



PRESENT

OTHER MESSIAHS

Friday December 5th 2025 - 7pm (6.15pm pre-concert talk) - Plymouth Church - Seattle

PROGRAM

Arvo PÄRT
(born 1935)

Berliner Messe
for SATB chorus and string orchestra

1. Kyrie
2. Gloria
3. Erster Alleluia vers zum Weihnachtsfest - (JB)
4. Zweiter Alleluia vers zum Weihnachtsfest - (JH)
5. Veni Sancte Spiritus
6. Credo
7. Sanctus
8. Agnus Dei

INTERMISSION

Camille SAINT-SAËNS
(1835–1921)

Oratorio de Noël Op. 12
for soli, chorus, organ, harp and string orchestra

1. Prélude
2. Et pastores erant - (DK, EC, CA, RWS) (*)
— Gloria in altissimis Deo
3. Expectans expectavi - (MP)
4. Domine, ego credidi - (JB)
5. Benedictus qui venit - (NI, JH)
6. Quare fremuerunt gentes
7. Tecum principium - (BH, MM, RWS)
8. Alleluia. Laudate cæli - (MB, KP, KW, BG)
9. Consurge, Filia Sion - (GDC, CA, MP, EC, GB)
10. Tollite hostias

(*) "Vocal soloists are indicated above by initials. See full list on page 12."

EMERALD ENSEMBLE & GARY D. CANNON *chorus master*

SEATTLE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA & LORENZO MARASSO *conductor*

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Berliner Messe [*Berlin Mass*]
(1990, orchestrated 1997, revised 2002 and 2005)

by **Arvo Pärt**
(born 1935)

Program Notes

The piano in Arvo Pärt's childhood home was damaged in the middle register, so he played around with the top and bottom notes instead. Hence even at an early age, the great Estonian composer was exploring unusual sonorities. While at the Tallinn Conservatory, he studied with Heino Eller, a commendable but conservative composer, and worked as a sound engineer for Estonian Radio. But Pärt remained drawn to the more experimental trends of European music. For example, his earliest works include the orchestral *Nekrolog* (1960), written in the twelve-tone serialist method, and *Solfeggio* (1963), in which the chorus only sings "Do, re, mi," etc., displaced in various octaves. Pärt's *Credo* (1968), scored for piano, chorus, and orchestra, drew the most attention with its polystylistic collage technique that incorporates a quote from Bach, strict serialism in pitch and rhythm, tone clusters, aleatoric music (certain variables being extemporaneously chosen by the performers), and extended vocal techniques such as whispers and shouts. The work was condemned by Soviet musical authorities for its foreign influence.

In the wake of such criticism, Pärt fell into a creative crisis, deeming modernism to be an artistic dead end. So he devoted his energies to composing film scores, especially for documentaries and animations, and to studying music of the distant past: Gregorian chant, the Notre Dame composers of the twelfth century, and medieval and Renaissance masters. He also converted to the Russian Orthodox church in 1972. From this period of introspection he emerged in 1977 with a whole new style of composition, which he called the "tintinnabuli" method because, as the conductor and biographer Paul Hillier writes, "the sounds ... reminded him of the way in which the sound of a bell lingers in the air after it has been wrung." Pärt's is a simple process, on the surface. One melodic line (which he called the "M-voice") moves usually stepwise, while a tintinnabuli line (the "T-voice") sings only the three pitches of a tonic triad. Both parts are homorhythmic (meaning they move at the same time). The music never strays from its implied home key. And that's about it! To Pärt, this simple style holds great symbolism: "The M-voice always signifies the subjective world, the daily egoistic life of sin and suffering; the T-voice, meanwhile, is the objective realm of forgiveness. The M-voice may appear to wander, but it is always held firmly by the T-voice."

His early tintinnabuli works took the world by storm, especially *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten* (1977) for string orchestra and bell; *Fratres* (1977) for any three instruments; the unaccompanied choral *Summa* (1977); *Tabula rasa* (1977) for two violins, piano, and strings; and *Spiegel im Spiegel* (1978) for violin and piano. In 1979, he gave an ironic award-acceptance speech at a meeting of the Estonian Composers' Union, and the Soviet musical authorities subsequently asked him to leave the country. Feeling hemmed in by the country's prevailing musical trends, he was only too happy to oblige. After a period in Vienna, Pärt and his family settled in West Berlin in 1981. For a time he focused his efforts mostly on choral music to sacred texts, as in *De profundis* (1980) for men's chorus and organ, and the hour-long *Passio* (1982), the first large-scale tintinnabuli work. He thus came to be lumped together with John Tavener and Henryk Górecki as the "holy minimalists." The term was meant as a pejorative, but came to

describe one of the most prominent movements in late-twentieth-century classical music.

