

THE CUNNING LITTLE VIXEN

An opera by
Leoš Janáček

April 16-19





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March-April 2026

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Broadway *Swings* into Macky Auditorium

By Henry Michaels

Michael Feinstein and the Carnegie Hall Ensemble swing into Macky Auditorium this April for an unforgettable night where Broadway meets big band!

It's hard to know where to start with the singer and pianist Michael Feinstein, who is as accomplished and as multifaceted as any musician you're liable to find. Over the course of his distinguished career, Feinstein has been nominated for five Grammys, an Emmy, and won both a Drama Desk Special Award and an ASCAP Deems-Taylor Television Broadcast Award. He is the founder of the Great American Songbook Foundation—Feinstein is known as the “Ambassador of the Great American Songbook”—and has served as a member of the Library of Congress’ National Recording Preservation Board. He is Principal Pops Conductor Emeritus with the Pasadena Symphony and spends his summers as conductor of the Pasadena POPS Series; he is also artistic director of both the Palladium Center for the Performing Arts in Carmel, Indiana and of “Standard Time with Michael Feinstein” at Carnegie Hall in New York City. Across his distinguished career, Feinstein has appeared at a laundry list of esteemed stages and landmarks, including The White House, Buckingham Palace, the Hollywood Bowl, Carnegie Hall and the Sydney Opera House. Put simply, Michael Feinstein is one of those rare people blessed with seemingly boundless energy—and on April 11, he'll bring his spectacular showmanship and dazzling musical talents to Macky Auditorium with “Big Band Broadway.”



Feinstein will be joined on stage by the Carnegie Hall Ensemble, a big band stocked with the best in contemporary jazz talent. Together they'll bring a big band twist to hit Broadway showtunes from multiple decades, including songs from the likes of *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Hello, Dolly!*, *Into the Woods*, *The Wiz* and *Chicago*. The consummate showman and host, Feinstein charmingly weaves stories, history, and other fascinating tidbits into the show about the tunes and musicals from which they originate.

The show is also in many ways a celebration of Carnegie Hall, a cultural institution whose storied history with the big band genre features the likes of Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman, Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra and more. Feinstein has a particular way with the music of Tony Bennett, with whom he shared a close friendship.

Michael Feinstein and the Carnegie Hall Ensemble perform on the Artist Series at Macky Auditorium on **April 11, 2026**.



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April 11

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The Cunning Little Vixen
April 16-19



Takács Quartet

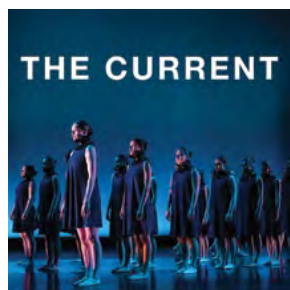


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At the 68th Annual Grammy Awards on Feb. 1, *Intelligence*—a contemporary opera by composer Jake Heggie and librettist Gene Scheer—won the Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording. Commissioned by the Houston Grand Opera (HGO), the opera—based on a true story—centers on Civil War-era spies and was praised for its artistic excellence and focus on Black voices. Of note, Heggie and Scheer workshopped *Intelligence* with the innovative CU New Opera Workshop (CU NOW) in 2021, their third CU NOW collaboration, in advance of its HGO premiere in October 2023. Congratulations to CU NOW Founder + Director Leigh Holman, former CU NOW Music Director Jeremy Reger (2015-2022), and all involved voice faculty and alumni!

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THE CUNNING LITTLE VIXEN

An opera by
Leoš Janáček

April 16-19



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Celebrate a Legacy, Support the Next Generation of String Players

This June, András Fejér, cellist, Ralph E. and Barbara L. Christoffersen Faculty Fellow and founding member of the Takács Quartet, will retire at the end of his 51st season on stage and in the classroom. András has shaped the artistry of hundreds of young musicians at the University of Colorado Boulder College of Music since 1986 and has helped build an international chamber music tradition in Boulder that continues to inspire audiences around the globe.

In recognition of his remarkable career, longtime arts supporters Richard Replin and Elissa Stein have established the András Fejér String Scholarship Fund. A native Coloradan, Richard and Elissa first heard the Takács Quartet perform in 1983, and he and Elissa have been passionate advocates for chamber music for decades. Their gift honors András' artistic legacy and humanity.

The fund provides scholarship support for violin, viola and cello students enrolled in performance degree programs at the College of Music. These awards help young artists focus on their studies, refine their craft and prepare for professional careers as performers, teachers and ensemble leaders.

In the spirit of encouraging broad community participation, Richard and Elissa will generously match all contributions to the fund, dollar for dollar.



We invite friends, alumni and supporters of the Takács Quartet to make a gift in András' honor. Your contribution will celebrate a lifetime of music making and support the next generation of string players at CU Boulder.

