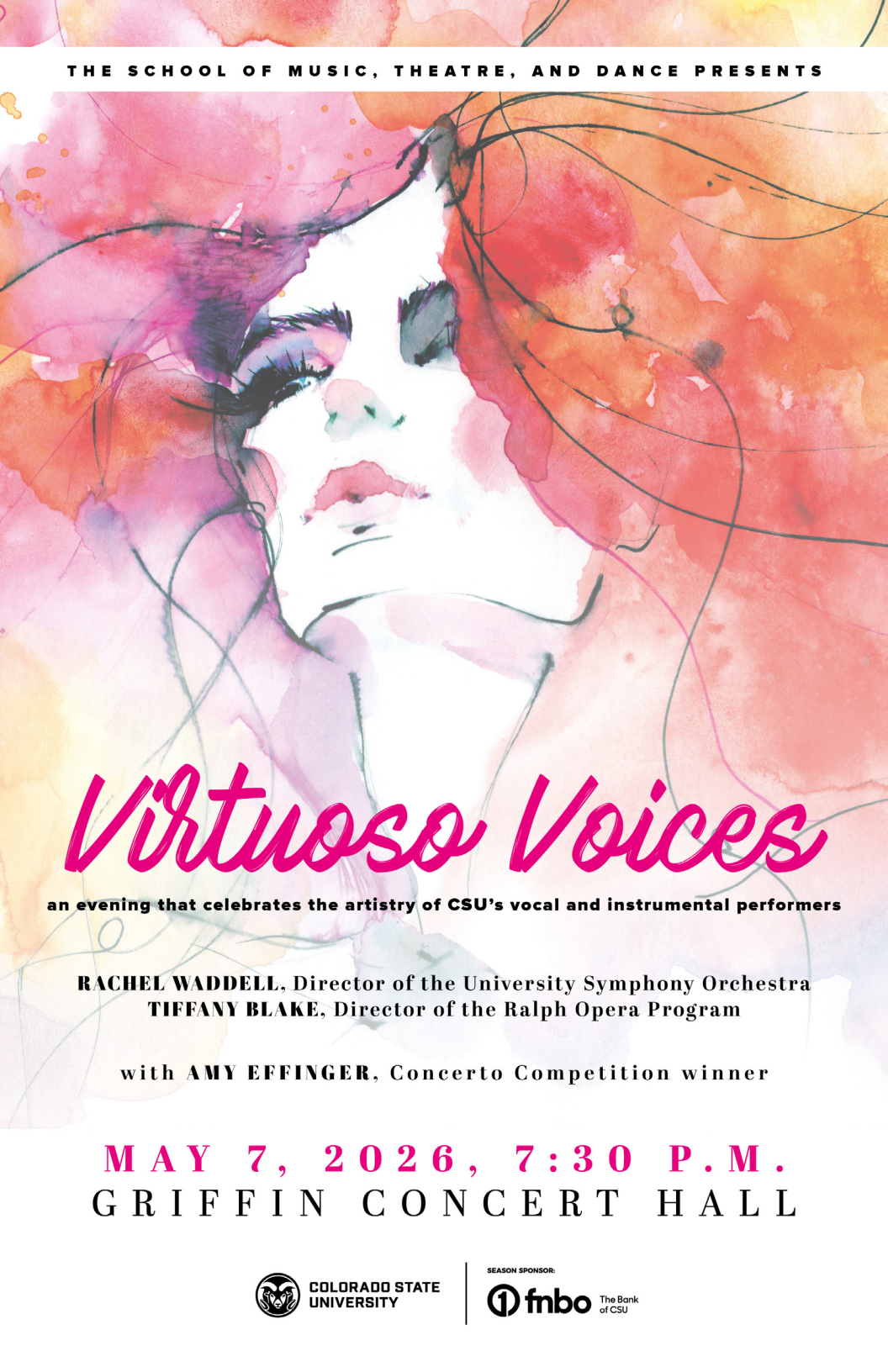


THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE, AND DANCE PRESENTS



Virtuoso Voices

an evening that celebrates the artistry of CSU's vocal and instrumental performers

RACHEL WADDELL, Director of the University Symphony Orchestra
TIFFANY BLAKE, Director of the Ralph Opera Program

with **AMY EFFINGER**, Concerto Competition winner

MAY 7, 2026, 7:30 P.M.
GRIFFIN CONCERT HALL



COLORADO STATE
UNIVERSITY

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**CSU SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND
THE CHARLES AND RETA RALPH OPERA PROGRAM AT CSU**