Pärt's popularity was bolstered by two important new professional relationships. First, the esteemed music publisher Universal Edition agreed to publish his forthcoming music. Second, ECM Records produced a bevy of premiere recordings, especially of sacred choral works performed by the Hilliard Ensemble. Many were extended works with orchestra or instrumental ensemble—such as *Stabat Mater* (1985), *Te Deum* (1985), and *Miserere* (1989)—but he became especially renowned for shorter, mostly unaccompanied works like *Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen* (1988), *Magnificat* (1989), and *The Beatitudes* (1990).

In 1990, Pärt received a commission to write a new work for the ninetieth Katholikentag, a festival assembly of German-speaking Catholics held periodically since 1848. In this particular year, it took place in Berlin, as the first Katholikentag since the fall of the Berlin Wall. The result was the *Berliner Messe* for four solo voices and organ, premiered at St. Hedwig's Cathedral by the Theatre of Voices, conducted by Paul Hillier. It was originally conceived for Pentecost, including two Alleluia verses and the "Veni Sancte Spiritus" hymn dedicated to that holy day. Later he created alternate Alleluia verses for Christmas; this is the version we will perform today. In 1997, Pärt re-worked the *Berliner Messe* for full chorus and string orchestra. He further revised the work in 2002, and three years later wrote the so-called "Matzelsdorf" version of the "Credo," evidently named after an historic Alpine village in southern Austria.

This was not Pärt's first setting of the Mass text: there was the early modernist Credo and also the *Missa syllabica* (1977), one of his earliest tintinnabuli works. The *Berliner Messe* maintains several characteristics common to Pärt's style: the text is mostly set syllabically (when there is only one pitch per syllable), the musical phrases are short, the tempo is consistent and predominantly slow, and the dynamics are mostly soft. Contemplation reigns supreme. Silence is important. The *Berliner Messe* exemplifies the "economy of expression" that Pärt has spoken of. Hillier suggests a link to Russian icon painting, "particularly the nature of its expressiveness and its spiritual meaning. It is as if the work of music is itself a gesture, even though it appears to contain none."

Let us consider the "Kyrie" in some detail. The voices are essentially unaccompanied, while the strings supply interjections that offset each line of text. Under the strings, a pedal note—sustained octave Gs in the double basses—ground the whole harmony. The alto and bass are the M-voices, moving always stepwise, sometimes offset by an octave and a third. Meanwhile, the T-voices of soprano and tenor sing only the pitches of a G minor triad, albeit leaping about in different registers. The altos begin, then a single voice is added for each word; this process is reversed for the central "Christe eleison." The second "Kyrie" section is identical to the first except for the initial soprano T-line, and that the sopranos and tenors trade lines thereafter. The accented syllable is always given two notes, the second being prolonged, and there is always a pause between words. In all of these ways Pärt creates a unique texture within his tintinnabuli style. By the way, attentive film-goers may recognize this "Kyrie" from *Avengers: Age of Ultron* (2015).

Obviously such a detailed analysis of every movement would be tedious for the purposes of this program note. But it

is useful to know that Pärt modifies his signature method for each movement, while always preserving the interplay of M-voice and T-voice. Note how he treats the strings and voices sometimes separately, but sometimes in mutual support, during the “Gloria.” The two “Alleluia” verses feature chant-like solo lines that fit perfectly within the tintinnabuli world, also reinforcing how this Mass could easily be performed within the liturgical service. Each stanza of the “Veni Sancte Spiritus” prayer is handled separately, but they are subtly linked, partly through a prevailing triple time that fits the poetic scansion (or implied rhythm). Only during the final verse do all the voices sing.

The “Credo” is more lively; though Pärt’s scores generally omit tempo markings, some authority is given to the first recordings, which the composer routinely advised. Pärt avoids some of the standard interpretations of this text—such as a slowing of tempo and softening of dynamic for “Et incarnatus”—but the interplay of voices and strings, careful handling of dissonance (note the juicy onset at “Crucifixus”), varied phrase-lengths, and subtle shifts of dynamic all serve to provide an engaging variety.

