

THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE, AND DANCE

# UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CONDUCTED BY  
**RACHEL WADDELL**

GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT AND ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR  
**SAM COOPER**

# Awakenings

**OCTOBER 16, 2025 • 7:30 P.M.**  
**GRIFFIN CONCERT HALL**



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**CSU SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**  
**OCTOBER, 16, 2025 | 7:30 P.M. | GRIFFIN CONCERT HALL**

# ***AWAKENINGS***

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**PROGRAM:**

**Overture to *Egmont*, Op. 84**

**Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)**

***Lyric for Strings***

**George Walker (1922 – 2018)**

Sam Cooper, Conductor

**Symphony No. 5 in D major, Op. 107 (“Reformation”)**

**Felix Mendelssohn (1809 – 1847)**

I. Andante – Allegro con fuoco

II. Allegro vivace

III. Andante

IV. Andante con moto – Allegro Vivace – Allegro maestoso

## **PERSONNEL:**

**Dr. Rachel Waddell**, Music Director and Conductor  
**Sam Cooper**, Assistant Conductor and Graduate Teaching Assistant

### **Flute**

Evan Moore, Principal for Beethoven  
Annika Johnson, 2<sup>nd</sup> flute/picc for Beethoven

Ella Patterson, Principal for Mendelssohn  
Elizabeth Movinsky, 2<sup>nd</sup> flute for Mendelssohn

### **Oboe**

Madina Rashidova, Principal  
Amber Mills

### **Clarinet**

Peter Hansen, Principal for Beethoven  
Kaiden Pink, 2<sup>nd</sup> clarinet for Beethoven

Bradley Irwin, Principal for Mendelssohn  
Orion Rayburn, 2<sup>nd</sup> clarinet for Mendelssohn

### **Bassoon**

Evelyn Underwood, Principal  
Brody Ramirez, 2<sup>nd</sup> bassoon for Mendelssohn  
Zhihong Zhang, 2<sup>nd</sup> bassoon for Beethoven, contra for Mendelssohn

### **Horns**

Colby Hutson, Principal  
Jenna Yonce, Asst. Principal  
Zoe Huff, horn 2  
Jonah Loschky, horn 3  
Maxine Ewing, horn 4

### **Trumpet**

Bryce Wicks, Principal for Beethoven, 2<sup>nd</sup> trumpet for Mendelssohn  
Lauren Smith, 2<sup>nd</sup> trumpet for Beethoven  
Adam Smith, Principal for Mendelssohn

**Trombone**

Amber Minich, Principal

Carson Koch

Silas Riep, Bass

**Timpani**

Harrison Gelber, Beethoven

Lucille Harlow, Mendelssohn

**Violin 1\***

Ella Batson, Concertmaster for Mendelssohn

Geneva Boersema

Alyssa Byrne

Coverdale

Mason England

Li Gomez

Kirby Miller

Nathan Newman

Russell Wolfe, Concertmaster for Beethoven and Walker

**Violin 2\***

Lamarana Baldé

Grace Bennett

Maribel Brannan

Shanon Cooper

Sam Cooper

Taylor Green

Fabian Kaltenbach

Alexander Latham, Principal

Mari Marsh

Jordan Olson

Haley Rieger

**Violas\***

Raymundo Barrera

Cassidy Hall, Principal for Mendelssohn

Alan Larsen

Madison Ramonette

**Violas (cont.)\***

Jade Vargas-Reynoso

Ruby Ybarra

Charlie Wootton, Principal for Beethoven and Walker

**Cellos\***

Zuzu Davis

Amy Effinger

Aurora Farrell

Matt Fox

Axel Gallegos, Principal

Isabelle Howard

Caleb Kintner

Cora Larson

Taryn Limke

Talitha Marinho

Louisa Mitchell

Lillian Rogers

Avery Stahla

Alex Strobel

**Bass\***

Nick Hailey, Principal for Walker

Josephina Matibag

Lucy McHugh, Principal for Beethoven and Mendelssohn

\*The members of the string section are listed alphabetically.

