

SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE, AND DANCE

at the University Center for the Arts

Guest Artist Concert:

JULYAN-SHORT-NEZ TRIO

MARCH 11, 2025 | 7:30 P.M.

ORGAN RECITAL HALL



**COLORADO STATE
UNIVERSITY**

SEASON SPONSOR:



The Bank
of CSU

GUEST ARTIST CONCERT

JULYAN-SHORT-NEZ TRIO

MARCH 11, 2025 | 7:30 P.M. | ORGAN RECITAL HALL

Trio in G minor, op. 17 (1846)

Clara Schumann (1819-1896)

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Scherzo
- III. Andante
- IV. Allegretto

Five Pieces in Folk Style, op. 102 (1849)

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

- I. Mit Humor: Vanitas vanitatum
- II. Langsam
- III. Nicht schnell, mit viel Ton zu spielen
- IV. Nicht zu rasch
- V. Stark und markirt

INTERMISSION

Bulgariana: Balkan Mountain Song and Dance (2016)

Ofer Ben-Amots (b. 1955)

trio in memory (2023)

Ketty Nez (b. 1965)

- I. searching within
- II. slipping away

BIOGRAPHIES:

Born in Haifa, in 1955, Israel, **Ofer Ben-Amots** gave his first piano concert at age nine and at age sixteen was awarded first prize in the Chet Piano Competition. Later, he continued his composition studies in Tel Aviv, Geneva, Switzerland, and the Academy of Music in Detmold, Germany, where he graduated with degrees in composition, music theory, and piano. Upon his arrival in the United States in 1987, Ben-Amots studied with George Crumb at the University of Pennsylvania where he received his Ph.D. in music composition. Currently member of the Music Department at Colorado College, Dr. Ben-Amots teaches composition and theory.

Ben-Amots' compositions are performed regularly in concert halls and festivals Worldwide. His music has been performed by such orchestras as the Zürich Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, Austrian Radio Orchestra, Brooklyn Philharmonic, Colorado Orchestra, Concerto Soloists of Philadelphia, and Portland Chamber Orchestra, among others. His compositions have been recorded by the Gewandhaus Orchestra of Leipzig, Munich Chamber Orchestra, Barcelona Royal Philharmonic, Odessa Philharmonic, BBC Singers, and the renowned Czech choirs Permonik and Jitro. He is the winner of the 1994 Vienna International Competition for Composers, 1988 Kavannagh Prize, the Gold Award at South Africa's 1993 Roodepoort International Competition for Choral Composition. His *Avis Urbanus* for amplified flute was awarded First Prize at the 1991 Kobe International Competition for Flute Composition in Japan. In 1999, Ben-Amots was awarded the Aaron Copland Award and the Music Composition Artist Fellowship by the Colorado Council on the Arts. Ofer Ben-Amots' works have been repeatedly recognized for their emotional and highly personal expression. The interweaving of folk elements with contemporary textures, along with his unique imaginative orchestration, creates the haunting dynamic tension that permeates and defines Ben-Amots' musical language.

Ketty Nez joined the composition and theory department at the *Boston University School of Music* in 2005, after teaching for two years at the University of Iowa. *Listen to a Wonder Never Heard Before!*, her portrait CD as composer/pianist, was released in 2010 by Albany Records. Her folk opera, *The Fiddler and the Old Woman of Rumelia*, was premiered in a staged version in May 2012, by Juventas New Music Ensemble. Her piano concerto *thresholds*, performed by Ketty and the Boston University Wind Ensemble, was released in July 2013 by Ravello Records. BUWE also recorded *four scenes for Juliet*, released February 2019 by Summit Records. Her CD's of chamber music with Albany Records also include *double images* (2020), *far sight sun light* (2023), and *through the light* (2025). During the fall term of 2021, Ketty was a guest teacher at the Liszt Academy in Budapest, Hungary, as a Fulbright scholar.

