

Eckert-McDonald Duo

Erika Eckert, viola
Margaret McDonald, piano

Guest Artist Series
Katzin Concert Hall | February 14, 2018 | 7:30 p.m.

Program

Viola Sonata (2001)

- I. Flow
- II. Drift
- III. Breathless

Libby Larsen
(b. 1950)

Sonata for Viola and Piano (1990)

- I. Calmly
- II. Declamatory

Jennifer Higdon
(b.1962)

Intermission

Rhapsodic Sonata (2011, revised 2015)

- I. Caritas
- II. ...fair as the moon, bright as the sun...
- III. Blithesome Spirit

Margaret Brouwer
(b. 1940)

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Composed for James Dunham, *Viola Sonata* is in three movements. Larsen adopted the formality of the sonata much in the same way an architect accepts the shell of a building and rehabilitates the interior. While she often draws influences from extra-musical influence, this work is about viola and piano, nothing more, nothing less.

Libby Larsen, the first woman to serve as a resident composer with a major orchestra, has held residencies with California Institute of the Arts, Arnold Schoenberg Institute, Philadelphia School of the Arts, Cincinnati Conservatory, Minnesota Orchestra, Charlotte Symphony, Colorado Symphony. She was the 2003-2004 Harissios Papamarkou Chair in Education at the Library of Congress and a recipient of the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts from MIT and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. – Libby Larsen

“The *Sonata for Viola and Piano* was composed in 1990, just as I was starting graduate school. It explores the wonderful colors for the viola, and also allows for substantial dialogue with the piano. As I was writing this work, I was mindful of other viola sonatas (Hindemith, Clarke) and was undoubtedly influenced by some of the flute music that I have played (the Prokofiev *Sonata* and the Copland *Duo*).” **Jennifer Higdon** is one of America’s most acclaimed and most frequently performed living composers. Dr. Higdon is the recipient of the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Music for her Violin Concerto; a 2009 Grammy Award (Best New Contemporary Classical Recording) for her Percussion Concerto; Guggenheim, Koussevitzky, and Pew fellowships; and awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Dr. Higdon currently holds the Milton L. Rock Chair in Composition Studies at The Curtis Institute of Music, where she has inspired a generation of young composers and musicians. – Jennifer Higdon

Rhapsodic Sonata portrays musically a person who is on an internal journey. In *Caritas* the viola begins with a mood of questioning and anger. The chant, *Ubi Caritas* is quoted near the end of the movement. ...*fair as the moon, bright as the sun...* is simply a love song. Again, *Ubi Caritas* returns near the end of the movement.

Blithesome Spirit is buoyantly playful, mischievous, and sometimes a bit jaunty. The award-winning composer **Margaret Brouwer** received a Meet The Composer Commissioning/USA award in 2010, an Award in Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2006, and was named a Guggenheim Fellow for 2004. She has also been awarded grants from the NEA, the Ford Foundation and the John S. Knight Foundation. Ms Brouwer served as head of the composition department and holder of the Vincent K. and Edith H. Smith Chair in Composition at the Cleveland Institute of Music from 1996 to 2008. Residencies include those at the MacDowell Colony and Rockefeller Foundation’s Bellagio Center. – Margaret Brouwer

Formed in 2004, the **Eckert-McDonald Duo** has performed a number of recitals throughout the United States, including performances in Alabama, California, Colorado, Georgia, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, and Tennessee. Colleagues on the faculty of the University of Colorado Boulder, the Duo has had the opportunity to present Colorado premieres of works by a number of composers, including Luis Jorge González, Richard Toensing, Carter Pann, Daniel Kellogg, Chen Yi, Libby Larsen, and Peter Seabourne. The Eckert-McDonald Duo recently made their first international appearance in Cremona, Italy at the International Viola Congress in October 2016 performing the viola and piano sonatas of Libby Larsen and Margaret Brouwer. They also performed at Palazzo Tornabuoni in Florence, and presented a recital and masterclasses at the Johann Sebastian Bach Musikschule in Vienna, Austria. The Duo can be heard on the Meridian Label performing Luis Jorge González’s *Sonata Elegiaca*, and recently recorded the viola/piano sonatas of Libby Larsen, Jennifer Higdon and Margaret Brouwer for Azica Records, to be released summer 2018.

