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COLLEGE OF MUSIC 2025-26 EVENTS



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# DMA Chamber Recital:

## “Leave Your Mark”

Grace Stringfellow, oboe

With:

Christine Teng, piano

Mallory Wood, flute

Juan Tovar Vargas, clarinet

The Glacier Reed Quintet

April 19, 2026 at 7:30 p.m.

Grusin Music Hall

## PROGRAM

### Homage to Paradise Valley

Jeff Scott (b. 1967) - 35'

- I. Ghosts of Black Bottom
- II. Hastings Street Blues
- III. Roho, Pumzika Kwa Amani
- IV. Paradise Theater Jump!

*Glacier Reed Quintet*

*\*\*Poetry will be read prior to movements I, II, and IV.\*\**

### Intermission, 10'

## **Variations on Bonny Sweet Robin**

Ethel Smyth (1858-1954) - 9'

*Christine Teng, piano*

*Mallory Wood, flute*

## **Trio for Oboe, Clarinet, & Piano**

David Mullikin (b. 1950) - 22'

I.

II. Scherzo

III.

IV.

*Christine Teng, piano*

*Juan Tovar Vargas, clarinet*

## **PROGRAM NOTES**

### **Homage to Paradise Valley**

Jeff Scott (b. 1967)

“Black Bottom was a predominantly Black neighborhood in Detroit, Michigan. In the early 20th century, African-American residents became concentrated here during the first wave of the Great Migration to northern industrial cities. Informal segregation operated in the city kept them in this area of older, less expensive housing. Black Bottom/Paradise Valley became known for its African-American residents' significant contributions to American music, including Blues, Big Band, and Jazz, from the 1930s to 1950s. Black Bottom was eventually razed and redeveloped for various urban renewal

projects, driving the residents out. By the 1960s the neighborhood ceased to exist.

Hastings Street ran north-south through Black Bottom and had been a center of Eastern European Jewish settlement before World War I, but by the 1950s, migration transformed the strip into one of Detroit's major African-American communities of black-owned businesses, social institutions, and nightclubs.

From the Bantu language of Swahili, "Roho, Pumzika kwa Amani" (Spirits, Rest Peacefully) is a lullaby, my humble offering to the many souls who came before me and persevered through the middle passage, decades of slavery, disenfranchising laws, and inequality. I am who I am because of those who stood before me. May their spirits rest peacefully.

Orchestra Hall closed in 1939, but reopened in 1941 as the Paradise Theater. For 10 years it would then offer the best of African-American musicians from around the country.

"Paradise Theater Jump" is dedicated to the famed theater and harkens to the up-tempo style of "jump blues," usually played by small groups and featuring saxophone or brass instruments.

Homage to Paradise Valley was commissioned by Akropolis and Chamber Music America, made possible by the Chamber Music America Classical Commissioning Program, with generous funding provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (2019)."

- *Program Notes provided by the composer*

Suggested Reading: *The Color of Law* by Richard Rothstein.

## **Variations on Bonny Sweet Robin**

Ethel Smyth (1858-1954)

“British composer Dame Ethel Mary Smyth (1858-1944) was a composer, conductor, author, and Suffragette. Raised during the Victorian age, Smyth fought against societal restrictions that said a woman should not have a profession. She insisted on an education, she insisted on performances of her works, and she insisted on having her works published. Today Smyth should be heralded as a champion of women’s rights and a pioneer for women in the classical music world, but she is still relatively unknown.

Between 1880 and 1930, she published two sets of lieder, several songs for voice and piano or chamber ensemble, numerous chamber pieces, two symphonic works, six operas, a mass, and a choral symphony. Today we also know of her unpublished works for solo piano, organ, and various chamber ensembles. In addition to composing, Smyth was also a devoted letter-writer, and she turned to writing memoirs and essays later in her life, publishing ten volumes of prose between 1919 and 1940.

Although Smyth became known for her proclivity for relationships, she maintained an independent life. Recognizing that the 19th-century idea of marriage was not compatible with a career or her personal inclinations, she wrote in a letter to her mother that even if I were to fall

desperately in love with BRAHMS and he were to propose to me, I should say no!” At the time she claimed that it would end any chances of a career, and later she argued that she was too independent. Both reasons are probably true, but Smyth could never be with only one person. She was unabashedly attracted to women while also maintaining a long-term, long-distance relationship with Henry Bennet Brewster (1850-1908) that lasted from 1884 until his death.” - Amy Zigler, Ph.D.

It is really important to me that composers and musicians bring their whole selves on stage, and I draw immense inspiration from Ethel Smyth, who was an unapologetic advocate for her music, her gender identity and sexual orientation during her lifetime. Her refusal to hide or dilute her values and her ability to integrate all these parts of herself into her artistic identity are traits I desire to embody.

## **Trio for Oboe, Clarinet, & Piano**

David Mullikin (b. 1950)

This piece ties in my own sense of place and space, as this composer’s music holds special meaning to me. The first time I ever heard my professor Peter Cooper play was while making reeds in my high school lessons teacher’s oboe studio ten years ago. The album was “Cooper & Marriner”, and featured Mullikin’s work *Oboe Concerto (1999)*, which Peter had commissioned from David. I was absolutely enchanted by this music and Peter’s performance, and it is this piece that inspired me to attend CU Boulder for my undergraduate degree.

During my time at CU, I won the Honors Competition with this same concerto, and after a performance delay due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, I was fortunate to be able to perform the work in February of 2022. During this period, I became good friends with one of the Oboe Studio TAs at the time, Brittany Bonner, who had also performed the Mullikin Concerto as the winner of her undergraduate concerto competition at Baylor University. Her mentorship and encouragement through this portion of my degree is something I remain grateful for to this day. Also in 2022, Brittany and clarinetist Kellan Toohey commissioned David for a trio and premiered it at the International Double Reed Society that took place in Boulder, CO. I am excited that this will be the work's second performance, as I love David's harmonic language and feel personally connected to its history.

Performing this piece feels like a full-circle moment, and ultimately represents my sense of home in Colorado, the deep and important bonds that I have made here over the past decade, my joy and feelings of accomplishment through my pursuit of two degrees here, and how I have been able to develop and meld these parts of myself into my artistry. I want to express my immense gratitude to all of these people who have left their lasting mark on me.

Thank you for coming to my recital so I can share these stories with you :)

You are invited to a small reception at the conclusion of the recital in the Grusin Lobby.

## ABOUT THE PERFORMER

Grace Stringfellow (she/they) is an in-demand orchestral, chamber musician, and teacher based in Denver, Colorado. Stringfellow holds positions with the Boise Philharmonic, the Wichita Symphony, and the Boulder Philharmonic. Grace is passionate about expanding the oboe repertory and the power of story-telling and is an active commissioner and performer of new music. Two of these such pieces were released in collaboration with pianist Dr. Er-Hsuan Li on Stringfellow's debut album entitled "Holloway & Walker: Four Sonatas" in 2022 on all streaming platforms. Follow them on Instagram to keep in touch! (@grace.oboe)

Stringfellow is currently a DMA student and teaching assistant at the University of Colorado Boulder, studying with Peter Cooper & Jason Lichtenwalter.

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*The Drowsy Chaperone (2023).  
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