



COLLEGE *of*
FINE ARTS

School of Music

presents

Guest Trumpet Recital

Ivano Ascari, trumpet and flugelhorn
Dr. Cecilia Lo-Chien Kao, piano

October 15, 2026

7:00pm

Cliburn Hall

Program

Sulla Soglia	Martin Blessinger (b. 1978)
Level Up.	Stefano Melloni (b. 1963)
Lusinghiera.	Jose Rafael Pascual-Vilaplana (b. 1971)
Oseh Shalom	Judith Shatin (b. 1949)
Hot Springs	Paolo Ugoletti (b. 1962)
Sonata da camera n.3: "architetture in movimento"	Massimo Priori (b. 1962)
Ancient Neumes; Broken Runes	Christopher Coleman (b. 1958)
Les Noces del Manyà	Jose Rafael Pascual-Vilaplana

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Program Notes

Martin Blessinger (1978)

Sulla Soglia Trumpet Solo

Sulla Soglia is a work for solo trumpet that inhabits two contrasting dramatic spaces: one solemn and ritualistic, the other more lyrical and cavalier. The Italian title translates as “On the Threshold,” a phrase that carries a double meaning in the work. Within the music itself, a threshold emerges between the insistent ceremonial calls of the trumpet in the opening and closing sections and the mercurial character of the middle. At first, standing at that threshold, the listener might perceive an either-or choice; yet the music ultimately suggests that these two contrasting worlds might coexist within a single voice. A threshold also lies between this work and the music that follows it. I conceived of this piece as a concert opener, and as it moves through its contrasting material, it prepares the listener for a varied program to come. In fact, its open-ended conclusion seems to insist that more music not only could follow but must follow. Because of this, the central tensions of *Sulla Soglia* are ultimately resolved outside the work itself, across the remainder of the concert on which it is programmed. *Sulla Soglia* was composed for and is dedicated to Ivano Ascari.

Stefano Melloni (1963)

Level Up Trumpet and Piano

The piece reflects an aesthetic I developed through exploration, transcription, and performance of video game soundtracks. The title refers to the concept of Leveling Up, the evolutionary leap that transforms experience into new strength: a metaphor for human existence. The piece is structured in rondo form, and combines the lyricism of the trumpet with an energetic piano part in a continuous dialogue between reflection and action.

José R. Pascual-Vilaplana (1971)

Lusinghiera Trumpet and Piano

In 1882, while putting the finishing touches on his opera *Parsifal* in Palermo, Richard Wagner composed the *Elegy* in A-flat for piano, known as the ‘Porazzi Theme’. The German master was staying with his family at the Villa Gangi, located in Piazza Porazzi in Palermo, Sicily. Although some musicologists have recently pointed out chronological inconsistencies regarding the piece's origins, its fame as the ‘Porazzi Theme’ has transcended historical fact, becoming a source of inspiration for a wide range of artists —musicians, painters, writers, and filmmakers alike. These thirteen bars — enigmatic, profound, and harmonically masterful — form the foundation of the present composition for trumpet and piano, commissioned by Ivano Ascari. The title *Lusinghiera* is the Italian translation of the German performance marking Wagner included in the score: “Schmeichelnd” (flatteringly). The piece aims to define the trumpet's role as an instrument of homage to both Wagner and Italy, blending motifs and harmonic atmospheres that appear in a spirit of contrast rather than through transitional elements. The trumpet takes on a role of profound expressiveness, moving through an expansive harmonic development characterized by continuous modulations and rhythmic variations.

