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Photo credit: Owen Zhou.

SoundWorks

Featuring the Boulder Altitude Directive
and Renova New Music Ensemble
Wednesday, Nov. 6, 2025, 7:30 p.m.
Grusin Music Hall

PROGRAM

The Lottery

Leah Porter Tracy

Boulder Altitude Directive: Carter Pann, director

Renova New Music Ensemble: Blake Clawson, music director

Missa Caelestis Regalis

Avanka Perera

Renova New Music Ensemble: Avanka Perera, conductor

Abiquiu Ruins

Alan Mackwell

Joel Ferst, soprano saxophone

Vignettes Under a Summer Sky

Aric Vyhmeister

I. Waverider

II. On an August Evening

III. Phantom River

IV. Zig Zag

Joel Ferst, saxophone

Grace Stringfellow, oboe

John Petefish, bass clarinet

Juan Tovar, clarinet

Sam Macken, bassoon

PROGRAM NOTES

The Lottery

Leah Porter Tracy

In 1948, American author Shirley Jackson's short story "The Lottery" was published in *The New Yorker*. "The Lottery" told the story of a fictional small town whose annual tradition was meant to ensure good harvest, but as the story unfolds, we realize that the ritual is not as it seems.

At the time of its publication, this story prompted more than 300 letters from readers, some angry and some mystified by the work. Jackson responded publicly: "Explaining just what I had hoped the story to say is very difficult. I suppose I hoped, by setting a particularly brutal ancient rite in the present and in my own village, to shock the story's readers with a graphic dramatization of the pointless violence and general inhumanity in their own lives."

I read this story for the first time when I was around 11 years old, and it's one that I return to over and over again. Though the story is now over 70 years old, its warning still rings true: At what point do we stop harming each other for the sake of doing things the way they've "always been done?"

*Text inspired by Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery" (1948),
used under fair use for educational presentation.*

Dewy grass flattened by little feet,
Sprawling strings of green, the corn, the wheat,
The summer heat
Set the perfect scene for our town lottery.

The saying goes, "Lottery in June, corn be heavy soon,"
The land will be fertile with our offering before high noon.

Seems like there's no time at all between lotteries anymore.
Seems like we got through with the last one only this week.
And yet, here we are, gathered in the square
While children harvest their smooth stones
Waiting for the lottery to begin.

Mr. Summers, have you brought your black box,
And your three-legged stool,
And your boisterous voice?
We'd like to be home
In time for noon lunch.

"Have you heard?
They do say that over in the north village
They're talking of giving up their lottery.
Did you know?
Have you heard
that some villages have already quit their lotteries?"

“Pack of crazy fools!
Listening to young folks,
Nothing’s ever good enough for them.
Next thing you know,
They’ll be wanting to go back to living in caves.
There used to be a saying that goes:
‘Lottery in June, corn be heavy soon.’
Next thing you know,
No one will want to work anymore.
These young kids need to know,
there’s always been a lottery.”

Heads of families first:
Take the paper from the black box
And hope it doesn’t have a black spot.
“Who’s got the paper with a black spot?”
“It’s Hutchinson. Bill Hutchinson.”

Husband, wife, daughter, son, little baby:
Take the paper from the black box.
All of us took the same chance.
Be a good sport.

Take the paper from the black box
And show us, does it have a black spot?
We’re dying to know.
“It’s Tessie. Tessie Hutchinson.”
“Tessie Hutchinson, step to the center of the square.”

Though we've forgotten the reason we began,
And lost the original black box,
We still remember to use stones.

Who are we without tradition?
Lottery in June, corn be heavy soon.

Missa Caelestis Regalis

Avanka Perera

Missa Caelestis Regalis (Mass of the Heavenly Royalty) is an original musical composition setting the ancient Latin texts of the *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei* from the Roman Catholic Mass Ordinary. Though the text derives from the long-standing tradition of the Latin Mass, the music itself is newly composed, uniting the timeless reverence of sacred liturgy with a distinctive contemporary choral language. Firmly rooted in the Church's worship of Christ as the eternal King of Heaven, the work follows the spiritual and musical arc of the Mass: the *Kyrie*'s humble plea for mercy, the *Gloria*'s jubilant outpouring of praise, the *Sanctus*' exalted acclamation of holiness, and the *Agnus Dei*'s serene invocation of peace. Through its synthesis of tradition and originality, *Missa Caelestis Regalis* seeks to embody the splendor, dignity and transcendence of divine worship.

Kýrie

Kýrie, éléison.

Kýrie, éléison.

Christe, éléison.

Christe, éléison.

Kýrie, éléison.

Kýrie, éléison.

Gloria

Glória in excélsis Deo, et in terra pax homínibus bonæ voluntátis.

Laudámus te. Benedícimus te. Adorámus te. Glorificámus te.

Grátias ágimus tibi propter magnam glóriam tuam. Dómine Deus,

Rex cælestis, Deus Pater omnípotens. Dómine Fili unigénite,

Jesu Christe. Dómine Deus, Agnus Dei, Fílius Patris. Qui tollis

peccáta mundi, miserére nobis. Qui tollis peccáta mundi, súscipe

deprecationem nostram. Qui sedes ad déxteram Patris, miserére

nobis. Quóniam tu solus Sanctus. Tu solus Dóminus. Tu solus

Altíssimus, Jesu Christe. Cum Sancto Spíritu, in glória Dei Patris.

Amen.

