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COLLEGE OF MUSIC 2025-26 EVENTS



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*Photo credit: Owen Zhou.*

# SoundWorks

Featuring Andrew Garland and Koa String Quartet

7:30 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 17, 2025

Grusin Music Hall

## PROGRAM

### **The Young Mother**

Poem by Paul Valéry

trans. Louise Varèse

*Andrew Garland, baritone*

*The Koa Quartet:*

*Kisa Uradomo and Leah Pernick, violin*

*Devin Cowan, viola*

*Heewon Lee, cello*

### **Excerpts from *The Snow Queen: A Ballet***

Holly McMahon

I. Lapland Woman

II. Gerda's Theme

III. Little Robber Girl

IV. Buttercups

V. Morning Glories

VI. Hyacinths

VII. The Snow Queen

*Holly McMahon, piano*

# Capriccio for Tuba and Piano

Aric Vyhmeister

*Jesse Factor, tuba*

*Aric Vyhmeister, piano*

# Spooky Tale

Indigo Farmer

IV. The Character Death

V. Haunted Kid

*Indigo Farmer, piano*

# Pedernal

Alan Mackwell

*Asher Dobrin, double bass*

# [untitled]

Addison Hill

*Addison Hill, voice, synthesizers and electronic processing kit*

# PROGRAM NOTES

## The Young Mother

David Conte

Poem by Paul Valéry

trans. Louise Varèse

The young mother, in the cheeks of the little child she is holding, breathes in her own purest substance. She presses him to her so that he shall remain always herself.

She embraces the being she has made. She forgets and rejoices at having given herself, since she has retrieved and found herself again in the tender contact of the intoxicating freshness of his flesh.

Her heedless eyes caress the leaves, the flowers, and all the splendour of the world.

She is not sure whether the center of the universe is in her heart or in this little heart that is beating in her arms and that, in its turn, brings all things to life.

## Excerpts from *The Snow Queen: A Ballet*

Holly McMahon

*The Snow Queen: A Ballet* was written as a second collaboration between choreographer Ixchel Levendowsky and Composer Holly McMahon. A staged version of the full ballet will be performed by dancers in Fort Collins this December. The new work is an adaptation of *The Snow Queen* by Hans Christian Anderson, which is a short story set in 19th century Europe, near Finland. It follows protagonist Gerda's quest to rescue her friend, Kai, from The Snow Queen's castle, after he has been cursed by an evil mirror.

On her journey, Gerda encounters many strange and whimsical characters before finally being led to The Snow Queen's Castle by a reindeer, with the help of a few helpful women who live nearby. The various encounters experienced by Gerda inspired many movements of the ballet, including a set of "variations" or short dances based on the flowers she talks to in an old woman's garden. Below is an excerpt from a translation of the original story, in which the Buttercups describe a beautiful, somewhat abstract scene to Gerda:

"In a small court the bright sun was shining in the first days of spring. The beams glided down the white walls of a neighbor's house, and close by the fresh yellow flowers were growing, shining like gold in the warm sun-rays. An old grandmother was sitting in the air; her grand-daughter, the poor and lovely servant just come for a short visit. She knows her grandmother. There was gold, pure virgin gold in that blessed kiss. There, that is my little story,' said the [Buttercups]."

## Capriccio for Tuba and Piano

Aric Vyhmeister

The tuba is well known for its supporting capabilities, less so for its soloistic qualities. This *Capriccio* is a short concert exercise that showcases the tuba's extensive agility and playful side.

## Spooky Tale

Indigo Farmer

The character Death is about the image of the grim reaper, like picture a google image of him sitting on a rock, threatening yet peaceful. Haunted Kid is like an agitated kid in a horror movie that

you wonder if they are being possessed/influenced by demons, or if their angsty deeds are rational reactions to goings-on in the spirit realm that the adults are unaware of.

## **Pedernal**

Alan Mackwell

Inspired by a trip to Abiquiú, home to Georgia O'Keefe's famed studio and the high desert landscape that inspired many of her New Mexican works, *Pedernal* meditates on the vast stillness that radiates across the basin; etching with its long, sweeping tones the skyline of O'Keefe's legendary painting of the same name.

# PERSONNEL

Egemen Kesikli, director

Annika Socolofsky, faculty coach

Nicholas Felder, community outreach coordinator

Luka Vezmar, stage manager

Addison Hill, social media coordinator

## Indigo Farmer

Indigo is a MM in composition student at CU Boulder. They also play the piano.

## Addison Hill

Addison Hill is an artist, composer, multi-instrumentalist and educator from Phoenix, Arizona. Her work collages together different mediums, stories and sonic possibilities to create experiences that strive for emotional liberation and connection. When composing, Hill steps into the role of a director to holistically consider the relationship between sound and space, allowing for a more visceral experience inspired by the imaginary worlds Hill lives in.

She received a Bachelor of Music in music composition from Arizona State University and is currently pursuing a master's in music composition with music technology from the University of Colorado Boulder, where she teaches Intro to Music Technology.

Hill's works have been performed at the Gammage Auditorium, PRISMS festival, Wildflower Composer's Festival, Arizona Women's Collaboration Concert, soundSCAPE, Sō Summer



Institute, Superbloom Drone Festival and National Sawdust. Addison spends her free time yapping, napping, yearning and learning, while providing love and support to her needy cat (which is definitely a full time job).

## **Alan Mackwell**

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

Mackwells music has been played on three different continents, and several US states. His compositions have been played by high-achieving groups such as Ensemble Modern, The New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, the Amorsima Trio, Hub New Music and the Corvus Ensemble. He was the grand prize winner of the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra’s Inaugural Young Composers’ Competition in addition to being a two-time finalist for the Todd Corporation Young Composers’ Awards hosted by the New

Zealand Symphony Orchestra. Mackwell is the winner of the 2023 American Prize as well as two BMI Student Composer Awards, which he won in 2022 for his string trio *Remains of a Permian Gas Station* and again in 2025 for *Rail Dynamics*, a work for string trio and fixed media written for his residency at the TANK Center for the Sonic Arts in September 2024.

## **Holly McMahon**

As a compelling performer and composer with a delicate yet expansive style, Holly McMahon studies and works as a multi-faceted musician based in Boulder, Colorado. Throughout her life, she has worked with countless artists across several mediums, including film, theater, dance and performance art. She continues to explore the use of new instrumentations and genres through her studies of music composition, music technology, and piano performance at the University of Colorado Boulder. She is most well known for her works for solo piano, which typically feature carefully sculpted, running lines and evocative yet comfortable rhythmic textures that have been described as “lush” and “uniquely vibrant”. McMahon is also known for absurdist works, which provide unconventional representations of ordinary occurrences. As she creates atmosphere and dimension in her writing, McMahon’s music is uniquely vibrant and breathtaking, reminding listeners how beautiful, vulnerable and humorous it is to be a human experiencing art.

## **Aric Vyhmeister**

Composer and pianist Aric Vyhmeister (ASCAP) earned a Master of Music student in collaborative piano at the University of Colorado Boulder, and is currently pursuing graduate studies in composition at CU Boulder under Carter Pann. Vyhmeister is

a frequent recitalist and chamber musician in the Denver area, served as music director with the Boulder Opera Company, performed with Art Song Colorado and the SoHap Ensemble, and served on the faculty at Metropolitan State University. He is also a regular guest artist at the Salt Creek Song Festival in Ashland, Nebraska.

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*Photos: On this page, University Chorus, Fall 2024.  
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*The Drowsy Chaperone (2023).  
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