

CU ★ PRESENTS

MARCH-APRIL 2024

-  Takács Quartet March 10-11
-  Titanic, the Musical March 15-17
-  Ray Chen and Julio Elizalde March 21
-  Asleep at the Wheel April 5
-  American Stories April 25-28
-  Takács Quartet April 28-29



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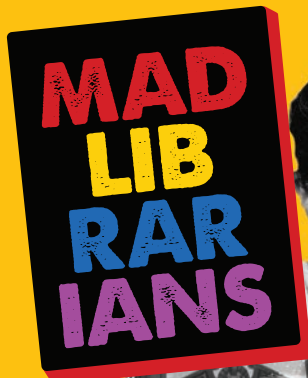
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BY HEIDI SCHRECK

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Asleep at the Wheel with the CU Boulder Symphony Orchestra comes to Macky Auditorium on April 5 Photo by Jeff Fasano.

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MARCH-APRIL 2024

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College of Music: *Promotional art for Titanic*, the Musical

Takács Quartet: *Photo by Amanda Tipton*

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Asleep at the Wheel to work with CU Boulder Symphony Orchestra to bring western swing to life

By Adam Goldstein

Symphonic music and country and western swing may seem like unlikely bedfellows for fans of either genre.

But according to Ray Benson, frontman of the world-renowned, Grammy Award-winning country group Asleep at the Wheel, the pairing of classical strings and honky-tonk twang isn't a new combination. The band will join the CU Boulder Symphony Orchestra and College of Music students for an exceptional performance at Macky Auditorium on April 5. Benson says the fusion of strings, guitars and country swagger will draw on a long-established musical partnership.

"We offer audiences a unique symphony show, in my opinion," Benson said, adding that Asleep at the Wheel has played symphonic concerts across the United States since the early 2000s.

"We play a genre of music called western swing which has roots in old-time fiddle music, country music, jazz, country and blues."

The 1940s saw a rare and ambitious fusion of styles. Western swing artists like Bob Wills, Milton Brown and Hank Thompson melded the folk roots of country music with the lush instrumental expressions of big band music, jazz and other idioms. Asleep at the Wheel continues that approach and—teaming up with the CU Boulder Symphony Orchestra—will bring the full scope of the genre to life for audiences.

The value of the show isn't limited to ticket holders. CU Boulder students will also play a role in the concert, a collaboration that echoes previous performances by Asleep at the Wheel on our campus.

"Fiddles are a big part of what we do and combining that approach with classically trained string musicians is very special. It's not often that you get a collaboration of these styles," Benson said. "We hope music students find this combination interesting and possibly educational."

Indeed, the value of the collaboration for CU Boulder students is immeasurable, according to Joan Braun, Executive Director of CU Presents and the College of Music's Assistant Dean for Concerts and Communications. This concert will offer students learning opportunities that aren't available in a classroom; it gives aspiring musicians the chance to work with award-winning artists in person.

"These are opportunities for our students to be on stage and to interact professionally with an award-winning touring band. That is unique and valuable," Braun said. "Part of our mission is to bring artists to Boulder that audiences wouldn't otherwise experience ... It's an opportunity to see a world-class act without going to New York or Los Angeles. You can see it right here at Macky Auditorium. That is a huge value."

There's also a benefit to the collaboration for the members of Asleep at the Wheel. Working with students and orchestral musicians on this stop gives the band the scope and framework to fully realize their tribute to an American genre forgotten by some.

"We encourage everyone to come out and check out this collaboration," Benson said. "We cover lots of musical ground and we've had some great charts written for the symphony. We always have a great time doing these symphony orchestra shows."

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Titanic, the Musical

March 15-17, 2024

CU Macky Auditorium



Ray Chen, violin and Julio Elizalde, piano

Thursday, March 21, 7:30 p.m.

★ Macky Auditorium



Asleep at the Wheel

With the CU Symphony Orchestra

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

★ Macky Auditorium



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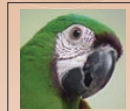


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A haunting double bill

By Henry Michaels

An open door. A broken window. Ghostly visages from the past. All this and more will feature on stage when the CU Boulder College of Music's Eklund Opera Program presents *American Stories by American Women*, an exciting operatic double bill featuring two uniquely American stories.

