Cascadian Chorale — March 2026

Pick a Mass!

Program Notes

Kyrie — Mass for Double Choir (1922)	Frank Martin (1890–1974)
Gloria — *The Western Wynde* Mass (c.1530?)	John Taverner (c.1490–1545)
Credo — Missa *L'homme armé* [a4] (1582)	Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c.1525–1594)
Sanctus — Missa brevis (2024) *world premiere performances*	Max Marcus (b.1993)
Agnus Dei — Missa *Bell' Amfitrit' altera* (c.1583)	Orlande de Lassus (c.1532–1594)

intermission

Kyrie — Missa *Ascendens Christus in altum* (1592)	Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548–1611)
Gloria — Mass in the Dorian Mode (1912)	Herbert Howells (1892–1983)
Credo — Mass in G minor (1921)	Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)
Sanctus and Benedictus — Chichester Mass (1974)	William Albright (1944–1998)
Agnus Dei — Mass in E♭, op.109, *Cantus Missæ* (1878)	Joseph Rheinberger (1839–1901)

1. Kyrie

Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison. Kyrie eleison.	Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

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.	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. Thanks we give you for your great glory, Lord God, King of heaven, God the Father all-powerful. Lord, only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; who takes away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; who sits at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are holy, you alone are Lord, you alone are highest, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

3. Credo

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, factorem cæli et terræ, visibilium omnium et invisibilium, et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium 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: 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, judicare vivos et mortuos, cujus 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	I believe in one God, the Father all-powerful, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father; through whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation descended from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the virgin Mary, and became man. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; he died and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and he ascended into heaven, to sit at the right hand of the Father. And again he will come with glory, to judge the living and the dead, he whose kingdom will have no end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is also adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. And in one holy, catholic, and apostolic church. I confess one baptism

in remissionem peccatorum, et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum, et vitam venturi sæculi. Amen.	for the forgiveness of sins, and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life in the time to come. Amen.

4. Sanctus – Benedictus

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.	Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of the heavenly assembly, full are the heavens and earth with your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

5. 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.	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.

Kyrie, from **Mass for Double Choir** (1922)
by **Frank Martin** (1890–1974)

Frank Martin was born in Geneva. (So please pronounce his name with nasalized French vowels, not in the dull fashion of the American accent. Thank you.) Most great composers of the twentieth century attended one of the world's many fine conservatories, but not Martin, who studied music on the side while attending university for mathematics and physics at the request of his parents. He was still figuring out his personal compositional style when he wrote his Mass, not for public performance but as "a matter between God and myself." The son of a Calvinist minister, Martin had struggled with his faith, and so the Mass sat in a drawer, untouched. Harmonically it is a questing work, largely chromatic but always lyrical—in other words, very French. But it bears rhythmic, motivic, and structural hallmarks more common to German music. (How very Swiss of him.) The influence of chant is heard in the altos' almost sensuous opening line of the Kyrie, dropping in small intervals but ultimately returning to the home pitch of A. With increased rhythmic energy and steady accelerations of tempo, the drama leads to a desperate high B in the sopranos before "Christe eleison" takes over with a falling fourth, in a melody reminiscent of Martin's beloved Bach. The tempo continues to accelerate until a variation of the opening chant concludes matters unsettlingly.

Later in the 1920s, Martin studied and then taught at the renowned institute for musical education founded by Émile Jaques-Dalcroze. He also lectured at the conservatory in Geneva and directed a private music school. He came to embrace the twelve-tone methods of Schoenberg, but always within a tonal framework that doesn't offend the untrained listener's ear. After the Second World War he churned out masterpiece after masterpiece, especially orchestral works and choral oratorios. I especially commend to you the *Petite symphonie concertante* (1945), the *Concerto for seven wind instruments* (1949), and the late violin concerto called *Polyptyque* (1973). In 1946 Martin moved to the Netherlands, his base while teaching at the Hochschule für Musik in Cologne. Finally, in 1963, a German choral conductor, Franz Brunnert, noticed that Martin's catalog of works included an early unaccompanied Mass. He requested a copy of the manuscript "for study purposes," and soon thereafter gave the work its first performance. Publication followed rapidly, and now Martin's Mass is universally regarded as one of the greatest unaccompanied choral works of its century.

