



UNIVERSITY OF  
NOTRE DAME

ARTS & LETTERS



# 2021

## SENIOR THESIS PROJECTS

Study everything. Do anything.<sup>SM</sup>

**Theresa Azemar**

- Majors: American Studies and English
- Minor: Musical Theatre
- Advisors: Peter Cajka and Erika Doss

## How to Be a Neoliberal Superstar

This thesis considers the fundamental components of the free-market ideology of American neoliberalism and applies them to the American cultural sphere, using the popular music industry's politics and operations as a representative case study. I define abounding social/cultural capital in this industry as "neoliberal superstardom." My research assesses the efficacy of three neoliberal superstars' principle attributes and attitudes, as exemplified by some of the biggest names in American superstardom.

Throughout my academic career in American studies, I have been particularly gripped by how American capitalists exploit and employ items of popular culture as a means of social control. I was introduced to the history of neoliberalism through a Gender and Popular Culture course and became interested in the ideology's pervasiveness in the cultural sphere and its conjunction with the American Dream mythos. I saw the popular music industry as a profound case of this phenomenon.

**Timothy Cantway**

- Major: Music (Concentration in Tuba Performance)
- Advisor: Matthew Merten

**Senior Tuba Recital**

I am performing an hourlong senior recital featuring my primary instrument— the tuba. This event is aimed to show the progress I have made over the past four years to master my instrument and learn more about what it means to be a musician. The recital will feature Vaughan Williams' Tuba Concerto as well as some other smaller works.

It was my goal to choose specific pieces of music that would showcase many different sides of playing that the tuba is expected to do. On top of this, I wanted this to be an enjoyable concert for the people who attend.

**Heather Christman**

- Majors: Theology and Music
- Minor: Education, Schooling, and Society (ESS)
- Advisor: Timothy O'Malley

## A Chestertonian Pedagogy: Enchantment in Catholic Education

Modern schooling leaves many students disenchanted by reducing reality to the purely rational and utilitarian. In a tradition which recognizes reality as including the transcendent and the nature of creation as gift from God, such a mode of learning is antithetical to Catholic schooling. G.K. Chesterton offers a response to such disenchantment through a pedagogy of enchantment, which situates the student in a posture of wonder, capable of receiving the gift of reality through learning. This project was a convergence of all my areas of study — each of which taught me the importance of learning through beauty and gratitude. When I took David Fagerberg's class on Chesterton, I knew that Chesterton was the person who most fittingly embodied the ideas that had been forming in my mind over my time as an undergraduate. I wanted to write on this topic in order to better prepare to be a teacher myself.

**Shannon Daley**

- Major: Neuroscience and Behavior (Concentration in Pre-Medicine)
- Minor: Musical Theatre
- Advisor: Matt Hawkins

**Choreographer of *An Old Family Recipe***

I served as the choreographer for the original musical, *An Old Family Recipe*, written by fellow Notre Dame senior Veronica Mansour. My primary responsibility as a member of the production team was to reflect the creator's vision for the show through dance and movement.

My passion for musical theatre is rooted in my love for dance. My time in the musical theatre minor has challenged me to grow as a choreographer who not only creates routines that look good on stage, but also tells another part of the story that cannot be expressed with words. Choreographing *An Old Family Recipe* was the culmination of that challenge.

When this project was first in the works, we had no idea how different the world would look like by the time we were putting it on stage. In order to complete the project, we adapted it to the camera, as well as to health and safety protocols, and filmed the musical scene by scene. As disappointing as it is not to perform the show in front of a live audience, it has been an incredible opportunity to be creative and produce something thought-provoking and emotional during a time in which so many others do not get that chance.

**Alexa DeVito**

- Major: Psychology
- Minors: Musical Theatre, Sociology, and Italian
- Advisor: Matthew Hawkins

**Assistant director of *An Old Family Recipe***

For my capstone project, I am one of two assistant directors for FTT's spring musical, *An Old Family Recipe*, written by senior Veronica Mansour. My main roles include working one-on-one with actors to enhance their performance, giving insight and opinions to the director and designers, and ensuring that the show is produced to its best quality.