Judith Shatin (1949)***Oseh Shalom Trumpet Solo***

Oseh Shalom, for Michael, is a tribute to my beloved late husband, Michael Kubovy, that springs from grief, love and gratitude for our time together. *Oseh Shalom* are the opening words of the peace blessing at the close of the Mourner's *Kaddish*. The complete phrase translates as «He who makes peace in His heavens, may He make peace for us (...)». While this stanza has inspired many beautiful vocal melodies, I wanted to create a purely musical interpretation, inspired by but existing beyond the words. I composed *Oseh Shalom* for our dear friend and outstanding trumpeter Ivano Ascari. It can either be performed on Bb trumpet with a bucket mute or on flugelhorn. Ivano not only responded to my technical questions but made excellent additional suggestions during several delightful collaborative sessions. I first became aware of the nuances of his timbral palette when he commissioned and recorded *For the Fallen*, for trumpet and electronics, fashioned from the Peace Bell in his hometown of Rovereto, Italy. It appears on his album *A Hundred Years (1914-2014)*, commemorating the centennial of WWI. His dedication to commissioning, performing and recording new music has contributed to a major expansion of the contemporary trumpet repertoire.

Paolo Ugoletti (1956)***Hot Springs Trumpet and Piano***

Hot springs have always been a symbol and practice of regeneration and rejuvenation, deep waters rising from the telluric depths that we imagine in contact with the fiery magma which is the soul of the Earth. We use them for pleasure and as medicine; they are the tranquil passage that connects us to those monstrous and disturbing forces at work beneath us. My weighty piece, while not at all disturbing, is characterized by the pulsating, seething trumpet part and the repetitive chord sequences that direct and segment the piece. Composed in 2026, it is dedicated to Ivano Ascari.

Massimo Priori (1963)***Sonata da camera n. 3: "architetture in movimento" Trumpet and Piano***

The Chamber Sonata No. 3, subtitled 'Architectures in Motion', explicitly references the world of architecture. Music and architecture, in fact, often share similar design methods: they begin from common principles but arrive at different results, because the materials and means of expression are different. It is commonly said that music is the art of time and architecture the art of space. In reality, this distinction is not so clear-cut: time and space intertwine and coexist, finding a particularly effective synthesis in these two arts. The first movement features a structure similar to an accompanied melody, comparable to ornamentation in architecture: a decorative element that enriches the form. The second is an Adagio, following the traditional formal structure of the sonata. It is characterized by a reflective and meditative atmosphere, enriched by occasional ironic episodes that highlight the illusory nature of reality. This expressive choice resonates with Charlie Chaplin's well-known remark: «A day without a smile is a day wasted», suggesting that even in moments of profound introspection, a smile can offer a meaningful perspective on the human condition.

The third movement is more organized and recalls the structure of an architectural plan, with well-defined spaces and precise functions. As architect Wright argued, "Form follows function," here too each part has a specific role and contributes to building the whole.

Christopher Coleman (1958)

Ancient Neumes; Broken Runes *Flugelhorn Solo*

The idea of stories and knowledge from the distant past being translated through generations to the present has always intrigued me. Such transmission inevitably involves change and loss as each subsequent generation retells and reinterprets it. In this piece, I intertwined two different techniques of composition—the first I thought of as ‘ancient neumes’, where every new sub-phrase starts with the same 1-4 pitch(es) the previous phrase ended with. ‘Broken runes’ is composed from a single generating phrase repeated several times. Each time different notes are discarded, or ‘broken’ away from it. You will hopefully find yourself hearing music that is in some strange way familiar, but that never literally repeats.

José R. Pascual-Vilaplana

Les Noces del Manyà *Two Flugelhorns and Piano*

Les Noces del Manyà was originally written for two dulcians and organ, for the wedding between Maite and Pakele Vicedo Pérez in the Church of Sant Joan Baptista in Muro. I had previously dedicated my Christian march *La Néta del Manyà* to the father of the groom, my friend Amparo Pérez Satorre. Taking inspiration from some themes from this march, I developed *Les Noces*, later creating versions for two French horns and piano, two trumpets or flugelhorns and piano, and two alto trombones and piano. I thank all the friends who have generously dedicated their precious time to the discovery of my humble music, and this piece is dedicated to them.

