SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents

Vienna Waits for You

Will Moeller, tenor
Elijah Ong, harpsichord & piano

November 15, 2026 | 7:00 PM | PepsiCo Recital Hall

Program

"Herr, so weit die Wolken gehen" — Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
From *BWV 171*

Elijah Ong, harpsichord
Sixto Elizondo V, double bass

Brume — Poldowski (1879-1932)
Crépuscule du Soir Mystique
L'heure exquise

A Simple Song — Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)
From *Mass*

Dr. Kristen Queen, flute

"In Need of Breath" — Craig Hella Johnson (b. 1962)
From *Considering Matthew Shepard*

Brief Intermission

The last rose of summer — Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

"Being Alive" — Stephen Sondheim (1930-2021)
From *Company*

Vienna — Billy Joel (b. 1949)

This Recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the BME in Music Education. Mr. Moeller is a student of Dr. James D. Rodriguez. The use of recording equipment or taking photographs is prohibited. Please silence all electronic devices.

Vienna Waits for You

Change and impermanence are married to being human. Whether it occurs gradually or all at once, it reshapes the world around us, challenges what we believe, and even reveals parts of ourselves we had not yet uncovered. We often find ourselves looking back at what is comfortable or toward a future we cannot attain, searching for stability in a world that never stands still. Throughout my time at TCU, I have grown tremendously from the person I was three years ago. I wanted this recital to reflect the beauty of that transformation and serve as a reminder to appreciate the changes that shape us, even amid the busy seasons of life when slowing down can feel impossible.

Stage One: Lull

Every transformation begins somewhere, often before we recognize that anything is about to change. In Bach's *Herr, so weit die Wolken gehen*, we encounter a moment of stillness, grounded in faith and surrounded by familiar comforts of the world we know. This opening represents innocence: a time when our understanding of the world feels secure, even if that understanding is incomplete. It is the calm before the storm, when we have not yet been asked to confront what lies beyond our perspective.

Stage Two: Change

In Poldowski's settings of Paul Verlaine's poetry, the natural landscape becomes a reflection of our changing perception. In *Brume*, mist obscures what once seemed familiar, leaving us uncertain of what lies ahead. *Crépuscule du soir mystique* inhabits the shifting boundaries of twilight, where what is known begins to blur into what remains unseen. Finally, *L'heure exquise* reveals the serene beauty that emerges beneath the moonlight, suggesting that even when our surroundings do not change fundamentally, our way of seeing them can.

Stage Three: Reconciliation

Leonard Bernstein's *A Simple Song* explores the transformation of faith, when unwavering devotion encounters uncertainty and must find its footing again. In Craig Hella Johnson's *In Need of Breath*, that uncertainty deepens into a confrontation with human suffering, vulnerability, and our need for compassion. The journey then turns internally with Benjamin Britten's *The Last Rose of Summer*, where the image of a solitary rose among flowers that have faded invites us to consider the loneliness that accompanies loss, but also the perseverance and resilience that can bloom from it.

Stage Four: Perspective

Stephen Sondheim's *Being Alive* emphasizes that rather than withdrawing from the uncertainty of connection, we begin to recognize the value of remaining open. Acceptance does not mean that every question has been answered or that every difficulty has disappeared. Rather, it reinforces that life will continue to change, regardless of whether we feel ready for it. Billy Joel's *Vienna* offers a moment of reflection, reminding us that we do not have to arrive at certainty all at once. There is no single destination at which we finally become complete, nor is there a deadline by which we must understand. All will come in time.

Johann Sebastian Bach

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) is easily one of the most influential composers of the late Baroque period. He came from a very musical family, starting out by playing organ and later finding success in composition. He spent much of his career in Germany, working as an organist, court musician, and church music director. His extensive output includes cantatas, passions, oratorios, piano works, and instrumental concertos. Bach's compositions remain central to the Western classical music tradition and demonstrate how the intellectual achievements of the Baroque era still hold up today.