Violist **Erika Eckert** is currently Associate Professor of Viola at the University of Colorado at Boulder and has been a member of the faculty there since 1994. She has also been a summer faculty member of the Brevard Music Center since 2011. Previously, Ms. Eckert served on the faculties of The Cleveland Institute of Music, Baldwin Wallace College, and the Chautauqua Institution in New York.

As co-founder and former violist of the Cavani String Quartet, Ms. Eckert performed on major concert series worldwide, and garnered an impressive list of awards and prizes, including first prizes at both the Walter W.

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Naumburg Chamber Music Competition and the Cleveland Quartet Competition. In recent seasons, Ms. Eckert has performed as guest-violist with the Takacs String Quartet, appearing with them in Canada, California, Colorado, North Carolina, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, and Vermont. She has also performed on numerous faculty recitals at the University of Colorado as well as soloing with the Music in the Mountains Purgatory Festival Orchestra, Four Seasons Chamber Orchestra, the University of Colorado Symphony Orchestra, the Boulder Bach Festival, and the Boulder Chamber Orchestra. Other performing engagements have included the 400th Galileo Anniversary at the American Academy in Rome, El Paso Pro Musica International Chamber Music Festival, Australian Festival of Chamber Music, Garth Newell Music Festival, Vail Bravo!, Music in the Mountains Chamber Music Festival, Sitka Summer Music Festival Autumn Classics, Niagara International Chamber Music Festival, and Fontana Chamber Arts. Ms. Eckert has also performed chamber music recitals at the International French Horn, Flute and Double-Reed Conventions and solo performances at SEAMUS and ICMC electronic music national and international conferences.

Teaching engagements have included presenting viola and chamber music pedagogy sessions, and coordinating the chamber music program at the American String Teachers Association International Workshops in Brisbane, Australia and Stavanger, Norway; presenting viola master classes at Juilliard, Cleveland Institute of Music, Eastman School of Music, Arizona State University, University of Minnesota, Governors School of South Carolina, Interlochen Arts Academy, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, University of Memphis, University of Tennessee, Bowling Green State University, and University of South Carolina; serving on the faculties of Perlman Music Program, Quartet Program, Takacs String Quartet Seminar, and the North American Viola Institute at the Orford Center for the Arts in Quebec, Canada; and coaching chamber music at the Suzuki Association of the Americas, Inc. Ninth Conference, the International School for Musical Arts, Chamber Music Connection, Interlochen Arts Academy, Chamber Music Wyoming Young Artist Program, Britt Institute Chamber Strings, and the Madeline Island Music Camp Adult Chamber Music Program. Ms. Eckert served for three years as an adjudicator for the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA) Arts Recognition and Talent Search, the exclusive nominating agency for the Presidential Scholars in the Arts, and appeared in their Academy Nominated Documentary, *Rehearsing a Dream*.

Pianist **Margaret McDonald**, a native of Minnesota, is an Associate Professor of Collaborative Piano at the University of Colorado Boulder. She joined the College of Music keyboard faculty in the fall of 2004. She helped to develop the College's graduate degree program in Collaborative Piano and the undergraduate collaborative curriculum. Praised for her poetic style and versatility, Dr. McDonald enjoys a very active performing career and has partnered many distinguished artists including the Takács Quartet, Kathleen Winkler, Zuill Bailey, Paula Robison, Carol Wincenc, Ben Kamins, David Shifrin, William VerMeulen, David Jolley, Ian Bousfield, Joseph Alessi, Steven Mead, and Velvet Brown. She has performed throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe.

Dr. McDonald received her Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees in Piano Performance from the University of Minnesota and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Collaborative Piano from the University of California – Santa Barbara. Her principal teachers include Lydia Artymiw and Anne Epperson. She received fellowships to study at both the Music Academy of the West and the Tanglewood Music Center where she worked closely with Dawn Upshaw, Robert Spano, and Osvaldo Golijov.

Dr. McDonald is active throughout the country giving master classes at peer institutions including Indiana University, University of Texas at Austin, University of Minnesota – Twin Cities, University of California - Santa Barbara, and Louisiana State University. She has released recordings with Velvet Brown, tuba, Aaron Tindall, tuba, and Erika Eckert, viola for Potenza Records and Meridian Records.

Dr. McDonald has been a staff accompanist at the Meadowmount School for Strings in New York and an official accompanist at the Music Teachers National Association competition and the National Flute Association annual convention. Ms. McDonald spends her summers as a member of the collaborative piano faculty at the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, California.

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