

CU ★ PRESENTS

MARCH-APRIL 2024

-  Takács Quartet March 10-11
-  Titanic, the Musical March 15-17
-  Ray Chen and Julio Elizalde March 21
-  Asleep at the Wheel April 5
-  American Stories April 25-28
-  Takács Quartet April 28-29



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BY HEIDI SCHRECK



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Asleep at the Wheel with the CU Boulder Symphony Orchestra comes to Macky Auditorium on April 5 Photo by Jeff Fasano.

CU ★ PRESENTS

MARCH-APRIL 2024

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Artist Series: *Ray Chen*, photo by John Mac

College of Music: *Promotional art for Titanic*, the Musical

Takács Quartet: *Photo by Amanda Tipton*

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Asleep at the Wheel to work with CU Boulder Symphony Orchestra to bring western swing to life

By Adam Goldstein

Symphonic music and country and western swing may seem like unlikely bedfellows for fans of either genre.

But according to Ray Benson, frontman of the world-renowned, Grammy Award-winning country group Asleep at the Wheel, the pairing of classical strings and honky-tonk twang isn't a new combination. The band will join the CU Boulder Symphony Orchestra and College of Music students for an exceptional performance at Macky Auditorium on April 5. Benson says the fusion of strings, guitars and country swagger will draw on a long-established musical partnership.

"We offer audiences a unique symphony show, in my opinion," Benson said, adding that Asleep at the Wheel has played symphonic concerts across the United States since the early 2000s.

"We play a genre of music called western swing which has roots in old-time fiddle music, country music, jazz, country and blues."

The 1940s saw a rare and ambitious fusion of styles. Western swing artists like Bob Wills, Milton Brown and Hank Thompson melded the folk roots of country music with the lush instrumental expressions of big band music, jazz and other idioms. Asleep at the Wheel continues that approach and—teaming up with the CU Boulder Symphony Orchestra—will bring the full scope of the genre to life for audiences.

The value of the show isn't limited to ticket holders. CU Boulder students will also play a role in the concert, a collaboration that echoes previous performances by Asleep at the Wheel on our campus.

"Fiddles are a big part of what we do and combining that approach with classically trained string musicians is very special. It's not often that you get a collaboration of these styles," Benson said. "We hope music students find this combination interesting and possibly educational."

Indeed, the value of the collaboration for CU Boulder students is immeasurable, according to Joan Braun, Executive Director of CU Presents and the College of Music's Assistant Dean for Concerts and Communications. This concert will offer students learning opportunities that aren't available in a classroom; it gives aspiring musicians the chance to work with award-winning artists in person.

"These are opportunities for our students to be on stage and to interact professionally with an award-winning touring band. That is unique and valuable," Braun said. "Part of our mission is to bring artists to Boulder that audiences wouldn't otherwise experience ... It's an opportunity to see a world-class act without going to New York or Los Angeles. You can see it right here at Macky Auditorium. That is a huge value."

There's also a benefit to the collaboration for the members of Asleep at the Wheel. Working with students and orchestral musicians on this stop gives the band the scope and framework to fully realize their tribute to an American genre forgotten by some.

"We encourage everyone to come out and check out this collaboration," Benson said. "We cover lots of musical ground and we've had some great charts written for the symphony. We always have a great time doing these symphony orchestra shows."

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Titanic, the Musical

March 15-17, 2024

CU Macky Auditorium



Ray Chen, violin and Julio Elizalde, piano

Thursday, March 21, 7:30 p.m.

★ Macky Auditorium



Asleep at the Wheel

With the CU Symphony Orchestra

Friday, April 5, 7:30 p.m.

★ Macky Auditorium



The Current

April 11-14, 2024

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American Stories by American Women

April 25-28, 2024

CU Music Theatre



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April 28-29, 2024

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Smoking is not permitted anywhere. CU Boulder is a smoke-free campus.

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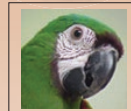


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Betsy Menand



A haunting double bill

By Henry Michaels

An open door. A broken window. Ghostly visages from the past. All this and more will feature on stage when the CU Boulder College of Music's Eklund Opera Program presents *American Stories by American Women*, an exciting operatic double bill featuring two uniquely American stories.

Amy Beach's 1932 chamber opera *Cabildo* is a story within a story. The frame sees a group of sightseers touring New Orleans' Cabildo, a government building that once held the imprisoned pirate Pierre Lafitte. After one of the tourists falls asleep in Lafitte's cell—a completely normal place for a nap—the action moves to her dreams of the imprisoned pirate. It's here that most of the roughly 45-minute-long opera's action takes place, including a prison escape, a visit from a lover's ghost and a War of 1812 connection.

Written in 2018, Missy Mazzoli's *Proving Up* is the tale of a family of Nebraska homesteaders seeking to achieve ownership of their land by satisfying the requirements—proving

up—of the Homestead Act: "House of sod, acres of grain, five years of harvest, a window of glass." It's a dark tale of a family haunted—figuratively and literally—by the ghosts of daughters lost to the harshness of prairie life: A father willing to do whatever it takes to prove up, a mother terrified of losing more children and a son confronted by a menacing stranger.

On one level, the American stories presented in Beach's and Mazzoli's operas could not be more different. The moment when the specter of Lafitte's lover idealistically exhorts him to "Pay thy debt to America," for example, seems worlds away from the grim portrait of American homesteading life in *Proving Up*.

Perhaps what they share, then, is a kind of idealism undercut by the reality that the American dream is complicated. Pierre Lafitte ultimately clears his name by fighting alongside Andrew Jackson, a moment of patriotism spurred on by the ghost of his lost love. Yet the pirate hero also participated in the slave trade,

a fact mentioned by the chorus of tourists in Beach's opera—"The Lafittes sold slaves ... Sold their slaves like cattle in the city"—a heavy statement that is flippantly answered by the tour guide's "Right-O!"

