org).



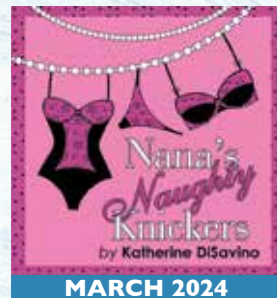
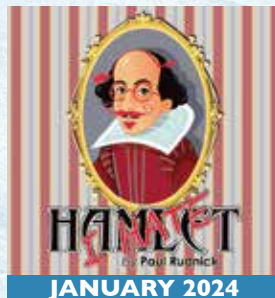
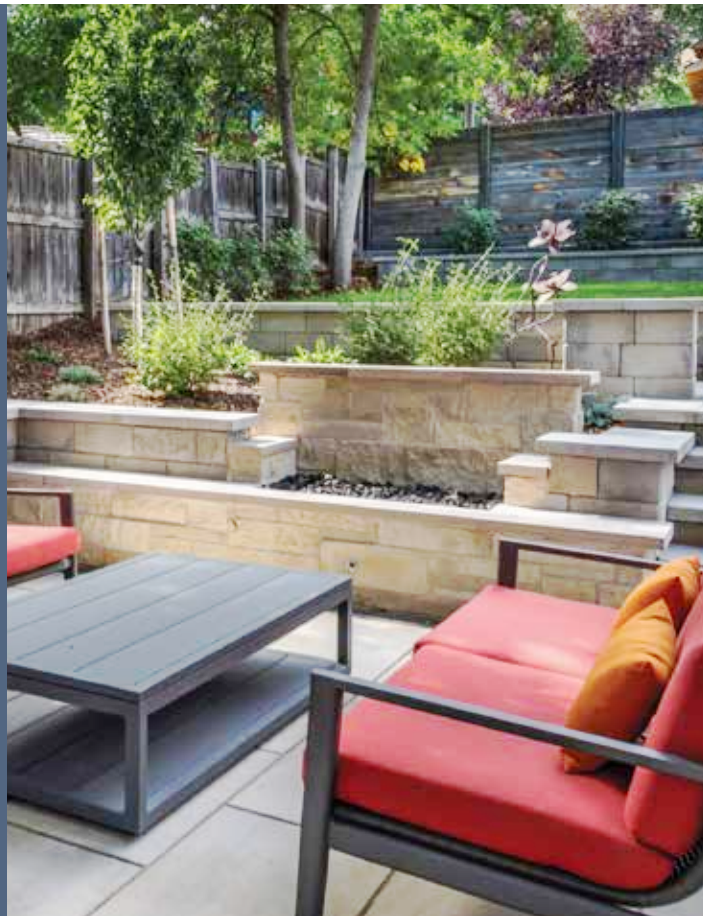




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# Deck the Halls with the Canadian Brass

By Henry Michaels

In the world of brass quintets, there is one name that stands above all others: the Canadian Brass.

From Carnegie Hall to Sesame Street, the Canadian Brass has been entertaining audiences around the globe for more than 50 years. Few musical groups are known so equally for their musicianship and their charisma, but this potent combination of impeccable playing and magnetic stage presence has become the hallmark of the Canadian Brass. Their more than 130 albums—totaling more than 2 million albums sold worldwide—is a testament to their immense musical impact.

A veritable musical force of nature, the Canadian Brass have left the landscape of brass chamber music forever altered. Their jam-packed schedule of traveling, performing, recording and outreach means the group goes through a *lot* of music—and in so doing, they have almost single-handedly transformed the brass quintet repertoire. Between commissions for new music and transcriptions and arrangements of existing works, the Canadian Brass are responsible for adding more than 600 musical works to a repertoire that once could have been described as limited.

Throughout the course of the 53-year history of the Canadian Brass, there has been one constant: tubist and founding member Chuck Daellenbach has served as the foundation—musically and otherwise—of the group since 1970! But new faces do join the Canadian Brass from time to time, and this fall marks the debut of new

trumpet player Ashley Hall-Tighe. Ashley brings a wealth of playing experience to the group, both as an internationally acclaimed soloist and as a chamber musician. She serves as principal trumpet of the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra and is on the faculty at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. And this won't be her first experience with the Canadian Brass, having first worked with the group as a student in 2001 as part of their chamber music residency at the Music Academy of the West. With an almost 20-year international performing career, Ashley Hall-Tighe is sure to fit right in with one of the world's busiest and most storied brass ensembles.

