

# COLLEGE OF MUSIC

2024-25



CU ★ PRESENTS



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The University of Colorado Boulder, Colorado's flagship university, honors and recognizes the many contributions of Indigenous peoples in our state. CU Boulder acknowledges that it is located on the traditional territories and ancestral homelands of the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Ute and many other Native American nations. Their forced removal from these territories has caused devastating and lasting impacts. While the University of Colorado Boulder can never undo or rectify the devastation wrought on Indigenous peoples, we commit to improving and enhancing engagement with Indigenous peoples and issues locally and globally.

# SoundWorks

Featuring Renova New Music Ensemble

7:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 19, 2025

Grusin Music Hall

## PROGRAM

### Willard Dorm Tales of Arrival

Sydney Notter

*Aimee Kennedy, soprano*

*Tony Adams, clarinet*

*Luke Meredith, trombone*

*Willem Rohwer, bass*

*Eli Knievel, piano*

*Connor Stitzel, percussion*

### Salt Marsh

Asher Dobrin

I. Water

II. Crabs

III. Grass

IV. Birds

*Corva Graham, piccolo*

*Natalie Highfield, C flute*

*Nova Rognerud, alto flute*

*Aria Henson, bass flute*

### sing to us, cedars

Leah Porter Tracy

*Renova New Music Ensemble*

## **Soleil d'Automne**

Glenda Luck

*Renova New Music Ensemble*

*Andrew Thomas Wilder, classical guitar*

## **where to count the stars**

JC Maynard

*Renova New Music Ensemble*

*Aric Vyhmeister, piano*

## **Intermission**

## **While I Breathe**

Josie Arnett

*Kate Fornshell, cello*

*Bb Seidenberg, violin*

*Josie Arnett, piano*

## **On Seven Paintings of Caspar David Friedrich**

JC Maynard

- I. Nebelschwaden
- II. Bellfrost
- III. On the Sailing Boat
- IV. Monastery Graveyard
- V. Meadow Race
- VI. Two Men by the Sea
- VII. Wanderer

*Anastasiia Pavlenko, piano*

# PROGRAM NOTES

## Willard Dorm Tales of Arrival

Sydney Notter

*Willard Dorm* came about from simply choosing friends I wanted to write for, then figuring it out from the instrumentation. These are all people from my dorm (Willard Hall) so I based the “storyline” off some of our shared experiences here. The three movements tell 3 short stories from the start of the school year: our friend Willam losing his buff card and climbing into the dorm through a window, staying up late and having fun as a group, and shared language patterns that evolve in the dorm.

## Salt Marsh

Asher Dobrin

*Salt Marsh* tells the story of its namesake. Specifically, salt marshes in the St. Johns and Apalachicola River tributaries. The salt marsh is a unique, ancient ecosystem that has witnessed many creatures, cultures and people. As one of the oldest, most biodiverse and climate diverse biomes in the world, many florae and faunae have called this place home for the lifetime of their species. Each movement of the piece represents a keystone part of the salt marsh that inspired character, harmony, and melodic shape. Visual art accompaniment by Oona Fojtik.

## sing to us, cedars

Leah Tracy

In the early months of the pandemic, my closest friend and I would meet at a park to walk the trails through the woods, sometimes for hours. During that time, this ritual was the only thing that kept me from feeling completely hopeless. I wrote *sing to us, cedars* for 10-part choir around the one-year anniversary of the initial COVID-19 lockdown as a way to process and respond to the complicated feelings I had about the previous year. A setting of *The Birds' Lullaby* by poet Emily Pauline Johnson, *sing to us, cedars* aims to capture the complexities of experiencing moments of comfort in an overwhelmingly dark and uncertain time. It is inspired by the moments of respite I experienced while walking in nature with someone I love.

### sing to us, cedars

Poem by Emily Pauline Johnson

I

Sing to us, cedars; the twilight is creeping  
With shadowy garments, the wilderness through;  
All day we have carolled, and now would be sleeping,  
So echo the anthems we warbled to you;  
While we swing, swing,  
And your branches sing,  
And we drowse to your dreamy whispering.

II

Sing to us, cedars; the night-wind is sighing,  
Is wooing, is pleading, to hear you reply;  
And here in your arms we are restfully lying,  
And longing to dream to your soft lullaby;  
While we swing, swing,  
And your branches sing.  
And we drowse to your dreamy whispering.