Performer Biography

Ivano Ascari

After graduating from the Parma Conservatorio, Ivano Ascari began his musical career as Principal Trumpet in the Bolzano Symphony Orchestra, from 1978 to 1993, performing many concertos as soloist. In addition to his role in Bolzano, Prof. Ascari performed with, among others, the orchestras of Teatro alla Scala in Milan, RAI Symphony Orchestra (radio and tv national broadcasting) in Turin, Teatro Comunale in Bologna, Bergamo Symphony Orchestra, Mantua Chamber Orchestra and Icarus Ensemble. In the meantime, Ivano was regularly popping over to Paris to study with Pierre Thibaud.

From 1977 to 2001, he has performed with the Verona Brass Ensemble for Pope John Paul II at the Vatican, in many European countries, in China, in the USA. He was also the primary organizer of an international festival of brass groups every two years from 1985 through 1999. During his tenure, the Verona Brass Ensemble won competitions in Ancona and in Stresa (Italy) and produced high quality recordings both of Renaissance and contemporary music.

Ivano left the Bolzano Symphony Orchestra in 1993 to become Professor of Trumpet at the Conservatorio in Riva del Garda [lake Garda] and subsequently took up a similar position at the Conservatorio in Trento. This change inspired him to concentrate and devote himself on a career as a soloist. His taste for collaboration with composers later led to Ivano's quest for new repertoire for trumpet when beginning his CD recordings. This marathon began when he was asked to give a recital at the International Trumpet Guild Conference in 2000. He needed a 'calling-card', so he had the idea of producing a CD. The first CD was born. The long series of collaborations with composers from all arts and parts followed on. More invitations from the ITG and Universities ensued, more CDs ensued. One of the highlights of the valuable collection of new works, which has now swelled to over one hundred, is a concerto by the Greek composer Dimitri Nicolau.

Prof. Ascari was able to rekindle his *liason* with the Bolzano Symphony Orchestra when he performed and recorded the Concerto for Trumpet and Strings with them. In 2016 he released the ninth CD of the series, titled 'A Hundred Years' inspired by the Great War. For this, the Italian War History Museum of Rovereto gave him special permission to record some tracks with the original Austrian Armistice Bugle. In 2025, the thirteenth CD was published, which includes exclusively new works for Trumpet and Organ written by composers who are former students of George Crumb. In the summer of this year, the fourteenth CD was released (Trumpet Solo, Flugelhorn Solo, Three Trumpets, Trumpet and Piano, Trumpet and Organ, Trumpet and Percussion, Trumpet and Strings Orchestra). As the "New Music for Trumpet" series is a work in progress, God willing, more CDs will follow in the next few years.

Ascari promoted the ITS (International Symposium Trumpet), a week's holiday-studio for trumpet players that took place in Trentino, Italy (2012 to 2015). He was awarded the Orpheus Award "for significant and lasting contributions to the cause of Music in America". Prof. Ascari has also given numerous recitals and master classes at several institutions in the United States. His last tour in 2025 took him to Michigan, North Carolina and South Carolina. In 2027 he will return to the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome (the first time was in 2019), where he was invited to realize a project: a concert of original music for Trumpet and Organ on the theme of the Creation and a CD in partnership with the PIMS.

Apart from music, Prof. Ascari earned a Doctorate in Economics from the University of Parma; his dissertation concerns the 'Bread Politics' in the dukedom of

Guastalla (Northern Italy, where he was born) in the second half of the 18th Century. He was part of a European interdisciplinary research team that created brass and bronze replicas of the karnyx, the animal-headed wind instrument, known as the war trumpet [in reality it's a horn] used by the Celtic populations, according to fragments that had been discovered in an archaeological dig during the 1950s in Trentino, Northern Italy, and other finds in Tintignac and Mandeure, France. The brass replica is shown and played in various lectures, conferences, and concerts. The bronze replica is on display in the Rhaetian Museum of Sanzeno together with the original fragments. The book *The Sanzeno Karnyx. History, Archaeology and Music* was published in 2024. One month ago (September 2026) he was in France to give a conference and concert on the karnyx as part of *European Heritage Day*.