Nathan is from the studio of Dr. Jeffrey Snedeker. This recital is presented as a part of the requirements of the 364 level of applied study and in partial fulfillment of the Bachelor of Music degree.

Reinhold Glière was a Russian nationalist composer born in Kiev in 1875 and died in Moscow in 1956. Glière studied at the Moscow Conservatory until 1900 and later became a professor of composition from 1920-1941. During his time as a teacher he taught several students who later became well known Soviet composers, namely Aram Khachaturian and a young Sergei Prokofiev. Glière’s composition style is reminiscent of the late Romantic music of Wagner and Tchaikovsky, known for having an expressive “Russian” melody, lush color and pictorialism, and sensitivity and beauty. These style traits are clearly shown in the Glière horn concerto on today’s program. During the time the concerto was written in 1951 there were many new things going on in the world of classical music. New possibilities and genera were opening in music such as jazz, electronic music, chance music, atonal music, and nationalist music. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Beethoven, Brahms, and Mahler pushed and developed the symphonic literature to somewhat unreachable standards and classical musicians wanted to make a name for themselves doing something a little different. Glière’s chose to embrace the traditional style of Romantic Russian music.

The Glière horn concerto is a masterwork of the horn repertoire and is well known in the world of horn players. The idea of the composition was planted when the composer met Valery Polekh during a rehearsal break in 1950. Glière commented on how beautiful the horn section sounded and how it was a shame that there isn't more solo repertoire for wind instruments. Polekh took this opportunity to suggest that Glière write a solo work for the horn. Days after the rehearsal Glière invited Polekh to his house to demonstrate the capabilities of the horn. Polekh heard nothing from Glière after that day until a year later when he received a phone call from Glière declaring the solo finished. The horn concerto debut performance was on May 10, 1951, in Leningrad and was an instant success.

The first movement follows a typical structure with two main themes and a development section in the middle. The accompaniment opens the first movement with a triumphant theme in Bb and rapidly changes to a minor fanfare that leads into a horn ad-lib opening to the piece. After the ad-lib opening, the horn then repeats the opening melody. Also, during the opening, the accompaniment tonality changes rapidly in an emotional, highly romantic way. In the second theme, the overall mood shifts to a slower lullaby section with simple chords.
supporting the solo melody. As the lullaby goes on, the accompaniment gets more complex and introduces an eight-note passage that is then traded to the horn part while the accompaniment picks up the melody. The accompaniment returns to the triumphant mood and a transition into the first theme begins again, this time in F major. The first theme then transitions into a barrage of triplet notes, traveling through many different keys before arriving at the cadenza of the first movement. The cadenza I will be performing today is taken from a transcription of a cadenza by Valery Polekh. After the cadenza, the accompaniment takes the melody and briefly passes through the starting theme before leading the horn into a repeat of the second theme, with the lullaby section in a different key and variations in the accompaniment. Lastly, the piece evolves into a beautiful ending section with the horn playing in 12/8 against the accompaniment continuing in 4/4.

The second movement starts slowly with an intimate accompaniment melody that is passed off to the horn. This beginning melody is reminiscent of a beautiful and peaceful dream. This melody is relatively simple, following mostly stepwise motion until about halfway through the second phrase where the mood begins to change. The music then shifts quickly into a storm-like melody that gathers momentum leading into a brief ad-lib section. After the ad-lib section, the accompaniment and horn give a grandiose version of the beginning melody before drifting back into the peaceful theme. The movement ends with meditative and tranquil chords and arpeggios switching between open and stopped horn.

Continuing this meditative state, the third movement begins with lavish chords that transition into a quick and jittery opening theme. This movement is full of contrasts, between loud and soft, and long and short. The first example of this is found in the horn’s opening theme, which sounds a lot like a Russian dance. The first phrase is played at a mezzo-forte volume and then repeated softer. In the next solo horn entrance, the first phrase is played short and the next four measures are played long. This idea of contrasts continues not only in individual phrases but in the overall architecture of the piece. The first theme is contrasted by slower and more delicate lyrical sections and the lyrical section is contrasted by a meditative solo horn phrase before returning to the introductory material. This movement gradually gains more speed, adding more complexity in the main melody and developing the earlier accompaniment material until the piece ends in a satisfying climax.