For the family in Mazzoli's opera, the Homestead Act and the idea of Manifest Destiny that it represented were built upon layers of exploitation: The settlers used as pawns in an attempt to expand American territory, but also the existing people whose land was stolen and "proved up." The father in *Proving Up* is desperate to achieve the American Dream for himself and his family, but at what cost? In the end, their story serves as a reminder that this dream is sometimes as fragile as a window of glass.

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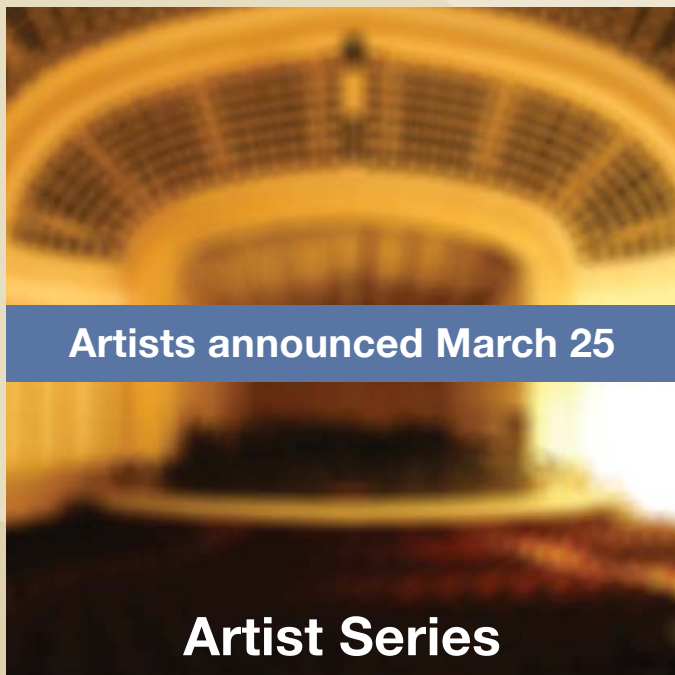
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Thompson Jazz Studies Program introduces new vocal jazz degree, new ensemble and more

By MarieFaith Lane

The College of Music is set to launch an exciting addition to its curriculum this fall—the new Bachelor of Music in Vocal Jazz degree in our Thompson Jazz Studies Program will offer intensive development of all aspects of musicianship as a jazz vocalist with study in jazz improvisation, theory, arranging, repertoire and history as well as individual study and performing in our jazz ensembles.

Professor of Jazz Studies John Gunther shares details of the long-anticipated program: “Thanks to the generous support of Jack and Jeannie Thompson, this program is finally coming to fruition. Jack and Jeannie are astute supporters of the College of

Music and are very involved and aware of the needs of the college.”

He continues, “The program is not only for aspiring jazz vocalists, as we hope it will serve the College of Music more broadly. Jazz improvisation is such an important part of the history of performance of American music and the skill sets that our musicians need to have in the 21st century.”

The methods incorporated into the Thompson Jazz program reflect a commitment to providing real-world experiences. Unlike traditional audition-based ensemble formation, the program embraces a unique approach. “Ensembles are formed without

auditions and then rotated every few weeks, fostering an environment where students of varying ages and experience levels come together and collaborate,” Gunther explains.

“This approach encourages students to build relationships, learn to communicate effectively and navigate the dynamics of working with musicians of varying backgrounds—mirroring the professional world, where collaboration is essential and musicians must adapt to different skill sets within the group.”

Developing and implementing the new degree program was both a response to internal recognition and driven by external demand. “The Jazz Studies department had been receiving inquiries from high school directors and prospective students eager to know when such a program would be offered,” Gunther says. “The call among young musicians for a broader experience is a clear recognition of the importance of engaging with contemporary music making, improvisation and diverse styles beyond their primary focus.”

Additionally, the jazz program has introduced a new extracurricular ensemble—Ralphie’s Ramblers—committed to embodying the spirit of New Orleans brass bands. Ralphie’s Ramblers ensures that students across disciplines have the opportunity to experience and collaborate in jazz in meaningful ways.

Looking ahead, over spring break, faculty and students from Thompson Jazz will spend a week-long intensive in Havana, studying and performing with master musicians of Afro-Cuban jazz, underscoring the College of Music’s commitment to providing a comprehensive education beyond the classroom walls.

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EKLUND OPERA

American Stories by American Women

Cabildo by Amy Beach

Proving Up by Missy Mizzoli

April 25-27, 7:30 p.m.

April 28, 2 p.m.

Music Theatre

Stage Director

Music Director

Scenic Designer

Lighting Designer

Costume Designer

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Production Director

Stage Combat Director

Assistant Director

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Emma Donnelly

Christie Conover

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Cabildo score typeset by

Proving Up: Libretto

Proving Up: Based on the short story by

Lili Tobias

Royce Vavrek

Karen Russesll

Proving Up by Missy Mizzoli and Royce Vavrek presented under license from G. Schirmer Inc. and Associated Music Publishers, copyright owners.

NEED TO KNOW FOR THE SHOW

- PHOTOS and VIDEO RECORDINGS are prohibited during the performance.
- See Page 9 of this publication for additional show and venue policies.

Cast

CABILDO

Thursday/Saturday

Barker/Jaoler

Marcus Schaller

Tom/Dominique

Miguel A. Ortega Bañales

Mary

Rebecca Seifert

Pierre Lafitte

Max Vann

The Lady Valerie

Kristina Butler

Ensemble

Ruby Anderson, Eric Wang, Lydia Blaisdell,
Simeon Wallace, Madison Falkenstine, Sidney
Grimm, Alleigh Watson and Adam Wells

Friday/Sunday

Barker/Jaoler

Benaiah Axlund

Tom/Dominique

Zane Pergram

Mary

Isabelle Bodley

Pierre Lafitte

Seth Tack

The Lady Valerie

Caitlyn Fuller

Ensemble

Ruby Anderson, Eric Wang, Lydia Blaisdell,
Thomas Bocchi, Camila Rabelo, Kailyn Martino,
Katiann Nelson and Sam Wetzel

