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COLLEGE OF MUSIC 2025-26 EVENTS



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Bruce Ekstrand Memorial Graduate Student Performance Competition

Competition Finals

Tuesday, Nov. 18, 2025, 7:30 p.m.

Grusin Music Hall

ABOUT THE COMPETITION

Launched by then Dean Robert Fink at Bruce Ekstrand's suggestion and later renamed to honor the late vice chancellor for academic affairs and psychology professor, the Bruce Ekstrand Memorial Graduate Student Performance Competition awards cash prizes for professional development to outstanding graduate student performers. After preliminaries among individual departments and a semifinal round, up to five finalists are chosen to compete in the grand finale before a panel of judges.

Supporting The Ekstrand Competition

The Bruce Ekstrand Memorial Graduate Student Performance Competition is generously supported by the Ekstrand family (Norma Ekstrand, Andrea Ekstrand, Brad & Diana Ekstrand) and other College of Music donors. To support the Ekstrand Competition, the Ekstrand family has generously established a permanent endowment to provide funding for student prizes and associated costs.

To help ensure the continuation of this competition, please make a gift to the Ekstrand Endowment [online](#) or call 303-492-3054.

2025 FINALS JUDGES

Barbara Lynne Jamison

Charles Lee

Rita Sloan

2025 SEMIFINALISTS

Mark Bennett, trombone

Alice Del Simone, soprano

Jared Hartl, tuba

Carrina Macaluso, mezzo soprano

Aimée McAnulty, viola

Paige Michaud, flute

Tyler Middleton, baritone

Katharine Nelson, violin

Luca Pompilio, piano

Mallory Wood, flute

Alex Yang, percussion

Cello Quartet: Priscilla Kim, Matthew Huff, Thea Dardanis,
Sam Moore

Skyline Saxophone Quartet: Joel Ferst, Spencer Cox,
Catherine Oles, Gavin Martellotti

2025 SEMIFINAL JUDGES

Leigh Holman

Carter Pann

Meta Weiss

PROGRAM

Down You Go from *Flight*

Jonathan Dove (b. 1959)

Le loup et l'agneau from *Trois fables de la Fontaine*

André Caplet (1878-1925)

I Shall Go West

Eric Tuan (b. 1990)

Alice Del Simone, soprano

Matthew Sebald, piano

Alma

Tania León (b. 1943)

Blue Dress Waltz

Shannon Heaton (b. 1969)

Prayer

Amanda Harberg (b. 1973)

Mallory Wood, flute and piccolo

William Shi, piano

Sonata No. 4 in E minor, Op. 27

Eugène Ysaÿe (1858-1931)

I. Allemande

Fantasy No. 1 in G minor

Florence Price (1887-1953)

Banjo and Fiddle

William Kroll (1901-1980)

Katharine Nelson, violin

Gabrielle Lowman, piano

Quartet for Saxophones

Elliot Del Borgo (1938-2013)

III. With Vigor

Nocturne

Zhou Tian (b. 1981)

Quatuor pour saxophones

Alfred Desenclos (1912-1971)

Poco largo, ma risoluto

Skyline Quartet:

Joel Ferst, soprano saxophone

Spencer Cox, alto saxophone

Catherine Oles, tenor saxophone

Gavin Martellotti, baritone saxophone

Largo al Factotum from ***Il Barbiere di Siviglia***

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)

A Warm Night from ***Dead Man Walking***

Jake Heggie (b. 1961)

Tyler Middleton, baritone

Anastasiia Pavlenko, piano

THE JUDGES



Barbara Lynne Jamison

A visionary builder by nature, Barbara Lynne Jamison has spent her career sparking multiple initiatives for artists and communities to connect, celebrate and create, including new commissions, emerging artist opportunities, community engagement programs, and innovative ways of producing and experiencing opera.

By inviting and centering the voices of the community, Jamison's work has consistently produced deep, new, and sustainable philanthropic support, multi-year partnerships and longitudinal growth. This approach has quickly resulted in increased diversity on stage and in the audience, successfully demonstrating the power of opera as a vehicle for inspiring beauty, truth, and reconciliation in communities.

Prior to her appointment to Opera Colorado, Jamison served as General Director and CEO of Kentucky Opera, where she led the acquisition, funding and activation of the Kentucky Opera Center for Cultural Health, a new civic home to expand the company's mission; built new programs to broaden service to the community; and served her local community as a Juneteenth Jubilee Commissioner, Chair of the Arts & Culture Alliance, and member of the Louisville Rotary Club's Leadership Team, among other groups.