I've had a passion for musical theatre for as long as I can remember. In the past couple of years, I've realized that within theatre, I am most passionate about directing. When I first heard about Veronica's show — and the strong messages it sends about mental health and the importance of family — I knew I wanted to be involved.

**Edwin Donnelly**

- Majors: Theology and Classics
- Minor: Liturgical Music Ministry
- CEC Sorin Fellow
- Advisors: Aldo Tagliabue and Max Johnson

**Mark: The Secret Narrative**

In this thesis project, I explore how the narratological principles of immersion and distance function in the Gospel of Mark to invite the reader into two dispositions of prayer: participation and contemplation.

Because I enjoy studying early Christianity, namely its texts, writing two theses — one on the Gospel of Mark and the other on the Didache — is a result of Providence. As I progressed in both the classics and theology majors, I developed an appreciation for Greek that has proven to complement my vocation as a theologian.

**Edwin Donnelly**

- Majors: Theology and Classics
- Minor: Liturgical Music Ministry
- CEC Sorin Fellow
- Advisors: Aldo Tagliabue and Max Johnson

**The Rites of Christian Initiation in the Didache Communities**

In this project, I offer an exegesis of the Didache and its surrounding texts in order to better understand the shape of Christian Initiation in the early Church.

Because I enjoy studying early Christianity, namely its texts, writing two theses — one on the Gospel of Mark and the other on the Didache — is a result of Providence. As I progressed in both the classics and theology majors, I developed an appreciation for Greek that has proven to complement my vocation as a theologian.

**Erica Forbes**

- Major: Music (Concentration in Vocal Performance)
- Supplementary Major: Arts and Letters Pre-Health
- Advisor: Stephen Lancaster

**Senior Vocal Recital**

My recital is comprised of five sets of three to four pieces of music. Each set is written in a different language: English, German, Italian, French, and Russian. I have chosen pieces that reflect what I have learned over the past four years, with many of the selections being more rarely performed.

For my recital, I wanted to show how different languages have distinct characteristics in vocal music — even when composed in the same era. I chose works from the languages I have focused on as an undergraduate that show both my technical progress and my favorite styles of music to listen to and perform.

The pandemic has changed many parts of how I have prepared for my recital. My lessons with my advisor, Stephen Lancaster, and the collaborative pianist I will be performing with, Paivi Ekroth, have all been online since March 2020. This has limited our abilities to work on certain details regarding vocal technique and musicality. In response to these difficulties, the Department of Music was able to set up a program called SoundJack that lets us work online in real-time without major audio lag. The pandemic has also restricted the number of audience members allowed at my recital, so most people will be watching via livestream. However, even with these differences, I am incredibly appreciative of the immense work done by our professors that has allowed our recitals to take place. I am truly excited to be able to perform.



### Ashlee Fu

- Majors: Mathematics and Music (Concentration in Piano Performance)
- Minor: Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE)
- Advisor: Daniel Schlosberg

## Senior Piano Recital

In my recital, I am performing a repertoire that consists of Sonata in B minor by Liszt, Musica Ricercata No. 7, 8 by Ligeti, and Intermezzo Op.117 by Brahms.

I chose this repertoire taking into consideration both the technical and aesthetic aspects of these pieces. They are very much a natural product of my four years of undergraduate studies in music and my own artistic view.

**Olivia Guntin**

- Major: Music (Concentration in Vocal Performance)
- Supplementary Major: Arts and Letters Pre-Health
- Advisor: Kiera Duffy

**Senior Vocal Recital**

My vocal recital will center around the composers Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, André Previn, Richard Strauss, Joaquin Rodrigo, and several others. In the André Previn set, I collaborate with a pianist and a cellist, and I end my recital with more recent pieces from Broadway musicals.

I chose this topic because I think it spans a wide variety of classical styles as well as some more contemporary styles. Mozart's concert aria and Strauss's art songs contain high levels of technicality along with clear emotional direction. Rodrigo and Previn, however, focus on the simplicity of music to communicate emotion.



