

COLORADO**MUSIC** 2025

The magazine of the University of Colorado Boulder College of Music

POWERING HUMAN CONNECTION



College of Music
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**



Dean's Downbeat

In this video, Dean John Davis previews the 2024-25 edition of *Colorado Music*, the annual magazine of the University of Colorado Boulder College of Music. This year's edition — “Powering Human Connection” — celebrates the 50th anniversary of the world-renowned Takács Quartet, honoring their artistic contributions and decades-long residency at CU Boulder. Dean Davis also previews the College of Music's efforts to advance sustainability by integrating human and environmental sustainability into music education, and underscores our commitment to developing universal musicians equipped to make an impact on an increasingly interconnected society. Join us in celebrating recent remarkable achievements of the College of Music community — and how we're powering human connection, together.



**Magazine
preview (video)**



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Colorado Music is published annually. To complement this abbreviated print edition, enjoy the complete 2025 edition of this magazine online.

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IGNITING INNOVATION, ARTISTRY + BELONGING



“...the best of the very best.” —The Spectator

In 2024-25, the College of Music’s Grammy Award-winning Takács Quartet celebrated its 50th anniversary season. This video tribute celebrates the quartet’s remarkable journey, international impact and renown, and close-to-home mentorship and community engagement.

Congratulations to Edward Dusinberre, Harumi Rhodes, Richard O’Neill and András Fejér on the quartet’s first half-century!



**CU Boulder Takács Quartet celebrates
50 years (1975-2025)**



Season highlights + news

*The Takács Quartet’s 50th anniversary season
was generously sponsored by Barbara and
Chris Christoffersen.*



CU Boulder is revolutionizing musicians' wellness

James Brody founded the college's Musicians' Wellness Program (MWP) 25 years ago to help students prevent and recover from injuries, sustain peak performance and maintain robust mental health throughout their careers. The MWP was among the first of its kind, predating the National Association of Schools of Music's 2005 mandate requiring music programs to address wellness. Since its inception, Brody and the MWP have expanded services and recently shared their work at three international conferences.



More college high notes

Creating sustainability *through* music education

Feb. 12, 2025 · By MarieFaith Lane

The University of Colorado Boulder is widely recognized for its commitment to sustainability—most often associated with protecting the environment. At the College of Music, that definition extends further.

Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Professor of Music Education Margaret Berg highlights the importance of *human* sustainability—that is, the well-being of individuals and communities. By integrating both human and environmental sustainability into music education, our college is helping students develop into responsible, thoughtful professionals who are prepared to make an impact on our interconnected society.

“Human sustainability is about more than just resources,” Berg explains. “It’s about the self—students and teachers—the community around the school or studio, and the larger systems like colleges or universities.” This multifaceted approach emphasizes the significance of emotional resilience, community building and cultural inclusivity in shaping the future of music education.

Berg’s Sociology of Music Education course amplifies the College of Music’s unique focus on preparing students for roles beyond music performance; the college’s universal musician approach to achieving its mission encourages interdisciplinary learning and broadly-based student development. “A teacher taking a more holistic approach will make a difference,” says Berg, emphasizing the value of connecting music education with sustainability in the classroom and beyond.

Aligned with CU Boulder Chancellor Justin Schwartz’s priority to accelerate sustainability on our campus, human sustainability in music education complements the College of Music’s progress toward reducing its environmental impact—from “green” digital program books, energy-efficient LED lighting in Grusin Music Hall and music tablets that replace paper scores.



Additionally, the use of braille building placards and other accessibility measures reflects the college's commitment to inclusivity in all forms.

Integrating human and environmental sustainability equips students with the knowledge, skills and awareness to engage with both their immediate communities and the planet. In the classroom, Berg advocates for experiential learning practices that promote ecological literacy and environmental activism. For example, music educators can encourage students to engage with local sounds and landscapes, fostering an awareness of the natural world and its challenges. "We can integrate local ecosystems into the repertoire selection process," Berg suggests, noting that Colorado's mountains or water issues might inspire student projects.

Berg further emphasizes the significance of core reflection which encourages educators and students to assess their well-being and resilience. "It has to start with the human," she says. That is, to sustain both the work and the community, we must take care of individuals first—teachers and students alike. Core reflection allows teachers to identify their strengths and recognize the need to care for their own mental and emotional health to avoid burnout. In this way, self-care becomes foundational to sustaining long-term success in educational settings.