Herr, so weit die Wolken gehen, from the cantata *Gott, wie dein Name, so ist auch dein Ruhm* (BWV 171), celebrates the universal greatness of God. Composed for New Year's Day in 1729, the cantata reflects the marvel and significance of Jesus's birth and the hope associated with the beginning of a new year. The aria opens by describing how the glory of God's name extends as far as the clouds and how all living things will praise His power. The image of clouds stretching across the sky evokes the vastness of a universe that exists beyond our understanding, capturing a moment when the world we know still feels familiar and our beliefs have yet to be tested. Bach's text painting and writing for coloratura make this one of the most dynamic pieces on the program and effectively sets the stage for more to unfold.

Herr, so weit die Wolken gehen

Herr, so weit die Wolken gehen,	Lord, as wide as the clouds span,
gehet deines Namens Ruhm.	so spans the glory of your name.
Alles, was die Lippen rührt,	Anything that can move its lips,
alles, was noch Odem führt,	anything that even has breath,
wird dich in der Macht erhöhen.	will exalt you of its own power.

Translation by Tobin Schmuck

"'Herr, so weit die Wolken gehen' (BWV 171)," Bach Cantatas Website, accessed October 19, 2026, https://www.bach-cantatas.com/Texts/BWV171-Eng10.htm

"Bach, Johann Sebastian," Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online, accessed October 19, 2026, https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/display/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-6002278195

Poldowski

Régine Wieniawski (1879–1932), who published her music under the pen name Poldowski, was a Belgian-born composer and pianist known especially for her French art songs. Poldowski composed numerous voice and piano works, including a collection of twenty-two songs setting poetry by French poet Paul Verlaine. Her music is characterized by expressive vocal lines, lush piano accompaniment, and attention to poetic imagery. Often, the piano takes a prominent role alongside the vocal line, creating a seamless duet between the parts. It is one of the main things about Poldowski's writing and musical style that drew me to her.

Across three settings of poetry by Paul Verlaine, Poldowski explores the relationship between the natural world and the shifting landscape of emotion. In *Brume*, the sparse yet tranquil piano accompaniment and the horizon of mist and towering trees represent the uncertainty that accompanies change, especially when the path forward is unclear. The world remains, yet its features blur beyond immediate recognition. The uncertainty continues in *Crepescule du soir Mystique*, where twilight dissolves the boundary between day and night. Suspended between light and darkness, the landscape embodies the unsettled nature of transition, when the past has begun to recede, but the future remains undefined. Finally, *L'heure exquise* concludes with a moonlit landscape in which the surrounding world emerges through a new and delicate illumination. The world has not fundamentally changed. Instead, the light transforms how we receive it. The mist conceals the world, twilight changes its boundaries, and moonlight reveals its beauty. Together, this set suggests that transformation is not always a journey toward something different, but a gradual discovery of how to see the world anew.

Brume

L'ombre des arbres dans la rivière embrumée
Meurt comme de la fumée
Tandis qu'en l'air, parmi les ramures réelles,
Se plaignent les tourterelles.

Combien, ô voyageur, ce paysage blême
Te mira blême toi-même,
Et que tristes pleuraient dans les hautes feuillées
Tes espérances noyées!

The shadow of trees in the misty stream
Dies like smoke,
While up above, in the real branches,
The turtle-doves lament

How this faded landscape, O traveler,
Watched you yourself fade,
And how sadly in the lofty leaves
Your drowned hopes were weeping!

Translation by Richard Stokes

Crèpescule du Soir Mystique

Le Souvenir avec le Crépuscule
Rougeoie et tremble à l'ardent horizon
De l'Espérance en flamme qui recule
Et s'agrandit ainsi qu'une cloison
Mystérieuse où mainte floraison
— Dahlia, lys, tulipe et renoncule —
S'élance autour d'un treillis, et circule
Parmi la maladive exhalaison
De parfums lourds et chauds, dont le poison —
Dahlia, lys, tulipe et renoncule —
Noyant mes sens, mon âme et ma raison,
Mêle dans une immense pâmoison
Le Souvenir avec le Crépuscule.

