

Liberty University School of Music

presents

Student Recital Series



Daniel Gray, *conductor*

March 6, 2021
Center for Music and the Worship Arts
Concert Hall
5:00 PM

STUDENT RECITAL SERIES: GRADUATE RECITAL

ACCESS RESTORED

Daniel Gray, *conductor*

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise (©2015)

Walter Chalmers Smith
New Words and Music by Tommy Walker
arr. Tommy Walker
orch. Daniel Semsen

Adam Stinespring, *voice*
Dr. Michael Brennan, *guitar*
Savannah Shockey, *violin*
Praise Team

The Word of God Has Spoken (©2011)

Travis Cottrell, Jonathan Lee,
and David Moffitt
arr. Travis Cottrell
orch. Daniel Semsen

Dr. Stephen Müller, *voice*
Praise Team

At the Cross (©2012)

Matt Armstrong, Benji Cowart, Jenna Cowart,
and William R. Newell
arr. and *orch.* Danny Mitchell

Low in the Grave He Lay /
Faithful (©2013)

Robert Lowry
Joel Auge and Greg Sykes
arr. and *orch.* Daniel Gray

Laurel Fogle, *voice*
Dr. Michael Brennan, *guitar*

New Jerusalem (©2009)

Carol Cymbala, Onaje Jefferson,
and Jason Michael Webb
arr. and *orch.* Bradley Knight

Dr. Mindy Damon, *voice*

Children of God (©2010)

Tai Anderson, David Carr, Mark Lee,
and Mac Powell
arr. and *orch.* Bradley Knight

James Cox, *voice*
Praise Team
Children's Choir

- PROGRAM NOTES -

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

Singing a new song to the Lord is biblical *and* beautiful, but we must never neglect to keep the hymns alive. “Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise” is a timeless hymn, arranged in modern form by Tommy Walker. One of Walker’s passions is for hymns to be sung simultaneously by multiple generations. This passion led him to record two *Generation Hymns* projects, with a third soon to come. *Generation Hymns* and *Generations Hymns 2* were released in 2012 and 2015, respectively. Both volumes were recorded at Community Bible Church in San Antonio, TX, and part of the first volume was recorded at Walker’s home church in Los Angeles. “Immortal, Invisible” appears on the second volume.

Tommy Walker has been leading worship at Christian Assembly in Los Angeles since 1990. Over the years, he has been known for his association with organizations such as Promise Keepers, Harvest Crusades, and Youth with a Mission. Walker’s unique style of songwriting cannot be accurately categorized because he continues to find new ways of expressing his musical creativity. Walker also has a heart for the nations. Tommy Walker Ministries (TWM) was founded in 2015 and is actively reaching the world. Last year, in the wake of COVID-19, TWM produced a phenomenal virtual-choir project that featured 223 worshipers, singing in 45 languages from 47 nations. Walker and his team are committed to fulfilling the Great Commission, faithfully and creatively, as God opens the doors.

Although the rhythmic emphasis of Walker’s “Immortal, Invisible” differs from the original hymn, the melody has been kept intact. Lyrically, this hymn has a satisfying mixture of sound theology and biblical metaphor. In addition, a new chorus and bridge have been added to contextualize the hymn for congregations in the present day. The new material is enjoyable to sing, yet, easy to learn for the average congregant. God’s throne is greater than any other. Therefore, consistent with the meaning of the word, we sing “hallelujah!”

The Word of God Has Spoken

Travis Cottrell is a hidden gem in the world of worship ministry. In a day when corporate worship on a Sunday morning has become more like a concert, Cottrell’s consistent desire is that his worship leading would not be a show. Cottrell loves to celebrate the goodness of God, but he also delights in facilitating holy moments of reverence by leading people to reflect on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. In accordance with Cottrell’s posture as a leader, the Holy Spirit sweeps across the room, and people respond in worship and adoration of the King.

“The Word of God Has Spoken” was released on Cottrell’s *When the Stars Burn Down* project in 2011. Serving at Englewood Baptist Church from 2010–2020, this project was released early on in his time as a Jackson, TN, resident. Cottrell now serves about two hours east at Brentwood Baptist Church, but *When the Stars Burn Down* continues to impact lives. Personally, I group this timeless collection of songs with few other collections. I find myself refreshed whenever I journey with this album from one song to the next. The Holy Spirit deeply ministers to me through these eternal truths.

