

CU ★ PRESENTS

2021-22 Season



College of Music
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

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CU Presents Digital Program

Spring 2022

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AT THE PERFORMANCE

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CU ★ PRESENTS is the home of performing arts at the University of Colorado Boulder.



The mission of the **University of Colorado Boulder College of Music** is to inspire artistry and discovery, together.



The College of Music acknowledges that the university sits upon land within the territories of the Ute, Cheyenne and Arapaho peoples. Further, we acknowledge that 48 contemporary tribal nations are historically tied to Colorado lands.

CU Symphony Orchestra

Gary Lewis, conductor

7:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 26, 2022

Macky Auditorium

Program

Ballade in A minor for Orchestra, Op. 33

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912)

Tzigane

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

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Program notes

Ballade in A minor for Orchestra, Op. 33

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912)

As modern audience members, we often assume that the musical giants from bygone centuries were always revered as they are today. We cannot imagine a time when the composers whose music we grew up with were anything less than household names. There was a time, however, when the music of Johann Sebastian Bach was considered “old-fashioned” and had fallen almost into obscurity. We can thank none other than Felix Mendelssohn for recognizing Bach’s genius and “rescuing” his music from the shadows. Antonín Dvořák might have spent his entire life as an underpaid church organist had it not been for Johannes Brahms to recognize his talent and promote his music. The 21st century has seen the music of several almost-forgotten composers finally beginning to receive the recognition they deserve, among them Clara Schumann, Florence Price and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor.

The child of an African father and British mother, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was born in London in 1875 and raised there by his mother and her family. His parents had never married, and his father, Daniel Taylor, had returned to Sierra Leone prior to Samuel’s birth. Named after the English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Coleridge-Taylor began violin lessons with his maternal grandfather as a young child, and his talent was immediately obvious. He enrolled in the Royal College of Music at the age of 15, where he turned his focus to composition. Although undoubtedly impacted by the racial bias and discrimination suffered by any person of color in late 19th-century London, Coleridge-Taylor’s talent was sufficient to garner him substantial support within the music community, and by age 21 he had already begun to make a name for himself as a gifted composer. His reputation was further enhanced when Sir Edward Elgar recommended the 23-year-old to the leaders of the Three Choirs Festival, a major European choral festival, who were commissioning a new orchestral work for their 1898 concert series. Elgar wrote that Coleridge-Taylor was “far and away the cleverest fellow going amongst all the young men,” and in September of that year, the premiere of Coleridge-Taylor’s Ballade in A Minor was extremely well received.

A mere two months later the premiere of his cantata, *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*, solidified his reputation as a composer of the first rank, as that work gained enormous popularity, becoming one of the most often-performed works for chorus and orchestra, rivaled only by Handel's *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. Coleridge-Taylor's interest in African music led to comparisons with Brahms and Dvořák, each of whom had incorporated folk music into their works. His fame brought him to the United States three times, where President Theodore Roosevelt received him at the White House. In Washington, D.C., a 200-voice African-American chorus was founded, calling themselves the Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Society, and public schools in Kentucky and Maryland were also named after him. Had he not died prematurely at the age of 37, there is little doubt that his name and music would be not only remembered, but revered to this day.

The Ballade in A Minor opens with a dramatic flourish designed to get your attention. A blast from the timpani, trilling flutes and unison strings introduce a swaggering theme in the woodwinds, who are joined in short order by the whole orchestra in a fierce, declamatory opening. This muscular music eventually transitions to a second, equally well-crafted, tender theme. A cinematic love song, this ballad is wildly passionate and equally as attention-grabbing as the opening theme. The work continues, vacillating between these two disparate moods, culminating in a full-throated rendition of the love theme by the whole orchestra. A splashy return to the dramatic opening music leaves no doubt that the 23-year-old composer of this supremely confident, youthful piece was proudly announcing himself to the world. 125 years later, the world is once again, finally taking notice. —*Program note by Betsy Hundson Traba*

Tzigane

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Ravel was in a rut. As of early 1924 he hadn't produced a new composition in a year. His current project, a sonata for violin and piano, was crawling along. But there was a solution to his paralysis. Two years earlier he had attended a private recital in England, in which the Hungarian violinist Jelly d'Arányi performed Béla Bartók's First Violin Sonata with the composer at the piano. Intrigued by both piece and performer, Ravel asked d'Arányi to play Gypsy

pieces for him, which she did well into the wee hours.

