

Liberty University School of Music

presents

Student Recital Series

Senior Commercial Music Program

Maria Anderson, *mezzo-soprano*

May 2, 2025

Macel Falwell Recital Hall

MUSIC 305

7:00 PM

SENIOR SONGWRITING RECITAL

Maria Anderson, *mezzo-soprano*
Sarah Vo, *keys*; Jarad Alpert, *drums*;
Keeton Bailey, *acoustic & electric guitars*; Lily Yates, *bass and violin*

Program

Around the Sun Maria Anderson

Full band
Adellaie Jung, Rachael Snodgrass, and Leta Carlene, *background vocals*

Down the Drain Maria Anderson
& Elliot Milton

Full band
Adellaie Jung, Rachael Snodgrass, and Leta Carlene, *background vocals*

Blue Lights Maria Anderson
& Christopher Spano

Full band
Lightning Maria Anderson, Adellaie Jung,
& Treson Behn

Full band
Chapman Lee Peugh, *vocalist*
Battery Maria Anderson, Adellaie Jung,
& Treson Behn

Full band
Adellaie Jung, *vocalist*
Rachael Snodgrass, and Leta Carlene, *background vocals*

Think About You All the Time Maria Anderson
Keeton Bailey, *acoustic guitar*

SENIOR SONGWRITING RECITAL

Program (cont.)

School's Out

Maria Anderson

Full band

What I Can't Have (Oh, Mama)

Maria Anderson,
Brandon Marshall,
& Noah Coleman

Full band

Rachael Snodgrass, and Leta Carlene, *background vocals*

Hey, Death

Maria Anderson, John Traylor,
& Riley Freeman

Full band

Lachlan King, *fiddle*

Eternally Loved

Maria Anderson

Full band

Molly Grace Gerk, *harp*
Lily Yates, *violin*

Psalm 27

Maria Anderson
& Rachel Bowsher

Full band

Rachael Snodgrass, and Leta Carlene, *background vocals*

- PROGRAM NOTES -

Around the Sun

Philippians 4:6-7 says, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Aging is a source of anxiety for many, but “Around the Sun” was born in response to that fear. Lyrically, the song embraces the joy of growing older, recognizing that each birthday is a gift- another year of life that not everyone is fortunate enough to receive. The title plays on the phrase “a trip around the sun,” reinforcing the song’s hopeful message of gratitude and celebration.

Musically, the band cultivates an uplifting, easygoing feel to match the song’s lighthearted perspective on aging. The keys shimmer with twinkling high-octave notes, adding a sense of brightness, while the guitar and drums lock into a classic pop/rock eighth-note backbeat, reinforcing a laid-back yet rhythmic groove. The song concludes with crowd-participation. It uses repetition on the “la” syllable to allow the audience to let out their worries and join in the musical celebration of life.

Down the Drain

Every bassist loves a song built around a great bassline, and “Down the Drain” delivers with spunky, driving bass and a vibey eighth-note backbeat. The minor key works in tandem with the lyrics to create a grungy, punk-inspired atmosphere. Vivid imagery adds depth, particularly in the second verse, where the narrator describes a rainbow-striped tiger whose colors dilute as they become wet. While the song explores the theme of life losing its vibrancy, this idea is juxtaposed with passionate adjectives (“fiery love”) and striking visuals (“rainbow tiger”).

Matthew 5:13 says, “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.” This concept is echoed in the song’s use of the term “spice;” the narrator laments a season or relationship that feels dull and lifeless. The Bible is no stranger to songs of lament, but the outro shifts the focus back to biblical truth, reinforcing hope. The lyric “Identity’s still mine” serves as a subtle declaration that our confidence and joy remain unshaken when rooted in Christ. Hard times will come, but we rest in the truth that Christ has overcome the world. There is no season of trial or despair that God cannot breathe new life into.

- PROGRAM NOTES -

Blue Lights

“Blue Lights” is a Fleetwood Mac-inspired song drawn from real-life experience. The metaphor-laden lyrics follow a singer performing onstage while someone she once loved runs sound from the back of the room, highlighting how presence and distance can coincide.

Harmonically, the use of the flat VII, flat IIImaj7, and IV chords evokes a warm, nostalgic feel rooted in 70s soft rock and modal blues. The modulation from the chorus to the bridge explores chromatic mediant movement—a third-related key change more idiomatic to piano than guitar—adding harmonic richness and an emotional shift at a key moment in the narrative.

Lyricaly, the song compares a relationship to a movie: you memorize the script but forget the lines you’ve chosen to erase. It is common to romanticize past relationships by remembering only the positives and forgetting why the ending was necessary. Rather than lingering on past hurt and nostalgia, “Blue Lights” finds peace in release, trusting that God is writing something better ahead. As the final line says, in a subtle display of anastrophe: “there’s healing found beyond the now from the pain of yesterday.”

