



The Rodland Duo

Friday, January 23, 2026 at 7:30 PM
Christ United Methodist Church

Praeludium in F Major

Fanny Hensel
(1805-1847)

Fanny Hensel, born Fanny Mendelssohn, was one of the most accomplished musicians of the early Romantic era. Hensel was raised in a musical household, receiving the same rigorous musical training as her brother Felix. She quickly emerged as an exceptional pianist and composer whom her brother relied on for critiques of his own musical works.

Social expectations of the time limited her opportunities for public performance and publication, yet her creativity flourished in the private sphere. She composed more than 450 works, including piano pieces, lieder (German art songs), chamber music, and an orchestral overture.



Hensel composed the “Praeludium in F major” in 1829 for her own wedding to the painter Wilhelm Hensel just days before the ceremony. It opens with a deep sustained tone followed by lighter imitative lines, adding movement and grace. The music offers a poised atmosphere that feels both intimate and quietly celebratory. Despite her extensive collection, this prelude is one of only two pieces she composed for organ.

Sonata in A Major

George Frederic Handel
(1685-1759)

German-born composer George Frideric Handel was celebrated for his operas, oratorios, and instrumental works. After receiving musical training in Germany, Hamburg, and Italy, he settled permanently in London in 1712, becoming a naturalized British subject in 1727. Masterpieces such as “Messiah”, “Water Music”, and his concerti grossi reveal a composer whose influence has endured for centuries.



Handel's “Sonata in A major” was composed around 1725–26 and first published in 1732. Originally written for violin and continuo, the four-movement work showcases his gift for elegant melodies and expressive contrast. Following a typical slow-fast-slow-fast structure, the piece opens with beautiful lyricism and finishes with a lively dance that highlights the composer's flair for rhythmic vitality.

Johann Sebastian Bach

(1685-1750)

J. S. Bach is one of the most influential and celebrated figures in Western music history. Bach was born in Eisenach, Germany, into an extremely musical family. He was orphaned at the age of ten, and was raised by his older brother Johann Christoph. Bach's career unfolded across several important time periods. While working in Weimar, Germany, he honed his skills as an organist and composer, producing many of his early cantatas and organ works. Moving to Cöthen marked a shift toward secular (non-religious) instrumental music, yielding masterpieces such as the "Brandenburg Concertos", "Well-Tempered Clavier", and the "Cello Suites". Bach finally moved to Leipzig, where he worked as a music director. His "St. Matthew's Passion" and "Art of the Fugue" were written during this time.

Air (Orchestra Suite in D)



The "Air" is the serene second movement of Bach's "Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D major", likely composed in the late 1720s during his years in Leipzig. Written for strings and continuo, the movement begins with a single, continuous melodic line floating over a gently pulsing bass, creating a beautiful and lyrical moment in this gorgeous piece.

Partita No. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1004

Sarabande

Gigue

Composed between 1717 and 1720, Bach's "Violin Partita No. 2 in D minor" forms part of his celebrated set of Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin. Each are comprised of dance movements, with this particular performance featuring the final two movements, the Sarabande (a personal favorite of mine) and the Gigue.

A "Sarabande" is a slow and somber dance movement in three. This movement features a number of stacked chords, where the performer plays multiple notes on the violin at once. The "Gigue" is a fast dance movement, that showcases the performer's virtuosity and command of the instrument. You'll surely love these beautiful movements!

Fugue in Eb, BWV 552.2

Bach's "Fugue in E-flat major" is the final piece in his 1739 publication of Clavier-Übung III, a collection deeply shaped by Christian symbolism of threes. The fugue itself is built around the number three—three flats, three subjects (themes), and three large sections—an intentional theological gesture. Its opening theme resembles the English hymn tune "St. Anne", which later inspired the work's familiar nickname. The piece itself uses five voices that are continuously combined in increasingly complex ways.

Early Hungarian Dances

Intrada

Chorea

Ferenc Farkas
(1905-2000)

Ferenc Farkas was one of the most influential Hungarian composers of the 20th century, known for a style that blends both early music and Hungarian folk traditions. Born in 1905, he studied composition in Budapest before moving to Rome to study with Ottorino Respighi. Over his long and prolific career, he wrote in nearly every genre, producing more than 700 works ranging from orchestral and chamber music to choral pieces, operas, and film scores.



Farkas's "Early Hungarian Dances" from the 17th Century is a suite based on Hungarian melodies written by anonymous composers and preserved in old tablature sources. This performance includes two movements, the "Intrada" - the lovely and ceremonial opening of the suite, and the "Chorea" - a simply beautiful and flowing dance.