Amy Beach's 1932 chamber opera *Cabildo* is a story within a story. The frame sees a group of sightseers touring New Orleans' Cabildo, a government building that once held the imprisoned pirate Pierre Lafitte. After one of the tourists falls asleep in Lafitte's cell—a completely normal place for a nap—the action moves to her dreams of the imprisoned pirate. It's here that most of the roughly 45-minute-long opera's action takes place, including a prison escape, a visit from a lover's ghost and a War of 1812 connection.

Written in 2018, Missy Mazzoli's *Proving Up* is the tale of a family of Nebraska homesteaders seeking to achieve ownership of their land by satisfying the requirements—proving

up—of the Homestead Act: "House of sod, acres of grain, five years of harvest, a window of glass." It's a dark tale of a family haunted—figuratively and literally—by the ghosts of daughters lost to the harshness of prairie life: A father willing to do whatever it takes to prove up, a mother terrified of losing more children and a son confronted by a menacing stranger.

On one level, the American stories presented in Beach's and Mazzoli's operas could not be more different. The moment when the specter of Lafitte's lover idealistically exhorts him to "Pay thy debt to America," for example, seems worlds away from the grim portrait of American homesteading life in *Proving Up*.

Perhaps what they share, then, is a kind of idealism undercut by the reality that the American dream is complicated. Pierre Lafitte ultimately clears his name by fighting alongside Andrew Jackson, a moment of patriotism spurred on by the ghost of his lost love. Yet the pirate hero also participated in the slave trade,

a fact mentioned by the chorus of tourists in Beach's opera—"The Lafittes sold slaves ... Sold their slaves like cattle in the city"—a heavy statement that is flippantly answered by the tour guide's "Right-O!"

For the family in Mazzoli's opera, the Homestead Act and the idea of Manifest Destiny that it represented were built upon layers of exploitation: The settlers used as pawns in an attempt to expand American territory, but also the existing people whose land was stolen and "proved up." The father in *Proving Up* is desperate to achieve the American Dream for himself and his family, but at what cost? In the end, their story serves as a reminder that this dream is sometimes as fragile as a window of glass.

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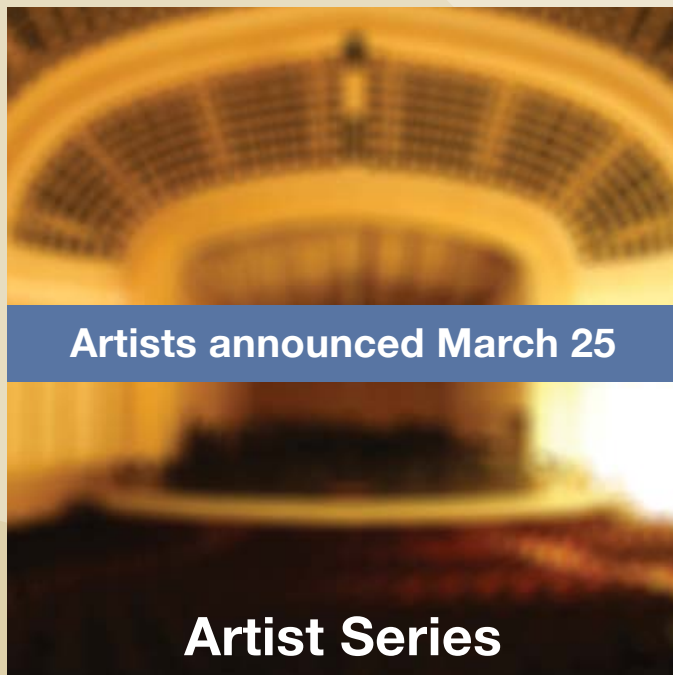
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Artists announced March 25

Artist Series

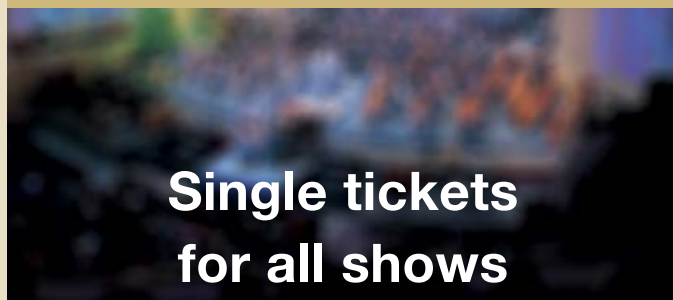


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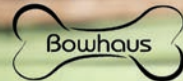
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Thompson Jazz Studies Program introduces new vocal jazz degree, new ensemble and more

By MarieFaith Lane

The College of Music is set to launch an exciting addition to its curriculum this fall—the new Bachelor of Music in Vocal Jazz degree in our Thompson Jazz Studies Program will offer intensive development of all aspects of musicianship as a jazz vocalist with study in jazz improvisation, theory, arranging, repertoire and history as well as individual study and performing in our jazz ensembles.

