University of North Texas College of Music

Senior Recital | Sunday, October 25, 2026 | 2:00 p.m. | Paul Voertman Concert Hall

Chase Thomas, euphonium

Gabriel Sánchez, piano

Romanze (1944) ..... Gustav Cords
(1870-1951)

The Unknown Soldier, Concerto for Euphonium (2023) ..... Ricardo Mollá
(b. 1992)
I. Battle
II. Resurrection
III. The Untold Story

Sonatina for Euphonium and Piano (2021) ..... Rodney Newton
(b. 1945)
I. Pavane
II. Sarabande
III. Gigue Irlandaise

Clair de Lune (1905) ..... Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)
arr. Jon Burr

Euphoria Euphonium Quartet
Marco Alzaitoun, euphonium
Jenna McClain, euphonium
Karla Torres, euphonium

Gabriel Sánchez, piano

Michelangelo (1992) ..... Sigvart Dagsland
(b. 1963)
arr. Frode Rydland

Thank You For The Music (1977) ..... Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus
(b. 1946), (b.1945)
as performed by Amanda Seyfried
in *Mamma Mia!* (2008)

Program seventy-nine of the 2026–2027 season
Photography and videography are prohibited

Program Notes

***Romanze* (1944)**

Gustav Cords (1870–1951)

Gustav Cords was a German composer and musician born in Hamburg. As a violinist in Wiesbaden and Berlin, he was well acquainted with a wide range of musical genres. Today, his contributions to the brass repertoire remain an important part of his compositional legacy. Originally for cornet and piano, ***Romanze*** was published in 1944 in a collection of works for trumpet or trombone. Since then, we've seen adaptations for other brass instruments, such as euphonium and tuba.

Romanze refers to a musical genre commonly characterized by lyrical, intimate-sounding melodies and expressive phrasing, originally from the idea of romance. Cords's ***Romanze*** embraces this through its flowing, expressive qualities, keeping the soloist's melody as the primary focus while maintaining musical interaction with the piano. This work suits the euphonium because of its broad range, mellow tone, and similarity to the human voice.

***The Unknown Soldier*, Concerto for Euphonium (2023)**

Ricardo Mollá (b. 1992)

Ricardo Mollá is an active composer and trombonist whose work has significantly contributed to the modern brass repertoire, as he works to complete a concerto for each brass instrument. Originally from Spain, Mollá continued his studies at The Juilliard School in New York City. Completed in 2023, ***The Unknown Soldier*** is dedicated to Bastien Baumet, a French euphonium soloist and professor. L'Orchestre d'Harmonie de la Ville du Havre in France originally commissioned the concerto, and Baumet performed it in 2023.

The concerto draws inspiration from the historical idea of the Unknown Soldier. This symbol is used to honor military personnel who lost their lives in combat, but whose identities or remains could not be established. This became significant after World War I, as many countries dedicated memorials to these unknown soldiers to remember their untold stories and honorable sacrifices.

Mollá sets this concerto in the context of World War II, along the coast of Le Havre in France and the Battle of Normandy. The concerto has three movements titled **Battle, Resurrection,** and **The Untold Story,** exploring its emotional subject matter while showcasing the instrument's technical demands in this cinematic setting.

The first movement, **Battle**, establishes the chaotic, uncertain world of soldiers facing combat and serves as a dramatic opening to the larger work. The second movement, **Resurrection**, follows the conflict of the opening movement and presents the ideas of transformation and remembrance. Rather than following the standard definition, **Resurrection** in the concerto's narrative symbolizes the survival of memory and the significance of the lives lost. The final movement, **The Untold Story**, brings the work's contrasting musical and emotional ideas together while demonstrating the euphonium's expressive range and virtuosic demands.

The Unknown Soldier explores this historical idea through a unique, human lens, using the euphonium as its storytelling instrument.

Sonatina for Euphonium and Piano (2021)

Rodney Newton (b. 1945)

Rodney Newton is a British composer with extensive involvement in orchestral performance, film and television, and the British brass band tradition. Newton has contributed to the euphonium repertoire through collaborations with prominent performers, including David Childs, Robert Childs, and Martin Smith. Martin Smith originally commissioned Newton's **Sonatina**, which premiered in England in 2021. David Childs and Chris Williams later recorded this work on Childs' 2025 album *Still Glides the Stream*.

Sonatina traditionally refers to a shorter, more concise sonata. In this work, Newton uses three contrasting movements in historical dance forms to explore the euphonium's character. Each movement establishes its own distinct melodic and stylistic character, rather than the conventional fast–slow–fast form of three-movement sonatas.

The opening movement, **Pavane**, comes from the European Renaissance dance form that was commonly associated with formal, elegant movement. Newton demonstrates these graceful, expressive qualities through a warm, flowing musical character. The second movement, **Sarabande**, is dedicated, *In memoriam Morfydd Myfanwy Childs*, and is based on the late Baroque dance style. It is commonly characterized by the slow triple meter and emphasis on the second beat. Newton uses this more solemn character to communicate the most introspective movement of his **Sonatina.** Finally, **Gigue Irlandaise** loosely translates to Irish Jig, a style associated with quick rhythms and strong dance character.

