

CSU SINFONIA: STRINGS AND PERCUSSION

CONDUCTED BY **WES KENNEY**

A NEW WORLD

WITH **BRYAN WALICK**, PIANO

APRIL 1, 2021 | 7:30 PM



Colorado State University



P R O G R A M :

MUSIC FOR A WINTER EVENING (2021) WORLD PREMIERE / JAMES DAVID

GRASS (1954) / COLERIDGE TAYLOR PERKINSON (1932-2004)

Bryan Wallick, piano

AFRICAN SUITE (1944) / FELA SOWANDE (1905-1987)

- I. Joyful Day
- II. Nostalgia
- III. Lullaby
- IV. Onipe
- V. Akinla

MOLLY ON THE SHORE (1907) / PERCY GRAINGER (1882-1961)

James David

Music for a Winter Evening

Dr. James David is the composition professor on the faculty of CSU School of Music, Theater, and Dance.

Music for a Winter Evening for strings, harp, piano, and percussion was inspired by both the beauty of my home state of Colorado and the works of two of my favorite composers. One of the great advantages of living so close to the Rocky Mountains is the ability to escape to beautiful yet isolated places that feel removed from the trappings of modern life. On one such quick escape, I was struck at how beautiful a mountain stream at midnight with a cloudless sky could be, and this brief orchestral work represents my feelings on such an evening. The gentle flow of the river intermingles with my restless mental state only to slowly relax and give way to a sense of calm as I look towards a brilliant sky unclouded by artificial lights. Two famous works are paraphrased: Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta* which features one of his signature "night pieces" as the center movement, and George Crumb's *Music for a Summer Evening* which was inspired by the motion of constellations. This work was commissioned by Maestro Wes Kenney for the Colorado State University Symphony Orchestra.

– Notes by the composer

Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson

Grass

Named by his mother after the British Black composer, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Coleridge Taylor Perkinson studied at the Manhattan School of Music under Vittorio Gianini and at Princeton University with Earl Kim. Equally versed in writing for classical ensembles, highly contrapuntal textures, and jazz idioms, *Grass* is the composer's response to what it meant to be Black in the Korean War conflict and is based on the poem of the same name by Carl Sandburg.

Grass

by Carl Sandburg

Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo.

Shovel them under and let me work—

I am the grass; I cover all.

And pile them high at Gettysburg

And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.

Shovel them under and let me work.

Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:

What place is this?

Where are we now?

I am the grass.

Let me work.

Although the composer refused to articulate the connection between music and poetry, the work in its outer sections uses complex counterpoint as the primary texture and is thematically connected. Part one of the 16-minute work uses constantly changing asymmetrical meters to keep the listener off balance. The middle section has the character of a lament but gives way to the final part of the piece set primarily in compound triple meter. The work becomes cyclic towards the end by restating the works opening melodic content. Although the piece is mostly consonant, dissonance is used between melodic lines to increase and release tension. The solo piano mimics or punctuates much of what the orchestra plays yet is also given a few cadenza-like passages. Snare drum, bass drum, and tam-tam also add color to the textures along with timpani that is often in dialogue with the other elements of the ensemble.

Fela Sowande ***African Suite***

This composer's work in his home country of Nigeria establishing the sound of modern Nigerian art music, created a large enough and venerable reputation that he was known simply as "Fela." During his education first at King's College in London, then later at University of London and Trinity College of Music, Sowande supported himself with a jazz septet made primarily of musicians from the Caribbean.

The *African Suite* dates from 1944 and comes from a productive period of composition while still in London. From the liner notes of a Canadian Broadcast Company recording come the following description:

The *African Suite*, written in 1944, combines well-known West African musics with European forces and methods. For the opening movement, *Joyful Day*, Sowande uses a melody written by Ghanaian composer Ephraim Amu, as he does in the fourth movement, *Onipe*. In *Nostalgia*, Sowande composes a traditional slow movement to express his nostalgia for the homeland (in itself a rather European idea). At the centre of the work is a restive *Lullaby*, based on a folk original.

The finale of the *Suite*, *Akinla*, traces a very singular musical history. It began as a popular Highlife tune – Highlife being a pungent, 20th-century style, combining colonial Western military and popular music with West African elements and a history of its own. Sowande then featured it as a cornerstone of his "argument" that West African music could be heard on European terms: the *African Suite* was originally broadcast by the BBC to the British colonies in Africa.