PROVING UP

Thursday/Saturday

Miles

Simeon Wallace

Pa Zegner

Adam Wells

Ma Zegner

Madison Falkenstine

Little Daughter

Sidney Grimm

Taller Daughter

Alleigh Watson

Sodbuster

Marcus Schaller

Peter

Colin Ring

Friday/Sunday

Miles

Thomas Bocchi

Pa Zegner

Sam Wetzel

Ma Zegner

Camila Rabelo

Little Daughter

Kailyn Martino

Taller Daughter

Katiann Nelson

Sodbuster

Benaiah Axlund

Peter

Colin Ring

Orchestra

Violin I

Jordan Grantonic

Violin II

Alan Chan

Viola

Conrad Sclar

Cello

Sophie Stubbs

Double bass

Eleanor Zhukenova

Flute

Andrea Kloehn

Clarinet

Jason Olney

Bassoon

Shih-Han Chiu

Horn

Sarah Zhukenova

Trumpet

Rebecca Ortiz

Percussion

Christopher Martin

Harp

Janet Harriman

Piano

Alaina de Bellevue



Photos, from top: Lafitte Cell, Cabildo Prison, 1950; A family and their sod house, Custer County, Nebraska, 1886.

Synopsis

CABILDO

New Orleans, 1950, and two young lovers find themselves on a tour of the Spanish plantation, then prison, now museum - the Cabildo. As the tour moves along, Mary finds herself fascinated and deeply absorbed in the story of what transpired in this historic room.

New Orleans, 1812, and the legendary pirate, Pierre Lafitte, has joined General Andrew Jackson in the fight for America only to be imprisoned for the murder of his dearly beloved. Awaiting execution, Lafitte's commander, Dominique, visits him, relaying a message from General Jackson that could result in his escape. If Lafitte agrees to leave piracy behind and join the fight in defending New Orleans in the wake of the British siege he

will find his cell door open to freedom. It is not clear who or how his cell was opened, but rumor has it that the United States exists because of the power of true love.

PROVING UP

Inspired by the Homestead Act of 1862 and the promise of getting a section of "Uncle Sam's farm," the Zegner family left Philadelphia for the Nebraska Prairie to obtain their American Dream. In order to prove that he is an official landowner, Pa Zegner and his family must meet the following regulations: have a sod house, acres of growing grain, five years of consistent harvest, and a glass window, all to be documented by a traveling Inspector.

Five years have passed and Pa has finally obtained the last obligatory item, the only known glass window in the Hox River Valley; and now the family eagerly awaits the Inspector's arrival. Pa has heard that the Inspector will be passing through the area, so he and Ma send their youngest son, Miles, out to meet and escort him back to the homestead. Since a fellow farmer shared the window with Pa, he believes it only right to do the same. Pa instructs Miles to share the window with the farmer so both families can pass their inspection and "prove up." Miles is to do whatever necessary to get the window back and then ride home with the Inspector. The Zegner's fixation on "proving up" never wanes even under the most dire and dangerous of situations.

Program Notes

STAGE DIRECTOR'S NOTE

When I first read the libretti for *Cabildo* and *Proving Up*, I was struck that two so seemingly different pieces written 84 years apart shared such a challenging theme. While *Proving Up* deals with a family's unwavering dedication to achieving the American dream regardless of the most impossible of circumstances and *Cabildo* suggests that true heroism is inspired by love over anything else, both pieces deal with the displacement of indigenous people from their native lands.

Cabildo centers around the story of the historical figure, the pirate Pierre Lafitte, who joined General Andrew Jackson in the battle of New Orleans during the War of 1812, securing the United States'

freedom. Lafitte was known as a “gentleman” pirate; he achieved wealth by sending crews out to maraud and capture ships traveling from Africa and would sell the passengers as slaves in New Orleans. He did no thieving himself; today, he is remembered as a hero. Additionally, regardless of the number of native people who are also remembered as heroes for fighting alongside these men, more than 10,000 indigenous people were killed and even more displaced during this war.

In response to the Homestead Act of 1862, the Zegner family moved west to “Prove Up” and become rightful landowners. They did everything right, adhering to the government’s stipulations to be granted a title for 60 acres of land. In settling this “unclaimed” territory, homesteaders like the Zegners declared land already belonging to the hundreds of tribes who inhabited the area—their own.

Amy Beach and Missy Mazzoli use their operas to remind us that there are always consequences to our actions, no matter the intention or impact. Let us take this moment to honor some of the original stewards and storytellers of the lands on which we stand and of whom we speak of tonight. Native tribes to Boulder: Arapaho and Cheyenne. Native tribes to Nebraska: Omaha, Arapaho and Cheyenne. Native tribes to New Orleans: Chitimacha and Choctaw.

MUSIC DIRECTOR’S NOTE

Amy Beach was one of the most fascinating figures in American music. She was America’s most famous turn-of-the-century female composer, and her Gaelic symphony was the first Symphony to be performed in the U.S. by a female composer. Her compositions range from orchestral music to song and chamber music, as well as musical theatre. She was a brilliant pianist, famous throughout the U.S. and Europe for her playing. And all this despite being a woman who was, according to her marriage requirement: “to live according to [her husband’s] status, that is, function as a society matron and patron of the arts.” She also agreed never to teach piano and to limit herself to two recitals a year, with the proceeds going to charity.

After her death in 1944, her papers were given to the MacDowell Colony, and amongst them was an unpublished opera, *Cabildo*, which she

had composed there in 1932. She had long expressed a wish to write an opera and her hope was that, being small scale (an orchestra of three players!), it would not suffer the fate of most operas and be forgotten. But forgotten it was; the first performance didn’t take place until 1945, nine weeks after her death. It was then neglected for another 40 years. It has since been revived a number of times and is beginning to get a foothold in the repertoire.

I was gifted a copy of the manuscript by the foundation in 2018. It is a fascinating document, and with the help of Lili Tobias, composer and Beach expert, to whom I am deeply indebted, I am creating a performing version for CU Boulder. Her labor of love in transcribing *Cabildo* and helping bring this wonderful piece back to life has been of immeasurable help.

The manuscript is full of handwritten corrections, comments to help understand the sometimes strange harmonies, and some obviously irritated exhortations as to how the piece should be performed. But there are also many discrepancies and many things that are obviously errors, where we have to make decisions about what we think is the correct version.