Together, Newton explores the euphonium's versatility by combining these historical dance styles with modern composition in his **Sonatina.**

Clair de Lune (1905)

Claude Debussy (1862–1918), arr. Jon Burr

Claude Debussy was a French composer who helped shape twentieth-century music through his innovative approach and compositional devices. Debussy studied at the Paris Conservatoire and is often associated with musical Impressionism, though he rejected the label. **Clair de Lune,** meaning "moonlight" in French, is the third movement from Debussy's Suite *bergamasque* for solo piano. The suite's movements reference historical Italian dance traditions and connect to French poetry. **Clair de Lune** was inspired by a poem by Paul Verlaine, which explored dreamlike masked figures, moonlight, and an underlying sense of sadness.

Although originally composed for piano, **Clair de Lune** has been transcribed for a wide variety of instruments and ensembles. This includes Jon Burr's arrangement for euphonium quartet and piano, which highlights subtle changes in tone, phrasing, and dynamics that bring out the work's variety of musical colors.

Michelangelo (1992)

Sigvart Dagsland (b.1963), arr. Frode Rydland

Sigvart Dagsland is a Norwegian singer-songwriter who built a successful career combining popular music with more reflective subjects that question faith, meaning, and human relationships. Originally from Dagsland's 1992 album *Bedre enn stillhet (Better than Silence),* **Michelangelo** was written with lyrics by Norwegian songwriter Erik Hillestad. This song reflects on the life of Italian Renaissance artist Michelangelo Buonarroti, who created works such as the statue of *David* and the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

Despite his extraordinary achievements, Michelangelo's life was also full of personal struggles, a contrast the song explores throughout. One key aspect of the text is its recognition of Michelangelo's lasting impact on future generations, as his art endures long after his death. Dagsland's musical setting conveys these ideas through a lyrical melody that evokes both deep admiration and sorrow, letting the listener experience the emotional weight without the original text.

Michelangelo then gained popularity in the brass band community through this arrangement by Frode Rydland, originally commissioned by the Bergen Brass Band in 2004 and popularized by notable euphonium artists such as Tormod Flaten and Mauro Martins.

Beyond its original focus, **Michelangelo** shows how creativity can come from personal struggle and how an artist's impact can continue long after their lifetime.

Thank You for the Music (1977)

Benny Andersson (b. 1946) and Björn Ulvaeus (b. 1945)
As performed by Amanda Seyfried in Mamma Mia! (2008)

Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus, the songwriters in the Swedish pop group ABBA, wrote **Thank You for the Music** in 1977 as part of a musical presentation titled *The Girl with the Golden Hair* for ABBA's European and Australian concert tour. The production follows a young woman who leaves her hometown with dreams of becoming a famous singer but eventually loses the freedom and happiness music once gave her. After the tour, ABBA recorded **Thank You for the Music** for their 1977 album, *The Album*.

Thank You for the Music is centered around the appreciation for music and the role that it has in everyday life, with lyrics that describe the difficulty of a world without musical expression.

After its original release, the song was featured in the stage musical *Mamma Mia!* It also appeared in the 2008 film adaptation, starring Meryl Streep and Amanda Seyfried, which uses ABBA's music to tell a story about family relationships and identity. Seyfried's performance during the film's closing credits introduces a different vocal character from ABBA's original version. Ultimately, the song reminds us that music is about more than individual achievement and celebrates the art form that connects people.

Personal Anecdotes

***Romanze* (1944)**

Gustav Cords (1870–1951)

When I first auditioned for the University of North Texas College of Music on February 25, 2023, I felt a mix of emotions as I entered a new chapter of my life. The first studio member to welcome me was Loke Lovett; he made me feel welcome in the short time I spent there that day. Loke's impact that day has stayed with me, and as I've continued my studies, he has continued to make a positive impact. After hearing Loke play ***Romanze*** in my first year, I decided to play it in the first recital I ever performed in.

Thank you, Loke, for your continued support and coaching as I've continued my studies here at UNT, including during my preparations for this recital. I appreciate your time and dedication to Euphoria Quartet Coaching and the meaningful impact you've had on my time here.

***The Unknown Soldier*, Concerto for Euphonium (2023)**

Ricardo Mollá (b. 1992)

While playing the euphonium, one of my biggest struggles has been finding new repertoire and building confidence in my performance. In December 2025, I discovered Ricardo Mollá's concerto, ***The Unknown Soldier***, and it immediately became one of my favorite works. The concerto's cinematic nature and the range of opportunities to show what makes the euphonium special really drew me in.

This semester, I advanced through multiple rounds to the finals of the William Gammon Henry Concerto Competition at UNT, where I played the second movement, **Resurrection**. This opportunity truly challenged me and pushed me far outside my comfort zone as a performer. As I struggled with the mental aspects of my preparation, I really appreciated my Mom, Thea, and Olivia for checking in and making sure I was successful every day from afar.