For further information, please contact
Assistant Dean for Advancement
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Alan Stanek

Paying it forward

By Adam Goldstein and Sabine Kortals Stein

Academic scholarships looked a little different when Alan Stanek was a student at the University of Colorado Boulder College of Music.

Stanek—who earned a bachelor’s in music education at CU Boulder in 1961, followed by an MM degree from the Eastman School of Music and a DMA in clarinet performance from the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance—relied on some financial assistance on his academic journey.

Before enrolling at CU Boulder, Stanek had been considering other schools in the state; but encouragement from then-Band Director Hugh McMillen, in addition to the prospect of scholarship support, brought him to the College of Music.

“The scholarship was \$54 a year—\$27 a semester—for four years,” recalls Stanek, currently based in Omaha, Nebraska following his retirement in 2001 from an illustrious career as an educator, academic administrator and professional musician. “It paid for books and helped me pay my expenses to go to college.”

Slight as an annual sum of \$54 seems today, that boost left a strong impression on Stanek who established the Valentine Henrich Memorial Endowed Clarinet Scholarship Fund, named for one of Stanek’s most influential instructors at CU Boulder from 1957 to 1961. The fund has provided financial support to musicians in training at the College of Music for more than a decade, serving as a critical resource for the college’s woodwind department.

Stanek attributes his continued contributions in part to his family legacy; he also notes his deep ties to his unique experience in Boulder, a place where he found support and inspiration around every corner.

“I was given every opportunity at CU Boulder,” adds Stanek who went on to garner numerous awards and prestigious recognitions including his induction into the Idaho Music Educators Hall of Fame. “By my second



year, I was principal clarinet in the band, librarian for the band department and playing in the orchestra. “Hugh McMillen was a father figure to me. He came to my high school to talk about the CU Boulder bands program.”

Henrich, an adjunct professor at the College of Music during Stanek’s undergraduate tenure, also left a deep impression. “I thought it would be nice to honor him as my mentor and the mentor of many,” says Stanek. “I was able. I called and said I’d like to establish a scholarship in his name.”

That scholarship has helped countless students, reflecting Stanek’s decades-long commitment to music education.



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The Cunning Little Vixen

By Leoš Janáček

April 16 | 18 | 19 2026

Music Theatre

Creative Team

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Music Director	Nicholas Carthy
Scenic Design	Ron Mueller
Costume Design	Ann Piano
Lighting Design	Karalyn Star Pytel
Hair/Wig and Makeup Design	Jason Estrada
Production Director	Ron Mueller
Technical Director	Jeff Rusnak
Props Design	Jenn Melcher Galvin
Intimacy Coordinator	Ellie Griffin
Program Manager	Christie Conover
Stage Manager	Camden Hornor
Assistant Stage Manager	Abba Wilson

Synopsis

Act I

The Forester finds a young Vixen in the woods and takes her home as a pet. Tied up in his yard, she is surrounded by Hens who have accepted a life of domesticity. The Vixen refuses to be tamed. She incites a farmyard revolt, kills the poultry and escapes back into the wild.

Act II

Now free, the Vixen claims her own territory by evicting a Badger from his lair. While the local Priest and Schoolmaster drink at the tavern and lament their pasts, the Vixen looks forward. She meets a Fox, and they begin a life together as equal partners, eventually marrying and raising a family in the forest.

Act III

Years pass. While protecting her territory from a poacher, the Vixen is shot and killed. Later, the aging Forester returns to the clearing where he first caught her. He finally realizes he never “owned” the forest; he is simply a part of it. He sees a new Vixen cub—a descendant of the first—and finds peace in the knowledge that while individuals die, the life force of the forest is immortal.

