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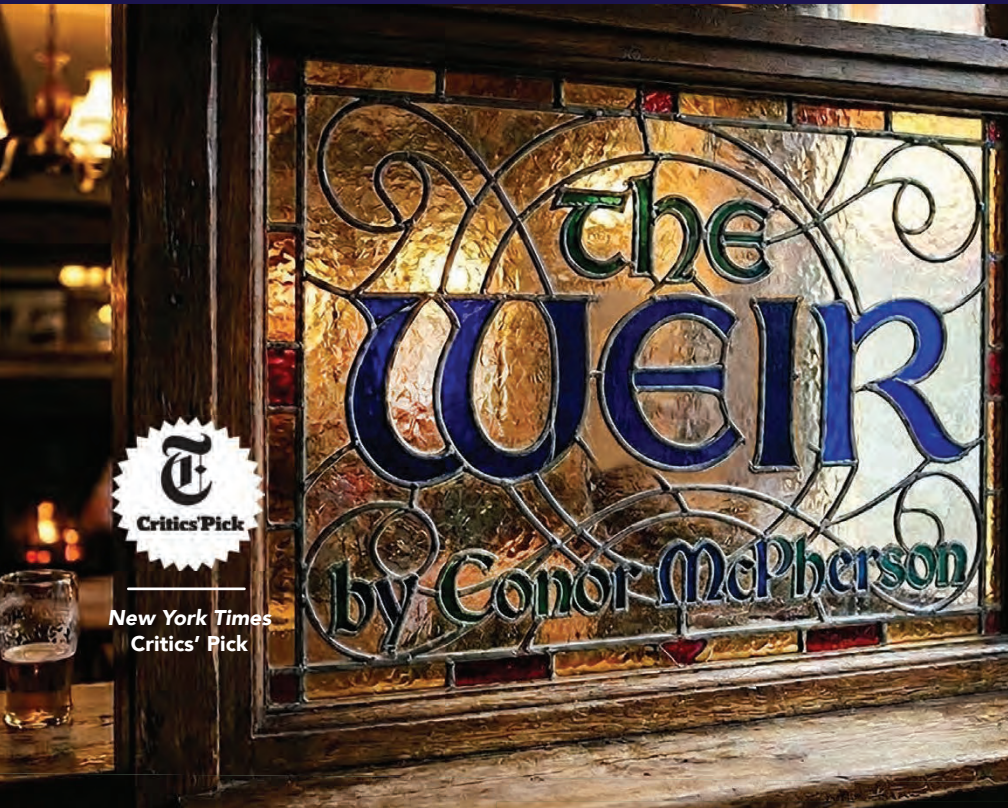
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CU ★ PRESENTS is the home of performing arts on the beautiful University of Colorado Boulder campus. With hundreds of concerts, plays, recitals and more on our stages each year, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

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Polyester

and Pearls

Revisits the Pop Standards of Another Era

By Adam Goldstein

The Great American Songbook isn't inscribed in stone.

What was once musically new is now vintage; what was once the fare of Top 40 radio now has a place in the collective pop culture consciousness. Jeremy Reger and the cast of the upcoming musical revue *Polyester and Pearls* are more than happy to celebrate that changing of the musical guard.

The new, original show—written and arranged by Reger, associate professor of vocal coaching at the CU Boulder College of Music—features music by the pop impresarios of the 1970s, specifically the songwriters behind the era's hits. Burt Bacharach, Jimmy Webb, Laura Nyro, Carole King, the Carpenters and others all figure into the soundtrack of this cabaret show which offers audiences a stage plot partly inspired by the dynamic of the New York City venue 54 Below and the over-the-top, boisterous aesthetic of the era.

"We'll be performing on a cabaret stage in the College of Music's theatre with suggestions of the time period. We'll take the same approach with the costuming," Reger notes. "We're going to take the audience back to an era, one of the *Gong Show* and Carol Burnett."