Lightning

“Lightning” tells the story of finding love when you least expect it. The song is an exercise in imagery, using the metaphor of a lightning bolt to describe the feeling of a healthy, God-honoring relationship entering your life and all of the exciting feelings attached. When anything in life is within God’s design, it is so much more rewarding and life-giving. This song also relies heavily on narration, switching between the perspective of the guy involved and the girl involved. When two people meet, they are often sharing the same thoughts, feelings, and fears without realizing it. The irony of this reaches a climax in the bridge when both singers express their hope for a lasting love, even as they fear that, like lightning, it could vanish as quickly as it had arrived. Lightning strikes and is gone in the “blink of an eye,” but the desire for a Christian relationship is that this initial spark will flourish into a commitment to serve and sacrifice for the person you choose to love. Ultimately, in marriage, this represents Christ’s agape love for His bride, the church. Just as the lyrics explore the unpredictability of love, the instrumental choices reflect the volatility of a storm, with grungy guitar riffs and chromatic scales evoking lightning’s dramatic nature. With its moody and energetic atmosphere, ‘Lightning’ captures the excitement, risk, and beauty of love.

- PROGRAM NOTES -

Battery

Originally conceived as a love song, “Battery” gradually evolved into an implicit worship song. The idea began with Adellaie wanting to capture the mind of an introvert—specifically, the feeling of one’s social battery running low. As the writing process unfolded, the song transformed into a love story about the rare kind of person you can be with and still feel completely at peace. Eventually, we realized we were describing God.

Matthew 11:28-30 says, “Come to me, all you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” This verse perfectly reflects the heart of “Battery”- the unfading comfort, rest, and peace found in Jesus. Lyrically, this is conveyed in a clear and conversational way.

Musically, “Battery” leans into a pop/R&B groove that aligns with Adellaie’s artistry. The vocal line is crafted to sit in the tessitura of a powerful, jazz-oriented mezzo-soprano, while the bridge was designed to give the singer space to vamp. Repetition plays a key role, fostering instant familiarity and drawing listeners into the moment. The bridge also features intentional tone-painting- when the lyric “up” is sung, the melody ascends, reinforcing the meaning musically.

At its core, “Battery” takes a universal human struggle and presents it in a fun, romantic light- offering a fresh perspective on what it means to find rest in true love and, ultimately, in God.

Think About You All the Time

“Think About You All the Time” is a good old-fashioned love song built around a strong melodic hook. Written using the topline technique, the song was crafted by composing an original melody and lyrics over a pre-recorded, free-for-use track (type-beat). The fingerpicking in the song reflects the inspiration drawn from that original track, shaping both the sound and story.

Lyrically, the song explores nostalgia working in favor of a former love. The narrator reminisces on sweet memories, but as the story unfolds, it becomes clear that this person is no longer in their life. Originally titled “words that rhyme with traffic,” the song was built around its opening lyric: “I think I miss being stuck in traffic.” Unique near rhymes like “mathematic,” “bad at it,” and “subtraction” were intentionally chosen to engage the listener’s ear.

The song’s narrative-driven approach leans heavily on assonance and consonance to create a bittersweet, dreamy atmosphere. While the chord progression remains steady throughout, the outro shifts to minor chords, subtly suggesting that even as the narrator moves forward with optimism, a trace of longing remains.

- PROGRAM NOTES -

School's Out

Childhood feels endless when you're young, yet in hindsight, it slips away far too quickly. "School's Out" is Maria's childhood, materialized in soundwaves. The chorus paints vivid memories of adventure- like bringing home a puppy (*with* her grandma's help and *without* her father's permission) and sneaking home Pop-Tarts from the school vending machine after her mom banned them to encourage healthier eating.

Unlike many of Maria's other songs, "School's Out" opens with its hook front and center as the first two words of the song. Musically, the nostalgic lyrics are mirrored by bold, pop-punk instrumentation reminiscent of a 2000s coming-of-age movie soundtrack. Electric guitars drive the energy, while rebellious drum rhythms amplify the carefree spirit. The song's structure embraces this youthful, outside-the-box swagger, blending the bridge with the second verse before circling back to the first verse and chorus in an almost ABA form.

At its core, "School's Out" is a love letter to Maria's childhood- one shaped by the love and sacrifice of her amazing parents, Matt and Marya Anderson.

What I Can't Have (Oh, Mama)

1 Corinthians 10:13 says, "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."

Many Christian songs focus on doing the right thing, but few explore the struggle of wanting to do the wrong thing. Vulnerability is essential in the Christian life; bringing sin into the light fosters accountability and growth. "*What I Can't Have (Oh, Mama)*" embraces that honesty, tackling the sin of envy head-on. In a world that encourages chasing whatever makes you happy, this song counters with a deeper truth: holiness is more valuable than fleeting satisfaction.