A painstakingly slow writer as a rule, Ravel could zip right along when the spirit moved him. In April 1924 he became so moved and produced *Tzigane* (Gypsy) for d'Arányi in just a few days, barely in time for the scheduled April 26 premiere. Fortunately, d'Arányi was a quick study, and the performance was a rousing success. Ravel's original version was for violin and piano with optional luthéal, an attachment that could produce sounds remarkably like the Hungarian cimbalon. That one's a curiosity, but both the non-luthéal violin and piano original and violin and the later orchestra version are beloved repertory staples.

There were some who wondered *Tzigane* might be satirical, given its spot-on evocation of virtuoso gypsy salon pieces from Liszt, Joachim, Hubay, and the like. Others took aim at what they heard as artificiality. But Ravel meant every note of the dazzling virtuoso pastiche. “Doesn’t it ever occur to these people that I can be ‘artificial’ by nature?” he replied.

—*Program note by Scott Foglesong*

On the Bridge of the Eternal (2020)

Christopher Theofanidis (b. 1967)

It seems like a lifetime ago that Dan Kellogg called me to ask if I would write a work for the centennial anniversary celebrations for CU Boulder's College of Music. Back then, one of the things that really drew me to be involved was that I was so impressed by the creative energy of the school, and I had many friends here—Dan, Carter Pann, Michael Theodore, Jeff Nytsch, Christina Jennings, Matt Dane, and more recently the incomparable Nicolò Spera and Annika Socolofsky, among others.

Of course, things took a dramatic turn, and so did the original intent of the music. What started as a direct and joyous musical impulse evolved into something with a more dramatic and self-reflective tone, with many contemplative silences and corners for introspection.

Most of the composers I know claim that their sense of time has changed in some pronounced ways during the pandemic, and that certainly has been the case for me. Among other things, I have started to trust more in longer term pacing and been able to introduce a new patience in the unfolding of sound. The idea of the mystery of time and meaning started to take root in this work—a questioning of a sense of the eternal.

This focus was furthered by my consideration of a text by St. Augustine, from his *Confessions* (trans. Henry Chadwick, used by permission):

IN THE ETERNAL

O Lord, a long time is only long because it is made of many successive moments which cannot be extended.
In the eternal nothing is transient but the whole is present.
All past time is driven backwards by the future,
All future time is consequent of the past.
All past and future are created and set on their course by
That which is always present.

Who will lay hold of the human heart to make it still,
So that it can see how eternity in which there is neither past nor future
Stands still, O Lord?

On the Bridge of the Eternal is just under 20 minutes in duration. The title comes from my girlfriend, the poet Melissa Studdard, who is my partner in discovery, and the journey.

—Program note by Christopher Theofanidis

Petrushka: A Burlesque in Four Scenes (1947 version)

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

With the premiere of *The Firebird* in 1910, Igor Stravinsky became an instant household name. After *The Firebird*'s stunning success, Serge Diaghilev, the impresario of the Ballets Russes, lost no time in commissioning a second ballet from Stravinsky. Stravinsky was writing a piano concerto at the time, but when Diaghilev heard it, he immediately realized its potential as a theatrical piece, and encouraged Stravinsky to rework it into a ballet.

