

Liberty University School of Music

presents

Student Recital Series

Junior Recital

Daniel Grady, *concert percussion*

Junior Recital

Joshua Graham, *film scoring*

April 14, 2026

Doug Oldham Recital Hall

MUSIC 170

5:00 PM

STUDENT RECITAL SERIES: JUNIOR RECITAL

Daniel Grady, *concert percussion*

Program

Close Encounters of the Third
Kind: Discovery of the Cotopaxi

Written and Directed: Steven Spielberg
Produced: Julia Phillips and
Michael Phillips
Original Music: John Williams
(b. 1932)

IT Chapter 2: Official Teaser
Trailer

Original Story: Stephen King
Directed: Andy Muschietti
Produced: Barbara Muschietti
Original Music: Benjamin Wallfisch
(b. 1979)

Monument Valley III:
Gameplay

Developers: Us Two Games
Game Director: Jennifer Estaris
Music: Todd Baker and
Lucie Treacher

- PROGRAM NOTES -

Close Encounters of the Third Kind: Discovery of the Cotopaxi (1977)

Close Encounters of the Third Kind explores the profound mystery of extraterrestrial interaction with Earth. The specific footage scored here is an alternate B-roll sequence depicting the "Discovery of the Cotopaxi." In the narrative, the *Cotopaxi* is a ship that vanished within the Bermuda Triangle in 1925, only to be inexplicably discovered intact and abandoned in the arid expanse of the Gobi Desert fifty years later. This discovery serves as a dramatic catalyst, raising questions about similar global anomalies and their connection to extraterrestrial life.

This piece holds significant personal value, as it was one of the earliest cues I scored during my foundational semesters at Liberty University. Originally drafted while I was first learning Logic Pro, the initial version was an exercise in fundamentals—relying heavily on strict beat mapping, volume automation, stock sounds, and a very rough engraving in Finale. The project sat archived for two years, but I chose to revisit it for this presentation because the core orchestral composition has always remained a personal favorite. Returning to this early work provided a unique opportunity to reflect on how much my technical workflow and musical sensibilities have evolved.

Given my appreciation for the original foundation, my recital revisions focused on sonic refinement rather than a complete compositional overhaul. The scene opens with figures wandering the desert; to enhance this atmosphere, I augmented the original soft synths by adding a Duduk, bringing a more authentic, geographic texture to the desert setting. As trucks suddenly burst across the landscape, the score shifts into a driving orchestral accompaniment. To elevate the overall soundscape, I updated the mix, applied deeper audio processing, and swapped out several solo instruments for higher-quality sample libraries. The cue concludes with a suspenseful build toward the ship's reveal, utilizing harmonically tense strings to emphasize the scene's underlying dread. Finally, to reflect my current professional standards, I completely re-engraved the sheet music utilizing Dorico, replacing the rough drafts of my early student career with a polished, industry-standard score.

IT Chapter Two: Extended Trailer (2019)

IT Chapter Two serves as the sequel to the acclaimed horror film IT. Adapted from Stephen King's massive novel, this installment follows the Losers' Club — now adults — as they return to Derry to definitively defeat the evil entity that plagued their childhoods. Representing one of my most recent works completed this semester, this project highlights a significant evolution in my technical workflow. In contrast to the rigid, frame-by-frame beat mapping of my earliest student cues, my approach here was more macroscopic; I established broader tempos that naturally aligned with the major structural hits, allowing for a more fluid and musical pacing.

- PROGRAM NOTES -

IT Chapter Two: Extended Trailer (2019) (cont.)

This specific extended trailer possesses a unique dual structure, beginning as a standalone cinematic scene before dramatically shifting into a traditional promotional format. To navigate this, I utilized an expansive sonic palette and heavy experimentation with audio processing, particularly within a distinct "record/vinyl" section. I approached the opening sequence by letting the scene breathe, crafting a deceptively sincere and peaceful score that doesn't immediately reveal its horror elements. Slowly, edges of harmonic, textural, and timbral tension are allowed to creep into the mix, creating a profound sense of liminal irony. As the visual dread mounts, the score fully commits to the horror genre, seamlessly transitioning into the explosive trailer segment. Here, I relied on industry-standard trailer instrumentation to drive the action and build intense anticipation, utilizing driving string ostinatos, heavy taiko drums, deep "boomers" and "downers," and aggressive "Braams" — massive, brassy low-end hits that punctuate the terror.

