

Liberty University School of Music

presents

Student Recital Series

Senior Commercial Music Program

Nicholas Brueggemann, *tenor*

May 1, 2026

Macel Falwell Recital Hall

MUSIC 305

5:00 PM

SENIOR COMMERCIAL MUSIC PROGRAM

Nicholas Brueggemann, *tenor*

Olivia Radabaugh, *keys*; Nick Warnstrom, *bass guitar*;

Connor Fancher, *electric & acoustic guitars*; Wilson Dick, *drums*;

Noah De Yarman, *cello*; Erica Windsor, *trumpet*;

Sophie Mason, *BGVs*

Program

The Blood

Dante Bowe,
Jenn Johnson,
& Mitch Wong

Reason I Sing

Phil Wickham
& Jonathan Smith

Connor Fancher, *acoustic guitar*

Stop this Train

John Mayer
& Pino Palladino

Connor Fancher, *acoustic guitar*

Cloud and Fire

Josiah Queen,
John Michael Howell,
Zac Lawson,
& Dylan Thomas

Springtime

Chris Renzema
& Hank Bentley

Always on Time

Jonathan Smith,
Pat Barrett,
Steven Furtick,
& Leeland Mooring

High and Lows

Aodhan King,
Ben Tan,
& Joel Houston

SENIOR COMMERCIAL MUSIC PROGRAM

Program (cont.)

Never Left My Side

Forrest Frank
& David Cook

Olivia Radabaugh, *keys*

Slower I Go

Austin Shuffit,
Chelsea Plank,
Cameron Giddens,
Nathan Masse,
& Shantal Santers

No One Ever Cared For Me Like Jesus

Chandler Moore,
Dante Bowe,
Jason Ingram,
& Steffany Gretzinger

- PROGRAM NOTES -

The Blood

“*The Blood*” immediately centers us on the sacrifice of Christ. Written by Dante Bowe, Mitch Wong, and Jenn Johnson and released on Bethel Music’s 2022 album *Simple*, the song carries a clear theological focus on grace. Wong has shared that the bridge was intentionally written to emphasize that God’s love is not earned through perfection but is freely given. Musically, the piece builds from a quiet, restrained opening into a full, anthemic climax, gradually increasing dynamics to heighten its emotional intensity. This steady build reinforces the song’s central message, making it a powerful and declarative opening that celebrates redemption and sets focus of the recital.

Reason I Sing

Originally released on Phil Wickham’s 2021 album *Hymn of Heaven*, “*Reason I Sing*” is presented here in a stripped-down acoustic style inspired by his later *Acoustic Sessions*. Co-written with Jonathan Smith, the song reflects a posture of gratitude rooted in worship. In this arrangement, the reduced instrumentation allows the melody and lyrical clarity to take precedence. The song’s bright, diatonic melody and accessible chorus create an immediate sense of warmth and invitation. By removing the fuller production of the original recording, this version emphasizes intimacy, drawing the listener into a personal expression of joy and devotion.

Stop This Train

Featured on John Mayer’s 2006 album *Continuum*, “*Stop This Train*” explores the universal anxiety surrounding aging and the passage of time. The arrangement is driven by Mayer’s distinctive acoustic “slap-pop” fingerstyle technique, which combines percussive hits with melodic motion to emulate the rhythmic momentum of a train. This groove remains constant throughout the song, symbolizing time’s inevitability. Harmonically, the piece uses a cyclical progression that reinforces a sense of motion without resolution. The interplay between rhythm and lyric creates a vivid example of musical storytelling, mirroring the feeling of being carried forward through life without control.

Cloud and Fire

“*Cloud and Fire*” by Josiah Queen draws directly from the imagery of Exodus, where God leads His people as a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. Released as a single in 2025, the song reflects a modern folk-influenced worship style. Its rhythmic foundation suggests forward movement, reinforcing the theme of a spiritual journey. Melodically, the use of pentatonic figures over primarily major harmonies creates an earthy, grounded sound. Rather than relying on harmonic complexity, the arrangement builds through texture, gradually adding layers to mirror the growing trust required in daily obedience. The result is a piece that musically and lyrically emphasizes dependence on God’s guidance.

- PROGRAM NOTES -

Springtime

Released on Chris Renzema's 2020 album *Let the Ground Rest*, "Springtime" uses seasonal imagery as a metaphor for spiritual renewal. The song begins with a subdued, intimate tone, reflecting the stillness of winter through a lower vocal register and minimal accompaniment. As the lyrics shift toward hope and restoration, the arrangement expands dynamically, introducing fuller textures and a more open melodic contour. The harmonic language remains relatively simple, allowing the gradual build in dynamics to carry the emotional arc. This progression mirrors the transition from dormancy to new life, making the song a poignant reflection on patience, healing, and growth.

