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2026-27 EVENTS



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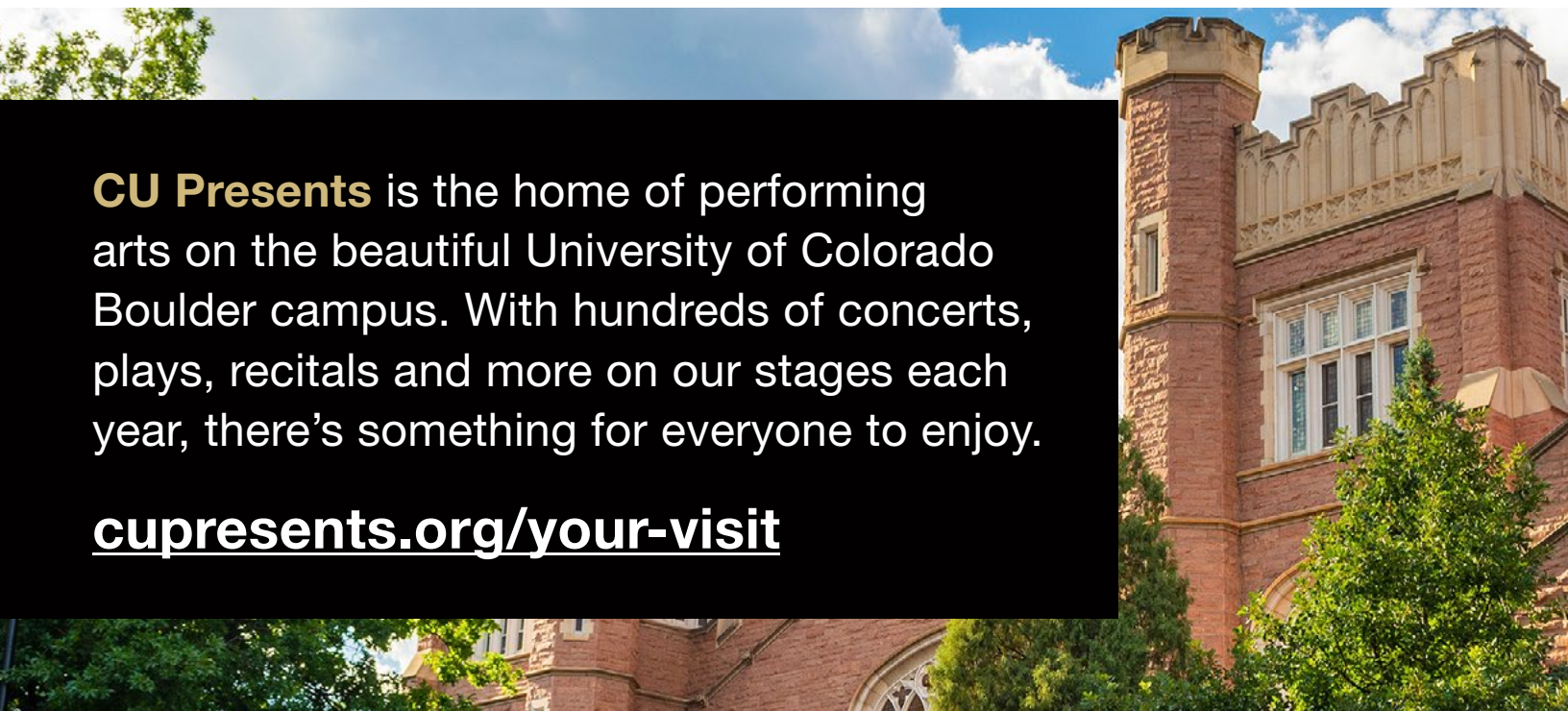
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SoundWorks

Friday, Sept. 18, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Grusin Music Hall

Program

Songs from Letters

Libby Larsen

Text by Calamity Jane

I. So Like Your Father's (1880)

II. He Never Misses (1880)

III. A Man Can Love Two Women (1880)

Levi Spanarella, soprano

Gabrielle Lowman, piano

Gazel in Makam Hüseynî

Egemen Kesikli, voice

Jesse Manno, oud

a kick in the mouth: deconstructed version

Addison Hill

Addison Hill, voice and electronics

Outh

Ben Portzen

Dew

J. Clay Gonzalez

J. Clay Gonzalez, song leader

Program Notes

Songs from Letters

Libby Larsen

Text by Calamity Jane

I. So Like Your Father's (1880)

Letter from Calamity Jane to her daughter Jane

Janey, a letter came today

and a picture of you.

