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NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2025



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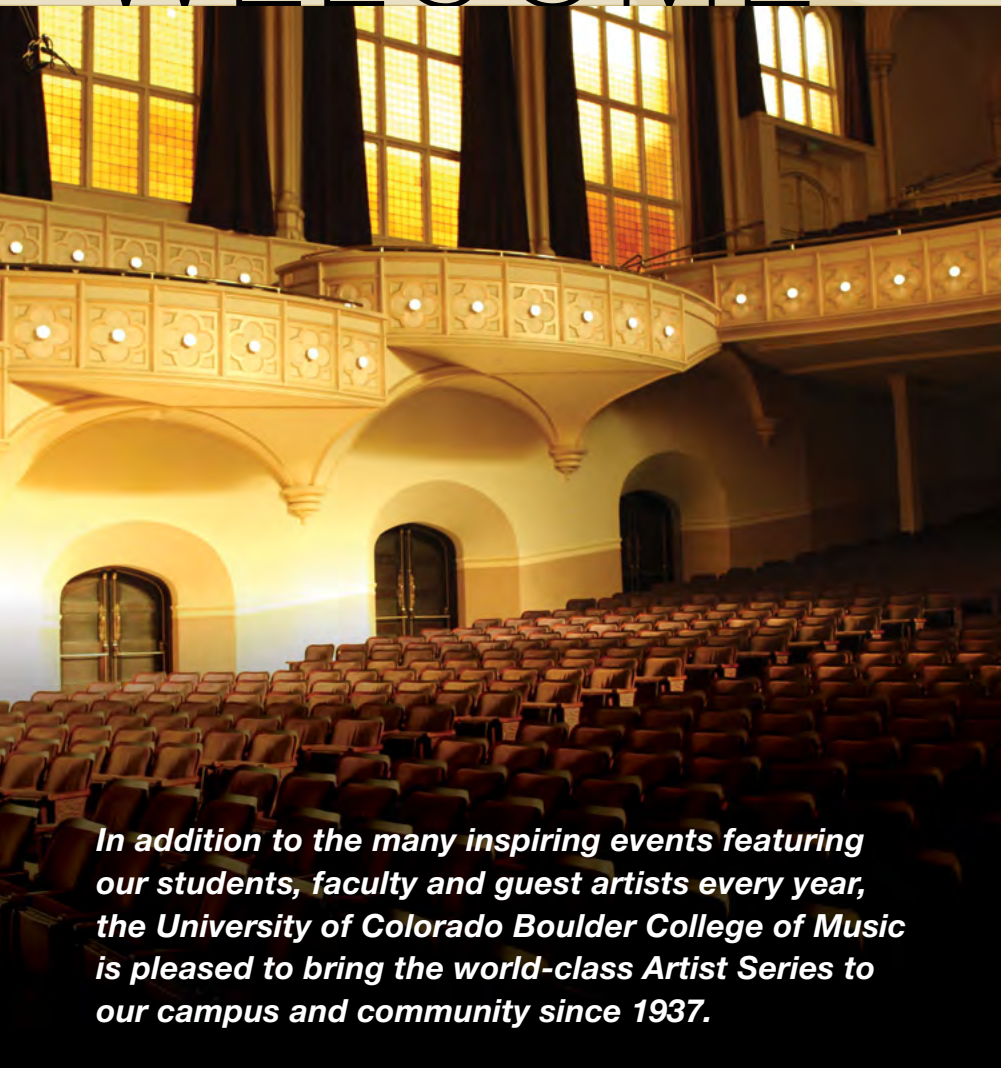
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*In addition to the many inspiring events featuring our students, faculty and guest artists every year, the University of Colorado Boulder College of Music is pleased to bring the world-class Artist Series to our campus and community since 1937.*

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## CU ★ PRESENTS

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2025

**CU Presents** is the home of performing arts on the beautiful University of Colorado Boulder campus. With hundreds of concerts, plays, recitals and more on our stages each year, there's something for everyone to enjoy:

- The **College of Music** including the Artist Series; Takács Quartet; Eklund Opera Program; Holiday Festival; Musical Theatre Program; and hundreds of free events featuring faculty, students and guest artists.
- The **Colorado Shakespeare Festival**.
- The College of Arts and Science's **Department of Theatre & Dance**.

