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Photo credit: Owen Zhou.

SoundWorks

Tuesday, April 14, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Grusin Music Hall

PROGRAM

Tuba Concerto (6')

Sydney Notter

I. The Great Plains

Brayden Metcalf, solo tuba

Will Bryant, Kaden Blake, trumpets

Aurora Conroy, horn

Luke Merideth, trombone

Max Adams, percussion

Lodestone (5')

Zeppo Castellano

Ehryn Myatt, Anthony Kuntz, trumpets

Zeppo Castellano, trombone

Noah Burak, trombone

Sean Gaffney, tuba

Quintet for Piano and Strings (13')

Indigo Farmer

Indigo Farmer, piano

Ellie Lim, Elijah Pouliot, violins

Taylor Sapanara, viola

Elise Cole, cello

Snapshots (11')

Luka Vezmar

Anastasiia Pavlenko, piano

Elegy for the Trees (5')

Blake Clawson

Renova New Music Ensemble

Ode on Solitude (5')

Aric Vyhmeister

Renova New Music Ensemble

Grace of the Dawn

Blake Clawson

Renova New Music Ensemble

PROGRAM NOTES

Tuba Concerto (6')

Sydney Notter

Written for Brayden Metcalf, with a full premiere planned for the 26-27 school year, this concerto draws from Wyoming's history and natural beauty. The first movement brings listeners along travels through the Great Plains from its wide expanses with a colony of prairie dogs to the revolutionary railroad and industry it brought alongside.

Lodestone (5')

Zeppo Castellano

A short piece for modified brass quintet inspired by the physics and behavior of magnets.

Snapshots (11')

Luka Vezmar

Snapshots for solo piano is a piece based on 5 photos that the composer (Luka Vezmar) took on his travels over the summer and winter of 2024-2025. They are all candid photos of random people experiencing and living life. Each movement is just a snapshot into that person's life. The movements are titled where the photo was taken, letting the music describe the photo rather than words.

Elegy for the Trees (5')

Blake Clawson

Elegy for the Trees imagines our world without trees and without peace. These hypotheticals are explored in a contemplative atmosphere, wrestling with hopelessness and fear. Doubt evolves into defiant optimism—we cannot give up on our hopes for peace and balance, no matter how naive they may seem amid the complex challenges we face. The work concludes with a return to the pensive mood of the opening, now tinged with bittersweetness in its questioning.

Imagine there were no trees.

What would life be like?

Imagine you and me laying where a tree should be.

Looking up at the sky, you and I, we would cry—
say “goodbye” to the trees.

Imagine there was no peace.

Is that what life is like?

No, that cannot be.

We cannot war our world away.

There must be peace for you and me.

Is it naive for you and me, beneath the trees in gentle breeze,
to wish for peace and simple ease the world to see?

What would it take?

Imagine we tend the soil.

What shining sentinels we would grow!

Why don't we grow?

We'll grow.

Will we grow?

Ode on Solitude (5')

Aric Vyhmeister

Alexander Pope's "Ode on Solitude" is a brief and contemplative poem expressing his desire to harmonize his life with the world around him. Pope itemizes the importance of meeting life's basic needs such as shelter and food, then moves on to the more lofty need for peace, belonging, and quiet sleep as the "years slide soft away". His final wish is that he leaves behind nothing but a full, well-lived life, or in his words "not a stone tell where I lie." Most touching is the fact that he wrote this at the age of 12, imagining life ahead. The music follows the contours and tension of each stanza in a somewhat pastoral fashion. In the final stanza in which he reflects on death, the familiar melody that has been sung up to this point moves to the piano while the voices change character in reverence. The music ends on the same metaphorical note as the poem, with a mix of uncertainty, acquiescence, and hope.

Ode on Solitude

Happy the man, whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air,
In his own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,
Whose flocks supply him with attire,
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,
In winter fire.

Blest, who can unconcernedly find
Hours, days, and years slide soft away,
In health of body, peace of mind,
Quiet by day,

Sound sleep by night; study and ease,
Together mixed; sweet recreation;
And innocence, which most does please,
With meditation.

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown;
Thus unlamented let me die;
Steal from the world, and not a stone
Tell where I lie.

Grace of the Dawn

Blake Clawson

Text by Blake Clawson

By Grace of the Dawn paints a portrait of human culture across time, using imagery of shifting sand dunes to illustrate the inseparability of humankind from the land on which we live. The text is informed both by the teachings of the ancient wisdom book Qoheleth—more widely known as Ecclesiastes—and by the cautionary tale of Icarus. The juxtaposition of these voices with the dunes invites contemplation of human hubris, especially our willful ignorance of the environmental crisis. The poem concludes with a prayer for intentionality and ownership of our actions, spiritual rootedness, and the flourishing of our shared home.

Each dune a candle by grace of the dawn,
Lit one by one at their appointed time,
Held in the solemn, timeless embrace
of mountains.

Sentinels watching, painted in light,
Ever dissolving into the wind,
Drifting away to some distant edge
of desert.

