

The **Solaris Duo** was formed in 2008 and has since thrilled audiences throughout Europe with their dynamic style and versatile programming. Saxophonist Joel Diegert and pianist Mariam Vardzelashvili enjoy introducing audiences to the possibilities of their uncommon instrumental ensemble. First-time listeners are often surprised by the saxophone's flexible and varied sound in a non-jazz setting.

The duo is a major proponent for contemporary music, dedicated to expanding their available repertoire, exploring new forms of expression.



Joel Diegert comes from upstate New York, and completed a Master's degree before moving to Paris in 2008 to continue his studies. Joel has been successful in national and international competitions, having won the 2006 North American Saxophone Alliance solo competition, and prizes in the 2009 Saxiana Chamber Music Competition, and 2011 Jean-Marie Londeix Saxophone Competition held in Thailand. Joel's writing about the saxophone has appeared in the American bi-monthly publication, *The Saxophone Journal*.

Mariam Vardzelashvili was born in Georgia and studied at the Tbilisi State Conservatory. She gave her first performance with the Georgian National TV and Radio Broadcasting Orchestra at the age of 10. Ten years later she moved to the United States to complete her Bachelor's and Master's degrees and then continued her world tour in France to study with Icelandic pianist Edda Erlendsdóttir. She has been an active performer since then both as a soloist and a collaborative artist, with extensive experience in solo vocal instrumental, and choral music.