Throughout my years in school, I have deeply appreciated the continued support my family and friends have shown me through all of my accomplishments and challenges.

Sonatina for Euphonium and Piano (2021)

Rodney Newton (b. 1945)

In my senior year of high school, I applied to about fifteen schools because I feared not being accepted anywhere and wanted to ensure I could continue my education and musical passion. UNT had been a dream, simply because I wanted to learn from Dr. David Childs. Throughout my time at UNT, I've discovered many reasons to be here and have continued to take advantage of every opportunity it offers.

Dr. Childs' album *Still Glides the Stream* is one of the most inspiring euphonium recordings I've ever heard. My favorite work featured on that album is Rodney Newton's **Sonatina for Euphonium and Piano**. Hearing the distinct piano introductions for each movement for the first time with my accompanist, Gabriel Sánchez, gave me immense joy and reminded me of my initial desire to learn from Dr. Childs. From the beginning of my time at the University of North Texas, thank you, Dr. Childs, for your contributions to my education through lessons, Euphoria Euphonium Quartet coaching, and by constantly setting the performance example I strive to follow.

Clair de Lune (1905)

Claude Debussy (1862–1918), arr. Jon Burr

As a group, Marco, Jenna, Karla, and I have always been ambitious with our repertoire selections. When we first formed the Euphoria Euphonium Quartet, we chose **Clair de Lune,** arranged by Takahiro Iwamitsu for the NTEQ, a**s** one of our first projects. However, despite attempting this piece every semester since the beginning, something never quite clicked. To me, this piece represents a formidable challenge and my constant desire for success.

At the end of last semester, when I found out Dr. Childs would be gone for my final year, I was gutted and felt incredibly pessimistic about the year ahead. He kept reassuring me that everything would be okay and made an effort to show me this. This included finding Professor Ryan McGeorge's senior recital from his time at UNT and sharing that he performed an arrangement of **Clair de Lune**.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with Professor McGeorge this semester and want to thank you for your unparalleled involvement, passion, and confidence you've instilled in me regarding this recital. You've made an undeniable impact in this short time, and I'm incredibly grateful for your continued support.

Thank you, Marco, Karla, and Jenna, for your dedication and contributions to the Euphoria Euphonium Quartet. Since my first days here in Texas, you three have continued to share your friendship and support through everything. Being surrounded by your immense artistry and performances in this quartet has also left an incredible impact on me.

Michelangelo (1992)

Sigvart Dagsland (b.1963), arr. Frode Rydland

Michelangelo focuses on the artistic influence and creative accomplishments Michelangelo Buonarroti continues to have after his death, as well as the complicated relationships and personal struggles that shaped his life. This idea that people have multiple sides applies to anyone, and we should remember it in our daily interactions.

As I reflect on my own complicated relationships and personal struggles, I feel fortunate to have an incredible support system of friends, family, and mentors I can learn from every day. Thank you to everyone here today, and to those who continue to support me in all that I do. As I move forward in life, I hope to keep growing in my accomplishments and influence the people and world around me.

Thank You for the Music (1977)

Benny Andersson (b. 1946) and Björn Ulvaeus (b. 1945)
As performed by Amanda Seyfried in Mamma Mia! (2008)

On June 27, 2021, my grandma, Margaret Dowling, passed away after her short cancer battle. For as long as I can remember, she has had an immense impact on me. In reflection, it feels as though, above all else, she lived her life with the intention of supporting me in everything I did. Some of my earliest memories with her include watching the 2008 film adaptation of *Mamma Mia!* together and singing the songs; this was one of my first exposures to music. A few days before she passed, I remember sitting with her and listening to some of the songs from the film, quietly singing while holding her hand.

In its original context, from the musical presentation *The Girl with the Golden Hair*, the song introduces a young woman who leaves her hometown and struggles with a new sense of identity after pursuing fame and losing her connection to music, among other challenges, as she navigates the loss of freedom that came from it. The text also highlights music's importance in everyday life and celebrates making and sharing it with others. In *Mamma Mia!*, **Thank You for the Music** is the final song heard in the end credits. It comes after the main character, Sophie, says goodbye to the place she grew up, realizes she is ready to pursue new experiences, and can be interpreted as an expression of gratitude to the family, friends, and experiences that shaped her.

My grandma supported me at the start of my musical journey, from attending all my performances to funding the purchase of every instrument I've owned, even after she passed. I remember, from a young age, sitting at her living room piano, playing simple piano duets from her childhood, singing *Mamma Mia!* songs, and, when I could finally read music, playing Ed Sheeran duets. I still feel her support in everything I do, and as I've said goodbye to the place I grew up and kept pursuing new experiences, I thank you for everything you've done to shape who I am today and who I will continue to become as I go ***Into The Unknown***. I love you and miss you every day. **Thank You for the Music.**