Although it may feel strange to refer to a group as well known as the Canadian Brass as being famous for any one particular thing, they are justifiably renowned for their Christmas concerts. With decades of holiday-themed programming and more than 10 Christmas albums, the Canadian Brass are sure to present a Yuletide musical extravaganza that will have visions of sugar plums dancing in *everyone's* heads.

## CANADIAN BRASS

Dec. 13, 2023  
Macky Auditorium  
Tickets at  
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# WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR

## A Jazz Tribute to 100 Years of Disney

Friday, Oct. 6, 7:30 p.m.

Macky Auditorium

### Program to be announced from the stage.

Join us for an unforgettable evening as we celebrate 100 years of Disney through the lens of Jazz. From *Snow White* to *Lady and the Tramp*, *Mary Poppins* and *Toy Story* to *The Jungle Book*, popular songs from these famous films have been interpreted and recorded by Disney music fans such as Louis Armstrong, Miles Davis, Dave Brubeck, Dianne Reeves and many more.

“Someday My Prince Will Come,” “He’s a Tramp,” “Everybody Wants to be a Cat” and “The Bare Necessities” are just a few of the iconic songs which will be celebrated as we look back on the impact of jazz on 100 years of Disney magic!

*When You Wish Upon a Star* will be performed by the newly created house band of The National Jazz Museum in Harlem, featuring pianist and musical director, Sean Mason, and vocalists Kim Nalley and Sasha Dobson, who will bring these famous songs to life.

*(This production is not affiliated with, sponsored or authorized by The Walt Disney Company)*

### Band Personnel

Sean Mason, piano / bandleader

Kim Nalley, vocalist

Sasha Dobson, vocalist

Ahmad Johnson, drums

Corentin Le Hir, bass

Alicyn Yaffee, guitar

Anthony Hervey, trumpet

#### NEED TO KNOW FOR THE SHOW

- When You Wish Upon a Star appears by arrangement with IMG Artists.
- Photography and video recordings of any type are strictly prohibited during the performance.
- See Page 9 of this publication for additional show and venue policies.

# Personnel

## Sean Mason

Sean Mason is a jazz pianist and composer based in New York City, quickly emerging as one of the premier talents of his generation. Born and raised in Charlotte, North Carolina, Mason took to the piano at age 13, teaching himself to play by ear the music of his upbringing; gospel, R&B & soul which quickly evolved into a highly original jazz style. Mason's unique voice in jazz is steeped in southern culture, giving extended time for groove without needing to fill in the space, while also displaying a range of vocabulary far beyond his years. As a bandleader, Mason leads two groups, the Sean Mason Trio based in Charlotte, and the Sean Mason Quintet in New York. Both groups play Mason's original music which has been described as highly melodic, swinging gospel jazz; as Mason puts it, "my purpose is to play dance music."

Folk music, stride piano and the style of Mason's early hero Ray Charles are the main ingredients in a stew that is greater than the sum of its parts. When studying at the University Of North Carolina-Greensboro, Mason met jazz legend Branford Marsalis who was immediately taken with the young student and recommended he apply to the Juilliard School in New York, "I told my brother [Wynton Marsalis, director of Juilliard Jazz], 'be on the lookout for this kid.'" Upon arrival in New York, Mason hit the ground running, quickly securing residencies for his groups at some of the more prestigious jazz clubs such as Smoke Jazz Club and Smalls Jazz Club, as well as sideman work with such luminaries as Wynton Marsalis, Catherine Russell, Herlin Riley, and many more; all while completing his studies at Juilliard. A major stepping stone occurred when NPR's influential multimedia show *Jazz Night In America* chose Mason among 5 musicians for their "Youngbloods" series.

Penetrating even further into popular culture Mason was featured on Branford Marsalis' film score to the highly acclaimed Netflix production of August Wilson's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*. Mason's debut record will be released in early 2023 on Blue Engine Records, the label of Jazz At Lincoln Center. Produced by Branford Marsalis, it is an album of original compositions for the Sean Mason Quintet, featuring a lineup of young all-stars; Tony Galusi (trumpet), Chris Lewis (tenor saxophone), Felix Moseholm (bass), Domo Branch (drums) and Sean leading at the piano. Early reports cite the record's impressive display of maturity from such burgeoning talents. As Mason continues touring the world as a bandleader and sideman while fitting in near-constant session work, the future is bright.