The sopranos are absent during the “Sanctus,” while the strings’ brief, separated notes offset the choir’s lyricism. For the concluding “Agnus Dei,” each of the text’s three statements is managed differently in the voices: first, tenors are the T-voice with the pitches from an E major triad; the M-voice is sopranos. They trade for the second statement. At the third, the lower voices are identical to the upper, but offset by one beat. The strings supply pedal tones throughout. Each movement of the *Berliner Messe* has its own characteristic handling of the tintinnabuli style, based on the exigencies of its text.

After the *Berliner Messe*, Arvo Pärt went from strength to strength. His tintinnabuli style has steadily matured. The flurry of popular unaccompanied choral works continued; my favorites are *I am the true vine* (1996), *Tribute to Caesar* (1997), and *Which was the son of...* (2000). Larger-scale works have emerged as well, such the *Fourth Symphony* (2009), written for the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the Grammy-winning *Adam’s Lament* (2010) for chorus and strings. Pärt also became more politically engaged, especially in Russian affairs: he devoted all his 2006–7 performances to the murdered journalist Anna Politkovskaya, and he dedicated the Fourth Symphony to Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the then-imprisoned (now exiled) anti-Putin businessman.

Since his return to Estonia in 2010, Pärt has composed few original works, mostly revising or re-arranging his earlier music for different forces. He has received thirteen honorary doctorates, plus civic honors from France, Britain, Denmark, Japan, and the Vatican. The online database Bachtrack calculates that Pärt has been the most performed living composer in almost every year since 2010, though John Williams bested him a few times. Surely Pärt will gain that accolade again this year, as the world celebrates his ninetieth birthday. He has also established a museum and research center dedicated to his music in the coastal village of Laulasmaa, west of Tallinn. Appropriately, this Arvo Pärt Centre, which is open to the public, includes a Russian Orthodox chapel. As the composer has said: “Religion influences everything. Not just music, but everything.”

by Dr. Gary D. Cannon

1. Kyrie

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

2. Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo
et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis.
Laudamus te, benedicimus te,
adoramus te, glorificamus te,
Gratias agimus tibi
propter magnam gloriam tuam,
Domine Deus, Rex cælestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.
Domine Fili Unigenite, Jesu Christe,
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris,
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis;
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus,
tu solus Dominus,
tu solus Altissimus,
Jesu Christe, cum Sancto Spiritu:
in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen.

3. Erster Alleluiavers zum Weihnachtsfest

Alleluia. Alleluia.
Dominus dixit ad me:
Filius meus es tu.
Ego hodie genuite.
Alleluia.

4. Zweiter Alleluiavers zum Weihnachtsfest

Alleluia. Alleluia.
Dies sanctificatus illuxit nobis:
venite gentes, et adorate Dominum:
quia hodie descendit lux magnam super terram.
Alleluia.

5. Veni Sancte Spiritus

Veni Sancte Spiritus
et emitte cælitus
lucis tuæ radium.

1. Kyrie

*Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.*

2. Gloria

*Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.
We praise you, we bless you,
we adore you, we glorify you,
we give you thanks
for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.
Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you who takes away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer. You are seated at the right hand
of the Father;
have mercy on us.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.*

3. First Alleluia Verse for Christmas Day

*Alleluia. Alleluia.
The Lord said to me:
You are my Son.
I have today begotten you.
Alleluia.*

4. Second Alleluia Verse for Christmas Day

*Alleluia. Alleluia.
The holy day dawns on us:
Come, people, and worship the Lord:
for today has descended a great light upon the earth.
Alleluia.*

5. Veni Sancte Spiritus

*Come, Holy Ghost,
and send from heaven
your light's ray.*

Veni, pater pauperum,
veni, datur munerum,
veni, lumen cordium.

Consolator optime,
dulcis hospes anime,
dulce refrigerium.

In labore requies,
in æstu temperies,
in fletu solatium.

O lux beatissima,
reple cordis intima
tuorum fidelium.

Sine tuo numine
nihil est in homine,
nihil est innoxium.

Lava, quod est sordidum,
riga, quod est aridum,
sana, quod est saucium.

Flecte, quod est rigidum,
fove, quod est frigidum,
rege, quod est devium.

Da tuis fidelibus
in te confidentibus
sacrum septenarium.

Da virtutis meritum,
da salutis exitum,
da perenne gardium.

Amen. Alleluia.

