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JANUARY-MARCH 2025

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# WELCOME



Friends and patrons,

When I took on the role of executive director of CU Presents in August, I knew that I'd be supporting the CU Boulder College of Music in continuing its tradition of excellence and high-quality performances. What I didn't expect was the variety of new experiences I would discover by delving deeper into the programming we create and support.

This fall, I attended an outreach performance of *Hänsel und Gretel* presented by the College of Music's Eklund Opera Program with hundreds of elementary school students, many experiencing their first live exposure to the performing arts. I saw the gravity-defying acrobatics of Circa's *Duck Pond* at the Artist Series. I laughed at a satiric examination of bullying and its consequences in our musical theatre program's *Heathers*, and I was stunned by our Wind Symphony's collaboration with the ~Nois saxophone quartet to present Viet Cuong's *Second Nature*. At each of these events, I was thrilled to join our audiences on impactful and emotionally transformative journeys.

I'm also looking ahead to next fall. One of my great joys is curating the College of Music's longstanding Faculty Tuesdays series along with Dean John Davis. This free recital series highlights the virtuosity and diverse repertory of the college's own faculty and we hope to see you at the series opener on Aug. 26, 2025. The event promises to be memorable, featuring rotating performances by our piano faculty to celebrate the generous gift of a brand-new Steinway grand piano for Grusin Music Hall. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Gregory Silvus and Deidre Ferris for their leadership and generosity in making the lead gift for this Music Advisory Board-led campaign.

If you see me at a performance this spring, please say hello! I love visiting with our valued patrons about what makes our shared experiences meaningful.

Warmly,

Andrew "Metz" Metzroth  
Executive Director, CU Presents

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## CU ★ PRESENTS

JANUARY-MARCH 2025

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This CU Presents program is published by:  
The Publishing House, Westminster, CO.

Angie Flachman Johnson **Publisher**  
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Stacey Krull **Production Manager**  
Wilbur E. Flachman **President Emeritus**

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# SPOTLIGHT



## Swashbuckling Fun for the Whole Family

By Henry Michaels

*"I am the very model of a modern Major-General,  
I've information vegetable, animal and mineral,  
I know the kings of England, and I quote the fights historical  
From Marathon to Waterloo, in order categorical."*

An all-time tongue twister, the "Major-General's Song" is the most beloved tune from what is perhaps the most beloved operetta of Arthur Sullivan and W.S. Gilbert: *The Pirates of Penzance*. Delivered at breakneck speed and chock-full of wit and humor, this legendary musical number is the very model of the style of Gilbert and Sullivan's lively, quick-witted comedy.

And when the CU Boulder College of Music Eklund Opera Program presents *The Pirates of Penzance* in March, fun will surely abound.

"The feel and vibe of this show is so much fun. I mean, it takes place on a pirate ship, right?!" says Eklund Opera Program Director Leigh Holman.

"It really is a sight to see. We have a luxurious, beautiful set. There's dance, lots of physicality like tumbling and a ton of swashbuckling fun with the pirates.

Then there are the jokes, which just come at you one after the other. It's the greatest of satire. And the music. The music is gorgeous."

*The Pirates of Penzance* tells the story of Frederic, a young man recently finished with his apprenticeship among a kindly group of pirates. He falls in love—don't they always?—with Mabel, one of the daughters of Major-General Stanley. Hijinks and hilarity ensue as the pirates attempt to find wives and Frederic discovers that his time with the buccaneers is honor-bound to continue because of a Leap Day technicality.

Like many of Gilbert and Sullivan's operettas, *The Pirates of Penzance* is satire, a lampooning of the concept of duty and of Victorian-era norms. The College of Music's production will also feature updates to some lyrics and dialogue, a common practice with Gilbert and Sullivan works.

"Unlike Mozart or Verdi where you would never change anything that they wrote, we know that Gilbert and Sullivan would prefer updates because that was the point of their satire," says Holman. "Gilbert as the librettist wanted to relate to what was going on in the audience's time."

Perhaps best of all, this swashbuckling musical extravaganza is seriously hilarious fun for the whole family. From young to old and everyone in between, *The Pirates of Penzance*—with all its music, its comedy and its dynamism—has something for everyone.


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# HOPE AND GRAVITY

By Michael Hollinger

Nine lives entangle in delightfully surprising and comical ways when an elevator crashes in a major American city. Michael Hollinger's comedy is a reminder that there are only a few degrees of separation between all of us.

**Jan. 23 - Feb. 16**

The Savoy | Denver

**Feb. 21 - Feb. 23**

The Nomad Playhouse | Boulder

# THE WHITE CHIP

By Sean Daniels

Straight from its critically acclaimed run off-Broadway, *The White Chip* is the true story of one man's journey from alcoholism to recovery in a play *The New York Times* described as "laugh-out-loud funny and gasp-inducing, self-inflicted tragedy."