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# Holiday Wonderment

By Henry Michaels

College of Music Dean John Davis' first experience with CU Boulder's Holiday Festival came in 2001. Davis had been director of jazz studies for two years when the invitation came for the jazz program to join the annual holiday festivities. "Until I performed as part of the Holiday Festival, I was unaware of the scope and the scale of it," recalls Davis. "As I was awaiting our time to perform, I was sitting in the front row, and I felt almost like a child. I was in wonderment at all the music that was taking place throughout the auditorium—in the loge boxes, on the stage and even in front of the stage on risers."

This December, our community can experience that same sense of child-like wonderment when CU Boulder's Holiday Festival returns to Macky Auditorium. A magical event that must be seen to be believed, the Holiday Festival—which dates in some form to 1945 and in its current iteration to the 1990s—has become a beloved annual tradition for *generations* of concertgoers. Featuring student and faculty performances from across the musical spectrum, it's also the perfect opportunity for new patrons to experience the breadth of what the College of Music has to offer. The lineup offers something for everyone, featuring music from multiple religious traditions alongside secular holiday favorites.

For Davis, the student experience is paramount when it comes to the Holiday Festival which reflects the College of Music's universal musician approach to achieving its mission. "We provide our students with a broad array of experiences, skills and education to help prepare them for their future in whatever ways that music intersects with it," says Davis. "By participating in the Holiday Festival, a student experiences what a real-world professional production feels like with staging, lighting, sound design and, of course, the performances themselves. What a student gains from this experience goes way beyond what we provide in the classroom or rehearsal room."

Above all, the Holiday Festival is about bringing people together: The musicians from across genres and disciplines; the audience members, both new and returning; and the College of Music's community of supporters who help make such impactful undertakings possible. And there's *nothing* quite like live music to bring people together. "The power and strength of music to bring us together, to share in the beauty that's created and to connect us with one another is something that I'm so pleased we're able to offer through the festival," says Davis. "It's more important now than ever before."

*The 2025 CU Boulder College of Music's Holiday Festival runs Dec. 5 to 7 in Macky Auditorium.*

*Photo credit: Glenn Asakawa*



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# CU ★ PRESENTS

## UPCOMING EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

### ARTIST SERIES

*Upcoming events • Macky Auditorium*

Dec. 11: **Bria Skonberg**

Jan. 23: **Ruckus Early Music and Keir GoGwilt**

Feb. 11: **Versa-Style Street Dance Company**

March 11: **Danú**

March 28: **Bang on a Can All-Stars**

April 11: **Michael Feinstein in Big Band Broadway**



*Ruckus with Keir GoGwilt.  
Photo credit: Jeremy Jacob*



*Photo credit: Ken Jacques*

### TAKÁCS QUARTET

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Jan. 11-12 • March 8-9 • April 26-27

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### EKLUND OPERA AND MUSICAL THEATRE AT THE COLLEGE OF MUSIC

*Upcoming events • Macky Auditorium and the  
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March 6-8: **Oklahoma!**

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on behalf of The Rodgers & Hammerstein Organization. [concordtheatricals.com](http://concordtheatricals.com)







# TICKETS AND MORE AT **CUPRESENTS.ORG**

## **THEATRE & DANCE EVENTS**

*Upcoming events · University Theatre Building*

Nov. 7-16: **The Olive Tree**

By Satya Chávez

Nov. 14-15: **Revel**

An evening of works presented  
by MFA candidates in Dance

Jan. 30-Feb. 1: **Catapult**

A BFA dance concert

Feb. 20-March 1: **Mr. Burns, a post-electric play**

By Anne Washburn and Michael Friedman

MR. BURNS, A POST-ELECTRIC PLAY: Presented by arrangement with Concord  
Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. [concordtheatricals.com](http://concordtheatricals.com)



*Holiday Festival (2023).  
Photo credit: Glenn Asakawa*

## **HOLIDAY FESTIVAL**

*Macky Auditorium*

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

Saturday, Dec. 6, 1 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 6, 4 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 7, 4 p.m.