## Kim Nalley

Awarded "Most Influential African American in the Bay Area" in 2005 and "Best Jazz Group" in 2013, vocalist Kim Nalley is already being called "legendary" and "San Francisco institution. Nalley was discovered by Michael Tilson Thomas singing to packed audiences live with no amplification. MTT recorded her singing live, without amplification, and invited her to sing

with the San Francisco Symphony. Subsequently she became a Rounder Records recording artist and went on a worldwide tour gracing concert halls from Moscow to Lincoln Center and festivals from Umbria Jazz to Monterey Jazz, garnering effusive international press, awards and ranking high on the jazz charts and Gavin Report for her many albums. Nalley had a solid background in classical music before switching to jazz for the freedom it provided. A true Renaissance woman, Nalley has been a featured writer for JazzWest and SF Chronicle's City Brights, shortlisted for a Grammy nomination, a produced playwright, an avid Lindy Hop & blues dancer, and the former jazz club owner of Jazz at Pearl's. She earned her PhD in history at UC Berkeley and is a published scholar. She was shortlisted by Downbeat Critics Poll in 2017 as a "Rising Star" (Deserving Wider Recognition). Nalley's many philanthropic endeavors include founding the Kim Nalley Black Youth Jazz Scholarship, fundraising for Richmond-Ermet Aids Foundation, BLM, Next Village, SF-Marin Food Bank, and Department of Economic and COVID relief sponsored in part by Community Development/Connecticut Office of the Arts as part of their 2020 Artists Respond grant program.

In looks, Nalley exudes the aura of a diva from a bygone era. Vocally, she has pipes to burn packing a three-and-a-half octave range that can go from operatic to gritty blues on a dime, projection that can whisper a ballad yet is capable of filling a room with no microphone, and the ability to scat blistering solos without ever losing the crowd's interest or the intense swing. She has been compared to all the greats, but in the end, it's Nalley and no one else—an unforced instrument with clarity and jazzy musicality, effortlessly delivered and a sense of humor to boot.

A born singer from a family that boasts several generations of jazz musicians, Nalley was taught piano by her great-grandmother and studied classical music and theatre in high school before relocating to San Francisco in the footsteps of the Grateful Dead. Working her way through college by singing in small dives and jam sessions, Nalley learned all of the intricacies of jazz the old fashioned way. Music critic Phil Elwood and San Francisco Symphony conductor Michael Tilson Thomas quickly discovered Nalley and brought her to national attention after they noticed her singing nightly at the Alta Plaza to packed audiences—without amplification. Tilson Thomas hired Nalley to sing a program of Gershwin with the San Francisco Symphony and recorded her farewell concert at the Alta Plaza.

Since then, Nalley has performed globally, including major jazz festivals such as Monterey, Umbria Jazz and Lincoln Center and lived in Europe for several years before returning to San Francisco to re-open the jazz club Jazz at Pearl's. During her tenure from 2003 to 2008, Nalley raised the club to iconic international acclaim as the owner and artistic director. She has collaborated with artists such as Rhoda Scott, David



“Fathead” Newman, Houston Person, James Williams, Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony. She has recorded several on both major and indie labels, including *She Put A Spell On Me*, which was short-listed for a 2006 Grammy Award, and *Million Dollar Secret*, which charted in the Jazz Top 40.

Nalley often combines music and history to create historiographical concerts, including her award-winning “Ladies Sing the Blues,” “She Put a Spell on Me: Tribute to Nina Simone” for Jazz at Lincoln Center, “Freedom’s Song: Music of the Civil Rights Movement,” musical director and curator for the Martin Luther King Institute’s Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington and *The Heart of Lady Day*, a Billie Holiday biopic. She has performed with Angela Davis recreating her seminal book *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism* for SFJAZZ. As a playwright she has written *Ella: the American Dream* a bio-musical about Ella Fitzgerald which premiered in 2008. As an actress, she portrayed Billie Holiday in the dramatic play *Lady Day in Love*, Blues Speak woman in Zora Neale Hurston’s *Spunk* and has starred in *Teatro Zinzanni* as Madame Zinzanni, a role subsequently filled by Joan Baez and Sandra Reeves-Phillips.

