

# Musical Arts

CONCERT SERIES 2020-2021

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC  
LAIDLAW PERFORMING ARTS CENTER RECITAL HALL

Guest Artist Event

*Cold War Recital*

**Kenneth Saxon, piano**

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Rondo in A minor	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)
Piano Variations	Aaron Copland (1900-1990)
Piano Sonata No. 2, op. 61 Allegretto Largo Moderato (con moto)	Dimitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)
homenatge a la fragrància <i>(premiere performance)</i>	kawai shiu (b. 1967)
Prelude in G-sharp minor, op. 32, no. 12	Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

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**The Twenty-second Concert of Academic Year 2020-2021**

**Tuesday, February 23, 2021**

**7:30 p.m.**

Laidlaw Recital Hall concert piano tunings are provided by



STEINWAY PIANO GALLERY  
SPANISH FORT

## **Cold War Recital**

Kenneth Saxon's program is called the *Cold War Recital*. It is built around the Second Piano Sonata of Shostakovich and Aaron Copland's Piano Variations and includes music by Mozart, Rachmaninoff and a newly commissioned work by Kawai Shiu. The music is infused with poetry and texts that bring into vivid relief the voices of composers living in the shadow cast by the Super Powers.

### **About the artist**

Pianist Kenneth Saxon has performed as a soloist and collaborative pianist on three continents, including appearances at the *Esplanade* in Singapore, the Teatro di Donnafugato in Ibla, Sicily, and La Teatro de la Reforma in Matamoros, Mexico. Known for his wide-ranging repertoire, Saxon has premiered works by Gary Smoke and Maxwell Dulaney and regularly explores works by Schumann, Crumb, Bartok, and Granados. Saxon's recording of the Rachmaninoff Preludes, Op. 32 was praised for the "fineness of touch . . . and excellent handling of polyphony" by William Kreindler for MusicWeb-International.

Saxon uses color, touch, and timing to create distinct sound worlds for each composer. His distinctive programming helps audiences make unexpected connections between the music and their own lives. An entertaining and engaging presence, Saxon often introduces works with a brief story about the pieces and his own experiences with them.

Saxon premiered Kawai Shiu's solo work *la negacion de simbolos* and *Bird Whistle*, a work inspired by and conducted by composer Harrison Birtwistle. Saxon recorded Shiu's "Winter Tide" on the album *eXchange:China* and "clear shade" on *music of Kawai Shiu*. In addition, Saxon created the contemporary ensemble *Sin Fronteras* (without boundaries) and has frequently championed the work of young composers by performing their works.

Kenneth is Professor of Music at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. He has published articles on sight reading in the *Piano Pedagogy Journal*, *American Music Teacher* and *Pianist* magazine. His book *Steps to Success* has helped hundreds of musicians improve their sight-reading fluency. Saxon regularly offers master classes and workshops along with his performances.