**Apr. 10 - May 4**

The Dairy Arts Center | Boulder



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# UPCOMING EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

# CU PRESENTS

## ARTIST SERIES



**Renée Fleming**  
Voice of Nature  
Jan. 31, 2025



**Kodo**  
One Earth Tour 2025:  
Warabe  
Feb. 15, 2025



**Sweet Honey in the Rock**  
Feb. 28, 2025



**Martha Graham  
Dance Company**  
April 26, 2025

## COLLEGE OF MUSIC



**The Pirates of Penzance**  
By Gilbert and Sullivan  
March 14-16, 2025



**Big Fish**  
By John August and  
Andrew Lippa  
April 24-27, 2025

## TAKÁCS QUARTET



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# FACULTY TUESDAYS SPRING 2025

- Hsiao-Ling Lin, piano** | Jan. 14  
**Dan Silver, clarinet** | Jan. 21  
**David Korevaar, piano** | Jan. 28  
**Suyeon Kim, piano** | Feb. 4  
**Doug Walter, percussion** | Feb. 11  
**Andrew Garland and Jeremy Reger** | Feb. 18  
**Sterling Tanner, trombone** | Feb. 25  
**Side-by-Side Chamber Music** | March 4  
**Wind Faculty Showcase** | March 11  
**Mutsumi Moteki, piano** | March 18

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**VISITOR INFO**

### LATE SEATING

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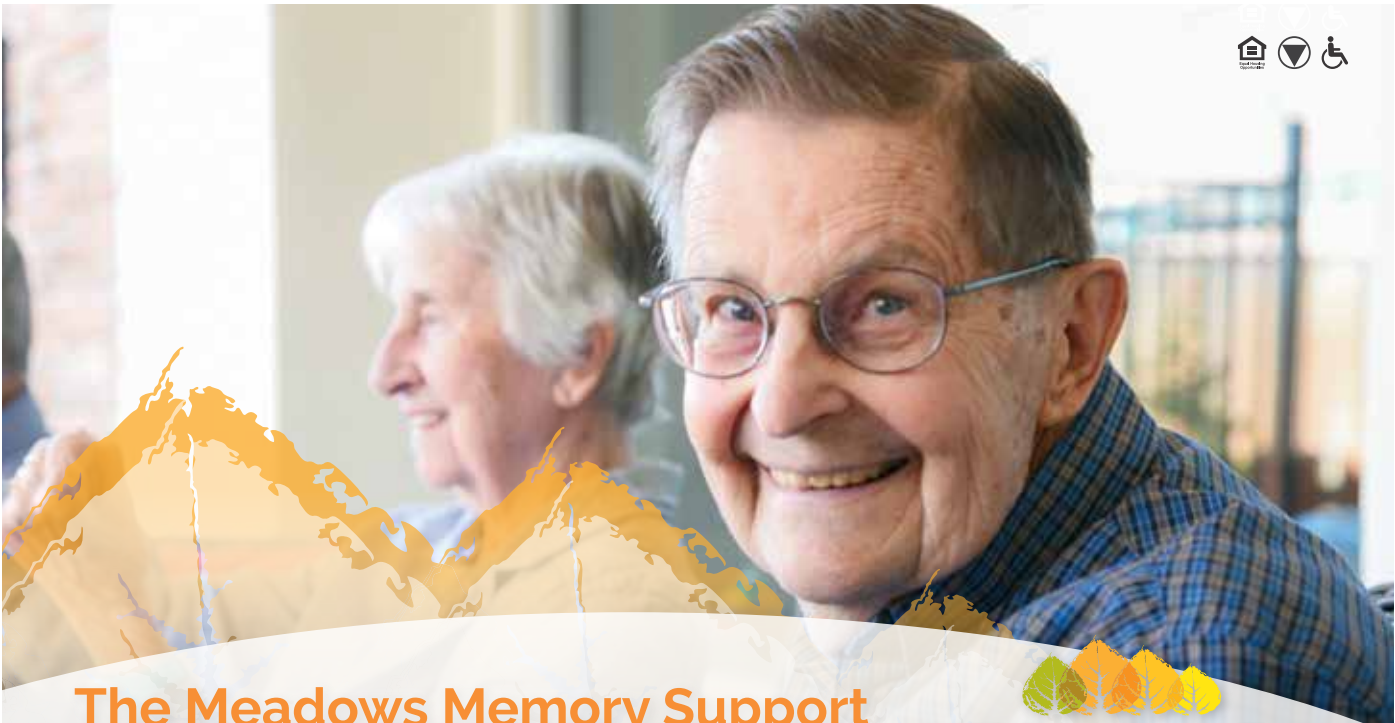
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# SPOTLIGHT



## Sweet Honey in the Rock Continues to Find Hope in the Darkness

By Adam Goldstein

For more than 50 years, the vocal ensemble Sweet Honey in the Rock has worked to address the ills of the world through the power of song.

Dozens of vocalists have brought their talents to the ensemble since Bernice Johnson Reagon, a teacher with the Black Repertory Company, formally founded the group in 1973. Since then, the all-female group has tackled myriad social issues through their a cappella musical stylings including civil rights, domestic violence, immigration and—on their 2016 album *#LoveInEvolution*—the toll of gun violence in the United States including those claimed by police violence and by the school shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

“Since we started writing this piece, we’ve had to keep adding names and sadly, we’ll be adding more before things change,” founding member Carol Maillard says of “Second Line Blues,” the track from the album that directly addresses the crisis.