When tastefully used, prime unison is a dynamic tool of communicating biblical truth. Paired with a well-crafted lyric, the precision of all voices on the same plane is electric. At a moderate dynamic level, “The Word of God Has Spoken” uses this technique to set the stage for the song in the first chorus. Later, the vocal parts explode, moving the song from a state of reflection to a state of proclamation. Working in tandem with the vocals, listen for the sweeping string lines as the song crescendoes to the climatic response of the soloist and orchestra.

- PROGRAM NOTES -

At the Cross

Made popular by Selah, “At the Cross” was originally recorded by two of its writers, Benji and Jenna Cowart. Having cowritten Big Daddy Weave’s “Redeemed” and Natalie Grant’s “My Weapon,” CCLI lists 180 song titles of Benji’s. Although the Cowarts released “At the Cross” in 2012, Selah would not record it until 2014 on their *You Amaze Us* project.

The verses and choruses of this song poignantly consider what the cross represents. Somehow, only because of the Almighty, justice and sacrifice intersect on that tree. Those of us on earth in the present would not walk the same planet as Christ for two millennia, but a new reality was made possible for believers as a result of His faithfulness on that day. Textually, this song contains fragments of two different hymns. Lyrics from William Reed Newell’s “At Calvary” can be heard in the bridge, and the Selah recording fittingly concludes the song with a portion of Ralph E. Hudson’s “At the Cross,” the hymn of the same title.

The arrangement being presented today is by Danny Mitchell and was published in 2015. Mitchell uses a classic choral texture for his setting. Without a solo, this moment in the program is the ideal opportunity to feature different voice parts. At a basic level, Mitchell uses individual male and female moments to uniquely convey the meaning of the text. Dig deeper and discover Mitchell’s brilliant intentionality in his choices of open and closed voicings throughout the song. In some places, the choir spans two octaves. In other places, they are contained within an octave or less. One of Mitchell’s most effective techniques is how he accentuates the lyric in one voice part by briefly and seamlessly employing vocal accompaniment in another. All of these methods come together to form this choral-ballad masterpiece.

Orchestrally, “At the Cross” is no less impressive. Dynamic fluctuations comprise most of this song for both the choir and the orchestra, individually. Although the orchestra serves in a supporting role, they provide the choir with the most amazing canvas on which to paint. The longest portion all the musicians play together is only a couple of measures in length. Instead, various instruments fade in and out, adding character to the choir’s sustained notes.

Low in the Grave He Lay / Faithful

One of the most noble disciplines for a songwriter is to write music for the local church. Written by Greg Sykes and Joel Auge, “Faithful” was released in 2013 on Central Community Church’s *We’ll Be Singing* album. Located in St. Catharines, Ontario, Central Community Church is where Greg Sykes led worship for many years. I first heard this song when both of these artists were featured on Paul Baloche’s *Christmas Worship* Tour in 2014. I remember how it struck a chord with me on the first listen.

Gratitude is what frames the life of a healthy believer. With his or her eternal destiny secure, so much of the believer’s daily experience is wrapped up in the faithfulness of God. Marked by its lyrical and melodic simplicity, “Faithful” takes the opportunity to extol God’s character as well as what He has done. Although we are not to live in past failures *or* past victories, Christians too often forget the many ways in which God has been gracious to us. The key to stepping out in faith and remaining at peace is to remind ourselves of the God that we serve. With that in mind, the song shifts to celebrate the things that God will continue to do in the midst of His people.

- PROGRAM NOTES -

Low in the Grave He Lay / Faithful, *cont'd*...

I arranged this song specifically for today's program. To my knowledge, it had not been arranged for choir and orchestra, and it fit, thematically, in the musical narrative. Mr. Don Marsh encouraged me to add an instrumental introduction, and I soon decided that this interlude needed to focus on the resurrection. The other elements of the gospel are addressed within the repertoire, so choosing "Low in the Grave He Lay" (otherwise known as "Up From the Grave He Arose") completed what was missing.

"Faithful" was originally recorded with piano, guitar, cello, and vocals. Throughout my arranging process, a guitar feature began to develop as I expanded the guitar line that was originally included in the song. Although I broadened the instrumentation considerably, I trust that I retained the honesty and beauty of the original. He *has* been so faithful.

New Jerusalem

Unlike choral anthems that publishers release individually throughout the year, the majority of the songs that come from the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir are conceptualized as part of a larger framework. Although they can stand alone, each song is a piece of that particular project's overall message. Released in 2009, "New Jerusalem" was one of the masterpieces on the *Declare Your Name* project. Having been in existence for more than 36 years at that point, the choir had already recorded many albums. However, this project marked the first collection where every title was cowritten by at least one member of the music staff.