Your expression so like your father's

brought back all the years.

II. He Never Misses (1880)

Letter From Calamity Jane to her daughter Jane

I met your father "Wild Bill Hickok" near Abilene.

A bunch of outlaws were planning to kill him.

I crawled through the brush to warn him.

Bill killed them all.

I'll never forget...

Blood running down his face

while he used two guns.

He never aimed and he was never known to miss.

III. A Man Can Love Two Women (1880)

Letter From Calamity Jane to her daughter Jane

Don't let jealousy get you, Janey.

It kills love and all nice things,

It drove your father from me.

I lost everything I loved except for you.

A man can love two women at a time.
He loved her and he still loved me.
He loved me because of you, Janey.

In the forward of *Between Ourselves*, a compilation of letters between mothers and daughters, editor Karen Payne quotes Rosa Luxemburg, “It is in the tiny struggles of individual peoples that the great movements of history are most truly observed.” I think she’s on to something. The diary of Martha Jane Canary Hickock (Calamity Jane), reveals the struggle of an individual soul, a tender soul, a woman and pioneer on many frontiers. Calamity Jane was a working woman, good in her profession, working at what she loved and making choices because of her will to work. Calamity Jane sent Janey, her daughter by Wild Bill Hickock, to live with a “normal daddy”—her friend Jim O’Neil. She paid for child support by working as a gambler, trick shooter, cowhand, barmaid, stagecoach driver and prostitute. She even tried (and rejected) marriage. In her time she was odd and lonely. One hundred years later, her life sheds light on contemporary society. She chooses rough-tough words to describe her life to her daughter. I’m interested in that rough-toughness and in Calamity Jane’s struggle to explain herself honestly to her daughter, Janey.

Program note by composer

Dew

J. Clay Gonzalez

“Dew” is an excerpt from *Every Last Thing*, an oratorio for choir, improvising quartet, and regenerative orchestra. The piece, commissioned by Virago, is an exploration of impermanence, an attempt to build meaning in a world of infinite possibility and limited time.

Personnel

Addison Hill

Addison Hill is an artist, composer, multi-instrumentalist and educator from Phoenix, Arizona. Her work collages together different mediums, stories and sonic possibilities to create experiences that strive for emotional liberation and connection. When composing, Hill steps into the role of a director to holistically consider the relationship between sound and space, allowing for a more visceral experience inspired by the imaginary worlds Hill lives in.

She received her Bachelor of Music in music composition from Arizona State University and is currently pursuing a master's in music composition with music technology at the University of Colorado Boulder, where she teaches Intro to Music Technology.

Hill's works have been performed at the Gammage Auditorium, PRISMS festival, Wildflower Composer's Festival, Arizona Women's Collaboration Concert, soundSCAPE, Sō Summer Institute, Superbloom Drone Festival and National Sawdust. She spends her free time yapping, napping, yearning and learning, while providing love and support to her needy cat (which is definitely a full time job).

J. Clay Gonzalez

J. Clay Gonzalez is a composer, director and producer specializing in site-specific, large-scale musical works that engage communities in collaborative sound-making. In 2025-26, Gonzalez served as a McKnight Visiting Composer. Gonzalez holds degrees in music composition from the University of Michigan.

Benjamin Portzen

Benjamin Portzen is a composer and improviser working at the intersection of sounding and moving, principally concerned with matters of being: the transformation of consciousness through art, aesthetic experience as divine. He investigates these through the media of concert and recorded music, dance, field recording, instrument building using found/natural materials and software design, treating each as a lens through which to look deeply into apparent binaries between living and nonliving, creation and destruction, remembering and forgetting, emergence and senescence. He is currently pursuing a Master of Music in composition at the University of Colorado Boulder.

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