That unflinching approach to society’s most dire issues is nothing new for the storied ensemble which has long examined contemporary society through a musical lens that draws from the rich tradition of Black female music in the United States. With strains of Gospel, spiritual and traditional hymns, the group in its current quartet form never shies from the world’s woes and will surely offer topical depth during its performance at Macky Auditorium on Feb. 28.

Even so, the note that shines through in the group’s music is full of hope and positivity and has always offered promise. The very name of the group hints at a better world—Sweet Honey in the Rock refers to a New Testament psalm that speaks of a world so abundant that even the rocks offer honey when split open. It’s a vision of a world that offers justice, peace and equality.

Through the group’s different iterations, which have featured more than 20 vocalists, that push toward a better world has remained consistent. The current lineup—which consists of members Nitanju Bolade Casel, Aisha Kahlil, Louise Robinson and Carol Maillard, as well as featured musician Romeir Mendez—continues the musical mission that has earned the group three Grammy Award nominations and spots on some of the world’s most prominent stages.

The group continues to strive for access and equity, whether it’s through their original compositions, their unique interpretations of music from artists ranging from Marvin Gaye to Bob Dylan or the way that they present their art. The group has long offered American Sign Language interpretations during its shows, a feature that will be part of the group’s performance at Macky.

It’s an artistic approach that offers solutions, even in the face of struggle, injustice and darkness.

“We are very forward-thinking as an organization, constantly re-evaluating how we can express concepts to uplift and create change through our music and concerts,” Maillard says. “*#LoveInEvolution* has a more contemporary sound and feel because as people in the group grow and change, we want to hear different things, feel different things and bring fresh elements to our presentation.”

*The performance is sponsored by the Center for African and African American Studies (CAAAS) and the Colorado Association for the Deaf.*

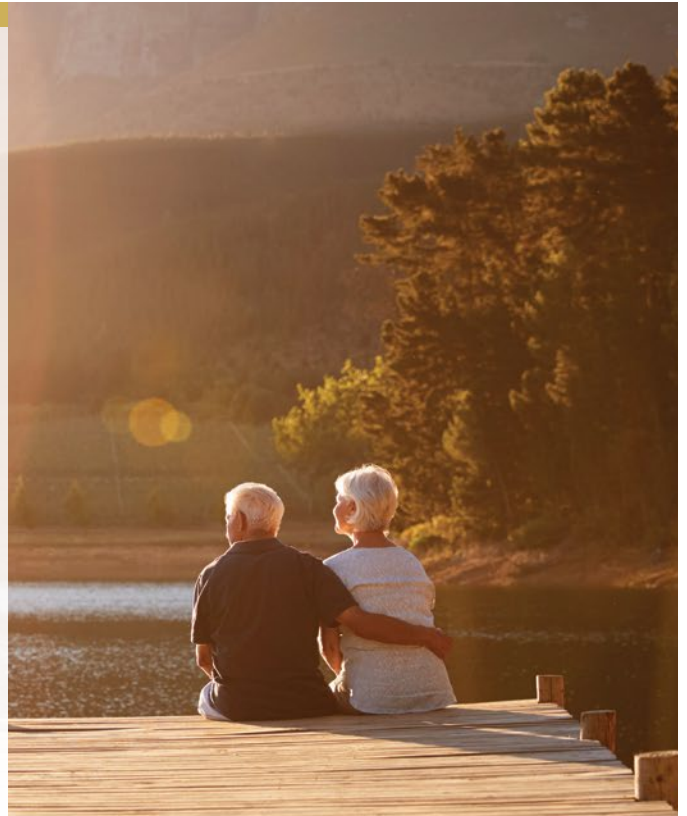
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# Sweet Honey in the Rock® Feb. 28



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# SPOTLIGHT



## 2024-25 Ekstrand Graduate Student Competition winners announced

By Kathryn Bistodeau

We are thrilled to announce the winner of the 2024-25 Bruce Ekstrand Memorial Graduate Student Performance Competition: The Koa String Quartet!

The College of Music's current graduate string quartet in residence—comprising violinists Kisa Uradomo and Leah Pernick, violist Thomas Chafe and cellist Heewon Lee—studies with the Takács Quartet. On Nov. 19, the Koa Quartet performed selections from works by Joseph Haydn and Kevin Lau, and was awarded \$2,000 for their Ekstrand win.

“We are so happy to have started our residency at CU Boulder on such a positive note! It was an incredible opportunity to perform onstage alongside so many of our talented peers,” Pernick says. “Thank you so much to the Takács Quartet and string faculty for their mentorship, and to

the Ekstrand family for their generous support of students.”

Lee shares, “Our main goal of the performance was to have fun and keep up the good energy. I think us dancing backstage helped with that. But in all seriousness, we’re super thankful for the win!”