Professor of Jazz Studies John Gunther shares details of the long-anticipated program: “Thanks to the generous support of Jack and Jeannie Thompson, this program is finally coming to fruition. Jack and Jeannie are astute supporters of the College of

Music and are very involved and aware of the needs of the college.”

He continues, “The program is not only for aspiring jazz vocalists, as we hope it will serve the College of Music more broadly. Jazz improvisation is such an important part of the history of performance of American music and the skill sets that our musicians need to have in the 21st century.”

The methods incorporated into the Thompson Jazz program reflect a commitment to providing real-world experiences. Unlike traditional audition-based ensemble formation, the program embraces a unique approach. “Ensembles are formed without

auditions and then rotated every few weeks, fostering an environment where students of varying ages and experience levels come together and collaborate,” Gunther explains.

“This approach encourages students to build relationships, learn to communicate effectively and navigate the dynamics of working with musicians of varying backgrounds—mirroring the professional world, where collaboration is essential and musicians must adapt to different skill sets within the group.”

Developing and implementing the new degree program was both a response to internal recognition and driven by external demand. “The Jazz Studies department had been receiving inquiries from high school directors and prospective students eager to know when such a program would be offered,” Gunther says. “The call among young musicians for a broader experience is a clear recognition of the importance of engaging with contemporary music making, improvisation and diverse styles beyond their primary focus.”

Additionally, the jazz program has introduced a new extracurricular ensemble—Ralphie’s Ramblers—committed to embodying the spirit of New Orleans brass bands. Ralphie’s Ramblers ensures that students across disciplines have the opportunity to experience and collaborate in jazz in meaningful ways.

Looking ahead, over spring break, faculty and students from Thompson Jazz will spend a week-long intensive in Havana, studying and performing with master musicians of Afro-Cuban jazz, underscoring the College of Music’s commitment to providing a comprehensive education beyond the classroom walls.

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Ray Chen, violin and Julio Elizalde, piano

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Macky Auditorium

Program

Sonata in G minor “Devil’s Trill”

Giuseppe Tartini (1692-1770)

arr. Kreisler

Violin Sonata No. 7 in C minor, Op. 30, No. 2

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Allegro con brio

Adagio cantabile

Scherzo. Allegro

Finale. Allegro-Presto

—Intermission—

Partita No. 3 in E Major for Solo Violin, BWV 1006

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Preludio

Loure

Gavotte en Rondeau

Menuet I & Menuet II

Bourrée

Gigue

La Ronde des Lutins, Op. 25

Antonio Bazzini (1818-1897)

Slavonic Dance No. 2 in E minor, Op. 72

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

arr. Kreisler

Spain

Chick Corea (1941-2021)

arr. Elizalde and Chen

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Program notes

By Marc Shulgold

Sonata in G minor “Devil’s Trill”

Giuseppe Tartini (1692-1770)

arr. Kreisler

Quite a character, this Tartini—angering his parents by not studying for the priesthood, infuriating his teachers at law school by secretly marrying then leaving his wife to lock himself away to study music and the violin. He went on to establish a school for violinists, while composing hundreds of concertos and sonatas, most famously a mysterious violin sonata that, he claims, came to him in a dream. Known as the “Devil’s Trill,” the work’s date of composition cannot be nailed down, since Tartini never bothered to include such details—plus, it was published as opus 1 in five different volumes between 1728 and 1734. So, what about that nickname? An astronomer friend of his quoted Tartini’s tale that as he slept, the Devil paid him a visit, grabbed the composer’s violin and played “with such consummate art and intelligence a sonata more exquisitely beautiful than anything I had conceived in my boldest flights of fantasy.” Jolted awake, Tartini said he tried to scribble down what he had heard, but the notes on the page didn’t come close, he told his friend. In frustration he considered destroying his violin and giving up music forever. Instead, we have this music, a dazzling showpiece that links warmly lyrical passages (a Tartini trademark, by the way, that impressed his listeners back then) with explosive episodes of virtuosity and plenty of, you guessed it, trills. In this arrangement, the real brilliance comes from the great Austrian American violinist Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962), who inserted an amazing trill-heavy, double-stop-crazy cadenza right before the end. Tartini would be impressed.