Ketty completed, in 2002-3, a residence of several months at the Ecole Nationale de Musique in Montbeliard, France, prior to the premiere of her chamber opera *An Opera in Devolution: Drama in 540 Seconds*, at the 2003 Seventh Festival A*Devantgarde in Munich. In 2001, she spent several months as visiting composer/scholar at Stanford University's Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics (CCRMA), and in 1998 participated in the year-long computer music course at the Institute de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique (IRCAM). Before computer music studies, Ketty worked for two years with Louis Andriessen in Amsterdam, and co-founded the international contemporary music collective Concerten Tot and Met. She spent a year studying with composer Michio Mamiya in Tokyo before her graduate work, and her music has been performed in festivals in Europe, North America, and Asia. Ketty holds a Ph.D. in composition from the University of California at Berkeley, a master's degree in composition from the Eastman School of Music, a bachelor's degree in piano performance from the Curtis Institute of Music, and a bachelor's degree in psychology from Bryn Mawr College.

Robyn Julyan, violinist, has performed as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral musician throughout the United States, Europe, and Singapore. Robyn has been a featured performer in festivals and concerts around the country, including the Albuquerque Chamber Soloists, Loon Lake Live Festival, Friends of Chamber Music Denver, Piccolo Spoleto Festival's Spotlight Series, the Charleston Chamber Players, the Breckenridge Music Festival's Winter Series, and Santa Fe Pro Musica. She has held positions with the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, the Charleston Symphony, and the Sarasota Opera. She is currently a member of the Opera Colorado Orchestra and plays frequently with the Colorado and Atlanta Symphonies. At home in many disciplines, Robyn is a member of the Playground Ensemble, the Front Range's premier new music ensemble. She is a frequent concertmaster of the Colorado Bach Ensemble, and performs each August as a tenured member of the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in Santa Cruz, California.

Robyn has been a member of the string faculty at Regis University since 2011, where she teaches applied violin and is the Chamber Area coordinator. In 2016, she was appointed Director of Strings of Orvieto Musica, a chamber music festival in Italy. Robyn Julyan holds a Master's of Music in Performance from the Cleveland Institute of Music and a Bachelor's in Music Performance from the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, MD. Her chamber music training includes working with members of the Cleveland, Cavani, Miami, Tokyo, and Juilliard quartets, among others. She lives in Denver with her husband, Benjamin Tomkins and their dog, Amelia, and 2 cats, Milo and Reggie. In some of her spare time, she teaches and trains aerial circus arts.

David Short, cellist, works and lives as a performer, educator, and arranger in Lakewood, CO. He plays with numerous groups in a wide variety of forms and styles. He is the cellist of The Mont Alto Motion Picture Orchestra, a silent movie 5-piece group that has been providing live film accompaniments for over 30 years and 130+ unique films. Mont Alto has toured locally and across the country at such venues as the Castro Theater for the San Francisco Silent Film Festival, the Telluride Film Festival, Lincoln Center, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Cleveland Institute of Art, and many, many more. Mont Alto records for Kino-Lorber, Francis Ford Coppola, the Cohen Collection, and Lobster Films. David is a founding member of the 13-piece string band Sphere Ensemble, one of their principal arrangers, and served as their artistic director from 2015 - 2017. Sphere has performed over 60 of David's arrangements and compositions. This April, Sphere will be premiering a work by Colorado composer Carter Pann.

David is the cellist for the contemporary music group Playground Ensemble, and is where he first encountered Ketty and her work while recording her string quartet *keep a secret*. He is a member of Opera Colorado. He has played shows at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, and Arvada Center, working with many local and touring shows. He has played with Mannheim Steamroller, the Nu Deco Ensemble, and, most recently, recorded for Decca with Kantorei in a premier of Christopher Tin's works for choir and small ensemble, serving as one of two cello soloists appearing on that album.

PROGRAM NOTES:

Clara Schumann composed her **Piano Trio in G minor op. 17** in May 1846, following her studies in counterpoint undertaken together with her husband Robert. The family had moved to Dresden in 1844 to help Robert's compositional career, which had been stagnating in Leipzig. At great cost to her own concert career as prominent piano virtuoso (since she was a child prodigy), Clara ran the rapidly expanding family, established a successful concert series, and continued to compose, starting this piano trio just 3 months after their fourth child was born. Touring Vienna in 1847, Clara gave the trio's premiere to critical acclaim, though her husband's works which she also performed were not so well received. Clara planned to dedicate the trio to her friend, Fanny Mendelssohn-Hensel, who sadly died before the work's publication in 1847.