After much work, we are delighted to present what we hope is what Amy Beach envisaged when she wrote the piece. It was a great disappointment to her that she did not hear *Cabildo* performed, and we are happy to be a part of helping revive this delightful and unusual work.

Personnel

RUBY ANDERSON (Ensemble) is so excited to be in her first opera! She is a sophomore in the Bachelor of Music in musical theatre program studying under the direction of Abigail Nims. She was last seen as Ms. Charlotte Cardoza in *Titanic*, and has recently been performing with CU’s Impact Playback Ensemble doing interactive theatre for communities. She’d like to thank Maestro Carthy and Ms. Widzer for the opportunity to be in this production. Enjoy the show!

BENAIH W. AXLUND (Barker/Jaoler and Sodbuster) is a baritone who enjoys sharing his love of opera, choir and song. He graduated from Pacific Lutheran University in 2021 with a Bachelor of Music degree in vocal performance. At Pacific Lutheran University, Axlund had roles in many productions, notably The Parson in *Leos*

Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*, Bartolo in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, and Judge Turpin in Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*. At Vashon Opera, he has taken part in several performances—most recently as Lakai in Richard Strauss's *Ariadne*. Currently, Axlund is working on his Master of Music degree in voice at University of Colorado Boulder, where he studies with Andrew Garland.

LYDIA BLAISDELL (Ensemble) This is Blaisdell's first opera production her at CU Boulder and she is ecstatic to get the opportunity to work with and perform along side such talented, experienced peers and staff. Blaisdell is a sophomore in the Bachelor of Music in musical theater program studying under Professor Matthew Chellis. She has participated in a number of shows her at CU including her favorites, *Chicago* as Roxie Hart, and most recently, *Titanic the Musical* as Eleanor Widener.

THOMAS LEO BOCCHI (Miles) is a vocalist equally versed in opera, oratorio/concert works, and musical theatre, who is currently pursuing his DMA under the tutelage of Matthew Chellis. With Colorado Bach Ensemble he performed as soloist/chorus in Bach's B Minor Mass, *St Matthew Passion*, Handel's *Messiah*, multiple cantatas, and was a finalist in their Young Artist Competition. Opera credits include Ben Morris' opera (*The Fall of Man*, ATLAS Institute), Joe (Paterson's *Companion*, MMF), and with Eklund Opera, Lesbus (*Agrippina*), the Witch (*Hänsel & Gretel*), Basilio/Curzio (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), and Suitor/Chorus (Heggie's *It's a Wonderful Life!*).

ISABELLE (IZZY) BODLEY (Mary) is a junior pursuing her BME choral general. She studies under Jennifer DeDominichi and Abigail Nims and has sung with the CU Treble Chorus, University Choir, and Chamber Singers. She has performed in productions across the Front Range, including *Falstaff* (Innkeeper/Chorus), *Cendrillon* (Fairy/Chorus), *La Bohème* (Chorus), *Cinderella* (Madame), *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Simeon) and *A Doll's House* (Anna). Bodley currently works as a private voice instructor at the Arts Hub in Lafayette. She would like to thank her teachers and family for their incredible support and hopes you enjoy the show!

KRISTINA BUTLER (Lady Valerie) is passionate about storytelling through music, especially through contemporary works. She has performed with the Journey North Opera Company, Dakota Valley Symphony, St. Olaf Band, Minnesota Symphonic Winds and the Sinfónica de Guayaquil. Butler is a 2021 recipient of the Fulbright Grant to Ecuador where she researched, produced, and recorded a new music album titled *Sueños de Zazá*. Her recent training includes the Minnesota Source Song Festival and Opera Reading Project, where she played Billie Jean King in *Balls*. Butler's roles include Ida in *Die Fledermaus* and Littler Daughter in *Proving Up*. She studies with Professor Jennifer Bird-Arvidsson.

MADISON FALKENSTINE (Ma Zegner) is a soprano based in Boulder where she is a master's student at Colorado University studying with Jennifer Bird. Falkenstine has been featured in a variety of concerts, operas and musicals and has sung the soprano solos in the following masterworks: Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*, G.F. Handel's *Gloria*, Charpentier's *Messe de Minuit* and John Rutter's *Gloria*. She has appeared with the Montview Westminster Choir, Colorado Springs Philharmonic and Parish House Baroque Chamber Orchestra. Additionally, Falkenstine premiered *True Women of the West* with Art Song Colorado, of which she was the curator and performer. She has attended the prestigious Taos Opera Institute and, most recently, the Vocal Arts Festival with Opera Theatre of the Rockies.

CAITLYN FULLER (Lady Valerie) is a young lyric soprano currently pursuing a master's degree in voice performance and voice pedagogy at the University of Colorado Boulder. While attending the University of Colorado Boulder she has studied with Jennifer Bird-Arvidsson and Julie Simson. She obtained her bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan where she studied with Scott Piper and worked with world renowned coaches and clinicians. She has studied roles such as Nannetta (*Falstaff*) and Rosemary (*JFK*). She will perform the role of Poppea in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* with the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival this July.

SIDNEY GRIMM (Littler Daughter) is a soprano obtaining a Master of Music at the University of Colorado Boulder, studying with Professor Jennifer Bird-Arvidsson. Last year, she graduated from Central Washington University with a Bachelor of Arts in vocal performance and a Bachelor of Science in psychology. There, she played the roles of Cupid in *Orpheus in the Underworld*, as well as scenes from *Così fan tutte* as Fiordiligi and Violetta in *La traviata*. Last spring, she was honored to be a soloist for Central Washington University's production of the Fauré *Requiem* with their symphony orchestra.

KAILYN MARTINO (Littler Daughter) is a soprano from Pittsburgh. In 2020, she graduated from Baldwin Wallace Conservatory with a BM in voice. This May, she will earn her MM in voice performance and pedagogy at CU Boulder, studying with soprano Jennifer Bird-Arvidsson. Some of her recent appearances include Amor in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Nannetta in *Falstaff* and Elle in Poulenc's *La Voix Humaine*. In 2018, she was Younger Alyce in the Midwest premiere of Tom Cipullo's *Glory Denied*. She has performed with Longmont Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Opera Theater, Eklund Opera and more.