III  
Sing to us, cedars; your voice is so lowly,  
Your breathing so fragrant, your branches so strong;  
Our little nest-cradles are swaying so slowly,  
While zephyrs are breathing their slumberous song.  
And we swing, swing,  
While your branches sing,  
And we drowse to your dreamy whispering.

## Soleil d'Automne

Glenda Luck

I composed this piece with the intention of embodying the essence of autumn, reflecting on the beauty and transience of nature during this season of change. *Soleil d'automne*, the “autumn sun” and *les fleurs du champs*, “the flowers of the field” highlight the interplay between light and the natural elements, portraying a serene yet poignant scene. The imagery suggests a time of transformation, as flowers *baissent leur têtes*, “lower their heads,” evoking a sense of introspection and surrender to the changing season, showcasing the natural beauty and transience of life.

The line *Le vent emmène nos pétales au loins, l'un après l'autre*, “The wind carries our petals far away, one after the other” speaks to the theme of loss and impermanence. Petals being carried away symbolize the delicacy of fleeting moments and the passage of time—a reminder that beauty is often temporary and must be cherished. The second stanza expands on the seasonal transition by focusing on the leaves falling from the trees. This moment is described as *se pose là en prière*, “settling themselves there in prayer,” a sense of reverence and acceptance. It suggests that the falling leaves, while they may signify endings, contribute to the cycle of life and rebirth. You are invited to reflect on the beauty inherent in change, encouraging a deep appreciation for nature’s cycles. The personification of the flowers and leaves imbues them with a sense of grace, prompting contemplation of one’s personal place within the larger tapestry of life.

The original version of this piece was a deeply personal art song I wrote and sung on my classical guitar, sitting in a field, under a late afternoon September sun, among the trees, the birds, and the bugs. It is not meant to be ABOUT Autumn. It is meant to BE Autumn. After having lived in the French speaking country of Senegal and years later while in the midst of further French studies back in the U.S. I began thinking and writing in French, as one does as they become more intimate with a language. I find French to be a particularly beautiful and melodic language, suited for conveying the delicate emotions that this piece embodies.

Having transformed this art song into a choral piece has been deeply satisfying to me. It celebrates the beauty of shared voices, creating a communal experience of the music. The gentle whistling and delicate guitar accompaniment enhance the piece's intimacy, tying it back to its original, personal feeling and grounding it in nature. The combination of lyrical harmonies, gentle guitar, and whistling creates an immersive atmosphere that captures both the haunting beauty and intimacy of the autumn season. These elements encourage a deep sense of calm and connection to the environment while inviting listeners to reflect on their own experiences.

## Soleil d'automne

Poem by Glenda Luck

Soleil d'automne,  
regarde les fleurs du champs,  
comment il baissent leur têtes.  
Le vent emmène nos pétales au loins,  
l'un après l'autre.

Soleil d'automne,  
brillant à travers les branches des arbres  
tandis que les feuilles tombent  
du ciel à la terre,  
se pose là en prière.

## English Translation

Translated by Glenda Luck

Autumn sun,  
Watch the flowers of the field,  
how they lower their heads.  
The wind carries our petals far away,  
one after the other.

Autumn sun,  
shining through the branches of the trees,  
while the leaves fall,  
from the sky to the earth,  
settling themselves there in prayer.

## where to count the stars

JC Maynard

*where to count the stars* expresses an earnest desire to find peace among a turbulent world increasingly disconnected from nature. Inspired in equal parts by a starry 2014 night that Maynard walked the beach of North Carolina's Cape Lookout shore and by a quote from Carl Sagan's *Pale Blue Dot*, this piece seeks to capture the indescribable awe felt when appreciating the universe in its full grandeur and vastness. In an age of nearly inescapable light pollution, few take the time to look upwards into the heavens to consider our individual smallness among it all. *where to count the stars* takes time to dwell in that feeling, allowing intentionally sparse piano accompaniment to draw us into the cold and distant cosmos. The piece can be seen as a plea for help—for a hand to guide us to a place of calm in a moment when we think it may not exist anymore. When we arrive under the stars and see them “strewn as salt” over the firmament, the music modulates, taking us to “that far, far land.” The initial unsettling sensation turns to a grounded sigh of relief as the starlight makes us feel at home, returning to C major. Still, doubt that peace can be found lingers. The voices leave the piano to wander alone as our gaze turns inward, almost fearful

of just how small we truly are. The repeated phrase “so small,” begins as a quiet thought tugging at us in our lowest moments. Slowly, our gaze returns upward, and the repeated phrase turns into a cry of awe, pain, wonder, inadequacy and hope all wrapped into one. Our racing heart settles, basking in the quiet, faint light of stars.

