

THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE, AND DANCE PRESENTS

CONCERT ORCHESTRA

ROCKY MOUNTAIN RHAPSODY

*Poetry and Music for
Colorado Soundscapes*

Conducted by

RACHEL WADDELL

Assistant Conductor and GTA

SAM COOPER

DECEMBER 8, 2025 | 7:30 P.M.

GRIFFIN CONCERT HALL



COLORADO STATE
UNIVERSITY

SEASON SPONSOR:



CONCERT ORCHESTRA
DECEMBER 8, 2025 | 7:30 P.M. | GRIFFIN CONCERT HALL

***ROCKY MOUNTAIN RHAPSODY:
POETRY AND MUSIC FOR COLORADO
SOUNDSCAPES***

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Program

“Praeludium” (Prelude) from *The Holberg Suite*

Edvard Grieg (1843 – 1907)

Rand Barcelo, Poet

Spirit of Colorado

Susan H. Day

Lindsey Zamboni-Cutter, Poet
Sam Cooper, Conductor

Prairie Fields

Alex Rumley, CSU Composition Student

World Premiere
Madison Toner, Poet

For When We Arrive

Kevin Poelking (b. 1988)

Anna Skarupa, Poet

The Endless Voyage

Chris Pilsner (b. 1986)

Keegan Casey, Poet
Sam Cooper, Conductor

PERSONNEL

Dr. Rachel Waddell, Music Director and Conductor
Sam Cooper, Assistant Conductor and GTA

Names are presented in alphabetical order

VIOLIN 1

Grace Asiala

David Chen

Sam Cooper, Violin 1 for Grieg, Rumley, and Poelking

Aaron Graff

Lydia Johnsen, Concertmaster for Poelking and Pilsner

Casey Lee, Concertmaster for Grieg

Mia Mendolia

Emily Reed

Andy Romero

Victor Villalpando

Kelsie Wayt, Concertmaster for Rumley and Day

Charlotte Wynkoop

VIOLIN 2

Rachel Johnson-Bothe

Hannah Burke

Josie Maes Farone, Principal for Day and Rumley

Ryan Haussmann

Cheryl Hite

Melissa Kelley, Principal for Grieg

Nora Kellmann

Chandler Klotz, Principal for Poelking and Pilsner

Eero Lounsbury

Isabelle Moore

VIOLA

Kaylee Giese

Madeline Heemstra, Principal for Day and Rumley

Kierra Jewell

Ryan Mendez, Principal for Grieg

VIOLA (CONT.)

Bella Penna, Principal for Poelking and Pilsner

Yangchen Rotto

Annabelle Thomas

Cameron Tungent

CELLO

Lucia Baithe

Maxine Bilodeau, Principal for Day and Rumley

Chloe Ellingson

Victoria Haluszczak

Isabel Inman

Amanda Kmetz, Principal for Grieg, Poelking, and Pilsner

BASS

Jojo Boysen

Hunter Dominguez, Principal

Derek Crane

Carmylla Powers

Rachel Waddell, Bass for Day and Pilsner

LIBRARIANS

Dr. Ethan Urtz, Head Librarian

Sam Cooper, Librarian Liaison

Devon Bignell

Gabriela Greenberg

THE CSUCO WISHES TO THANK:

Dr. Ethan Urtz

Devon Bignell

Gabriela Greenberg

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Jennifer Clary, Creative Director for the School of Music, Theatre, and Dance

Nicole Darling, Administrative Assistant for the School of Music, Theatre, and Dance

Daniel Stein, SMTD Events Manager, and his student staff

Valerie Reed, Assistant Events Manager

Jim Doser, Audio Engineer

Dr. Devon Fulford, Director of Literacy Through Prose and Poetry

Dr. Rose Wollman, Professor of Viola

Dr. Meredith Blecha-Wells, Professor of Cello

Professor Ron Francois, Violin

Professor Cristian Mazo, Double Bass

Axel Gallegos, Cello Performance Graduate Student

Ella Batson, Business Management Undergraduate Student and CSUSO Violinist

All of our student poets!