Cast

Vixen

Fox

Forester

Forester's Wife/Innkeeper's Wife

Parson/Badger

Schoolmaster

Poacher

Mosquito/Innkeeper

Dog

Young Vixen

Rooster

Pepik

Frantik

Cricket/Foxcub/Wedding Dancer

Owl/Foxcub/Wedding Dancer

Grasshopper/Wedding Dancer

Frog

Hen/Jay/Wedding Dancer

Chief Hen/Foxcub

Hens/Foxcubs

Reagan Hinze *(April 16 and 19)*

Charis Cumings Battersby *(April 18)*

Carrina Macaluso *(April 16 and 19)*

Kaitlyn Markus *(April 18)*

Tyler Middleton *(April 16 and 19)*

Teddy Spachman *(April 18)*

Hannah Benson

Matthew de Meyrick

Miguel Ángel Ortega Bañales

Noah Nussbaum

Jimi Adams

Isaiah Utto-Galarneau

Levi Spanarella

Halle Harrington

Lily Velapoldi

Fiona Spencer

Maggie Triplett

Charli Brunette

Olivia Daly-Short

Allison Williamson

Kaya Leyendecker

Alyssa Ledford

Teague McCormick

Emma Olivier

Madison Price

Stage Director's Note

It is easy to mistake *The Cunning Little Vixen* for a simple children's story. But Leoš Janáček didn't write a fairy tale; he wrote a reflection on the natural cycle of life, death, and renewal. Composed between 1921 and 1923, when Janáček was in his late sixties, the opera captures his obsession with pantheism—the belief that the divine is found within the literal, physical fabric of the world. For Janáček, who died in 1928 just four years after the premiere, the forest was not a backdrop, but a living system where life is never lost, only redistributed.

At the center of this cycle is the Vixen. In our production, she is not a mere animal, but a figure of fierce, modern autonomy. She is an independent woman—strong, unsentimental and unapologetically free. Her “cunning” is her greatest weapon; it is the sharp, tactical intelligence she uses to dismantle the social structures that try to cage her. Whether she is leading a farmyard revolution or choosing her own partner on her own terms, she refuses to be “owned.” Her journey is a triumph of the individual spirit over domesticity.

The Forester serves as our human anchor. We follow his journey from a man who attempts to dominate nature by capturing the Vixen, to one who finally accepts his small, fleeting place within it. He realizes that he is not the master of the forest, but a part of it—the “boundary” between the village and the woods was merely an illusion. When this boundary disappears, he finds peace. He realizes that even though he will die, the life force he shared with the Vixen continues in the next generation.

Janáček found such comfort in this idea that he requested the Forester's final aria be played at his own funeral. In this performance, we invite you into a world where that same life force connects us all, and where nothing is ever truly lost.

Music Director's Note

Leoš Janáček must have one of the oddest biographies of any great composer. Born into a family of teacher-musicians, he began his musical education as a boy chorister at St. Thomas in Brno. He later studied in Prague and Leipzig, and then moved to Vienna where he applied to study composition at the Music Academy. Unfortunately, the professors at the Academy did not find his compositions up to the required standard and so he returned to his childhood home to study music at the Czech Teachers' Institute. He was then awarded a post at the institute, where he taught for the next 20 years. He completed his first major work, the opera *Jenufa*, at the age of 50, and it was only after a successful production of this work in Prague, twelve years later, that he came into his own as a composer. Astonishingly, the vast majority of his compositions were written after he was sixty-five. He was a highly individualistic composer, scathing of convention. Like Mussorgsky before him and Bartók after him, he took the rhythms of his native language and its folksongs and created a completely new musical language. For many years he would walk through his home town and notate the speech rhythms and vocal cadences of the Moravian people, and it is this inflection that gives his operas their distinctive vocal melodies.

The Adventures of Vixen Sharp-Ears started off life as a series of cartoons in the local newspaper *Lidové noviny*. These cartoons fascinated Janáček, with their wonderful juxtaposition of the human and animal world and their amusing escapades, with the Vixen always getting the better of her human adversaries. Janáček had always been a keen observer of nature and, as soon as he had decided on the story as his next opera, he began to learn about the habits of the animals that he would be characterizing. He would rise very early and go off into the woods, sketching down bird-song (just as Messiaen was to do 30 years later) as he went along. He kept a pet frog, and observed the way a dog's bark changes according to circumstance. He learnt about the breeding habits of foxes and went with friends to observe a vixen and her cubs in their natural habitat (once turning up in a white suit and rushing home, embarrassedly, to change when it was pointed out to him that vixens do not only have sharp ears, they also have sharp eyes!). As he himself said: "My themes grow out of the earth, out of animals, out of people..." and there is not a measure in the score which is not filled with his love of nature and humanity.

The opera was composed in 1921-22, when Janáček was nearly 70. He described the work as "a happy tale with a sad ending". But it is not really sad. Rather it reaffirms, in a very simple and moving way, the cycles of nature and the continuation of life.

Personnel

JIMI ADAMS (Mosquito/Innkeeper) is excited to be a part of his third production with the CU Eklund Opera program. You may have caught him earlier this season playing the role of Ali Hakim in *Oklahoma!* or last spring in the Ensemble of *Pirates of Penzance*. Adams is so grateful for the opportunity to be in this production, work with this wonderful company and perform for such a wonderful audience. He hopes you enjoy the show!

CHARIS CUMINGS BATTERSBY (Vixen) is excited to perform with Eklund Opera! Battersby is studying with Jennifer Bird-Arvidsson and pursuing a master's in vocal performance and pedagogy. She loves teaching, performing and organizing collaborative music projects. Her favorite roles include Jo (*Little Women*), Alice (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*), Morticia (*The Addams Family*) and Ariel (*The Little Mermaid*). Battersby has performed with the Jackson Symphony Orchestra, the Wheaton College Symphony Orchestra, and was a featured soloist in Wheaton College Concert Choir's 2024 *The Messiah Project*. She thanks her husband, family, and community for their support. Soli Deo Gloria!

