

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

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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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- 🎵 Takács Quartet
- CU CU Boulder Performing Arts



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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

CU Roe Green Theatre



American Stories by American Women

April 25-28, 2024

CU Music Theatre



Takács Quartet

April 28-29, 2024

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Photography and video recordings of any type are strictly prohibited during the performance.

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

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Ticket sales are final; no refunds. Exchanges are subject to availability and must be made at least one business day prior to the day of performance.

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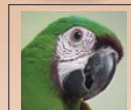


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Betsy Menand



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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AMERICAN
WOMEN**

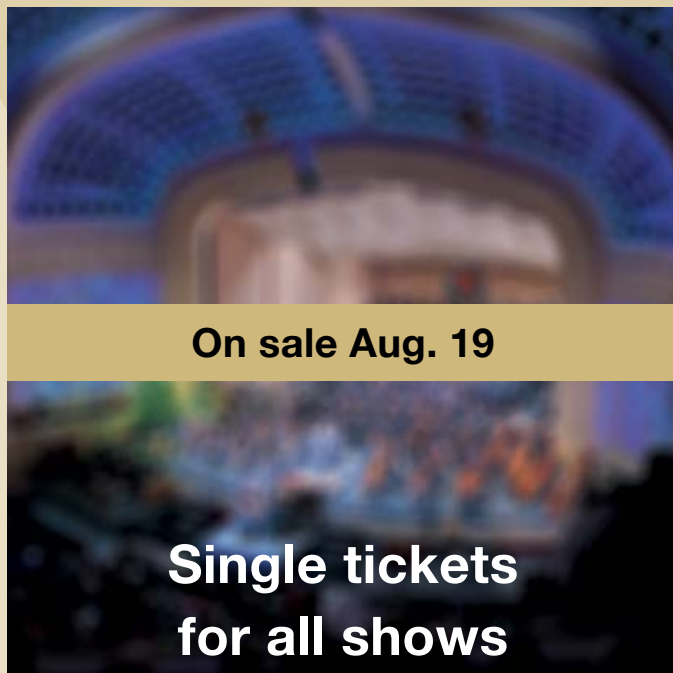
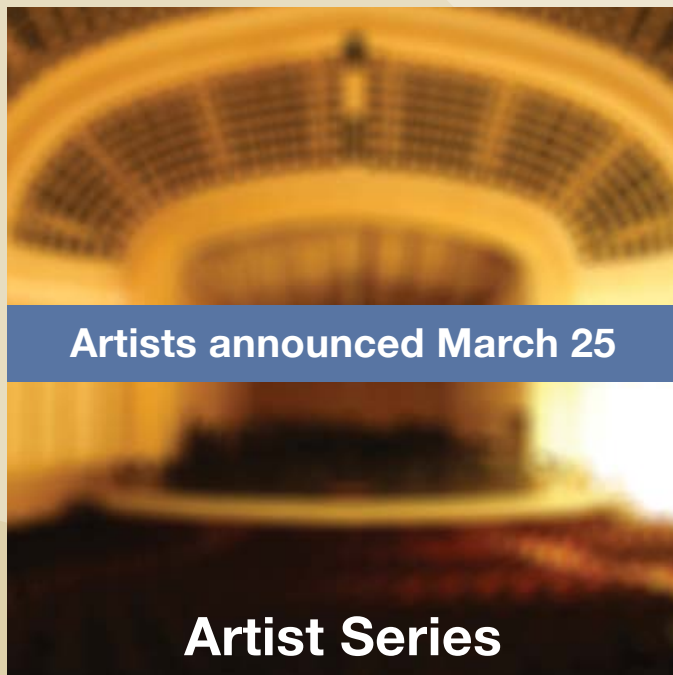
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Thompson Jazz Studies Program introduces new vocal jazz degree, new ensemble and more

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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Asleep at the Wheel

With the CU Symphony Orchestra

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

Macky Auditorium

For over fifty years, **ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL**'s Ray Benson has been traversing the globe as an ambassador of Western swing music and introducing its irresistible sound to generation after generation. More than 100 musicians have passed through the Wheel, but Benson remains the front man and the keeper of the vision, in the process racking up more than 30 albums, ten Grammy awards and literally millions of miles on the road.