Adds Berg, "Nature is constantly creating and evolving, and engaging with the arts is a creative act that empowers both students and teachers to respond to the challenges of climate change, for example, in productive and meaningful ways. This is invaluable, as it engages their hearts and fosters powerful, thoughtful responses.

"It's a profoundly healthy way to navigate such challenges."



Meet Spring 2025 Outstanding Graduate Nathan George

For Nathan George (BME, choral)—who graduated from the CU Boulder College of Music on May 8 as our Outstanding Graduating Senior—“community of performance” drew him to prepare for a career in music education. Both George and Leonard Eppich (BM, viola performance) maintained a 4.0 GPA throughout their academic careers at CU Boulder, earning Chancellor’s Recognition Awards this spring as graduating music students.



Meet 2025 Presser Scholar Samuel Nixon

Samuel Nixon (BM, flute performance) has made the most of his time at our college—from playing in our Early Music Ensemble and all large band and orchestra ensembles to taking a class in jazz improvisation, completing a business minor and Music Entrepreneurship Certificate, and participating in chamber music. By faculty vote, Nixon is the College of Music’s 2025 Presser Undergraduate Scholar Award recipient based on his high level of musical and academic excellence, demonstrated leadership and community impact.

Johnette Martin awarded Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellowship

Johnette Martin—a PhD ethnomusicology student at our College of Music—was awarded the highly competitive and prestigious Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellowship at The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens in South Pasadena, California. This fellowship supports advanced research in the humanities and will enable Martin to pursue her project: “Unveiling Pacific Histories: Joseph Oliver Carter and the Role of Privy Councilors in Hawaiian Sovereignty.”



Enion Pelta-Tiller on pushing creative expression

A wealth of influences coexist in Enion Pelta-Tiller’s ambitious, experimental approach to music. In fall 2025, Pelta-Tiller (MM, jazz performance + pedagogy) joins our College of Music faculty as lecturer teaching our Cross-Genre American Roots String Ensemble.





Trumpet studio wins BIG at National Trumpet Competition

The College of Music's history-making, all-female trumpet ensemble (left to right): Master's students Leilani Spurlock (MM '26) and Sydney Hoehl (MM '26), Professor of Trumpet Ryan Gardner, and undergraduates Elise Ehlert (BME '26), Katherine Votruba (BME '28) and Gwen Milette (BM/BME '27).

Congratulations to Professor of Trumpet Ryan Gardner, Associate Teaching Professor of Collaborative Piano Suyeon Kim and the entire CU Boulder trumpet studio for advancing to the live rounds and competing at the 2025 National Trumpet Competition! The studio's tremendous success included several top-place finishes, a sweep of the Graduate Division and our all-female ensemble winning first place in the Small Ensemble Division. This represents a monumental success for the studio and an historic "first" in the competition. "Our students inspire me with their artistry, musicianship and execution," says Gardner.



Listen



More student high notes

DIGITS

329

undergraduates

198

graduate students

95.2%

undergrad retention
(year 1 to year 2)

25%

undergrads pursue interdisciplinary studies

99%

BME job placement

69%

grads employed within six months

Fennoyee Thomas

named

2025 Distinguished Alumna

April 21, 2025 · By MarieFaith Lane

The University of Colorado Boulder College of Music named triple alumna Fennoyee Thomas (BA '68, MA '71, DMA '83) our 2025 Distinguished Alumna, honoring her lifelong contributions to the arts.

“When I graduated from high school, I had no intention of attending CU Boulder,” recalls Thomas, reflecting on her journey. “But my piano teacher was insistent—and in the end, it felt like a conspiracy between my parents and him to get me here. Looking back, they were right.”

Thomas—who established a distinguished career as a pianist and educator—spent decades shaping the next generation of musicians. “Teaching was never just a job, it was my calling,” she says. “Seeing students grow, challenge themselves and find their voices as musicians has been one of the greatest joys of my life.”

Beyond teaching, Thomas is a passionate advocate for the arts, having served on numerous local, state and national boards, commissions and committees—including the College of Music Advisory Board and the CU National Alumni Board Association. “Music connects us in ways words cannot,” she observes. “It brings communities together and that’s why I’ve always believed in supporting the arts at every level.”

Looking back on her College of Music experience, Thomas credits her professors with igniting her confidence and shaping her career. “I was very fortunate to have wonderful teachers,” she shares. “My first two years, I studied with [the late] Storm Bull who was not only an excellent teacher, but who also made me feel secure and supported.”