This setting will help bring the most important element of the show—the music—to life in the proper context, Reger adds. For those who lived through the soundtrack of the '70s, the revue will offer a fresh take on familiar material. For those unfamiliar with the era, the production will serve as a crash course into a

specific chapter in the history of American music—one where songwriters and performers expanded on the folk/rock cues of the 1960s and found a new direction.

That instructive quality isn't just for young audiences, Reger shares. The show also serves as an educational experience for the cast of about 10 performers who are presenting the soundtrack of a specific era.

"We've written this show specifically for our students. In the musical theatre program, we're always trying to think of ways to help students with things they're going to encounter in their professional lives," Reger says, adding that songs like "Moon River," "Say a Little Prayer for You" and "Alfie" could very well be standard tunes for a performer tackling what he calls a "cruise ship revue." "We wanted to open it up and find pieces by all songwriters—women and non-white composers included."

The result is a one-act featuring a live band that will offer audiences and performers alike an important lesson in the shifting topography of what's considered the "classic" era in American songwriting.

"These songs, they're now what we would call the Great American Songbook," Reger says. "That used to be music by the Gershwins and Cole Porter—as time moves on, these take their place. This music is 50 years old now, and they're still such great songs."

*The CU Boulder Musical Theatre Program presents **Polyester and Pearls** Nov. 12-15 in the Music Theatre, Imig Music Building.*



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Artist Series 90th Season

Balances Past Masterworks and Future Innovation



By Adam Goldstein

Tradition has its roots in innovation, especially when it comes to the arts.

In assembling the lineup for the 90th season of CU Presents' Artist Series, Rudy Betancourt wanted to explore that link between established masterworks and the bold reinvention that's always marked great art. For Betancourt, who will begin his second season as the Artist Series director in the fall, that throughline is critical to understanding the history of the concert series as well as its future.

"Across the seven performances this season, we'll experience different performing arts forms—from dance to music to dramatic monologue. We'll be spotlighting music from the Baroque and modern eras, we'll be taking well-established cultural heritage and mixing it with technology. We'll be making it evident that there is an evolving relationship between tradition and innovation."

Adds Betancourt, "This season, we are combining innovation with respect for the past in order to create a new tradition."

Indeed, over nearly 100 years, the Artist Series has mixed the old and new, the cutting edge and the undisputed classics. For its 90th season, Betancourt builds on that foundation, relying partly on the works of Ludwig Van Beethoven as a connecting thread.

The season kicks off with Pinchas Zukerman and Shai Wosner performing Beethoven's violin sonatas. Victor Quijada's dancer-athlete troupe returns in November for a dynamic performance by RUBBERBAND. Mariachi Garibaldi de Jaime Cuéllar and Ballet Folklórico del Río Grande will celebrate the holiday season with *Campana Sobre Campana: Christmas in México!* in December. Australia cirque troupe Circa will unite with pianist Vitaly Starikov to perform Bach's *The Art of Fugue* in time for Valentine's Day 2027.

In March, renowned actor John Malkovich will lead *Roll Over Beethoven*, a theatrical portrait of the late composer from a crucial stage in his life. April will feature a performance from percussion ensemble Third Coast Percussion and Pulitzer Prize-finalist composer/performer/electronic musician Jlin. And the 90th season will wrap with a visit from jazz masters Stanley Clarke and Hiromi celebrating the music of Chick Corea and beyond.

It's a lineup that fuses classical masters, contemporary dance icons and a towering figure from the stage and screen. For Betancourt, these diverse experiences point to a common theme of artistic progress, struggle and reinvention.

"The theme of the season from a high altitude is transformation through artistic reinvention," Betancourt notes, specifically highlighting the reappearance of Beethoven throughout the series. In addition to the season debut—featuring Zukerman, a returning master musician performing the violin sonatas—and *Roll Over Beethoven* which will frame the composer's loss of hearing in a dramatic framework, there are other nods to the late composer woven throughout the season.