"I'm the reason it's still together, but the reason it's popular is because we've had the greatest singers and players," Benson explains. "When someone joins the band, I say, 'Learn everything that's ever been done, then put your own stamp on it.' I love to hear how they interpret what we do. I'm just a singer and a songwriter, and a pretty good guitar player, but my best talent is convincing people to jump on board and play this music."

Asleep at the Wheel has collaborated on records with genre-spanning friends, including Willie Nelson on 2009's Grammy nominated *Willie and the Wheel* and other critically acclaimed artists, including Brad Paisley, Jamey Johnson, Merle Haggard, George Strait, the Avett Brothers, Amos Lee, Old Crow Medicine Show and Lyle Lovett on *Still the King*, their 2015 critically acclaimed and Grammy winning tribute to Bob Wills. On their latest release, *Half A Hundred Years*, Asleep At The Wheel continued their contributions to the American music landscape when three original members of Asleep at the Wheel—Chris O'Connell, Leroy Preston and Lucky Oceans—returned after 40 years to lend their voices and musicianship to a number of tracks on the album along with Emmylou Harris, Lee Ann Womack, George Strait, Lyle Lovett and Willie Nelson.

Asleep at the Wheel represents an important cornerstone of American roots music, even though some of its members and audiences represent a new generation. That far-reaching appeal remains a testament to Benson's initial vision.

"It took me 60 years, but I'm doing what I'm meant to do—singing and playing and writing better than I ever have. A bandleader is just someone who gathers people around them to play the best music they can play. I just try and make the best decisions possible and kick some ass every night onstage."

NEED TO KNOW FOR THE SHOW

- Asleep at the Wheel appears by arrangement with Creative Artists Agency (CAA). caa.com
- Photography and video recordings of any type are strictly prohibited during the performance.
- See **Page 9** of this publication for additional show and venue policies.



Social Channels

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YouTube

[@AATW1969](https://www.youtube.com/AATW1969)

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Instagram

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HD Performance Videos

Music video, *Jack I'm Mellow*:

youtube.com/watch?v=9ZOoNanS_nl

Music video, *Seven Nights to Rock*:

youtube.com/watch?v=jgR_6W8RKUk

Paste Magazine, *Miles and Miles of Texas*:

youtube.com/watch?v=1-4MlvY9GCK

Texas Music Scene, *Navajo Trail*

with The Quebe Sisters:

youtube.com/watch?v=HFFYkF5v7Kk

Austin City Limits, *Blues for Dixie* with Lyle Lovett:

youtube.com/watch?v=sOotQAwPNNs

Austin City Limits, *It's All Your Fault*:

youtube.com/watch?v=_z9RNhUMQ14

Austin City Limits, *Take Me Back to Tulsa*

with The Avett Brothers:

youtube.com/watch?v=wffzZGV8urw

Late Show with David Letterman, *I Can't Give You Anything but Love* with Kat Edmonson:

youtube.com/watch?v=eKJ39Rx3iM0

Tonight's Program

First Half

Devil's Dream
Miles and Miles of Texas
Don't Fence Me In
Route 66
Bob Wills STK
San Antonio Rose
Ode to Joy
Faded Love
Choo Choo Boogie

Second Half

Cherokee Maiden
South of the Border
Call It A Day Tonight
Take Me Back to Tulsa
What A Wonderful World
Dublin Blues
Hot Rod Lincoln
House of Blue Lights
Happy Trails/Texas Playboy Theme

CU Boulder Symphony Orchestra

VIOLIN

Greg Abrell
Charlie Bistodeau
principal
Alyssa Byrne
Rinat Erlichman
Jordan Grantonic
Logan Indge
Hailey Jang
Sam Jarvis
MarieFaith Lane
Sarah Payton
Laura Perez Rangel
Eli Pouliot
Bebe Seidenberg
Jonathon Winter
concertmaster
Nelio Zamorano
Lauren Zimmerman

VIOLA

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Devin Cowan
Finn Cruik
Avedis Escandon
Zoe Fernandez
Alejandro Gallagher
Madeline Guyer
Aaron Lockhart
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Taylor Sapanera
Allyson Stibbards
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Amy Delevoryas
Alex Engelhardt
Julia Emery
Nia Lepore
Peyton Magalhaes
Erik Okel
Louis Saxton

