

## The Playground offers homage to composer Henry Cowell

The Lamont School of Music's chamber ensemble-in-residence, the Playground, will perform the eclectic music of Henry Cowell at 7:30 p.m. Oct.

By: Brenda Gillen

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The Playground, a chamber ensemble-in-residence at the Lamont School of Music, will pay tribute to composer Henry Cowell on Oct. 26.



The Lamont School of Music's chamber ensemble-in-residence, [the Playground](#), will perform the eclectic music of Henry Cowell at 7:30 p.m. Oct. 26 in DU's Newman Center for the Performing Arts.

The group's 15 members include several former [Lamont](#) students and current faculty members. They play a variety of instruments — piano, guitar, flute, violin, cello, accordion, percussion and voice. Cellist Richard vonFoerster (PsyD '91, MA '03), one of the Playground's founders and a theory instructor at Lamont, says the group thrives on experimentation.

“We don't want to be too narrowly defined regarding what kind of music we'll do and what kind of venues we'll perform in,” says vonFoerster.

VonFoerster says Cowell, 1897–1965, is a perfect subject for the group, because the early modernist composer also was known for his experimental style. Along with what vonFoerster describes as “sweet and lovely” piano pieces are Cowell's sound effects produced by playing the piano strings rather than keys and by pounding the keys with fists and forearms.

Much of Cowell's work was inspired by other cultures. “Homage to Iran,” written during a time when the U.S. and Iran had good relations, is one of the works that will be performed on Thursday night.

Peter Schimpf, a music professor at Metropolitan State College of Denver, will conduct a pre-concert lecture at 6:30 p.m. about the performance's pieces, which feature many sides of Cowell's compositional voice. Schimpf recently completed his dissertation on Cowell's music.

The Cowell tribute concert is made possible in part by the Henry Cowell Performance Fund, administered by the American Music Center. Tickets are \$16–\$18 and are available at the Newman Center Box Office, 303-871-7720 and through Ticketmaster at [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com), 303-357-2787 or at any Ticketmaster outlet.

Admission is free to all students, not only DU students, and to DU faculty and staff with a Pioneers ID card. Ticket prices include free parking at the Newman Center garage and a reception after the performance to meet the artists. For information, call the Lamont Concert Line at 303-871-6412.

The Newman Center for the Performing Arts is located at 2344 E. Iliff Ave.