Jamison also previously served on the executive leadership teams at Seattle Opera and the Metropolitan Opera Guild, and was an accomplished soprano, conductor, and educator.

Jamison currently serves on the OPERA America Board of Directors and on the Trustee Council, Government Affairs working group, and Learning & Leadership Council.

As a grateful alumna of many notable mentorship programs, such as Leadership Kentucky (2020), American Express Women in Music Leadership (2019), and OPERA America Leadership Intensive (2014) alumna, her work is infused with building the next generation of artists, technicians and opera leadership. She continues to be involved in nurturing the next generation of leaders as a mentor, and is active as a speaker and panelist at local and national conventions and forums.



Charles C. Lee

Charles C. Lee is a cellist and an educator. Lee has been principal cellist of the Boulder Philharmonic orchestra since 1998, co-principal cellist of Colorado Ballet Orchestra since 2002, and a member of the Opera Colorado Orchestra since 2011. In addition to performing actively in the region as a chamber musician, he is a sought after teacher currently serving as director of string orchestra and chamber music, and instructor of cello at the Regis

University in Denver. In 2011 he joined the Metropolitan State University of Denver as instructor of cello.

He received his bachelor's degree in composition and piano from the Eastman School of Music, where he won the Bernard Rogers composition award, and a master's degree in cello performance at Temple University under Jeffrey Solow. He then moved to Boulder to join the graduate quartet program at the University of Colorado, Boulder, where he received a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in 2004.



Rita Sloan

Rita Sloan is acknowledged internationally as a leading teacher of piano, collaborative piano and chamber music. In 1999, she was appointed a piano faculty member and director of the collaborative piano program at the University of Maryland.

As an Artist Faculty Member at the Aspen Music Festival, Sloan founded their collaborative piano program. She has performed as soloist with both the

Aspen Festival Orchestra and Chamber Symphony as well as in chamber music with many of Aspen's distinguished guest artists including pianists Wu Han and Orli Shaham, violinists Sarah Chang and Nadia Salerno-Sonnenberg, cellist Gary Hoffman, bassist Edgar Meyer and flutist Emmanuel Pahud.

Teaching residencies and master class presentations have included Tainan National University of the Arts and National Normal University in Taiwan, China Conservatory in Beijing, China, leading universities in Seoul, Korea, London's Royal College of Music and American universities and conservatories including numerous visits to the Juilliard School in New York. Sloan has performed with orchestra, in recital and in chamber music throughout the U.S., Europe, South America and Japan. She has been a guest in many chamber music venues and has performed with members of the Emerson and Guarneri String Quartets.

Born in Russia to Polish parents, Sloan graduated from the Juilliard School, where she studied with Martin Canin and Rosina Lhévinne. Further studies were with Leon Fleisher, Aube Tzerko, Herbert Stessin and Vladimir Ashkenazy.

THE FINALISTS



Alice Del Simone **SOPRANO**

Soprano Alice Del Simone, an Oakland, California native, holds a BA in vocal performance and a BS in plant science from UC Davis, and an MM in voice pedagogy and performance from CU Boulder, where she is currently a DMA candidate studying with Andrew Garland and Jennifer Bird-Arvidsson. Recent performance highlights include Kitty Hart in *Dead Man Walking* (Heggie) with Eklund Opera, Bubikopf

in *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* (Ullmann) with Colorado MahlerFest, the Israelite Woman in Handel's *Judas Maccabeus* with Seicento Baroque Ensemble and soprano soloist in Handel's *Messiah* with Boulder Bach Festival, as well as numerous other operatic and concert roles. Del Simone has also been fortunate to perform in two CU NOW workshops at CU Boulder. A champion of new music and art song, she frequently performs solo and chamber recitals and is the recent regional winner of West Central NATS NATSAA Competition and the Art Song Colorado Competition. Del Simone also maintains a private voice studio and conducts voice science research exploring registration and nasalance.