Gloria, from ***The Western Wynde*** **Mass** (c.1530?)
by **John Taverner** (c.1490–1545)

Suppose that a modern composer were to incorporate the music of a Taylor Swift song into a Catholic mass. You can imagine the resulting controversy. Yet similar compositions were quite common in the sixteenth century. They were called parody masses—the term implying neither humor nor disrespect, but a sincere incorporation of pre-existing music. Three English composers of the late medieval period used a secular tune called *The Western Wynde*. Its earliest manuscript dates from perhaps 1515–1530, with the text: "Western Wind, when wilt thou blow? / The small rain down can rain. / Christ, that my love were in my arms, / And I in my bed again." Pretty racy stuff for a mass, yes?

There has been much confusion about the life of composer John Taverner. The earliest documentation indicates that in 1524 Taverner was an adult choral singer at the prestigious collegiate church in Tattershall, near Boston in Lincolnshire. Two years later he founded the choir at the newly established Cardinal College (now Christ Church) at Oxford, but when the college's founder, Cardinal Wolsey, fell out of favor at King Henry VIII's court, Taverner read the writing on the wall and resigned. Most of his surviving music is believed to date from his time at Tattershall and Oxford.

His mass based on *The Western Wynde* may be a later work, though this conjecture is based on largely circumstantial evidence: its secular source tune and its scoring for four rather than the customary six voices. That said, occasionally smaller forces are called for: for example, early in the "Gloria," the sopranos sing the tune while the tenors have a virtuosic line more reminiscent of Taverner's predecessors like Robert Fayrfax. The tune appears nine times, usually in the top line. The final statement is in the traditional dancelike triple-time.

After Taverner's resignation from Oxford in 1530, the historical record includes no mention of him until seven years later, by which time he was a wealthy gentleman back in Boston. He was even appointed one of the city's aldermen on its receiving a charter in 1545. Despite later claims to the contrary, all documentary evidence asserts that he remained devoutly Catholic even as Henry VIII forced Protestantism upon the English. When he died, Taverner was assuredly England's most prominent composer. And—fun fact—one of his descendants was the composer Sir John Tavener (1944–2013).

Credo, from **Missa *L'homme armé* [a4]** (published 1582)
by **Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina** (c.1525–1594)

Palestrina was trained at Santa Maria Maggiore, one of the most important churches in Rome, and now the burial place of Pope Francis I. He gained his first position at the cathedral in the nearby town of Palestrina, where he may have been born. From 1551 until his death, he was thoroughly Roman, holding positions at some of the city's most prestigious churches, including the Cappella Giulia, the chapel choir of St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican; the Cappella Sistina, the pope's private chapel; and San Giovanni Laterano, the cathedral church for the city of Rome. He finally returned to the Cappella Giulia in 1571, where he remained in service until his death. Palestrina was amazingly prolific: among his surviving works are 104 masses, approximately 500 shorter sacred works, and over 140 madrigals. His style of composition, which focused on a clear declamation of text, has formed the basis of counterpoint studies for five centuries.

Most of Palestrina's masses are based on pre-existing works, their source material often stemming from France or Burgundy. Twice he chose *L'homme armé*, a Burgundian chanson of whose origins we know nothing with certainty, though it was used as the basis of over forty parody masses from around 1450 to the mid-1600s. Indeed, perhaps no melody in human history has evoked more adaptations or more historical curiosity. Palestrina's efforts are among the final examples of this tradition. His more well-known setting for five voices appeared in 1570, but we will perform an excerpt from his four-voice *L'homme armé* mass, first published in 1582. In this rendition, Palestrina takes a rather free approach to the original tune: it is rhythmically modified so as to be almost unrecognizable, though its prominent descending fifth appears occasionally. Palestrina's priority is not faithfulness to the source, but clarity of expression of the text.