Monument Valley III: Gameplay (2024)

A continuation of its highly successful predecessors, Monument Valley III is a peaceful yet deeply engaging video game that challenges players with mind-bending architectural illusions. Unlike the first two games, which centered on concepts of personal redemption, this installment pivots to focus on themes of community and environmental preservation. Set among geometric islands in the sea, the player is tasked with finding a new energy source to sustain their home and stop the encroaching ocean. Given the atmospheric and interactive nature of the medium, the musical score needed to be highly environmental. I leaned into this by utilizing a variety of self-constructed pads, gentle instrumental timbres, and soft melodic content that emerges only to punctuate points of narrative significance.

This recent project provided an invaluable lesson in holistic audio production and technical foresight. The original gameplay footage was provided entirely without audio, meaning every sonic element had to be built from the ground up. Before writing any music, I meticulously crafted the sound design using a blend of environmental samples—such as ocean waves and seagulls — and heavily processed found sounds for the tactile elements, like footsteps, grinding stones, and turning gears. During my hearing, I received feedback that the score was overpowering these delicate sound effects. I subsequently remixed the audio to prioritize the sound design, ensuring the player truly feels the physical "weight" of the world and remains deeply immersed. Furthermore, my initial decision to forgo strict beat mapping — due to the score's ambient, floating nature — created massive hurdles during the engraving process. To salvage the sheet music, I exported the MIDI data from Logic Pro into Cubase, utilizing its time-warp features to align the barlines, before finally engraving a professional score in Dorico. It served as a rigorous, practical reminder that foundational beat mapping is essential, regardless of a cue's atmospheric freedom.

I first and foremost seek to bring all glory and praise before God. He deserves credit for weaving this masterful story and bringing me to where I am. I want to thank my parents for supporting me in so many ways and guiding me to the place I am. Thank you to my friends who have supported me and eagerly awaited and celebrated my work. Thank you to my professors who have poured into me and helped develop these invaluable skills.



Daniel Grady is a student of Dr. David Schmal.

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Music in Commercial Music: Film Scoring (Film and Media) Concentration degree.

STUDENT RECITAL SERIES: JUNIOR RECITAL

Joshua Graham, *film scoring*

Program

The Little Things – Official
Trailer

Written and Directed by: John Lee Hancock
Executive Producers: Mike Drake
Kevin McCormick

Hostiles

Directed by: Scott Cooper
Written by: Scott Cooper
Donald E. Stewart
Executive Producers: Byron Allen
Mark Borde
Chris Charalambous
Mark DeVitre
Carolyn Folks
Terence Hill
Jennifer Lucas
Donald E. Stewart
Alex Walton
Will Weiske

The Lord of the Rings – The
Rings of Power

Created by: Patrick McKay
John D. Payne
Executive Producers: Jason Cahill
Justin Doble
Callum Greene
Gennifer Hutchison
Lindsey Weber
Patrick McKay
John D. Payne
Belén Atienza
J.A. Bayona
Bruce Richmond
Sharon Tal Yguado
Eugene Kelly

- PROGRAM NOTES -

The Little Things – Official Trailer (2021)

“The Little Things” trailer was released on December 22nd, 2020. The script was written in 1993, but the film spent 25 years in development before finally filming entering production in 2019. Because of this, the film remains set in 1990s California.

This neo-noir crime thriller follows burned-out deputy Joe “Deke” Deacon as he teams up with ambitious detective Jim Baxter to track down a serial killer. As the investigation unfolds, Deke’s past resurfaces, revealing haunting secrets tied to a similar case he once handled. The suspect, an eerie and elusive loner, draws both men deeper into obsession. The film explores guilt, moral ambiguity, and the psychological toll of pursuing justice. Ultimately, it raises unsettling questions about truth and the cost of closure.