HANNAH BENSON (Forester's Wife and Innkeeper's Wife) is a mezzo-soprano in her second year in the Artist Diploma in opera and solo voice program under the private instruction of Abigail Nims. She holds vocal performance degrees from Wheaton College Conservatory (BM) and Indiana University Jacobs School of Music (MM). Benson has portrayed roles including die Hexe in Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*, Ruth in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance*, Der Trommler in Ullmann's *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* with Colorado MahlerFest 38, Sarah Caldwell in Mark Adamo's workshop of *Sarah in the Theatre* with CU NOW and Sister Helen Prejean in Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*.

HALLE HARRINGTON (Rooster) is a junior pursuing a Bachelor of Music in vocal performance under Jennifer Bird-Arvidsson. You may have seen her perform in *Hänsel und Gretel* as a member of the gingerbread children or in *Dead Man Walking* as a nun. She is excited to share all of the hard work she and the cast have put into this production and hopes you have an egg-cellent time!

REAGAN HINZE (she/her) (Vixen), soprano, is currently in the first year of a master's degree at the University of Colorado Boulder. Notable roles include Blanche de la Force (*Dialogues des Carmelites*), Gretel (*Hänsel*

und Gretel), and Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*). She is a two-time recipient of an encouragement award from the Metropolitan Opera's Laffont Competition. Before arriving in Colorado, Hinze completed a bachelor's degree in vocal performance at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Hinze is currently studying with Professor Jennifer Bird-Arvidsson and Nicholas Perna.

ALYSSA LEDFORD (Chief Hen/Ensemble) is a Maryland native and a senior pursuing a Bachelor of Arts Vocal, studying under Jennifer Bird-Arvidsson. This will be her first opera at CU Boulder and she is beyond excited. Outside of CU she has been in numerous musical theatre productions, most recently portraying Hodel in *Fiddler on the Roof*. Ledford extends her thanks to her friends and family who have unconditionally supported her passions, making it possible for her to be a part of this production.

KAYA LEYENDECKER (Ensemble) is a sophomore BM in musical theatre major with a minor in dance. Born in Central California, Leyendecker is now honing her vocal skills under the guidance of Jennifer DeDominci. CU Boulders credits include *Oklahoma!* (Virginia), *Cabaret* (Fraulein Kost), *Big Fish*, *Pirates of Penzance* and *Heathers*. Additional credits include *Six: The Musical* (Catherine Parr), *Bright Star* (Alice Murphy), *The Little Mermaid* (Ariel) and *Tuck Everlasting* (Winnie Foster). She would like to thank her directors, teachers, family and fiancée for their support.

CARRINA MACALUSO (Fox) is a mezzo-soprano from Asheville, North Carolina, pursuing a Master of Music at the University of Colorado Boulder, where she studies with Abigail Nims. Before arriving in Colorado, she completed a Bachelor of Music degree with distinction at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she studied under Jeanne Fischer. Macaluso is a versatile artist who regularly performs concert, opera, musical theatre and chamber music repertoire. Macaluso recently made her concert soloist debut with Boulder's Seicento Baroque ensemble performing the mezzo solos in Mozart's C minor *Mass*. She also made her debut with the Colorado Bach Ensemble performing in the chorus of Bach's *St. John Passion*. Macaluso has portrayed the roles of Mrs. Patrick De Docher (*Dead Man Walking*), Ruth (*The Pirates of Penzance*) and Der Sandmann (*Hänsel und Gretel*) with Eklund Opera.

Mezzo-soprano **KAITLYN MARKUS** (Fox) is completing a Master's in vocal performance and pedagogy under the guidance of Abigail Nims. She earned an undergraduate degree in piano and voice with honors

from Grand Valley State University in Michigan. Markus teaches both disciplines at Parlando School of Musical Arts in Boulder. Favorite roles include Miss Todd in *The Old Maid and the Thief* (independent project), Second Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* (Trentino Music Festival, Italy), Big Stone in *Eurydice* (Opera Grand Rapids), and Aunt Eller in *Oklahoma!* (Eklund Opera). She also enjoys performing jazz and musical theatre. Markus is thrilled to bring Fox to life and thanks her sister Lyndi and parents, Joe and Diane, for their unwavering support.

TEAGUE MCCORMICK (Ensemble) is thrilled to be making her opera debut in *The Cunning Little Vixen*. She is in her first year at CU Boulder where she is studying theatre. Earlier this year, she was in her first production with CU Boulder in Sandbox's *A Midsummer Nights Dream* as a swing covering Titania/Hippolyta and Theseus/Oberon. She is so excited to be in her first opera and she hopes you enjoy the show.