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

PROGRAM NOTES

“Praeludium” (Prelude) from *The Holberg Suite*

Edvard Grieg (1843 – 1907)

Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg (1843-1907) composed *The Holberg Suite* (Op. 40) as a “suite in the olden style.” As a collection of dances, the *Holberg Suite* emulates Baroque style, echoing such composers as J.S. Bach and G.F. Handel . The work includes five movements: a Praelude, Sarabande, Gavotte-Musette, Air, and Rigaudon. Additionally, the composition’s namesake is the Danish-Norwegian playwright and philosopher, Ludvig Holberg (1684-1754), also known as the Baron of Holberg, and the founder of modern Danish and Norwegian literature. This evening we perform the lively Praelude which blends Baroque form with romantic harmonies over a propulsive, rhythmic energy. Our concert this evening is in collaboration with CSU English, and each piece on our program has been paired with a premiere of a new poem inspired by that work. We felt it would be fitting to begin our performance with this selection, which shows the long-standing relationship between music and text. To that end, here is an excerpt by Holberg:

“In our Passage to the House, I could not help reflecting how much more Pleasure it must give one to protect Life, than to take it away; and how much happier he must be in catching the Fish with no other Intent than to feed them, than it can be with us, to first torture them with Hooks, and then throw, them on the Ground to expire in Agonies. Surely, if we were to make it our own Case, we should refrain from many Barbarities, that we look upon as Amusements, and not entertain ourselves by tormenting any Thing that has Life for our Diversion, when we are sensible how terrible it would be to us, to be serv’d in the same Manner. For every Thing that has Life, as naturally endeavours to preserve it, and feels Pain as severely as we, the great, self-conceited Lords of the Universe.” – Ludvig Holberg, [The Journey of Niels Klim to the World Underground](#)

— Program Note by Rachel Waddell

Spirit of Colorado

Susan H. Day

Spirit of Colorado is an exciting work for string orchestra by Colorado composer and pedagogue Susan H. Day, whose music is widely celebrated among youth orchestras and educational ensembles for its accessibility, strong melodic writing, and expressive musical storytelling. In this piece, Day paints a musical portrait of Colorado’s sweeping landscapes—

its open plains, towering mountains, and the sense of momentum and adventure that defines life in the Centennial State

The piece unfolds in a series of vivid musical “scenes,” each representing an essential part of Colorado’s cultural story. Day begins with a reflective theme honoring the First Peoples, evoking a sense of reverence and connection to the land’s original stewards. This is followed by a lively cowboy theme, capturing the rugged independence and frontier spirit that shaped early Western life. As the work progresses, Day introduces an energetic railroad theme, representing the arrival of the rail lines that transformed Colorado’s communities and connected the region to the wider world. The piece culminates in a broad, expansive section depicting the majestic Rocky Mountains, whose towering presence has long defined the state’s identity.

Spirit of Colorado invites listeners to experience the landscapes, histories, and cultures that continue to shape Colorado today.

— Program Note by Sam Cooper

Prairie Fields

Alex Rumley, CSU Composition Student

Prairie Fields seeks to capture the landscape of a prairie from the rolling hills to the colorful plants littered around. The beginning opens with a staccato figure giving it a skippy feel to it. The melody then comes in opening the sound like a ray of sunshine. The following section is in 7/8 representing a tumbling feel. The form of this piece follows a day cycle, starting with midday going into night and ending in the morning.

— Program Note by Alex Rumley

For When We Arrive

Kevin Poelking (b. 1988)

The idea for this music came from a piece I wrote a few years prior entitled *There and Back*. That work is a musical palindrome, with several themes that return in reverse order after a slower middle section. While writing, I felt as though there was something more to be said about the central “There” (the “slow” section) of *There and Back*. The melody from this section gave birth to *For When We Arrive*.

So often, we begin moving towards a place, event, or goal, but when we arrive, things often look different than we thought they would. What if the place we ended up was not what we originally envisioned, but we were able to find beauty in it just the same?

So often, we begin moving toward a place, event, or goal, but when we arrive, things often look different than we imagined. What if the place we ended up wasn't what we originally envisioned, but we still found beauty in it?

In the beginning of *For When We Arrive*, the music repeatedly *almost* reaches a satisfying arrival. However, with each swell, we fall short of our anticipated destination. At measure 45, we seem to give up and restart, trying our luck in a new key.

Suddenly, the music gains much-needed momentum, supporting a new melody. Perhaps this new melody, which we had never seen before, is the true destination.

At measure 66, we receive a taste of resolution as we reflect on where we've been. There is a sense of relief that we are on the right path and an anticipation of more to come.

The music finally reaches a satisfying arrival at measure 78. While the piece had been building around earlier material the entire time, we now realize that the melody we had been waiting for all along was one we had to discover along the way.

For When We Arrive demonstrates the beauty that can come from being open to new, opportunities and ideas. Questioning, and even sometimes altogether abandoning our plans, convictions, or beliefs can often lead to the discovery of something wonderful.