Each grain a life and each dune a land,
Built on the ghost of once-drifted sand:
Wind-driven rock—Icarian leaps all
too human.

Let not these shifting sands be void of purpose.
Let not our striving be for only wind.
Let not our drifting be without a grounding.
O bless this land!
May this fallow earth be rooted rich and deep.
Amen.

PERSONNEL

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Annika Socolofsky, faculty coach

Nicholas Felder, community outreach coordinator

Luka Vezmar, stage manager

Addison Hill, graphic designer

Zeppo Castellano

Zeppo Castellano is a first-year composition undergrad and multi-instrumentalist at CU Boulder. He joined the studio in January and as such, this piece is an artist premier.

Blake Clawson

Blake Clawson is a composer, conductor and educator from Washington state. His music unites human stories and natural landscapes, weaving the warmth of voices and the vitality of global folk traditions into soundscapes that evoke wonder and nostalgia. Blake is pursuing a dual Master of Music in composition and choral conducting at the University of Colorado Boulder, where he studies with Carter Pann, Annika Socolofsky, Coreen Duffy and Elizabeth Swanson. At CU Boulder, he serves as the conductor of Renova New Music Ensemble and teaches Aural Skills and musicianship skills. His research highlights underperformed Icelandic choral works, aiming to increase their accessibility and performance in the U.S. and abroad.

Indigo Farmer

Indigo is a master's student in music composition at the University of Colorado Boulder. She also plays piano and teaches aural skills. Farmer's style is influenced by German romantic composers like Beethoven, Brahms, Schubert and Schumann, as well as more modern composers such as Undine Smith Moore and Mable Bailey. She often uses old forms, focusing on the development of ideas to create a journey without words, while incorporating experimental harmonies and timbres. She is inspired by music's ability to access complex human experiences from the spiritual level, to the fun and cute, to the painful. She aims to create music like that of the composers she loves—exciting, transformative and existentially stabilizing.

Sydney Notter

Sydney Notter, a lifelong musician and active performer, is a sophomore composition major at the University of Colorado Boulder. Having performed in choral, jazz and concert band, musical theatre, and worship contexts, Notter loves creating new music for these groups and beyond. As a composer, she writes to tell meaningful stories with or without words and explore what it is her performers love to do. Whether it's a scene of nature, an entertaining vignette, or a message of a deeper conflict or personal meaning in the world, when writing, there is always a compelling storyline that drives her. Continually keeping music a central element of her life, Notter hopes to continue expanding her abilities in writing for a variety of instruments and voice styles and exploring how to tell emotionally complex stories through her music.

Luka Vezmar

Luka Vezmar is a composer, oboist, accordionist and all around music lover. Since he was 9 months old, he has gone to many concerts with his family and friends which always inspires him to write more music. He grew up playing the piano and various other instruments throughout schooling like the trumpet, saxophone, and oboe. He decided to continue with the oboe and is pursuing a BM in oboe performance as well as in composition. While Vezmar's music encompasses many different fields, he specializes in classical music, with the hopes of getting accordion into the main stream classical music world. Vezmar always has a very distinct character in his music, which to him makes the music seem alive. He hopes that the audience can connect with his music and hopefully leave feeling just a little better than when they came in.

Aric Vyhmeister

Composer and pianist Aric Vyhmeister (ASCAP) earned a Master of Music in Collaborative Piano at the University of Colorado Boulder and is currently pursuing graduate studies in composition at CU Boulder under Carter Pann. Vyhmeister is a frequent recitalist and chamber musician in the Denver area, served as music director with the Boulder Opera Company, performed with Art Song Colorado and the SoHap Ensemble, served on the faculty at Metropolitan State University Denver and has recently premiered original compositions with the Renova New Music Ensemble at CU Boulder, the Walla Walla University Brass Choir (Walla Walla, Washington), and the Maitland Symphony Orchestra (Orlando, Florida). He is also a regular guest artist at the Salt Creek Song Festival in Ashland, Nebraska. Vyhmeister is music editor for The Canciones Project.

Prior to becoming a full-time musician, Vyhmeister was a systems engineer with Lockheed Martin Space Systems working on various commercial space and NASA programs, and has a deep appreciation for the balance of the STEM fields and the arts, recognizing the wide range of interests and backgrounds aspiring musicians might have both in and outside of the arts.

Renova New Music Ensemble

Blake Clawson, conductor

Aric Vyhmeister, collaborative pianist

Soprano 1

Brooklyn Stellato

Zoe Myers

Katy Bowman

Addy Prouse

Soprano 2

Payton Keeler

Saige Curro

Aimee Kennedy

Lelle Szucs

Alto 1

Addie McCurdy

Sara Strauss

Rebecah Deans

Alto 2

Amelia Pennell

Iona Binnie

Jenna Clawson

Tenor 1

Ellery Galvin

Collin Deans

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Avi Kumar

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*Photos: On this page, University Chorus, Fall 2024.
Photo credit: Erika O'Connor; On the cover, Cross-Genre Ensemble, 2025. Photo credit: Owen Zhou.*

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*The Drowsy Chaperone (2023).
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