Sanctus, from **Missa brevis** (2023–4)
by **Max Marcus** (born 1993)

Max Marcus is one of those astonishingly multi-talented musicians. He is a fine cellist, and has taught and conducted youth string orchestras. As befitting a graduate of Pacific Lutheran University, he is a marvelous tenor, having even sung as a hired hand for Cascadian Chorale twice in 2018. He has studied composition with Alan Belkin in Montreal and James Knapp in Seattle, and graduated this year from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he studied with David Conte. Conservatory students these days are rarely encouraged to write choral music, but Marcus has written several madrigals and a mass setting in recent years. The *Missa brevis* is dedicated to Marcus's grandmother, a soprano in Tacoma who has long encouraged his love for choral music.

The term *missa brevis* has many different interpretations. In the fifteenth century, it meant a full mass setting in which the movements were short and/or lacked metric contrast. By time of Bach, it meant a Lutheran mass that consisted of only the Kyrie and Gloria. Sometimes, as with Haydn, each voice simultaneously sings a different part of the text in the Credo. Nowadays *missa brevis* usually signifies a mass that simply omits the Credo, and this is how Marcus uses the term. His Sanctus is harmonically linked to the great French masters, like Fauré and Duruflé. The melodies are often chant-like, moving floridly in small intervals. Metrically he begins in a slightly ambiguous 3/4 time, but proceeds to 6/8 for "pleni sunt cæli." The Benedictus and "Osanna" shift between 9/8 and 2/4. Despite these changes, the impression is one of a smoothly flowing devotional setting.

Agnus Dei, from **Missa *Bell' Amfitrit' altera*** (c.1583)
by **Orlande de Lassus** (c.1532–1594)

Unfortunately, in some cases a Renaissance parody mass survives to us but the material on which it is based does not. Thus is the fate of the mass built by Lassus on the long-lost *Bell' Amfitrit' altera*. Some have conjectured that the source madrigal was Venetian, given that the titular Amphitrite was the mythical wife of Poseidon, god of the ocean, who was sacred to seafaring Venice. Presumably the madrigal was in two parts, the first distinguished by an opening rise of a third in the top soprano, and the second by a dropped third; these motives appear frequently during the mass, though the Agnus Dei is the freest section. Here is a flowing, gentle appeal, full of humility and grace.

As for the composer himself, Orlande de Lassus was born in Hainault, a northern French province noted for its great musicians. At age twelve he entered the service of a visiting Italian general as a professional singer. Still in his teens he traveled with the court throughout Italy, achieving independence as the *maestro di cappella* at San Giovanni di Laterano in Rome in 1553, a remarkably illustrious post for such a young man. Soon the famed printers of Venice and Antwerp began publishing his music. (His early fame in Italy is why he was often called by the Italianate version of his name, Orlando di Lasso.) But he remained in Rome for only a year, returning to Hainault and Flanders, and eventually, in 1556, joining the court of Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria, based in Munich. Within seven years he had become head of the duke's musical establishment, a post he retained until his death thirty years later. During his lifetime he was perhaps the most acclaimed musician in Europe, thanks to his travels to and publications in all the musical centers of continental Europe. In 1570 he was even elevated to the nobility by the Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian II. Lassus excelled in all the vocal genres of the period, from Catholic masses, motets, and *Magnificats* to secular forms such as the German lied, French chanson, and Italian madrigal.

Kyrie, from **Missa *Ascendens Christus in altum*** (published 1592)
by **Tomás Luis de Victoria** (1548–1611)

A prosperous but small town about sixty miles northwest of Madrid, Ávila was known for its spiritualism in the late sixteenth century; it was, after all, home to the famed mystic St. Teresa. The family of Tomás Luis de Victoria, who sang in the local cathedral choir as a boy, was socially well connected: not only did St. Teresa know them, but King Philip II facilitated young Tomás's studies at the Collegio Germanico, a noted boarding school for German, English, and Spanish seminarians in Rome. From 1569, Victoria sang at Santa Maria di Montserrato, the leading Spanish church in Rome, and in 1571 he began to teach at his old haunt, serving as the Collegio Germanico's *maestro di cappella* in 1573–6. In 1575, Victoria was ordained to the priesthood and joined the Congregazione dell'Oratorio, an order recognized for its joyful devotion. He became chaplain of San Girolamo della Carità, an important Oratorian church, and held minor posts among various Spanish congregations throughout Rome.