Those familiar with my pieces *Refractions* and *Light Descending* will find that these works borrow the eighth note motif from the final measures of *For When We Arrive*. I find that this suits the story of the music well, with a distinct connection between *There and Back* (one of my first ever commissions) a development through *For When We Arrive*, and the unexpected inspiration for two new works that propelled me into a new era of composing.

— Program Note by Kevin Poelking

The Endless Voyage

Chris Pilsner (b. 1986)

The Endless Voyage is a story of adventure, reflection, and a passion to always retain a never-ending intrepid spirit. From my early planning, I knew that Dr. Walter Temme, whom this work was commissioned for, had such a spirit. And since this work was to commemorate his retirement from as an orchestra director, I took the opportunity to write a him his own adventurous melody for which he could take with him throughout all of his future journeys.

The work opens with a “calling” from the celli for the adventure to start, but quickly moves into the beginning of our voyage. The tempo then picks up just before the melody bursts forth in its first majestic statement. As the music moves into the middle of the work, we take a more reflective view with a new melody that shares several to its earlier cousin, but allows a bit of respite before the tempo picks back up into full adventure mode.

I am honored to have composed this work for Dr. Temme, as his adventurous spirit very much reflects my own. It now serves a reminder to have a endless amount of adventure and joy in everything I do.

— Program Note by Chris Pilsner

STUDENT POEMS

Rand Barcelo

Poem to accompany "Praeludium" from the *Holberg Suite* by Edvard Grieg

Elms

The way these trees challenge me,
the way they split and scrape their leaves that
tinge the sky
until their black boughs are dry,
until the berries slap the bark,
silken bells when
the wind blows

through the elms that tower
over me, but higher still,
the torch of youth that sings
eternally scarlet
the evening sky,
the immense flame
of the ship Judea pulsing
over bright current clouds
and the vapors that fall
leave soft stains on my vision when

the steam of scalding ambition
ebbs from a thousand young minds who
drift like the Fall of Rebel Angels through
the shadows of collegian elms,
searching
for the old philosophers who travel
today in their work boots,
who gather gravel and mulch
and dance around Rodin's
immortally constipated Thinker,
to get him to open up

who, they say, holds the answers
for the scientists
and the believers
inside stone; a dogma
that crumbles over time,
crumbles so finely to
tachyons of time that swirl in the
murk

glittering and sinister,
but history floats to the top, buoyant like bones!
breaching, bubbling
like the breath of lost sailors
by the deep blue coastal dreams,
the arc of their shores
like a comet that scathes,
for an instant, its echo
over the seafoam, scrapes
fractal dust from between stars
to fall; to rise
in the mirror of waves

the comet, on its way
to some abyssal tributary,

beyond reaches
a gleaming purple disk
spilling delicately over its one
round edge, over stars,

when a thought; a comet,
caresses the constellations
into vibrato ribbon spills; fills a space,
a space to consider the Conductor,
or the persistence of

insects
crawling on my pant leg,
to infinitely speculate

under the glow of huge
American Elms that
encourage my pursuit
with a place to sit.

Lindsey Zamboni-Cutter

Poem accompanying *Spirit of Colorado* by Susan H. Day

Ascent

My foot stumbles on loose gravel,
but I have her to catch my fall,
and her grass will let me rest.
My tears roll to the dirt,
but her brooks will cover the sound,
and her flowers will soak up what falls.

I stand,
using her boulders to help me.
And I walk further
up, ignoring my pain because she
will be my aid.

Evergreen trees
will turn from big to smaller, replaced
by the golden glow of
glacier lilies.
The piercing bugles of
majestic elk
grow further in the distance, replaced
by the chirps of
yellow-bellied marmots.

The air
get crisper and crisper,
the fresh air of
my mountain home.

Madie Toner

Poem to accompany *Prairie Fields* by Alex Rumley

False Hope

You took me to a field
played and ran with me
through the tall grass and rolled hills.
We laughed and smiled,
spun around each other
faster and faster.
I tried reaching for you
My hand grazed yours but you pulled away.
The tall grass around us began to
grow brown and brittle.
The hills we ran through
became boring and flat.
I spun one last time.
You were not there.
Red rivers flowed past me
down my arms, legs, and wrists.
I looked around again and you weren't there.
Sitting in the field, I was looking for a false hope.
Flowing through the rivers
I grasped at tree trunks hoping you would get me out of this funk.
You never found me.
Rivers were red, grass was dead
the field withered away beneath me.
I try to cope with this false hope.
I am lost.
Nothing in the field but stains and pain.
I died in the field you left me in.

