FLIGHTS OF FANCY

Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine (2001)   Eric Whitacre (b.1970)

Three Gnostic Poems (2007)   Greg Bartholomew (b.1957)
    1. An Open World
    2. When I Land
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Mondnacht (2011)   Joy DeCoursey-Porter (b.1974)
    world premiere performances

Ascendens Christus in altum (1572)   Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548–1611)

intermission

Spem in alium (c.1570)   Thomas Tallis (c.1505–1585)
    performed in collaboration with
    Sine Nomine: Renaissance Choir
    and additional singers

When rooks fly homeward (1950)   Arthur Baynon (1889–1954)

The Blue Bird (1910)   Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924)

Mosquitoes (1991)   Stephen Chatman (b.1950)

Ezekiel saw the wheel (1942)   arr. William L. Dawson (1899–1990)

Cascadian Chorale

Gary D. Cannon, conductor

Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine (2001)
by **Eric Whitacre** (born 1970)

Eric Whitacre is without question the leading American choral composer of his generation. Growing up in Nevada, his ambition was to be a rock star, and he never considered classical music until his undergraduacy at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. The composer writes: "I was sort of tricked into joining the choir (there were a lot of cute girls in the soprano section) and on the first day of class we started rehearsing the *Kyrie* from the Mozart *Requiem*. My life was profoundly changed on that day, and I became a choir geek of the highest order." He proceeded to composition studies at New York's prestigious Juilliard School, and soon such works as *Cloudburst* (1993) and *Water Night* (1995) became standards for choirs throughout the country. Whitacre's three Virtual Choir recordings, available on YouTube, have gained international attention through his innovative use of the Internet to incorporate thousands of singers from across the globe into one online performance.

The composer has written the following about the genesis of *Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine* and its libretto by poet Charles Anthony Silvestri, incorporating fragments in Italian from Leonardo da Vinci's notebooks.

"We started with a simple concept: what would it sound like if Leonardo da Vinci were dreaming? And more specifically, what kind of music would fill the mind of such a genius? The drama would tell the story of Leonardo being tormented by the calling of the air, tortured to such degree that his only recourse was to solve the riddle and figure out how to fly.

"We approached the piece as if were were writing an *opera bréve*. Silvestri (Tony to his friends) would supply me with draft after draft of revised 'libretti', and I in turn would show him the musical fragments I had written. Tony would then begin to mold the texts into beautiful phrases and gestures as if he were a Renaissance poet, and I constantly refined my music to match the ancient, elegant style of his words. I think in the end we achieved a fascinating balance, an exotic hybrid of old and new."

Tormented by visions of flight and falling,
More wondrous and terrible each than the last,
Master Leonardo imagines an engine
To carry a man up into the sun…

And as he's dreaming the heavens call him,
Softly whispering their siren-song:
"*Leonardo, Leonardo, vieni à volare.*" *

L'uomo colle sua congiegniate e grandi ale,
facciendo forza contro alla resistente aria. **

As the candles burn low he paces and writes,
Releasing purchased pigeons one by one
Into the golden Tuscan sunrise…

And as he dreams, again the calling,
The very air itself gives voice:
"*Leonardo, Leonardo, vieni à volare.*"*

Vicina all'elemento del fuoco…
Scratching quill on crumpled paper
(*Rete, canna, filo, carta.*)
Images of wing and frame and fabric fastened tightly.
…*sulla suprema sottile aria.* ***

As the midnight watchtower tolls,
Over rooftop, street and dome,
The triumph of a human being ascending
In the dreaming of a mortal man.

Leonardo steels himself,
Takes one last breath, and leaps…
"*Leonardo, vieni à volare! Leonardo, sognare!*" ****

— Charles Anthony Silvestri (born 1965)

* "Leonardo, Leonardo, come fly."
** A man with connected and large wings,
   creating force against the resistance of the air.
*** Close to the sphere of elemental fire…
   (Net, cane, thread, paper.)
   …in the highest and thinnest atmosphere.
**** "Leonardo, come fly! Leonardo, to dream!"

Three Gnostic Poems (2007)
by **Greg Bartholomew** (born 1957)

Too often modern society expects its artists to be on a pedestal, removed from society. But in the philosopher Fletcher Bartholomew and his composer son Greg we have two prime examples of people who have successfully explored creative impulses while maintaining day jobs. The former made his living in the aviation industry. During World War II he was a test pilot for the United States Army Air Corps in India. After the war he developed his love for aviation through a degree in meteorology from MIT. This led to a career as an analyst for Boeing—Greg remembers his father bringing home large weather balloons—and then in airport planning and management. Though he loved his career in aviation, Fletcher Bartholomew found his greatest passion in philosophy. He was deeply concerned that "scientific humanism" had diminished many individuals' regard for spirituality, and expounded these thoughts in a book and a volume of poetry.

His son, Greg Bartholomew, had a restless youth, as his father's work took the family from Minneapolis to Seattle (twice), northern Virginia, and Connecticut. Greg learned the trombone and piano and enjoyed writing pop songs. During college in Michigan, Virginia, and England, he became a choir groupie of sorts: choir was the core of his social life, though he never studied music formally. In 1979 he returned to Seattle, the happiest place of his childhood, with just two suitcases and a typewriter. He eventually got a law degree from the University of Washington, and practiced law periodically for twenty years, even rising to a partnership. Amid all of this, Greg continued to develop his love of composing, writing, and the visual arts. In 2000 he began to compose more earnestly, especially choral music. By 2005 he had settled into a "new life" as a full-time composer. You can read more about his subsequent accomplishments below.

