

FORBES CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY®

School of Music

presents

the guest artist recital of

Matthew Nelson, *clarinet*

with

Steven Brancalone, *piano*

Saturday, April 11, 2026

3 pm

Recital Hall



There will be one 5-minute intermission.

Program

Sonatina (1981)

Joseph Horowitz
(1926-2022)

- I. Allegro calmato
- II. Lento, quasi andante
- III. Con brio

Seven Folksongs (1978, rev. 1983)

Mark Satterwhite
(b. 1954)

- I. Will He Remember
- II. The Wagoner's Lad
- III. Drunken Sailor
- IV. John Riley
- V. One by One
- VI. Sprig of Thyme
- VII. He Promised Me at Parting

Variants (1963)

William O. Smith
(1926-2020)

- I. Singing
- II. Aggressive
- III. Nervous
- IV. Tranquil
- V. Brilliant
- VI. Dramatic

5-Minute Intermission

Program - continued

Outlines for Clarinet and Fixed Media (2021)

Tanner Porter
(b. 1994)

- I.
- II.

Four Rags for Two Jons (2006)

John Novacek
(b. 1964)

- I. Schenectady
- II. 4th Street Drag
- III. Recuperation
- IV. Full Stride Ahead

This recital is sponsored by the JMU School of Music,
Madison Association of Clarinetists, and Buffet Crampon USA.

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personal computers, and any other electronic devices.

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Biographies

Hailed for his “astounding range and virtuosity” (CD HotList), **Matthew Nelson** is Professor of Clarinet at the University of Louisville, where he performs with the Louisville Winds woodwind quintet and the Grawemeyer Players contemporary music ensemble. He maintains an international profile as both performer and pedagogue, with engagements as invited professor on the faculties of the Beyond the Music International Chamber Music Festival, the Conservatorio Superior de Música de Castilla-La Mancha, and the Curso Internacional “Eduardo Ocón” in Spain. He performed recently at prestigious venues in Russia and Mongolia, also presenting master classes at the Rostov State Conservatory in Rostov and at the Mongolian State Conservatory in Ulaanbaatar. He has performed as guest principal clarinet with the Virginia and Utah Symphonies, and his performances throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia include international competitions and premieres.

Nelson recently released a CD of lesser-known Romantic works for clarinet and piano on the Soundset label with Utah Symphony pianist Jason Hardink. Their interpretation of Felix Draeseke’s Sonata garnered rave reviews from the Internationale Draeseke Gesellschaft, who will promote the recording in their upcoming annual publication, while critics describe the album in its entirety as a “superb exposition” (Colin Clarke) and praise the performers’ “great virtuosity and excellent style” (Maria Nockin). Nelson’s debut solo CD release, *Meditations and Tributes*, was lauded as “an unreserved success” (Fanfare), demonstrating a “staggering command of the instrument” (textura). He has recorded as a soloist or chamber musician for the Soundset, Centaur, Parma, and Albany labels.

Prior to his appointment at the UofL, Nelson held the position of principal clarinet with the Utah Chamber Orchestra (Ballet West). He served on the faculty of Utah Valley University for five years, where he was a founding member of the critically acclaimed Alpine Chamber Winds woodwind quintet. He was a NOVA Chamber Music Series artist from 2011 – 2014, and he also held an artist/faculty position at the Tuacahn Summer Symphonic Institute in St. George, UT. In 2013 he gave master classes and performed at the Instituto para el Desarrollo Musical in Castellón, Spain.

Biographies - continued

Nelson's frequent chamber music collaborations have reached enthusiastic audiences at the Schumann Festival, the Gentse Vleugels Festival, the Utah Music Festival, the Beethoven Festival Park City, and the Park City International Music Festival. He has also performed at the International Clarinet Association's annual ClarinetFest in Knoxville, Ostend, Orlando, Lawrence, Baton Rouge, Assisi, Tokyo, and Washington, D.C. An advocate of new music, Nelson has worked closely with many prominent contemporary composers, including Kaija Saariaho, Shulamit Ran, Steve Rouse, Marc Satterwhite, Krzysztof Wolek, William O. Smith and others.

Nelson completed his doctoral work in clarinet performance at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music in 2009 with his thesis, Morton Feldman's Clarinet Works: A Study Through the Words of the Note Man. He received a MM in clarinet performance and a BA with distinction in English from the University of Washington. His principal teachers include Michael Webster, William McColl, Richard Gellman, and Scott Wright.

Nelson is a Buffet Crampon Artist/Clinician and D'Addario Woodwinds Artist. He performs on a set of Buffet Légende GL clarinets, and he uses D'Addario Reserve reeds exclusively.

Biographies - continued

Steven Brancalone is an avid pianist in the Shenandoah Valley. As a collaborative artist, he has worked with faculty, students, and guests at James Madison University, collaborating with the likes of Oskar Espina Ruiz, Matthew Nelson, Andy Hudson, and Anthony Taylor.

In 2022, Steven participated as an artist in the Nightingale Opera Theater summer program, where he partook in the production of Jake Heggie's *If I Were You* and Hans Bridger Heruth's *A Certain Madness* under the direction of Cynthia Skelley-Wohlschlagel. Steven has also worked with the JMU Opera Theater since 2019 and has served as a rehearsal pianist and music director for productions such as Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*, Gounod's *Faust*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Stravinsky's *The Rakes Progress*, Rachel Portman's *The Little Prince*, Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmelites*, Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance*, and various opera scenes concerts.

Outside of JMU, Steven has collegiately participated in the Brevard Music Festival and the Saarburg Music Festival in Germany, performing solo and chamber repertoire for a variety of audiences. As a founding member of The Bluestone Contemporary Ensemble (BCE), he traveled to the 2025 Sofia Art and Music Festival (SAMF) in Sofia, Bulgaria where the ensemble performed as featured artists in two chamber music concerts. The BCE is scheduled to return to Sofia again for the 2026 SAMF.

Steven earned his D.M.A. from James Madison University where he studied with Dr. Paulo Steinberg and a B.M. and M.M. from Eastern Michigan University where he studied with Dr. Joel Schoenhals.

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Dear Patron,

Thank you for attending this School of Music performance, we appreciate your support! The QR code below will take you to a page where you can donate to the Marlon Foster Scholarship. Marlon Foster ('82, '95) served in the United States Air Force, taught in Harrisonburg City Public Schools for 26 years, and taught percussion in the JMU School of Music. Marlon was awarded Teacher of the Year from Harrisonburg City Public Schools, and he was inducted into the Virginia Band and Orchestra Directors Association's Hall of Fame.