Nalley’s dissertation “GI JAZZ: African Americans as Artists and Occupiers in post-WWII Germany” details the German chittlin’ circuit that popped up on and around Military bases, how some Jazz musicians chose to stay in Europe to become expats, interracial relationships, and tells the story of the 7th Army Band which boasted the titans of jazz, including: Cedar Walton, Eddie Harris, Leo Wright, Lex Humphries, Lanny Morgan, Don Menza, Don Ellis, Sam Fletcher and Billy Paul. Other scholarly papers by Nalley include “Two Gardenias for Civil Rights: Robin Carson’s photo of Billie Holiday” and “This Bitter Earth: Infertility for Billie, Ella and Sarah.” She is also featured on Google Talk for her presentation “Rethinking Billie Holiday on her Centennial.”

## Sasha Dobson

Sasha Dobson has performed all over the world in diverse contexts as a leader and first-call collaborator. The singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist represents one-third of hit trio Puss n Boots, alongside Catherine Popper and Blue Note Artist Norah Jones, with whose band Dobson has toured fairly regularly for the past eight years. As a guitarist and songwriter, Dobson bonds intuitive phrasing and refined storytelling chops with her honest, witty lyric-writing. Daughter of vocalist Gail Dobson and highly sought pianist and arranger, the late Smith Dobson, Dobson developed a core understanding of the lineage of jazz from an early age—one that has allowed her to develop into the powerhouse singer and multi-instrumentalist she’s become. In addition to traveling the world as a three-dimensional performer, Dobson spent her early days in New York hitting as a leader at many of the city’s noted venues including Jazz at Lincoln Center and Smalls Jazz Club where she and her band are a regular fixture. In recent years, she’s led her own project at Farm Aid and opened

for Willie Nelson. In 2020, Dobson released *Simple Things*, her anticipated EP featuring Don Was on bass and production and Jay Lane on drums. Her 2021 release of *Girl Talk* featuring guitarist Peter Bernstein reflects her most personal contribution to the music to date.

## Ahmad Johnson

Multifaceted jazz drummer, composer and arranger Ahmad T. Johnson is currently emerging as one of his generation’s modal figures in music and the related arts. Growing up in a family of the arts, Johnson was heavily influenced by a variety of music and since the age of three has been pursuing his passion for the drums. During his early childhood years there was a heavy jazz influence therefore developing an “ear” for his craft. When joining his middle school jazz band, Johnson immediately submerged to the different styles of music. Studying drummers such as Max Roach and Art Blakey, but truly digging deep into the roots of jazz was inspired by artist ranging from Billie Holiday to Thelonious Monk. Johnson continued his education and obtained his Bachelor of Music degree at Michigan State University with a concentration in jazz studies.

Johnson has had enormous opportunities to show his ability and passion for the drums such as having the privilege to work with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis, and has performed at well known venues such as Minton’s Harlem, Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center and many other locations around the world. Johnson is also apart of the inaugural class of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Summer Jazz Academy, awarded by the Berklee 12-week program and has been awarded by the Juilliard School Jazz Summer Intensives for astounding performances within the program.

Johnson holds the leadership of groups such as the Ahmad Johnson Trio and Quintet, and is a sideman for artists such as Wynton Marsalis, Rodney Whitaker, and many others. Johnson’s versatile skillset behind the drums have led him not only to provide for the arts community but also to work closely with some of the most well known artist/groups in the world, including the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis, Rodney Whitaker, Ulysses Owens Jr., Russell Malone, Ron Blake, Wycliffe Gordon and Jon Batiste, and he has played in numerous small-large ensembles such as Diego Rivera Quintet and the Etienne Charles Quartet, and was awarded 2016 Swing Central Jazz Festival (ranked 1st place), getting the opportunity to work with professional arrangers, composers, and musicians from all around the world. Johnson is constantly arranging projects and creating new ideas, providing the opportunity to give back to communities and continuing to uplift the arts.

Johnson’s ambitions are not only to succeed at all that is necessary to become a great musician but also to connect with others on a spiritual level with his audience produce and commit to life changing music. Johnson’s ability to share ideas, lead and follow when necessary are skills that have allowed him to work well with his peers and grow as a jazz artist. With a strong passion for his

craft, a humble spirit and a bold commitment to create, and inspire, Johnson is certainly an innovative contributor to jazz community and generations to come. A powerful and charismatic performer, Johnson possesses wide-ranging talents that are reinvigorating the contemporary arts and are received enthusiastically nationwide.

## Corentin Le Hir

Meet Corentin Le Hir, a talented bassist with a captivating musical journey. Born in France and raised amidst the rich musical heritage of North Carolina, Corentin's passion for the bass has taken him on an inspiring musical adventure. Having honed his skills in various local music scenes and in conservatories, he now proudly calls the bustling city of New York his home. With his undeniable talent and unwavering dedication, Corentin continues to mesmerize audiences with his soulful bass lines, creating an unforgettable experience in every performance.