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*Latin American Ensemble (2023).  
Photo credit: Erika O'Connor*

# Cirque Kalabanté

*Afrique en Cirque*

Nov. 7

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## Center for African and African American Studies

The Center for African and African American Studies (acronym: the CAAAS, and commonly called the Cause) is the research, creative work, and programming division of the broader Black Studies community at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Established in May 2021 by Reiland Rabaka, along with student leaders Audrea Fryar, Ruth Woldemichael, Karia White and Isaiah Chavous, the CAAAS is the focal point for campus and community life grounded in, and growing out of the historical, cultural, spiritual, sociopolitical, economic, and artistic experiences of Africans, African Americans, and the African diaspora.



[colorado.edu/center/caaas](https://colorado.edu/center/caaas)

## Community, support and healing through music

About 60 Evergreen High School band students joined our Golden Buffalo Marching Band (GBMB) for a halftime performance on Folsom Field at the Buffs' winning game against Iowa State on Oct. 11, marking a significant moment of healing for a community still recovering from a school shooting in September. Earlier that day, CU President Todd Saliman and CU Boulder Chancellor Schwartz joined College of Music Dean John Davis, our GBMB and the Cougar Pride Marching Band on Farrand Field. "I love the fact that our leaders, the leader of CU and the leaders of the CU Boulder campus, came to the thought that music making is something that can bring us all together and provide healing and a sense of community and support," Davis said (Daily Camera).









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*In the*  
**Popping,  
Whacking,  
Locking**  
*Archives*



*By Lisa Kennedy*

At last summer's Versa-Style Street Dance Festival, held in a dance studio in Burbank, California two competitors faced off in "the popping final." Clad in white pants, Dnoi slid across the wooden floor, his blue plaid shirt billowed. A voice counted down, "five ... four ... three ... two ... one," and Dnoi handed off to rival Rampage, who had his own subtle way of moving. One that suggested a syntax, an embodied language; hinted at histories and diasporas.

"Rooted" is an apt word for hip-hop's story. Little wonder the Versa-Style Street Dance Company called the show it is presenting in Boulder "Rooted Rhythms."

A cultural juggernaut, hip-hop's heritage runs deep. In 2023, the 50th anniversary was feted at the Grammys, at the Super Bowl, at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture and, fittingly, at a block party on Sedgwick Avenue in the birthplace of the life-meets-art form, the Bronx.

Intimately aware of the art form's cultural contexts, the Los Angeles-based hip-hop dance troupe marked its own milestone, its 20th anniversary, in 2025.

"They're incredible," said CU Boulder Assistant Teaching Professor Lawrence Southall. "They're one of the best street dance companies in California because they do styles." Styles? He begins a list. "There's hip-hop proper. There's Campbelocking [think Michael Jackson]. There's boogaloo and popping. There's breaking." He wasn't finished. "Then you have house and a litany of other styles ... juking, jitting, whacking, voguing."

Southall is co-director of Hip-Hop Studies at CU Boulder—along with hip-hop dancer-choreographer-educator Rennie Harris. Southall hails from the Bronx and was there for, if not the birth, the coming of age of hip-hop. Harris, he says, begins his course during slavery. For his part, Southall starts with the 1965 Watts Uprising.

Think of Miss Funk, Breeze-Lee and Versa-Style as stewards of the physical archive of hip-hop dance. And the degrees of separation turn out to be few: Versa-Style founders Miss Funk (Jackie Lopez) and Breeze-Lee (Leigh Foaad) studied under Harris.