The most prominent element of the music are the double basses which play a key role in telling the story musically. The ‘hook’ is the constant boom of double basses doing an extended technique called a ricochet - a bow stroke where the bow is thrown onto the string and naturally rebounds to play extra notes. I intended this to be not only eerie and startling but also representing the draw of their obsession. The other prominent element is the harp playing quick arpeggios high in its range. The chord progression here doesn’t follow any traditional music theory as it represents the ambiguity at play within the story. Finally, the cue is layered with synths, strings, as well as an ever-incessant ticking clock.

Hostiles (2017)

Directed by Scott Cooper, the film was inspired by an unproduced manuscript by Donald E. Stewart. It was noted for its historical attention to detail and collaboration with Native American consultants, particularly in its portrayal of Cheyenne culture.

Set in 1892, the film’s final moments center on Captain Joseph Blocker, whose long journey escorting a Cheyenne chief has transformed him. In this quiet and deeply human conclusion, Joseph forms an unexpected bond with a young Cheyenne boy, reflecting a hard-won shift from hostility to compassion. Alongside Rosalie Quaid, a widow shaped by grief and violence, this scene suggests the fragile possibility of a shared future. With the Cheyenne presence at its heart, the ending emphasizes cultural encounter, reconciliation, and the enduring weight of loss. The film closes not with triumph, but with a tentative gesture toward understanding.

To represent the two sides of Blocker, there are two major instruments; an acoustic guitar in drop D tuning to give it a hostile growl, and a Native American hand drum. The guitar is used at the beginning of the cue. Blocker, transformed, but still retaining his hard edges. Musically, we have the guitar playing its melody, but with strings overtop, almost breaking down the edges. Then we move to the

- PROGRAM NOTES -

Hostiles (2017) (cont.)

second half of the scene. I found a great opportunity to utilize the chugging of the train to bring in the hand drum. In Cheyenne culture, the drum represents the heartbeat of mother nature. So here, comes in with the chugging of the train to reflect Blocker's thoughts – first questioning if it's the train or his own heartbeat, but finally following the undeniable call to join the train.

The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power (2022-)

Developed by J. D. Payne and Patrick McKay, the series was produced by Amazon Studios as one of the most expensive television projects ever made. Filming took place primarily in New Zealand, drawing on the visual legacy of earlier Middle-earth adaptations.

Set thousands of years before *The Lord of the Rings*, the series explores the gradual return of darkness to Middle earth during the Second Age. Central to this arc is the re-emergence of Sauron, whose identity and influence unfold across multiple storylines. The narrative weaves together Elves, Dwarves, and Men as they unknowingly move toward the forging of the Rings of Power. In this culmination, Sauron's return is realized as a singular, decisive turning point. The moment marks the quiet but catastrophic beginning of a new age of shadow.

This is undoubtedly the most challenging piece I have written. It is built on two central ideas: first, the gradual development of a primary motif toward a climactic, consequential moment. As Sauron rebuilds himself, the motif passes through shifting keys and orchestral colors, steadily gaining strength until it culminates in a full tutti. The second idea lies in the aleatoric string writing, inspired by the Shepard Tone: an auditory illusion of a continuously rising pitch. Here, that concept is reimagined not as ascent, but as convergence: an inward motion toward a single point. Divided violins perform tremolo glissandi, each beginning on separate pitches and moving toward target tones, fading before arrival. The result is a sense of unstable merging, mirroring the formation of a unified, emerging force.

Thank you all for attending today! God is incredibly gracious to bring me to this point in my academic career, and I am incredibly grateful for His continued and unfailing love. I would like to thank my parents for their amazing support and care. I would also like to thank Dr. Schmal and Professor Piorkowski for their continued effort and patience with me. Finally, I would like to thank the Liberty University School of Music, Maddy, Eden, Judy, and the Phoenicians. God bless everyone!



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The School of Music Administration, Faculty, and Staff

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