

Liberty University School *of* Music

presents

Performing Artist Series

Dr. Clifford Lambert, *tenor*

**September 30, 2025
Macel Falwell Recital Hall
MUSIC 305
7:30 PM**

Performing Artist Series

Dr. Clifford Lambert, *tenor*
Professor Jon Werking, *piano*

Program

An Evening Hymn
from *Harmonia Sacra* (1688)

Henry Purcell
(1659-1695)

Matthew Petralia, *guitar*

Comfort Ye, My People/Every Valley Shall Be Exalted
from *Messiah* (1741)

George Frideric Handel
(1685-1759)

Oh, Happy Day/Amazing Grace

Philip Doddridge
(1702-1751)
John Newton
(1725-1807)
arr. by Edwin Hawkins
(1943-2018)

AJ Cantrell, *background vocals*
Crissa Davis, *background vocals*
Mo McCorvey, *background vocals*

Ye People, Rend Your Hearts/If with All Your Hearts
from *Elijah* (1846)

Feliz Mendelssohn
(1809-1847)

Panis Angelicus
from *Messe à trois voix* (1872)

Cesar Franck
(1822-1890)

The Lord Is My Light and My Salvation

Frances Allitsen
(1848-1912)

The Lord's Prayer

Albert Hay Malotte
(1895-1964)

My Tribute

Andrae Crouch
(1942-2015)

My Redeemer is Faithful and True

Steven Curtis Chapman
(b.1962)
James Isaac Elliot
(b. 1955)

Performing Artist Series

Program (cont.)

Ancient of Days

Gary Sadler
(b.1962)
Jamie Harvill
(b. 1960)

Word of God, Speak

Bart Millard
(b.1972)
Pete Kipley
(b. 1970)

Agnus Dei

David Phelps
(b. 1969)

Meghan Lambert, *soprano*

Great I Am

Jared Andersen
(b. 1979)

Evan Jacobs, *drums*
Jacob Charles, *bass guitar*
AJ Cantrell, *keyboard*
Nathan Barrow, *electric guitar*
Matthew Petralia, *acoustic guitar*
Breanna Lambert, *background vocals*
Michaela Lambert, *background vocals*

- PROGRAM NOTES -

An Evening Hymn

A towering figure of English Baroque music, Henry Purcell is renowned for his profound contributions to both sacred and secular vocal repertoire. *An Evening Hymn*, composed around 1688, is one of Purcell's finest examples of solo devotional music. It was published in *Harmonia Sacra*, a collection of spiritual songs intended for private or semi-liturgical performance.

Set over a gently repeating ground bass, a hallmark of Purcell's compositional style, the work presents a serene meditation on the close of day and the soul's rest in God. The vocal line unfolds with expressive freedom, allowing the singer to explore the emotional nuance of the text, while the classical guitar accompaniment of this arrangement offers a steady, grounding presence.

The text reflects a nightly prayer of thanksgiving and trust, culminating in a series of increasingly ornamented and exalted "Hallelujahs", which serve as both musical and spiritual climax. Purcell's harmonic choices and word painting demonstrate his deep sensitivity to language and his ability to elevate devotional text into profound artistic expression.

The first in this program's chronological journey of worship music through the ages, *An Evening Hymn* not only showcases Baroque performance practice, but also serves as a reminder of the enduring connection between faith, reflection, and artistry in vocal music.

Comfort Ye, My People/Every Valley Shall Be Exalted

This iconic recitative and aria from George Frideric Handel's *Messiah* mark the beginning of one of the most beloved oratorios in the Western canon. Composed in 1741 in an astonishing span of just 24 days, *Messiah* sets a libretto compiled from Scripture by Charles Jennens, centered around the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

"Comfort Ye, My People" and "Every Valley Shall Be Exalted" open Part I of the oratorio and serve as a prophetic and pastoral prologue. Drawing from Isaiah 40, these movements offer a message of hope and restoration, announcing the coming of the Messiah not with thunderous grandeur, but with tender reassurance.