Just as Beethoven had to evolve over his creative life—most notably, dealing with the loss of his hearing—the artists featured in the 90th season have drawn from established norms to create new directions. It's a season that offers what it means to make art—discovering and rediscovering the intricate balance between respect for the past and an unyielding commitment to pushing the boundaries of what's next.



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Artist Series

Events 2026-27

8 OCT **Pinchas Zukerman & Shai Wosner**

Beethoven Violin Sonatas

8 NOV **RUBBERBAND**

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18 DEC **Christmas in Mexico!**

Mariachi Garibaldi de Jaime Cuéllar & Ballet Folklórico del Río Grande

13 FEB **J.S. Bach's The Art of Fugue by Circa**

21 MARCH **Roll Over Beethoven with John Malkovich**

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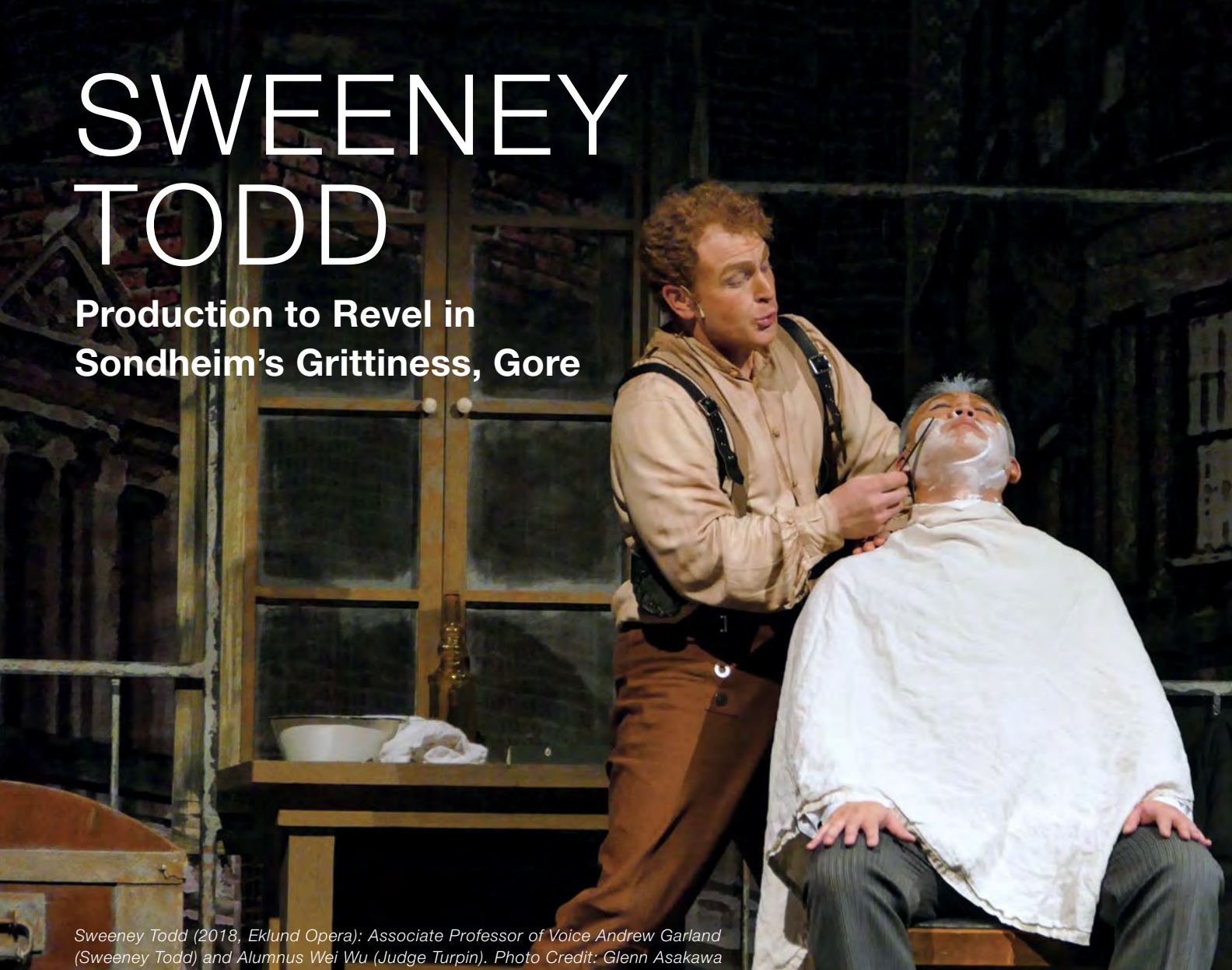