KATIANN NELSON (Taller Daughter), originally from Waterford, Wisconsin, is a master's degree student at the University of Colorado Boulder, studying under Abigail Nims. Having finished her undergraduate degree in vocal

music education and instrumental performance (piano and clarinet), Nelson moved to Colorado to continue her performance education in voice. While in Wisconsin, Nelson experienced many musical opportunities, including soloing with the Carthage Philharmonic Orchestra on Amy Beach's Piano Concerto in C-sharp minor, and becoming a collaborative piano fellow with the Kenosha Opera Festival. Nelson has been seen with Eklund Opera previously as Meg in *Falstaff*.

MIGUEL A. ORTEGA (Tom/Dominique), Mexican singer, pianist and conductor; currently a first-year DMA student in voice performance and pedagogy at CU Boulder. Dedicated to developing honest artistry and musical quality on and off the stage, he has appeared in a number of the recent Eklund Opera productions in roles such as *Traviata* (Alfredo), *Bohème* (Rodolfo), *Falstaff* (Fenton) and others including off-stage conducting and instrumental duties. He is currently studying voice with professor Matthew Chellis while also enjoying an assistant/apprentice role with conductor Nicholas Carthy.

ZANE GABRIEL PERGRAM (Tom/Dominique) is a master's candidate and teaching assistant at the University of Colorado Boulder, studying with John Seesholtz. He holds an undergraduate degree from Bowling Green State University. Pergram has recently appeared in the Detroit Opera Chorus and Toledo Opera and Symphony Choruses. He is grateful to his mentors pianist Kevin Bylsma and Mozartian tenor Shawn Mathey. Recently, Pergram spent summers building hiking trails on the Kenai Peninsula in Alaska.

CAMILA RABELO (Ma Zegner) Born in São Paulo, Brazil, the soprano is currently pursuing an Artist Diploma in voice performance at the University of Colorado Boulder in the studio of Professor Jennifer Bird. She holds a bachelor's degree in voice performance from the University of São Paulo, where she studied with professors Francisco Campos and Ricardo Ballestero, and a master's degree from the University of Wyoming under the guidance of Professor Katrina Zook. Additionally, she completed a year-long masterclass program, Meisterkurs Gesang, with Professor Margreet Honig at the University of Basel, Switzerland. Rabelo participated in festivals in Germany, including the Chorakademie Lübeck and the Bachakademie Stuttgart. Some of her operatic roles include Mimì, Micaela, Pamina, Donna Anna and Alice Ford, among others. Rabelo was awarded in some singing competitions in Brazil, with emphasis on the Maria Callas Competition, securing the First Grand Prize for Female Voice.

MARCUS SCHALLER (Barker/Jaoler and Sodbuster) is a fourth year undergraduate in the College of Music, pursuing a Bachelor of Music in vocal performance under the erudite and whimsical tutelage of Professor Andrew Garland, and is planning to pursue vocal

performance, particularly within contemporary opera, in graduate school and beyond. Previous roles with Eklund Opera include Pistola in Verdi's *Falstaff* and Le Surintendant in Massenet's *Cendrillon*. When not singing, they can be found engaging in improvised theater, composing digital sound paintings and spending every possible moment outside.

REBECCA SEIFERT (Mary) is a mezzo soprano from Phoenix Arizona. She holds a bachelor's degree in vocal performance from the University of Oregon, where she graduated cum laude and with an achievement award in recognition of "Outstanding Vocal Performer" in her graduating class. Some of her recent roles include Isabella in Gioachino Rossini's *L'Italiana in Algeri*, Desiree Armfeldt in Stephen Sondheim's *A Little Night Music*, and Fuego in Antonio de Liteser's *Los Elementos*. Seifert is a first year Master of Music student majoring in vocal performance under Professor Abigail Nims.

SETH TACK (Pierre Lafitte), baritone, is a second-year Doctor of Musical Arts student under the tutelage of Andrew Garland. Last spring, Tack performed the role of Pandolfe in Eklund Opera's production of Massenet's *Cendrillon*. Tack received his Master of Music degree in voice from Michigan State University in 2022, where he performed Sid in *Albert Herring* (Britten) and David in *A Hand of Bridge* (Barber). Tack received his Bachelor of Music degree from Drake University in 2020 (summa cum laude), where he performed the roles of Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*, Mozart), Pistola (*Falstaff*, Verdi), and Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*, Mozart).

MAX VANN (Pierre Lafitte) Received his undergraduate degrees in vocal performance and music education from Georgia Southern University. Vann is currently a first year masters student studying vocal performance and pedagogy with Professor Garland at CU Boulder.

SIMEON WALLACE (Miles), is a tenor from the foothills of North Carolina. He has a passion for exploring the compositions of Black composers who intricately crafted idiomatic classical compositions through the lens of African American culture. He has featured in a masterclass on African American song with Louise Toppin, editor of *An Anthology of African and African Diaspora Songs*. Recently he portrayed Fenton in Verdi's *Falstaff* with Eklund Opera. He holds a BM in music education from Appalachian State and is pursuing an MM in vocal performance and pedagogy from CU Boulder under Matthew Chellis.

ALLEIGH WATSON (Taller Daughter) is a Master of Music student from Knoxville, Tennessee. She is in her first year at the University of Colorado Boulder, pursuing a degree in MM vocal pedagogy and performance. Before CU Boulder, Watson attended Lee University in Cleveland, Tennessee, earning her degree in Vocal Performance in May of 2023 under the study of Andrea

Dismukes. Watson is currently teaching private voice lessons, leading sectionals in her local church choir and performing in numerous gigs and masterclasses throughout the year. She will perform her solo recital and finish her pedagogical research within the next year. Watson is studying with mezzo soprano vocal faculty member Professor Abigail Nims.