Matthew Sebald

COLLABORATIVE PIANO

Matthew Sebald is known for his bold performance presence. Sebald's professional engagements have included continuo player for the NMPAS performance of Bach's *St. John Passion* and a trip to the XVIII World Saxophone Congress in Croatia, where he collaborated with Scott Sandberg (UND) in the premiere of Catherine McMichael's *Duality* for tenor saxophone and piano. As a

solo pianist, some of his accolades include winner of the 2016 Bismarck-Mandan Symphony Orchestra Concerto competition and UND's 2015 Mozart Piano Concerto competition, and runner-up for the 2017 Greater Grand Forks Concerto Competition. Sebald's research as a student in CU Boulder's collaborative piano program has provided practical tools for beginning vocal coaches, specifically through a written guidebook that compliments the literature available for this fascinating field. Currently, Sebald accompanies choirs at Altona Middle School, the Boulder Children's Chorale, and the Longmont Chorale. In addition, he remains active as a vocal coach, as well as performing with his duo partner, soprano Alice Del Simone.

PROGRAM NOTES

Down You Go from *Flight*

Jonathan Dove (b. 1959)

Libretto by April De Angelis

“Down You Go” is an aria from composer Jonathan Dove and librettist April De Angelis’ 1998 opera *Flight*. The opera takes place in an airport over two days, and the characters are passengers and staff at the airport, as well as The Refugee. The opera takes inspiration for the life of Mehran Karimi Nasseri, an Iranian refugee who lived in the Charles de Gaulle Airport for 18 years. “Down You Go” is sung by The Flight Controller from her control tower. During the aria, the Controller vents her disgust and frustration at the Steward and Stewardess, who she sees sneaking off for a romantic encounter, and at the airport passengers who she imagines are all on a futile search for happiness on their various vacations. The only person that she does not include in her ire is The Refugee, to whom she has grown attached. Twice during the aria, the Controller uses the public address system to communicate with the world outside of her tower, however, the rest of her conversation is heard by no one.

Text:

Down you go.

Scurry down, for sweaty embraces in sordid places.

Ruled by animal natures.

And people come from ev'ry corner,

Come scrabbling here from ev'ry corner,

Heading for somewhere warmer.

Their grubby dreams of love and romance.

If you can't get it here,

What makes you think you can get it in France?

I'd like to put a spoke in.

Put a spanner in.

Put a stop to that sort of thing.

Stewards, return to departure please:

Another plane about to leave.

Ev'ryone passes through.

Ev'ryone's in transit.

But you sit there and stare.

You're not going anywhere.

I like that, starrng at me,

Transfixed, unchanging.

I like him to look at me and adore.

That's enough for me.

Flight Four Seven O about to go.

Le loup et l'agneau

from ***Trois fables de la Fontaine***

André Caplet (1878-1925)

Text by Jean de la Fontaine

Le loup et l'agneau (“The Wolf and the Lamb”) is the third of André Caplet’s settings of three of Jean de la Fontaine’s fables for children. Its moral is presented by a narrator in the introduction: The strongest individual with a strong conviction will always be victorious. Thus begins the tale of the poor Lamb who is ultimately eaten by the Wolf who feels entitled to do so because of the mistreatment he has received from shepherds and their dogs. This fable explores the reality that society often allows strong individuals to prevail over the innocent, like the Lamb who has done no wrong himself. By playing up the violent tone of the Wolf, in contrast to the pathetic responses from the Lamb, Caplet brings attention to the power dynamics of the story. In Caplet’s setting, the song stands as a reminder to us all to moderate our sense of righteousness to avoid behaving like the Wolf.

Text (French):

La raison du plus fort est toujours la meilleure,
Nous l'allons montrer tout à l'heure.
Un agneau se désaltérait
Dans le courant d'une onde pure.
Un loup survient à jeun, qui cherchait
aventure,
Et que la faim en ces lieux attirait.
"Qui te rend si hardi de troubler mon breuvage?"
Dit cet animal plein de rage:
"Tu seras châtié de ta témérité."
"Sire," répond l'agneau, "que Votre Majesté
Ne se mette pas en colère:
Mais plutôt qu'elle considère
Que je me vas désaltérant
Dans le courant,
Plus de vingt pas au-dessous d'elle;
Et que par conséquent en aucune façon
Je ne puis troubler sa boisson."
"Tu la troubles, reprit cette bête cruelle,
Et je sais que de moi tu médis l'an passé."
"Comment l'aurais-je fait si je n'étais pas né?
Reprit l'agneau; je tette encor ma mère."
"Si ce n'est toi, c'est donc ton frère."
"Je n'en ai point." _ "C'est donc quelqu'un des tiens;
Car vous ne m'épargnez guère,
Vous, vos bergers, et vos chiens.
On me l'a dit: Il faut que je me venge."
Là-dessus, au fond des forêts
Le loup l'emporte, et puis le mange,
Sans autre forme de procès.