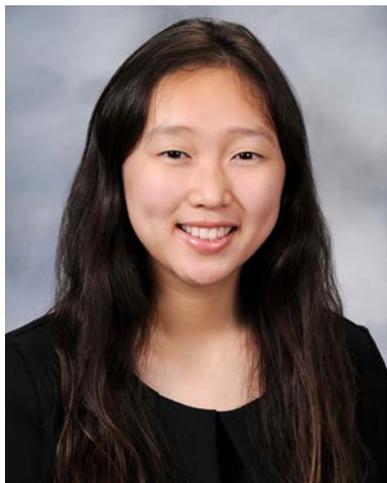
## Catherine Hyry

- Majors: Mathematics and Music (Concentration in Vocal Performance)
- Minor: Theology
- Advisor: Kiera Duffy

## Senior Vocal Recital

As a culmination of my music major, I presented a senior vocal recital on April 11, 2021. The works I performed included pieces by Buxtehude, Mozart, Boulanger, Mendelssohn, Liszt, and MacMillan.

I chose these pieces because I find them both musically satisfying and technically challenging.

**Sophia Koo**

- Major: Music (Concentration in Piano Performance)
- Supplementary Major: Arts and Letters Pre-Health
- Advisor: Daniel Schlosberg

**Senior Piano Recital**

In my senior senior recital this semester, I performed pieces from a comprehensive repertoire accumulated during my years learning piano. I played works by Schumann, Stravinsky, and Schubert. I chose to play these pieces because they represent a wide range of different periods of classical music and are representative of the various types of piano works I have been able to explore and learn during my time at Notre Dame.



**Veronica Mansour**

- Majors: Music (Concentration in Cello Performance) and English
- Minor: Musical Theatre
- Advisor: Matt Hawkins

***An Old Family Recipe***

Over the past two years, I have been writing and workshopping an original musical with the help of the Department of Film, Television, and Theatre here at Notre Dame. This spring, it premiered.

This project is very personal to me and has a lot to do with the issues and topics I most care about: family, love, mental health, and of course, Italian food. The show is very close to my heart, and I'm so excited for this project to hopefully start important conversations about issues that people are otherwise afraid to talk about.

This musical was originally supposed to be staged and live, for a live audience. Because of the pandemic, we weren't able to do that, of course. Instead, we filmed the musical, with no audience, over the course of the month of March. With the help of FTT professors like Bill Donaruma and Matt Hawkins, we have a whole film of my musical.

*Traveled to Rome.*

**Veronica Mansour**

- Majors: Music (Concentration in Cello Performance) and English
- Minor: Musical Theatre
- Advisor: Paul Dwyer

**Senior Cello Recital**

I put together a senior recital to represent the progress I've made over the past four years in my cello studies. It was a one-hour concert of me playing cello, with a piano accompanist.

As a cello major, I was excited to put on a senior recital to culminate my studies. I have been playing the cello since age 4, and even though cello is not necessarily what I will pursue professionally, it's been a constant for me throughout my life.

**Andrew Peterson**

- Majors: Music (Concentration in Clarinet Performance) and Theology
- Advisor: Chris French

**Senior Clarinet Recital**

For my senior recital, I showcased my work with the clarinet, performing a number of pieces that highlight the beauty and versatility of this instrument. My repertoire included pieces such as Elliott Carter's Pastorale, Camille Saint-Saens' Clarinet Sonata, and Malcolm Arnold's Fantasy for B-flat Clarinet, as well as an arrangement of George Gerschwin's Rhapsody in Blue for a clarinet quartet.

My recital program was chosen to capture a wide range of the styles, time periods, and techniques found within the clarinet repertoire. Moreover, each piece contains something that I could not have done prior to my years of study at Notre Dame. For this reason, my preparation for my recital has been thoughtful as I reflect on my growth as a musician, a student, and a person.