Anna Skarupa

Poem to accompany *For When We Arrive* by Kevin Poelking

Returning

Sleepless night upon sleepless night,
Hands shaking with anticipation,
For victory or defeat,
Only tomorrow will tell.
One thought keeping me alive, a
Never ending enchantment.
A word so sweet,
Like summer's honey,
Or the gentle fire
In harsh winter's storm.
Home
That's the place where I'll bury my soul
Underneath the red beek tree,
Resting place for my weary bones,
Where I can finally sing the ocean's praise.
Let that be the place I rest, let it be my last.
Let mother embrace me, it's her right.
Let the gentle earth opened up her arms for me,
And if I can't have her let me live forever in hope
Wonder haunting my soul,
Standing in the midst of it all,
A cold winter wind passes by,
Sun rising on midnight mountains.
For a moment I don't think I can take it all in,
The floating enchantments, the yellows,
The blues, the purples all mixing in hues.
Crystals shining deep within.
A mountain so tall, so fierce,
And beautifully dangerous,
I can't help but admire it all.
And climb it till I can't, no more.
Sunlight guiding my every step,
The morning air begging me,

To continue on my journey,
Adventure singing so sweetly.
And yet, it has been years since I last seen home,
Since I see the great oak across my porch,
Since I smelled the sunflowers bloom,
But the joy of the moment replaces all longing.

Keegan Casey

Poem to accompany *The Endless Voyage* by Chris Pilsner

Tides

Coasting frothy azure molten glimmer
You were a stone
Under the falls
Furrowed brow rocky fingers
Endure endure enduring
You will be a grain of sand
Falling through my contemplative fingers
On a burning beach
I blink
You erode over millennia
Ocean ebbing and flowing
Of tides of rivers
Of streams of droplets
You are a ripple
In the ocean

BIOS



Alex Rumley

Current composition student at Colorado State University, Alex Rumley explores form and modern harmony in her works. Rumley has great interest in writing for younger musicians along with chamber groups of all ages. As a saxophone player, she finds great interest in multiple styles inside and out of the “classical” realm. She started composing in 2020 and knew from her very first composition that this was it. Rumley’s greatest inspirations for her pieces are nature and specific emotions. Musically, she enjoys the works of Bartok and Ravel and aims to incorporate some of their flair into her own work.



Devon Fulford

Devon Fulford (she/hers) is the author of the poetry collections *thrum* (2026), *hopscotch* (2026), *you can still drown in the shallows* (2026), *onus* (2025), *gulp* (2024), *the skin song* (2024), and *southern atheist: oh, honey* (2021). She serves as the faculty director for the Literacy Through Prose and Poetry at Colorado State University program, where she teaches writing and literature courses. Devon holds a Doctor of Education in transformative leadership and is in the first year of a PhD in creative writing, in which she is composing a craft book about the benefits of using experiential learning in the writing classroom.



Rand Barcelo

Rand Barcelo is a senior Integrated Visual Studies major with concentrations in drawing and creative writing. He got into poetry somewhat recently, and it has become a major piece of his artistic process. All of his recent projects have explored the intersection between drawing and poetry. He writes poems and then translates them visually, or he’ll draw a composition and write about it. They expand each other and help him find unique compositions that he never would have thought of otherwise.



Keegan Casey

Keegan Casey is a senior majoring in photography and minoring in English. Poetry for him has been an inspiration behind his recent art projects, particularly the poetry and history of the Beat Generation—Jack Kerouac, Diane DiPrima, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and others. Writing poetry is a fun challenge, and he finds it to be a great outlet to express himself.



Anna Skarupa

Anna Skarupa is a junior at Colorado State University studying English and philosophy. To Anna, writing poetry is the best way to express any emotion you are currently feeling.



Madison Toner

Madie Toner is a junior at Colorado State University pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in English. Reading and music have long shaped her love for creativity and expression, with writing woven in along the way. She's grateful for the chance to share a piece of her passion with others.



Lindsey Zamboni-Cutter

Lindsey Zamboni-Cutter is in her senior year. She is an English major with a creative writing emphasis. She writes poetry because she loves finding the beauty in words, and she loves sorting her feelings through art. She also plays euphonium in the Symphonic Band.



Rachel Waddell

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

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. Sam was honored to serve as Assistant Conductor for the Loveland

Opera Theatre's production of *The Sound of Music* in October of 2025. He also served 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 infused the original with fresh humor and a modern perspective

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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