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SWEENEY TODD

**Production to Revel in
Sondheim's Grittiness, Gore**



Sweeney Todd (2018, Eklund Opera): Associate Professor of Voice Andrew Garland (Sweeney Todd) and Alumnus Wei Wu (Judge Turpin). Photo Credit: Glenn Asakawa

By Adam Goldstein

It would be easy to make the antics of the macabre musical *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* cartoonish in terms of its gore and melodrama.

After all, the iconic 1979 musical with words and music by Stephen Sondheim centers on a murderous barber bent on revenge—one who acts as judge, jury and executioner of his victims. The musical, set in 19th-century London, features a title character drawn from Victorian penny dreadfuls who turns his victims into literal fodder for meat pies.

Plenty of directors have made the choice to push the dark drama to almost farcical levels—including Harold Prince who directed the original, 1979 Broadway production. In Prince's conception, characters stepped out of the brutal onstage action of the piece,

offering asides and shifting the dynamic toward the gruesome comedy of caricature.

Associate Teaching Professor of Musical Theatre Robert Westenberg doesn't want to take that approach for the production of *Sweeney Todd* that will run in Macky Auditorium in October. Westenberg, an accomplished performer and educator who's directing the production, is intent on drawing on the gritty reality of the setting, the premise and the characters to find the show's full impact.

"I think the show should stay connected and grounded the entire time. The songs, the scenes, the scope—I think that all needs to be deeply, humanly motivated and entirely believable," Westenberg maintains. "We mean what we say and we say what we do. I love the bloody, macabre, thickness of the plot. The stakes are high and we never step outside of that."

Plenty of artistic experience undergirds Westenberg's creative decisions. His credits speak for themselves—from his Tony Award-nominated role in the original production of *Into the Woods* on Broadway to his stint replacing Mandy Patinkin in the title role of *Sunday In the Park with George*. An impressive roster of national tours, film and television credits also make up his substantial resume.

Now dedicated to teaching, Westenberg is excited to bring his insights to bear on *Sweeney Todd*—a production he calls “a great show for the university level.” With a doubled cast that includes graduate students, Westenberg marvels at the artists he has on hand to bring his vision to life: “That speaks very highly of the College of Music program and the depth of talent here.”

The performers will have the chance to benefit from Westenberg's years of experience on stage and film as well as the insights gleaned from a personal friendship with Stephen Sondheim.

“I worked with Stephen and I got to know him very well,” Westenberg says. “It's going to be fun to bring that inside track to Steve and Steve's mind to the students, to offer perspective on what he thought and what he expected with certain moments and characterizations.

“I think that's going to be a joyful experience,” he adds.

*The CU Boulder Eklund Opera and Musical Theatre programs present **Sweeney Todd** Oct. 23-25 at Macky Auditorium.*

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Opera and Musical Theatre Events 2026-27



23-25 OCT

Music and Lyrics by
Stephen Sondheim
Book by Hugh Wheeler
Macky Auditorium



12-15 NOV

A 1970s Songbook
Music Theatre



5-7 MARCH

Music by
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte
Macky Auditorium



14-18 APRIL

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Dual Anniversaries

Open Artist Series Season

By Henry Michaels

When the stage lights brighten and the expectant pre-concert hush falls over the audience in Macky Auditorium on Oct. 8, it will mark a significant occasion for CU Presents: The opening of the 90th Anniversary of the Artist Series. And just in case one momentous anniversary is not sufficient, this concert actually marks *two*. That's because for organizations around the world, the 2026-2027 season is being dedicated to the bicentennial of Ludwig van Beethoven's death in March 1827.

