SCHOOL OF **MUSIC**

TEXAS TECH

J.T. & Margaret Talkington College of Visual & Performing Arts

GUEST ARTIST RECITAL

Nathan De'Shon Myers, *baritone*
Jared Tehse, *piano*

Sunday, October 11th, 2026 | 2:00pm
Hemmle Recital Hall

Songs of a Journey

3 Lieder für Bariton mit Klavierbegleitung, Op. 20 (Hesse) — Robert Owens (1925-2017)

I. Fremde Stadt
II. Eine Geige in den Gärten
III. Im Nebel

Mortal Storm, Op. 29 (Hughes) — Robert Owens (1925-2017)

I. A House in Taos
II. Little Song
III. Jaime
IV. Faithful One
V. Genius Child

The Rebirth of Spring (Garcia) — Francis Osentowski (1943-2023)

Without You (Garcia) — Francis Osentowski (1943-2023)

A Luv Song 4-U - "In One Dozen Tweets" — Francis Osentowski (1943-2023)

-Intermission-

Plenty Good Room	Arr. John L. Cornelius, II (b. 1966)
Steal Away	Arr. Shawn E. Okpebholo (b. 1981)
Ride On, King Jesus!	Arr. Hall Johnson (1888-1970)
Witness	Arr. Hall Johnson (1888-1970)
All of Me (Simons)	Gerald Marks (1900-1997)
My Foolish Heart (Washington)	Victor Young (1899-1956)
Found My Joy	Nathan De'Shon Myers (b. 1979) Robert "Sput" Searight (b. 1975)

– Program Notes –

Songs of a Journey

Music is a journey. It can take us across languages, cultures, traditions, and generations, but it can also take us somewhere much more personal. A melody can bring back a place we once knew, a poem can suddenly feel like it was written for us, and a familiar song can sound completely different when we hear it through another person's experience.

Songs of a Journey brings together music that has been meaningful to Nathan De'Shon Myers and Jared Tehse at different points in their musical lives. The program moves through art song, the poetry of Langston Hughes, contemporary American song, African American spirituals and jazz. These distinct musical traditions all have a place in the journeys that brought us to this recital.

Art song is at the heart of the first part of the program. We are drawn to the way a composer can take a poem and reveal something that may not be immediately apparent in the words alone. Music can linger over a single image, change the meaning of a phrase, or reveal an emotion hiding beneath the surface. In that sense, every art song is a conversation between poet and composer—and ultimately, between the performers and the listener.

For Nathan, musical hybridity has been a hallmark of his life and career. From gospel to opera and everything in between, he takes pleasure in the challenge of sharing music of multiple styles. Beginning with art song in German carries a particularly personal connection. His own musical journey included living and working in Germany, making the language and tradition represented in these songs a special part of his own experience.

From Owens, the program moves through music by Francis Osentowski before turning toward spirituals and jazz. These traditions are not simply musical categories for us. They are part of the sounds that have shaped the way we hear and understand music.

For Jared, that began at home. Growing up, there was never a need to choose between musical worlds. Jazz, pop, classical music, and music heard in church were all listened to and appreciated. That experience continues to shape the way he approaches music today: with curiosity

about the connections between traditions rather than a desire to keep them separate.

The recital is also a journey in a more literal sense. Nathan returns to Texas, his home state, while Jared returns to Arizona State University, one of his alma maters and an important part of his own musical development. We return to these places carrying years of experiences that were not there the last time. In that way, coming home can be its own kind of journey.

Robert Owens

***3 Lieder für Bariton mit Klavierbegleitung*, Op. 20**
Text by Hermann Hesse

The program begins with three songs by Robert Owens setting poetry by Hermann Hesse. Owens' life crossed many of the same geographical and cultural boundaries that this program explores. Born in Texas and eventually settling in Germany, he developed a musical voice informed by both his American background and his experience with European musical traditions.

Hesse's poems in this cycle turn inward. *Fremde Stadt* ("Strange City") follows a traveler moving through an unfamiliar place and feeling the pull of home. *Eine Geige in den Gärten* ("A Violin in the Gardens") finds longing in the distant sound of a violin. *Im Nebel* ("In the Fog") considers a more universal kind of solitude: even when people travel together, each person ultimately experiences the world from their own perspective.