**Kate Ragan**

- Majors: Music (Concentration in Piano Performance) and Political Science
- Advisors: John Blacklow and John Liberatore

**Senior Piano Recital**

My senior piano recital consists of pieces spanning Baroque, Romantic, 20th-, and 21st-century repertoire. My recital involves both solo and collaborative works, including a piece for piano and viola. Furthermore, it integrates my piano and composition studies under the direction of John Blacklow and John Liberatore, respectively, by including my original piano preludes.

Ultimately, my recital is a culmination of my music education at Notre Dame.

**Mariella Stephens**

- Major: Film, Television, and Theatre
- Minors: Musical Theatre and Business Economics
- Advisor: Anne Garcia-Romero

***How to Catch a Mad Dog: A Contemporary Play***

*How to Catch a Mad Dog* is a contemporary play set in American suburbia about a young, biracial girl trying to understand her role in the world while on a mission to catch her beloved (and mischievous) mutt, who has escaped from her house.

As a biracial, American woman myself, I have experience with what it feels like to be alone and confused about the intersection of my ethnic, national, and personal identities. That's not to say this is some magnum opus because it's so personal, but rather that I've been eager to find a way to shed light on experiences that many Americans may never have — and this play is just that.

**Mariella Stephens**

- Major: Film, Television, and Theatre
- Minors: Musical Theatre and Business Economics
- Advisor: Matt Hawkins

***COVID: The Musical (A Documentary)***

The Department of Film, Television, and Theatre has spent this year workshopping, staging, and filming a student-written musical, *An Old Family Recipe*, during a time when theatre is essentially non-existent, thanks to the pandemic. This short documentary follows the musical's director, Matt Hawkins, and creator/writer/composer Ronnie Mansour as they navigate the process through insane circumstances.

I love musical theatre and shooting and editing films — not to mention the fact that these circumstances are pretty once-in-a-lifetime — so the idea to make a documentary about it all just made sense.

**Michelle Tapp**

- Major: Music (Concentration in Piano Performance)
- Advisor: Daniel Schlosberg

**Senior Piano Recital**

For my senior recital, I offered a live presentation of a solo piano performance, about one hour in length. My recital featured works such as Franz Liszt's Dante Sonata, Alexander Scriabin's Sonata No. 3, Alvin Singleton's "Baked in the Cake," and others.

I wanted to perform repertoire from multiple periods, but focus more on music that moves beyond the Classical functionally harmonic idiom, especially late Romantic, 20th-century, and contemporary pieces.

**Kilian Vidourek**

- Majors: Music (Concentration in French Horn Performance) and Film, Television, and Theatre
- Advisor: Kenneth Dye

**Senior French Horn Recital**

I performed a French horn recital as a culmination of my four years of music performance at Notre Dame and my 11 years of horn playing. It was a 40-minute concert with me in the spotlight almost the entire time. I presented a solo horn piece called Laudatio and played Mozart's Horn Quintet with some fantastic string players. I also played Siegfried's Funeral March with a horn quartet and Alec Wilder's jazzy horn sonata — all on the Leighton stage of the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center.

I was very excited and very nervous to show off my horn skills.

**Kilian Vidourek**

- Majors: Music (Concentration in French Horn Performance) and Film, Television, and Theatre
- Advisor: Jeff Spoonhower

**21. Across**

Over the last two semesters, I completed a short film for which I wrote the script, shot and edited the footage, and composed an original musical score. The film is about a man on a farm who is going about his daily routine, but things start to take an odd turn. It is called *21. Across*, as the whole film is sort of structured like a crossword puzzle —with clues, depth, and mystery going up, down, and across the entire film.

It was a challenge to create an original film during the pandemic that had only a single actor and could be shot in a short enough time during the semester, but it's probably the coolest thing I've ever done.

*Traveled to Plymouth, Indiana, with funding from FTT's Broad Avenue Filmmakers Award.*

**LeeAnne Williams**

- Major: Music (Concentration in Vocal Performance)
- Supplementary Major: Spanish
- Minors: Sociology and Catholic Social Tradition
- Advisors: David Lantigua and Ricardo Martínez-Schuldt

## Women Protection and Empowerment Programs in Refugee Camps in Ciudad Juarez

Within the broader issue of gender-based violence in refugee camps, I explored the International Rescue Committee's Women Protection and Empowerment Program as a case study in the Ciudad Juarez area. My project delves into the issue of how women protection and empowerment programs can either perpetuate the narrative of women as victims or use empowerment initiatives such as entrepreneurship to further develop female agency.