Rhapsody no. 2 for Solo Violin

Jessie Montgomery
(b. 1981)

Jessie Montgomery is a widely celebrated American composer, violinist, and educator whose music blends classical tradition with elements improvisation and social consciousness. Raised on New York's Lower East Side, Montgomery studied violin at Juilliard and later earned a master's degree in composition from NYU. Her works are performed around the world by leading ensembles, and she has been recognized with major honors including the Leonard Bernstein Award and the Sphinx Medal of Excellence. Today, Montgomery is regarded as one of the most distinctive and important voices in 21st-century American music.

Montgomery's "Rhapsody No. 2 for Solo Violin" blends bold virtuosity with moments of lyricism. Rapid passages and quick rhythmic bursts flow into a beautiful lyrical middle section before bringing the listener back to a fiery end.



Air

Toccato

Florence Price (1887-1953)

Florence Price (1887–1953) was a pioneering American composer whose music blends European classical traditions with spirituals, blues, and folk influences. Born in Arkansas, she trained at the New England Conservatory before building her career in Chicago, where she became the first African American woman to have a symphony performed by a major U.S. orchestra when the Chicago Symphony premiered her Symphony No. 1 in 1933. Her catalog spans symphonies, concertos, chamber works, choral music, and piano pieces. Though her music was long overlooked, the rediscovery of many manuscripts in 2009 sparked a major revival of her masterful works.

Price's "Air" and "Toccato" come from her Suite No. 1 for Organ. The "Air" unfolds with a graceful melody supported by warm, flowing harmonies. In contrast, the "Toccato" provides a brilliant, high-energy finale, driven by rapid figures and textures that showcase Price's command of color and rhythmic vitality.



Meditation

Cécile Chaminade (1857-1954)

Cécile Chaminade was a French composer and pianist who was one of the most celebrated women musicians of her time. Trained privately in Paris, she built a successful career as both a performer and composer, earning particular acclaim for her piano pieces, songs, and her Concertino for flute. In 1913 she became the first female composer awarded the Légion d'Honneur. Though her music later fell from fashion, today it is enjoying a welcome revival, revealing a distinctive voice marked by charm, clarity, and refined craftsmanship.



"Meditation" is the sixth piece in her Songs Without Words, Op. 76, published around 1893. Originally written for solo piano, it has since been arranged for other instruments, including flute, violin, and organ. "Meditation" is lyrical and intimate, built around a flowing melodic line that gently unfolds. Its character is reflective rather than dramatic, and showcases Chaminade's elegant and sensitive writing style.

La Fille aux Cheveux de Lin

Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

Claude Debussy transformed modern music with his emphasis on tone color and subtle harmonic innovation. Often linked to Impressionism, a term that he himself resisted, he crafted sound worlds inspired by poetry, nature, and global musical traditions. Through works like “La Mer”, Debussy’s music brings the listener on a journey that evokes a feeling or impression of the subject rather than a direct image of it.

Debussy’s “La Fille aux Cheveux de Lin” (“The Girl with the Flaxen Hair”) is the eighth prelude from Book I, composed in 1909–1910. Inspired by a poem by Leconte de Lisle, the piece evokes a world of innocence and gentility. Debussy uses simple folk-like melodies and inviting harmonies create a beautiful and tender sound. You are sure to love this calm and tender piece.



Three American Folk Hymns

Wondrous Love

Land of Rest

Foundation

John Weaver

(1937-2021)

American composer and organist John Weaver's career shaped generations of church musicians and concert organists. A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music and Union Theological Seminary, he served for 35 years as Director of Music at Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City. Weaver also led the organ departments at both the Curtis Institute and The Juilliard School, earning recognition as one of the most notable organists of the 20th century.



Originally composed for viola and organ, Weaver's "Three American Folk Hymns" offers an expressive reimagining of three beloved early American tunes: "Wondrous Love", "Land of Rest", and "Foundation." Each movement preserves the spirit of the original melodies while embellishing them with harmonic color.

Matt Wilson, Program Notes

Matt Wilson, the author of the program notes that you hopefully found illuminating and inspiring, is a violinist and violist from South Carolina. He received a Bachelor's in Music Education from Appalachian State University in Boone, NC, before teaching in the North Carolina public schools for several years. He received a Master's in Music Education from UNC Greensboro and a Ph.D. in Music Education from the University of Kansas in Lawrence, KS. He is an active researcher, often focusing on issues of gender and sexuality in music education. Dr. Wilson is currently on the faculty at Penn-Griffin School for the Arts, where he teaches history, philosophy, music theory, and music appreciation.



Dr. Wilson has been an active member of the North Carolina and Kansas Music Educators Associations. He is a member of the National Association for Music Education and the American String Teachers Association (ASTA). He is currently on the ASTA's RIA committee, continuing to share in creating inclusion and diversity within music education.