These songs offer a fitting place to begin. The journey here is not really about getting somewhere. It is about what happens inside us when we are somewhere unfamiliar, when we remember what we have left behind, and when we recognize the distance that can exist between ourselves and others.

Robert Owens

***Mortal Storm*, Op. 29**
Text by Langston Hughes

Owens' connection with Langston Hughes became an important part of his work as a composer. After the two met in 1958, Owens began setting Hughes' poetry extensively, eventually creating more than forty settings of his work. *Mortal Storm*, composed in 1969, brings together

five of those settings.

The Hughes poems take us into a very different world from the Hesse songs. *A House in Taos, Little Song, Jaime, Faithful One,* and *Genius Child* each tell a different kind of story, and together they move through loneliness, tenderness, mystery, devotion, and isolation.

What makes this cycle especially compelling is its variety. Hughes could say something profound in only a few lines, and Owens responds by allowing each poem to establish its own musical world. The result is not a single continuous narrative, but a collection of encounters—five glimpses into different lives and emotional landscapes.

The connection between Owens and Hughes also feels important within the larger journey of this recital. We move from Hesse to Hughes, from German poetry to an unmistakably American voice, while the music continues to ask many of the same questions about belonging, identity, and connection.

Francis Osentowski

The three songs by Francis Osentowski—*The Rebirth of Spring, Without You,* and *A Luv Song 4-U*—bring the first half of the program into a more contemporary and personal world.

Osentowski's musical career has encompassed many different forms of music, and that breadth makes these songs a natural part of this program. Rather than treating musical traditions as isolated categories, his work reminds us that composers can move freely between different musical languages.

These three songs explore experiences that require very little explanation: renewal, absence, and love. *The Rebirth of Spring* looks toward the possibility of beginning again. *Without You* dwells in the space created by someone's absence. *A Luv Song 4-U*, with text compiled by Osentowski, brings us into an especially direct and personal expression of affection.

After the emotional and literary landscapes of Hesse and Hughes, these songs bring the journey closer to home. They remind us that the subjects of poetry and music are often remarkably simple: the people we love, the people we miss, and the possibility of beginning again.

Spirituals

After intermission, the program turns toward the African American spiritual tradition with four works by John L. Cornelius II, Shawn E. Okpebholo, and Hall Johnson.

Spirituals emerged from the experiences of enslaved African Americans and became a powerful means of expressing faith, suffering, hope, perseverance, and longing for freedom. They have continued to live and evolve through generations of singers, churches, arrangers, composers, and performers.

That continuing life is important to these performances. The spiritual is not simply something preserved from the past. It has continued to find new musical voices.

Plenty Good Room by John L. Cornelius II opens this set with a sense of welcome and abundance. Shawn E. Okpebholo's *Steal Away* offers a contemporary reimagining of the familiar spiritual, showing how an old melody and text can speak through a modern musical language.

Hall Johnson's *Ride on, King Jesus!* and *Witness* represent another important chapter in the journey of the spiritual into the concert hall. Johnson's arrangements helped establish spirituals as an important part of the classical vocal repertoire while retaining the rhythmic energy and expressive character of the tradition.

Together, these works demonstrate that there is no single way to hear or perform a spiritual. Each composer brings a different perspective, and each generation continues the conversation.

Jazz and R&B

The final set turns toward jazz, popular song, and contemporary R&B—music that has been central to both of our musical journeys.

All of Me, by Seymour Simons and Gerald Marks, and *My Foolish Heart*, by Victor Young, come from the rich tradition of American popular song. Both have been interpreted by countless singers and musicians, each finding something different within the same melody and words.

That possibility of reinterpretation is one of the things we love about this repertoire. A song does not necessarily have one final version. Harmony, rhythm, tempo, phrasing, and improvisation allow performers to discover something new within familiar material. Every performance becomes another stop along the song's journey.