There are no finer artists with whom to celebrate these dual anniversaries than violinist Pinchas Zukerman and pianist Shai Vosner. Over the course of his more than half-century career, Zukerman has cemented a legacy as one of the world's preeminent musicians. Whether it be as a virtuoso violinist and violist, a devoted pedagogue, a conductor or a recording artist—his more than 100 albums have resulted in an impressive 21 Grammy nominations and two wins—Zukerman is a musician whose reputation precedes him in any venue. He also has a long history with this venue, having performed on the Artist Series in 1978, 1986 and 1994. A fitting choice for this anniversary season!

Zukerman's partner for this performance is Shai Vosner, a pianist who has been lauded by NPR's *All Things Considered* for



Pinchas Zukerman

his "keen musical mind and deep musical soul." An avid recitalist and chamber musician, Vosner performs regularly on stages spanning the globe. His lengthy list of orchestral appearances includes performances with the BBC orchestras, LSO Saint Luke's, the Vienna Philharmonic and the orchestras of Atlanta, Chicago, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Toronto. Particularly noteworthy during this Beethoven bicentennial season are Vosner's chamber arrangements of Beethoven's symphonies which have been performed and recorded by Emanuel Ax, Leonidas Kavakos and Yo-Yo Ma.



Shai Vosner

In honor of the Beethoven bicentennial season, Zukerman's and Vosner's program will feature three violin sonatas by the man himself. Beethoven composed a total of 10 violin sonatas and this concert will feature a symmetrical selection: The First, Fifth and Tenth Sonatas. The Violin Sonata No. 1 in D Major and Violin Sonata No. 5 in F Major, Op. 24—known by the nickname of "Spring"—both date from Beethoven's Early Period, while the Violin Sonata No. 10 in G Major, Op. 96 is widely considered to be the final work of his Middle Period. These three remarkable works are suffused with all the beauty, the drama and the wit that is to be expected from the man who is perhaps classical music's most revered composer.

Pinchas Zukerman and Shai Vosner perform on the Artist Series at Macky Auditorium on Oct. 8.



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Pinchas Zukerman, violin Shai Wosner, piano

Beethoven Violin Sonatas

Oct. 8 2026

Macky Auditorium

Program

Violin Sonata No. 4 in A minor, Op. 23

Violin Sonata No. 5 in F Major,
Op. 24 “Spring”

Intermission

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

About the Performers

Pinchas Zukerman

With a celebrated career encompassing five decades, Pinchas Zukerman reigns as one of today’s most sought after and versatile musicians—violin and viola soloist, conductor and chamber musician. He is renowned as a virtuoso, admired for the expressive lyricism of his playing, singular beauty of tone, and impeccable musicianship, heard throughout his discography of over 100 albums for which he has earned two Grammy® awards and 21 nominations.

In the 2026–2027 season, Zukerman performs with the Berlin Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta, at the Tsinandali Festival under Gianandrea Noseda, and returns to Japan with the Tokyo Philharmonic, Mito Chamber Orchestra and Miyazaki International Music Festival. He also appears with Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Sinfonia Varsovia in Warsaw and Katowice, Palm Beach Symphony under Gerard Schwarz, Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra, Verbier Festival Chamber Orchestra in China, and Athens International Music Festival. Recitals with esteemed pianist Shai Wosner take him to Colorado, Connecticut, North Carolina and New York. A South American tour includes trio performances, master classes and an orchestral appearance at Buenos Aires’ Teatro Colón. Additional highlights include chamber performances with members of the Berlin Philharmonic, concerts celebrating the Israel Philharmonic’s 90th Anniversary, and a performance of Strauss’s *Don Quixote* with Amanda Forsyth and the Sofia Philharmonic.

PINCHAS ZUKERMAN appears by arrangement with **KIRSHBAUM ASSOCIATES**.