A master's student in voice performance and pedagogy, **NOAH NUSSBAUM** (Harasta the Poacher) has recently performed baritone roles in Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (King Balthazar), Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (Masetto), Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* (Guard 1), and Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* (Jud Fry). Now a student of Andrew Garland at the University of Colorado Boulder, Nussbaum holds a Bachelor of Music degree in Voice Performance from Furman University.

EMMA OLIVIER (Ensemble) is a soprano in her junior year in the choral music education program at CU Boulder. Olivier is lucky to be studying voice with Jennifer DeDominici! She is also pursuing a Certificate in singing health. She is excited to be in her first opera with the Eklund Opera in *The Cunning Little Vixen!* She is from Longmont, and loves being close to the mountains.

MADISON PRICE (Ensemble) is a mezzo-soprano with a passion for theatrical musical performance. Price attended the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in Houston, Texas, where she studied vocal music. She now studies Philosophy in her senior year at CU Boulder and pursues musical opportunities whenever available. Price most recently starred in *The Olive Tree* in a featured role, and looks forward to sharing her voice in *The Cunning Little Vixen*, her first foray into classical vocal performance in college.

FIONA SPENCER (Pepik/Ensemble) is a transfer student in her second semester studying musical theatre, with vocal training from Jennifer Bird-Arvidsson. Previous credits include Veronica in

Heathers (The Arts Hub), Ivy in *Bare: A Pop Opera* (The Arts Hub), and Young Alice in *Bright Star* (CenterStage Theatre Co.). She is also a singer/songwriter under the name Fiona Liv (music on all streaming platforms!). Thank you to her friends, family, and Melissa Williams for all their support. Enjoy the show!

ALAINA de BELLEVUE (Chorus Master/vocal coach) is a freelance pianist, vocal coach and music director based in Boulder. She currently serves as the pianist for Colorado Ballet's pre-professional division as well as chorus master for Anchorage Opera and Opera Steamboat. Previous music staff positions include Portland Opera, Sarasota Opera, Opera Colorado, Central City Opera, Mittelsächsisches Theater Freiberg, Opera Et Cetera (Wiesbaden, Germany) and Opera Fort Collins, among others. She has played for Oregon Ballet Theatre, Peninsula Ballet Theatre, Boulder Ballet, and is music director for Centennial State Ballet. From 2021-23 she served on the faculty at Colorado State University as vocal coach and opera music director. Alaina is the principal pianist for Fort Collins Symphony and appears regularly with other Front Range orchestras. She holds an Artist Diploma in vocal coaching and master's in collaborative piano from CU Boulder.

NICHOLAS CARTHY (Music Director/Conductor) is now in his 20th season with Eklund Opera. He studied at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria. He served as musical assistant to Bernard Haitink and Sir Georg Solti at the Salzburg Festival and to Daniel Barenboim in Paris, Chicago and Bayreuth. Carthy has conducted opera productions in Vienna, Salzburg, Oslo, Stockholm, Winterthur, Milan, Rome, Naples, Bonn, Eugene and Tel Aviv. He has conducted orchestras, including the Colorado Symphony, Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie, Orchestra RAI di Torino, Orchestra San Carlo di Napoli and the Accademia Filarmonica Roma. As a collaborative pianist he has performed in many of the world's great halls, including Carnegie Hall, Suntory Hall, Wigmore Hall, the Bolshoi Theatre and the Musikverein Vienna. He is music director of the Helgeland Sinfonietta and the Toppen International Summer School in Norway. He is well known for his public lectures at the University of Colorado and beyond, and is occasionally heard on the radio, spreading around his uncurbable enthusiasm for music and history.

CHRISTIE CONOVER (Program Manager) is a soprano and arts administrator whose performing career includes lead roles with Komische Oper Berlin, Minnesota Opera, Opera Colorado, and Central City Opera, as well as orchestral collaborations across

the U.S. Since 2017, Conover has brought her artist's perspective to Eklund Opera, where she manages productions and special events while supporting emerging performers.

JASON KYLE ESTRADA (he/him/his) (Wig and Makeup Designer) is a hair and makeup artist and costume designer currently based out of Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He is a graduate of the UNC School of the Arts with an MFA in wig and makeup design. Estrada has worked in many arenas of the entertainment industry from the stage to the screen. He builds custom wigs from his studio and loves to garden. He is also a proud member of IATSE local 322. Estrada is an alum of CU Boulder and is happy to be back collaborating with the creative team at Eklund Opera.