Text by JC Maynard

show me where to count the stars,  
take my trembling hand,  
and show me that far, far land,  
see them strewn as salt upon a glass dome,  
softly lighting the way back home,  
show me where to count the stars,  
where naught but waves grace the shore,  
tell me, is there such a place anymore?  
so small, so small,  
so small among it all.

## **On Seven Paintings of Caspar David Friedrich**

JC Maynard

### **I. Nebelschwaden (c.1818-1820)**

The suite opens with a bleak, lonely statement that reflects the cold solitude of the morning fog. In Nebelschwaden, a wispy, melancholic texture paints a picture of this contemplative scene, taking time to develop its dorian sonorities. As an introduction, Movement I introduces the harmonic language of the suite and foreshadows material to come in Movements IV and VII. This is the start of the hero’s journey at a moment of rest before the grand adventure begins.

## II. Bellfrost (Winter Landscape, 1811)

Movement II, inspired by Friedrich's *Winter Landscape* begins with the main motif of the suite—a triumphant chorus of striking, frosted church bells. This theme is corrupted by the shadowy mist surrounding the snow-covered scene, utilizing minor ninths to evoke feelings of unrest. Bellfrost is the darker “twin” to Movement V, between the two of which several motifs are shared. The church bell theme was the first material composed in this suite, and the enticing use of both G-flat and G natural helped craft the textural fingerprint of all seven movements.

## III. On the Sailing Boat (1819)

*On the Sailing Boat* is the love theme of the piano suite. Meant to evoke the gently rolling waves, the rich harmonies convey a sentiment of warmth and passion, inspired in part by the soundscape of jazz ballads by the likes of Erroll Garner. This romantic scene journeys through various textures, from the briskly blowing breeze, to the soft serenity of the morning sea. This movement shares motivic elements of the ocean with its counterpart, Movement VI. It concludes with a heartfelt outpouring of love and vulnerability, taking its time to bask in the final chords—the golden light of sunrise.

## IV. Monastery Graveyard (c.1819)

Monastery Graveyard is a cold, foreboding and barren movement that serves as a compliment to the opening *Nebelshwaden*. The grays and blues of Friedrich's painting seep into the unnerving sonorities of the music, creating unsettling space and loneliness. A moment of brief escape arrives, as a single ray of sunlight is able to penetrate the brooding clouds before returning to dreary overcast.

## V. Meadow Race (Mountainous Landscape, c.1830)

In a most dramatic contrast, Movement V—inspired by Friedrich's *Mountainous Landscape*—opens with a wild frenzy of F lydian reminiscent of the joy felt running through a wide open mountain meadow. As children laughing and rolling down hills, this piece utilizes playful, asymmetric meter

to evoke a sense of carefree fun, free of all worry. The movement thunders, dances, and tumbles around until falling into an aleatoric flurry as we collapse to the grassy ground to catch a breath.

## VI. Two Men by the Sea (1817)

*Two Men by the Sea* is centered on the idea of parallel or mirrored intervals to reflect the symmetry of Friedrich's painting. In the opening of the piece, the notes and chords in each hand are literal reflections of each other over the D natural axis, symbolizing the two men overlooking the ocean. The symmetry slowly breaks apart as it gives way to ebbing and flowing sonic imagery reminiscent of the waves in Movement III, this movement's complement in the suite. The pentatonic language of this piece evokes a romantic era sound, culminating in a joyous chorus that voyages toward the vast horizon.

## VII. Wanderer (Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog, 1818)

The final movement—inspired by Friedrich's most famous painting, *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog*—serves as both a medley of the previous six movements and a portrayal of adventure. A fitting work to set for the finale, this painting's mystery and majesty lend itself beautifully to similarly nuanced musical material. Beginning first with the uncertainty of what is to come, the human desire to explore and overcome new dangers is manifested in the arrival of a triumphant chorus, rising to the mountaintop above the sea of fog—a mist below which we began in the first movement. The motivic references to previous movements represent the journey on which this suite has embarked and now completed. Wanderer comes full circle in this way, marking the conclusion of this grand adventure through the beautiful, dynamic and powerful paintings of Casper David Friedrich.