SHAI WOSNER appears by arrangement with **OPUS3 ARTISTS**.

Recent highlights include performances with the Vienna Philharmonic in Vienna and Paris, the Belgrade Philharmonic, the Israel Philharmonic with Lahav Shani, Colorado Symphony with Peter Oundjian, Orquestra de València, Euskadiko Orkestra, KG Philharmonic in Seoul, KNN Broadcasting Orchestra in Busan, the Hangzhou Philharmonic and a tour of Japan with the ARK Philharmonic. Chamber highlights included recitals with pianist Shai Vosner in Philadelphia and San Francisco, appearances with the Zukerman Trio across the United States, performances with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and a return to the Rhode Island Philharmonic.

A devoted teacher and champion of young musicians, he has served as chair of the Pinchas Zukerman Performance Program at the Manhattan School of Music for more than 30 years, and has taught at prominent institutions throughout the United Kingdom, Israel, China and Canada, among others. He served as the Dallas Symphony Orchestra's artistic and principal education partner from 2021-2024, collaborating with DSO in partnership with Southern Methodist University's Meadows School of the Arts to provide intensive coaching and tutoring sessions for its music students.

As a mentor he has inspired generations of young musicians who have achieved prominence in performing, teaching, and leading roles with music festivals around the globe. Zukerman has received honorary doctorates from Brown University, Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, and the University of Calgary, as well as the National Medal of Arts from President Ronald Reagan. He is a recipient of the Isaac Stern Award for Artistic Excellence in Classical Music.

Shai Vosner

Pianist Shai Vosner has attracted international recognition for his exceptional artistry, musical integrity, and creative insight. His performances of a broad range of repertoire—from Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert to Ligeti and the music of today—reflect a degree of virtuosity and intellectual curiosity that has made him a favorite among audiences and critics, who note his “keen musical mind and deep musical soul” (NPR's All Things Considered).

Recent and upcoming highlights include recitals and chamber music in Japan; a return to the Utah Symphony; performances of Mason Bates's Piano Concerto in Italy and of Vijay Iyer's Piano Concerto “Handmade Universe,” written for Vosner and ECCO (East Coast Chamber Orchestra), with whom he has

enjoyed a longstanding relationship. The concerto also marks his ongoing collaboration with Iyer, whose piece, *Plinth*, was part of Vosner's multi-composer commissioning project *Variations on a Theme of FDR*. Other performances of note include a program with the JACK Quartet at the newly-reopened Frick Collection in New York, the 3 Brahms Sonatas in Philadelphia and San Francisco, as well as a China tour with Pinchas Zukerman, a U.S. tour with Joshua Bell, and chamber music with the Zukerman Trio.

In recent years, Vosner's arrangements have gained widespread recognition. His chamber versions of various Beethoven Symphonies have been premiered and toured in the U.S. and Europe by Emanuel Ax, Leonidas Kavakos and Yo-Yo Ma and are available in GRAMMY-nominated recordings released by Sony Classical. Vosner also recently toured the U.S. with Martin Fröst and Antoine Tamestit in a program that included many of his own arrangements made especially for the group.

Vosner has appeared with the major North American orchestras of Atlanta, Baltimore, Berkeley, Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Ottawa, San Francisco and Toronto, among others. He has performed abroad with the BBC orchestras, the Barcelona, Bournemouth, and Gothenburg Symphonies, LSO St. Luke's, Staatskapelle Berlin and the Vienna Philharmonic, among others. His acclaimed recordings for Onyx Classics range from Schubert sonatas, to chamber works by Bartók and Kurtág, to concerti by Haydn and Ligeti.

Born in Israel, Vosner studied piano with Opher Brayer and Emanuel Krasovsky, as well as composition, theory, and improvisation with André Hajdu. He later studied with Emanuel Ax at The Juilliard School, where he is now on the piano faculty. He is a recipient of Lincoln Center's Martin E. Segal Award, an Avery Fisher Career Grant, and a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award. For more information on Shai go to shaivosner.com.