Second prize (\$1,000) went to saxophonist Joel Ferst, who also won the audience favorite prize (\$250). This year's other Ekstrand finalists (\$500 each) include pianist John-Austin King, baritone Andrew Konopak and violinist Laura Pérez Rangel.

This year's esteemed panel of judges were **Jason Bergman**—Associate Professor of Trumpet, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music; **Courtney Hershey Bress**—Principal Harpist, Colorado Symphony; Adjunct Professor of Harp, University of Denver

Lamont School of Music; and Lecturer of Harp, University of Wyoming; and **Cameron Stowe**—Chair, Collaborative Piano, New England Conservatory; and Director, Collaborative Piano, Aspen Music Festival and School.

The Ekstrand Competition was launched by previous College of Music dean Robert Fink, and later renamed to honor the late Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and psychology professor Bruce Ekstrand. The competition invites top graduate students to compete for cash prizes for professional development. This year's faculty judges for the semi-final competition were Renee Gilliland, Jeremy Reger and Branden Steinmetz.

Semi-finalists included:

- Voice: Sidney Grimm, soprano; Andrew Konopak, baritone; James Robinson, baritone
- Piano: John-Austin King and Luca Pompilio
- Strings: Julian Bennett, cello; Koa String Quartet; Laura Pérez Rangel, violin
- Woodwinds: Joel Ferst, saxophone; Dylan King, saxophone; Harold Gomez-Montoya, clarinet
- Brass + percussion: Mark Bennett, trombone; Sydney Hoehl, trumpet; Connor Johnson, trumpet

Congratulations to the Koa String Quartet and all participants in this year's competition, as well as their teachers—the Takács Quartet, Andrew Cooperstock, Andrew Garland and Nathan Mertens in the final round. Our special thanks also to collaborative pianists Runze Li, Hsiao-Ling Lin, Matthew Sebald—and all other pianists, mentors and teachers involved in the previous rounds of this competition.

*Partially funded by the Ekstrand Competition Endowment Fund, this annual event is the premier performance competition for the College of Music's most outstanding graduate students.*



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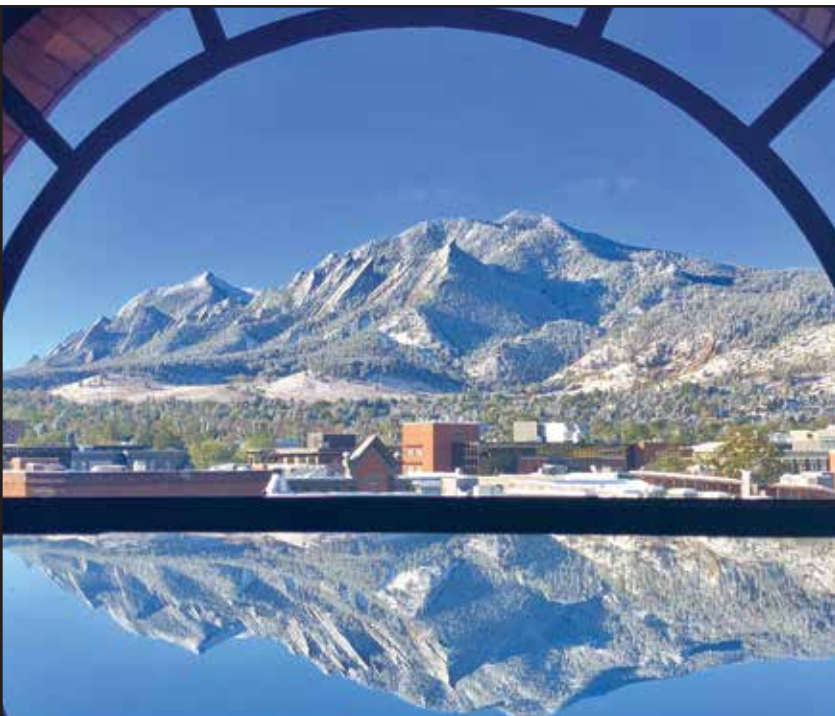


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# PROGRAM NOTES

By Marc Shulgold

## “Melancholie” Four Songs, Op. 13

Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)

The horrors of World War I resulted in unimaginable death and destruction—as well as works of art, produced by soldiers finding creative inspiration away from the anguish of combat. The English poet Wilfred Owen wrote of the sights and sounds of battle, tragically killed a week before armistice. His poignant verses would later be immortalized in Benjamin Britten’s *War Requiem*. And here we have another example. A 21-year-old German soldier named Paul Hindemith, drafted in 1917, found himself stationed in the trenches after a year with a military band. He had earlier purchased a book of poems titled *Melancholie* by Christian Morgenstern, written in 1906. Four of those were checked in the composer’s book on Sept. 17, 1917 and would later be set for soprano and string quartet. It seems that Hindemith brought his violin and was joined by three comrades for some in-the-trenches music making during occasional quiet hours (he’d later switch to viola).