The tenor recitative "Comfort Ye" begins with a gentle, almost conversational orchestral introduction, leading into an expressive vocal line that echoes God's promise to His people in exile. It is not merely a declaration of divine consolation, but an invitation to personal healing and national restoration.

Following directly, "Every Valley Shall Be Exalted" shifts from recitative to aria, bursting with joyful energy. Handel's masterful word-painting is on full display—the winding melisma on "crooked" and soaring phrases on "exalted" evoke the very landscape being transformed. It's a vivid musical metaphor for spiritual renewal and the coming of Christ, whose presence will level every barrier.

These pieces serve to center the evening on themes of promise, preparation, and the enduring hope found in Scripture. Whether heard in the concert hall or the cathedral, these opening lines of *Messiah* still ring with clarity and comfort: "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem... prepare ye the way of the Lord."

Oh, Happy Day/Amazing Grace

Upon hearing this arrangement, the listener may wonder why, if this recital is to be a chronological progression of worship music, "Oh, Happy Day" is placed at this point in the program. The truth is that this song is a remarkable musical testament to the enduring power of worship across centuries. While most listeners today associate the song with Edwin Hawkins' Grammy-winning gospel arrangement from 1967, its roots reach back to the mid 18th-century. The lyrics were originally penned by English clergyman Philip Doddridge in 1755, as a reflective paraphrase of a 16th-century baptismal hymn that celebrated the believer's joy in salvation and lifelong devotion to Christ. This arrangement is appropriately capped with the last line of the well-known hymn, "Amazing Grace", having been penned just seventeen years after Doddridge wrote his.

- PROGRAM NOTES -

Oh, Happy Day/Amazing Grace (cont.)

Edwin Hawkins' transformative gospel arrangement reinterprets the hymn through the lens of 20th-century Black gospel tradition, infusing it with rhythmic vitality, syncopated piano accompaniment, call-and-response vocals, and exuberant harmonies. Recorded with the Northern California State Youth Choir, Hawkins' rendition became an international sensation in 1969, blending sacred tradition with contemporary soul music. It brought gospel music into the mainstream and became a spiritual anthem of both personal salvation and collective celebration.

While stylistically worlds apart from the pieces before and after it, this setting of "Oh, Happy Day" is placed here in the program because it bridges the formal worship of early Protestant hymnody with the emotionally rich expression of 20th-century gospel, reminding us that the "happy day" of a believer's salvation transcends time, culture, and musical genre.

Ye People, Rend Your Hearts/If with All Your Hearts

Felix Mendelssohn's oratorio *Elijah* (1846) stands as one of the crowning achievements of 19th-century sacred music. Composed in the spirit of Handel's monumental works, *Elijah* tells the dramatic Old Testament story of the prophet's confrontation with the idolatry of Israel and his call for repentance. The aria and recitative—"Ye People, Rend Your Hearts" and "If with All Your Hearts"—occur early in the work and are often performed together as a poignant unit.

"Ye People, Rend Your Hearts" is a brief, recitative-style introduction in which the prophet Elijah appeals for genuine repentance, quoting Joel 2:13. It sets a tone of spiritual urgency, calling God's people to turn away from sin with sincerity rather than mere outward ritual. Following this, "If with All Your Hearts" (based on Jeremiah 29:13) offers a soaring, lyrical affirmation of God's readiness to be found by those who seek Him wholeheartedly. This aria is among the most beloved tenor solos in the oratorio repertoire, balancing lyrical beauty with theological depth. Its message—that worship must come from an earnest and repentant heart—resonates powerfully with the recital's theme, *Worship Music Through the Ages*.

In this recital, accompanied by piano rather than orchestra, the music's intimate and devotional character is brought into sharper focus. Mendelssohn's fusion of biblical text, Romantic lyricism, and reverent tone reminds us that true worship begins with the heart—repentant, sincere, and seeking after God.