**Librarians**

Dr. Ethan Urtz, Head Librarian

Sam Cooper, Librarian Liaison

Devon Bignell

Gabriela Greenberg

**Set-Up Crew**

Nathan Krause

Lucy McHugh

Sam Cooper

**The CSUSO Wishes to Thank:**

Dr. Ethan Urtz

Devon Bignell

Gabriela Greenberg

Nathan Krause

Lucy McHugh

Mike Solo

Daniel Stein, SMTD Events Manager, and his student staff

Valerie Reed, Assistant Events Manager

Jim Doser, Audio Engineer

Dr. Galit Kaunitz, Professor of Oboe

Dr. Cayla Bellamy, Professor of Bassoon

Dr. John McGuire, Director of the Department of Music and Brass Area Coordinator

Dr. Rose Wollman, Professor of Viola

Dr. Meredith Blecha-Wells, Professor of Cello

Professor Ron Francois, Violin

Professor Cristian Mazo, Double Bass

Dr. Eric Hollenbeck, Professor of Music, Percussion

**COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY MUSIC APPLIED FACULTY**

**Violin**

Ron Francois

**Flute**

Ysmael Reyes  
Michelle Stanley

**Trumpet**

Stanley Curtis

**Harp**

Kathryn Harms

**Viola**

Rose Wollman

**Oboe**

Galit Kaunitz

**Horn**

John McGuire

**Piano**

Bryan Wallick  
Tim Burns

**Cello**

Meredith Blecha-Wells

**Clarinet**

Wesley Ferreira

**Trombone**

Drew Leslie

**Organ**

Joel Bacon

**Bass**

Forest Greenough

**Saxophone**

Peter Sommer  
Dan Goble

**Tuba/Euphonium**

Brian Sugrue

**Voice**

Nicole Asel  
Tiffany Blake  
John Lindsey

**Guitar**

Jeff Laquatra

**Bassoon**

Cayla Bellamy

**Percussion**

Eric Hollenbeck  
Shilo Stroman

## PROGRAM NOTES

### Overture to *Egmont*, Op. 84

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)

Beethoven composed his *Egmont Overture* in 1809–10 as part of the incidental music for Goethe's tragedy about the Flemish nobleman Count Egmont, executed in 1568 for resisting Spanish rule. The story of a lone hero standing for freedom against oppression resonated deeply with Beethoven's political ideals, especially amid Vienna's subjugation under Napoleonic rule.

The overture opens with a dark, solemn introduction in F minor, its steady triple meter and grave character evoking a Spanish sarabande—a nod to the oppressive Catholic rule of King Philip II of Spain, against which Egmont struggled. A contrasting, lyrical melody in the winds carries an almost unbothered quality, reflecting how Egmont initially seems unconcerned about the danger to his life at the beginning of Goethe's play. From this dark prelude, the music launches into an Allegro section in F minor, its restless energy and sharply etched motives portraying Egmont's determination in the face of oppression. The Allegro drives toward a sudden, dramatic gesture in the violins—a single, cutting stroke that evokes Egmont's beheading. In the silence that follows, solemn lines in the bassoon, clarinet, and oboe create a funeral atmosphere. From this darkness, the music rises into a triumphant Allegro con brio that reflects Goethe's ending, where Egmont's spirit transcends death and inspires his people to continue the fight for freedom.

The Overture to *Egmont* stands as one of Beethoven's clearest musical statements on freedom and human dignity. By transforming tragedy into moral victory, it reminds us that courage and ideals can outlast oppression, a message as stirring today as it was in Beethoven's own turbulent age.

— Program note by Sam Cooper

### Lyric for Strings

George Walker (1922 – 2018)

George Walker was a pioneering American composer, pianist, and educator whose career broke barriers throughout the classical music world. In 1996 he became the first African American composer to win the Pulitzer Prize for Music, and over his long life he wrote more than ninety works spanning symphonies, concertos, and chamber music.