ADAM HIRAMA WELLS (Pa Zegner) is in their second year of the Artist Diploma studying under the tutelage of Andrew Garland. Wells has appeared in a multitude of 20th century operas and musicals ranging from Paul in Glass' *Les Enfants Terribles* to the title role in Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*. They have sung with companies including The Glimmerglass Festival, Rochester Philharmonic and Ohio Light Opera. Wells will join the Charlottesville Opera as 2024 Ader Emerging Artist this summer performing the role of Oliver Hix and covering the role of Harold Hill in *The Music Man*. They hold degrees from the Eastman School of Music and Oberlin Conservatory.

SAMUEL WETZEL (Pa Zegner) is a master's student studying with Andrew Garland. He has most recently sung the title role in Opera Steamboat's production of *Brundibár*, Ford in Eklund Opera's production of *Falstaff* and is a finalist in the Colorado Bach Ensemble's Bach competition for aspiring vocal soloists. Wetzel has also sung Pandolfe in Massenet's *Cendrillon*, Marcello in *La Bohème* and participated in 2023's CU NOW festival, all with Eklund Opera. Wetzel earned a bachelor's degree in voice at Baldwin Wallace University, where he notably sang Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze Di Figaro*, and in the annual Bach Festival.

NICHOLAS CARTHY (Music Director) is now in his 19th season with Eklund Opera. He studied at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria. He served as musical assistant to Bernard Haitink and Sir Georg Solti at the Salzburg Festival and to Daniel Barenboim in Paris, Chicago and Bayreuth. Carthy has conducted opera productions in Vienna, Salzburg, Oslo, Stockholm, Winterthur, Milan, Rome, Naples, Bonn, Eugene and Tel Aviv. He has conducted orchestras, including the Colorado Symphony, Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie, Orchestra RAI di Torino, Orchestra San Carlo di Napoli and the Accademia Filarmonica Roma. As a collaborative pianist he has performed in many of the world's great halls, including Carnegie Hall, Suntory Hall, Wigmore Hall, the Bolshoi Theatre and the Musikverein Vienna. He is music director of the Helgeland Sinfonietta and the Toppen International Summer School in Norway. He is well known for his public lectures at the University of Colorado and beyond, and is occasionally heard on the radio, spreading around his uncurbable enthusiasm for music and history.

CHRISTIE CONOVER (Production Assistant) wears many hats, having returned to her alma mater as production assistant for Eklund Opera. In her active solo career she has performed lead roles with Komische Oper Berlin, Minnesota Opera, Opera Colorado and concerts with the Colorado Symphony, Colorado Music Festival and Colorado Springs Philharmonic, among others. Conover fondly remembers her many roles with Eklund Opera and singing in the inaugural CU NOW.

YUKI IZUMIHARA (she/her) (Scenic Designer) is a scenic, projection and production designer born in Shimonoseki City, Japan and based in Oakland, California. Izumihara's work is influenced by years of martial arts training and is animated by a belief in discipline, ethics and craftsmanship. Recent productions include projection design for SF Symphony's Lunar New Year, production design for *Inkwell* with ODC Dance, projection design for Cirque Musica's *Holiday Wonderland*, production design for *Semele* and *Tosca* with Opera Santa Barbara; scenic design for *INTERSTATE* with East West Players and projection design for *The Cuban Vote* with Miami New Drama (winner of Carbonell Awards Outstanding Achievement of an Artistic Specialty for Projection Design). Her work has been featured at LA Opera, the New World Symphony, The Adrienne Arsht Center, Boston Lyric Opera, Opera Omaha, San Diego Opera, Heart Beat Opera, the Hammer Museum, Getty Villa Museum and various theaters in Los Angeles.

JASON KYLE ESTRADA (he/him/his) (Wig and Makeup Designer) is a hair and makeup artist and costume designer currently based out of Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He is a graduate of the UNC School of the Arts with an MFA in wig and makeup design. Estrada has worked in many arenas of the entertainment industry from the stage to the screen. He builds custom wigs from his studio and loves to garden. He is also a proud member of IATSE local 322. Estrada is an alum of CU Boulder.

JENN MELCHER GALVIN (Properties Designer and Scenic Artist), MFA, joined Eklund Opera at CU Boulder in 2007, and she has considered it her professional home ever since. Galvin has painted for prestigious summer companies including the Colorado Shakespeare Festival and Ohio Light Opera. Locally, Galvin has worked for Macky Auditorium, BDT Stage, Chataqua Auditorium and BETC. Her hobbies include fiction, needlecraft and hiking. In 2010, Galvin walked 400 miles of an ancient pilgrimage road across Northern Spain called the Camino de Santiago. She thanks her cat Nutmeg, husband Peter and son Dominic for their love and support.

RON MUELLER (Production Director) has served Eklund Opera as technical director and now production director for more than a quarter of a century. He has also designed scenery and/or lighting for many Eklund productions in that time, most recently *Titanic* and

Drowsy Chaperone. Also a BETC ensemble member, he designed scenery for last season's *The Children*, and a dozen others over the last decade. He has also designed scenery or lighting for productions at Crested Butte Music Festival, Skylight Opera Theatre, Colorado Shakespeare Festival, Boulder's Dinner Theatre, Theatre X, Milwaukee Chamber Theater, Boulder Broadway Company, CU Boulder Theatre and Dance and the University of Denver's Lamont School of Music.

ANN PIANO (Costume Designer) As the costume coordinator for Opera Colorado since 2003, she has designed costumes: *Don Giovanni* (2013), *Carmen* (2014) and *The Magic Flute* (2015). She has designed more than 100 shows for Denver area opera, theater and dance companies. In 2012, she won a True West "Best Costume Design" Award for *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* at Curious Theatre. Most recently, she designed *Tosca* at Bravo! Vail Music Festival and *La Boheme* and *Cendrillon* for Eklund Opera at CU Boulder. Piano has a BFA in Fashion Design from Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, with a minor in fine art.

KARALYN STAR PYTEL (Lighting Designer) has been doing lighting design in the Denver metro area for more than 20 years. Most recently Star's work can be seen at Wonderbound Ballet, a Denver based contemporary dance company, and the *Polar Express* experience at the Colorado Railroad Museum. It's been about 15 years since Star last worked with Eklund Opera and is very excited to collaborate once again with the amazing production staff.