Memory glows with Twilight
And trembles at the fiery horizon
Of Hope in flames - flames that subside
And then rise up like a mysterious wall,
Where many a blossom -
Dahlia, lily, tulip and buttercup -
Winds itself around a trellis, and moves
Amid the sickly exhalation
Of hot and heavy scents, whose poison -
Dahlia, lily, tulip and buttercup -
Drowning my senses, my soul and my reason,
Blends together in one immense swoon
Memory with Twilight

Translation by Richard Stokes

L’heure exquise

La lune blanche	The white moon
Luit dans les bois;	Gleams in the woods;
De chaque branche	From every branch
Part une voix	There comes a voice
Sous la ramée...	Beneath the boughs.
Ô bien aimée	O, my beloved
L’étang reflète	The pool reflects,
Profond miroir	Deep mirror,
La silhouette	The silhouette
Du saule noir	Of the black willow
Où le vent pleure...	Where the wind is weeping...
Rêvons, c’est l’heure.	Let us dream; it is the hour.
Un vaste et tendre	A vast and tender
Apaisement	Consolation
Semble descendre	Seems to fall
Du firmament	From the sky
Que l’astre irise...	The moon illumines...
C’est l’heure exquise.	The exquisite hour.

Translation by Richard Stokes

Mooney, David.“Poldowski,” Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online, accessed October 19, 2026,
“L’ombre des arbres,” Oxford Song, accessed October 18, 2026. https://oxfordsong.org/song/lombre-des-arbres
“Crépuscule du soir mystique,” Oxford Song, accessed October 18, 2026.
https://oxfordsong.org/song/cr%C3%A9puscule-du-soir-mystique
“L’heure exquise,” Oxford Song, accessed October 18, 2026. https://oxfordsong.org/song/lheure-exquise

Leonard Bernstein

Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990) was one of the most influential American conductors, composers, and educators of the twentieth century. He studied at Harvard University and the Curtis Institute of Music before rising to international prominence as a conductor and eventually becoming music director of the New York Philharmonic in 1958. His compositional catalogue spans multiple genres, with his most famous composition being the Tony Award-winning musical, *A West Side Story.* Bernstein's unmatched passion for musical expression is what attracted me to his work and compositional style.

A Simple Song is the second movement from Bernstein's musical theatre work, *Mass*. After beginning with a percussive and chaotic Kyrie, the celebrant interjects with an expression of praise. *A Simple Song* reframes the approach to praise and worship, presenting faith as a personal relationship rather than an unquestioning devotion. The folk-inspired melody is juxtaposed with the chromatic and sweeping flute accompaniment, which never aligns in unison until the very final note. He extends the journey from learning to see the world differently to reconsidering how we understand faith and our relationship with something greater than ourselves. Through changing our perspective, Bernstein suggests that returning to old traditions with renewed eyes can bring forth unexpected tranquility.

"A Simple Song" From *Mass*

Sing God a simple song:
Lauda, Laude...
Make it up as you go along:
Lauda, Laude...
Sing like you like to sing.
God loves all simple things,
For God is the simplest of all.

I will sing the Lord a new song
To praise Him, to bless Him, to bless the Lord.
I will sing His praises while I live.
All of my days.

Blessed is the man who loves the Lord,
Blessed is the man who praises Him.
Lauda, Lauda, Laude...
And walks in His ways.

I will lift up my eyes
To the hills from whence comes my help.
I will lift up my voice to the Lord
Singing Lauda, Laude.
For the Lord is my shade,
Is the shade up on my right hand,
And the sun shall not smite me by day
Nor the moon by night.

Blessed is the man who loves the Lord,
Lauda, Lauda, Laude...
And walks in His ways.
Lauda, Lauda, Laude, Lauda, Lauda di da di day...
All of my days.

Laird, Paul R., and David Schiff. "Bernstein, Leonard," Grove Music Online, 2001, accessed October 19, 2026.
"Mass: A Theatre Piece for Singers, Players and Dancers," Leonard Bernstein, accessed October 19, 2026. https://leonardbernstein.com/works/view/12/mass-a-theatre-piece-for-singers-players-and-dancers

Craig Hella Johnson

Craig Hella Johnson (b. 1962) is an American composer, educator, and conductor. He is well-known for being the founder and artistic director of the contemporary choral ensemble, *Conspirare*. As a group, they have received international recognition and a Grammy nomination for their recording of *Considering Matthew Shepard*, easily Johnson's most successful and widespread composition.

