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Kaleidoscope

Diversity, and the Joy It Brings Me

A degree recital by Kevin Halsey

My five years at CU have shown me how important diversity is in America. As our society continues to attack diversity, I want to show you just how personally it has benefitted me. This program is not perfect; only one composer is living. All but one of the composers are white, all but two are straight men. What makes this set of music so diverse is not just the differing nationalities, gender identities, and eras the composers represent; it is also the stark differences in styles and ideas within the stories each tells. Each piece bears little relation to the next, yet each connects to very specific people and places from my education.

This recital takes the listener from South Korea to Brazil, and it builds upon my experiences in Austria, France, and Germany. It points to a future where diversity is celebrated; it highlights the stories of some that persist beyond persecution, the stories of some that are rarely told, and stories of some that are revered as “classics.” Please enjoy *Kaleidoscope; Diversity, and the Joy it Brings Me*.

Arcade (2022) – Juri Seo

Piano, John-Austin King

Albumblatt (1902) – Max Reger

Brazileira from “Scaramouche” (1937) – Darius Milhaud

Piano, Dr. Forrest Howell

Variations de Printemps (2017) – Ida Gotkovsky

- I. Andante
- II. Staccato
- III. Legato
- IV. Molto cantabile con calore
- V. Prestissimo
- VI. Finale

-5-minute pause-

Duos for Flute and Clarinet Op. 24 (1991) – Robert Muczynski (1929-2010)

Flute, Paige Michaud

- I. Andante sostenuto
- II. Allegro risoluto
- III. Moderato
- IV. Allegro ma non troppo
- V. Andante molto
- VI. Allegro

Trio for Clarinet, Viola, and Piano (1938) – Leo Smit (1900-1943)

Piano, Juhyun Hwang; Viola, Alejandro Gallagher

- I. Allegretto
- II. Lento
- III. Allegro vivace

Serenata in Vano (1914) – Carl Nielsen (1865-1931)

Horn, Nate Bonin; Bassoon, Larissa Hanson; Cello, Kate Fornshell; Bass, Asher Dobrin

Juri Seo, 서주리, (b. 1981) was born in South Korea and is currently professor of composition at Princeton. She has a diverse and extensive output, including *The Well-Seasoned Iron Pan (2015)*, a percussion solo written for a Lodge 8-inch cast iron skillet. *Arcade* is her reminiscing on her childhood days spent in arcades. Through rhythmic ostinato and “start-up” leitmotifs, this piece takes the listener through the highs and lows of an intense videogame. Juri Seo also uses a selection of extended clarinet techniques, those being *multiphonics* and *flutter-tonguing*. As musicians, John-Austin and I are literally walking a technical tightrope; for us, it indeed feels like a fun and challenging videogame.

John-Austin King is my roommate and has been so since July 2025. He was born and raised in South Carolina, then earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the Cincinnati College Conservatory in piano performance. He is currently pursuing a DMA in piano performance here at CU. If you would like to hear this piece again, alongside a program of all female composers, his chamber recital will take place this upcoming Sunday, 04/18, at the Boulder Piano Gallery, 7:30 PM.

Max Reger (1873-1916) of Leipzig was the quintessential peak-romanticist of fin-de-siècle Germany. One may ask, “what makes this music romantic?” Reger uses a tonal center of Bb major and strophic form derived from the German classical tradition; however, as a departure from proper classical technique he sprinkles in lots of chromaticism, dual meter, and rubato. The combination of traditional form with these new techniques, techniques championed by greats like Brahms and Wagner, make this piece an exemplary work of romanticism. *Albumblatt* translates to *Album Leaf*; essentially, this piece offers itself as a snippet of a larger whole, a sampling of Reger’s musical prowess. **Please hold your applause until after *Brazileira*, for these pieces are both very short and work quite well together!**

Darius Milhaud (1892-1974) was a prolific writer for the clarinet; I had the good fortune of playing his *Trio Op. 157b* in the (former) synagogue where he worshipped and was married. *Brazileira* takes inspiration from Brazilian samba, particularly in its rhythm. The music of South America has had irremovable impact on both my life and classical music as we know it. Not only do countries like Brazil, Venezuela, or Colombia, produce prolific composers and musicians, as well as inspire many others, they produced three of the most impactful people I have ever met; my TAs Dr. Gleyton Pinto, Juan Tovar Vargas, and Harold Gomez Montoya. These three helped me so much in my undergrad, helping me find joy in my excerpts and solos, fine tune my fundamentals, and appreciate the global community of which we are all a part of.

I found out **Ida Gotkovsky (1933-2025)** passed away this February. Just two hours before I was to play her *Images de Norvège (1977)*, alongside Messiaen's *Quatour pour la fin du temps (1941)*, I received an email from her son, Étienne. He notified me of her passing on October 15th, 2025. I had initially written to Madame Gotkovsky nearly one year ago; I was going to play her music in Paris and wanted to invite her. While I was in Paris, I found *Variations de Printemps (Spring Variations)* hidden in the stacks of a music shop along Rue de Rome. It piqued my interest, so I bought it. After that, I discovered that currently no professional recording of the piece exists; only one publicly available recording is on YouTube, and there are considerable cuts.

This piece is a set of variations without a theme that employs structures like free time and free tonality. Each bar has a different subdivision of sixteenth notes; the themes and harmonies themselves are built upon modes and serial collections. The woman who wrote it was a student of legends like Nadia Boulanger and Olivier Messiaen. She went on to fill their shoes, becoming the professor of composition at the Paris Conservatory (CNSMDP), a position she held for decades. Her credo was "to create a universal work and realize the unity of musical expression by means of contemporary musical language with powerful structures."