Sanctus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dóminus Deus Sábaoth. Pleni sunt
cæli et terra glória tua. Hosánna in excélsis. Benedíctus qui venit
in nómine Dómini. Hosánna in excélsis.

Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi dona nobis pacem.

Abiquiu Ruins

Alan Mackwell

Inspired by the remains of a centuries-old adobe church outside of Georgia O'Keeffe's home studio in Abiquiu, New Mexico, *Abiquiu Ruins* seeks to sonically recreate the quiet and meditative atmosphere that has settled on the ruins; gently outlining melodic ideas, now faint and distant, amongst strange, organic musical growth.

Vignettes Under a Summer Sky

Aric Vyhmeister

Vignettes Under a Summer Sky is a lighthearted work for reed quintet that depicts fond memories of nights spent under the stars as a child. Each movement captures a different scene, each with a special personal significance.

The first movement, Waverider, is inspired by the little constellation Delphinus, which quite literally looks like a small dolphin leaping across the sea of stars. This movement follows the celestial creature on his fanciful journey amidst the ancient heroes, princesses, and monsters that surround him in the night sky.

Every year in mid-August one of the most stunning meteor showers appears, called the Perseids. On an August Evening is a musical depiction of the sense of togetherness and serenity I would experience camping with friends and family while waiting for stars to streak across the sky. The comforting return of this beautiful sight year after year is both nostalgic and optimistic—a highlight of the summer and a reflection on pleasant memories of the past, and memories yet to be made.

On warm summer nights far away from city lights and surrounded by the utter stillness of the remote wilderness, one can look up at the Milky Way gleaming overhead. Phantom River captures the stream of consciousness I experienced when first getting lost in its mysterious glow, as it leads to all sorts of stellar landmarks: passing through an ancient harp, a giant swan, and dense knots of interstellar dust that point to the center of our own galaxy.

Zig Zag, the final movement, draws on the constellation Lacerta—the lizard—which is a strand of stars arranged in a zig-zag pattern resembling its namesake. This constellation captivated me as a child as I imagined all of the antics that might ensue as it scurried playfully across the summer sky.

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John Petefish, clarinet

Kristen Barrett, violin

Elise Cole, cello

Kevin Yetter, percussion

Anastasiia Pavlenko, piano

Renova New Music Ensemble

Blake Clawson, music director

Aric Vyhmeister, collaborative pianist

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Soprano 2: Saige Curro, Payton Keeler, Aimee Kennedy, Lelle Szucs

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Alto 2: Iona Binnie, Jenna Clawson, Merryn Madison

Tenor 1: Collin Deans, Ellery Galvin

Tenor 2: Peter Kennedy, Jamie Lammers

Bass 1: Avi Kumar, Andrew Obler, Autumn Stephens

Bass 2: James Battersby, Mason McCool, Matthew Winford

Glenda Luck

In the relentless pace of modern life, Glenda Luck's music creates a sanctuary—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.

Luck brings 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.

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 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 Elainie Lillios. leahportertracy.com

Avanka Perera

Avanka Perera is a Catholic musician dedicated to uniting faith and artistry through both performance and composition. She is pursuing a bachelor's degree in piano performance under Robert Hjelmstad at the University of Colorado Boulder, where she sings with the university's premier choral ensemble, the Chamber Singers, and serves as a resident singer and organist at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church. Trained in piano, voice, flute, violin, guitar and organ from an early age, she has developed a deep appreciation for sacred music through years of liturgical service. Her first choral work, *Veni Creator Spiritus*, premiered at the Colorado Sacred Music Conference in August 2024, and her recent compositions include motets and her newly completed *Missa Caelestis Regalis* (Mass of the Heavenly Royalty).

Alan Mackwell

Described as “an original composer with new ideas and a command of complex symphonic writing” (BroadStreet Journal), New Zealander-American Alan Mackwell (b. 1998) is a two-time BMI award-winning young composer and performer based in Boulder, Colorado. In his work, Mackwell seeks to explore a unique blend of atmospheres inspired by his experiences in the Permian Basin, northern New Mexico and Appalachian North Carolina using a highly resonant and bluegrass-influenced musical language as well as the utilization of original field recordings. He earned a BM at the Boston Conservatory, where he studied with John Murphree, Eun Young Lee, Curtis Hughes and Marti Epstein, and earned an MA at Tufts University where he studied with John McDonald and Kareem Roustom. Mackwell is currently pursuing a DMA at the University of Colorado Boulder where he teaches an Intro to Music Technology course.

Mackwell’s music has been played on three different continents, and several US states. His compositions have been played by high-achieving groups such as Ensemble Modern, The New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, the Amorsima Trio, Hub New Music and the Corvus Ensemble. He was the grand prize winner of the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra’s Inaugural Young Composers’ Competition in addition to being a two-time finalist for the Todd Corporation Young Composers’ Awards hosted by the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. Mackwell is the winner of the 2023 American Prize as well as two BMI Student Composer Awards, which he won in 2022 for his string trio *Remains of a Permian Gas Station* and again in 2025 for *Rail Dynamics*, a work for string trio and fixed media written for his residency at the TANK Center for the Sonic Arts in September 2024.

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 and served on the faculty at Metropolitan State University. He is also a regular guest artist at the Salt Creek Song Festival in Ashland, Nebraska.

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Photos: On this page, University Chorus, Fall 2024.

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The Drowsy Chaperone (2023).
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