My Selection Process for the Program

I decided that I wanted the overall concept of my program to illustrate my musical journey up to this point in my life and thus, the pieces that I chose represent important milestones along that journey. The first composition on my program, Bruch’s *Violin Concerto in G minor*, is the piece that I auditioned on. Thus, the piece that began my experience in the violin studio at Western is the same piece that began my senior recital. The next 3 pieces, Corelli’s *Sonata in D Minor*, Bartok’s *Romanian Folk Dances*, and Lalo’s *Symphonie Espagnole*, are a culmination of the major works that I studied over my two and a half years in the violin studio. The second half of my program, the untraditional half, is when I start to explore other avenues that music has taken me and/or ways it has affected my life. The first song, Duelling Violins, is the piece that inspired me to play violin. When I was around six or seven years old, my parents bought Michael Flately’s *Feet of Flames* video and my sisters and I immediately fell in love with it and spent hours role playing the characters. I was always the fiddle player and would grab any two items laying around to use as my fiddle and bow. From that point on, I was set on the path to become a violin major. The next piece, *All of Me*, is a piano piece that my sister gave to me as a Christmas gift. It happened to be during a really stressful time in my college career and so I would often play this piece to escape the stress of school and to just enjoy playing music again. I still love this piece and experience pure joy whenever I play it. *We Bow Down*, is the next piece on the program and serves as a tribute to my Lord and Savior. I believe that the sole reason that I am able to pursue a degree in music education is because He first blessed me with a musical gift and then orchestrated the events and people in my life that have led me to where I am today. Thus, all
that I do is for His honor and glory. The last piece, *Christmas Morning*, is one of my original compositions that I wrote in 2014 and I thought it would be neat to show this side of my musical experience as well. I also thought it would be meaningful to have my former violin and piano teachers perform the piece with me as a trio to give the program a complete full circle ending.

**Post Recital Evaluation**

The most impactful thing that I learned through the process of planning and performing my senior recital actually has nothing to do with the music but with people. I always knew that I was surrounded by loving and supportive people, but I never truly understood how blessed I was until I saw all the people that came together to support me at my recital. I had friends from high school, family from both sides, church friends, teachers, professors, and colleagues all come together that night and I never felt so loved. Music is a wonderful gift, but supportive and loving people are priceless.

Looking back over what I learned during my preparation, I discovered that recitals (or any big performances) have a way of forcing the “need to know” mentality. As a result of the looming performance, this was probably my most focused and productive semester in regards to practicing. Rather than having a lackadaisical mentality while practicing, I was instead forced to strive towards perfection in as few repetitions as possible knowing that every second of practice counted towards the performance. I now see why all of my private lesson teachers always advocated the benefits of performance because doing so creates a type of motivation that’s more intense and productive than just practicing for fun. As a result, I too will encourage performance as a music teacher.

In regards to the performance, I again saw that God answers prayers. I’m not an extroverted person and I certainly don’t look forward to performances in front of groups of
people, but that night, my mind was focused, my hands were steady, and I was able to actually “get into” the music and enjoy playing. There were of course a few minor blunders such as out of tune notes and lapses into old technique habits, but compared to the musical and technical level that these pieces were at during the beginning of the semester to where they were at the performance, I was very pleased with my progress. I was especially satisfied with the accuracy of my double stops (two or more notes played at the same time), articulation (especially with the extended techniques required in the Bartok piece such as harmonics and percussive bow strokes), technique (such as bow distribution and tone quality), and overall endurance.