

# Keeheon Nam

Clarinet

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## Long Biography (834 words)

Korean-American clarinetist Keeheon Nam cooks up his musical appetite as a performer, teacher, and administrator. His performances have taken him from the intimacy of dive bars in Minneapolis to improvising Arabic music in Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall to performing for an audience of 20,000. Equally versed in solo, chamber, and orchestra performance, Keeheon has performed with the Nashville Symphony, Nashville Sinfonietta, and most recently, with the Chamber Music Society of the United Nations, helping to promote the values of the United Nations, such as understanding between civilizations, freedom of expression, and equality of rights, through music making.

He is the 2017 winner of the Eastern Music Festival's concerto competition and was the 1<sup>st</sup> prize winner of the Tennessee Music Teachers Association's Young Artist Competition. Along with his solo wins, he gave 6 solo recitals at the Blair School of Music during his time as a Bachelor of Music student under the tutelage of Bil Jackson, focusing not only on traditional repertoire, but contemporary works that moved the boundaries of the possibilities of the clarinet, including two composer commissions for solo clarinet. In 2017, Keeheon was given an invitation from the Chancellor of Vanderbilt University and the Dean of the Blair School to perform a musical interlude at the 2017 Vanderbilt University Commencement Ceremonies, where he commissioned and premiered a work for solo clarinet from composer Michael Slayton for a crowd of over 20,000 people.

As a chamber musician, he has performed within various groups at The Juilliard School and the Blair School of Music and was a 2019 Juilliard ChamberFest musician, a week-long chamber music intensive that culminates in showcase concerts that features students and faculty members in concert. He was a founding member of the Eschaton New Music Ensemble, a new music collective at Vanderbilt University.

Keeheon is committed that new music is an important cornerstone of a well-rounded musician and actively seeks opportunities to perform new commissions. He has performed with AXIOM at The Juilliard School and has commissioned and premiered many works during his time at Vanderbilt and Juilliard, from composers such as Michael Slayton, Michael Alec Rose, Lila Meretzky, Jordyn Gallinek, and Webster Gadbois.

Keeheon started his early orchestral career as a member of the Minnesota Youth Symphonies and attending the Birch Creek Summer Symphony sessions. From there, his love for orchestral performance blossomed at Vanderbilt University, where he was a co-principal performer for four years and served as a co-principal clarinetist of The Juilliard Orchestras. Keeheon is fortunate to have worked with many of the greatest conductors of our time, including John Adams, Barbara Hannigan, Jeffrey Milarsky, David Robertson, and Osmo Vänskä and performing in the great halls of the United States including Carnegie Hall, David Geffen Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Minnesota's Orchestra Hall, and Tennessee's Schermerhorn Symphony Center.

A passionate teacher and Juilliard Morse Teaching Fellow at Manhattan's Riverside School of Makers and Artists, P.S. 191, he worked weekly with 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade beginning band students. Inspiring them with the fundamentals of woodwind playing and basics of musical rhythm and notation, he creates a fun and passionate atmosphere. Previous teaching experience includes faculty positions at the W. O. Smith Community Music School in Nashville, Tennessee, where he gave tuition-free private lessons to under-represented middle and high-school students, preparing them for their respective school's ensemble programs and local county and state honor ensembles, as well as the annual week-long Eden Prairie School District Band Camp, where he taught and led small ensembles comprised of middle and high-school students. Keeheon also maintained a private studio in New York City. Along with his performance work with the Chamber Music Society of the United Nations, Keeheon is a strong advocate for equality in the arts and strives to continue work to make music accessible to all.

Keeheon is also an avid conductor, and has studied conducting with Maestro Jerry Hou, associate conductor of the Shepherd School Symphony Orchestra, Maestro Robin Fountain, director of the Vanderbilt University Orchestra, and Dr. Elizabeth Jackson Kirchhoff, director of bands at Eden Prairie High School. During his senior year of high-school, Keeheon reinstated the Eden Prairie High School Full Orchestra and conducted the inaugural concert after a 3-year hiatus, featuring Beethoven's *Egmont Overture*. Later at Vanderbilt, he led the Vanderbilt University Orchestra in a performance of Beethoven's *Coriolanus Overture* in the annual concerto competition concert.

Born in Suwon, South Korea, and one of the only two in the family to be musicians, Keeheon immigrated to the United States at the age of 5 with his family. Beginning clarinet studies at the age of 10, he studied under the tutelage of Alexander Fiterstein, Burt Hara, and Karrin Meffert-Nelson. Keeheon is an avid home cook, where he enjoys creating and sharing the Korean comfort dishes of his childhood. He is, unexpectedly, a ServSafe certified food safety manager, a Minnesota certified food protection manager and is a food safety consultant in his parents' intimate Korean restaurant, Kimchi Tofu House, which can be found in Minneapolis' Stadium Village neighborhood.