

2026-27 BRUCE EKSTRAND MEMORIAL GRADUATE STUDENT PERFORMANCE COMPETITION

This competition honors the memory of former CU Vice Chancellor Bruce Ekstrand, a founder of the event, supporter of the College, and member of the CU Golden Buffalo Men's Chorus.

Departmental preliminary competitions: Completed by Oct. 30, 2026

College-wide semi-final competition: Wednesday, Nov. 4, 2026
4-8 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

Final competition: Tuesday, Nov. 17, 2026
7:30 p.m. Grusin Music Hall

No additional rounds of competition are allowed.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES

Collaborative pianist request deadline: Monday, Sept. 14, 2026, noon

Online application form deadline: Thursday, Oct. 1, 2026

Finals program materials deadline: Sunday, Nov. 8, 2026, 5 p.m.

ELIGIBILITY: Any currently registered College of Music graduate student(s) in good academic standing. Contestants may compete as soloists or in chamber ensembles. If students enter as an ensemble, each member must be eligible, and the award will be made to the ensemble as a whole. Ensembles including students from more than one department can compete in only one departmental preliminary competition. Please check with your studio teachers to decide which preliminary to enter. Previous first place winners are only eligible to compete again if in a different configuration (i.e., a prize-winning soloist competing again as part of an ensemble).

AWARD: First place: \$2000
Second place: \$1000
Remaining finalists: \$500
Audience favorite: \$250

SPONSORS: The competition is sponsored jointly by the College of Music and associated private sponsors.

APPLICATION: Each student participating in the Ekstrand Competition shall complete an online application form by Thursday, Oct. 1, 2026. The application can be found [here](#). You will be asked to upload your program information, including precise timings, with your online application.

REPERTOIRE: Candidates should choose a program of repertoire that best represents their musical skills and ability. The only criterion is that the total timing of the repertoire **does not exceed** 15 minutes. While memorization is not required at any level of the competition, it may be a factor considered by the judge(s). No change of repertoire is permitted between levels of the competition.

COLLABORATIVE PIANISTS: All requests for collaborative pianists must be received by the collaborative piano department by noon on Monday, Sept. 14, 2026. Instrumentalists must fill out the online collaborative pianist request form by this deadline. Singers must contact the collaborative piano department for repertoire and pianist approval by this deadline. If a student would like to work with a pianist from outside the collaborative piano department, they must have approval from the collaborative piano faculty prior to the preliminary competition. No change in collaborative pianist is permitted between levels of the competition except in extenuating circumstances as decided by the collaborative piano faculty.

PRELIMINARIES: Each performance area will hold its own preliminary competition. Department chairs will determine the date, time, and length of performance for the departmental preliminary. Students must be prepared with their entire program for the preliminary round, and the jury will choose the specific passages they would like to hear. Students are not allowed to make pre-determined cuts in their program. Each performance department may select up to **three candidates** for the College-wide semi-finals. **No additional rounds prior to the departmental preliminary competition, including limits on studio participation, are allowed.**

SEMI-FINALS: Semi-final contestants will be scheduled at twelve-minute intervals, allowing for ten minutes of performing time and two minutes for entering, exiting, and tuning. Performance order will be determined by random draw. **Candidates must be available for the entire published competition time.** The judges will choose specific passages from the program. The semi-final competition is not a publicly advertised event, but teachers, colleagues, family, and friends are welcome to attend. PDFs of scores, for use by the judges during the semi-finals, must be emailed to margaret.mcdonald@colorado.edu no later than 5 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 2, 2026.

FINAL COMPETITION: A maximum of five candidates will advance to the final competition and will perform their program in its entirety. The competition will be open to the public.

All finalists are required to submit the following materials for the printed program to margaret.mcdonald@colorado.edu by 5 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 8, 2026. Finalists must have all materials reviewed, proofed, and approved by their advisors before submission. Please send items 1, 2, 3, and 4 electronically as MS Word or Google document to margaret.mcdonald@colorado.edu.

1. A short professional biography and photograph (175 words or less; please acknowledge your studio teacher)
2. Your collaborative pianist's professional biography and photograph.
3. Program notes (150 words or less per composition)
4. Vocalists should provide translations of foreign texts.