*Come, father of the poor;
come, giver of gifts;
come, light of hearts.*

*Greatest comforter,
sweet guest of the soul,
sweet consolation.*

*Rest in labor,
tempering in heat,
solace in tears.*

*O most blessed light,
fill the innermost heart
of your faithful.*

*Without your divinity
nothing is in man,
nothing is unharmed.*

*Wash that which is soiled,
water that which is arid,
heal that which is wounded.*

*Bend that which is rigid,
warm that which is cold,
rule that which has strayed.*

*Give to your faithful
who trust in you
the holy seven gifts. (*)*

*Give virtue's reward,
give salvation's result,
give eternal protection.*

Amen. Alleluia.

() In Catholic dogma, the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of God.*

6. Credo

Credo in unum Deum,
Patrem omnipotentem,
factorem cæli et terræ,
visibilium omnium et invisibilium.
Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum,
Filius Dei Unigenitum,
et ex Patre natum ante omnia sæcula.
Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine,
Deum verum de Deo vero,
genitum, non factum,
consubstantialem Patri:

6. Credo

*I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Son of God, Only Begotten,
of the Father born before all ages.
God from God, light from light,
true God from true God,
born, not made,
of one substance with the Father;*

per quem omnia facta sunt.
 Qui propter nos homines
 et propter nostram salutem
 descendit de cælis.
 Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto
 ex Maria Virgine, et homo factus est.
 Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato;
 passus et sepultus est.
 Et resurrexit tertia die,
 secundum Scripturas.
 Et ascendit in cælum,
 sedet at dexteram Patris.
 Et iterum venturus est cum gloria,
 iudicare vivos et mortuos,
 cuius regni non erit finis.
 Et in Spiritum Sanctum,
 Dominum et vivificantem:
 qui ex Patre Filioque procedit.
 Qui cum Patre et Filio
 simul adoratur et conglorificatur:
 qui locutus est per prophetas.
 Et unam, sanctam, catholicam
 et apostolicam Ecclesiam.
 Confiteor unum baptisma
 in remissionem peccatorum.
 Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum,
 et vitam venturi sæculi. Amen.

7. Sanctus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
 Pleni sunt cæli et terra gloria tua.
 Hosanna in excelsis.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
 Hosanna in excelsis.

8. Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
 miserere nobis.
 Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
 miserere nobis.
 Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
 dona nobis pacem.

*through him all things were made.
 For us humans
 and for our salvation
 he came down from heaven.
 And he was made flesh by the Holy Spirit
 through the Virgin Mary, and became human.
 He was crucified for our sake under Pontius Pilate;
 he died and was buried.
 And he rose again on the third day
 in accordance with the Scriptures.
 And he ascended into heaven,
 seated at the right hand of the Father.
 And he will come again in glory
 to judge the living and the dead;
 his kingdom will have no end.
 I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the Lord, and the giver of life,
 who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
 who with the Father and the Son
 is adored and glorified,
 who has spoken through the prophets.
 And in one, holy, catholic
 and apostolic Church.
 I confess one Baptism
 for the forgiveness of sins.
 And I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
 and life in the eternity to come. Amen.*

7. Sanctus

*Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.
 Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
 Hosanna in the highest.*

*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
 Hosanna in the highest.*

8. Agnus Dei

*Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
 have mercy on us.
 Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
 have mercy on us.
 Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
 grant us peace.*

Oratorio de Noël Op. 12 [*Christmas Oratorio*]*(1858, revised 1869)*by **Camille Saint-Saëns***(1835–1921)**Program Notes*

Like most of Europe, France suffered from a musical inferiority complex in the nineteenth century. The legacy of Germanic composers, particularly Mozart, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn, reigned supreme. But, bit by bit, the French purged the Teutonic giants to find their own way. One prominent figure in this process was Camille Saint-Saëns. Raised by his widowed mother and great-aunt, Saint-Saëns began piano lessons at age three, and just seven years later debuted as soloist in Mozart and Beethoven concertos; He even performed from memory, which was unusual at the time. He went on to study at the Paris Conservatoire, first as an organist with François Benoist, then composition under the prominent opera master Fromental Halévy. His ambitious student works included the Piano Quintet (1855?) and the “Urbs Roma” Symphony (1856). He won several prizes, though never the coveted Prix de Rome, and served as organist at Saint-Merri for four years as just a teenager. Saint-Saëns’s big break came in 1857, when, at age twenty-two, Saint-Saëns was hired to one of the most prestigious posts in Paris: that of organist at the fashionable Église de la Madeleine, where Parisian high society worshipped.

