

Liberty University School of Music

presents

Student Recital Series

Senior Commercial Music Program

Michael Pearn, *baritone*

May 2, 2026

MUSIC 305

7:00 PM

STUDENT RECITAL SERIES: SENIOR RECITAL

Michael Pearn, *baritone*
Aaron Webster, *drums*; Ryan Townsend, *electric guitar*;
Myles Cooley, *bass*; AJ Cantrell, *keys*;
Caleb Pearn, *Guitar and BGV*; Caitlyn Naill, *voice*

Program

Down to the River to Pray	Traditional Song
Washed by the Water <i>Acoustic Live Vol. 1</i>	Bear Rinehart (b. 1980)
Ragged Wood <i>Fleet Foxes</i>	Robin Pecknold (b. 1986)
Sahara <i>Forget and Not Slow Down</i> Caleb Pearn, <i>electric guitar and vocals</i>	Matthew Thiessen (b. 1980)
Angela <i>Cleopatra</i>	Wesley Schultz (b. 1982)
Manna (After All These Years) <i>Manna</i>	Chris Renzema (b. 1995)
Because He Lives <i>David Crowder Band Collection</i>	Bill Gaither (b. 1936)

- PROGRAM NOTES -

Down to the River to Pray

This classic southern spiritual embodies the essence of Church community. The natural imagery and harmony evoke a sense of old-time American tradition, calling to mind an era of Church authority and prominent Biblical values. The hope of the song is in the refrain, which invites us all—sisters, brothers, fathers and mothers—to go down to the river to pray. This arrangement provides a fresh take on the beautiful hymn. Since blues has played an equally integral part of American folk music as the choral tradition, the program is proud to represent a heavy, blues-inspired groove to invigorate the old classic.

Ragged Wood

Ragged Wood embodies the spirit of the outdoors. From the first melodic line, boasting lush harmonies and bright tones, one is reminded of nature's freedom and the beauty of life. The tune is a journey in and of itself. The melodic contour takes the singers range over mountains and valleys, painting a picture of variety and adventure. Robin Pecknold, the song's composer, makes much of the themes of revival and springtime. He invites the listener into a world that has healed from itself.

Sahara

Reliant K's Sahara is a hard rock anthem depicting the loss of pride. The raw, driving guitars fuel the narrator's angsty lament. Lyricist Matt Theissen uses the "pride" of a lion as an allegory for his fall from grace, growling over lyrics like "supposedly I'm a man, but I felt like a cub." The desert imagery reflects our program's theme of spiritual wilderness, as a parallel to Jesus' testimony in Matthew 4:1-11. The hope of this song is found in God's ability to sustain us through temptation and displacement.

Angela

There are times in our lives when we have to redefine home. Sometimes it's the company we keep, a hotel room, or our car. Angela tells the story of a wayward soul looking for a place to call home. The chord progression creates a sense of harmonic ambiguity by using a minor five, adding to the lost yet determined subject. The theme resolves with the refrain of "I'm home at last", meaning the titular character has found contentment in the searching.

Manna (After all these years)

Manna is a direct allusion to the central theme of our program. It uses the Biblical story of Exodus to illustrate a figurative spiritual wilderness, and makes allusion to God's providence to the Israelites in the desert. Manna is first described in Exodus 16:31 "Now the house of Israel called its name manna. It was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey."

- PROGRAM NOTES -

Washed by the Water

Luke 3:21-22 gives us a parallel account of the Baptism of Jesus. This event notably takes place right before His 40 days in the desert, making a parallel to the Israelites crossing through the Red Sea and wandering for 40 years in the wilderness. The application of the song is that sanctification and adversity often come hand in hand. *Washed by the Water* describes a lifetime of difficulty, but the narrator takes heart in the wonder working power of God's providence.

Because He Lives

This hymn summarizes the main theme of our program. Simply put, the powers of earth cause us to be depraved, but because Christ has risen we can face whatever opposes us. The song impresses these themes upon us through the groove, which is plodding and simple. It sounds as if the narrator is using the last of his will to sing a song attributing his life to Christ. The whole tone brings to mind the hard-fought endurance of a life of adversity, redeemed by the sustaining power of Jesus.

For Kathleen and Michael Pearn, Caleb and Fiona Pearn, and for my friends.



Michael Pearn 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.

**We would like to thank the
Liberty University Administration for
their faithful support of the School of Music.**

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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