Text (English):

The reasoning of the strongest is always the best,
we shall prove it by and by.

The lamb was quenching its thirst
in the current of a pure water.

A fasting wolf passed by which was seeking adventure, and which
hunger attracted to these parts.

“Who makes you so bold as to disturb my drink?”

says this animal full of rage

“you will be castigated for your temerity.”

“Sire,” replies the lamb, “let not Your Majesty get himself into a
rage:

but rather let him consider

that I go to quench my thirst

in the current,

more than twenty paces below him;

and thereby in no way

shall I be able to disturb his drink.”

“You disturb it,” repeated this cruel beast,

“and I know that you spoke ill of me last year.”

“How would I have done that if I was not born?”

replied the lamb; “I am still suckling my mother.”

“If it’s not you, then it is your brother.”

“I have none.” _ “Then it’s one

of your family; for you hardly spare me, you, your shepherds, and
your dogs. I have been told: I must have my revenge.” Thereupon,
into the depths of the forests the wolf carries him, then eats him,
without any other kind of ceremony.

I Shall Go West

Eric Tuan (b. 1990)

Text by Mary Hunter Austin

“I Shall Go West” is the last song in a set of three songs I commissioned from California composer, and my dear friend, Eric Tuan for my final doctoral recital. The recital was centered on physical landscapes and how those landscapes influence our emotional lives, and the song set commission was inspired by my deep relationship with nature and how it shapes my continued grief journey after the loss of my father in 2015. The text, by feminist and indigenous rights activist and writer Mary Hunter Austin, poignantly evokes the ways in which the poet will become one with her beloved California landscape after her death. Eric’s sensitive setting of this text fully realizes the awesome and healing power found both in nature and in music. I see “I Shall Go West” as something of an artistic thesis statement for my performance career going forward and I am profoundly honored to share it with you tonight.

Text:

Someday I shall go West,
Having won all time to love it in, at last,
Too still to boast.
But when I smell the sage,
When the long, marching landscape line
Melts into wreathing mountains,
And the dust cones dance,
Something in me that is of them will stir.
Happy if I come home
When the musk scented, moon-white gilia blows,
When all the hills are blue, remembering
The sea from which they rose.
Happy again,
When blunt faced bees carouse
In the red flagons of the incense shrub,
Or apricots have lacquered boughs,
And trails are dim with rain!
Lay me where some contented oak can prove
How much of me is nurture for a tree;
Sage thoughts of mine
Be acorn clusters for the deer to browse.
I shall be small and happy as the grass,
Proud if my tip
Stays the white, webby moons the spider weaves,
Where once you trod
Or down my bleaching stalks shall slip
The light, imprisoning dew.
I shall be bluets in the April sod!
Or if the wheel should turn too fast,
Run up and rest
As a sequoia for a thousand years!



Mallory Wood

FLUTE

Mallory Wood is a multifaceted artist, teacher and arts advocate pursuing a DMA in flute performance and pedagogy with Christina Jennings at the University of Colorado Boulder. As a flutist and piccoloist, she values the beauty of sound, champions living and underrepresented voices, and expresses the duality of simplicity and complexity in music. She recently won the second flute position with the

Wichita Symphony and received third prize in the Colorado Flute Association Young Artist Competition. Wood has also performed with the Eugene Symphony, Eugene Opera and Orchestra Next.

Wood is passionate about teaching students of all ages and musical backgrounds. Since establishing her private studio in 2019, she has continuously taught individual lessons and remains an active private instructor in Colorado. She also served as an adjunct professor at Oregon State University and currently works as the flute studio teaching assistant at CU Boulder, where she teaches undergraduate flute majors and chamber music, and serves as studio liaison during Professor Jennings's sabbatical. As an arts advocate, Wood has worked with arts nonprofits including Orchestra Next and The Cultural Caravan, reflecting her commitment to both the artistic and organizational sides of the arts community. Wood is pursuing a DMA with the goal of teaching at the collegiate level, aiming to inspire and mentor the next generation of musicians.



William Shi

COLLABORATIVE PIANO

William Shi is the inaugural winner of the Australian Music Foundation's Richard Bonyng Award, the first award created by the AMF for a collaborative pianist. His U.S. collaborative performances have been broadcast on Performance Today, WCRB and WXXI Classical, with critics praising his "crisp and clean extended solos" and "precise coordination." He was awarded an American Australian Association Arts Fund Grant in 2020.