Panis Angelicus

Composed in 1872, *Panis Angelicus* ("Bread of Angels") is one of the most cherished sacred songs in the classical repertoire. Setting a Latin text drawn from the hymn *Sacris solemniis* by Thomas Aquinas, the piece beautifully expresses the mystery and reverence surrounding the Lord's Supper.

Franck's setting is both simple and sublime, with a lyrical vocal line that gently rises in prayerful devotion and a rich harmonic foundation in the piano accompaniment that conveys a sense of quiet awe.

Originally written for tenor, organ, harp, and cello, this recital performance with piano highlights the intimacy of Franck's musical language and the sincerity of its devotional intent. *Panis Angelicus* represents the 19th-century Catholic tradition of sacred music, emphasizing the sacramental aspect of worship and the mystery of God's presence among His people.

Through its timeless melody and reverent text, *Panis Angelicus* continues to serve as a musical offering—drawing listeners into a moment of quiet reflection, gratitude, and communion with God.

Translation -

*The Bread of Angels
becomes Bread of men;
The Bread of heaven
puts an end to all symbols:
O thing most wonderful!
The Lord becomes our food
Poor, a servant, and humble.*

- PROGRAM NOTES -

The Lord is My Light and My Salvation

British composer Frances Allitsen's "The Lord is My Light and My Salvation" is a powerful solo song rooted in the language of Scripture and infused with Romantic-era musical expression. Drawing on verses from Psalm 27, the work sets to music a confident declaration of faith in God's protection, guidance, and sustaining presence amid life's trials.

Written in the late 19th-century, Allitsen's setting showcases her gift for dramatic vocal writing and lyrical piano accompaniment. With sweeping melodic lines and richly harmonized textures, the piece offers the soloist opportunities for both introspective reflection and bold proclamation. The music moves from quiet assurance to triumphant exultation, mirroring the psalmist's journey from seeking to trusting.

This selection represents a significant moment in sacred solo literature, bridging the devotional tradition of the psalms with the expressive depth of Romantic song. Allitsen, one of the few prominent female composers of her time, contributed works that have endured in both concert and church settings. "The Lord is My Light" continues to inspire worshipers and audiences alike with its enduring message: "The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

The Lord's Prayer

Albert Hay Malotte's "The Lord's Prayer", composed in 1935, is one of the most beloved and enduring musical settings of the text from Matthew 6:9–13. Though Malotte was best known as a film composer and organist, this sacred solo became his most famous work, crossing boundaries between classical, sacred, and popular traditions.

Musically, Malotte's setting pairs lyrical vocal lines with sweeping, cinematic harmonies that reflect his background in early Hollywood. His interpretation transforms the ancient and familiar words of Jesus' prayer into a deeply personal expression of devotion, humility, and reverence. Written originally for voice and piano, it has since been arranged in countless forms and performed by many iconic vocalists, from opera stages to church services.

"The Lord's Prayer" represents the 20th-century tradition of sacred art song. It bridges classical vocal technique with contemporary accessibility, illustrating how worship music continued to evolve in both musical style and spiritual expression in modern America. Its inclusion highlights the enduring significance of the Lord's Prayer not only as a communal act of faith but also as a profound personal devotion.

My Tribute

Composed in 1971 by legendary gospel artist Andraé Crouch, "My Tribute (To God Be the Glory)" has become one of the most beloved anthems in contemporary Christian worship. With its sweeping melody and deeply personal text, the song stands as a heartfelt declaration of gratitude and praise. Written during a period of spiritual reflection in Crouch's life, the lyrics express an overwhelming desire to honor God for His grace, mercy, and faithfulness.

The piece begins with quiet reverence and builds to a powerful climax, echoing the structure of a traditional hymn while embracing the emotional depth and stylistic freedom of gospel music. Its refrain—"To God be the glory"—connects it to Fanny Crosby's 19th-century hymn of the same phrase, creating a bridge between past and present expressions of worship.