Walker composed his *Lyric for Strings* in 1946 as a heartfelt memorial to his grandmother, Malvina King, whom he remembered as “extraordinarily gentle.” In his own program note for the work, Walker wrote: “After a brief introduction, the principal theme that permeates the entire work is introduced by the first violins. A static interlude is followed by successive imitations of the theme that lead to an intense climax. The final section of the work presents a somewhat more animated statement of the same thematic material. The coda recalls the quiet interlude that appeared earlier.”

As thoughtfully described in a 1995 St. Louis Symphony program note (author unattributed): “George Walker was still doing graduate work, in fact, when he composed this piece, and that is how it came to be given its premiere at the Curtis Institute. The original title, *Lament*, alludes to the death of the composer’s grandmother, to which the music was a direct response. Perhaps feeling that title was too delimiting, Walker renamed it to *Adagio* before it was given its professional premiere, and then again to *Lyric for Strings* before it was published. The piece is as straightforward as it is brief. The various instruments steal in one by one, building a dark-hued but warm tonal frame for the simple, clean-cut theme. Once the atmosphere is thus established, the ensemble ruminates on the proceedings and the theme returns to proceed resolutely to a powerful climax. In its wake the theme, now somewhat varied, takes on a quieter, more intimate character to conclude the work on a serene resignation.”

Though born from an intimate grief, *Lyric for Strings* speaks with a universal voice, offering solace and hope through its expressive simplicity.

— Program note by Sam Cooper

## **Symphony No. 5 in D major, Op. 107 (“Reformation”)**

**Felix Mendelssohn (1809 – 1847)**

Mendelssohn composed his Fifth Symphony in 1829–30 to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession, a key statement of Lutheran faith during the Protestant Reformation. Though numbered “Fifth,” it predates several of his other symphonies; the numbering reflects publication order rather than chronology. Mendelssohn withdrew the score after a lukewarm reception, and it was not published until 1874, decades after his death.

The first movement opens with music that suggests a quiet organ prelude, creating a sense of sacredness that is soon interrupted by horn calls cutting through the texture, an almost ceremonial summons that underscores the immediacy of the religious struggle the work commemorates. The strings (with the violins’ first entrance) then introduce the “Dresden

Amen,” a liturgical motif associated with Lutheran worship that returns throughout the symphony. From this emerges an Allegro con fuoco in sonata form, where the turbulent, driving first theme conveys a struggle for conviction, answered by a more lyrical, singing second theme that suggests hope and spiritual clarity. The Dresden Amen reappears as a unifying signal of faith amid the drama. The movement closes in D minor, seemingly all hope feels lost.

The second movement, a B-flat major scherzo, offers complete contrast to the first: its playful, quicksilver spirit feels worlds apart from the first movement’s solemn D minor struggle.

The third movement, marked Andante, turns to G minor and offers the most inward, contemplative music of the symphony. The music remains intimate and prayerful, its textures spare and transparent, but it is never static; the melody swells and recedes with an emotional freedom that feels deeply human. In this way, the movement is at once restrained and unrestrained—modest in scale and orchestration, yet capable of surging into moments of heartfelt expression.

A flute cadenza that is newly written and performed by our principal flutist, Ella Patterson bridges the third and fourth movements, creating a luminous transition from the Andante’s introspection to the finale’s proclamation. The final movement begins in reverence as the winds intone Martin Luther’s chorale *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott* (“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”). What follows is unexpected: the hymn takes on a light, almost playful character. This leads to a brilliant Allegro maestoso. The energetic principal theme grows out of the chorale’s motives, while counterpoint and sweeping strings drive the music forward. By the end, the full orchestra proclaims *Ein feste Burg* in radiant D major, answering the first movement’s defeatist end with a vision of hard-won faith and steadfast triumph.

— Program note by Sam Cooper

## BIOS:



**Rachel Waddell** shapes orchestras as interconnected forces, bridging the professional and educational to transform vision into action. With a proven record of growth, artistry, and impact across the United States and beyond, she positions ensemble artistry as a catalyst for community. Orchestras, under her leadership, pulse as civic and cultural heartbeats, rooted in the enduring complexity, beauty, and relevance of today's orchestral music.