LEIGH HOLMAN (Stage Director) balances a teaching and professional stage directing career in the United States and abroad. In recent years, she has made directing debuts at the Pafos Aphrodite Festival in Cyprus, L'Opéra de Montréal and Florida Grand Opera. Recent CU Boulder productions include *West Side Story*, *Sweeney Todd* and *Ariodante*. As well-suited to new operatic works as she is to traditional works, Holman has produced and directed workshops of operas in association with composers and librettists, including Jake Heggie, Gene Scheer, Mark Campbell, Mark Adamo, Colm Toibin, Kirke Mechem, Libby Larsen, Lori Laitman, Herschel Garfein, Robert Aldridge, Daniel Kellogg, Alberto Caruso and Dave Mason. As the founder and artistic/general director of CU Boulder's New Opera Workshop (CU NOW), she continues to passionately promote the creation, collaboration and production of new American works.

JENN MELCHER GALVIN (Properties Designer and Scenic Artist), MFA, joined Eklund Opera at CU Boulder in 2007, and she has considered it her professional home ever since. Galvin has painted for prestigious summer companies including the Colorado Shakespeare Festival and Ohio Light Opera. Locally, Galvin has worked for Macky Auditorium, BDT Stage, Chataqua Auditorium, and BETC. Her hobbies include fiction, needlecraft and hiking. In 2010, Galvin walked 400 miles of an ancient pilgrimage road across Northern Spain called the Camino de Santiago. She thanks her cat Nutmeg, husband Peter and son Dominic for their love and support.

CAMDEN HORNOR (Stage Manager) is a recent graduate of CU Boulder's design and tech management BFA with an emphasis in stage management, business, leadership, and LGBTQ+

Studies. Hornor had the incredible experience of getting to work with Eklund Opera as a student and then as a professional after graduating early in December 2025. Hornor has joined the teams of 12 productions in the past year and three so far this year, including *The Cunning Little Vixen*. Following this production, Hornor will be headed to the East Coast to join the Barnstormers Theatre in New Hampshire as arts admin intern for the season, intern ASM for *She Loves Me*, and ASM for *Sheer Madness*. Hornor has developed a love for opera through their work with the Eklund Opera Program and hopes you enjoy this production as much as they do. Website: camdenhornorsm.com. Instagram: @that_thtr_kid.

RON MUELLER (Production Director) has served Eklund Opera as technical director and now production director for more than a quarter of a century. He has also designed scenery and/or lighting for many Eklund productions in that time, most recently *Titanic*, *Postcard from Morocco* and *Agrippina*. Also a BETC ensemble member, he designed scenery for last season's *The Children*, and a dozen others over the last decade. He has also designed scenery or lighting for productions at Crested Butte Music Festival, Skylight Opera Theatre, Colorado Shakespeare Festival, Boulder's Dinner Theatre, Theatre X, Milwaukee Chamber Theater, Boulder Broadway Company, CU Boulder Theatre and Dance and the University of Denver's Lamont School of Music.

ANN PIANO (Costume Coordinator): As the Costume Coordinator for Opera Colorado since 2003, she has designed costumes *Don Giovanni* (2013), *Carmen* (2014) and *The Magic Flute* (2015). She has designed more than 100 shows for Denver area opera, theater and dance companies. In 2012, she won a True West "Best Costume Design" Award for The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity at Curious Theatre. Most recently, she designed *Tosca* at Bravo! Vail Music Festival and *La Boheme* and *Cendrillon* for Eklund Opera at CU Boulder. Piano has a BFA in Fashion Design from Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, with a minor in fine art.

KARALYN STAR PYTEL (Lighting Designer) Star is a Denver based entertainment lighting designer with over 25 years of experience working on a variety of professional productions across the country. Her most recent work for CU Eklund Opera department includes *American Stories* (2024) and *Big Fish the Musical* (2025). Star currently is the Production Manager and Lighting Designer for The Polar Express Train Ride at the Colorado railroad museum.