"My Tribute" represents the evolution of worship music into the 20th century, where personal testimony and contemporary musical idioms became central to the genre. Crouch's composition invites both performer and audience to reflect on the goodness of God and respond with sincere praise—embodying the enduring heart of worship across generations.

- PROGRAM NOTES -

My Redeemer is Faithful and True

Steven Curtis Chapman, a defining figure in contemporary Christian music, wrote “My Redeemer is Faithful and True” as a personal testimony to the unwavering trustworthiness of God. First appearing on his 1987 album *Real Life Conversations*, the song became a landmark of 1980s Christian worship, offering listeners an intimate and heartfelt affirmation of God’s presence in all seasons of life.

At its core, the piece is a declaration of confidence in God’s promises, even when the future is unclear. With lyrics that reflect deep spiritual conviction—“As I look back on this road I’ve traveled / I see so many times He carried me through”—the song resonates with the scriptural assurance of Lamentations 3:23: “Great is your faithfulness.” Its gentle melody and expressive phrasing allow the soloist to convey both gratitude and awe, embodying a personal moment of worship within a public setting.

Chapman’s song represents the contemporary era’s contribution to the ongoing legacy of Christian devotion in song. Bridging personal testimony with corporate affirmation, “My Redeemer is Faithful and True” echoes the timeless cry of worshippers across centuries: God is faithful, and He is worthy of our trust and praise.

Ancient of Days

Ron Kenoly’s rendition of “Ancient of Days” stands as one of the defining anthems of contemporary worship music from the late 20th century. Released in 1992 on the live album *Lift Him Up*, this song blends vibrant praise with rich biblical imagery, drawing its title and refrain from the prophetic language of Daniel 7:9, where God is referred to as the “Ancient of Days”—a title that emphasizes His eternal sovereignty and majesty.

Set in an upbeat, declarative style, “Ancient of Days” invites congregations to join in exultant praise, proclaiming the power and everlasting reign of God. The driving rhythm, strong melodic lines, and memorable chorus have made it a staple in worship services across denominations and cultures. Theologically, the song bridges Old Testament reverence with New Testament celebration, affirming the unchanging nature of God throughout all generations.

“Ancient of Days” offers a glimpse into how modern worship music continues the ancient tradition of exalting the Lord in song. Its inclusion highlights the global influence of gospel and charismatic worship in shaping the contemporary Christian music landscape. This performance reimagines the piece for a concert setting, while honoring its original spirit of joyful, communal praise.

Word of God Speak

“Word of God Speak,” written by Bart Millard and Pete Kipley of the contemporary Christian band MercyMe, quickly became a defining anthem of early 21st-century worship music following its release in 2002. The song emerged during a period of personal spiritual dryness for Millard, who penned the lyrics as a heartfelt response to moments when human words fell short and only divine presence could satisfy the soul’s longing.

With its gentle piano accompaniment and introspective melody, “Word of God Speak” strips away musical excess to reflect the song’s central theme: stillness before God. Its lyrics—“I’m finding myself at a loss for words / and the funny thing is, it’s okay”—echo the ancient biblical tradition of contemplative silence, where true encounter with the divine happens not in our striving but in quiet surrender (Psalm 46:10, “Be still and know that I am God”).

This performance highlights the evolution of worship from structured liturgical expression to deeply personal dialogue with God. “Word of God Speak” stands as a modern expression of worship’s intimate nature, inviting listeners to quiet their hearts and open themselves to God’s transformative voice.

- PROGRAM NOTES -

Agnus Dei

David Phelps' stirring rendition of "Agnus Dei" represents a powerful fusion of contemporary Christian expression with deeply traditional liturgical language. Demonstrating his signature vocal intensity and expanded harmonic textures, Phelps sets the ancient Latin phrase "Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis" ("Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us") in a soaring modern worship context.

This performance by a tenor and soprano duet highlights both the reverence of the sacred text and the emotional transcendence of the music. The vocal interplay between the two voices evokes the unity and diversity of the global church worshipping across generations, languages, and styles. The swelling dynamics and dramatic range of the arrangement draw the listener into a posture of awe, as the simple, eternal declaration—"You are holy"—echoes the heavenly worship scenes described in Revelation 4 and 5.