## Alicyn Yaffee

Alicyn Yaffee is a New York City-based guitarist and vocalist, by way of Kelseyville, California. An artist of wide range and depth, she earned a BM in jazz studies, with a double major of guitar and vocals, at Cal State University in Sacramento. In the few years since her move to New York, she has toured the U.S. and Europe under her own name, as well as with Becca Stevens, Grammy-nominee JC Hopkins' Biggish Band, award winning singer Allan Harris and bassist Benny Rietveld (Santana); released her first solo album, *Someone Else*, featuring Cindy Blackman Santana, Ronnie Foster and Jeff Cressman; and played numerous venues with her own groups and with a diverse range of jazz and rock artists, including guitarist Mark Whitfield, China Moses, Kat Rodriguez (Beyonce), Bria Skonberg, Shirazette Tinnin's Sonic Wallpaper, Arcoiris Sandoval, 13th Law, Tiana Major9, Haitian singer Darlene Desca, Dawn Drake's Zapote and Indian progressive rock composer Anupam Shobhakar. Yaffee was featured in Classical Theater or Harlem's remake of *The Bacchae* where she performed with the actors onstage with a wireless guitar in Marcus Garvey Park. Yaffee has performed at many venues including; Dizzys Club Coca-Cola, Birdland jazz club, Minton's Playhouse, Smalls, Mezzrow, Bar lunAtico, Carnegie Hall, Little island main stage as well as many other notable venues.

## Anthony Hervey

Anthony Hervey, who was recently recognized by Grammy.com as one of "10 emerging artists to know in 2023," has impressed audiences across the globe as a first-call sideman for luminaries such as Christian McBride, Jon Batiste, Michael Bublé and Wynton Marsalis, who described Hervey as a "beautiful trumpet player of the first magnitude."

He was a member of the nationally renowned Dillard Center for the Arts Jazz Ensemble in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and afterward earned admission to the

prestigious Juilliard School. There he honed his craft and graduated with a BM in 2019 and an MM in 2020. His debut album, *Words From My Horn*, is a blend of soulful and cerebral compositions that draw from his personal, musical, and spiritual memories.

Additionally, Hervey has been commissioned to write for esteemed groups and organizations, including The Westerlies, Jazz at Lincoln Center and The Soapbox Presents "Stoop Sessions." He was recognized by the ASCAP Foundation, earning an Honorable Mention for the Herb Alpert Young Jazz Composer Awards for his composition *Brass Games*. He is also on Christian McBride's Grammy Award-winning Big Band Album, *For Jimmy, Wes, and Oliver*, which was released on Mack Avenue Records. Beyond the studio and stage, Hervey has also ventured into acting, impressively showcasing his trumpet skills in the Hulu anthology series *Monsterland*.

He is committed to preserving the rich legacy of Jazz while infusing it with relevance for the present. He has personally experienced the power of music to uplift and inspire. As a result, he strives to share that joy with others and make a positive impact on their lives through the art of jazz. With unwavering dedication, exceptional talent, and a deep appreciation for the heritage of jazz, Anthony Hervey is poised to leave an indelible mark on the music world.

## The National Jazz Museum in Harlem

The National Jazz Museum in Harlem (NJMH) is a Smithsonian affiliated museum, led by Artistic Directors Jon Batiste and Christian McBride. The mission of the National Jazz Museum in Harlem is to preserve, promote and present jazz by inspiring knowledge, appreciation, and the celebration of jazz locally, nationally and internationally. Batiste and McBride serve as co-Artistic Directors of the National Jazz Museum in Harlem. More about the NJMH at [jmih.org/about](http://jmih.org/about).