# PERSONNEL

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Nicholas Felder, community outreach coordinator

Gracie Fagan, social media coordinator

Keenan Powell, stage manager

## Josie Arnett

Josie Arnett is a composer, pianist, singer and overall instrument enthusiast. She grew up playing a variety of instruments including piano, upright and electric bass, ukulele, banjo, cello, guitar and any other instrument she could get her hands on. Arnett started piano lessons at a young age and grew up playing the music of Bruce Hornsby, Billy Joel, The Beatles and countless pop and rock songs. As a composer, she has been inspired by film music, minimalism, jazz and rock. She is currently based in Boulder, where she is pursuing a bachelor's degree in music composition with a certificate in music theory at the University of Colorado Boulder. She has written for a variety of ensembles and has performed as a pianist and singer around the Boulder area, worked with local choirs and schools, and teaches private piano lessons. Arnett's music often centers around the emotional gesture of the music in order to encourage the audience to connect with the music on an emotional level, and frequently integrates elements of psychology, visual art, film and nature into her music.

## Asher Dobrin

Asher Dobrin (b. 2004) is a composer from Gainesville, Florida. He is pursuing a bachelor's degree in music composition at the University of Colorado Boulder. Before moving to Boulder, he worked as an independent composer and performer in the Gainesville and Denver areas. Dobrin's compositions are primarily inspired by nature and American folk culture. He has written works for chamber ensemble, film score, orchestra, concert band and electronics.

## **Oona Fojtik**

Oona Fojtik (b. 2004) is a graphic designer and multi-media artist from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She is currently attending Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York, pursuing a bachelor's degree in communication design with an emphasis in graphic design. Dividing her time between Brooklyn, Philadelphia and Yosemite, she explores materiality through art and design with interests in motion graphics and book design.

## **Glenda Luck**

In the relentless pace of modern life, Glenda Luck's music creates a sanctuary for you—an intimate invitation to pause, breathe and reconnect with the emotions and stories that celebrate your humanity. Rooted in a deep bond with nature, inspired by a childhood spent dancing barefoot through the forest in upstate New York, her compositions offer you a moment of warmth and stillness, a chance for transformation and meaning. With eclectic influences ranging from the haunting beauty of Russian melodies to the vibrant, earthy rhythms of Miriam Makeba, Luck brings you a unique voice in classical music—one that speaks directly to your heart. This music invites you to feel your own authenticity. It draws you into an intimate community of shared experience, offering a powerful connection that transcends time and place. In a world where genuine connection often feels lost, Luck's compositions compel us to remember who we are. Through refined craftsmanship and curated orchestrations, she will enrapture you with an honesty that will inspire you to clarity, and introspection. The experience of losing yourself in this music, is a journey for you to reclaim the beauty and meaning woven into every moment of your life.

## **Joshua Carter (JC) Maynard**

Joshua Carter (JC) Maynard is a composer and conductor from Colorado Springs, who specializes in bringing passion for choral and chamber music to a new generation of musicians. Currently studying composition at CU Boulder, Maynard never allows himself to be confined to one artistic box—instead, blending genres and disparate sources of inspiration in all his works. He was recently named ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award Semi-Finalist and Orpheus Chamber Singers Competition Second

Place Finalist. In addition to composing for mediums like choir and orchestra to electronics and jazz combos, Maynard is the founder and president of the Renova New Music Ensemble—CU Boulder’s premier contemporary choral group. Prioritizing collaboration and musician ownership in all his projects, Maynard has conducted and had pieces commissioned by groups such as the Colorado Vocal Arts Ensemble, the University of Wyoming Bel Canto Choir, the Colorado Springs Philharmonic, the CU Boulder Chamber Singers, Lírios String Quartet, the Denver Playground Ensemble, the Eklund Opera and more. Maynard also has experience as a producer and recording technician, an audio editor and mixing engineer, a private lesson instructor, a musical theater performer, and an ensemble administrator.

## **Sydney Notter**

Sydney Notter is a freshman composition major at the University of Colorado Boulder who enjoys exploring storytelling through her music. She continues to expand the instrumentation she works with but loves writing for band.

## **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. 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 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. 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, and with CU Boulder’s contemporary music choir, Renova. She earned a Bachelor of Music in composition from Bowling Green State University in 2021, where she studied with Elaine Lillios.

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