Dr. Forrest Howell is a post-doctoral lecturer at CU Boulder. Born in Sokcho, South Korea, from Woodinville, Washington, he is a prolific musician and writer. He has performed engagements across the United States and is currently working on two large-scale interdisciplinary projects, a three-movement work for piano and fixed media with composer Michael Kropf and filmmaker John Hanson, and a sonic landscape map of Northern Spain, Southern Portugal, and Southwestern Colorado in collaboration with geographer Eduardo Gomes. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Brigham Young University in piano performance. He received his DMA at the University of Michigan in piano performance and pedagogy.

Robert Muczynski (1929-2010) was the professor of composition at the University of Arizona from 1965-1988. He was a first-generation American from Chicago, his parents being Jewish emigres from eastern Europe. These pieces were written for clarinetist Mitchell Lurie and flutist Julius Baker. In his obituary from the *Arizona Daily Star*, then U. of Arizona piano professor Rex Woods said "the music itself is just full of rhythmic vitality. It's like Prokofiev in that there is light melody, harmonic writing, and clever assimilation of jazz influences." Flute professor Brian Luce agreed, saying "He was able to convey the rhythms, the energy... I have a great deal of fun whenever I play his repertoire. It's a very forthright, honest, American voice." I strongly agree with them both.

I have been collaborating with Paige Michaud since 2024. We started working together at Ozo Coffee Co. There, during a slow shift we got to talking about the music of Muczynski, and we decided we had to play this piece. Paige was born in Missouri and is from Nebraska. She holds a bachelor's degree in flute performance from the U. of Nebraska Omaha and graduates with her master's in May. She will be moving back to Nebraska after graduation to teach, perform, and enjoy life without homework due dates.

Leo Smit's (1900-1943) music builds upon the ideas of Debussy, Ravel, Hindemith, and Stravinsky. This neoclassical trio is particularly reminiscent of Stravinsky and Nielsen. Absolute music inspired by jazz, it uses chromaticism and bitonality to portray “bipolar,” noire musical characters. Leo Smit was a Danish Jew of both Ashkenazi and Sephardic descent. He was the professor of analysis and harmony at the Amsterdam Conservatory for 10 years, before moving to Paris for 10 years. He returned to Amsterdam in the fall of 1937 due to the failing health of his mother. She died soon after. He wrote this piece in the wake of her death.

In May 1940, the Third Reich invaded Denmark. One year later, Jews were banned from public performance. Jewish artists and organizations continued despite the fact they were segregated and increasingly persecuted by the Nazi's. The years of 1941-1945 are described by philosopher Hannah Arendt as “The Final Solution;” following the Wannsee Conference of 1942, Nazi leadership concluded the solution to the “Jewish Question” was murder. In April of 1943, Leo Smit and his wife were deported to Westerbork transit camp. They were then swiftly sent to the Sobibor extermination camp and murdered upon arrival. This piece is a testament to survival amidst conflict; it is a work that was almost lost to time, it exists as artistic defiance to authoritarianism.

Hailing from South Korea, Juhyun Hwang holds bachelors' degrees in piano performance and business from Missouri State University. She graduates this May with her masters in piano performance. Alejandro Gallagher, of Memphis and Puerto Rico, holds a bachelor's degree from Memphis State University, where he served as a fellow with the Memphis Symphony. He is also graduating this May, with a degree in viola performance. Our trio is the *푸엘리아 Trio*, Ruellia in English; it means purple rain flower, and it comes from a shared love of springtime, purple, rain, and Prince. This past summer we toured France with fellow CU musicians, playing in venues like the Steinway Gallery of Paris and the Conservatoire Darius Milhaud. We have played together since August of 2024.

Carl Nielsen (1865-1931) is best remembered in the clarinet community for his utterly bonkers *Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra Op. 57 (1928)*. If you are familiar with this work, or others by Nielsen, this short *Serenade in Vain* might surprise you. It's rich orchestration and pastoral imagery tells the humoresque of a man serenading to a woman

who will never come. In the words of the composer, "First the gentlemen play in a somewhat chivalric and showy manner to lure the fair one out onto the balcony, but she does not appear. Then they play in a slightly languorous strain (Poco adagio), but that hasn't any effect either. Since they have played in vain (in vano), they don't care a straw and shuffle off home to the strains of the little final march, which they play for their own amusement."

Nate Bonin was born in Boulder and is from Longmont. He is currently a junior in horn performance. Larissa Hanson is a first-year master's student in bassoon performance, holding a bachelor's from CU in bassoon performance. She was born and raised in Pearland, Texas. Kate Fornshell was born in Cleveland and is from Columbus, Ohio. She is a junior in cello performance. Asher Dobrin is graduating this May with degrees in composition and bass performance. He was born and raised in Alachua, Florida, and plans on attending graduate school for composition.

I am **Kevin Halsey (b. 2002)** and thank you for coming to my senior degree recital. I was born and raised in Billings, Montana, where I fell in love with music thanks to some excellent clarinetists, those being Laurel Linde, Wendy Bickford, and Bil Jackson. I moved to Boulder to study clarinet performance with the lovely Daniel Silver and met many other incredible professors throughout my journeys in education and history. After I graduate in May, I will be a teaching assistant at the University of Northern Colorado under the advisement of your Colorado Symphony's principal clarinet, Jason Shafer. Diversity is a beautiful thing, and it is a necessary thing. The survival of any species is dependent on diversity, especially our own. I hope that you, whoever reading this, can see just how much it has impacted me. I hope that you can begin to explore how much it has impacted you, and together we can see how important it is for us all. This was *Kaleidoscope; Diversity, and the Joy it Brings Me*.

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*The Drowsy Chaperone (2023).
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