## IMG Artists

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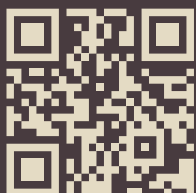
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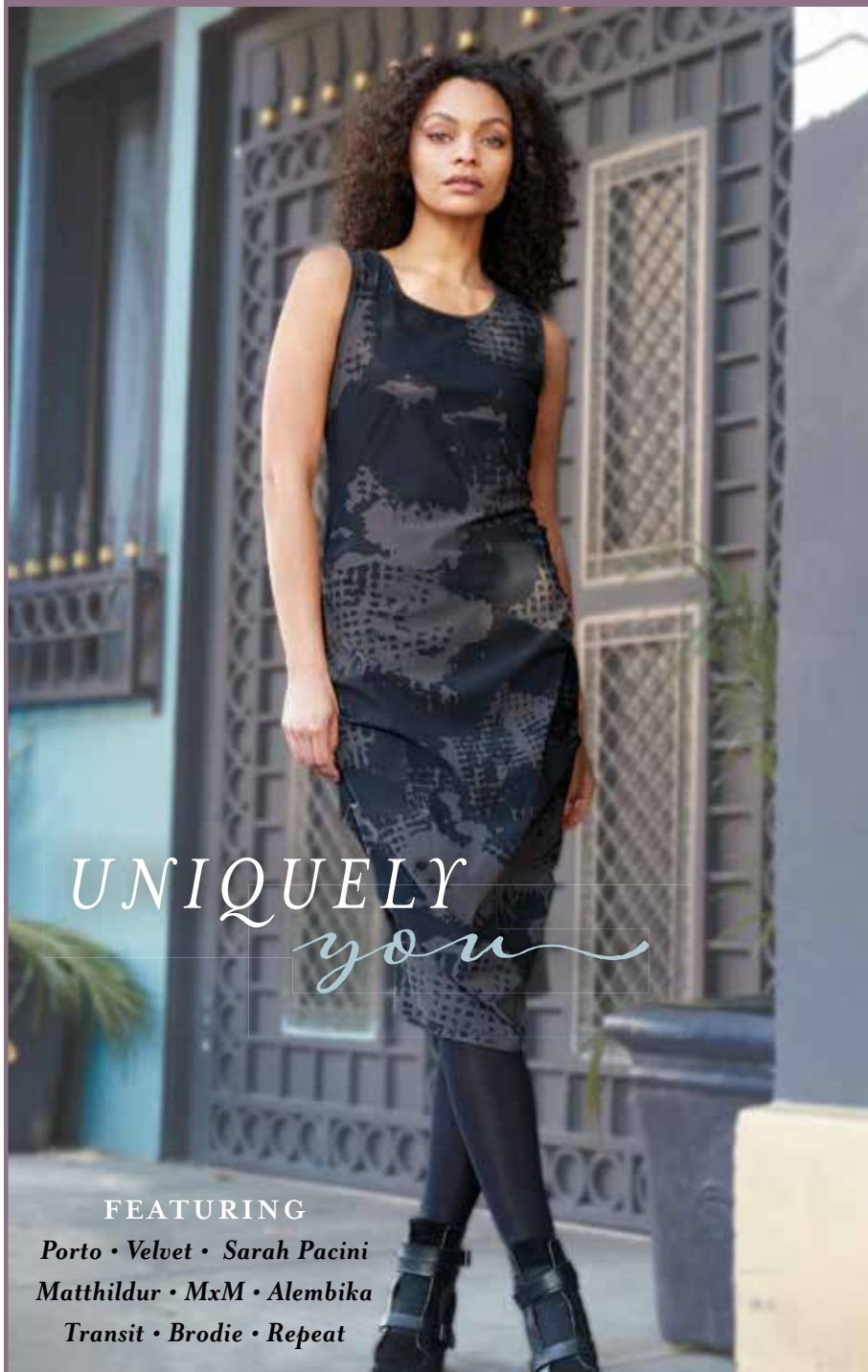