Violin Sonata No. 7 in C minor, Op. 30, No. 2

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Don’t get the wrong impression from the published title of Beethoven’s Op. 30: “Three Sonatas for the Pianoforte with the Accompaniment of Violin.” No, Chen is not playing second fiddle here. In Vienna, the piano was king—especially in the hands of a virtuoso like Beethoven. Yes, the keyboard part dominates in this second of the three Sonatas of Op. 30, written in 1802 and published the following year, with a dedication to Czar Alexander.

The piano was gaining bigger and brighter sounds, thanks to the labors of numerous manufacturers springing up all over the city (inspired by the demands of Beethoven, whose approval all of them sought). At the same time, he had been widening his compositional vocabulary, expanding the emotional range of his piano

writing. This was evident in other early works in C minor: chamber pieces for strings, piano sonatas and this Violin Sonata—and in monumental later works, such as the Fifth Symphony, Third Piano Concerto and the “Eroica” Symphony’s Funeral March.

But then, the violin had changed as well: Players were using strings with added weight and stronger bows. Audiences were growing, and so larger halls were required, necessitating bigger sounds from the stage. The music world was evolving, and Beethoven’s music with it. Those huge masterpieces of his “heroic” period were on the horizon. Ironically, the years of 1801-03 also marked the beginning of his tragic journey toward deafness.

The C-minor Sonata of Op. 30 is the only one of the group built with four movements, although the composer’s friend Anton Schindler suggested that Beethoven had regretted including that extra *Scherzo*, noting that it seemed out of character with the other three movements. Regardless, the Sonata brims with youthful confidence and some brilliant passagework for the piano, which does carry our attention throughout. Growing up in Bonn, Beethoven had studied the violin, though he never developed a particular expertise or, one can surmise, a personal fondness for the instrument. Notice how the piano introduces each movement, though rarely overwhelming the violin. There are plenty of moments where the two voices seem to get along just fine. The three Sonatas are among eight of the 10 that Beethoven would compose in a span of four years soon after his arrival in Vienna in 1792. Among the ten, one stands out as a singular masterpiece: the “Kreutzer” Sonata, No. 9, written in 1803, a work that finds piano and violin perfectly matched as equal partners. Don’t miss it.

Partita No. 3 in E Major for Solo Violin, BWV 1006

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

We think of Bach as master of the organ and harpsichord. But working in Weimar in the early 1700s, the 17-year-old lad got pretty good on the violin, encouraged when he heard a set of six solo sonatas and partitas from a respected composer named Johann Paul von Westhoff, whom he’d met in Weimar. Later, it was an invitation to serve as music director at the palace of Prince Leopold at Cöthen in 1717 that turned Bach from church musician into a court instrumental composer—though first, he had to serve four weeks in jail before he could be released from his Weimar contract. But it would be worth it.

At Cöthen, Bach had at his disposal a gathering of superior musicians, for whom he wrote all manner of solo works, chamber pieces, orchestral works, keyboard studies, etc. Among them were six partitas and sonatas for solo violin—works that stand as masterpieces

that have challenged generations of the greatest solo players. Witnesses to Bach's prowess on the violin (including his son Carl Philipp Emanuel) report that J.S. was a brilliant player. So it's possible that these pieces were played by the composer. Or perhaps by Prince Leopold's court concertmaster Joseph Spiess.

The partitas (the name is drawn from the Italian term for suite) utilize popular court dances gathered from across the European continent, written to reflect the mood and tempo of each dance, each composed in the same key. This third and last of the partitas omits the usual *Allemande*, *Courante* and *Sarabande*. There is, instead, a rare *Loure*, a slow, French version of a *Gigue* (an Irish jig), followed by an ongoing *Gavotte* with alternating mini-episodes in-between. Then, Bach offers two *Minuets* and a charming *Bourée*. A graceful, smile-inducing *Gigue* serve as a finale.

But we must give special mention to the opening *Prelude*, one of the most familiar and beloved of Bach's out-of-this-world showpieces. Seeming to burst the boundaries of what a four-string instrument played by one individual can accomplish, this is a glorious perpetual-motion river of 16th notes that unfolds with perfect logic, as one phrase leads to another, sometimes repeating, sometimes inverting, naturally leading to a new idea, always making sure we're enjoying the ride. There's nothing like it in all music.

