SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents

Corey Mackey, clarinet
Michael Bukhman, piano
Allen Cordingley, saxophone

October 26, 2026 | 7:00pm | Van Cliburn Concert Hall

Program

Sonata for Clarinet and piano — Carlos Guastavino (1912-2000)

Allegro deciso
Andante
Rondó: Allegro spiritoso

Prayer: A Tribute to Edward Said — Kinan Azmeh (b. 1976)

Intermission

unravelation — Reena Esmail (b. 1983)

Éléments — Joel Love (b. 1982)

Terre
Vent
Feu

Allen Cordingley, saxophone

PLEASE SILENCE ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES.
TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS OR USING RECORDING EQUIPMENT IS PROHIBITED.

Program notes

Carlos Guastavino: Sonata for Clarinet and Piano (1970)

Carlos Guastavino's music holds a distinctive place in Argentina's concert tradition. His extensive output of songs reflects a gift for expressive melody, while his instrumental works share the lyrical warmth and national character that is prevalent throughout his writing. Dedicated to clarinetist Luis Rossi, the Sonata for Clarinet and Piano brings these qualities into a three-movement chamber work. After the success of his other clarinet work, *Tonada y Cueca,* Guastovino wanted to create a sonata that was influenced by the European sonata tradition.

The opening *Allegro deciso* combines expansive melodic writing with a active piano lines, moving between dramatic intensity and more intimate exchanges. The central *Andante* gives particular prominence to the clarinet's singing voice: recitative-like passages frame a lyrical central span, and changes of harmony shift the music's emotional coloring. The concluding *Rondó: Allegro spiritoso* introduces a buoyant, dance-like energy, with contrasting lyrical episodes and lively interplay between the instruments. Across the three movements, melodic expression and instrumental brilliance remain closely connected.

Reena Esmail: *unravelation* (2026)

From Reena Esmail:

One of the hardest lessons for me to learn in this practice of composing has been that the greatest creativity comes from learning how to hit every mark perfectly — and then letting that tightly wound control begin to slowly unravel. The title (a portmanteau of the words "unravel" and "revelation") is just that — that unraveling leads to surprising revelation.

The melodic framework of this piece comes from three different Hindustani raags (a raag is a collection of pitches, but also has a lot of other aesthetic information). Raag Vibhas (1-b2-3-5-6-8) makes up some of the most tense material in the piece. Raag Pratiksha (1-2-3-5-b6-8 – the 'flat' quality of 2 and 6 is simply reversed from Vibhas) feels so mystical and otherworldly. And Raag Hamsadhwani (1-2-3-5-7-8) opens into warmth.

unravelation was commissioned by the International Clarinet Association with support from a consortium of co-commissioners. The first performance was given at the ICA's conference *ClarinetFest* in Incheon South Korea on July 11th, 2026 by Thomas Piercy, clarinet and Noritaka Ito, piano. This performance is one in a series of world premieres.

Kinan Azmeh: *Prayer: Tribute to Edward Said* (2003)

Kinan Azmeh began *Prayer* during the summer of 2003 and completed it that October, shortly after Edward Said's death. Composed and premiered in Damascus, the work honors the Palestinian scholar and humanist whose writings and public advocacy left a profound

impression on the composer. In his own program note, Azmeh describes the piece as a response to Said's legacy and his call for justice in Palestine.

Said's connection to music gives the tribute an additional resonance. In 1999, he and Daniel Barenboim founded the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, bringing together musicians from Israel, Palestine, and other parts of the Arab world.

Written for unaccompanied clarinet, *Prayer* places the act of remembrance in a single instrumental voice. That solitary voice offers a deeply personal setting for reflection on loss, human dignity, and the continuing force of another person's ideals. It successfully encapsulates the emotional spectrum that grief can bring.

Joel Love: *Éléments* (2024)

Joel Love's *Éléments*, for clarinet and alto saxophone, draws inspiration from the classical elements as understood in various philosophical traditions. It's three movements; *Terre* (Earth), *Vent* (Wind), and *Feu* (Fire) connect images of the natural world with distinct emotional experiences.

Love states:

Early thinkers from a variety of the world's philosophical schools and traditions held the "classical elements" (some variation of earth, water, fire, wind, and aether) as the basis of their worldview. Each movement of my piece explores its own sound world and draws emotional inspiration from the elements Earth, Wind, and Fire. The first movement, "Terre," meditates on our cyclical connection to the earth and the pain and struggle that we experience as we wander through life on it. "Vent" imagines a dying ember of hope that is nearly blown out by the wind. Instead of dying out, the ember harnesses the wind's energy and transforms into a billowing flame. Lastly, "Feu" is full of fiery technique, written in a quasi-rondo form, and asks the players to explore their incendiary virtuosity.

The work was commissioned by Duo Entre-Nous with a consortium that included Corey Mackey and Allen Cordingley. Mackey and Cordingley performed their world premiere in New Mexico in February 2026.