For his entire life Saint-Saëns was very quick with his pen. For example, it took him just twelve days (4–15 December 1858) to compose an *Oratorium pro nocte Nativitatis Christi* (“Oratorio for the night of the Birth of Christ”) for liturgical performance at La Madeleine that Christmas. Comprising six movements, the oratorio was initially scored for soloists, chorus, organ, and string quartet. At an unknown later date he added harp and double bass, plus four more movements (which correspond to #4, 6, 7, and 9 of the final version). Flaxland published the work around 1863; when Saint-Saëns revised it for publication by Durand in 1869, it bore a new, simpler title—*Oratorio de Noël*—and a dedication to the Vicomtesse Clémence de Grandval, a student seven years his senior. After all, it never hurts to flatter nobility.

The *Oratorio de Noël* is full of the freshness and vibrance of youth, but also of a finely honed craft. For a twenty-three-year-old whose only previously completed choral works were four sacred miniatures and a Mass (1856), Saint-Saëns displays an impressively sure hand at writing for voices. He selected the text himself from the Latin Vulgate Bible. Some of his chosen verses you may recognize from Handel’s *Messiah*, another pastiche Biblical libretto. Bach’s church cantatas are also crucial models. The opening orchestral prelude is even marked “in the style of Bach,” though its pastoral lilt owes more to the instrumental “pifa” interlude of *Messiah*. The organ is given prominence from the outset.

As one would expect from a Bach cantata, soloists then tell the Christmas story in recitative with organ alone: the shepherds are watching their flocks when an angel appears and directs them to worship the newborn Christ. At the invocation of the chorus of angels, Saint-Saëns takes another page from Handel’s book, accompanying the soloist with repeated chords in the strings. The full chorus—which takes a subsidiary role throughout the oratorio—sings as the jubilant choir of angels. Incidentally, Saint-Saëns’s manuscript reveals that he first conceived of this “Gloria” as an elaborate fugue, but after eight bars he crossed out the attempt and instead playfully sketched a winged seraphim, complete with fiery tongue above its head.

The ensuing seven movements are—as appropriate for a Bach cantata—mostly a series of arias and ensembles that meditate on the Christmas theme. The many pauses in the mezzo-soprano aria “Expectans expectavi” cleverly depict the singer’s impatience. It gives way to more lyrical lines when Christ appears. The tenor takes center stage next. Especially noteworthy are the strings’ offbeat accents whenever he invokes “Christus,” and interpolations by the angelic choir of sopranos and altos. In a duet for soprano and baritone, the soloists imitate each other’s lines against the unusual scoring for harp and organ alone.

The orchestral opening of the sixth movement is both an homage to the “Confutatis” from Mozart’s *Requiem* and a welcome moment of quasi-operatic drama. This is one of only two movements devoted exclusively to the choir, as they wonder about the fury of warring humanity—cries of “Quare?” (“Why?”) permeate the texture—then peacefully sing the Doxology (“Gloria Patri”). The trio that follows highlights the harp, with chromatic lines for the singers. A contralto soloist leads the ensuing quartet, followed by a melodious quintet with choral insertions of “Alleluia.” The oratorio closes with a paean of praise that, were it not for its uniquely French mood of pomp and grandeur, could almost be mistaken for a Lutheran chorale closing a Bach cantata. Saint-Saëns infuses his older models with a youthful vigor that adds a special spirit to the well-worn Christmas story.

And how, you may ask, did the young organist/composer proceed from there? Quite well, it turns out. Through the 1860s he gained a reputation as one of the most prominent composers, pianists, and organists in France. He attended the most chic salons in Paris. In 1861–5 he taught at École Niedermeyer, the prominent conservatory for church music, where he was much beloved by his students, including André Messager, Eugène Gigout, and especially Gabriel Fauré, to whom he remained uniquely devoted throughout his life. Charles Gounod hailed him as “the French Beethoven.” After hearing him improvise at La Madeleine, Franz Liszt called him “the greatest organist in the world.” The ever-pithy Hector Berlioz, however, slyly commented that Saint-Saëns “knows everything but lacks inexperience.” And there’s the rub: Saint-Saëns’s music was consistently well-crafted, but lacked the biting edge of originality that later audiences would come to expect.