Shi has presented recitals with principals of major orchestras including the Detroit, Los Angeles, North Carolina and Rochester Philharmonics, appearing internationally at venues such as Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Ozawa Hall, Brahms Haus, Szabelski's Hall and the Australian Festival of Chamber Music.

Shi recently completed a doctorate in piano performance and literature with Natalya Antonova and Ran Dank, alongside a concurrent master's in piano accompanying and chamber music with Andrew Harley at the Eastman School of Music. He is a four-time recipient of Eastman's Excellence in Accompanying Award in addition to the Jean Barr Award in Accompanying. Shi currently serves as lecturer of collaborative piano at the University of Colorado Boulder.

PROGRAM NOTES

Alma

Tania León (b. 1943)

Tania León is a distinguished and award-winning composer, conductor, and educator, notably the first Latin American woman to win the Pulitzer Prize in Music (2021). Her works span a wide range of instrumentations and ensemble types, continuing to have a profound impact on the musical community.

“Un flauta toca un crescendo que se va convirtiendo en alegría.”
—A flute plays a crescendo that starts transforming into joy.

This line by Carmen A. Vega Schimmenti inspired León’s *Alma*, which translates from Spanish as “soul” or “spirit.” León imagines the beginning as “a bird flying in the forest and singing.” The flute opens unaccompanied, with unpredictable lines that mimic birdsong. In the middle section, the flute and piano interact, evoking the bird (flute) chirping while the leaves of the tree flutter (piano). León follows this interplay with sounds of “a happy time, like birds in spring.” The piece closes as the bird enters a meditative state and gently falls asleep.

This piece is extraordinarily colorful. The lyrical flute lines, paired with the rhythmic character of the piano, create a vivid dialogue that feels both improvisational and full of storytelling.

Blue Dress Waltz

Shannon Heaton (b. 1969)

Shannon Heaton, a Boston-based Irish flutist, composer, and singer, composed *30 Original Tunes for April* in 2010. Among these pieces is *The Blue Dress Waltz*, inspired by a vintage blue dress in Heaton's closet. She describes it as "bright blue, with a layer of blue lace over the shell. It looks very delicate—though you'd have to have hands of steel to rip it apart." The sweet melody, supported by a solid foundation, reflects Heaton's belief that "strength can come in pretty packages."

The Irish flute, traditionally made of wood, inspired my decision to perform this tune on piccolo—an instrument I adore. Although they differ in register and mechanism, the piccolo captures a similar wooden timbre to the Irish flute. Throughout the waltz, Heaton's ornamentation adds to its historical charm. In my interpretation, you'll hear traditional Irish embellishments, including taps (a quick note below the main pitch), long rolls (a rapid ascent leading into the main note), and casadhs (two surrounding notes that decorate the melody).

Prayer

Amanda Harberg (b. 1973)

Amanda Harberg is a composer, teacher and performer whose music bridges classical and contemporary styles. Her writing demonstrates expressive lyricism and emotional sensitivity, earning her recognition as a leading voice in modern flute repertoire. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra has called her "a hero to the flute and piccolo community."

Prayer (2017) was composed in response to the serious illness of a family member. The opening features cyclical piano arpeggios over which the flute floats, evoking peace and stillness. Moments of calm are interrupted by tense harmonies, reflecting the fragility of time and emotion. As the piece unfolds, the texture broadens, peaks in intensity and range, and resolves into quiet acceptance. The musical arc captures the inner turbulence and release that accompany grief.

This piece has become one of my favorites to perform live. There is a cathartic beauty in its melodies that reminds me of music's power to heal. I dedicate this performance to my late grandmother, my biggest champion, who reminded me that even in the darkest times, we must never forget to "just laugh."



Katharine Nelson

VIOLIN

Katharine Nelson is a master's student at University of Colorado Boulder College of Music, studying with Harumi Rhodes and Edward Dusinberre. She completed her undergraduate studies at Indiana University in 2025, where she studied with Simin Ganatra.

Nelson won second prize in the National Federation of Music Clubs 2025 Student Collegiate

Biennial Competition. In 2023, she was a finalist in Indiana University Jacobs School of Music Mendelssohn Violin Concerto Competition. In 2023 and 2025, Nelson helped raise several thousand dollars through a benefit concert for a women's shelter in Indiana. In January 2020 she organized a classical music concert that raised \$3,154 for Public Action to Deliver Shelter and continues to host benefit concerts for various organizations.