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Jordan Grantonic

Violin II

Lauren Lier

Viola

Allyson Stibbards

Cello

Sophie Stubbs

Bass

Ethan Alexander-
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Flute

Andrea Kloehn

Oboe

Ingrid Anderson

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Will Shi

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Director/ Stage Hand

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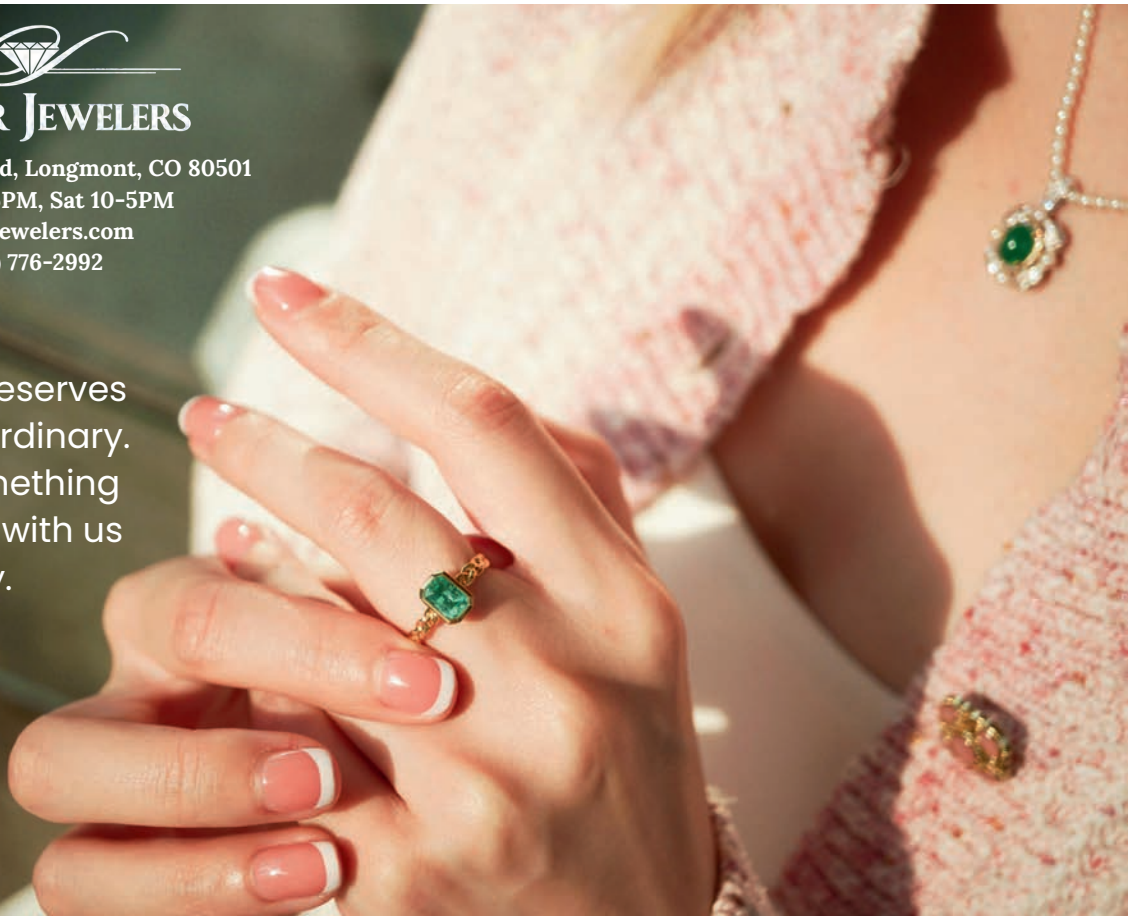


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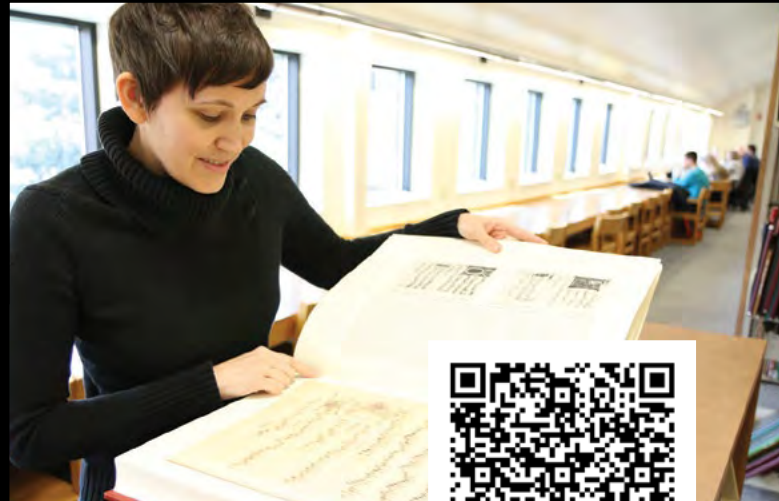
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Meet

Mihai Marica

Takács Quartet cellist designate

By Adam Goldstein

Mihai Marica has plenty of musical memories of the CU Boulder College of Music's Takács Quartet-in-residence.

The Romanian-born cellist can easily rattle off moments he fondly associates with the internationally renowned quartet, currently in its 51st season: Obsessively listening to Takács recordings of the Beethoven cycle with fellow musicians; watching the Takács perform as part of the prestigious Cliburn Competition 20 years ago and being “completely mesmerized”; playing alongside Takács' violist Richard O'Neill at the Lincoln Center in New York ... and more.