By 1587, Philip II had acquiesced to Victoria's request to return to Spain and embark on the peaceful life of a priest. Victoria was granted the lofty appointment of personal chaplain to Dowager Empress Maria; as the king's sister and the widow of Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II, she was one of the era's most prominent Spanish royals. Maria was ensconced at a convent of the order founded by St. Teresa of Ávila, a prominent home for noble widows and spinsters. Victoria served as Maria's chaplain and the convent's choirmaster until his death.

Victoria's most popular compositions today—such as the mystical *O magnum mysterium* and the 1603 *Requiem*—have contributed to a misperception of the composer as a dour, severe individual. However, his motet *Ascendens Christus in altum*, composed during his early years in Rome, demonstrates the ebullient personality drawn to the Oratorian order. He later composed a parody mass based on the motet. Those familiar with the motet will recognize the Kyrie right away. Both works are fine examples of imitative polyphony, in which each voice begins each phrase of text with the same melodic gesture.

Gloria, from **Mass in the Dorian Mode** (1912)
by **Herbert Howells** (1892–1983)

Surely one of the most prominent figures in English church music was Sir Richard Terry (1865–1938), who served for two decades as the music director at Westminster Cathedral, the Catholic cathedral in London (not to be confused with the Anglican Westminster Abbey, where coronations are held). Terry was renowned for almost single-handedly restoring to the liturgical repertoire countless anthems and masses from Tudor composers like Fayrfax, Taverner, Tye, Tallis, Sheppard, White, Byrd, and Philips. He also commissioned new works to be built along the lines of that ancient tradition. One early example was a mass by Herbert Howells, which was published posthumously as the *Mass in the Dorian Mode*. Howells, though still little-known at the time, had studied Tudor music intensely. Those musicological pursuits inspired the foundation of his compositional language: modality (organizing pitches without using modern major or minor keys). He tinges his modal harmony with chromatic notes outside the key, sometimes inadvertently evoking jazz.

Howells had been the favorite student of Charles Villiers Stanford at the Royal College of Music, where he himself later taught for decades. An intensely sensitive man, he wrote little music on a large scale after his Second Piano Concerto (1925) was heckled at its premiere. He became the doyen of Anglican liturgical music with a series of settings of the *Magnificat* and *Nunc dimittis*, beginning with one written for King's College, Cambridge, in 1945. It seemed like every major cathedral in England vied for the next commission. Major works such as the *Missa Sabrinensis* (1954) and *Stabat Mater* (1965) began again to flow from his pen, and he remained active as a composer until his death.

Credo, from **Mass in G minor** (1921)
by **Ralph Vaughan Williams** (1872–1958)

RVW was a remarkably slow developer: one relative quipped derisively, "He *will* go on with his music." Coming from a wealthy family, he studied history and music at Cambridge, and finally at the Royal College of Music under both of the leaders of British music education: Hubert Parry and Charles Villiers Stanford. But he was fully twenty-nine years old when his first work—the song *Linden Lea* (1901)—was published. The years 1903–8 saw the three events which guided his entire career: he began roaming the countryside collecting folksongs from England's rural elders, he edited *The English Hymnal*, and he gained supplemental tutelage from Maurice Ravel. The melodism of folksong, the economy of hymnody, and the imaginative freedom of French harmony and orchestration are among the primary hallmarks of RVW's mature style, including two works that premiered in 1910: the rhapsodic *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* for strings, and the choral *A Sea Symphony*. He served as an ambulance man, artillery officer, and music organizer during the First World War, lucky enough to survive the trenches. Immediately after the war, he began collecting his thoughts orchestrally with *The Lark Ascending* (1921) and *A Pastoral Symphony* (1922).