At times, the dance-offs at Versa-Style's celebratory festival recalled jazz sessions in which the performance is both practiced and improvised, precise and free, showy at times but also welcoming.

The "Rooted Rhythms" program will embrace Versa-Style's two-decade history as well as hip-hop dance's longevity and innovation. In addition to the styles of the street, there will be dips into African and Latin dance. This mix of celebratory and communal is why Versa-Style matters, says Southall. "It's a community-based thing, trying to bring people together instead of, you know, breaking people down."

*Versa-Style Street Dance Company performs on the Artist Series at Macky Auditorium on Feb. 11, 2026.*

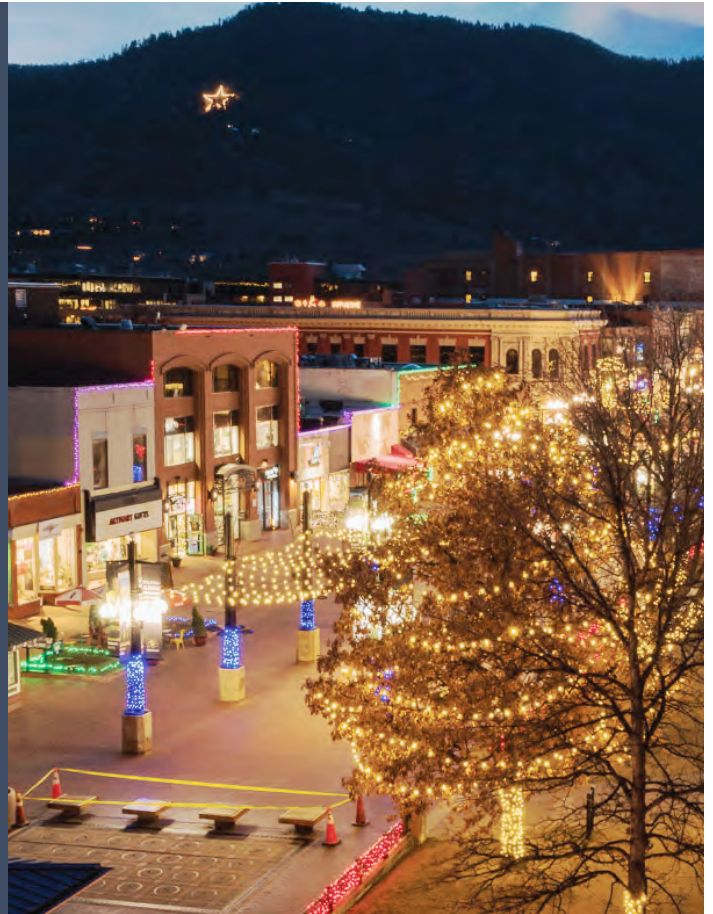
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# ARTIST SERIES

## Cirque Kalabanté

Afrique en Cirque

Nov. 7 2025

Macky Auditorium

*Afrique en Cirque* is a show by Yamoussa Bangoura, inspired by daily life in Guinea. This performance shares the beauty, youth and artistry of African culture. A colorful show beyond its scenery, costumes and staging, it makes any theatre vibrate with energy and represents the strength, agility and life's joys of young Africans.

The audience will see acrobats execute gravity-defying moves and human pyramids, accompanied by the contemporary sounds of live Afro-Jazz, percussion and kora. Welcome to the universe of Kalabanté Productions and prepare for an unforgettable journey.

*Afrique en Cirque is presented without an intermission. Join us for a Q&A with Yamoussa Bangoura after the performance.*

Tonight's performance is generously sponsored by:



**Cirque Kalabanté** appears by arrangement with:

**IMG Artists**, Pleiades House, 7 W 54th Street, New York, NY 10022. [imgartists.com](http://imgartists.com)

## ABOUT CIRQUE KALABANTÉ

Kalabanté Productions was created by Yamoussa Bangoura, a multidisciplinary artist of Guinean origin. Bangoura's dream was the founding of a school of circus arts, and to direct his own multidisciplinary company specializing in the African arts. Bangoura first became interested in the Circus Arts as a young man growing up in Conakry, Guinea in the 1990's. He studied the circus performers he saw on European TV and practiced on the beach and dirt around his home. He also studied the Nyamakala tradition of circus, practiced by the Fula people of West Africa. He eventually joined Guinea's original circus company, Circus Baobab, with whom he toured Africa and Europe.