La Ronde des Lutins, Op. 25

Antonio Bazzini (1818-1897)

Never heard of Bazzini or "Dance of the Goblins?" If you're a violin buff, you are very familiar with the Italian composer and his Greatest Hit. Actually, it's his only hit. Itzhak Perlman got it right: He commented that Bazzini hadn't written anything else because he used up all the notes in *La Ronde*. It's less than five minutes long, but manages to employ every trick in the fiddler's arsenal of weapons: harmonics, ricochet bowings, double-stops, double-stop tremolos, left-hand pizzicatos, notes way up the neck, plenty of dizzying speed—a schmaltzy little catch-your-breath episode—and, of course a rousing finale. So who was this Bazzini? He was a virtuoso violinist, a serious composer and quite an impressive teacher. Among his students were such great opera composers as Alfred Catalani, Pietro Mascagni and Giacomo Puccini. None of that matters—just this crazy little piece. But that's enough.

Slavonic Dance No. 2 in E minor, Op. 72

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

arr. Kreisler

Brahms and Dvořák loved exploring the infectious folk music of Eastern European (as did Liszt before them). Brahms published four sets of *Hungarian Dances* in

1869 and 1880, and Dvořák produced two collections of *Slavonic Dances* in 1878 and 1886 (he'd composed 23 *Moravian Duets* during that stretch). Brahms soaked up the intoxicating world of Hungarian gypsy camps with his fiddling pal Eduard Remenyi, jotting down their tunes and later copying them into *his* piano-four-hand dances. Dvořák on the other hand merely used the rhythms, moods and styles of the Slavonic folk dances to create his four-hand pieces (like Brahms, later orchestrating them). Both composers enjoyed considerable success with their keyboard and orchestral interpretations. Here, we encounter another Fritz Kreisler arrangement, bringing the rich harmonies of Dvořák's charming *Slavonic Dance* in E minor to life, thanks to a fragrant use of violin double-stops.

Spain

Chick Corea (1941-2021)

arr. Elizalde and Chen

Ready for a little jazzy spontaneity to end the evening? Here is a beloved standard by the immortal Chick Corea, written in 1971 for the "Light as a Feather" album by his fabulous group Return to Forever. Inspired by Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez* guitar concerto, it begins with the evocative opening of the dreamy slow movement, but soon opens up with a joyous samba-like celebration, offered in unison. From there, the piece takes its cues from the basic chord structure of Rodrigo's music and the late jazz master's charts to paint a spontaneous portrait in improvisation to honor Spain—and Chick Corea, a musical genius sadly missed but never forgotten.

Ray Chen

Ray Chen is a violinist who redefines what it is to be a classical musician in the 21st Century. With a media presence that enhances and inspires the classical audience, reaching out to millions through his unprecedented online following, Ray Chen's remarkable musicianship transmits to a global audience that is reflected in his engagements with the foremost orchestras and concert halls around the world.

Initially coming to attention via the Yehudi Menuhin (2008) and Queen Elizabeth (2009) Competitions, of which he was First Prize winner, he has built a profile in Europe, Asia, and the U.S. as well as his native Australia both live and on disc. Signed in 2017 to Decca Classics, Ray's forthcoming recording with the London Philharmonic follows three critically acclaimed albums on SONY, the first of which (*Virtuoso*) received an ECHO Klassik Award.

Profiled as "one to watch" by the *Strad* and *Gramophone* magazines, Chen's profile continues to grow: he was featured on *Forbes'* list of 30 most

influential Asians under 30; made a guest appearance on Amazon's *Mozart in the Jungle* TV series; has a multi-year partnership with Giorgio Armani (who designed the cover of his Mozart album with Christoph Eschenbach); and performs at major media events such as France's Bastille Day (live to 800,000 people), the Nobel Prize Concert in Stockholm (telecast across Europe), and the BBC Proms.

Chen has performed with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, Leipzig Gewandhausorchester, Munich Philharmonic, Filarmonica della Scala, Orchestra Nazionale della Santa Cecilia, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and upcoming debuts include the SWR Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, Berlin Radio Symphony, and Bavarian Radio Chamber Orchestra. He works with conductors such as Riccardo Chailly, Vladimir Jurowski, Sakari Oramo, Manfred Honeck, Daniele Gatti, Kirill Petrenko, Krystof Urbanski, Juraj Valcuha and many others. From 2012-2015 he was resident at the Dortmund Konzerthaus and in 17/18 was an "Artist Focus" with the Berlin Radio Symphony.