Thomas also speaks fondly of her later studies with the late Paul Parmelee: “He was a fantastic pianist and preparing for our lessons was something I truly looked forward to—we had the most wonderful discussions about music and piano. I admired him and he played a significant role in shaping my career.”

She adds, “My life was practically transformed at CU Boulder. I learned to be self-confident and I experienced success in the College of Music that I carried with me throughout my professional career.”

As a student, Thomas was the recipient of the Theodore Pressler Piano Performance Award and represented our College of Music at its NASM Evaluation/Accreditation student concert.

She also cherished the natural beauty of the campus. “Coming from Houston, I was so taken by the mountains—the beauty of the campus. I still think that it’s one of the most beautiful campuses in the country.”

Beyond her personal experiences, Thomas supports the College of Music’s universal musician approach that aims to equip students with a flexible skill set to navigate broadly-based careers. “I think it’s very important and I’m impressed with the curricula, programs and all of the opportunities that students have now to help them become well-rounded artists in today’s society,” she says.

“

The arts can play such an important role in service to mankind. I applaud the College of Music administration for adapting to students' needs, providing more options for them to be creative and responsive to today's world.

”

Noting the evolving role of education and advocacy in today's cultural landscape, Thomas adds: “More people are beginning to appreciate the arts as essential to our humanity and how we relate to each other. From attending concerts and visiting museums to attending lectures, listening to poetry or even joining a book club—all of these experiences shape our perspectives on society.

“It's encouraging to see so many patrons supporting the arts. Their dedication makes a difference, and it reassures me that the arts will continue to thrive and impact future generations.”

Although retired from her role as professor of music and associate dean at Texas Southern University, Thomas remains active as an arts advocate and mentor to young musicians. She offers this advice to our graduates: “Follow your passion and pursue what you love with determination. Use the knowledge and positive experiences you've gained here to go out into the world, make it a better place and support others—because now, more than ever, we need that.



More alumni high notes



Alums, do you have a class note to share? Update your friends and classmates by submitting your news here.



ACCOMPLISHED, DEDICATED FACULTY



Entrepreneurship Center for Music announces leadership transition

On June 30, Professor of Composition Jeffrey Nytych—who directed the College of Music's Entrepreneurship Center for Music (ECM) for the past 16 years—stepped down from that role. Marilyn Brock will assume the roles of assistant teaching professor and interim ECM director; and Nytych—as professor of composition + entrepreneurship—will continue to teach The Entrepreneurial Artist,

the Certificate in Music Entrepreneurship capstone and the college's new Graduate Career Seminar, as well as help develop new opportunities for the composition department with the CU Boulder ATLAS Institute and Leeds School of Business.

"I'm proud of what Jeff Nytych has built," says College of Music Dean John Davis. "The college's Entrepreneurship Center for Music is broadly recognized, domestically and abroad, as one of the top programs of its kind. The center is a keystone of our college's universal musician approach to developing multiskilled, multifaceted musicians prepared for flexible career options."



New leadership, bold vision: Michael Uy and the future of the AMRC

The American Music Research Center (AMRC) at CU Boulder is a unique hub for exploring and celebrating the diverse traditions of American music. Jointly housed in our College of Music and University Libraries, the AMRC boasts the largest repository of archival collections on American music in the region including scores, recordings, personal papers and artifacts

documenting the nation's musical heritage. In our digital magazine, Meet Michael Uy—the AMRC's new director—including his vision for the center, upcoming initiatives and more.

Kelly Parkes wins centennial medal

Associate Professor of Music Education Kelly Parkes was awarded the prestigious Centennial Medal from the Frost School of Music, University of Miami. Additionally, Parkes was named a 2024-25 Faculty Leadership Institute (FLI) fellow and is chair-elect of the Society for Research in Music Education's Executive Committee which collaborates with and advises the leadership of National Association for Music Education (NAfME).



Benjamin Teitelbaum named CWA faculty program director

Associate Professor of Ethnomusicology + International Affairs Benjamin Teitelbaum—a previous member of the CU Boulder Conference on World Affairs (CWA) Board—is the new CWA faculty program director. Additionally, Teitelbaum was included in Radio France's list of 100 new thinkers and experts in international relations.





Retirement roundup

We're pleased to celebrate the countless contributions of our strongly committed, accomplished faculty members who retired from our College of Music at the end of the 2024-25 academic year—thank you for your artistry, innovation, leadership and service!