The composing came slowly, as one would guess, and the work was not completed until 1919. A year earlier, he’d learned of the death in battle of a good friend, Karl Köhler, and thus the four songs were dedicated to his memory. It was a dark time for Hindemith: “Everything is dreary and empty,” he wrote. “I am deathly sad.”

Gazing at the texts, listening to the quartet, hearing the aching weary vocal lines, it’s easy to understand the mournfulness in the music and the dreadful circumstances that led to its creation. Look no further than the work’s title, of course. The first poem, “The primroses bloom and greet me,” opens and closes in a dark mood, as the music and the text seem to brush aside the central verse’s attempt to brighten the mood with a child’s innocent viewpoint. The constant undulating strings in the second song, “Fog-Weaving,” suggest the constant moving of the weaver’s shuttle, though the fog reference may be used here as a reference to the terrible use of mustard gas in trench warfare. The extended postlude reminds of the fog’s inescapable presence. Perhaps darkest of all is the following “Dark Drop,” a funeral march in which the players pluck strings close to the bridge, eliminating any resonant sounds. The soprano intones in short phrases, “Dark drop, falling today into my cup, into the cup of life, dark drop of death.” Finally, there is “Dream-forest,” a song of the afterlife, with a gentle, extended vision of hope. “Far far off sounds the starry choir.” It’s as if the poet, a decade earlier, had visions of soldiers, locked in a future war, wondering if the end will ever come.

# TAKÁCS QUARTET

March 9 | 10 2025

Grusin Music Hall

## PROGRAM

### “Melancholie” Four Songs, Op. 13

Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)

1. Die Primeln blühn und grüßen...
2. Nebelweben
3. Dunkler Tropfe
4. Traumwald

*Jennifer Bird-Arvidsson, soprano*

### String Quartet No. 3, Sz.85

Béla Bartók (1881-1945)

- I. Prima parte: Moderato
- II. Seconda parte: Allegro
- III. Recapitulazione della prima parte: Moderato
- IV. Coda: Allegro molto

### — Intermission —

### String Quartet in F Major, Op. 135

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

- I. Allegretto
- II. Vivace
- III. Lento assai, cantante e tranquillo
- IV. Der schwer gefasste Entschluss.  
Grave, ma non troppo tratto —  
Allegro

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Die Primeln blühen und grüßen... /  
The primroses bloom and greet me  
Poems by Christian Morgenstern (1871-1914)

The primroses bloom and greet me  
So friendly at my feet,  
The blackbird sings so loudly.  
The sun shines so brightly --  
Only I know a place  
Where there is no sky of blue.

Dear child, you must not speak thus!  
Heaven's chariot will bring  
the day to you as well.  
Your soul will also  
like the dear voice of the bird  
sing the tune loudly.

The primroses bloom and greet me  
So friendly to me at my feet,  
The blackbird sings so loudly.  
The sun shines so brightly.  
My friendly companion,  
I have known much suffering.

#### Nebelweben / Fog-Weaving

In the forest the fog-weaver weaves  
a white shirt for his wife.  
She stands in a crack in the rock  
like a slender birch tree.

In the forest her dark green curly foliage  
shivers slightly and trembles.  
She lets him have her quiver as a prize.  
The fog-weaver weaves and weaves ...

#### Dunkler Tropfe / Dark drop

Dark drop, falling today into my cup,  
into the cup of life, dark drop of death.

Do you want to cloud my clear wine --  
must I, tired, drink it --  
weary, weary – out of this life?

Dark drop that today falls into my cup,  
into the cup of happiness,  
dark drop of death ...

#### Traumwald / Dream-forest

The bird's eye gently closes;  
On his tree he plunges into sleep.  
In his dream the forest is transformed  
And becomes deep and solemn.

The moon, calm and silent, rises  
The little throat chirps faintly.  
In the whole forest, no leaf stirs.  
Far far off sounds the starry choir.

## String Quartet No. 3, Sz.85

Béla Bartók (1881-1945)

Two things occupied Bartók's attention throughout his career: composing music and collecting folk melodies of Eastern Europe and surrounding regions. His passion for ethnomusicology is well-known, as was the powerful influence his field research held through his "serious" compositions. He demonstrated the blending of both pursuits quite clearly in this third of his half-dozen string quartets. Each of those masterful six, when listened to separately, occupy a world of their own—and none more so than No. 3, completed in 1927 (a decade after its predecessor). Not only is it the shortest, but it's the only one written in a single, unbroken movement. From its whispered opening to its explosive climax, it provides an intense, challenging listening experience. Don't worry if you feel befuddled. That first audience was completely baffled when the work was premiered in London on Feb. 19, 1929, by the Waldbauer-Kerpely Quartet. It was awarded prizes, including one from the Musical Fund Society of Philadelphia, and soon received prestigious performances in Europe. But it took a while for audiences to sink into Bartók's startlingly new musical language. But really, it's not that intimidating. And it's a hoot to watch four very busy players!