Premiering in 2016, *Considering Matthew Shepard* is an oratorio that ponders the life and death of Matthew Shepard, a young gay man who was murdered in Wyoming in 1998. *In Need of Breath* occurs during the passion section of the work. Within the context of Matthew's story, this movement takes on a deep emotional significance, inviting the listener to consider the fragility of life and the human need for compassion, connection, and understanding. Johnson calls on us to contemplate what gives meaning to the world around us, especially when confronted with intense suffering and vulnerability. Rather than resolving the grief and hardship that precedes it, *In Need of Breath* invites us to sit within that feeling and contemplate.

"In Need of Breath" From *Considering Matthew Shepard*

My heart
Is an unset jewel
Upon the tender night

Yearning for its dear old friend
The Moon.

When the Nameless One debuts again
Ten thousand facets of my being unfurl wings
And reveal such a radiance inside

I enter a realm divine
I too begin to sweetly cast light
Like a lamp,
I cast light
Through the streets of this World.

My heart is an unset jewel
Upon existence
Waiting for the Friend's touch.

Tonight

My heart is an unset ruby
Offered, bowed and weeping to the Sky.
I am dying in these cold hours
For the resplendent glance of God.

My heart is an unset jewel
Upon the tender night

My heart is an unset ruby
Offered bowed and weeping to the Sky.

"Considering Matthew Shepard," Conspirare, accessed October 19, 2026, https://conspirare.org/considering-matthew-shepard/

Benjamin Britten

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976) was one of the leading British composers of the twentieth century, known for his operas, vocal works, and contributions to English music. While his contemporaries were focusing on avant-garde techniques, Britten proved that there is beauty in simplicity and refreshing old tonal centers with modern flair. His extensive output includes operas such as *Peter Grimes* and *The Turn of the Screw*, the choral work *War Requiem*, and numerous songs for voice and piano. Britten was also drawn to arranging traditional folk songs, bringing deep expression to familiar melodies.

The last rose of summer, with text by Irish poet Thomas Moore, reflects on loneliness, loss, and the acceptance of life's impermanence. The poem depicts a final rose continuing to bloom after its companions have faded. The Irish folk melody of the vocal line, along with the convoluted, arpeggiated piano accompaniment, portrays the simplicity of natural beauty above an undercurrent of chaos. One thing that initially drew me to this piece was its sensitivity to the powerful text. The fading of summer reflects the inevitability of change, as seasons progress and familiar things give way to new beginnings. Just as we must allow the rose to bloom without expecting it to last forever, we must accept that life is always changing and nothing lasts indefinitely.

The last rose of summer

'Tis the last rose of summer
Left blooming alone;
All her lovely companions
Are faded and gone;
No flow'r of her kindred
No rosebud is nigh
To reflect back her blushes
Or give sigh for sigh

I'll not leave thee, thou lone one
To pine on the stem;
Since the lovely are sleeping
Go, sleep thou with them;
Thus kindly I scatter
Thy leaves o'er the bed
Where thy mates of the garden
Lie senseless and dead

So soon may I follow
When friendships decay
And from Love's shining circle
The gems drop away!
When true hearts lie wither'd
And fond ones are flown
Oh! who would inhabit
This bleak world alone?

"3 Arrangements from Moore's Irish Melodies (1957–58)," The Gerald Larner Programme Note Archive, accessed October 21, 2026, https://geraldlarner.com/work/britten-3-arrangements-from-moore-s-irish-melodies-1957-58

"Benjamin Britten," Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, accessed October 19, 2026. https://www.chambermusicsociety.org/about-the-music/composers/benjamin-britten

Stephen Sondheim

Stephen Sondheim (1930–2021) was an American composer and lyricist widely regarded as one of the most influential figures in musical theatre. Mentored by the iconic librettist and lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II, Sondheim developed a distinct approach to musical storytelling through intricate rhythms, sophisticated melodic writing, and nuanced explorations of relationships. He initially gained recognition for his work as the lyricist for *West Side Story* and *Gypsy* before composing both the music and lyrics for works like *Company*, *Sweeney Todd, Sunday in the Park with George*, and *Into the Woods.*

Being Alive appears at the conclusion of his 1970 musical *Company*, which follows Robert, a single man approaching his thirty-fifth birthday, as he reflects on his life through the relationships of his married friends and his own romantic experiences. Throughout the musical, Robert struggles to reconcile with the expectations and complications of intimacy. Having spent much of the show observing relationships from a distance, he begins to recognize that connection requires more than simply admiring love from the outside. Robert realizes that allowing another person into his life means the possibility of discomfort, disappointment, and change alongside the possibility of love and companionship. In broader context, *Being Alive* represents a willingness to embrace life as it is rather than waiting for it to become easy.