Nevertheless, it’s great stuff: rewarding, engaging, and often downright fun. Among the orchestral music from his first flowering of maturity, I especially commend to you the *Second Piano Concerto* (1868), the *First Cello Concerto* (1873), and the *Fourth Piano Concerto* (1875). Also in the 1870s he wrote a series of symphonic poems inspired by the example of Liszt, of which *Danse macabre* (1874) remains a perennial favorite. He wrote salon music all his life: songs, chamber music including the *Piano Quartet* (1875), and piano music such as the *Variations on a Theme of Beethoven* (1874) for two pianos. He undertook two more Biblical offerings in this decade: the oratorio *Le déluge* (1875) about Noah’s flood, and the opera *Samson et Dalila* (1867–76). The latter was rather controversial, as the opera house was considered an inappropriate venue for a Bible story; only through the influence of Liszt in Weimar was it finally premiered. Saint-Saëns returned the favor by championing Liszt, as well as Schumann and Wagner, who were underappreciated in France at the time. But Saint-Saëns retained his greatest enthusiasm for homegrown talent, co-founding the Société Nationale de Musique to encourage performances of music by living French composers such as Chabrier, Dukas, Debussy, and Ravel. And he became engaged in the nascent field of musicology, editing works by Gluck, Mozart, Beethoven, and especially earlier French composers like Lully, Charpentier, and Rameau.

The year 1877 brought him financial freedom. A wealthy patron bequeathed to Saint-Saëns a substantial legacy specifically so that he could devote himself to composition. He composed a fine *Requiem* (1878) to honor his patron, left his post at La Madeleine, and took the world by storm, touring as composer, conductor, pianist, and organist, eventually to realms as distant as Scandinavia, Russia, the United States, South America, and East Asia. He contin-

ued to churn out masterworks: the *Third Violin Concerto* (1880); the unconventionally scored *Septet* (1880), which includes movements based on seventeenth-century French dance styles; and the *First Violin Sonata* (1885). *Henry VIII* (1883), based in part on Shakespeare, is perhaps his greatest opera. His two most famous works both date from 1886: the *Third Symphony*, with its prominent part for organ, written for the Philharmonic Society in London; and *Le carnaval des animaux*, which he prevented from being publicly performed or published during his lifetime out of fear that his reputation would be damaged by having written such a light-hearted parody.

After the death of his mother in 1888, Saint-Saëns began to travel even more, vacationing often in Egypt and Algeria, which was then a French possession. He was especially beloved by the English, composing a coronation march for Edward VII and receiving honorary doctorates from Cambridge and Oxford. At home he also received special honors, such as the Grande Croix of the Légion d'Honneur in 1913, but he became regarded increasingly as a reactionary voice; Debussy called him “the musician of tradition.” His compositional style became leaner, embracing modal harmonies and focusing more on woodwinds and the harp. His *Second Violin Sonata* (1896) and *Clarinet Sonata* (1921) are especially noteworthy among his late works. He continued to write incidental music for the theater, though none rose to prominence, despite some lavish premieres. And he still wrote essays of music criticism and toured as a pianist, despite paralysis in his left hand. As the twentieth century dawned, prevailing compositional trends in France left him behind. The freer harmonic approach of Fauré had spawned the so-called impressionistic music of Debussy and Ravel. Stravinsky’s primitivist ballet *The Rite of Spring* was premiered in Paris in 1913; when Saint-Saëns heard it the next year, he said he thought Stravinsky was insane. (The story of him storming out of the work’s premiere after hearing the opening bassoon solo is untrue.) Saint-Saëns died in Algiers and received a state funeral at La Madeleine. The English conductor Thomas Beecham called him “the greatest writer of second-rate music who ever lived.” But history has been kinder. Besides, Saint-Saëns was one of the principal figures who brought French music into maturity. We have much to thank him for—especially for his own marvelous music.

by Dr. Gary D. Cannon

1. Prélude dans le style de J.S. Bach

2. Et pastores erant in regione eadem vigilantes,
et custodientes vigilias noctis
super gregem suum.
Et ecce angelus Domini stetit juxta illos,
et claritas Dei circum fulsit illos;
et timuerunt timore magno.
Et dixit illis Angelus:
Nolite timere: ecce enim evangelizo vobis
gaudium magnum quod erit omni populo:
quia natus est vobis hodie
Christus Dominus in civitate David,
et hoc vobis signum:
invenietis infantem panis involutum,
et positum in præsepio.
Et subito facta est cum Angelo
multitudo militiæ coelestis
laudantium Deum, et dicentium:

1. *Prelude in the style of J.S. Bach (for orchestra)*

2. *And shepherds were in the same region, awake,
and guarding vigilantly by night
over their flock.
And behold, an angel of the Lord stood near them,
and the brightness of God shone around them,
and they were afraid with great fear.
And the angel said to them:
“Be not afraid: behold, indeed I preach to you
great joy which shall be for all people:
for he is born for you today,
Christ the Lord, in the city of David,
and this will signify him to you:
you will find an infant wrapped in cloth,
and placed in a feeding trough.”
And suddenly there was with the angel
a multitude of the heavenly assembly,
praising God and saying:*

Gloria in altissimis Deo,
et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis.