The Quartet is built in four parts, each distinctive, each attached. Part one is slow and mysterious, as if the composer is gazing over material at his disposal and experimenting with a possible direction or two. Sonorities, motifs, textures and such come and go. Out of this unfolds a short little melody for the second violin and viola before we are thrown into Part two. Suddenly the energy multiplies, led by an extended trill from the second violin with busy pizzicato accompaniment. Here's where Bartók's folk flavor arrives, with suggestions of an Eastern European stamping dance. As this exuberant music continues, we're treated to a sampling of some of the composer's favorite quartet sonic effects: *glissandos* (slithering slides up and down the fingerboard), *sul ponticello* (bowing close to the bridge), *col legno* (tapping the strings with the wood of the bow) and other tricks with Italian names. They will be present throughout the remainder of the work.

Suddenly, the fun of the second part is erased and we have the recapitulation, a term harking back to the days of Haydn and Mozart, describing a return to the first part of a work's opening movement. Similarly, the moody beginning of this quartet is approached once again, this time by the cello and viola, but in barely recognizable fashion—as if as a distant, cloudy memory. Then, according to the rule of classical works from the distant past, comes the *coda* (Italian for "tail"), a section of music where it's time to wrap things up in a hurry. And such is the case here. The tempo is quick as if we have a train to catch. The ideas come flying past at warp speed, punctuated by plenty of *glissandos*, sometimes up and down simultaneously. And the ending comes with explosive finality.

# String Quartet in F Major, Op. 135

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

What a surprise: Beethoven's last completed quartet emerges as an enjoyable romp. Coming on the heels of a series of late quartets that wrestled with profound thoughts and explored new musical worlds over the course of lengthy, multiple movements, Opus 135 returns to the modest length and traditional four-movement structure of his Opus 18 Quartets, dating back a quarter century. There is a playfulness here (its ending is almost childlike), which belies the fact that all was not well with Beethoven as he worked in near-total deafness. With his health starting to fail, after Opus 135 he would complete only an alternate ending to the B-flat Quartet, Opus 130, from the previous year. What's more, he was also dealing with the attempted suicide of his troubled nephew Karl, whose cause Beethoven had championed with unstoppable zeal. The boy was nursed back to health by Beethoven at the country home of the composer's brother in October of 1826, when work was completed on Opus 135. His life ended the following March.

It seems confounding to place this relatively brief and contented work in the context of the previous otherworldly quartets. Consider the distance covered from the first quartets to the last, which reveals an enormous leap from the past—Haydn and Mozart—into the future world of 19th-century romanticism and 20th-century modernism.

The F-major Quartet begins with a warm welcome in a graceful, accessible *Allegretto*, built around a sweet, four-note idea that distributes question-and-answer episodes with equanimity. Despite its pleasant demeanor, Opus 135 offers huge challenges to the players, particularly in the rhythmic twists and turns of the wild second movement (*Vivace*). But then, a prayer-like third movement (*Lento assai*) offers a reminder of Beethoven's singular ability to lift his music to a higher spiritual plane, with a melody sung in the four instruments' lower ranges.

The enigmatic Beethoven emerges in the final movement, titled by the composer, *Der schwer gefasste Entschluss* ("The difficult resolution"). Had he known the head-scratching this would cause generations of scholars, he might have chuckled. And if that title weren't puzzling enough, right below those words is a single line of music, divided in two segments. The first is marked *Grave*, the second *Allegro*. The first slow section features three notes with the words underneath *Muss ess sein?* ("Must it be?"); the second replies with the repeated exclamation, *Es muss sein!* ("It must be!"). These motifs form the basis of the movement's two main ideas: the anguished introductory section, marked *Grave*, then the *Allegro* theme. But what did Beethoven mean with that question and reply? Some scholars point to a squabble between the composer and a music lover and concert organizer named Dembscher, involving payment for a manuscript of Opus 130. When

informed of the bill, Dembscher reportedly asked, "Must it be?" Told of this, Beethoven wrote a four-voice canon on the words, "It must be! Yes, take out your wallet"—its theme relating to the exclamation of Opus 135. On the other hand, Beethoven wrote to his publisher that this would be his final quartet, confessing how difficult that decision was. Facing inevitability, he posed that simple question, then declared in his note that yes, it must be.

## PERSONNEL

### Takács Quartet

The world-renowned Takács Quartet is now entering its 50th anniversary season. Edward Dusingberre, Harumi Rhodes (violins), Richard O'Neill (viola) and András Fejér (cello) are excited about projects including a new concerto for them and the Colorado Music Festival orchestra by Gabriela Lena Frank. In November the group will release its latest Hyperion project, *Flow* by Nokuthula Ngwenyama. A new album with pianist Marc Andre Hamelin will be released in the spring featuring works by Florence Price and Antonín Dvořák.

The Takács maintains a busy international touring schedule. In 2025 the ensemble will perform in South Korea, Japan and Australia. The Australian tour is centered around a new piece by Kathy Milliken for quartet and narrator. As associate artists at London's Wigmore Hall, the group will present four concerts featuring works by Haydn, Britten, Ngwenyama, Beethoven, Janáček and two performances of Schubert's cello quintet with Adrian Brendel. During the season the ensemble will play at other prestigious European venues including Barcelona, Budapest, Milan, Basel, Bath Mozartfest and Bern.