Nelson has enjoyed summer music institutes at Colorado College, Festival Del Lago, Engers Academy, Chautauqua Music Festival, Bowdoin International Music Festival, Indiana University and University of Michigan. She has taken master classes with Sirena Huang, Christian Altenburger, Jorja Fleezanis, Stephanie Arado, Nurit Pacht, Vadim Gluzman, Mikhail Kopelman and Lina Bahn.



Gabrielle Lowman

COLLABORATIVE PIANO

Gabrielle Lowman (she/they) is a pianist based in Boulder, Colorado. Her performance styles are eclectic, ranging from collaborative piano and improvisation, to electronic music. Lowman is an experienced choral pianist, playing for Idaho State University's chamber choir, honor choir events, and touring with the group to perform at the Northwestern ACDA conference. While in Idaho, she

founded a private studio teaching traditional piano lessons and jazz improvisation.

Lowman has written and released a jazz piano trio album titled, *Impossibility Reduced to Bricks*. In summer 2024 she worked as a collaborative pianist intern at the Borromeo Music Festival in Switzerland. She studied under Kori Bond at Idaho State University, graduating in 2021 with a degree in Piano Performance.

Currently, she is pursuing a master's in collaborative piano at University of Colorado Boulder under Margaret McDonald and Alexandra Nguyen.

PROGRAM NOTES

Sonata No. 4 in E minor, Op. 27

Eugène Ysaÿe (1858-1931)

Eugène Ysaÿe, a Belgian violinist and composer, composed six solo violin sonatas, each of which was dedicated to a different violinist and written in their musical style. Sonata No. 4 in E minor (1923) was dedicated to Fritz Kreisler, an Austrian-American composer and violinist, known for his expressiveness and dance-like approach to music. Ysaÿe pays homage to Kreisler's signature sound in the first movement of the fourth sonata, *Allemande*, which is a stylish dance. Ysaÿe believed that the main goal of technique was to create a melodic and expressive sound. He stated that "the tools of violin mastery, of expression, technique, mechanism, are ... indispensable, if the spirit is to express itself without restraint." Ysaÿe's fourth sonata, although technically difficult, contains enchanting lines and chords that have inspired generations of violinists to play without reserve.

Fantasy No. 1 in G minor

Florence Price (1887-1953)

Composed in 1933, Florence Price's *Fantasy No. 1 in G Minor* is a powerful testament to her ability to blend European and African-American spirituals. Price believed that America's music should reflect its diversity. The *Fantasy* nods to Dvorak's *New World Symphony* with a repeating motif which is heard during the *Andante* section. Syncopated rhythms, flattened seventh scale degrees, and call-and-response patterns between the violin and piano hint to African American folkloric elements.

Price was a major cultural and influential figure in the 20th century. She published a fraction of the music she wrote during her lifetime. It has taken decades to discover more of her works and over half of it is still unpublished. A large collection of Price's work, including this Fantasy, was discovered in 2009 in an abandoned home in Illinois. Thanks to the work of music editor John Michael Cooper and other scholarly writers, Price is getting the recognition she deserves.

Banjo and Fiddle

William Kroll (1901-1980)

William Kroll, an American violinist, composer and teacher, wrote *Banjo and Fiddle* in 1945. The violin mimics the sound of a banjo by strumming the strings in a lively tempo. It transitions into a sweet and joking tune, filled with chromatic phrases and rubato. Listen for the way the melody returns several times and how it is slightly different in unexpected ways.



Skyline Quartet

Joel Ferst
SOPRANO SAXOPHONE

Catherine Oles
TENOR SAXOPHONE

Spencer Cox
ALTO SAXOPHONE

Gavin Martellotti
BARITONE SAXOPHONE

Newly founded at the University of Colorado Boulder, Skyline is a chamber ensemble dedicated to uplifting the saxophone through the highest level of performance in classical and contemporary repertoire. United through a shared passion for creating lasting connections with both audience, composers and collaborators, Skyline is a quartet that seeks a balance between thoughtful interpretation and challenging experimentation. The ensemble is currently made up of master's and doctoral students and studies under Nathan Mertens.

PROGRAM NOTES

Quartet for Saxophones

Elliot Del Borgo (1938-2013)

III. With Vigor

Elliot Del Borgo was an American composer and educator known for his bold rhythmic language and idiomatic instrumental writing. He spent the majority of his career on the faculty of the Crane School of Music, where he taught music theory, history and composition, and directed the Crane Wind Ensemble. He composed more than 600 works, including music for the closing ceremony of the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid.