His presence on social media makes Chen a pioneer in an artist's interaction with their audience, utilizing the new opportunities of modern technology. His appearances and interactions with music and musicians are instantly disseminated to a new public in a contemporary and relatable way. He is the first musician to be invited to write a lifestyle blog for Italian publishing house, RCS Rizzoli (Corriere della Sera, Gazzetta dello Sport, Max). He has been featured in Vogue magazine and is currently releasing his own design of violin case for the industry manufacturer GEWA. His commitment to music education is paramount, and inspires the younger generation of music students with his series of self-produced videos combining comedy and music. Through his online promotions his appearances regularly sell out and draw an entirely new demographic to the concert hall.

Born in Taiwan and raised in Australia, Chen was accepted to the Curtis Institute of Music at age 15, where he studied with Aaron Rosand and was supported by Young Concert Artists. He plays the 1715 "Joachim" Stradivarius violin on loan from the Nippon Music Foundation. This instrument was once owned by the famed Hungarian violinist, Joseph Joachim (1831-1907).

Julio Elizalde

Praised as a musician of "compelling artistry and power" by The Seattle Times, the gifted Hispanic-American pianist Julio Elizalde is a multifaceted artist who enjoys a unique career as soloist, collaborator, curator, and educator. Elizalde has performed at many of the world's major music centers including Walt Disney Concert Hall (Los Angeles), Davies Symphony Hall (San Francisco), Koerner Hall (Toronto), Alice Tully Hall (New York), Kioi Hall (Tokyo), Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall, Seoul Arts Center, Teatro Colón (Buenos Aires), St. Paul's Knightsbridge (London), National Centre for the Performing Arts (Beijing), Shanghai Oriental Arts Center, Palacio de Bellas Artes (Mexico City), National Concert Hall (Taipei) and the Esplanade Concert Hall (Singapore), among many others.

For nearly a decade, he has appeared as recital partner to world-renowned violinists Ray Chen and Sarah Chang, and has collaborated with many of the leading artists of our time, including Pablo Ferrández, Kian Soltani, Pamela Frank, Robert McDonald, and members of the Juilliard, Cleveland, Takács, Kronos, Brentano, St. Lawrence and Dover string quartets. As a founding member of the N-E-W Trio, he won the grand prize at the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition and received the Harvard Musical Association's prestigious Arthur W. Foote Prize. As part of the Trio, he performed for notable American politicians including President Bill Clinton and Secretaries of State Condoleezza Rice and Henry Kissinger.

A champion of new music, Elizalde has collaborated with celebrated composers such as Osvaldo Golijov, Sir Stephen Hough, Adolphus Hailstork, and Michael Stephen Brown. Julio was a featured artist on the soundtrack composed by Academy Award-winner Howard Shore for the film *Jimmy P*, starring Benicio Del Toro.

Originally from the San Francisco Bay Area, Elizalde is a graduate of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he earned a bachelor's degree with honors as a student of Paul Hersh. He holds Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees from the Juilliard School in New York City, where he studied with Jerome Lowenthal, Joseph Kalichstein, and Robert McDonald. Since 2014, Elizalde has served as artistic director of the Olympic Music Festival outside Seattle, Washington, and he is currently the Associate Chair of Strings & Piano Chamber Music at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