— **Luke 2:8–14**

3. Expectans expectavi Dominum:
et intendi mihi.

— **Psalm 39(40):2**

4. Domine, ego credidi
quia tu es Christus Filius Dei vivi
qui in hunc mundum venisti.

— **John 11:27**

5. Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Deus Dominus, et illuxit nobis.
Deus meus es tu, et confitebor tibi.
Deus meus es tu, et exaltabo te.

— **Psalm 117(118):26–28**

6. Quare fremuerunt gentes,
et populi meditate sunt inania.

— **Psalm 2:1**

Gloria Patri, gloria Filio,
gloria Spiritui Sancto,
sicut erat in principio, et nunc,
et semper, et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

7. Tecum principium in die virtutis tuæ,
in splendoribus Sanctorum.

— **Psalm 109(110):3**

8. Alleluia. Laudate cœli, et exulta, terra,
quia consolatus est Dominus populum suum;
et pauperum suorum miserebitur.

— **Isaiah 49:13**

9. Consurge, Filia Sion,
lauda in nocte, in principio vigiliarum.
Alleluia.

— **Lamentations 2:19**

Egrediatur ut splendor justus Sion,
et Salvator ejus ut lampas accendatur.
Alleluia.

— **Isaiah 62:1**

10. Tollite hostias, et adorate Dominum
in atrio sancto ejus.

Lætentur cœli, et exultet terra,
a facie Domini, quoniam venit.
Alleluia.

— **Psalm 95(96):8,11,13**

*“Glory in the highest to God,
and on earth peace to those of good will.”*

*3. With anticipation I waited for the Lord,
and he reached out to me.*

*4. Lord, I believe
that you are Christ, Son of the living God,
who into this world has come.*

*5. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord:
God the Lord, and he shines on us.
My God is you, and I trust in you.
My God is you, and I praise you.*

*6. Why do the nations rage,
and why are the people’s thoughts empty?*

*Glory to the Father, glory to the Son,
glory to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, and now,
and forever, and for generations of ages. Amen.*

*7. With you is the principality, in the day of your power,
in the brightness of the Saints.*

*8. Alleluia. Praise, you heavens, and rejoice, you earth;
for the Lord has comforted his people,
and will have mercy on his poor.*

*Rise up, Daughter Zion,
praise at night, at the beginning of the late watch.
Alleluia.*

*March forth to brilliance and justice, Zion;
and the Savior: he, like a lamp, illuminates.
Alleluia.*

*Raise offerings, and worship the Lord
in his holy house.*

*May the heavens rejoice, and the earth exult,
in the presence of the Lord, who comes.
Alleluia.*

EMERALD ENSEMBLE



Soprano

Clarice Alfonso
Natalie Ingrisano
Maria Männistö
Ksenia Popova

Alto

Marjorie Bunday
Erica Convery
Melissa Plagemann
Kathryn Weld

Tenor

Joel Bevington
Gary D. Cannon
Brandon Higa
Dustin Kaspar

Baritone

Gustave Blazek
Ben Grover
Jacob Herbert
Robin Wyatt-Stone



DR. GARY D. CANNON

www.cannonesque.com

is one of Seattle's most versatile choral musicians, active as conductor, musicologist, and singer. He founded the *Emerald Ensemble* in 2016, a professional chamber choir featuring the region's leading ensemble singers. Since 2008 he has served as Artistic Director of two major community choirs: the *Cascadian Chorale*, known for its wide-ranging a cappella repertoire and premieres by local composers, and the *Vashon Island Chorale*, a central part of its island's arts community. He has also conducted for *Vashon Opera* and previously led *Early Music Seattle's* Renaissance choir, *Sine Nomine*. Cannon lectures for *Seattle Symphony* and writes program notes for ensembles nationwide. His research focuses on nine centuries of music, especially twentieth-century English composers. A California native, he holds degrees from *UC Davis* and the *University of Washington*.

EMERALD ENSEMBLE

The Emerald Ensemble provides a unique concert experience: truly a choir of soloists.