At this time, Richard Terry commissioned from him an unaccompanied mass for Westminster Cathedral. RVW was not a conventionally religious man—his widow's memoir calls him a "cheerful agnostic"—but he did believe that "there is no reason why an atheist could not write a good Mass." One biographer suggests that it might be better titled "Mass *around* G minor," for its pervasive modal harmonies (that is, scales other than major or minor) beloved of the Tudor composers. There are other anachronisms too: antiphonal block chords (strong chords alternating between the two choirs), false relations (alternations of minor and major thirds, and the like), and imitative counterpoint (when each voice takes a motive in turn). But RVW also employs modern elements like unorthodox rhythms, delayed cadences, parallel fifths, and pentatonic harmonies that earned it the nickname "L'après-midi d'un Vaughan," after Debussy. Unusually, the altos are granted a special role throughout, just as the viola, his own instrument, is often given position of pride in his chamber music. This Mass is a fusion of old and new, as revolutionary as it is timeless.

The period between the wars saw a flurry of masterworks: the ballet *Job* (1930), the dramatically dissonant Fourth Symphony (1935), the cantata *Dona nobis pacem* (1936), and the short opera *Riders to the Sea* (1937). He became the *de facto* leader of English classical music. The Second World War brought his introspectively spiritual Fifth Symphony (1943), and he began writing film scores, most notably *Scott of the Antarctic* (1948). For the latter RVW explored exotic realms of orchestration and harmony that he embraced in later works. An

interviewer for RVW's eightieth birthday asked if he was running out of ideas, and he replied that he had enough ideas to last another eighty years. That relative from his youth was right: "he *will* go on with his music."

Sanctus and **Benedictus**, from **Chichester Mass** (1974)
by **William Albright** (1944–1998)

The American composer William Albright gave the ancient words of the mass a very modern take in his setting written for the nine-hundredth anniversary of Chichester Cathedral in England. In the Sanctus, Albright invokes a technique known as aleatoric, or chance, music, in which the performers must spontaneously make certain decisions, using the written score solely as a framework. The movement begins with three treble parts in which each individual sings the same part at their own speed, creating a beautiful sonic nebula from which first the high sopranos, then the tenors and basses, emerge with chant-like melodies. The Benedictus, barely a minute long, includes a virtual cacophony as each part whizzes around vigorously, culminating on a chord in which each part is at the very top of their register—what better way to set the word "highest!"

William Albright taught for many years at the University of Michigan. His organ music is particularly noteworthy, but his many choral, orchestral, and chamber works reveal remarkable craftsmanship and eclecticism, befitting a student of such diverse figures as Ross Lee Finney, a relatively conservative American composer, and Olivier Messiaen, leader of the post-war French avant-garde. He led a revival of interest in ragtime music and often incorporated elements of popular music into his classical works. Indeed, Albright's *New York Times* obituary identified him as "Composer of Ragtime Music for the Organ"—now there's a combination you had probably never thought of before!

Agnus Dei, from **Mass in E♭ major**, op.109, *Cantus Missæ* (1878)
by **Joseph Rheinberger** (1839–1901)

You might suppose that the tiny Alpine principality of Liechtenstein might not make an impression on musical history, but native son Joseph Rheinberger would prove you wrong. At age seven, he became organist of the capital's parish church, the next year composing the first of his fourteen masses. Ever the prodigy, Rheinberger went to Munich to study at age twelve, eventually rising to director of the Conservatory. In 1877 he became the city's Hofkapellmeister—head of music-making at the royal chapel and court of "Mad" King Ludwig II of Bavaria. The next year, he composed one of the finest unaccompanied choral works of the nineteenth century, the *Cantus Missæ*. Its dedicatee, Pope Leo XIII, even honored the composer with the Knight's Cross of the Order of St. Gregory. Few works are as worthy of Rheinberger's dictum: "Music is above words; it begins where words no longer suffice."

Rheinberger was essentially a conservative composer. The *Cantus Missæ*, or "Song Mass," emphasizes lyrical melody over the exotic harmonic experiments of the day. It is largely antiphonal, in that four voices are juxtaposed against the other four, in a manner that Palestrina and Lassus would have appreciated. Rheinberger assigns clear structural variety, and despite the full eight-voice texture, the text is always clear, ensuring a devotional experience for the listener. The Agnus Dei is particularly impassioned. Slowly falling lines create a sense of humility. The harmony is at times chromatic but always subdued. Climaxes are handled deftly. The concluding "Dona nobis pacem" is all fleet-footed gentility, imbued with a confident peace.