Photo: Mutsumi Moteki



Learn more



More faculty high notes



**Faculty, do you have news to share?
Submit your updates here.**



Alumna Annie Booth

In 2025-26, the College of Music welcomes several new + newly promoted faculty members!

Annie Booth

Assistant Professor of Jazz Studies

India Carney

*Assistant Professor of
Contemporary Music*

Stephanie Choi

*Assistant Professor of
Ethnomusicology*

Saraswathi Shukla

Assistant Professor of Musicology

Jennifer DeDominici

Associate Teaching Professor of Voice

Marilyn Brock

*Assistant Teaching Professor +
Interim Director, Entrepreneurship
Center for Music*

Carl Dixon

*Assistant Teaching Professor
of Percussion*

Emily Gee

*Assistant Professor of Music +
Director, Musicians' Wellness Program*

Kirsten Hoogstraten Rivera

*Interim Assistant Director, Bands;
Assistant Director, Golden Buffalo
Marching Band*

Kelly Parkes

Professor of Music Education

Enion Pelta-Tiller

*Lecturer, Cross-Genre American
Roots String Ensemble*

Altin Sencalar

*Assistant Teaching Professor of
Jazz Studies*

Shanti Simon

*Professor of Conducting +
Director, Bands*

Logan Sorey

*Assistant Teaching Professor of
Conducting; Interim Associate
Director of Bands; Director, Golden
Buffalo Marching Band; Director, CU
Boulder Summer Music Academy*

Elizabeth Swanson

*Associate Professor of Conducting +
Associate Director, Choral Activities*

Meta Weiss

*Teaching Professor,
Chamber Music Program*

Tim Wendel

Lecturer, Jazz Guitar

Developing the universal musician at CU Boulder

Last year, the *Coloradan* alumni magazine featured Dean John Davis in a leadership Q&A. In our digital magazine, get to know our dean—the experiences that shaped him, the philosophy that drives him and the purpose that inspires him.



Andrew Metzroth named executive director of CU Presents

Andrew (“Metz”) Metzroth can’t contain his joy when he talks about his new role as executive director of CU Presents. “I’ve worked toward this for a decade—it’s truly exciting,” he enthuses. As part of the University of Colorado Boulder College of Music, CU Presents is the home of performing arts on campus annually presenting hundreds of events by CU Boulder students and faculty, as well as world-famous guest artists.



Rudy Betancourt named director of CU Boulder Artist Series

After almost 15 years at the helm of Macky Auditorium, Rudy Betancourt was also named the new director of the College of Music's long-running Artist Series which has brought the finest jazz, classical, world music and dance performers to our campus for more than eight decades.



A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORTERS



“Art is possibility, expression is potential.”

In February 2025, the College of Music’s annual Genevieve McVey Wisner Lectureship featured trailblazing composer, musician and sound installation artist Raven Chacon. Even as he tackles weighty questions in his work, Chacon also finds power and joy in the ability to create—a boon he shared during his residency. “No matter what our occupation or how we spend our daily lives, we should be conscious of the work we can do to improve upon justice and the way we treat each other,” says Chacon, the first Native American to win the Pulitzer Prize for music.



On the lasting impact of endowment support: Thompson Endowment swings jazz forward at CU Boulder

In 2013, the Thompson Jazz Studies Endowment—alumni and longtime donors Jack (Hist '64; MA '70) and Jeannie Thompson (Zool '64)—transformed the future of the CU Boulder College of Music jazz program. Today, the program has expanded and gained national recognition—drawing world-renowned artists for workshops, enabling students to collaborate with musicians worldwide and enriching the community with outstanding performances year-round.



More supporter high notes



Your giving keeps our music alive!



A “grand” challenge

As a thank-you for their leadership contribution to acquire a new nine-foot Steinway & Sons concert grand piano for Grusin Music Hall, Music Advisory Board members gReg Silvus and Deidre Ferris enjoyed a private tour of the Steinway factory in Astoria, Queens. Pictured here, Ferris and Silvus at the “rim press” where our instrument (#627654) began its journey.

