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(le) poisson rouge



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The Cathedral
Church of **Saint John**
the **Divine**



**The Cathedral Of St. John The Divine and Experiential Orchestra
In Partnership with LPR
present
Arvo Pärt's *Passio*
A Concert for Peace and Healing**



January 26 & 27, 2024

<http://bit.ly/Passio-NYC>

The Cathedral of St. John the Divine and Experiential Orchestra, in partnership with LPR, present Arvo Pärt's *Passio: A Concert for Peace and Healing* on **Friday, January 26th and Saturday, January 27th** at 8pm at the **Cathedral of St. John the Divine, 1047 Amsterdam Avenue (at 112th Street)**.

A choral prelude will be presented at 7PM by Artefact Ensemble. Tickets are \$20 - \$75 and are available at stjohndivine.org or in person at the Cathedral's box office.

Grammy-winning Experiential Orchestra and collaborators Artefact Ensemble bring their acclaimed interpretation of the music of Arvo Pärt to New York for the first time since their two sold-out concerts of the music of Arvo Pärt at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2021.

Soloists include bass-baritone Enrico Lagasca as Jesus, and tenor Haitham Haidar as Pilate. Experiential Orchestra Music Director James Blachly conducts.

At 7pm, a choral prelude of Orthodox Chant settings by Artefact Ensemble Artistic Director Benedict Sheehan invites the audience to experience an encounter with the tradition that forms the root of Arvo Pärt's religious and musical world.

This concert will be performed as an offering for peace and healing in the world.

Arvo Pärt's, *Passio: A Concert for Peace and Healing*
Music by Arvo Pärt

Enrico Lagasca, *Jesus*
Haitham Haidar, *Pilate*

With Evangelist Quartet
Elijah McCormick, *soprano*
Kate Maroney, *alto*
Oliver Mercer, *tenor*
Charles Wesley Evans, *bass*

Featuring soloists from Experiential Orchestra and Artefact Ensemble

Passio conducted by James Blachly, Experiential Orchestra Music Director
Choral Prelude conducted by Benedict Sheehan, Artefact Ensemble Artistic Director
Concept developed by Pauline Kim Harris, Experiential Orchestra Director of Artistic Planning

About The Concert

Building on the two sold-out performances of the Music of Arvo Pärt at the Met Museum in 2021, Experiential Orchestra and Artefact Ensemble join forces to perform Pärt's 1982 masterpiece *Passio* in a concert for peace and healing at the world's largest Gothic Cathedral, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

James Blachly, Music Director of Experiential Orchestra, says “we live in a turbulent and troubled time, and with this concert, we hope to provide a place of solace that transcends our sorrow and pain.”

Audience members are invited to choose between traditional seating and yoga mat options.

In 2023, as well as from 2012-2018, Arvo Pärt was recognized as the most-performed living composer in the world by Bachtrack, and performances of *Passio* in particular attract world-wide attention. His Tintinnabuli style music is understood to be uniquely suited to an experience of healing, and draws on Pärt’s deep religious devotion and the Orthodox chant tradition that informs his musical language.

The choral prelude of Orthodox chants at stations around the vast nave will be performed by Artefact Ensemble, led by acclaimed composer and conductor Benedict Sheehan. These chants also honor the celebrated ecumenical tradition of the Cathedral, and in particular the influence of Alexander Schemann and Orthodox liturgy on former Dean, James Parks Morton.

James Blachly adds: “I grew up attending the interfaith services for peace at the Cathedral, and the profound mystery and joy of the liturgy at the Cathedral has informed my career in countless ways. I want to dedicate this concert to the pursuit of peace through art and connection, and to thank The Very Reverend James Parks Morton for the interfaith and ecumenical tradition that he expanded and celebrated at the Cathedral, particularly his expansive vision in creating a full-body experience. By bringing Pärt’s music to this vast and inspiring space and inviting people to lie down as they listen, we hope to allow all who attend an experience of transcendence.”

Benedict Sheehan, Artistic Director of Artefact Ensemble, says, “It has been said that Arvo Pärt is not simply a composer of music, but that he is also, perhaps more than any other, a composer of silence. Pärt’s music is deeply connected with silence, and in particular to the composer’s profound love for the Eastern Orthodox tradition of *hesychia*, or “stillness” as it is sometimes translated.