The Emerald Ensemble is a professional chamber choir made up of many of the Seattle area's finest vocal artists. Most of its singers are full-time freelance musicians whose work spans opera, oratorio, recitals, cathedral liturgies, conducting, university teaching, arts administration, and instrumental performance. Every singer brings both exceptional solo ability and refined ensemble skill, resulting in performances that unite individual artistry with deep collaborative sensitivity.

Founded in 2016, the ensemble is led by its Artistic Director and conductor, Dr. Gary D. Cannon. The choir performs a wide range of music from the Western classical tradition, championing both beloved masterworks and unjustly neglected repertoire. Beyond traditional concerts, the Emerald Ensemble is committed to bringing meaningful musical experiences to places where the arts seldom reach, including hospice and senior-living communities, schools, and unhoused neighbors.

The Emerald Ensemble's mission is to enlighten the mind, uplift the heart, and enrich the soul through great choral music presented with passion and skill.

For more information, or to join our mailing list, visit www.emeraldensemble.org.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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John Kim
Ruth Marie Ballance
Michelle Witt

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HyeKyung Seo
Pamela Liu
Leah Anderson

Viola

Leslie Johnson
Aleida Gerhels
Maria Ritzenthaler

Cello

Jared Ballance
Rose Bellini
Soohyun Juhn

Bass

Attila Kiss
Sean Casey

Harp

Kelly Hou

Organ

Stef Price



LORENZO MARASSO

www.lorenzomarasso.com

is an impassioned and sympathetic conductor, concert pianist, chamber musician, educator, and radio host. Dubbed, by Mexican American pianist Ana Cervantes, the *king of repertoire* Lorenzo's creative and intrepid programming spans centuries and continents, often revealing lesser-known masterpieces and rarely performed arrangements. Lorenzo's performances have been broadcast in numerous media outlets, including Seattle's *98.1 Classical King FM* and *NPR*. In 2021 Lorenzo founded the *Seattle Chamber Orchestra* (SCO) and is serving now as the ensemble's music director. Lorenzo was born in Torino, Italy and graduated from the *Conservatorio di Milano* in 1994. The same year, he enrolled in the postgraduate program at the *Royal Academy of Music* in London, where he also studied orchestral conducting. Lorenzo currently lives in Seattle and is serving as Music and Artistic Director of the *SCO*.

SEATTLE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

PRESENTS

2025-2026 SEASON

BERBERIO BASH - *To celebrate the 100 years of Luciano Berio and Cathy Berberian*

Friday October 24th, 2025, 8pm - The Chapel at Good Shepherd, Wallingford, Seattle

Music by L. Berio, J. Cage, L. Dallapiccola, G.F. Ghedini, C. Monteverdi

"OTHER" MESSIAHS - *Seattle Chamber Orchestra in collaboration with Emerald Ensemble*

Friday December 5th, 2025, 7pm - Plymouth Church

Music by A. Part, C. Saint-Saens

CONTEMPORARIES OF MOZART - *w/ Danny Holt piano and Eleanor Legault violin*

Friday February 6th, 2026, 7pm - Faith Lutheran Church

Music by J. Boulogne, L. Boccherini, J. Kozeluch

SUNDAY CHAMBER MUSIC AT SCO/1 - *w/ Leslie Johnson viola & Lorenzo Marasso piano*

Sunday March 1st, 2026, 3pm - Faith Lutheran Church

Music by D. Shostakovich, B. Britten, G. Faure'

SUNDAY CHAMBER MUSIC AT SCO/2 - *w/ Eleanor Legault violin & Lorenzo Marasso piano*

Sunday March 29th, 2026, 3pm - Faith Lutheran Church

Music by E. Mayer, L. V. Beethoven, J. Brahms, N. Campogrande

JAZZ AT SCO - *"If you don't know what it is, then it's jazz" (Alessandro Baricco in "Novecento")*

Saturday April 18th, 2026, 7pm - David Corry House

Music by C. Bolling, L. Einaudi, P. Glass, S. Joplin, Radiohead

METAMORPHOSIS - *Celebrating the ever-changing essence of SCO!*

Friday May 1st, 2026, 7pm - The Chapel at Good Shepherd, Wallingford, Seattle

Music by O. Respighi, N. Borenstein, R. Strauss

LA VOIX HUMAINE - *A chamber opera by Jean Cocteau and Francis Poulenc*

Saturday June 6th, 2026, 7pm - David Corry House

Music by F. Poulenc

(every concert is preceded by a pre-concert talk starting 45 minutes prior to concert time)

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