DIGITS

\$1.11M

contributions toward scholarships

\$4.94

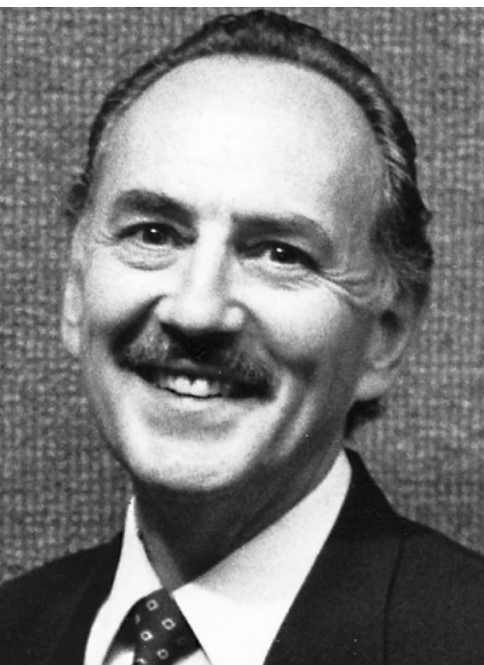
raised for the College of Music

805

unique households

IN MEMORIAM

With fondness and gratitude, we remember faculty, alumni, colleagues and friends who have recently passed on.



Robert Fink

Our College of Music community is deeply saddened by the recent passing—on Dec. 7, 2024—of Dean Emeritus Robert (Bob) Fink. Serving as dean from 1978 to 1993, Fink’s first initiatives at CU Boulder included the creation of a concerts office (now CU Presents) to manage all aspects of the college’s performance and publicity activities; and the acquisition of control of Macky Auditorium and the Artist Series.

His long-serving administration also saw the establishment of our American Music Research Center and the onboarding of our quartet in residence—the world-renowned Takács Quartet that recently celebrated its 50th anniversary.



Robert Carnochan

Our College of Music community mourns the passing of alumnus Robert Carnochan (MM '93)—a passionate music educator and artist who made a profound impact. Upon earning a master’s in wind conducting at CU Boulder, Carnochan served on our faculty as associate director of bands and director of the Golden Buffalo Marching Band (1998-2002). “He was an innovative leader, a respected colleague and a beloved teacher,” shares Professor of Conducting Emeritus and Distinguished Professor Allan McMurray. “His warmth and genuine interest in each student were apparent to all.”



More passings + tributes

GUEST ARTISTS + RESIDENCIES



The College of Music welcomed 85+ accomplished, inspiring guest artists this academic year.

IN THE 2024-25 ACADEMIC YEAR

THE COLLEGE OF MUSIC PRESENTED 340 EVENTS INCLUDING:

39

Artist Series + other ticketed events

192

student recitals

109

other free events

In addition to the many inspiring events featuring our students, faculty and guest artists every year, the **University of Colorado Boulder College of Music** is pleased to bring the world-class **Artist Series** to our campus and community since 1937.



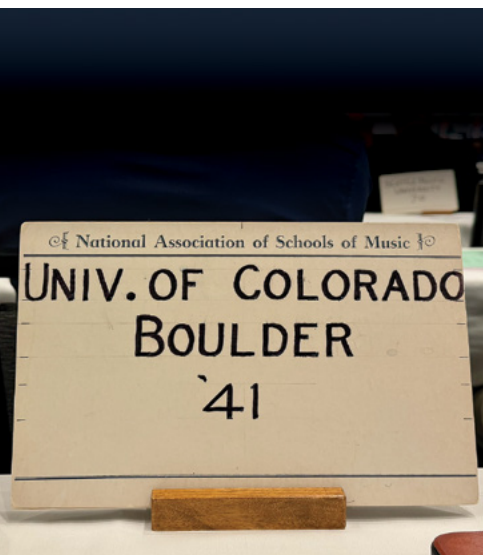
CU ★ PRESENTS

2025-26 season on sale now.

BUY 2025-26 TICKETS NOW AT **CUPRESENTS.ORG**



*Bria Skonberg performs
on the Artist Series
Dec. 11, 2025. Photo
Credit: Shervin Lainez.*



NASM celebrates 100 years

In November, Dean John Davis attended the annual meeting—and centennial celebration—of the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) in Chicago, Illinois. This organization of schools, conservatories, colleges and universities establishes national standards for undergraduate and graduate degrees and other credentials for music and music-related disciplines, and more. Our college has been a member since 1941.



Renée Fleming: “Voice of Nature: the Anthropocene”

Kennedy Center honoree and five-time Grammy-winner Renée Fleming, soprano—with Howard Watkins, piano—headlined the College of Music's Artists Series on Jan. 31 in a program inspired by her “Voice of Nature” album focused on the environment. Fleming's Colorado residency further included a panel discussion—“Music and the Mind”—at the CU Anschutz Center for Bioethics and Humanities and a master class at Grusin Music Hall.