Lyrically, the song opens with vivid imagery, placing the narrator in an art gallery, metaphorically envying someone else's painting. The first verse leans on internal rhyme, assonance, and consonance to scratch the listener's ear. The chorus introduces an apostrophe ("Oh, mama") to find an outlet for the narrator's turmoil. The payoff line ("I want what I can't have") intentionally frames temptation/jealousy in an almost childish, simplistic light.

Musically, the song leans into Maria's signature rootsy, blues-rock guitar style. The interplay between guitar and vocals feels like a duet, with the outro melody lifting in response to the guitar's dramatic walk-down. The closing section features ringing chord diamonds before resolving with a descending, Spanish-influenced lead line. The raw, gritty tone of the instrumentation mirrors the song's lyrical tension, embodying the push-and-pull of moral conflict.

- PROGRAM NOTES -

Hey, Death

“Hey, Death” is a Christian rock song declaring that Christ has won the battle against sin and death. Based out of Galatians 2:20-21, it conveys the emotion of triumph and hope found in our newly given eternal life. The song is written in common time, but it is characterized by rhythmic acoustic guitar and a gritty, blues feel. Personification is employed to speak to death by name, and the bridge uses repetition to turn a lyrical phrase into a victory cry. Assonance and consonance also play a large role in the flow of the lyrics. Moreover, there are many allusions to different verses in Scripture scattered throughout the song; for example, the second verse pulls in Philippians 2:10-11, which says, “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” “Hey, Death,” is an artistic worship song meant to bring glory to God for His sovereignty even over death- and His compassion within the creation, salvation, redemption framework to love and redeem His children.

Eternally Loved

Fun Fact: While Saturn is famous for its icy rings, Jupiter also has its own display of beautiful space debris orbiting the planet! “Eternally Loved” draws upon familiar imagery-Jupiter’s rings, spiderwebs, and stars- to highlight a deeper truth: humans are the most precious creation of all. Genesis 1:27 tells us, “So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” This verse reminds us that we are not only intricately designed but also bear the fingerprint of our perfect Creator.

Instrumentally, this idea is reflected in the delicate fingerpicking and arpeggiated guitar patterns. The vocal melody is intimate and kind, rising and falling in lilting lines rather than leaping. The chorus serves as a palate cleanser, breaking up the more verbose verses with a concise statement of belief: “I know you were made for more.” The “more” that the narrator speaks of is eternal life with God, experiencing His agape love, a love that cannot be known outside of a relationship with Him.

As the song unfolds, the refrain releases the kinetic energy packed into its message. The instrumentation swells, the drums drive the momentum forward, and the song reaches its emotional peak before circling back to the opening line: “Your soul is an immortal thing, more timeless than Jupiter’s rings.” Following “Serpiente de Mar,” “Eternally Loved” reaffirms that the human soul, made in the image of God, was never designed for death. God’s purpose has always been for us to experience the fullness of life in His presence.

- PROGRAM NOTES -

Psalm 27

Psalm 27:1 declares, “The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?”

“Psalm 27” was written directly from this passage of Scripture. The verses reflect on the Lord’s guidance and protection, leading to an expression of adoration and gratitude in the chorus. The bridge walks through Psalm 27:13-14: “I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.” This verse reminds us that God’s providence is not only a future hope but also a present reality- what a source of joy and comfort!

Accompanying the voice, driving quarter notes on piano underlay the sparse texture of the first verse, building a sense of trepidation and mimicking the pounding heart awaiting courage. The melody remains within a singable range, lifting naturally in the chorus with the song’s momentum while remaining accessible for a church congregation.

The heart of this song is to equip believers with a song of worship and truth. It has become a personal anthem for Maria in moments when she needs to feel the Lord’s peace. Hopefully, you will find encouragement in this song and walk away with the words of Psalm 27:4 on your heart:

"One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple."

- ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS -

Praise The Lord for making music and allowing us to enjoy it! I am so thankful that He gives us life abundantly.

I would like to thank all of the talented people that played for me tonight and throughout my time at Liberty University. Your friendship and partnership in creating art has been priceless to me!

I also owe a HUGE thank you to the mentors God has placed in my path- specifically, my private lesson professors, Professor Ready and Professor Duff. You both were far more than teachers to me; you were spiritual leaders who taught me more about the faith than I could summarize in this one tiny paragraph. I love both of you! I am so thankful for how you have poured into my life.

Finally, thank you to my best friends and biggest supporters, my parents. You both have believed in me since I was a little kid singing in choir and writing lyrics on sheets of notebook paper. I would not be where I am without you. I am so thankful that you have enabled me to pursue my God-given calling, but I am more thankful that I have two extraordinary people like you in my life. You have taught me what love, sacrifice, and service mean. You are kind and consistent, and you live your life putting others first. I love you, and I only hope I can live up to the high bar you set for parenthood one day.



Maria Anderson is a student of Nirva Ready.

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

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