SARA E. WIDZER (Stage Director) is a stage and intimacy director and performance coach for opera and theatre. For the 2023-24 season: In Jan. 2024, Widzer directed the world premiere of Carla Lucero's opera *t o u c h* for Opera Birmingham for which she also did the intimacy direction. LA Opera employed her for the season as intimacy director for *Don Giovanni*, *Highway One*, *La Traviata* and the upcoming *Turandot*. She will spend the summer coaching and teaching acting at the Taos Opera Institute. Widzer has served as Stage Director for LA Opera, Washington National Opera, The Royal Opera House of Muscat, Hong Kong Arts Festival, Virginia Opera, Hawaii Opera Theatre, Chautauqua Opera Company, Opera Birmingham, Opera Santa Barbara, Long Beach Opera, Pasadena Opera, Music Academy, Cal State Northridge and Opera UCLA. She has taught opera workshop and coached young artists at UCSB, UCLA, Cal State Long Beach, FSU, Glimmerglass, the Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program at LA Opera and the Cafritz Young Artist Program at WNO. She is tenured faculty at the Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute in Los Angeles. She was the first resident acting and performance coach for Music Academy where she also taught classes in intimacy direction and consent-based practices. Widzer

is the intimacy director and consent consultant for LA Opera. Widzer has trained with Theatrical Intimacy Educators and Intimacy Directors Coordinators, Inc., with whom she is certified. She has a MM in opera direction from Florida State University, an Artist Diploma in Shakespeare from The Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, and BA in theatre from Connecticut College. She makes her home in Los Angeles. (SaraEWidzer.com)

EMMA DONNELLY (Stage Manager) is a CU Boulder alumna who is happy to be back working with the opera program. This will be her fifth show with the College of Music and first time acting as calling stage manager on an opera. She has a background in music including 10 years as a second chair violinist. As a stage manager she challenges herself to be knowledgeable in various forms of performance art from opera to comedy. This has given her the opportunity to work with companies such as The Colorado Ballet and The Santa Fe Opera. During her time outside of CU Boulder she works as a house and stage manager for the renowned comedy club, Comedy Works, in downtown Denver.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Technical Director
Jeff Rusnak

Assistant Technical Director
Ben Smith

Assistant Stage Manager
Olivia Russell Botto

Properties Manager
Jennifer Melcher Galvin

Scenic Artists
Jennifer Melcher Galvin
Lelah Radostis

Carpenters
Pearl Enssle
Joshua Kirk

Costume Shop Assistants
Nia Quan
Melissa Lubecke
Zita Kinney
Jenna Clark
Alliegh Watson
Melis Coskuncan

Draper
Kelly Gregson

Wardrobe Crew
Nia Quan

MUSIC STAFF

Head Vocal Coach
Jeremy Reger

Rehearsal Pianist and Coach
Barbara Noyes

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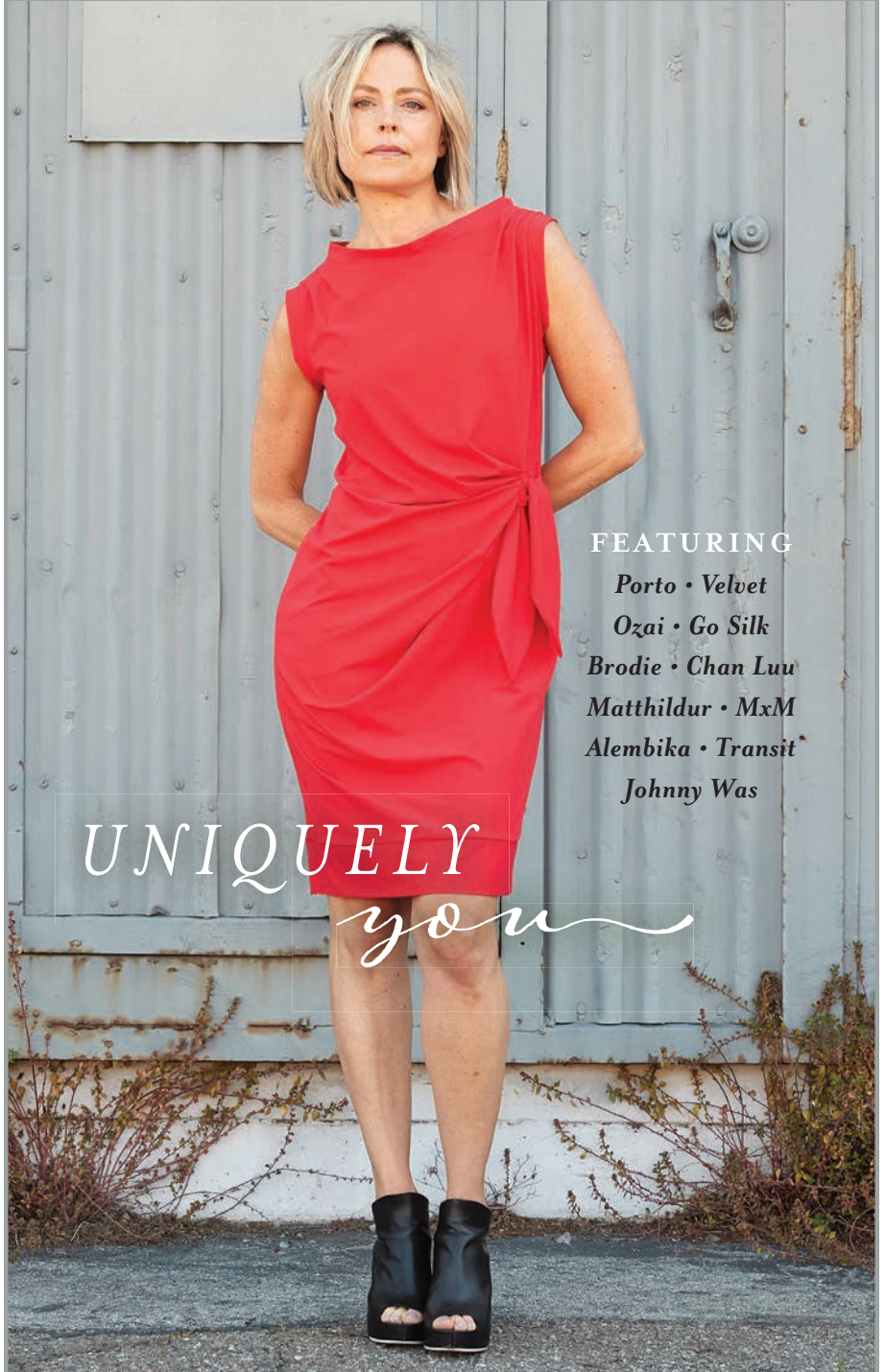
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Celebrating the legacy and impact of Anna Sie, lifelong supporter of the arts and humanity