Far from being a passive thing, a mere absence of sound or activity, *hesychia* is best understood as a silence of the heart that is assiduously cultivated through watchfulness over one’s thoughts and attentive love for others. Pärt’s music, therefore, is not simply meant to induce a kind of static calm in the listener, but it is rather meant to act as an invitation for the listener to actively focus awareness on their inner selves and on the other “selves” around them.

In order to help us all prepare for such a journey into the deep stillness of *Passio*, therefore, the singers of Artefact Ensemble and I will offer a prelude of my own arrangements of Eastern Orthodox chant—a tradition integrally bound up with the daily practice of *hesychia*. Using this music as a guide, our hope is that listeners will be able to use the prelude to quiet their minds,

focusing attention on the movements of their thoughts, and feeling their bodies simply existing in the beautiful space of St. John the Divine in the living and breathing company of others.”

Pauline Kim Harris, Director of Artistic Planning for Experiential Orchestra, says, “I look forward to gathering in this magnificent space, breathing the same air and ruminating through Part’s transcendental work in such a way that lends comfort and solace, which may open our hearts with compassion to understanding better one another.”

The Very Reverend Patrick Malloy, Phd, Dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, adds, “The Cathedral has always seen art as human participation in the creative action of God. Our great building is itself a sign of how much we value the human search for beauty. Arvo Pärt’s work, and certainly his remarkable setting of the Passion according to John, gives us an example of what beauty we human beings can achieve. And not just human beings from other times! Pärt assures us that such beauty can arise among us, even today. Pärt’s work is grounded in his deep Christian faith. Art doesn’t have to be explicitly religious to be a window into God’s creative life, but it is a happy coincidence when the two so seamlessly meet.”

“Many scholars have claimed that the John who composed the text of Pärt’s “Passio” is the same John who composed the Book of Revelation. He is often called “John the Theologian,” that is, “John the Divine.” So, what better place than this to hear the music of Arvo Pärt and text of John’s Passion coming together.”

“You are always welcome at the Cathedral.”

David Handler, owner and co-founder, Le Poisson Rouge, says, “Arguably the most spiritual work by the holiest composer of the last half century, hosted at what is by far New York’s largest sacred site, Experiential Orchestra has given us an opportunity to find the sublime at a time it seems we need it most. To commune under the towering vault, enveloped by one of the most phenomenal human-made acoustics, we’re invited to explore what is hallowed in all of us - our humanity.”

About Experiential Orchestra

Experiential Orchestra was founded by conductor James Blachly as a way to invite audiences more deeply into the sound and powerful experience of the symphony orchestra. Their Grammy®-winning world-premiere recording of Dame Ethel Smyth’s *The Prison* (1930) was critically acclaimed in *The New York Times*, *Gramophone*, *The New Yorker*, *The Guardian*, and many other publications. Their recording of the music of Julia Perry and Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson is set for release in March, 2024.

Musicians are top-tier New York freelancers, top-level soloists, and acclaimed string quartet members. The orchestra was founded on collaborations and co-creations between a generous

spirit of celebration, and each curated performance is an exploration of “a new experience of sound” for audience members. As quoted in Symphony Magazine, Blachly says, “We try and keep it fresh for everybody. We are not trying to displace the standard concert experience, but invite people in so that when they next attend a traditional concert they hear things differently.” For more information, please visit www.experientialorchestra.com.

About The Cathedral

Over one hundred years ago, the trustees of the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine conceived its mission to be a house of prayer for all people, an instrument of church unity, and a center of intellectual light and leading in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

Today, as the mother church of the Episcopal Diocese of New York and the seat of its bishop, the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine serves the many diverse people of our diocese, city, nation, and world through the worship of God; pastoral, educational and community outreach activities; cultural and civic events; international ecumenical initiatives; and the preservation of the great architectural and historic site that is its legacy.