"Being Alive" From *Company*

Someone to hold you too close,
Someone to hurt you too deep,
Someone to sit in your chair,
To ruin your sleep,
To make you aware
Of being alive,
Being alive.

Someone you have to let in,
Someone whose feelings you spare,
Someone who, like it or not,
Will want you to share
A little, a lot,
Is being alive,
Being alive.

Someone to crowd you with love,
Someone to force you to care,
Someone to make you come through,
Who'll always be there,
As frightened as you
Of being alive,
Being alive.

Somebody hold me too close
Somebody hurt me too deep
Somebody sit in my chair
And ruin my sleep
And make me aware
Of being alive,
Being alive.

Make me confused
Mock me with praise
Let me be used

Vary my days,
But alone is alone
Not alive,

Somebody crowd me with love,
Somebody force me to care,
Somebody let me come through,
I'll always be there
As frightened as you,
To help us survive
Being alive.

Lovensheimer, Jim. 'Sondheim, Stephen (Joshua),' Grove Music Online, 2001, accessed October 19, 2026, https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/display/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-1002225586.

"Company," Music Theatre International, accessed October 19, 2026. https://www.mtishows.com/company

Billy Joel

Billy Joel (b. 1949) is an American singer, songwriter, and pianist. Born and raised in New York City, Joel began playing piano as a child and developed a musical style that blends rock, pop, and piano-driven songwriting with witty, narrative lyrics. He gained widespread recognition with his 1973 album *Piano Man* and achieved a breakthrough with *The Stranger* (1977), his fifth studio album. Throughout his career, Joel has received numerous honors, including multiple Grammy Awards and induction into both the Songwriters Hall of Fame and the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. His songwriting often explores romantic relationships, the passage of time, and the challenges of navigating everyday life.

Billy Joel's music holds a special place in my own musical journey. When I first enrolled in choir and piano lessons during middle school, the first piano songbook my parents bought me was a collection of Billy Joel's music. His music has been a great source of inspiration and nostalgia for me ever since, and for this reason, it felt like a no-brainer to close the recital with *Vienna*. As I reflect on the experiences and growth that have shaped both this program and my time at TCU, returning to music that has accompanied me since the beginning feels like a natural conclusion. *Vienna* serves as a reminder that while we are always growing toward something new, there is also beauty in remembering where we began and allowing ourselves to appreciate how far we have come. Joel reminds us that transformation does not require reaching an arrival point. Sometimes, it means learning to be patient with ourselves, accepting where we are, and trusting that the journey itself serves a purpose.

Vienna

Slow down, you crazy child
You're so ambitious for a juvenile
But then if you're so smart
Tell me, why are you still so afraid? Mm
Where's the fire, what's the hurry about?
You'd better cool it off before you burn it out
You've got so much to do
And only so many hours in a day, hey

But you know that when the truth is told
That you can get what you want or you can just get old
You're gonna kick off before you even get halfway through, ooh
When will you realize Vienna waits for you?

Slow down, you're doing fine
You can't be everything you wanna be before your time
Although it's so romantic on the borderline tonight, tonight
Too bad, but it's the life you lead
You're so ahead of yourself, that you forgot what you need
Though you can see when you're wrong
You know you can't always see when you're right
You're right

You've got your passion, you've got your pride
But don't you know that only fools are satisfied?
Dream on, but don't imagine they'll all come true, ooh
When will you realize Vienna waits for you?

Slow down, you crazy child
And take the phone off the hook and disappear for a while
It's alright, you can afford to lose a day or two, ooh
When will you realize Vienna waits for you?

And you know that when the truth is told
That you can get what you want or you could just get old
You're gonna kick off before you even get halfway through, ooh
Why don't you realize Vienna waits for you?
When will you realize Vienna waits for you?

"The Stranger by Billy Joel," Classic Rock Artists, accessed October 19, 2026, https://classicrockartists.com/the-stranger-by-billy-joel/

"Billy Joel," Biography.com, accessed October 19, 2026, https://www.biography.com/musicians/billy-joel