The group's North American engagements include concerts in New York, Vancouver, Philadelphia, Washington D.C., Lajolla, Berkeley, Ann Arbor, Chicago, Tucson, Portland and Princeton, and collaborations with pianists Stephen Hough and Jeremy Denk.

The members of the Takács Quartet are Christoffersen Fellows and Artists in Residence at the University of Colorado Boulder. During the summer months the Takács join the faculty at the Music Academy of the West, running an intensive quartet seminar.

The Takács has recorded for Hyperion since 2005. Their most recent album includes Schubert's final quartet D887. This and all their other recordings are available to stream at [hyperion-streaming.co.uk](https://www.hyperion-streaming.co.uk). In 2021 the Takács won a Presto Music Recording of the Year Award for their recordings of string quartets by Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn, and a Gramophone Award with pianist Garrick Ohlsson for piano quintets by Amy Beach and Elgar. Other releases for Hyperion feature works by Haydn, Schubert, Janáček, Smetana, Debussy and Britten, as well as piano quintets by César Franck and Shostakovich (with Marc-André Hamelin), and

viola quintets by Brahms and Dvorák (with Lawrence Power). For their CDs on the Decca/London label, the Quartet has won three Gramophone Awards, a Grammy Award, three Japanese Record Academy Awards, Disc of the Year at the inaugural BBC Music Magazine Awards, and Ensemble Album of the Year at the Classical Brits. Full details of all recordings can be found in the Recordings section of the Quartet's website.

The Takács Quartet is known for its innovative programming. In 2021-22 the ensemble partnered with bandoneon virtuoso Julien Labro to premiere new works by Clarice Assad and Bryce Dessner, commissioned by Music Accord. In 2014 the Takács performed a program inspired by Philip Roth's novel *Everyman* with Meryl Streep at Princeton, and again with her at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto in 2015. They first performed *Everyman* at Carnegie Hall in 2007 with Philip Seymour Hoffman. They have toured 14 cities with the poet Robert Pinsky, and played regularly with the Hungarian Folk group Muzsikás.

In 2014 the Takács became the first string quartet to be awarded the Wigmore Hall Medal. In 2012, Gramophone announced that the Takács was the first string quartet to be inducted into its Hall of Fame. The ensemble also won the 2011 Award for Chamber Music and Song presented by the Royal Philharmonic Society in London.

The Takács Quartet was formed in 1975 at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest by Gabor Takács-Nagy, Károly Schranz, Gabor Ormai and András Fejér, while all four were students. The group received international attention in 1977, winning first prize and the Critics' Prize at the International String Quartet Competition in Evian, France. The Quartet also won the gold medal at the 1978 Portsmouth and Bordeaux Competitions and First Prizes at the Budapest International String Quartet Competition in 1978 and the Bratislava Competition in 1981. The Quartet made its North American debut tour in 1982. Members of the Takács Quartet are the grateful beneficiaries of an instrument loan by the Drake Foundation. We are grateful to be Thomastik-Infeld Artists.

## Jennifer Bird-Ardvisson

Soprano Jennifer Bird has built an international reputation as a charismatic, intelligent and versatile performer of more than 50 roles in opera, operetta and musical theater, as well as much of the standard oratorio, concert, and recital literature.

As the recipient of a Rotary International Ambassadorial Scholarship, Bird studied in Germany in the Opernklasse of the Hamburg Musikhochschule, where she joined the vocal studio of renowned soprano Judith Beckmann. Soon thereafter, she received her first Festkontrakt at the Landestheater Coburg and then at the Bremer Theater, where she became a pillar of the soloist ensemble, singing major roles in the lyric and lyric-coloratura soprano repertory and, in Coburg, twice earning the Audience Favorite

Prize. Engagements followed at the Vienna Volksoper, Nationaltheater Mannheim, Theater Bonn, Theater Chemnitz, Theater Lübeck, Theater Würzburg and Theater Hagen, among many others. Highlights include title roles in *Lulu* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Ann Trulove in *The Rake's Progress*, Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*, Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Marguerite in *Faust*, Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Gilda in *Rigoletto*, Violetta in *La traviata*, the Governess in *Turn of the Screw* and Konstanze in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*.