“They're such an honest and natural-sounding group,” Marica notes. “The musical tastes of the Takács Quartet through the eras somehow align with what I like musically, too.”

Starting this fall, Marica will have many opportunities to create more memories with the critically acclaimed group called “the essential quartet of our time” by The New York Times; that's when Marica succeeds cellist András Fejér—the last remaining member of the original Takács Quartet, who will retire at the end of the current season. Leading up to the transition, Marica will join the quartet for its final Boulder performance this season in Franz Schubert's String Quintet in C Major, D. 956; on Sept. 1, he'll step into his role as a full-fledged member, signing on for a season that includes high-profile performances in Boulder and worldwide.

For Marica, his new position is the latest in a long string of prestigious musical roles. He started studying cello at the age of 7 in his hometown Cluj/Kolozsvár, Romania, with Gabriela Todor and later Mihály Guttman, who taught chamber music. “The school of cello playing that I was brought up in was a mix between the old Soviet school and the Hungarian school,” he says. “We were kind of right in the middle of those huge entities.”



From these roots, Marica became a chamber music luminary with a global reach: After studying at Yale University with Aldo Parisot, he went on to collaborate with orchestras and ensembles globally—from Chile to Mexico and from Switzerland to Russia. An alumnus of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's Bowers Program, Marica has kept up a presence in that program and on that stage, and he's called New York home for the past 15 years.

Moving to Boulder will be just one of many big shifts to come as part of joining the Takács Quartet, but Marica never hesitated in saying 'yes' to the invitation. "I still can't believe my luck, that I was given this opportunity," Marica says. "When I think about it, it's a bit like the moment when Mr. Parisot said, 'Why don't you come and study with me at Yale?,'" Marica adds, referencing another seminal point in his career,

"It's life-changing."

The Takács Quartet's 2026-27 season will include works by Gabriela Lena Frank as well as more selections by Schubert, Carlos Simon, Johannes Brahms and Joseph Haydn. Beyond Boulder, the quartet will also bring its signature musical style to Carnegie Hall and embark on a North American tour with pianist Jeremy Denk.

While the composers, concerts and touring aren't new for Marica, the chance to play with such an iconic ensemble feels novel. Stepping in for Fejér, whom Marica cites as a "model," will carry its own significance; and aligning with the Takács' dynamic approach onstage stands as a specific responsibility. "My ambition is to match their energy," Marica says. "They've always blown me away on stage—they're so direct in their music making, all qualities that I'm aiming to keep in the group dynamic."

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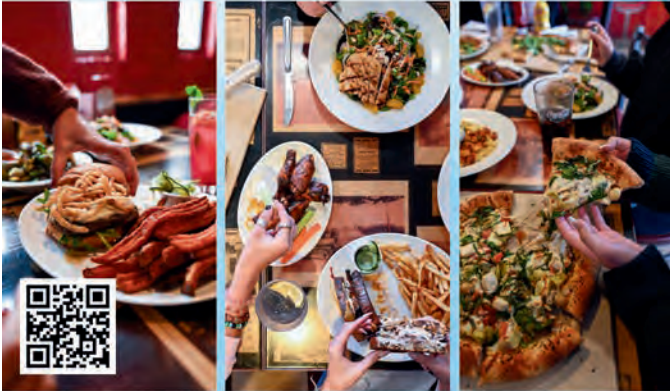
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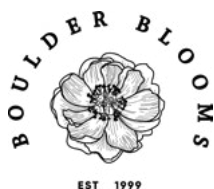
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– *Los Angeles Times*


Stewart Goodyear | piano

Boulder Philharmonic Orchestra
Macky Auditorium

SATURDAY | APRIL 25, 2026 | 7 PM

PROKOFIEV - *Lieutenant Kijé* Suite, Op. 60
PROKOFIEV - Piano Concerto No. 3
PROKOFIEV - Suite from *Romeo and Juliet*


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LATECOMERS are seated at the discretion of the house manager.

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- Music Theatre (Imig Music Building)
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BY JOHN PATRICK SHANLEY

Feb. 20 - Mar. 15
AT THE DAIRY ARTS CENTER

From the **Oscar-winning, Tony-winning, Pulitzer-winning writer** of *Moonstruck* and *Doubt* comes a new play about three sisters, a guy who operates a laundromat and the random tricks life plays on them for better or worse.

Like many of Shanley's plays, the story pits the quest for love and happiness against the demands of family obligations.

“Stanley keeps the play moving ruthlessly forward, peppering what sounds like the grimmest of tales with wry humor.”

— THE CHICAGO READER



Mary Jane

By Amy Herzog

May 1-24
AT THE DAIRY ARTS CENTER

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— THE GUARDIAN



New York Times
Critics' Pick

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