By Allison Nitch

Known for her heartfelt philanthropy on both local and national levels, Anna Sie dedicated her life to supporting causes she felt passionate about, including students and faculty at the University of Colorado Boulder.

“She was really the most generous human being that I’ve ever met,” said CU Boulder alumna Michele Ritter (Anth’81) and University of Colorado Foundation trustee. “She really cared about people and issues, and if something came her way and she was able to make an impact—to make someone’s life better or to help in a broader way—she never missed an opportunity. She had this spirit about her that was open, generous, heartfelt and authentic.”

Sie left a powerful legacy of impact at CU Boulder, establishing a transformational student scholarship in the College of Music with her husband, John, and endowing several faculty chairs.

“At the College of Music, we aim to offer our students diverse opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration,” said John Davis, the college’s dean. “Such broad-based opportunities rely in no small part on the active, consistent engagement of our community of supporters. Anna Sie’s dedication to our college both indelibly impacted our students, programs and activities, and influenced others’ giving.”

“Anna Sie was extraordinarily committed to giving back, and in countless arenas, that is exactly what she and John accomplished for many years,” agreed Daniel Sher, College of Music dean emeritus.

“Anna was a superb partner with John, and she will be remembered for her generosity of spirit as much as philanthropic generosity.”

Changing lives through scholarships

Sie’s love of music led to the sponsorship of a student scholarship program at CU Boulder’s College of Music, which changed the lives of more than a dozen former students, including the accomplished opera singer Wei Wu (MMus’13).

After hearing then-student Wu perform at Central City Opera in 2007, the Sies were struck by the raw talent of this young man, explained Ritter. His performance inspired the couple to generously contribute to CU Boulder’s Eklund Opera Fund—specifically to support two Chinese opera singers, Wu and Yang Bo, beginning in the 2008-09 academic year.

Now a Grammy Award-winning bass, Wu trained at the People University of China, Beijing, before continuing his education at CU Boulder.

“Auntie Anna, also known as Mrs. Sie, always humbly said, ‘I am only a small part of your success,’” shared Wu. “However, I know deep down that her and Uncle John’s kindness and generosity played a significant role in my achievements.”

He continued, “She never expected anything in return, always welcoming me into her family with open arms. We cooked, laughed and shared countless memories together. She made me feel like I had a true family in the U.S.

“Now, I proudly make my Metropolitan Opera debut dedicated to Auntie Anna—a new production of Carmen opening on New Year’s Eve, one of the important performance events of the whole season. I hope to keep carrying her spirit of philanthropy forward and make her proud.”

Cultivating culture in higher education and beyond

Sie also established several faculty chairs at Front Range universities, including the Anna Maglione-Sie Chair in Italian Language & Literature at the University of Denver; and the Dan & Boyce Sher Chair at CU Boulder’s College of Music. Faculty chair positions are important opportunities on campus, as they help provide talented faculty with the flexibility and resources to pursue their creative work in a university setting.

Sie received recognition through many awards for her philanthropic work and holds an honorary doctorate in higher education at the University of Denver, an honorary doctorate in humane letters from the University of Colorado and an honorary doctorate from Regis University.

Beyond higher education, Sie helped enrich Denver’s cultural offerings. As the home of Denver Film, the Sie FilmCenter was established in 2010 and features the finest in independent and world cinema. The Sie FilmCenter also regularly hosts festivals, program series and other special events that bring filmgoers and filmmakers together to celebrate the art of film. Sie also established the prestigious annual Italian Filmmaker Award at the Denver Film Festival.

“She was an immigrant child from southern Italy and she said she learned her English by watching movies,” noted Ritter. “She loved American movies. Everything she did was about giving back and about drawing on her own personal experiences—sometimes challenges and struggles—to make it easier for other people that might be also experiencing those [same] challenges and struggles.”

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The Eklund Opera Fund provides support for activities related to the Eklund Opera Program in the College of Music at the University of Colorado Boulder.

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Concert: Cary Morin

MARCH 21
Film: Dead Man
(1995, R)

MARCH 23
Colorado Symphony
"The Ugly Duckling"

MARCH 28
NCAR Explorer Series—
Total Solar Eclipses

MARCH 29
Film/Concert: Mont
Alto Motion Picture
Orchestra—"The Patsy"
(1928, NR)

MARCH 30
Film/Concert: Mont
Alto Motion Picture
Orchestra—"Show
People" (1928, NR)

APRIL 4
Concert:
Slim Cessna's Auto Club

APRIL 11
TRANSformative Stories
from Transgender &
Non-Binary Leaders

APRIL 12
Friday Afternoon
Concert: James
Hoskins & Victor
Mestas Compositions
for Cello & Piano

APRIL 18
Film: Smoke Signals
(1998, PG)

APRIL 25
Concert: Foxfeather

MAY 2
Film: Asteroid City
(2023, PG-13)



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The Takács String Quartet Program Support Fund, CUltivate Undergraduate String Scholarship Fund, and Takács Scholarship Endowment in Memory of Fay Shwayder provide valuable scholarship funding for the College of Music's String Program and the Takács String Quartet residency.

\$10,000+

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