

# Lenten Recital Series

821 South Fourth Street Louisville, KY 40203 | [calvaryepiscopal.org](http://calvaryepiscopal.org)

## Elliot Eckel

### Piano Recital

March 24, 2021; 12:05 pm

Jeux d'eau

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Variations on an Original Theme, Op. 21 No. 1

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

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Elliot has been singing at Calvary for over three years as a baritone. He grew up in Louisville, KY, and attended the U of L School of Music as a piano student, studying with Dr. Dror Biran. He has had opportunities to learn from masterclasses lead by Van Cliburn competitors such as Sean Chen and Vadym Kholodenko. Elliot joined The Collegiate Choral and Cardinal Singers directed by Dr. Kent Hatteberg, as well as the U of L Symphony Orchestra and Opera Pit Orchestra lead by Kimcherie Lloyd. Other musical interests have taken Elliot through the Appalachian Mountains to meet folk artists like Jean Ritchie, dance with the contra dancing community, and learn shape note singing in the Sacred Harp tradition.

The program presents two contrasting senses of romanticism for the piano. *Jeux d'eau* by Ravel contains two alternating themes or melodies, and is in a loosely defined sonata form, alternating among the two themes. The romantic expression of *Jeux d'eau* can be characterized by a diverse sense of coloration and texture. Ravel writes major-7th and altered-9th harmonies that are familiar to the blues and Jazz, and harmonic motion that is distant from the semantics of traditional western music theory. This language of harmony blends the themes and textures into music, taking the listener on a cascading journey through mysterious whole tones, and glittering pentatonic scales sweeping through various major-sounding modes in the key of E.

By comparison, Brahms' variations also contain melodies and textures, but the journey through them is less an evocation of the texture of water, and more so an evocation of the linguistic sense of transformation. The initial theme states a melody with saturated chords spanning many octaves which is to be transformed throughout the work. The theme is in a pair of uneven 9-bar phrases; the first phrase of each variation develops the theme by brightening the sound in D-major and A-major tonalities, then in the second phrase of each variation the theme darkens into d-minor and F-major tonalities. Some variations will include a canon in contrary motion, or a sudden change to a monophonic texture playing only one note at a time. The variations end with a small cadenza and a calm closing phrase that resolves both the harmonic and the rhythmic motion of the piece.

Music is best enjoyed when anyone can participate, and Elliot looks forward to returning to a full-strength choir and healthy community when the time is right!