The third movement titled With Vigor, of his 1987 work Quartet for Saxophones, provides a driving and decisive conclusion to the work. It is built on energetic rhythmic figures and tightly coordinated ensemble writing. The movement showcases the saxophone quartet's ability to be precise and connected as an ensemble. Rapid motivic exchanges create momentum, while dynamic contrasts and pointed articulations intensify its forward motion. The tenor and baritone anchor the texture as the soprano and alto propel it upward, resulting in a finale that is both robust and engaging.

Nocturne

Zhou Tian (b. 1981)

According to the composer, Zhou Tian (b. 1981), "Nocturne is a chorale for saxophone quartet conceived on a cold, winter night. Lyrical and reflective, the music carries a strong sense of romanticism, and strives to convey a sense of spiritual bliss."

Though now being performed with saxophone quartet, this piece

has gone through a long process of transformation to reach its current form. Baylor University writes that “In 2000, Zhou wrote his first string quartet. It was the last piece he composed in China before moving to the United States. Three years later, he reimagined the quartet’s middle movement, *Amoroso*, as a chorale for strings, titled *Nocturne* ... In 2021, with the help of David Thornton, *Nocturne* has been arranged for wind ensemble. David Thornton first transcribed the string chorale for wind ensemble, and Zhou followed up on the initiative, making further arrangements and even composing new material for the current version.”

Quatuor pour saxophones

Alfred Desenclos (1912-1971)

Poco largo, ma risoluto

Alfred Desenclos’ *Quatuor pour saxophones* was commissioned by the French government for the Marcel Mule Quartet, the premiere saxophone quartet of the time. Desenclos uses various influences in this piece such as jazz from early 20th century America, George Gershwin, and fragments that reflect Darius Milhaud’s *Creation du Monde*. Syncopation is frequently used throughout this movement in energetic passages, with each voice imitating one another in passing melodies. The third movement starts with a unified, staccato introduction, followed by an energetic main theme. The slower, middle section of this movement draws influence from the second movement, utilizing its thematic content as well as its gradual intensification of energy and tempo. The height of this development is reached with a unison line that is reminiscent of the introduction, and the piece concludes with a dynamic restatement of the main theme and a dramatic codetta.



Tyler Middleton

BARITONE

Tyler Middleton, from Knoxville, Tennessee, is a lyric baritone beginning an Artist Diploma at CU Boulder under the tutelage of baritone Andrew Garland. Middleton holds a master's degree from the University of Michigan ('24), where he performed as Inspector Kildare in Kevin Putz's *Elizabeth Cree* and Leporello in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* under the baton of the legendary Martin Katz. He also holds a bachelor's degree from Middle Tennessee State University ('22).

Middleton is an active performer in the Midwest, having sung with companies such as Motor City Lyric Opera, South Bend Lyric Opera, No-Fly Productions and the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra in the 2024-25 season. This fall, he made his debut with the Eklund Opera program at CU Boulder singing Joseph De Rocher in Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*.



Anastasiia Pavlenko

COLLABORATIVE PIANO

Anastasiia Pavlenko is a Ukrainian pianist currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts in collaborative piano at the University of Colorado Boulder. She serves on the music faculty at the Metropolitan State University of Denver and maintains an active career as a collaborative pianist throughout the greater Denver metropolitan area.

Pavlenko is the staff pianist for the Colorado Children's Chorale and a frequent collaborator with the Colorado Symphony Chorus, recently contributing as rehearsal pianist for the *Too Hot to Handel* production at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts. Dedicated to the performance and promotion of contemporary repertoire, Pavlenko has recorded world-premiere works by emerging American composers Jordan Holloway and Joshua Maynard, available on major streaming platforms. Her scholarly interests center on cultural justice and social change. From 2020 to 2022, she participated in the Hidden Voices research project, documenting and recording works by African American women composers from the Walker-Hill Collection at CU Boulder. In 2023, she was invited to present *The Fight for Identity: Ukrainian Music* at the Denver Area Music Teachers Association Fall Course.

PROGRAM NOTES

Largo al Factotum from ***Il Barbiere di Siviglia***

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)

Libretto by Cesare Sterbini (1783-1831)

While opera is known for high drama and tragic endings, one of the great exceptions to this rule is Gioachino Rossini's comedic masterpiece *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, or *The Barber of Seville*.