Nathan De'Shon Myers' *Found My Joy* brings the program to its conclusion. After a musical journey that has taken us through loneliness, longing, love, absence, faith, and searching, arriving at joy feels like a fitting place to end.

Perhaps that is what we ultimately hope to share through this program. A musical journey does not always have a clear destination. Sometimes the value is in the traveling—in the people we encounter, the places we remember, the traditions we discover, and the ways our understanding changes along the way.

For Nathan, this journey brings him back to Texas. For Jared, it brings him back to Arizona State University. For both of us, it is another moment in a much longer musical journey.

And for one recital, we invite you to travel with us.

Thank you for being part of the journey.

– About the Artists –

Nathan De'Shon Myers

American baritone, conductor, and educator Nathan De'Shon Myers has built a 27-year international career distinguished by versatility and artistic leadership across opera, jazz, and gospel. He has appeared as a featured soloist with opera companies and orchestras throughout the United States and Europe, including Deutsche Oper Berlin, Dallas Opera, Chautauqua Opera, Salzburg Landestheater, Stadttheater Trier, Theater Neustrelitz, Opera Louisiane, and the Amalfi Coast Festival.

As a fest soloist with Deutsche Oper Berlin, Myers performed roles including Dandini (La Cenerentola), Dancairo (Carmen), Schaunard (La bohème), Ping (Turandot), Marullo (Rigoletto), Il Prologo (Cassandra), and Matthieu (Andrea Chénier). Title roles performed include Gianni Schicchi, Don Giovanni, and Johnny in Ernst Krenek's Johnny Spielt Auf. He also created the role of Julian in the world premiere of Mary Alice Rich's Wading Home.

During the 2025–26 season, he made his Houston Grand Opera debut as Jim in Porgy and Bess and Pinellino in Gianni Schicchi (Il trittico) and will join the casts of Carmen and the world premiere of Lalovavi with Cincinnati Opera this summer.

Beyond opera, Myers maintains an active presence in gospel and jazz. He contributed to Kirk Franklin's Grammy Award–winning album, *Losing My Religion*, performed on the soundtracks of *Hidden Figures* and *The Star* and recently released his second album *Found My Joy*.

A dedicated educator and conductor, Myers is Associate Professor of Voice and Choral at Arizona State University and remains active internationally as a multi-genre soloist, clinician, and conductor.

Jared Tehse

Dr. Jared Tehse is a collaborative pianist, vocal coach, and educator with a passion for working with singers and instrumentalists and discovering new and diverse musical repertoire. He currently serves as Lecturer of Collaborative Piano at Texas Tech University, where he works extensively with singers and serves as a rehearsal pianist and coach for opera productions. His performing and collaborative work has taken him throughout Canada, Europe, and the United States.

Jared has pursued additional training through the Collaborative Piano Institute, Toronto Summer Music Festival, Opera NUOVA, Orford Arts Centre Piano Master Classes, and Music Fest Perugia. His professional experience includes serving as a pianist for the Classical Singer Convention Master Classes and Competition, collaborative pianist and coach for the Matador Opera Workshop, and collaborative pianist at Rocky Ridge Music. He has been a rehearsal pianist for Opera McGill and the Music Theatre and Opera program at Arizona State University, and has worked as a freelance pianist with the University of Toronto, Glenn Gould School, and other ensembles and institutions in Canada. His collaborative work encompasses both vocal and instrumental repertoire, and he has performed with the University of Saskatchewan Jazz Ensemble, Greystone Singers, Université de Montréal Jazz Ensemble, and McGill University's Song Interpretation Ensembles.

Jared holds an Associate Diploma in Piano Performance from the Royal Conservatory of Toronto, a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance with a Minor in Jazz Studies from the University of Saskatchewan, a Master of Music in Collaborative Piano Performance from McGill University, and a Doctor of Musical Arts in Collaborative Piano Performance from Arizona State University. His primary piano teachers include Michael McMahon and Andrew Campbell.

Outside of his professional work, Jared enjoys hiking, mountain biking, and spending time outdoors with his wife. His interest in jazz remains an important part of his musical life, reflecting his broad musical background and continuing curiosity about different styles and approaches to performance.