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Ella Bajcsi
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Ben Shearer
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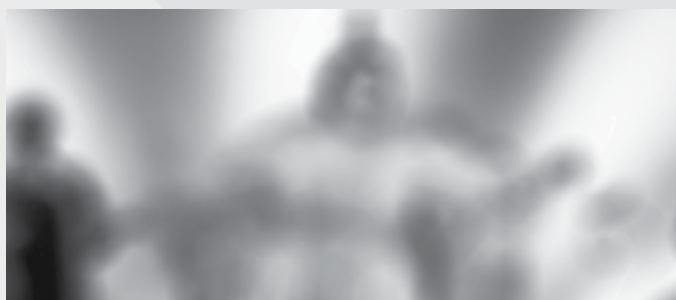
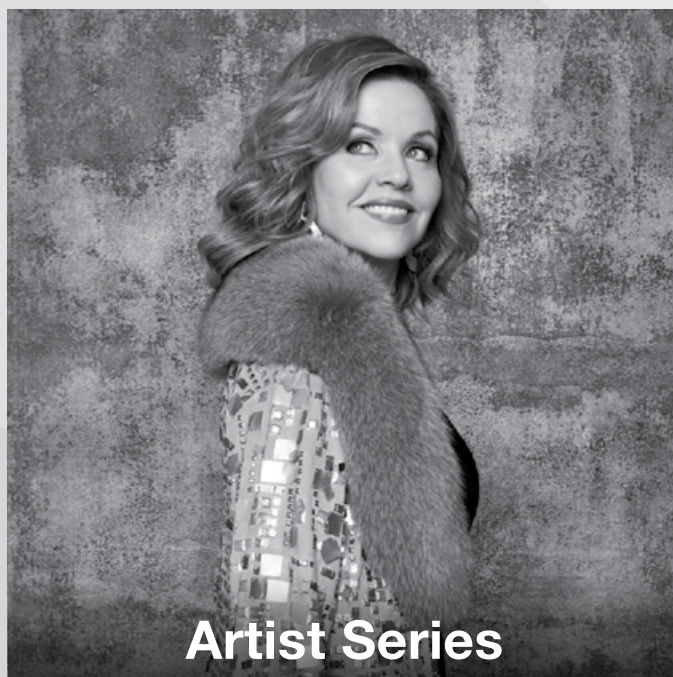
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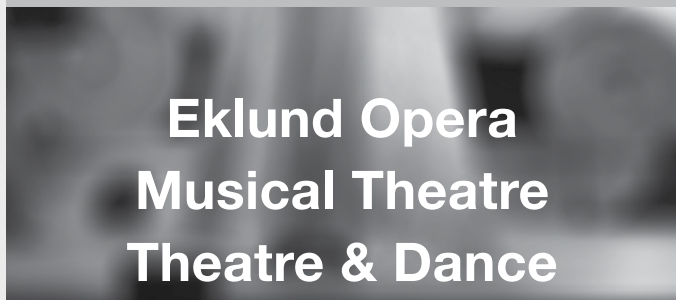
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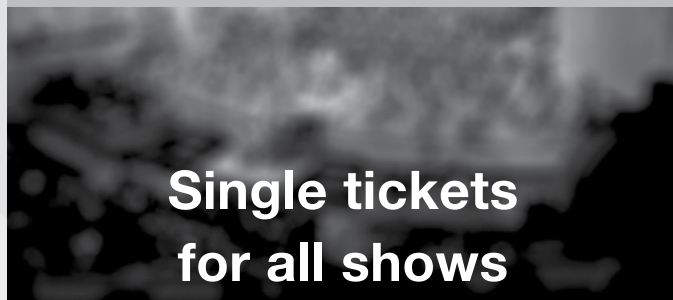
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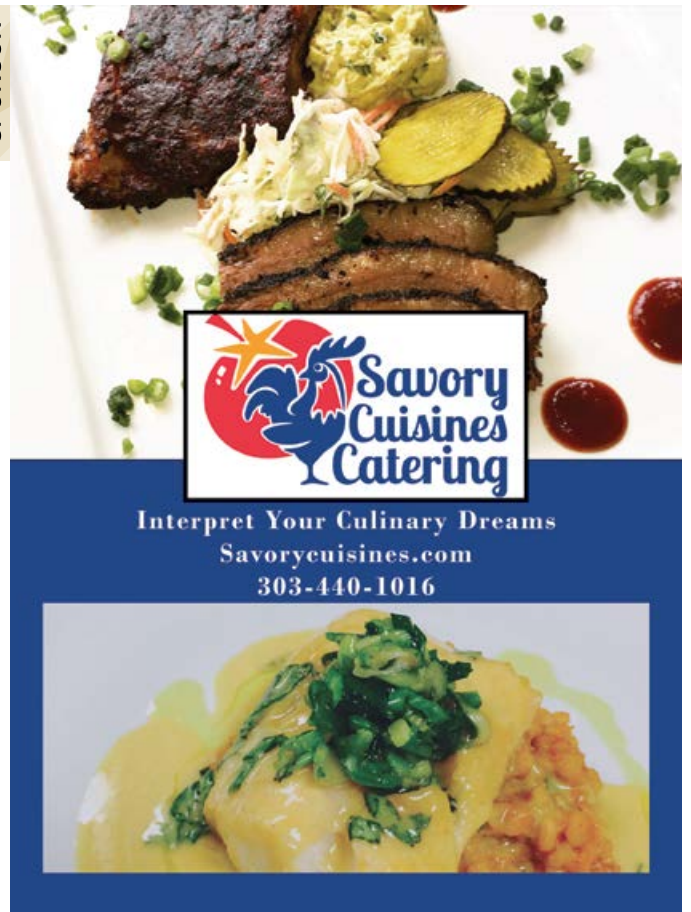