The character of Petrushka (also known as Punch, Pulcinella or Polichinelle) dates from the 16th-century Italian Commedia dell'arte. In Stravinsky's version, Petrushka is a figure of pathos and pity, the eternal outsider whose vain attempts to gain acceptance arouse both compassion and contempt. The primitive edginess of Stravinsky's music captures the elemental nature of the story and its characters, who represent human emotions in their most raw form: Petrushka, the despised pariah yearning for love; the Ballerina, an unattainable emblem of beauty and desirability; and the ill-mannered Moor, who epitomizes all the base, loutish aspects of the human psyche.

The first of *Petrushka*'s four scenes opens with the hectic bustle of the Shrovetide Fair, a pre-Lenten carnival in 1830s St. Petersburg. A flute summons people to the colorful street party. Two buskers vie for the crowd's attention (flutes and clarinets, accompanied by triangle). A drum signals the entrance of the Magician, who introduces the three characters of his puppet theatre: Petrushka (a pathetic clown), the Ballerina and the Moor. The Magician, who has imbued the three with quasi-human emotions, makes them perform a lively Russian dance.

In the second scene, the Magician kicks Petrushka into a cramped cell after the show. The room contains a portrait of the Magician, an ever-present reminder of Petrushka's oppression. Petrushka sobs (bassoon) and rages (full orchestra led by piercing trumpet). The Ballerina joins him (duet for woodwinds and piano), and Petrushka expresses his love for her; she is disgusted by his piteousness and departs. Furious at the Magician, Petrushka kicks a hole in the wall. This scene also features the first appearance of the famous "Petrushka

chord,” which sounds periodically throughout. A combination of two highly dissonant keys, we hear it first played by pairs of clarinets, which sound like the raucous, unmelodic blaring of a car horn.

In the third scene we find the Moor, a splendid brute, in his own cell. Blaring low brasses and grumbled piano arpeggios accompany his banal ditty (clarinet, bass clarinet, and English horn). The Moor’s animalistic vulgarity attracts the Ballerina (trumpet), and the two dance an odd, uneven Viennese waltz (cornet, flutes, and harps). Petrushka enters, objecting (muted trombone), and all three puppets quarrel. In the melee, the Ballerina faints and the Moor shoves Petrushka out.

The final scene returns to the commotion of the fair at evening. Like a film director, Stravinsky uses his music to zoom in on specific points of action within the larger hubbub. Two nursemaids dance to a cheerful folksong (oboe, followed by horn and flutes). A peasant (clarinet) leads a chained bear (tuba) into the crowd. The lumbering dance of the bear and its owner fade into the distance as two Gypsy girls cavort with a drunken vendor. Several grooms and coachmen enter with a foot-stomping dance, which mingles with the nursemaids’ music. The frenzy increases as mummers in devilish animal masks weave in and out amongst the crowd. Suddenly Petrushka cries out, pursued by the Moor, who slays him with a scimitar (dropped tambourine). Flute and piccolo sound Petrushka’s dying whimpers, while a policeman summons the Magician, who arrives, picks up Petrushka’s corpse, and shakes it at the crowd to show he was merely a sawdust puppet. The crowd disappears, but Petrushka’s defiant voice (trumpets) rises once more. In the ballet, Petrushka’s ghost appears onstage, thumbing his nose at the frightened Magician, who flees in terror.

Petrushka premiered on June 13, 1911, at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris. Pierre Monteux conducted, and Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes danced to choreography by Michel Fokine, set and costume design by Alexandre Benois, and Vaclav Nijinsky dancing the title role. A friend of Stravinsky’s, Nikolai Myaskovsky, opened his review of the work by posing the question, “Is Stravinsky’s *Petrushka* a work of art?” He continued, “I don’t know. Can

one call life a work of art? That very life that roars all around us, that calls forth our wrath and our joy, that weeps, that rages, that flows in a swift, broad current? For *Petrushka* is life itself. All the music in it is full of such energy, such freshness and wit, such healthy, incorruptible merriment, such reckless abandon, that all its deliberate banalities and trivialities, its constant background of accordions not only fail to repel but, quite the contrary, carry us away all the more ... The music of this extraordinary ballet has such integrity, energy, and such inexhaustible humor, that one positively loses all desire to attempt a more detailed analysis—it would be like a vivisection."