VIRTUOSO VOICES

MAY 7, 2026 | 7:30 P.M. | GRIFFIN CONCERT HALL

Follow Us on Instagram @CSUOrchestras and @csuvoiceandopera

Program:

Cello Concerto in D minor

Édouard Lalo (1823 – 1892)

I. Prelude: *Lento – Allegro maestoso*

Amy Effinger, Cello: CSU Concerto Competition Winner

Rachel Waddell, Conductor

***Prelude & Argonaire* from Carmen Suite No. 1**

Georges Bizet (1838 – 1875)

from Carmen, “Mélons! Coupon”

Georges Bizet

Sophia Welker, soprano

Abbi Brundrett, soprano

Cecily Mash, mezzo-soprano

INTERMISSION

Overture from *William Tell*

Gioachino Antonio Rossini (1792 – 1868)

Axel Gallegos, Cello 1 in Opening Septet

Talitha Marinho, Cello 2 in Opening Septet

Amy Effinger, Cello 3 in Opening Septet

Aurora Farrell, Cello 4 in Opening Septet

Caleb Kintner, Cello 5 in Opening Septet

Lucy McHugh, Bass 1 in Opening Septet

Isaac Hermanson, Bass 2 in Opening Septet

from *L'elisir d'amore*, "Una furtiva lagrima" **Gaetano Donizetti (1797 – 1848)**

Matthew Mortensen, tenor

from *Gianni Schicchi* "O mio babbino caro" **Giacomo Puccini (1858 – 1924)**

Sophia Welker, soprano
Sam Cooper, conductor

from *Turandot*, "Tu che di gel sei cinta" **Giacomo Puccini**

Abbi Brundrett, soprano
Rachel Waddell, conductor

from *Don Giovanni*, "La ci darem la mano" **Wolfgang Amedeus Mozart (1756 – 1791)**

Caleb Green, baritone
Cecily Mash, mezzo-soprano

from *Lakmé*, "Viens, Mallika...Dôme épais" **Léo Delibes (1836 – 1891)**

Sophia Welker, soprano
Emily Quiroga, mezzo-soprano

Introduction from "Porgy and Bess" Suite (Catfish Row) **George Gershwin (1898 – 1937)**

from *La Traviata*, "Brindisi" **Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)**

Abbi Brundrett, soprano
Matthew Mortensen, tenor

from *Die Fledermaus*, "Happy Days" **Johann Strauss II (1825 – 1899)**

Tutti

CSU SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL:

Dr. Rachel Waddell, Music Director and Conductor

Sam Cooper, Assistant Conductor and Graduate Teaching Assistant**

Flute

Lalo, Bizet (Prelude and Aragonaise)

Elizabeth Movinsky, Principal**

Ella Patterson, piccolo**

Bizet (Act 3, No. 20) and Rossini

Lydia Chinchilla, Principal

Elizabeth Movinsky, piccolo

Donizetti, Puccini, Mozart, Delibes, Gershwin, Verdi, and Strauss

Karin Sotillo, Principal

Annika Johnson

Oboe

Olivia Zenzinger, Principal

Sophie Haase, 2nd Oboe

Amber Mills, English Horn

Clarinet

Orion Rayburn, Principal

Henry Buckley

Cole Boyd, Bass Clarinet**

Bassoon

Lalo, Bizet, and Rossini:

Charlie Beauregard, Principal**

Brody Ramirez

Donizetti, Puccini, and Mozart:

Will Withers, Principal

Charlie Beauregard

Brody Ramirez, Contra

Delibes, Gershwin, Verdi, Strauss:

Will Withers, Principal

Brody Ramirez

Horns

Colby Hutson, Principal

asst. Jenna Yonce

Jonah Loschky, Horn 2

Zoe Huff, Horn 3

Maxine Ewing, Horn 4

Trumpet

Lalo

Hannes Spiller, Principal

Bryce Wicks

Both Bizet's

Adam Smith, Principal

Bryce Wicks

Rossini

Adam Smith, Principal

Hannes Spiller

Puccini, *Gianni Schicchi*

Bryce Wicks, Principal

Hannes Spiller

Adam Smith

Puccini, *Turandot*

Hannes Spiller

Adam Smith

Gershwin

Adam Smith, Principal

Bryce Wicks

Hannes Spiller

Verdi

Bryce Wicks, Principal

Hannes Spiller

Strauss
Bryce Wicks, Principal
Hannes Spiller

Trombone

Lalo
Amber Minich, Principal**
Carson Koch
Silas Riep

Bizet (both pieces)
Silas Riep, Principal
Amber Minich
Carson Koch

Rossini
Carson Koch, Principal
Silas Riep
Amber Minich

Gershwin
Silas Riep, Principal
Carson Koch
Amber Minich

Verdi
Carson Koch, Principal
Silas Riep
Amber Minich

Strauss
Carson Koch, Principal
Silas Riep
Amber Minich

Tuba

Arabella Dunnington, Principal

Percussion

Lucille Harlow, Principal**

Noah Roppe**

Nathan Krause

Neo Shaffer

Ryan Mikesell

Harp

Katerina Mead, Principal

Piano

Dr. Jesse Pierson, Guest Artist

Violin 1*

Geneva Boersema

Coverdale

Mason England

Li Gomez

Mari Marsh

Kirby Miller

Nathan Newman

Russell Wolfe, Concertmaster

Violin 2*

Lamarana Baldé

Maribel Brannan

Claire Davis

Taylor Green

Fabian Kaltenbach

Alexander Latham, Principal

Jordan Olson

Haley Rieger

Violas*

Raymundo Barrera

Cassidy Hall, Principal

Alan Larsen

Madison Ramonette

Genesis Tyler

Jade Vargas-Reynoso

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

Ilian Ross

Avery Stahla

Alex Strobel

Bass*

Hunter Dominguez

Isaac Hermanson

Lucy McHugh, Principal

*The members of the string section are listed alphabetically.

**Class of 2026 Graduates

Librarians

Dr. Megan Bellamy-Lanz, Head Librarian

Sam Cooper, Librarian Liaison

Devon Bignell

Set-Up Crew

Nathan Krause

Lucy McHugh

Sam Cooper

THE CSUSO WISHES TO THANK:

Dr. Megan Bellamy-Lanz

Devon Bignell

Nathan Krause

Lucy McHugh

Dr. Daniel Stein, SMTD Events Manager, and his student staff

Valerie Reed, Assistant Events Manager

Mike Solo, Creative Director for the School of Music, Theatre, and Dance

Jim Doser, Audio Engineer

Dr. Tiffany Blake, Director of the Ralph Opera Program

Dr. Timothy Burns, Supervisor of Piano Accompanying and Coordinator of Piano Proficiency

Dr. Jesse Pierson, CSU Adjunct Music Instructor of Music Theory, Aural Skills,
and Music Appreciation

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY MUSIC APPLIED FACULTY

Violin

Ron Francois

Viola

Rose Wollman

Cello

Meredith Blecha-Wells

Bass

Forest Greenough

Guitar

Jeff Laquatra

Flute

Ysmael Reyes

Michelle Stanley

Oboe

Galit Kaunitz

Clarinet

Wesley Ferreira

Saxophone

Peter Sommer

Dan Goble

Bassoon

Cayla Bellamy

Trumpet

Stanley Curtis

Horn

John McGuire

Trombone

Drew Leslie

Tuba/Euphonium

Brian Sugrue

Percussion

Eric Hollenbeck

Shilo Stroman

Harp

Kathryn Harms

Piano

Bryan Wallick

Tim Burns

Organ

Joel Bacon

Voice

Nicole Asel

Tiffany Blake

John Lindsey

BIOS:



AMY EFFINGER, 19, has been playing the cello for twelve years. She first started playing the cello when she was eight years old through the *El Sistema* Oklahoma Music Program; she continued with *El Sistema* for six years. She attended Classen SAS High School in Oklahoma where she held the principal position for four years in the orchestra. She participated in the Oklahoma All-State Orchestra from 2022 through 2024 and the Oklahoma Summer Arts Institute Orchestra in 2022 and 2023. After high school, she moved to Colorado to attend Colorado State University where she currently studies under Dr. Meredith Blecha-Wells. In her free time, Amy enjoys horticulture and propagation, photography, reading, and time with her dogs back home.



ABBI BRUNDRETT is a second year master's student in Vocal Performance at Colorado State University. She is originally from Omaha, NE and graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2023 with her BM in Vocal Performance and BA in French. Brundrett has been seen in several productions with CSU, UNL, and Chicago Summer Opera, and has also been a stage director with Music On Site, Inc. Most recently, she was seen as Nella in CSU's production of *Gianni Schicchi*. Some of her favorite roles include Mabel (*The Pirates of Penzance*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*), and Annina (*La Traviata*).



CECILY MASH is a second-year Music Composition major at CSU. Her performance credits at CSU include Zita in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, Rosine in Pasatieri's *Signor Deluso*, and Chorus in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance*. In her time as a performer, she has enjoyed participating in theater, marching band, jazz, bluegrass, funk, and folk music.