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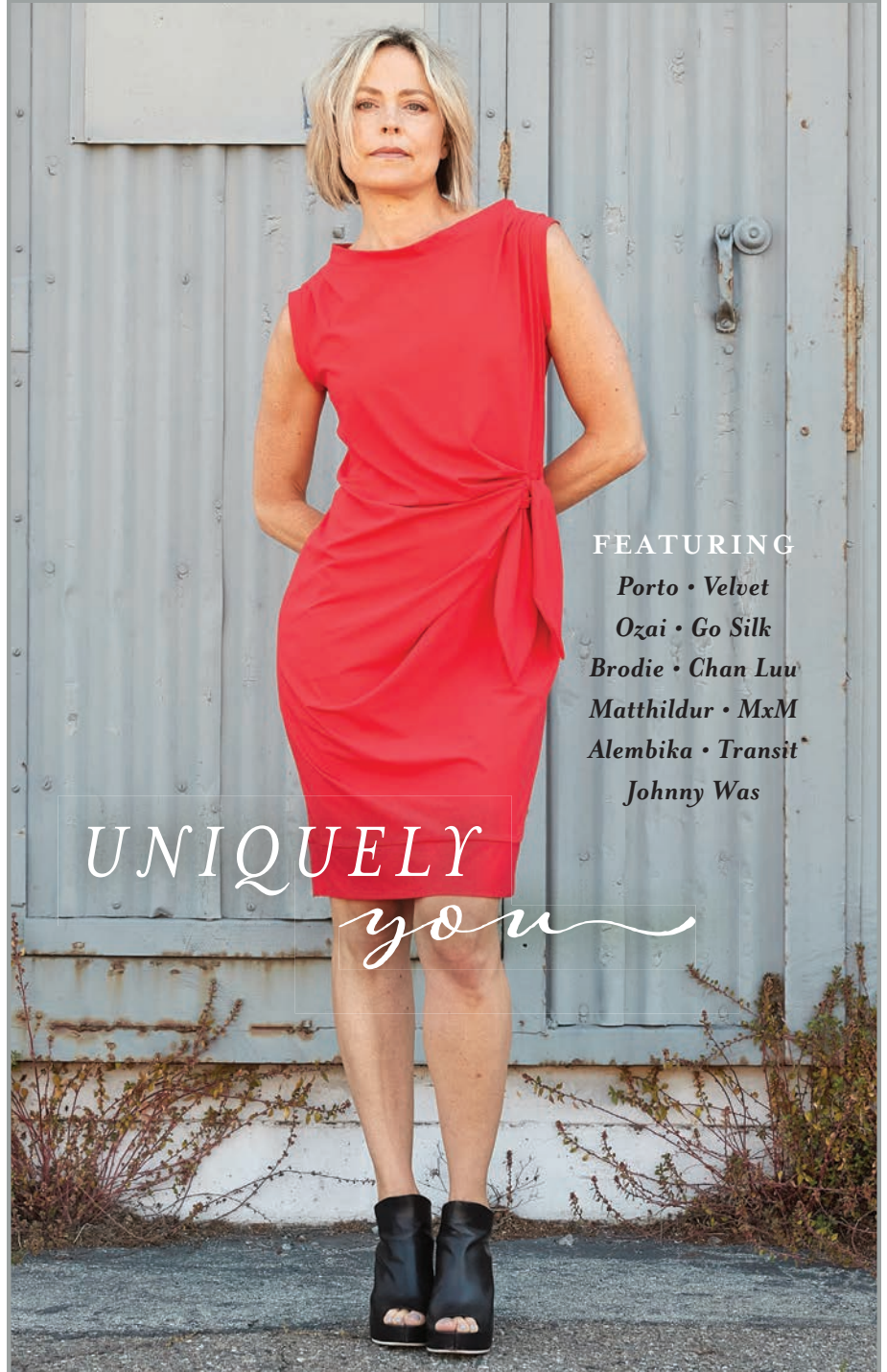
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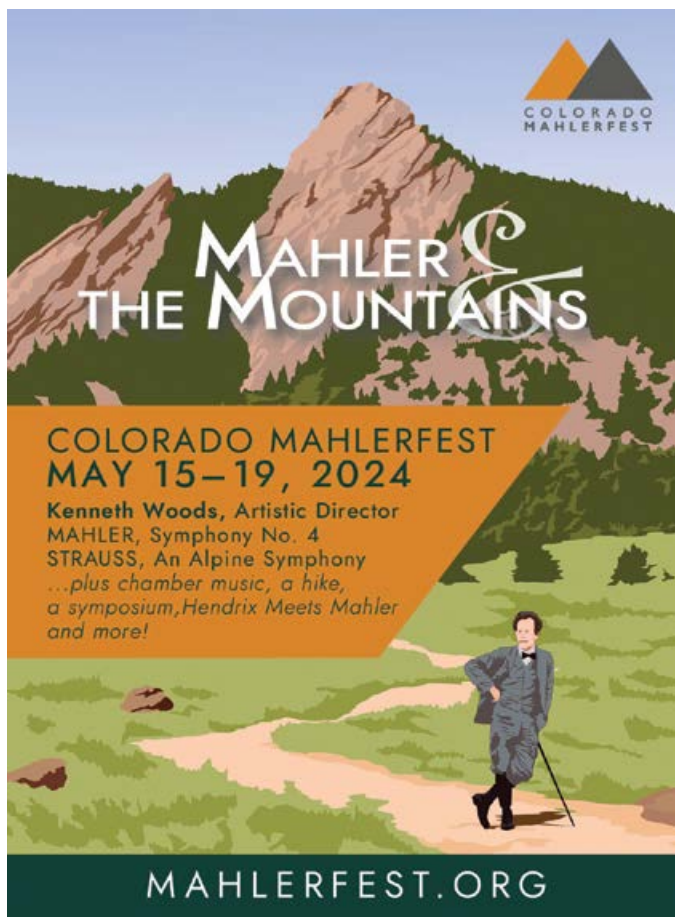
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Celebrating the legacy and impact of Anna Sie, lifelong supporter of the arts and humanity

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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MARCH 21
Film: Dead Man
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MARCH 29
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Orchestra—"Show
People" (1928, NR)

APRIL 4
Concert:
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APRIL 12
Friday Afternoon
Concert: James
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for Cello & Piano

APRIL 18
Film: Smoke Signals
(1998, PG)

APRIL 25
Concert: Foxfeather

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Film: Asteroid City
(2023, PG-13)



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