Always On Time

Featured on Elevation Worship's 2024 Worship album of the year *When Wind Meets Fire*, "Always On Time" focuses on the theme of trusting God's timing. The arrangement mirrors this idea through a gradual build in texture and intensity, beginning with a sparse, reflective opening before expanding into a fuller sound. Melodically, the verses remain contained within a narrower range, while the chorus introduces wider intervals, creating a sense of lift and release. This contrast reflects the shift from human uncertainty to confident trust. The song's pacing and dynamic growth reinforce its message, culminating in a declaration of faith in God's sovereignty.

Highs and Lows

Released on Hillsong Young & Free's 2018 album *III*, "Highs and Lows" uses clear musical contrasts to depict the emotional range of human experience alongside God's constancy. The verses sit in a lower vocal register, representing life's "lows," while the chorus expands upward, often leaping to a higher range to illustrate "highs." Beneath these changes, a consistent compound meter groove (12/8) provides rhythmic stability. This unchanging foundation acts as a musical metaphor for God's steady presence, anchoring the song regardless of emotional fluctuation. The result is a direct and effective example of text painting within a contemporary worship context.

Never Left My Side

Written by Forrest Frank and David Cook and released on Forrest Frank's 2024 album *Child of God*, "Never Left My Side" centers on the theme of God's constant presence through every season of life. The simplicity of the accompaniment allows the lyrical message to take priority, with the piano providing a steady harmonic foundation rather than driving rhythmic momentum. This restraint highlights the song's reflective verses and gives greater weight to the text's progression from past struggle to present assurance. The addition of a trumpet solo at the conclusion introduces a new timbral color, serving as a musical extension of the song's message—shifting from introspection to a more declarative and resonant expression of confidence in God's faithfulness.

- PROGRAM NOTES -

Slower I Go

Released by SEU Worship in 2024 on the album *Move of God*, “*Slower I Go*” reflects on the spiritual discipline of surrender through stillness and trust. The arrangement is intentionally restrained, centered on gentle piano textures and sustained harmonic support. This creates space for the vocal line to unfold naturally, emphasizing lyrical clarity and emotional nuance. Harmonically, the song favors simplicity, allowing repetition to reinforce its message rather than develop complexity. The gradual pacing mirrors the theme of learning to slow down, listen, and depend more fully on God’s presence. Positioned here in the program, it serves as a reflective transition, drawing the listener inward before the final, deeply intimate closing piece.

No One Ever Cared for Me Like Jesus

Featured on Steffany Gretzinger’s 2020 album *Forever Amen*, “*No One Ever Cared for Me Like Jesus*” is a deeply intimate worship ballad co-written with Dante Bowe, Chandler Moore, and Jason Ingram. The album itself was designed as a continuous, immersive worship experience rather than a traditional track-based release. This piece stands out for its simplicity and emotional transparency. Performed with a largely rubato opening, the tempo is shaped by the phrasing of the text rather than a strict pulse. The accompaniment—centered on flowing piano arpeggios—supports a slow harmonic rhythm, allowing space for reflection. The melody often resolves gently downward, reinforcing a sense of rest and surrender. As the closing piece of the recital, it creates a quiet, contemplative ending that emphasizes the personal nature of faith.

I am incredibly grateful to everyone who came out tonight. To my family and friends, your support and constant prayers throughout my college years mean the world to me. I couldn't have reached this milestone without you. To the incredible faculty, professors, and staff, thank you for pouring your wisdom into my life. You have profoundly shaped not just my musicianship, but my character. To my band, thank you so much for the hard work you put into this recital. It has been a true joy to become friends with each of you over this past year. For those of you I've traveled and led worship with on YouthQuest, those experiences have been incredible highlights of my senior year. To the whole group, I am so honored to share the stage with you this evening. Most importantly, I want to give all glory to God. Thank you, Lord, for Your endless grace, the beautiful gift of music, and the immense privilege of studying here at Liberty.



Nicholas Brueggemann is a student of Dr. Mark Greenawalt.

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Music in Commercial Music: Performance Concentration degree.

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Dr. Dondi Costin, President
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Dr. Stephen Müller, Dean, School of Music
The School of Music Administration, Faculty, and Staff

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