About Artefact Ensemble

Hailed as “seamless” and “technically flawless” (Musical America) Artefact Ensemble brings together leading vocal artists from New York and around the country to craft immersive experiences of human connection through the transforming power of song. Partnering with schools, community organizations, and religious institutions, Artefact Ensemble — in collaboration with its sister organization, Artefact Institute — also offers workshops, masterclasses, culture creation events, and co-operative music-making experiences to students, teachers of music, music ministers, and underprivileged audiences who might not otherwise have access to high-level ensemble music. The ensemble “shone” (The New Criterion) and “stopped time” (Bachtrack) in their sold-out world premiere performances of Arvo Pärt’s O Holy Father Nicholas on the Met Museum’s LiveArts series in 2021.

Artefact’s 2023-24 season includes a free-of-charge summer choral program for high school students in Bethlehem, PA; the world premiere performances of Benedict Sheehan’s oratorio Akathist at Trinity Church Wall Street with The Choir of Trinity Wall Street, NOVUS NY, Downtown Voices, Trinity Youth Chorus, and conductor Elaine Kelly; performances of Arvo Pärt’s Passio with James Blachly and the Experiential Orchestra at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine; concerts and workshops in Louisville and Washington DC with music by Aaron Copland, Caroline Shaw, Trevor Weston, Benedict Sheehan and others; and a “Worship Experience” program at the Southern Regional conference of the American Choral Directors’ Association (ACDA). Learn more about Artefact Ensemble at artefactensemble.org

About LPR Presents

Owned by co-founder and composer David Handler, Le Poisson Rouge (LPR) first opened its doors in 2008 in the space that was once home to Art D'Lugoff's historic venue, The Village Gate. After composing and performing from a young age, Handler has used his classical training background to make a lasting mark on New York's music scene while seamlessly incorporating diverse and daring programming. With LPR Presents, the venue's promotional arm, the team at Le Poisson Rouge also purveys its mission of eclecticism outside of LPR's home base in Greenwich Village. Established almost simultaneously with the founding of the venue, LPR Presents has served as a means of presenting ground-breaking acts across the city, as well as in Miami Beach, with its same tenacity and discovery-centric approach. Some notable past LPR Presents performances include Nils Frahm, Tove Lo, Meshell Ndegeocello, Action Bronson, Ólafur Arnalds, Adrienne Lenker (of Big Thief), Herbie Hancock, Sunn O))), Jóhannn Jóhannsson, Darkside, Jeff Goldblum, Liars, and Kishi Bashi.

Enrico Lagasca

Filipino-American bass-baritone Enrico Lagasca has traveled long musical distances in his career – comprising 16 oratorios, 17 new-music works, seven opera roles plus 13 song cycles and collections. Heard on four Grammy Award-nominated recordings, Enrico is both a solo and ensemble singer in settings as diverse as New York's mission-specific TENET Vocal Artists and major orchestras under conductors such as Riccardo Muti, Zubin Mehta, Pablo Heras-Casado, Nicholas McGegan, Jane Glover, John Butt, John Nelson, Matthew Halls and Carl St. Clair.

Amid the wide-ranging demands of his repertoire, critics note that Enrico is readily heard: “Bass-baritone Enrico Lagasca summoned nearly as much volume as everyone else onstage put together, and matched that visceral force with vivid phrasing,” wrote Baltimore's Tim Smith regarding the U.S. premiere of the Jonathan Dove opera *The Monster in the Maze* by the Baltimore Choral Arts Society.

Other performances have been noted for their emotional magnitude. “Lagasca's singing was an outpouring of devotion and grief as elegant as it was moving.” wrote Rick Perdian in *Seen and Heard International* regarding Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* at New York's Saint Thomas Church in New York.

Haitham Haidar

Haitham Haidar is a Lebanese-Palestinian Canadian tenor praised for his 'musical and linguistic versatility' and his 'bright' and 'innately lyrical voice.' Haitham enjoys performing oratorio, opera, and chamber music across North America, Europe, and Asia. He is a proud member of Kaleidoscope Vocal Ensemble, a group that develops opportunity for music excellence and diversity to exist in one space.

Haitham's approach to performance has always been humanity first. Being an Arab immigrant in North America comes with its unique set of oppressive challenges and it is because of that and

what he sees around him in the field, that he aims to touch people's hearts with music and compassion and make change in the world the best way he knows how.

For More Information

<http://bit.ly/Passio-NYC>

<http://www.lpr.com>

<http://stjohndivine.org>

<http://www.experientialorchestra.com>

<http://artefactensemble.org>

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