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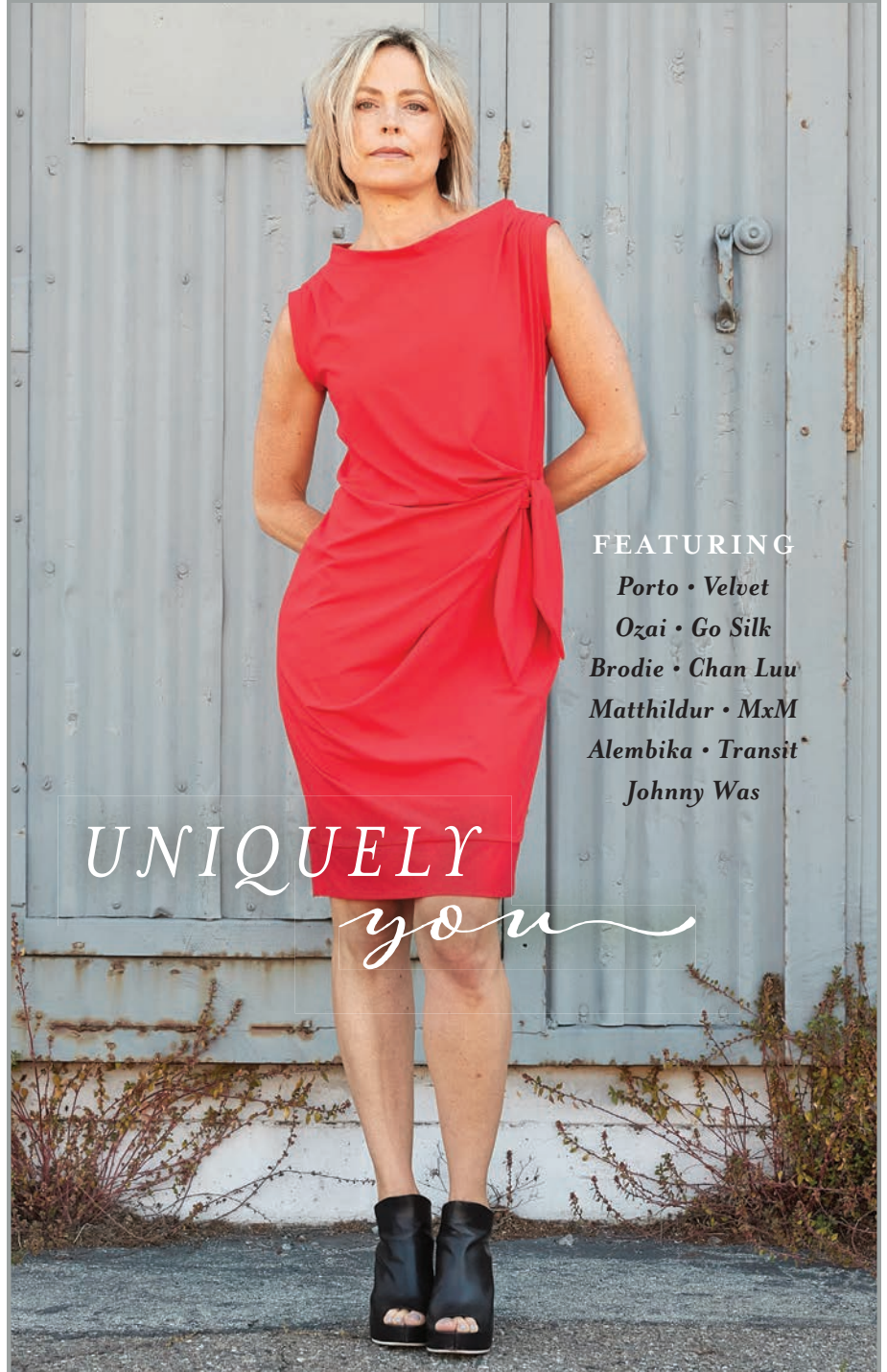
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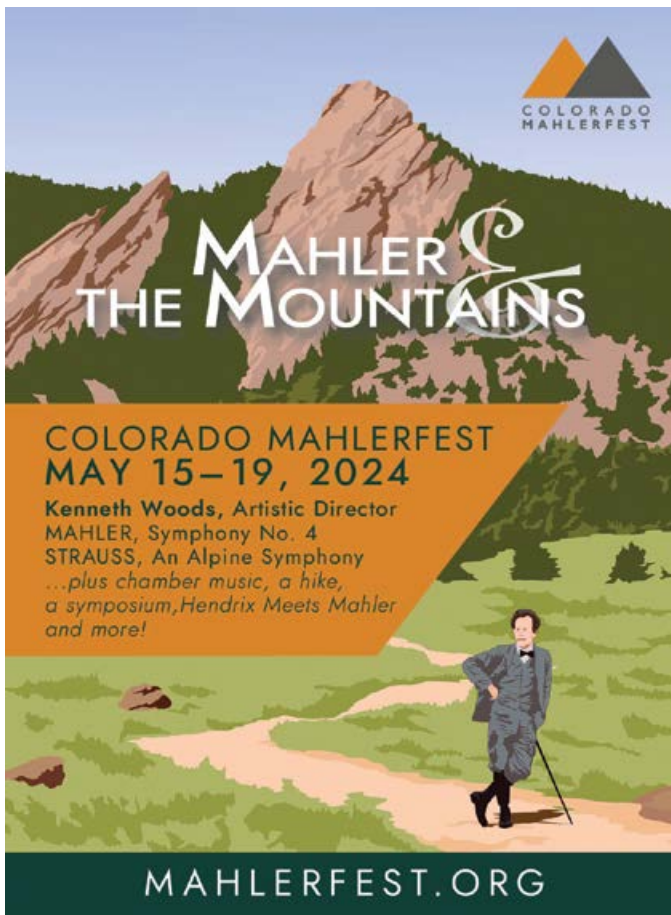
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Celebrating the legacy and impact of Anna Sie, lifelong supporter of the arts and humanity