Barbiere premiered in 1816 in Rome to a less than stellar reception but, 209 years later, it has withstood the test of time and remains in the top 10 most produced operas worldwide today. The only other comedy to crack that list is Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, which is no coincidence. Both operas are based on one of a trilogy of plays by Pierre Beaumarchais recounting the tales of barber and jack-of-all-trades Figaro, his master Count Almaviva, and a rotating cast of commedia dell'arte inspired characters. The opera opens in a town square in Seville, Spain where a disguised Count Almaviva attempts to serenade Rosina, to no avail. With his musicians gone and no sign of Rosina, the Count is out of options and ideas- until he hears the voice of his former servant, Figaro, singing his famous entrance aria, "Largo al factotum della città ...":

Text (Italian):

Largo al factotum della città.
Presto a bottega che l'alba è già.
Ah, che bel vivere, che bel piacere
per un barbiere di qualità!

Ah, bravo Figaro! Bravo, bravissimo!
Fortunatissimo per verità!

Pronto a far tutto, la notte e il giorno
sempre d'intorno in giro sta.
Miglior cuccagna per un barbiere,
vita più nobile, no, non si da.

Rasori e pettini, lancette e forbici,
al mio comando tutto qui sta.
V'è la risorsa, poi, del mestiere
colla donnetta ... col cavaliere ...

Tutti mi chiedono, tutti mi vogliono,
donne, ragazzi, vecchi, fanciulle:
Qua la parrucca ... Presto la barba ...
Qua la sanguigna ... Presto il biglietto ...
Ehi, Figaro! Figaro! Figaro!

Ahimè, che furia! Ahimè, che folla!
Uno alla volta, per carità!
Ehi, Figaro! Son qua.
Figaro qua, Figaro là,
Figaro su, Figaro giù.

Pronto prontissimo son come il fulmine:
sono il factotum della città.
Ah, bravo Figaro! Bravo, bravissimo;
a te fortuna non mancherà.
Sono il factotum della città!

Text (English):

Make way for the handyman of the city!
Off to the shop soon, it is already dawn.
Ah, what a beautiful life, what lovely pleasure
For a barber of such quality!

Ah, bravo Figaro! Well done, superb!
A lucky one for sure!

Ready for anything, night and day,
Always on the move.
No better luck for a barber,
A nobler life? No, there is none!

Razors and combs, lancets and scissors
Are all here at my command.
There are also tools of the trade,
With the young lady, with the young man.

Everyone asks for me. Everyone wants me:
Women, boys, the elderly, girls.
Here this wig; quickly the beard;
Here these leeches, quickly this note;
“Hey, Figaro! Figaro! Figaro!”

Alas, what a fury! Alas, what a crowd!
One at a time, for goodness sake!
“Hey, Figaro!” Here I am!
Figaro here, Figaro there,
Figaro up, Figaro down.
Swift, swifter, like lightning I am.
I am the city’s handyman.
Ah, bravo Figaro! Well done, superb;
Fortune will not fail you.
I am the city’s handyman!

A Warm Night from ***Dead Man Walking***

Jake Heggie (b. 1961)

Jake Heggie’s *Dead Man Walking* is a triumph of the American operatic canon. Based on the acclaimed memoir of the same name by Sister Helen Prejean, *Dead Man Walking* tells the story of death row inmate Joseph De Rocher and his relationship with Sister Helen, his spiritual advisor, while he awaits execution at the Louisiana State Penitentiary. The opera opened in 2000 at San Francisco’s War Memorial Opera House to rave reviews and the production went on to tour the world in the early 2000s. It remains one of the most performed American operas today. This is partly to do with the gripping drama and partly to do with Heggie’s rich score, which integrates the distinctly American traditions of blues, rock and roll and zydeco. During Sister Helen and Joseph’s first meeting face to face, they play a sort of conversational game of cat and mouse. Joseph is angry and testing Sister Helen with insults and vulgarities, but he ultimately wants to ask her to be his spiritual advisor. The first cracks in his facade show during his aria “A Warm Night” (text on the next page):

Text:

You ever been with a man?

[If you mean physically intimate, no.]

You don't know what you're missing.
You're blushing.

I love the ladies. I miss 'em, I do.
That's the worst part about this place.
You're all alone that way, too.

A warm night, a cold bottle of beer
down by the river with your woman.
Hmm.

A little Zydeco drifting down from the roadhouse.
You lay your head on her breasts, and she tells you:
"Everything is gonna be alright."

And for a little while you believe her and it is.
Everything is gonna be alright.

Sister, nights like that's what makes the rest of this ugly old planet
tolerable.

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