I became involved with IRC while interning in the immigration department and developed an interest in their work in Ciudad Juarez. The site has responded to migrants affected by the Migration Protection Protocols and the issue of gender-based violence — which is already a huge issue in Ciudad Juarez and even worse for female migrants. I wanted to study IRC's Women Protection and Empowerment program because it is relatively new.

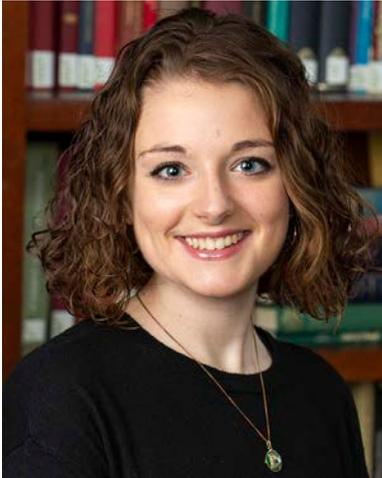
**LeeAnne Williams**

- Major: Music (Concentration in Vocal Performance)
- Supplementary Major: Spanish
- Minors: Sociology and Catholic Social Tradition
- Advisor: Stephen Lancaster

## An Ethereal Walk through Modern Music: A Senior Vocal Recital

My senior recital includes works from 1830 to 2005, though the majority of works were published in the 1900s. It incorporates various cycles emphasizing those of love, death, and nature. The nature elements also bring out a playful aspect which is highlighted by the selections *Tais-toi Babillarde* by Milhaud and *Despedida* by Lena Frank. Furthermore, a feminist undertone flows through the recital as five of the seven composers I chose are women.

I wanted to go against the traditional narrative of composers often performed and revered in the world of Western classical music, which is why I included a majority of female composers in my recital. I was also drawn to more modern music and wanted to challenge myself, and so my recital came to have a very modern appeal. The first set I decided to include ties into the work I've done in Peru with Aymara and Quechua indigenous women's rights activism. Gabriela Lena Frank — whose work I have fallen in love with — composed *Cuatro Canciones Andinas* based on the poems of José María Arguedas, a Peruvian poet and folklorist who translated traditional Quechua poems into Spanish.



### Eleanor Wood

- Majors: Program of Liberal Studies and Music (Concentration in Viola Performance)
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Advisor: Jennifer Martin

## *There Is Another Sky: A Modern Folk Retelling of Dante's Purgatorio*

My thesis is a retranslation of Dante's *Purgatorio* into the modern American Catholic idiom, taking the form of a novel written in poetry and prose. Dante himself used the vernacular (breaking from the traditional Latin) to create a world filled with contemporary references recognizable to his readers. He seized the opportunity to broaden the idea of the epic through specificity. My retranslation hopes to show how much and in how many ways *Purgatorio* can mean.

Translations that aim to create a space for works like Dante's in post-modernity, while still challenging the reader to rise with Dante's subject matter, are more necessary than ever. If, as Dante posits, the divine can be found by looking deeply at the human, the transcendent almost inextricably interwoven with the immanent, where better for the contemporary reader to discover these unfathomable truths than through the familiarity of the American folk ethos?



### **Eleanor Wood**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies and Music (Concentration in Viola Performance)
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Advisor: Rose Wollman

## **Senior Viola Recital**

For my senior viola recital, I have prepared a selection of pieces from a wide range of styles and eras, all of which highlight the viola's mellow timbre and introspective sonority. The composers whose work I perform include Vieuxtemps, Bach, Shostakovich, Martinu, and Dvorak.

The pandemic actually helped me in preparing for my recital. Because I had much more time on my hands over the summer, I was able to tackle repertoire that would have taken me much longer to learn otherwise.