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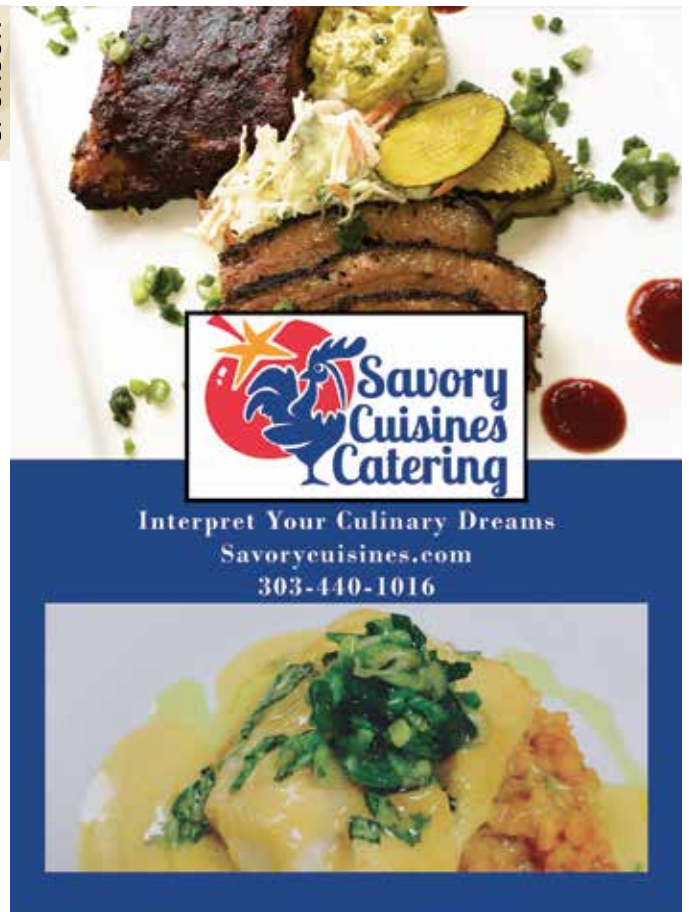
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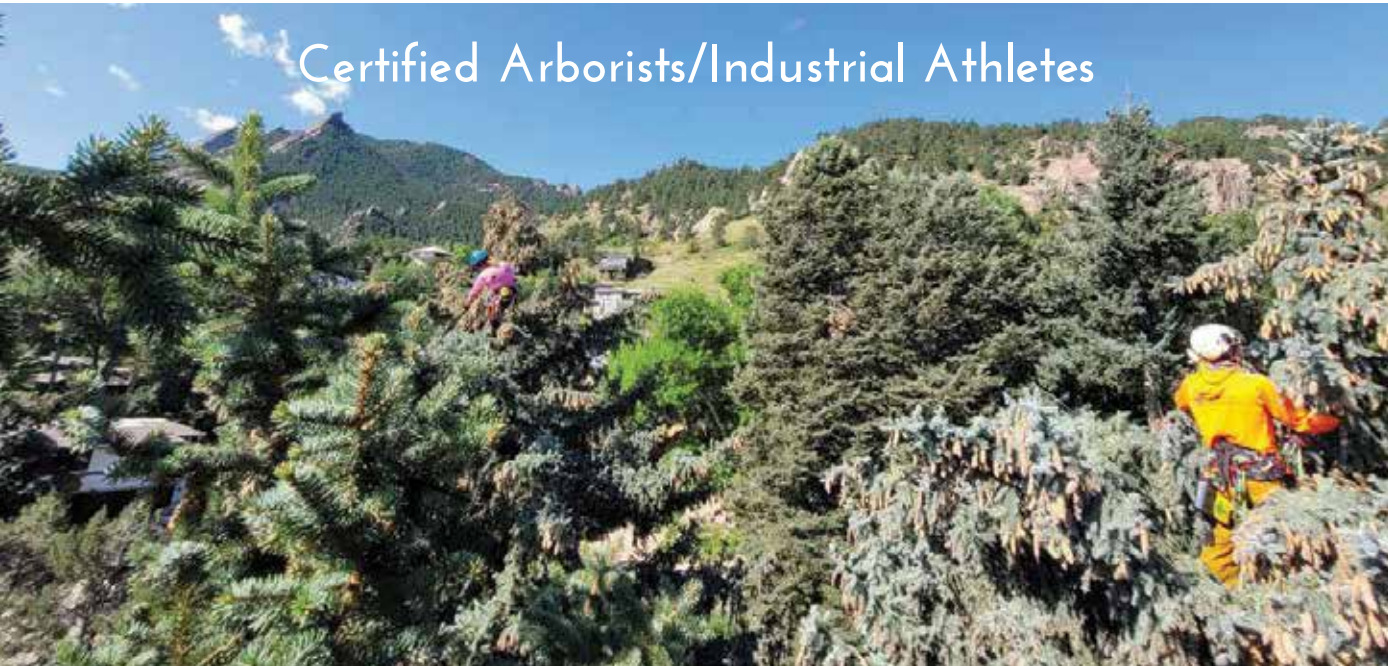
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# “A Boulder treasure”