In the early 2000's, Bangoura was recruited to come to Canada with Cirque Eloize, a Montréal based cirque company. While in Canada he also performed with Cirque du Soleil and Cavalia (cirque with horses). In 2007 Bangoura realized his dream and opened his own company, Kalabanté Productions in Montréal. He recruited many of his extended family members to join the company, including his twin sisters, brothers and cousins.

The company began doing shows in Québec, and over the years expanded to all of Canada, the U.S. and now performs all over the world. In 2018, Kalabanté opened their own studio and school in Montréal, where they offer classes in African dance, cirque and drumming.

Kalabanté Productions is proud to be able to share their work, achievements and skills to inspire others and to assist with the humanitarian mission to help the Guinean community from which Bangoura and many of his company members come.





# CU ★ PRESENTS

## BRIA SKONBERG

*Jingle Bell Swing*



# Dec. 11

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*Presented by the Artist Series*



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Joy Redstone is a licensed therapist, a member of Denver's D'art 360 Gallery, and serves on the boards of both Next Gallery and the Colorado Women's Art Museum. This exhibition is an invitation to witness healing in visual form.



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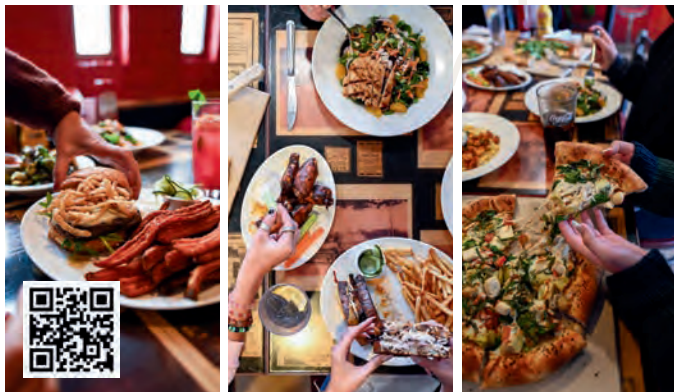
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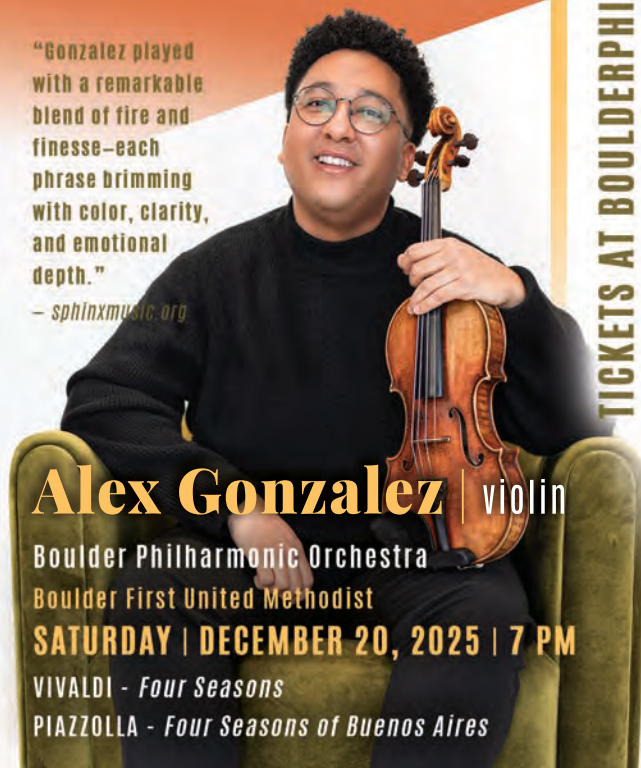
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# New innovative graduate degree bridges music research and performance

*By MarieFaith Lane*

This fall, the University of Colorado Boulder College of Music launched a graduate program that reimagines the study and practice of historical music. The new master's degree in historical performance and research blends rigorous academic scholarship with intensive professional-level performance training, offering students a path found at no other institution in North America.