Percy Grainger

Molly on the Shore (1907)

Grainger set a number of short pieces that utilized folk tunes and country dances which he would often collect simply by asking someone on the street to sing him an example. In this work two Irish reels are contrasted: “Molly on the Shore” and “Temple Hill.” Here is what the composer said about the work:

“In setting Molly on the Shore, I strove to imbue the accompanying arts that made up the harmonic texture with a melodic character not too unlike that of the underlying reel tune. Melody seems to me to provide music with initiative; whereas rhythm appears to me to exert an enslaving influence. For that reason, I have tried to avoid regular rhythmic domination in my music – always excepting irregular rhythms, such as those of Gregorian Chant, which seem to me to make for freedom. Equally with melody, I prize discordant harmony, because of the emotional and compassionate sway it exerts.”

The piece was originally set for string quartet or string orchestra with a wind band arrangement created in 1920. For our performance, we have joined percussion with strings as a hybrid . . . Necessity being the mother of invention and a sign of these pandemic times!

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

WES KENNEY, Conductor

ANDREW MENDIZABAL, Graduate Teaching Assistant

Violin I

Dmitri Ascarrunz, *Concertmaster*

Rhea Chan

Landon Fennell

Mary Fox

Peng Liu

Laura Mariea

Amelie Peccoud

Steven Hsu

Leslie Stewart^

Violin II

Madison Kubala*

Brooke Der

Hallie Harris

Rachel Nieves

Tim Patawaran

Chris Snell

Viola

Garret Figueroa*

Troy Cao

Carly Dekker

Hailey Simmons

Percy Slovut

Cello

Faith Rohde *

Laurel Ave

Amber Ketzenberger

Alex Koster

Barbara Thiem^

Bass

Zachary Niswender*

Thomas Hasler

Max Johnson

Myah Precie

Hunter Allen

Wesley Daucsavage

Percussion

Christian Kuhlman*

Ben Stordeur

Derek Summers

Jalen Thompson

William Wilson

Zach Van Hook

Harp

Abigail Enssle

Piano

Bryan Wallick

*Principal

^Faculty guest performer



WES KENNEY was recently named a 2020 Honored Artist by The American Prize. He is now in his eighteenth year as Professor of Music and Director of Orchestras at Colorado State University. He conducts the CSU Symphony and Chamber Orchestra as well as CSU Opera productions and teaches graduate conducting. Mr. Kenney has led the orchestra to many new milestones, including first ever at CSU performances of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, Mahler symphonies No. 1 and 5, two Strauss tone poems, the Bartok *Concerto for Orchestra*, and the Bruckner *Symphony No. 5*. In 2014 he was named Music Director of the Denver Young Artists Orchestra—the premiere youth orchestra in the state of Colorado—and has taken that

orchestra on two tours through Italy, France, Austria, Czech Republic, and Spain. He has also led them in two well-received concerts at Carnegie Hall. With Mr. Kenney on the podium, DYAO has won multiple prizes for its performances and presentation of contemporary music.

Mr. Kenney is also currently in his 18th season as Music Director of the fully professional Fort Collins Symphony, notable this past year for being the only orchestra in the country to play a live concert on July 4, 2020. In the summer of 2004 he was named to an additional post of Music Director of Opera Fort Collins, helping that organization establish a full season of three productions a year. Mr. Kenney was named the 2009 Outstanding Teacher by the Colorado American String Teachers Association. He was also awarded the Grand Prize in the summer 2007 Varna (Bulgaria) International Conducting Competition. He traveled back to Bulgaria in 2008 for concerts in Vidin and to conduct *La Traviata* in Stara Zagora.

Mr. Kenney is a frequent guest conductor of professional and educational ensembles. Recent appearances include the Lviv (Ukraine) Philharmonic, Changwon (South Korea) Philharmonic, Vietnamese National Symphony Orchestra (Hanoi), Colorado Symphony, Colorado Music Festival, Lafayette (IN) Symphony and the Acadiana Symphony (LA). He has conducted New Mexico All-State, Virginia All-State, Alabama All-State, and New Hampshire All-State Orchestra. He has given orchestra clinics in all corners of Colorado and is sought after for sessions at the Colorado Music Educators Association Conference. Mr. Kenney is a former president of the Conductors Guild and serves currently on their advisory board.

Mr. Kenney is also in demand as a conducting pedagogue. He has taught alongside Jorge Mester in a Conductors Guild sponsored workshop at CSU and Larry Livingston at CMEA. He has been a guest lecturer at the Conductor's Institute held at Bard College in upstate New York, teaching alongside founder (and the late) Harold Farberman and American Symphony Orchestra Music Director Leon Botstein. He is also one of the founders of the CSU Summer Master's Degree program in conducting, designed to allow Music Educators the opportunity to earn a graduate degree while furthering their conducting studies and remaining in their current position.

Education: San Francisco State University, University of Southern California, Conductors Institute, Hochschule fur Musik und Darstellende Kunst (Vienna).



BRYAN WALLICK is gaining recognition as one of the great American virtuoso pianists of his generation. Gold medalist of the 1997 Vladimir Horowitz International Piano Competition in Kiev, he has performed throughout the United States, Europe, and Africa.