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**23-25
OCT** **Macky Auditorium**
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Oct. 24, 7:30 p.m.
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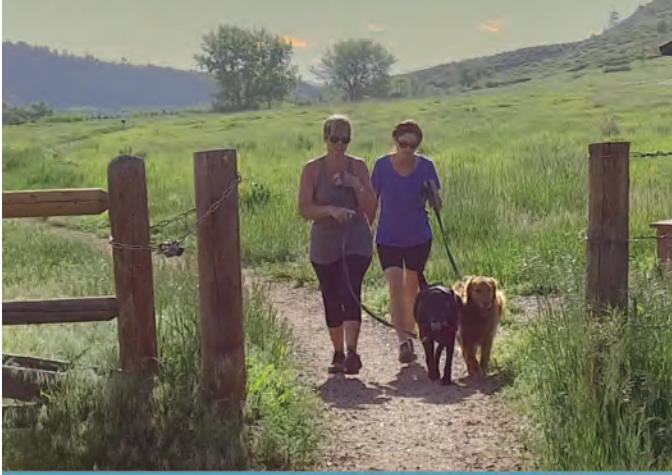
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4-5 Poiesis Quartet
OCT Oct. 4, 4 p.m.
Oct. 5, 7:30 p.m.

1-2 Nov. 1, 4 p.m.
NOV Nov. 2, 7:30 p.m.

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JAN Jan. 11, 7:30 p.m.

28-1 Feb. 28, 4 p.m.
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25-26 April 25, 4 p.m.
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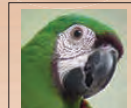


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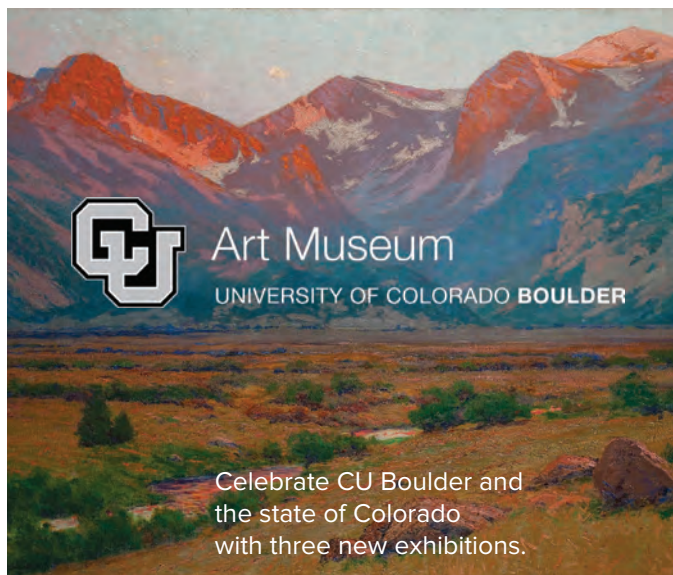
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CU Boulder Professor **Shanti Simon** Views Music As Connection

*By Christie Sounart
Originally published in the Coloradoan*

Last year, Professor of Conducting Shanti Simon joined the College of Music from the University of Oklahoma as director of bands where she oversees the band program, leads the wind conducting program and teaches undergraduate conducting. Previously, she served as flight commander and associate conductor with the United States Air Force Academy Band in Colorado Springs and the United States Air Force Band in Washington, D.C. Her leadership at CU Boulder is guided by music's power to bring people together, an insight she credits to her global travels.

You've traveled the world with the U.S. Air Force Band. What performance is among the most memorable for you?

The Air Force gave me an opportunity to do what I love as a profession and serve my country at the same time. My first performance was memorable because it was my first assignment in Washington, D.C. It was in 2011 for the National Tree Lighting at the White House with the Airmen of Note, one of the best jazz ensembles in the world. As a young trumpet player, I grew up listening to them on cassette tapes. And then, here I was, conducting this group for the president of the United States and the first family at the White House.

