



Svyati Duo

featuring

Rebecca Hepplewhite, Cello

&

Julian Collings, Organ

Friday, October 30th at 7:30 PM

Christ United Methodist Church

Pēteris Vasks (b. 1946)

Born in Latvia, Pēteris Vasks is one of the most distinguished contemporary composers of the Baltic region. Vasks is the son of a Baptist minister and grew up during the Soviet era. Many of his works reflect themes of spirituality, freedom, and nature. His music combines lyricism with emotional intensity, often drawing inspiration from the landscapes and folk traditions of his homeland.



Musique du Soir

Vasks is known for his music that showcases his connections to nature. Written for cello and organ, *Musique du Soir* ("Evening Music") is a meditation on stillness and contemplation. The work captures the quiet beauty of twilight with long, singing lines in the cello floating above organ's harmonies, creating an atmosphere of serenity and introspection.

Russell Hepplewhite (b. 1982)

British composer Russell Hepplewhite studied composition and piano at the Royal College of Music. He has written for opera, chamber music, choral music, and pieces for young performers, and he has received particular recognition for his operas “Laika the Spacedog” and “Shackleton's Cat”. Hepplewhite uses colorful harmonies and vivid imagery that bring his music to life.

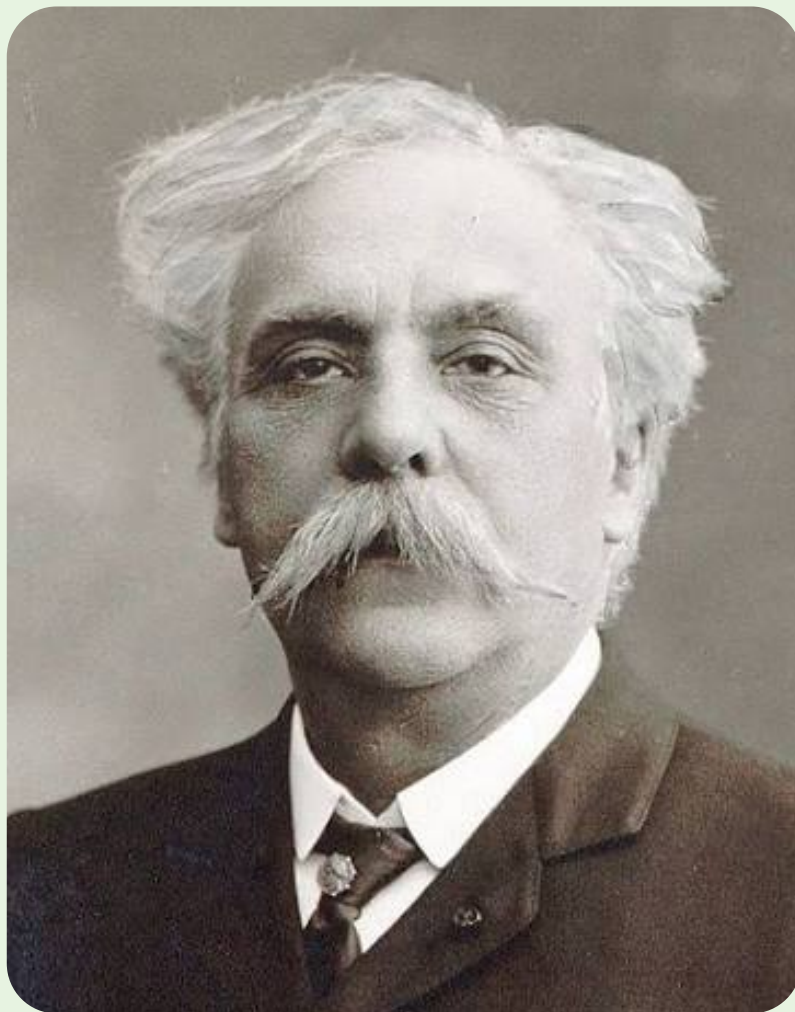
Two Invisible Landscapes

Two Invisible Landscapes explores landscapes that exist not in geography but in memory and imagination, making this music almost a neo-impressionist work. The contrasting movements create musical pictures through changing tone, textures, and mood. Movement between the organ and cello help to create the landscape imagery that is unique to each listener.



Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Gabriel Fauré is among the most influential French composers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Educated at the École Niedermeyer in Paris, he became a respected organist, teacher, ultimately landing him as the Director of the Paris Conservatoire. Fauré's music is admired for its elegance, harmonic language, and sense of refinement.



Papillon

Composed in 1884, Papillon ("Butterfly") is one of Fauré's most delightful character pieces. Originally written for cello and piano, it sparkles with lightness and agility, capturing the fluttering movement suggested by its title. The work remains a favorite among cellists for its combination of technical brilliance and unmistakable French grace.

Peter Mathews (b. 1944)

American composer and organist Peter Mathews has written extensively for the organ. His music often reflects a neo-romantic if flavor, using rich harmonies, expressive melodies, and plenty of atmospheric writing.

Mathews often writes music that pairs the organ with other instruments - in this case, two pieces will feature the cello!

Last Song of Summer

Written in 1986, Last Song of Summer is a meditation on the passing of a season. The music creates the image of fading sunlight and at the end of a warm summer day. The lyricism and rich harmonies create a tranquil atmosphere that allows the cello and organ to converse quietly.

Autumn Nocturne

In contrast to the warmth of summer, Autumn Nocturne embodies the rich color and calm beauty of autumn evenings. The work begins with an expansive melody that gradually develops toward the climax of the work before falling into its peaceful conclusion.



Eric Sweeney (1948-2020)

One of Ireland's most prolific contemporary composers, Eric Sweeney was also an accomplished conductor, pianist, educator, and broadcaster. Born in Dublin, he studied in Ireland and England and composed across a broad range of genres, including orchestral, chamber, choral, and operatic music. Sweeney's style balances modern harmonies with memorable melodies. Throughout his career he was a passionate advocate for music education and contemporary Irish composition, leaving a significant legacy within Ireland's musical life.

Autumn Music

Autumn Music reflects Sweeney's gift for lyrical expression and atmospheric writing. The work captures the changing mood of the season, blending thoughtful moments with passages of warmth and gentle energy.



Calvin Hampton (1938-1984)

American composer and organist Calvin Hampton is one of the most influential twentieth-century figures in organ music. Hampton gained wide recognition for his innovative recital programs and his long tenure at Calvary Episcopal Church in New York City. His compositions blend traditional forms with contemporary harmonies and often include a playful sense of experimentation. His music continues to be celebrated for its originality, imagination, and distinctive voice.



Procession through a Black Hole

Procession through a Black Hole combines cello, organ, and electronic sound to create an incredible musical journey. Rather than depicting a scientific event literally, Hampton uses the image of a black hole as a metaphor for movement through vast and mysterious space. The result is an otherworldly work filled with hypnotic textures and dramatic contrasts that pull the listener along through the ride.

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).