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Photo credit: Owen Zhou.

SoundWorks

Featuring Mantra Percussion and Koa String Quartet

Wednesday, March 25, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Grusin Music Hall

PROGRAM

TEETH (8')

Addison Hill

Addison Hill, voice and electronics

Mantra Percussion:

Caitlin Cawley

Christopher Graham

Joseph Bergen

Mark Utley

Michael McCurdy

Mika Godbole

Hovel (9')

Alan Mackwell

Mantra Percussion

Rose-Colored Skies (7')

Leah Porter Tracy

Mantra Percussion

Snapshots (8')

Luka Vezmar

Mantra Percussion

Intermission

Sad Kites (6')

Jonah Stern

Koa String Quartet:

Kisa Uradomo, Leah Pernick, violins

Devin Cowan, viola

Heewon Lee, cello

Evergreen Cycles (15')

Blake Clawson

Paige Michaud and Regan Buttermore, flutes

Janet Harriman, harp

PROGRAM NOTES

TEETH (8')

Addison Hill

TEETH is the realization of a reoccurring dream I have about all of my teeth falling out.

Hovel (9')

Alan Mackwell

Hovel, a work for six percussionists, emerged from an opportunity I received to write for Mantra Percussion during their residency at the University of Colorado Boulder. As I listened to as much percussion ensemble repertoire as I could in preparation for this piece, I found myself particularly attracted to the sounds that emerged from found percussion; soon enough I found myself discreetly hitting PVC pipes and wooden boards at the local hardware store near my childhood home in Santa Fe, New Mexico and scouring the desert landscape and thrift stores for new sounds I could use.

During my sonic explorations, I could not help comparing my obsessive collection of junk to the family of pack rats that plagued my mother's house for decades; stealing nuts and bolts from the back porch, destroying the grill in search for trinkets, and hauling it all off to their bizarre treasure hole in the backyard. In some ways, *Hovel* is a strange sonification of the pack rats' eclectic home.

Snapshots (8')

Luka Vezmar

Snapshots is a piece written for the Mantra Percussion Ensemble, meant to imitate a casual game of catch between friends that become increasingly more and more intense as players join and the stakes increase. The musicians are playing catch at the same time they are playing their instruments, which could lead to some funny chaos and who knows ... there may be consequences if you drop the ball

Evergreen Cycles (15')

Blake Clawson

Inspired by the varied evergreen forests of Washington state where I spent much of my childhood, *Evergreen Cycles* explores the perpetual life cycles of forests, from lushness and stillness to a raging inferno.

The first movement, Cloud Forest, transports listeners to the misty realm of the temperate rainforests on the Olympic Peninsula. Cloud forests are some of the rarest biomes on Earth, and while they are generally tropical, the Olympic National Forest is one of a select few that exists in a temperate region. Sprightly and mystical, this vignette weaves a tapestry of lush moss and verdure, enveloping listeners in the serene embrace of the forest.

In Boreal Winter, the still and solemn character of the music mirrors the austere beauty of a winter landscape. Amid the stillness, light flurries of snow drift down, glinting in the cool winter light. Peace and spaciousness predominate as the bittersweet melodies and spare textures of this movement settle gently, as a blanket of fresh snow.

Phoenix represents the intense cycle of destruction and renewal caused by forest fires. Starting with a spark, the piece builds to a rolling and erratic groove to depict the fiery chaos ravaging the landscape. Building from the ashes, the music then soars with renewed vigor and vitality symbolizing the resilience of the natural world.

The final movement, Roots, is grounded and tranquil, reflecting the enduring strength and regenerative power of the forest's ancient lineage of trees.

PERSONNEL

SoundWorks

Egemen Kesikli, artistic director

Annika Socolofsky, faculty coach

Nicholas Felder, community outreach coordinator

Luka Vezmar, stage manager

Addison Hill, graphic designer

Mantra Percussion

Mantra Percussion, Inc. is a future-focused arts organization committed to a lasting influence on percussion music, developing equitable music communities, fostering high-level musicianship for underserved youth and engaging international audiences by challenging the standard concert format through evening-length events that look toward a grander artistic vision.

Our flagship ensemble, Mantra Percussion, founded in 2009, has been featured around the world and has commissioned/premiered over 70 new works for percussion ensemble. Recap, a quartet of alumni from Mantra Youth Percussion, releases their debut album *Count To Five* on Innova Recordings this Fall. Mantra Youth Percussion, our free tuition youth ensemble has been featured at Carnegie Hall and the New Music Gathering and The Necessary Noise Festival has programmed more than 100 ensembles from around the region.

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.

Clawson 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.

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

Hill's works 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. Hill 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).

Alan Mackwell

Described as “an original composer with new ideas and a command of complex symphonic writing” (BroadStreet Journal), New Zealander-American Alan Mackwell is a two-time BMI award-winning composer and performer based in Boulder. In his work, Mackwell seeks to explore atmospheres inspired by his experiences in the Permian Basin, northern New Mexico and Appalachian North Carolina using a highly resonant and bluegrass-infused musical language.

Leah Porter Tracy

Leah Porter Tracy (she/they) (b. 1999) is a composer and vocalist currently pursuing a Master of Music in composition at the University of Colorado Boulder, where she studies with Annika Socolofsky and Carter Pann. Tracy draws inspiration from the people and places around her, basing her compositions on current events, childhood recollections, vibrant stories, and nature. She has a particular interest in introducing beginner or intermediate singers to contemporary techniques and often writes with a wide range of ability levels in mind. Tracy was a 2023 Composer Fellow for the Choral Arts Initiative PREMIERE|Project Festival and the 2025 Ablaze Composer Lab Emerging Composer with the Ember Choral Arts. Her choral music has been chosen for honors such as the San Francisco Choral Artists New Voices Project and the Chicago A Cappella HerVoice Competition, and her works

have been performed by ensembles including Grammy Award-winning Kansas City Chorale, and by church, school, college and community choirs throughout the United States. Tracy is also an active performer, singing soprano with the Denver-based choir Kantorei. She earned a Bachelor of Music in composition from Bowling Green State University in 2021, where she studied with Elaine Lillios.

Jonah Stern

My name is Jonah Stern and I am a fourth-year composition major. I am a pianist and I get inspired by art, improvisation and collaborating with others.

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 and 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.

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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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