Celebrating the illustrious career of CU Presents Executive Director Joan McLean Braun

By Sabine Kortals Stein

Boulder native and CU Boulder alumna Joan McLean Braun (BM '81 and MBA '93) has achieved an extraordinary 30-year career at her alma mater, much to the delight and deep appreciation of campus and community audiences alike.

“As executive director of CU Presents since 2001, Joan took the helm when CU Presents was still CU Concerts at the College of Music,” recalls Dean John Davis. “From the beginning—back when I directed the college’s jazz studies program in the early 2000s—Joan took the time to really listen and understand the goals, needs and performance activities of the program which opened the gates for me to achieve what I envisioned.

“She extended the same can-do, open-minded approach to all academic areas in the College of Music, quickly recognizing that she needed to closely partner with our departments and studios to develop the infrastructure of a sustainable performing arts entity that also supports our academic mission.”

Since then, Braun—who further serves as the college’s assistant dean for concerts and communications—has led the expansion of CU Presents to become what it is today: The home of all performing arts on the CU Boulder campus with hundreds of concerts, recitals, plays and other events each year, including the popular Holiday Festival and uniquely innovative Faculty Tuesdays series, as well as the much-lauded Artists Series and Takács Quartet series, the nationally acclaimed Colorado Shakespeare Festival and more.

“Joan has done a wonderful job of building and sustaining CU Presents over its long history,” says CU Boulder Chancellor Philip DiStefano. “Her dedicated work connecting the community with all that the College of Music offers has elevated the college’s reputation and strengthened the university’s relationships with the community.

“Joan’s efforts have been deeply appreciated and have laid the foundation for future success for CU performers, scholars and artists.”

Indeed, under Braun’s artistic vision—and thanks to the collaborative relationships she’s established on campus and with other Colorado arts presenters and artists’ agents worldwide—our audiences have experienced the College of Music’s many outstanding ensembles and opera/musical theatre productions, as well as CU Boulder Theatre & Dance performances and groundbreaking acts by award-winning, world-renowned icons.

“The Artist Series has been and remains an extremely prestigious and important series,” says Toby Tumarkin, executive vice president and global head of artists and attractions with IMG Artists. “Under the leadership of Joan

Braun, CU Presents has continued to bring new stars from around the globe while maintaining its traditional audiences, subtly and successfully adapting to a changing arts landscape.

“Consistently an anchor for artists and touring projects in the region and a crucial lynchpin to help to bring shows to the West Coast, Joan Braun’s work at CU Presents is a powerful example of important and thoughtful arts presenting.”

But Braun—who will retire at the end of the 2023-'24 season—is quick to deflect such well-earned respect and admiration. “I have the good fortune of a brilliant team,” she says, also crediting a strong, synergistic collaboration with College of Music Dean Emeritus Daniel Sher over more than two decades. “The way I see it, my role is to empower my senior team, and to ensure they understand what I’ve learned and how I do things—especially artist management and meeting the needs of our community. That’s how we can best support the next director of CU Presents.”

Among her dedicated staff are longtime colleague Laima Haley who directs CU Presents’ marketing and public relations; CU Presents’ Operations Director Andrew Metzroth who oversees Tessitura ticketing operations; Senior House Manager Rojana Savoye; and Macky Auditorium Director Rudy Betancourt. “Boulder’s cultural scene would not have achieved its world-class reputation without Joan’s vision for what is possible, steadfast leadership and resilience in the face of challenges,” says Betancourt. “She has been a trusted mentor and a dear friend not only to me but to many at CU Presents, the College of Music and—closer to my heart—Macky Auditorium.

“Her service to the university and the surrounding area has become an unmatched legacy.”



*And it's precisely Braun's remarkable legacy that inspires our **invitation for donations to the Artist Series endowment in her honor**, with the goal of reaching \$1 million this season.*

“I’m so gratified knowing that the endowment ensures and protects the Artist Series and the overall health of CU Presents—long after I’m retired and into the future,” says Braun. “In the arts, we’re quite vulnerable to events beyond our control—like the recent pandemic or the floods in 2013 when, understandably, a lot fewer people were able to come to our performances.

“For myriad reasons, when earned revenues fall short, the endowment provides crucial funding—hopefully in perpetuity.”



*"Managing a performing arts venue is an affair of the heart and mind. On one hand are the myriad logistics: Contracts, communications, transportation, finances. On the other: Human connection, the gift of beauty and meaning. At best, these all play together in a poetic rhythm, organic and natural, to create a unity that seems like it was inevitable."*

*But it only happens when someone has the vision to see the whole in all of its parts. For the Artist Series and CU Presents, that person is Joan who for 30 years has brought us together for encounters with beauty and meaning through music and dance. She is truly a Boulder treasure."*

*—Daryl James, Artist Series Advisory Board member + former chair*



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### Online

[cupresents.org](http://cupresents.org)

### By Phone

303-492-8008

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University Club


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