It is interesting to note that Robert's first piano trio was also written in 1847, and shares similarities with Clara's trio. As further insight to the 16-year marriage between these two, though Robert encouraged Clara's composition and sought publishers for her, his creative

work took priority, and for years her own practicing and composing had to fit into times which would not disturb him. After his death, despite her considerable gifts, Clara stopped composing, some speculating that she did so given the need to support her children, and later, grandchildren, through performing and teaching activities.

The trio follows the usual four-movement form, Allegro – Scherzo – Andante – Allegretto, and demonstrates Clara's interest in polyphonic techniques. Soaring melodies are harmonized in subtle ways, occasionally featuring sequences. The three instruments are mostly in equal partnership, with occasional moments of elegant piano virtuosity. The piano writing itself is challenging and rewarding, having been composed by someone who was an extraordinary pianist as well as composer.

Robert Schumann wrote **5 Pieces in Folk Style** op. 102 (1849) during in a couple days in April, during an immensely productive burst despite the political turmoil and democratic uprisings sweeping Europe. Fighting broke out in Dresden 3 May, and to avoid the draft to join the republicans, Robert and the family briefly fled the city. Reflecting Robert's interest in chamber music for duet combinations, and his own early training as a cellist, these pieces serve as experiments in writing for cello, and precede his cello concerto by a year. Another 5 pieces for cello and piano were composed in 1853, but destroyed by Clara in 1893, who considered these later pieces too affected by Robert's deteriorating mental condition at the time.

Dedicatee cellist Andreas Grabau met Clara when she was only 9 years old, as well as Robert, who at that time was taking piano lessons from Clara's father, the pedagogue Friedrich Wieck. Grabau later joined the Schumanns' *Davidsbündler*, a loose association of close friends who "defended" contemporary music against "philistines" through various literary and musical activities, which included founding the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in 1834 (a magazine that still continues today). Grabau and Clara premiered **5 Pieces** at an informal concert celebrating Schumann's fortieth birthday on June 8, 1850.

Given Robert's interest in folk music of Germany and Bohemia, it is of interest to note that there are no actual folk tunes in **5 Pieces**. Rhythmic syncopations, shifting metric accents, and odd phrase lengths could be heard to suggest folk music, but are also trademarks of Schumann's music in general. For example, second piece features 7-bar phrases. As with his other duets, **5 Pieces** is also published in an alternate version for violin. Only the first piece has been given a title, "Vanitas Vanitatum" (a favorite saying of Robert's, likely inspired by Goethe's poem of the same name).

Bulgariana, for violin and piano, is a short musical depiction of a Balkan Mountain song and dance. Having been born to a Bulgarian-Jewish family (on my mother's side) it has long been my quest to create a work based on Bulgarian folk music. The violin solo introduction is a free arrangement of a well-known Bulgarian folk-song titled "Malka Moma" (Little Girl.) The beauty and simplicity of the slow tune is accentuated by the open strings D and A, which serve as a continual drone throughout the opening, reminiscent of a bagpipe, or of the *Gadulka*, a traditional bowed string instrument often used in Balkan folk music. Following the slow introduction the music breaks into a fast and relentless dance in the typical Balkan uneven rhythm of 7/16. The end of the piece returns to the slow melodic idea, this time with a gentle accompaniment of the piano.

Bulgariana was commissioned by Rimon: The Minnesota Jewish Arts Council. Rimon, an initiative of the Minneapolis Jewish Federation, promotes and enhances Jewish identity through arts and culture, supports arts and artists who broadly explore Jewish themes, and assists the greater Jewish community in developing a collaborative involvement with the arts. The invitation to create this work came from David Harris, a colleague and a friend, who also serves as the Executive Director of Rimon. David, is a committed promoter of Jewish Arts and Culture and this work is dedicated to him.

LEVEL UP.

The NEW CSU™ Visa® Debit Card.



Show your Rams pride everywhere you go with the all-new CSU Visa® Debit Card – free with any FNBO checking account. New design. Raised detail. Premium finish.

 **fnbo**

The Bank of CSU

fnbo.com/csu

Member FDIC