By Allison Nitch

Known for her heartfelt philanthropy on both local and national levels, Anna Sie dedicated her life to supporting causes she felt passionate about, including students and faculty at the University of Colorado Boulder.

“She was really the most generous human being that I’ve ever met,” said CU Boulder alumna Michele Ritter (Anth’81) and University of Colorado Foundation trustee. “She really cared about people and issues, and if something came her way and she was able to make an impact—to make someone’s life better or to help in a broader way—she never missed an opportunity. She had this spirit about her that was open, generous, heartfelt and authentic.”

Sie left a powerful legacy of impact at CU Boulder, establishing a transformational student scholarship in the College of Music with her husband, John, and endowing several faculty chairs.

“At the College of Music, we aim to offer our students diverse opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration,” said John Davis, the college’s dean. “Such broad-based opportunities rely in no small part on the active, consistent engagement of our community of supporters. Anna Sie’s dedication to our college both indelibly impacted our students, programs and activities, and influenced others’ giving.”

“Anna Sie was extraordinarily committed to giving back, and in countless arenas, that is exactly what she and John accomplished for many years,” agreed Daniel Sher, College of Music dean emeritus.

“Anna was a superb partner with John, and she will be remembered for her generosity of spirit as much as philanthropic generosity.”

Changing lives through scholarships

Sie’s love of music led to the sponsorship of a student scholarship program at CU Boulder’s College of Music, which changed the lives of more than a dozen former students, including the accomplished opera singer Wei Wu (MMus’13).

After hearing then-student Wu perform at Central City Opera in 2007, the Sies were struck by the raw talent of this young man, explained Ritter. His performance inspired the couple to generously contribute to CU Boulder’s Eklund Opera Fund—specifically to support two Chinese opera singers, Wu and Yang Bo, beginning in the 2008-09 academic year.

Now a Grammy Award-winning bass, Wu trained at the People University of China, Beijing, before continuing his education at CU Boulder.

“Auntie Anna, also known as Mrs. Sie, always humbly said, ‘I am only a small part of your success,’” shared Wu. “However, I know deep down that her and Uncle John’s kindness and generosity played a significant role in my achievements.”

He continued, “She never expected anything in return, always welcoming me into her family with open arms. We cooked, laughed and shared countless memories together. She made me feel like I had a true family in the U.S. “Now, I proudly make my Metropolitan Opera debut dedicated to Auntie Anna—a new production of Carmen opening on New Year’s Eve, one of the important performance events of the whole season. I hope to keep carrying her spirit of philanthropy forward and make her proud.”

Cultivating culture in higher education and beyond

Sie also established several faculty chairs at Front Range universities, including the Anna Maglione-Sie Chair in Italian Language & Literature at the University of Denver; and the Dan & Boyce Sher Chair at CU Boulder’s College of Music. Faculty chair positions are important opportunities on campus, as they help provide talented faculty with the flexibility and resources to pursue their creative work in a university setting.

Sie received recognition through many awards for her philanthropic work and holds an honorary doctorate in higher education at the University of Denver, an honorary doctorate in humane letters from the University of Colorado and an honorary doctorate from Regis University.

Beyond higher education, Sie helped enrich Denver’s cultural offerings. As the home of Denver Film, the Sie FilmCenter was established in 2010 and features the finest in independent and world cinema. The Sie FilmCenter also regularly hosts festivals, program series and other special events that bring filmgoers and filmmakers together to celebrate the art of film. Sie also established the prestigious annual Italian Filmmaker Award at the Denver Film Festival.

“She was an immigrant child from southern Italy and she said she learned her English by watching movies,” noted Ritter. “She loved American movies. Everything she did was about giving back and about drawing on her own personal experiences—sometimes challenges and struggles—to make it easier for other people that might be also experiencing those [same] challenges and struggles.”

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