Whether coaching youth ensembles or collaborating with international soloists, Rachel approaches the podium with grit, imagination, and humor. She currently serves as Director of Orchestras at Colorado State University and the Music Director of the Longmont Youth Symphony. Rachel is a sought-after guest conductor, recently leading the TMEA All-State Orchestra Sinfonietta (2025) and the AA Montana Festival Orchestra (2024). Her past work with the University of Rochester Orchestras earned national acclaim for innovative programming, winning the American Prize's Vytautas Marijosius Memorial Award in 2019 and 2020.

In recognition of her ongoing commitment to education and mentorship, Rachel was named a Quarterfinalist for the 2025 Music Educator Award through the Grammys.

Rachel's professional engagements span the *Orchestre Métropolitain*, Rochester, Las Vegas, and Denver Philharmonics, the Greater Bridgeport Symphony, and Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra, among others. She is currently a Music Director finalist for the Mid-Columbia Symphony in Washington. As Associate Conductor of the Canton Symphony Orchestra, she led over 80 concerts of classical, pops, and education programming. She has attended numerous conducting programs including the Dallas Opera's prestigious Hart Institute for Women Conductors, and Mark Shapiro's Conducting Intensive at Juilliard. In August 2022, she made her Vienna debut conducting *Così fan tutte* as part of the Vienna Opera Academy. In July 2023, she made her Canadian debut with the *Orchestre Métropolitain*, after being selected to conduct by Yannick Nézet-Séguin at *Le Domaine Forget de Charlevoix*.

Driven to reshape the narrative of American orchestras, Rachel co-founded *Conductors for Change*, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit empowering artistic leaders to build inclusive, future-forward institutions. Her research explores how 21st-century orchestras can engage through liberal arts education, civic dialogue, and interdisciplinary storytelling to cultivate cultural transformation.

Rachel holds degrees from the Hartt School (BM, Composition) and University of Nevada, Las Vegas (DMA, Conducting), and earned a certificate in Music Industry Essentials from NYU's Clive Davis Institute and Yellowbrick. She is a member of the Recording Academy.

From podium to program, Rachel continues to advance orchestras as interconnected, community-driven, and artistically alive. To learn more about Rachel Waddell please visit [www.rachelwaddellconductor.com](http://www.rachelwaddellconductor.com) or follow her on Instagram @rachel\_waddell\_conductor .



**Sam Cooper** is currently pursuing his master's in instrumental conducting at Colorado State University under the mentorship of Dr. Rachel L. Waddell. He serves as the Assistant Conductor of Orchestras at CSU and the Assistant Conductor for the Health and Wellness Community Orchestra, a Fort Collins-based ensemble that fosters a welcoming and engaging environment where musicians of all backgrounds can enjoy playing together. He is very excited to serve as Assistant Conductor for the Loveland Opera Theatre's upcoming production of *The Sound of Music* in October. Sam was honored to serve as pit director for the Empire Lyric Players' July 2025 production of *The Mikado...in Space*, a contemporary reimagining of Gilbert and Sullivan's classic operetta that brought fresh perspective and humor to the original work.

Sam studied violin with Dr. Philip Ficsor and Dr. Emily Ondracek-Peterson at MSU Denver, where he earned degrees in music performance and music education in December 2023. He has played violin with various musical groups, including the Aurora Symphony and Empire Lyric Players, and held the roles of concertmaster and assistant conductor with the MSU Denver Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Dr. Brandon Stephen Matthews. As a co-founder and violinist of the Apollo String Quartet, Sam remains actively engaged in chamber music.

In January 2025, Sam was selected to participate in a conducting workshop with Carl Topilow and the Cleveland Pops Orchestra. In June 2025, he took part in another workshop led by Diane Wittry and Dr. Silas Huff in New York City with the Collegium Musicum New York.

Sam encourages you to follow his conducting journey on Instagram: @cooper\_conducts

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