CU NOW unpacks the story of an opera legend

In June 2025, the College of Music's New Opera Program (CU NOW) workshopped Mark Adamo's “Sarah in the Theatre” spotlighting legendary (and controversial) American opera conductor, impresario and stage director, Sarah Caldwell.

Photo: Composer/librettist Mark Adamo, composer John Corigliano and College of Music Dean John Davis.

Otis Taylor musicians' workshop

Hosted by the American Music Research Center (AMRC), legendary blues musician Otis Taylor led a musicians' workshop for students and faculty this spring. A singer, songwriter, guitarist and banjoist, Taylor has recorded 15 albums since 1996, pioneering electric, psychedelic "trance blues."



2024 Emerging Composers Project

In September, music students at Boulder's Platt Middle School met Luka Vezmar, a College of Music junior, who combined the band, orchestra and choir students' suggestions into a single piece, which premiered at a November school concert. Platt band director and alumnus Caleb Starbuck (BME '02 + MME '07) started the composer program more than 15 years ago in partnership with Professor of Composition Carter Pann.



Fall 2024 Powwow

The Fall 2024 Powwow at CU Boulder marked the return of a beloved tradition to campus after a 23-year hiatus. On Sept. 28 at Farrand Field, College of Music students, staff and faculty participated or attended the event including (front) Director of Community Support + Programming Alexis McClain and Associate Professor of Musicology + Director, American Music Research Center Michael Sy Uy; and (back) Administrative + Student Services Assistant Josie Moe and husband Peter.





Inspiring artistry + discovery, together

Since 1920, the **CU Boulder College of Music** offers a wide range of programs for undergraduate and graduate study, integrating advanced musical and interdisciplinary training with professional-level experiences. One of the top comprehensive music schools in the country, the College of Music is a fully accredited member of the National Association of Schools of Music since 1941.

OUR STUDENTS earn more than a music degree in the foothills of the Rockies: Opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and a supportive spirit of excellence await you! We develop multiskilled, multifaceted **universal musicians** who are well-equipped to participate in the 21st century as artists, educators and scholars; as broadly based professionals with sustainable career options; and as passionate, compassionate world citizens.

OUR FACULTY are deeply dedicated pedagogues, award-winning performers, scholars and composers who are standing by to support your success—whether your passion is to teach, perform, compose, research or rethink music entirely.

Home to the American Music Research Center, the first university-level music entrepreneurship center in the country and a musicians' wellness program, the College of Music offers seven degrees in 24 fields of study—i.e., a full range of bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs including three degree types for undergrads (BA, BME, BM) plus options for dual degrees. Discover our 11 academic areas including composition, performance, education and more.

Our students, alumni and faculty are regularly awarded such prestigious honors as Andrew Mellon Foundation Fellowships and MacDowell Fellowships, and more than a dozen CU Boulder students have pursued a music focus as Fulbright recipients to date; the university has been named a Fulbright Top Producing Institution for U.S. Scholars by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Additionally, our faculty and alumni have garnered 40+ Grammy awards and nominations.

Engage

Sign up for our newsletter to stay connected:

colorado.edu/music/news-signup

Update your alumni profile to keep in touch and network with other Forever Buffs:

foreverbuffsnetwork.com

Stay involved through lifelong learning experiences and inspiring events:

colorado.edu/music/events

Include the College of Music in your giving:

colorado.edu/music/giving

Be social, #MusicBuffs!



@CUBoulderMusic

COLORADO**MUSIC**

*Higher education and the arts are beacons of progress and the College of Music is poised to contribute to that journey: We're committed to expanding and deepening a culture of care; and creating a welcoming, supportive environment where everyone matters and all can thrive. **Colorado Music** aims to inform and inspire the College of Music community by elevating the accomplishments and successes of our students, alumni, faculty, staff and supporters.*

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Sundance Film Festival comes to Boulder

On March 27, the Sundance Institute named Boulder, Colorado as the new host of the Sundance Film Festival starting in 2027. “Boulder is a tech town, a college town, it’s a really creative town,” says Eugene Hernandez, the festival’s director. “It’s just a really creative place. And that integration of the artsy community with the university side of it all is really dynamic.” CU Boulder’s Macky Auditorium Concert Hall will host Sundance Film Festival screenings.



Be Boulder.