In the broader context of this recital, "Agnus Dei" stands as a bridge between the historical roots of Christian worship and its vibrant contemporary expressions. It is a reminder that, while musical styles may shift through the ages, the heart of worship remains fixed on the Lamb of God—Christ himself—who is worthy of eternal praise.

*Translation –
Lamb of God
Who takes away the sins of the world
Please have mercy on us
Have mercy on us*

*Lamb of God
Take away the sins of the world
Lamb of God, Lamb of God
Please come and grant us peace*

Great I Am

Closing this evening's recital is Jared Anderson's powerful modern worship anthem, "Great I Am". First introduced to congregations in 2011, the song has quickly become a staple in contemporary Christian worship, known for its soaring melody and reverent declaration of God's majesty and holiness. Anderson, a prominent voice in modern worship and former member of the Desperation Band, penned this song as a heartfelt cry to encounter the presence of God in His fullness.

The text of "Great I Am" echoes the awe-inspiring language of Scripture—particularly Exodus 3, where God reveals His name to Moses as "I AM WHO I AM," and Revelation 4, which depicts heavenly worship around the throne. The lyrics blend personal longing with cosmic praise, inviting worshippers to behold God's transcendence while drawing near to His presence. The music intensifies this plea through dynamic contrasts and a climactic chorus that unites the voice of the singer with that of the global church.

Presented here as the final offering in a recital journeying through centuries of worship music, "Great I Am" serves as a bridge from tradition to today—honoring the past while affirming the living, active voice of worship in our time. Its placement at the close reminds us that the God who inspired the psalmists, the composers of oratorios, the gospel pioneers, and hymn writers continues to be worshiped with new songs from every generation.

- ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS -

I would like to begin by thanking God for His undeserved salvation through Jesus Christ. He is the one who is worthy of all glory, honor, and power. Next, I'd like to thank my incredible wife, Brenda, for her enduring support and guidance as the Lord has led us through so many different phases of our journey together. I am extremely blessed by our children, their love the Lord, and their desire to service Him. I would also like to thank Dr. Müller, Dr. Randlett, and the entire School of Music faculty for their belief in me as professor and mentor. A special thanks to Jon Werking for his willingness to accompany a recital that covers 350 years of musical genres. I wouldn't have entrusted this to anyone else. Lastly, I'd like to thank my incredible students who blow me away everyday with their ability and desire grow both artistically and spiritually. The future of the Church is bright!



- Dr. Clifford Lambert

Liberty University School of Music Upcoming Events

*Wind Symphony	<i>Center for Music and the Worship Arts, Concert Hall Fri, October 3, 7:30 PM</i>
*Jazz Orchestra	<i>Center for Music and the Worship Arts, Concert Hall Tue, October 7, 7:30 PM</i>
Concert of Praise	<i>Center for Music and the Worship Arts, Concert Hall Mon, October 13, 7:30 PM</i>
Performing Artist Series <i>Dr. Daryl Duff</i>	<i>Center for Music and the Worship Arts, Macel Falwell Recital Hall (M305) Thu, October 16, 7:30 PM</i>
*Songwriter Café	<i>LaHaye Event Space, Green Hall Fri, October 24, 7:30 PM</i>
Percussion Ensemble Recital	<i>Center for Music and the Worship Arts, Concert Hall Tue, October 28, 7:30 PM</i>
*Concert Choir & Chamber Singers	<i>Center for Music and the Worship Arts, Concert Hall Thu, October 30, 7:30 PM</i>
Guitar Ensemble Recital	<i>Center for Music and the Worship Arts, Macel Falwell Recital Hall (M305) Sun, November 2, 7:30 PM</i>

**Ticketed Event. Tickets can be purchased at www.liberty.edu/tickets.*

**We would like to thank the
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The School of Music Administration, Faculty, and Staff

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