Upcoming opportunities for Cecily include the role of Mrs. Paroo and ensemble in Meredith Wilson's *The Music Man* this July as part of the CSU Summer MM in Conducting program! In her remaining time at CSU, Cecily hopes to continue expanding on her versatility in all aspects of her musicianship, including as a vocalist, keyboardist, and composer.



EMILY QUIROGA is a second-year undergraduate student studying vocal performance at CSU. She grew up in Houston, Texas but moved to Colorado with her family after she graduated from high school. Emily appeared in Colorado State's production of Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* as La Ciesca, as well as the role of Kate in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance*. She also took part in a reduced version of Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* which kickstarted her love and passion for opera. Outside of opera Emily is a member of the Chamber Choir at CSU as well as her local Church's choir in Longmont.



SOPHIA WELKER is a second-year BM in Performance student from Colorado Springs, CO. Recent performance credits with the CSU Ralph Opera Program include Lauretta (*Gianni Schicchi*), Célie (*Signor Deluso*), Lady Ella (*Patience*), and Edith (*The Pirates of Penzance*). Outside of the opera program, Sophia spends her time performing in the CSU chamber choir as well as the sanctuary choir at First Presbyterian Church in Fort Collins. Upcoming projects include a weeklong choir tour in Austria with singers from CSU and the Fort Collins community, the role of Amaryllys in *The Music Man*, and a three-week intensive opera program with Opera Theatre of the Rockies at Colorado College.



MATTHEW MORTENSEN is a voice teacher and tenor from St. Paul, Minnesota. He holds a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from Concordia College and will complete his Master of Music in Vocal Performance at Colorado State University at the end of this academic year. At Colorado State University, he serves as the Graduate Teaching Assistant in voice and maintains a private voice studio in Fort Collins. Recent performance credits include Rinuccio (*Gianni Schicchi*), Archibald Grosvenor (*Patience*), and Frederic (*The Pirates of Penzance*) at CSU, as well as an upcoming performance as Alfred (*Die Fledermaus*) with Loveland Opera Theatre in October. Fun fact: Matthew does not know how to ride a bike.



CALEB GREEN is a Junior vocal performance major at CSU. Growing up in Loveland, Colorado he was an active participant in choir and community theater. Some favorite roles at CSU include the Sergeant of Police in *The Pirates of Penzance* and Simone in *Gianni Schicchi*.



Praised by *Opera News Online* for her “...truly virtuoso performance.... immaculate tone, good support and breath to spare.”, soprano, **DR. TIFFANY BLAKE**, received her D.M.A. in Vocal Performance with a minor in Opera Stage Direction from the Eastman School of Music, where she also earned her M.M. and was awarded the prestigious Performer's Certificate.

Dr. Blake's operatic roles include Desdemona in *Otello*, Marguerite in *Faust*, the title role in Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah*, and Mercedes in *Carmen* among others.. Blake has a special interest in song literature, and has given several recitals in Scotland, France, Salzburg, and across the U.S.

She currently serves as associate professor of voice and director of the Charles and Reta Ralph Opera Program at Colorado State University.



Pianist **TIMOTHY BURNS** is a versatile performer and collaborator, with significant instrumental, vocal, and choral accompanying experience. He holds degrees in piano performance, music theory pedagogy, and collaborative piano from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, studying with Carol Schanely-Cahn, David Allen Wehr, and Jean Barr. Currently, Dr.

Burns is an Assistant Professor of Practice at the School of Music, Theatre, and Dance at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, serving as Collaborative Piano Coordinator, and where he frequently collaborates with faculty, guest artists, and students.



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 or follow her on Instagram @rachel_waddell_conductor .



SAM COOPER is currently pursuing his master's degree in instrumental conducting at Colorado State University under the mentorship of Dr. Rachel Waddell, where he also serves as the Assistant Conductor of Orchestras. In July 2026, he is thrilled to take the podium as pit conductor for the Empire Lyric Players' production of *Yeomen of the Guard*.

He additionally held the position of Assistant Conductor for both the Health and Wellness Community Orchestra during their 2024–25 season and the Loveland Opera Theatre's production of *The Sound of Music* in October 2025. Sam was honored to be the pit conductor 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 began playing violin in fifth grade, encouraged and mentored by Michelle Ewer. During the latter half of high school, he continued his studies with Melissa Barru. 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](#)

THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE, AND DANCE PRESENTS

SPRING DANCE CAPSTONE CONCERT

TO BE SEEN

MICAELA OAR • KIMBERLY MAYORGA • MADISON HARD • CLAIRE FORDEN

FRIDAY, MAY 8 AND SATURDAY, MAY 9, 2026

7:30 P.M. | MATINEE SATURDAY, MAY 9, 2 P.M.

UNIVERSITY DANCE THEATRE

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