Mr. Wallick made his New York recital debut in 1998 at Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall and made his Wigmore Hall recital debut in London in 2003. He has also performed at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall with the London Sinfonietta and at the St. Martin-in-the-Fields Church with the London Soloist's Chamber Orchestra.

In recent seasons, Mr. Wallick has performed with the Arizona Musicfest All-star Orchestra, Boise Philharmonic, Brevard Symphony, Cape Town Philharmonic, Cincinnati Pops, Evansville Philharmonic, Eastern Cape Philharmonic, Free State Symphony, Gauteng Philharmonic, Illinois Philharmonic, Johannesburg Philharmonic, Kentucky Symphony, Kwa-Zulu Natal Philharmonic, Phoenix Symphony, Portland Symphony, and Winston-Salem Symphony; he has also collaborated with Erich Kunzel, Marvin Hamlisch, Robert Moody, Daniel Raitskin, Daniel Boico, Arjen Tien, Yasuo Shinozaki, Andrew Sewell, Vladimir Verbitsky, Victor Yampolsky, Josep Vicent, Leslie Dunner, Alfred Savia, Christopher Confessore, and Carmon Deleon among others. Mr. Wallick has performed recitals at the Chateau Differdange in Luxembourg, on the Tivoli Artists Series in Copenhagen, Ravinia's Rising Star Series, Xavier Piano Series (Cincinnati), Scottsdale Center's Steinway Series, Sanibel Island Music Festival, and the Classics in the Atrium Series in the British Virgin Islands. In 2002, Mr. Wallick played two solo performances at Ledreborg Palace for HRH Princess Marie Gabrielle Luxembourg, and HRH Prince Philip Bourbon de Parme.

Bryan Wallick is an avid chamber musician and has performed with violinists Yi-Jia Susanne Hou, Nikita Borisov-Glebsky, Rachel Lee Priday, Miriam Contzen, Sergei Malov, Zanta Hofmeyer, and cellists Zuill Bailey, Alexander Buzlov, Alexander Ramm, Wolfgang Emmanuel Schmidt and Peter Martens. In 2015, he took over as artistic director of Schalk Visser/Bryan Wallick Concert Promotions, which hosts many international musicians who perform concert tours throughout South Africa. Mr. Wallick was a guest soloist at the 2019 International Keyboard Odyssiad and Festival in Colorado and has been invited to judge the 2nd Olga Kern International Piano Competition in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in Nov. 2019.

Bryan Wallick's 2018-2019 engagements included return appearances with the Butler Philharmonic, Cape Philharmonic, Pretoria Symphony Orchestra, Free State Symphony Orchestra, Johannesburg Philharmonic, and solo recitals at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago, Rising Star Series in South Hampton, New York, Grand Piano Series in Naples, Florida, Fitton Center in Hamilton, Ohio, and other recitals throughout South Africa. He performed with Russian trio partners violinist Nikita Borisov-Glebsky and cellist Alexander Buzlov for a tour of South Africa in June 2018. He also performed with soprano Hanli Stapela at the Sept. 2018 "Doctor's in Performance" conference held in Vilnius, Lithuania, and with cellist Alexander Ramm on a South Africa tour in June 2019. His 2019-2020 engagements include return engagements with the Johannesburg Philharmonic, Kwa-Zulu Natal Philharmonic, debut performances with the Memphis Symphony Orchestra, Colorado State University Symphony, Gauteng Philharmonic Orchestra, and recitals at Colorado State University, University of Texas (Austin), University of Texas (El Paso), Scottsdale Center in Arizona, Ravinia Festival, and throughout South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Mr. Wallick has performed on Chicago's WFMT Fazioli Series and "Live on WFMT," on BBC's radio show "In Tune," National Ukrainian Television and Radio, on Danish National Radio, and on NPR's "Performance Today." He was given a grant in 2006 by the Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts to explore his synesthetic realities in a multimedia project that allows the audience to see the colors he experiences while performing. Synesthesia is the ability to experience two or more sensory experiences with one stimulus. Bryan Wallick sees colors with each musical pitch and has created a computer program that projects images of his colored visions to the audience.

Mr. Wallick studied with Jerome Lowenthal in New York City where he was the first Juilliard School graduate to receive both an undergraduate Honors Diploma (2000) and an accelerated master's degree (2001). He continued his studies with Christopher Elton in London at the Royal Academy of Music where he was the recipient of the Associated Board International Scholarship, receiving a Post-graduate Diploma with Distinction, and previously studied with Eugene and Elisabeth Pridonoff at the Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music. Mr. Wallick has recently been appointed as assistant-professor of music, piano, at Colorado State University. George Plimpton's feature article on Bryan Wallick appeared in the March 2002 edition of Contents magazine.

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