Bird has been the soprano soloist in Handel's *Messiah* with the Berlin Symphony Orchestra at the Konzerthaus am Gendarmenmarkt, in Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* with the Bremer Philharmonic and with the United States Army Band at Carnegie Hall in a Veteran's Day concert emceed by Walter Cronkite. In 2008 Bird was invited to Brussels to perform with members of the Ictus Ensemble in honor of the 200th anniversary of Ricordi Publishing. She has been the featured soloist in gala concerts with the Stuttgart Philharmonic at the Stuttgart Konzerthalle and in Luxembourg with the Orchestra of the Warsaw Teatr Wielki. In 2010 she made her Alice Tully Hall debut in Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the Riverside Choral Society. In 2012 Bird was the soprano soloist in the world premiere performances of Frank Ticheli's *Songs of Love and Life* with conductor Allan McMurray, since recorded and released on the Klavier label. Highlights of recent seasons include Mendelssohn's *Elijah* in Cape Town, Mozart's *Requiem* with the Midland-Odesa Symphony, Mahler's 2nd and 4th Symphonies with the Boulder MahlerFest, Poulenc's *Gloria* at Alice Tully Hall, Chausson's *Chanson Perpetuelle* with the Takács Quartet, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with Central City Opera, Brahms' *Requiem* with the Cheyenne Symphony Orchestra and Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream* with the Colorado Music Festival. Bird has been a prizewinner in several international competitions, including First Prizes in the Sylvia Geszty Competition, Elisa Meyer Competition and the Robert Stolz Competition.

Bird holds a Bachelor of Music in vocal performance and a Bachelor of Arts in foreign languages from Southern Methodist University as well as a Master of Music in vocal performance from the University of Michigan. She is a member of the voice faculty at the University of Colorado Boulder.

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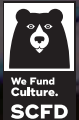
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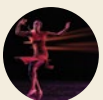
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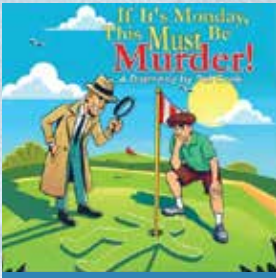
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# LEIGH HOLMAN TO LEAD COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY AS NEW MARSHAL

By Greg Swenson

Leigh Holman, director of CU Boulder's Eklund Opera Program, has been named the new commencement marshal.

Holman, a CU Boulder alumna who has been with the university for 15 years, replaces Bud Coleman who has led the spring commencement ceremony since 2018.

"On behalf of our entire college, we're proud of Leigh Holman assuming the role of the university's next commencement marshal," said College of Music Dean John Davis, also noting Holman's transformative role as director of the college's highly regarded Eklund Opera Program and New Opera Workshop (CU NOW).

"Leigh's work advances our mission to develop multiskilled, multifaceted universal musicians with flexible career options, thereby also amplifying momentum toward more interdisciplinary collaborations across our campus. In that spirit, as commencement marshal, Leigh perfectly represents not only the College of Music, but also our increasingly interconnected campus community."

The role of commencement marshal is mostly behind the scenes, until the day of the ceremony when Holman will be front and center on stage before thousands of graduates and their guests. It's a role she relishes and is excited to take on.

"As a performer, I feel comfortable being on stage. And part of the job of being commencement marshal is emceeding the event, so I feel very comfortable in that role," she said. "The main thing I'm excited about is being a part of this special day for our

students, a day that hopefully they'll never forget."

Holman took some time to talk with CU Boulder Today about herself, her time at CU Boulder and her new role as commencement marshal.

## DIRECTOR, EKLUND OPERA PROGRAM

I am the director of opera for the College of Music, and that means I'm the director of the program administratively, but I'm also the resident stage director. I am in charge of working with my team to cast shows, choose the operas we will be performing and, more importantly, I come up with the vision for the show ... what it's going to look like, what it's going to feel like and what the characters will be like.

So I'm really a storyteller, and I use acting and visual elements on stage to tell that story. That's what a stage director does, and that's my role here at CU.

## NEW OPERA WORKSHOP

In the summer we have a program that I started called the New Opera Workshop (CU NOW). It's a really exciting program where we bring in opera composers who are working on new projects and pair them with our wonderfully talented students who then bring the opera's characters and the music to life. So the composers get to work on their project in a beautiful setting here in Boulder, and our students get the opportunity to work with some of the most renowned creators of opera in the world.

## ROAD TO CU BOULDER

My grandparents went to CU Boulder in the 1920s. After graduating—my grandmother graduated too, which was almost unheard of back then—

they moved to Tennessee. When I was growing up, we lived in Tennessee but my grandparents had moved back to Colorado, so we went to visit them every summer.

After completing my undergraduate and graduate degrees and working for a while, I decided that I wanted to teach voice and direct operas. I had a few schools on my list, and CU was one of them. So, in my 30s, I went back to school and got my doctorate. After teaching at the college level for a few years and working with Opera Colorado, I came to work at CU Boulder. I feel very lucky to have my dream job. It's pretty awesome to be a teacher where my grandparents went to college.

## PASSION FOR SINGING AND OPERA

I've been a singer since birth. I think the first time I ever sang in public I was 4 years old, and I sang the song "Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head." I'll never forget it. I was a voice major in college where I studied classical music. I am a mezzo soprano, which is fun because it is one of the lower soprano voices, so you get cast in roles such as witches. So I sang, went to college to study voice and started doing opera. And then after college, I did opera professionally.

## PEOPLE WOULD BE SURPRISED TO KNOW...

I think people would be surprised that I ride a motorcycle. One other thing ... When I was in high school, I was a Congressional page in Washington, D.C. I was from this little rural town in Tennessee, and I was asked by my Congressman to come to D.C. to be a page. I served during the end of the Carter administration.



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