—Program note by *Elizabeth Schwartz*

Personnel

Gary Lewis, conductor

Anita Dumar, violin

Violinist Anita Dumar has enjoyed an active career as a soloist, chamber musician, competitor and music educator with a strong passion for diversity in the arts. Upon the completion of her bachelor's degree at the University of Michigan where she studied under Professor Danielle Belen, Dumar was presented with the Willis Patterson Diversity Award for her contribution to the development of a more culturally and ethnically diverse community at U of M's School of Music, Theatre & Dance. Formerly a member of the prize-winning Ivalas Quartet, she is a recent graduate of the Quartet in Residence program at the University of Colorado Boulder, where she studied under the world renowned Takács Quartet. Dumar plays on a 1900 Bailley violin provided by a scholarship grant from the Virtu Foundation.

Christopher Theofanidis, guest composer

Christopher Theofanidis' music has been performed by many of the world's leading performing arts organizations, from the London Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, and New York Philharmonic to the San Francisco Opera, the Houston Grand Opera and the American Ballet Theatre. He is a two-time Grammy nominee for best composition, and his Viola Concerto, recorded with David Alan Miller and the Albany Symphony with Richard O'Neill soloist, recently won the 2021 Grammy for Best Instrumental Solo. Theofanidis' work *Rainbow Body* is one of the most performed works in recent decades, having been performed by more than 150 orchestras worldwide. Theofanidis is currently on the faculties of Yale University and the Aspen Music Festival, and has taught at the Juilliard School and the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University.

Symphony Orchestra

Violin

Greg Abrell
Ingrid Anderson
Payton Andrews
Dmitri Ascarrunz
Victor Avila-Luvsangenden
Seth Bixler +
Laena Batchelder
Alan Chan
Jordan Grantonic
Larina Gray
Veda Hingert-McDonald
Alisa Johnson
Hannah Kennedy *
Zhiqi Liu
Anna Lugbill
Soria Nguyen
Lucy Rissman
Rosalee Walsh
Inga Well-Off-Man
George Willis
Jonathon Winter
Joy Yamaguchi

Viola

Finn Cruit
Aaron Lockhart
Elizabeth Macintosh
Daniel Moore +
Emma Reynolds
Ashley Santore

Andy Sprinkle

Gina Stonikas
Regina Vendetti

Cello

Ethan Blake
Nicole Chung +
Alex Engelhardt
Peyton Magalhaes
Louis Saxton
Sophie Stubbs
Eric Vasquez
Matthew Wiest

Double Bass

Victoria Bakewell
Justine Barrera
Maeve Celedon
Isaiah Holt
Kurt Melendy +
Jake Thurston

Flute

Rachelle Crowell
Lauren Flaten
Madison Hardick
Andrea Kloehn
Yuna Langehennig

Oboe

Sophie Oehlers
Taysia Petersen
Lisa Read

Clarinet

Charles Burnside
Carson Conley
Gracie Lime

Kristen Pierri
Gleyton Pinto
Julian Ruiz

Bassoon

Tony Federico
Isabel Goodwin
J.T. Holdbrooks
Madison Triplett
Jacob Webb

Horn

Dilon Bryan
Kira Goya
Maria Long
Annika Ross
Michael Sgrecci
Olivia Walt
Ethan Watson

Trumpet

Christopher Boulais
Noah Mennenga
Isaac Ponce
Urbina
Michael Winkler

Trombone

Sebastian Alvarez
Riley Bahin
Jack Holoman
Daniel Orthel

Tuba

Braeden Held

Percussion

Todd Bills
Christian De La Torre
Chris Eagles
Griffin Klapp

Harp

Shelby Roberts

Celesta

Ashley Civelli

* concertmaster
+ principal

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