But what I think are the most memorable performances I did with the Air Force are the full honors funerals at Arlington National Cemetery. There are bands of all services out there 365 days

a year honoring our fallen heroes. Allowing families a space to feel emotions during a fragile time of their lives is really meaningful. I'll always remember the professionalism and care that was put into those funerals, and what it felt like to be honoring something much bigger than me or the bands.

When deployed to the Middle East, what were your main duties?

I was deployed in 2016 for six months. My job was leading a band for the Air Force Central Command, and I worked closely with the public affairs officer to determine where the band could be most helpful to meet the Air Force commander's priorities. We were stationed in Qatar and went to Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Afghanistan, Kuwait and Egypt.

Before I left, I wondered about the purpose of military bands in the region. It didn't take long for me to understand. The mission was twofold: First, to support the troops and bring a taste of home to the forward operating bases and second, to build relationships with our host nations and allies in the region. Every day, music was able to open doors to conversations and connections between people.

Can you give examples of this?

We would often learn the songs in the native languages of the countries that we were in. We would collaborate with other musicians, sometimes play on radio programs. We were not just representing the Air Force—we were representing the United States in these missions.

When we were at school performances, we knew these interactions with kids could have a long-term impact on how they view the United States. Once, the band was setting up in a cafeteria surrounded by windows. The kids were coming to the windows and looking in. They could not wait to get in. Then they had a wonderful experience singing along and, at the end, the kids came up and hugged the musicians, hugged someone in an American uniform. I looked at those interactions as a chipping away at the negative narrative and replacing it with a positive experience that really only music can do.

Another time, we went to a NATO base in Kabul, Afghanistan, to perform for the troops. One day, we were instructed to go to the Afghan side of the base. To do this, we had to get armored up and travel in an armored vehicle from one side of the base to the other. We set up in a hangar to create an atmosphere where the NATO and Afghan troops could share time together. When we first started the concert, the troops kept to different sides and didn't talk to each other. But by the end of the hour, people had gone to the other side and were having conversations. We gave them a chance to get to know each other as people through music.

Was there something about CU Boulder that inspired you and your family to move to Colorado?

The College of Music has a mission to develop its students as universal musicians. This resonated with me because, after my professional experience with the Air Force bands, I saw a disconnect between what I learned in my studies and what I ended up doing with the Air Force. Now, I want to try to bridge that gap so that we're preparing our students the best we can for the professional jobs that exist beyond CU Boulder.

What else should we know about your work here?

I'm thinking about crafting seamless concert experiences through innovative audience engagement. I want people to come to the concert hall and have something happen in the space that makes them want to come back. I've been exploring all kinds of things, from video to lighting to memorized performances where we take away chairs and stands.

What do you do when you're not conducting?

I have a wonderful husband, Jebodiah, who supports my career and everything I do, and two young kids. A lot of my time and joy is spending time with my family. I still serve in the Oklahoma Air National Guard as a public affairs officer. I also love hiking. I'm really excited that this will be my first full summer in this area.

What else should we know about you?

I love music, I love people and I love the connection that music brings for people. I've really found my place here at CU Boulder, and I plan to spend the rest of my career building on the legacy of this incredible program.



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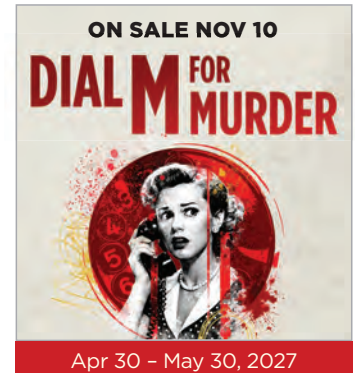
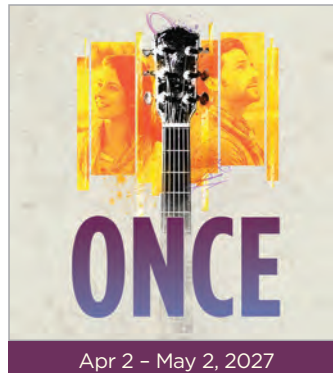
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