With a rich heritage of ministry in New York City and a reach around the world, it amazes me when people have not heard of the Brooklyn Tabernacle. The Lord has clearly had His hand upon Pastor Jim Cymbala and his wife, Carol. Pastor Cymbala did not attend seminary, and, Carol, who directs the choir, does not possess formal music training. Yet, they are who they are because of what they prioritize. As the bedrock of their ministry, thousands of people attended Tuesday Night Prayer Meeting prior to COVID-19, a weekly staple in the life of the church. Almost one year later, services continue to be held exclusively online. The choir may not be ministering right now, but the lives of its members, each with a story to tell, remain changed.

"New Jerusalem" is the brainchild of director Carol Cymbala, Onaje Jefferson, and Jason Michael Webb. Bradley Knight served at the Brooklyn Tabernacle for a time, but this 2013 arrangement of his was outside that period. The writers share that, although the song looks forward to heaven, it contains a degree of musical familiarity that is reminiscent of old Jerusalem. Yet, the frequent modulations depict the constant newness of an eternity spent with God, free from sin and death. Without question, this song requires the orchestra to be "all in," just as much as the singers. Listen as the lyrical story is told, first by the soloist, and later with the choir, in this colorful, movie-esque selection. And the best part is, it's not just a story.

- PROGRAM NOTES -

Children of God

Adoption is a powerful picture of the gospel in action. That parents would choose to raise a child, not originally their own, is a radical display of the Father's love. "Children of God" was recorded in 2010 by Third Day. Lead singer Mac Powell and his wife, Aimee, had just adopted their second child, in addition to already having three biological children. Together, the Powells speak of adoption's significance in terms of its permanence. In the Old Testament, once a child became a young adult, parents could divorce a child, upon having a sharp disagreement. The exception to this allowance was in the case of an adoption, where parents were legally bound to a child forever. Such security defines the relationship of the redeemed with the Father because of Jesus Christ.

The official music video for the song features portraits of adoption, with the subjects wearing white t-shirts that say "adopted." This song's truth brings together all the elements of the reconciliation theme in a celebratory setting. Originally written for a rock band, the male-led vocal is maintained, both in the solo and in the choir. As a result, rich female harmonies sound above the melody. To top it off, Bradley Knight's soaring orchestration intensifies the sonic spectrum and punctuates this victory shout with grandeur.

Although Third Day disbanded in 2018, this song remains one of their classics. It is our privilege to be joined by members of the Thomas Road Baptist Church Children's Choir, as well as some children of our faculty. "Children of God" describes all of us who are in Christ. Yet, kids have a special way of driving the message home. So, as one family, we celebrate our adoption together, today and for eternity.

- CHOIR -

Soprano	Alto	Tenor	Bass
Parker Andrews	Mikayla Benner	AJ Denson	Forrest Ansell
Keely Cox	Alli Bunner	Sam Drew	Ethan Haglund
Maggie Effler	Sarai Burgos	Richard Hall	Matthew Knesal
Chrissy Hoss	Savannah Geiger	Noah Pfenninger	Isaiah Mercado
Lillian Leighton	Nina Koestler-Levy	Jared Shay	Zuriel Mercado
Terryn Mersch	Hatangimana Lea		Taylor Mersch
Maddie SeEVERS	Katie Munson		
Savannah Shockey	Joyce Lyman		
Caeleana Smith	Sofia Mercado		

- CHILDREN'S CHOIR -

including members of the *Thomas Road Baptist Church Kids Worship Crew*,
directed by Abby Williams

Kenadi Brunk	Will Osterbind	Mollie Sparkman	Justice Thomas
Faith Holder	Melody Pettit	Owen Sparkman	Janelle Thomas
Payslee May	Kylie Schrock	Caroline Summers	Béla Ware
Bowden Miller	Jaina Schrock	Emily Summers	Elliot Ware
Jude Miller	Abigail Seavers	Julia Summers	Wynton Ware
Sophie Osterbind	Chloe Seavers	Jalina Thomas	