The program is co-directed by Assistant Professor of Harpsichord and Eugene D. Eaton, Jr., Chair in Baroque Music Performance **Lillian Gordis** and Assistant Professor of Musicology **Saraswathi Shukla** who developed a curriculum modeled after European conservatories and universities where hybrid programs have existed for decades. Gordis, who completed such a program in Paris, says it was “a really rewarding degree” that empowered her to develop broadly-based skills in writing, archival research and performance-related scholarship. Our new program offers CU Boulder students the opportunity to gain a comparable level of knowledge and skill without traveling abroad: Emphasizing cohesion among university and conservatory coursework, co-taught classes and rigorous skill-building, the program prepares students for scholarly creative works, performance and more.

“Historically, early music has always been a blend of scholarship and performance,” says Shukla. “Over time, those two branches split apart. What we’re doing is bringing them back together in a way that equips students with the full range of skills they need to succeed in diverse disciplines.”

## A rigorous curriculum

Students will take seminars in performance practice, tuning and temperament, basso continuo and archival research. They will also study privately on their instrument, perform in the College of Music's early music ensemble and complete a master's thesis. Public performance is a major component of the new master's degree: Students must present a recital in both the first and second years.

“This is not a program for the faint of heart,” notes Gordis. “Students are expected to perform at a high level, write a substantial thesis and master the core skills of historical performance. It's almost a double workload, but it prepares students for doctoral study, or a professional performing career or other related career.”

Unlike a conventional performance or musicology degree, the program demands equal commitment to both. Gordis and Shukla



emphasize that the workload is intentionally rigorous but designed to be complementary: Research courses inform performance and performance deepens research.

### Responding to national trends

The College of Music is introducing the degree at a pivotal moment: Across the country, early music programs are shrinking or closing, leaving fewer opportunities for students who wish to pursue specialized training.

“There’s strong demand from students for this kind of program, but fewer places where they can actually get it,” explains Shukla. “Our program fills that gap while also offering something distinctive: The chance to graduate prepared for both research and performance at the highest levels.”

Gordis adds that young musicians increasingly demand flexibility in their training. “Many students don’t want to be forced to choose between performance and scholarship right after completing their undergraduate degrees,” she shares. “Our new master’s degree keeps both doors open and allows them to build the skill set they need in a complex and changing profession.”

### Ensuring broadly-based career options

This forward-thinking approach aligns with the College of Music’s mission to prepare students for careers beyond music performance, embracing an interdisciplinary model that encourages holistic student development and discovery. Specifically, the program reflects the college’s innovative universal musician approach to achieving its mission, preparing students for flexible career options.

The program’s inaugural student—Ray Pragman—establishes the beginning of a new academic community and the future of historical performance education, nationally.

### A forward-looking mindset

For Gordis, the program is also about cultivating a mindset. “Historical performance is about curiosity,” she says. “It’s about asking questions, experimenting and building community. We want our students to experience the new program as a space where they can pursue their interests rigorously, but also creatively—and come out prepared for whatever direction they choose.”

Shukla also views the program as developing skills that extend beyond music. “We’re offering students the tools to ask the right questions. That kind of open-mindedness and critical thinking are valuable not just in music but in any field.”

### A one-of-a-kind opportunity

By combining research and performance into a single degree, the CU Boulder College of Music is positioning itself at the forefront of historical music education in North America. The ability to attract international guest artists, invest in tenure-track faculty and foster interdisciplinary collaboration sets the program apart.

*Applications for the master’s in historical performance and research are now open.*

*Photos, from left: Lillian Gordis, Saraswathi Shukla.*



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