- ORCHESTRA -

Violin I

Abigail Western, *concertmaster*
Julia Dombrowski
Sierra Landel

Violin II

Elizabeth Killmon
Kamlyn Prince
Johanna Vogt

Viola

Talitha Armbrust
Elizabeth Browns

Cello

Max Foster
Sara Phelps

Flute

Steven Lester, *principal*
Aliza Nogueras

Clarinet

Ryan Robinson, *principal*
Caroline Harper

Oboe

Mai'Ya Jackson

Trumpet

Kent Bergin, *principal*
Jamie Bream
Autumn Mortenson

Trombone

Alex Harmon, *principal*
Kevin Bergin
Ariana Carleton

French Horn

Elizabeth Holder, *principal*
Julia Hoyes

Harp

Sabrina Vaughan

Percussion

Noah Banks
David MacPherson

- BAND -

Brandon Witters, *piano and band leader*
Adam Stinespring, *acoustic guitar*
Caleb Pearn, *electric guitar*
Jake Widger, *bass guitar*
Evan Hasker, *drums*

- PRAISE TEAM -

Sarai Burgos
AJ Denson
Chrissy Hoss

- FEATURED ARTISTS -

Dr. Michael Brennan
James Cox
Dr. Mindy Damon
Laurel Fogle

Dr. Stephen Müller
Savannah Shockey
Adam Stinespring

- PRODUCTION TEAM -

Ben Davidson, *Camera Operator*
Tyler Harrison, *Recording Engineer*
Tim Mershon, *Theme Graphic Designer*
Gus Ritchey, *Video Director*
Michael Struble, *Camera Operator*
Ryan Townsend, *Sound Technician*
Kevin Williams, *Sound Technician*

Each and every step of the way, God’s hand on this project has been evident. There have been numerous tests of faith throughout the preparation journey, and He has consistently proven His faithfulness. The three most influential people in shaping the direction of *ACCESS RESTORED* serve on the faculty committee. Dr. Rumrill—you sharpened my original ideas when they were in their infancy. Mr. Bullman—we became excited together about this repertoire in the fall as you gave me weekly instruction. Dr. Byrd—my correlating paper to this recital is already stronger because of your input. THANK YOU!



Many people have come together to make this endeavor a reality. To every person on stage—thank you for giving of your time, talent, and enthusiasm as a collective worship offering to the King. Dr. Müller—due to COVID protocols and the number of people involved, thank you for granting the use of the Concert Hall! Kevin and Abby Williams—I am indebted to both of you for ALL of your effort in making this project be something special. Travis Cottrell and Bradley Knight—thank you for providing us with resources for the out-of-print songs. Among the other individuals who made important contributions are Pat Edmiston, Tyler Harrison, Don Marsh, Alissa Passburg, Jack Underwood, Stephanie Wilkinson, Timmy Williamson, Brandon Witters, and Nathan Zwald.

Financially, 44 individuals/couples exceeded the \$4,000 fundraising goal via a GoFundMe campaign. Many of them wish to remain anonymous. However, I can publicly thank David and Shirley Edwards, Josh Gittens, André and Sally Bernier, Daniel and Amberly Allers, Wayne and Alycia Outlaw, Ted and Sandee Olson, Paul and Brenda Hankins, Ed and Mary Jane Claussen, Paul and Christa Barnett, David and Cheryl Coates, Gordie and Gertrude Barker, Shane and Angela Wiebe, Kelly Williams, Steve and LuAnne Basney, Dave and Rita Fowell, Lindy Vincent, Peter and Marian Wilkinson, Gary and Donnita Mathena, Chris and Aileen Salomons, Don and Dolores Tjart, and Winston and Sharon Roberts. From 3 provinces and 6 states (in 2 countries), this team put arms and legs on this project. I know that these and other individuals have faithfully prayed for my team and me throughout the rehearsal process. I appreciate each one of you, including all in attendance today!

If my Mom were still alive, I would have two parents on top of the world today, observing the culmination of my hard work. However, I still have one. I am *so* grateful for a Dad who is one of my closest friends. He has continued to support me these past three years, and I thank God for continuing to give him life. Dad, I love you. It is my honor to dedicate this project to you.

Father, thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus Christ, to pay the fine I could never pay. I am honored that You would call me one of Your own. You have blessed me abundantly with musical abilities, and I am in awe of the things You have done over the past number of years. I joyfully return the glory to You for anything and everything of value that may come out of this presentation. May today’s musical offering be one application of my life verse, “Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name” (Hebrews 13:15). Amen.

Daniel Gray is a student of Mr. Scott Bullman.

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Music and Worship: Conducting Concentration degree.

**We would like to thank the
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their faithful support of the School of Music.**

Dr. Jerry Prevo, President
Dr. Scott Hicks, Provost and Chief Academic Officer
Dr. Stephen Müller, Dean, School of Music
The School of Music Administration, Faculty, and Staff

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