A year after Fletcher Bartholomew's death, Greg set three of his philosophically oriented poems to music. (In the texts below, the poet's original titles are given below the composer's movement titles.) The first movement begins with the men's voices, almost representing the voice of the poet himself. Slight fluctuations of tempo yield a conversational pace. In the second chosen text, the poet poses existentialist questions but concludes that life alone is not "enough for any man". Again the men's voices are prominent. The final movement depicts the "awesome beauty found in sailing / Through black of night upon the open sea" with varied repetitions of the same phrase, just as each wave on the ocean is slightly different. This text, like that of the first movement, recalls the poet's wartime journey to India by ship. The composer concludes the cycle with a grand gust of "the wind", as the choir expands dramatically into nine parts.

1. An Open World

Sanity

There is a certain madness born of sailing
From port to distant port the world around.
There is a certain way it has, unveiling
Unused chambers of the mind so that the sound
Of many different voices can be heard.
— The range of human thoughts and views,
From which with joy can be inferred,
An open world, and paths to choose.

2. When I Land

Humanity

I fly da Vinci's dream on wings of speed,
With effortless delight I cleave the air,
Free in the boundless realm of sky, I feed
My soul with wonder, questions seeming fair.

Why brought forth to wander on this earth?
Why given this brief breath of life,
To wonder at our enigmatic birth,
To reach for stars, want reason for the strife.
Yet, being here, why try to find a plan?
Why waste time in thought before we go?
Is not life enough for any man?
How many have, as theirs, my answer, "No."

When I set foot again upon the land,
And darkness gains upon the setting of the sun,
I long to feel the welcome of your hand
In mine, to rest, let Time its silly cycles run,
Life's nights are all too few.
No other hand, no other's look, no other one,
Can bring that peace to mind or heart or soul,
No peace. Although I know there's always fun
In life, to reach that sublime goal,
I must return to you.

3. And the Wind

Intrepidity

There is an awesome beauty found in sailing
Through black of night upon the open sea,
Your vessel mauled by unseen waves and trailing
Her phosphorescent wake, as steadily,
She plows into the darkness,
And the wind.

— Fletcher LaVallee Bartholomew (1918–2006),
from *And the Wind: Gnostic Poems 1945–1979* (published 1980)

Mondnacht (2011)
by **Joy DeCoursey-Porter** (born 1974)

Eichendorff was one of the leading poets of nineteenth-century German Romanticism. His poem *Mondnacht* ("Moon-night") was especially beloved by his compatriot composers, with over two dozen settings including a particularly famous one by Schumann. It was through Schumann's work—as recorded by Barbra Streisand—that Joy Porter first encountered the text. She had long associated it with her father, classical and jazz pianist Ralph DeCoursey. Upon his death in February 2011, Porter composed her own setting in just one month. Her father's love of Debussy is reflected in extended, quasi-impressionistic harmonies, such as the opening C-major-ninth chord with an A in the melody. The opening sonorities return for the final stanza, expanding and accelerating as the soul stretches its wings. The work concludes with gentle, again impressionistic, oscillations between C minor and C major.

Born in Vancouver, British Columbia, and raised largely in Hawaii, Joy Porter gained a pilot's license after high school. She had hoped to become a bush pilot in Africa and pursued further studies at Christian Heritage College in El Cajon, California (now the San Diego Christian College). Unfortunately, the school's aviation program closed months before her arrival, so she switched her academic focus to music. Porter moved to the Seattle area ten years ago, and she now devotes her time to her family and church ministry.

Es war, als hätt' der Himmel	It was as if the heavens
Die Erde still geküßt,	had quietly kissed the earth,
Daß sie im Blütenschimmer	that she, in blossoms' shimmer,
Von ihm nun träumen müßt.	now must dream of him.
Die Luft ging durch die Felder,	The breeze went by the field,
Die Ähren wogten sacht,	the ears of corn waved softly,
Es rauschten leis die Wälder,	it rustled gently the woods,
So sternklar war die Nacht.	so starlit was the night.
Und meine Seele spannte	And my soul stretched
Weit ihre Flügel aus,	out wide its wings,
Flog durch die stillen Lande,	flew through the quiet lands,
Als flöge sie nach Haus.	as if flying itself home.

— Joseph Freiherr von Eichendorff (1788–1857)

Ascendens Christus in altum (published 1572)
by **Tomás Luis de Victoria** (1548–1611)

Tomás Luis de Victoria sang as a choirboy at the cathedral in Ávila, a prosperous but small town in central Spain. Victoria's family was socially well connected: King Felipe II himself facilitated young Tomás's studies in Rome from 1565. Ten years later, 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. He was granted a lofty appointment as personal chaplain to the king's sister, Dowager Empress Maria, the widow of Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II. She had settled in a prominent convent for noble widows and spinsters. Victoria remained in that post until his death.

Victoria's most popular compositions today—such as *O magnum mysterium* and the 1603 Requiem—have contributed to a misperception of the composer as a dour, severe individual. *Ascendens Christus in altum* demonstrates the ebullient personality drawn to the Oratorian order. This motet, composed during Victoria's early years in Rome, was intended for the Matins service (held between midnight and dawn) on the Feast of the Ascension, commemorating Christ's rising to heaven forty days after his resurrection.

Ascendens is littered with examples of text-painting. For example, in the opening line, the first three voices rise a full octave to depict Christ's ascension. Triumphant vocal fanfares accompany the "voce tubae" ("the voice of a trumpet"). *Ascendens* is also a fine example of imitative polyphony, in which each voice begins each phrase of text with the same melodic gesture. The structure of this motet is such that the final line of each strophe ("Dedit dona…") is given the same music, though the two soprano lines trade parts.

Ascendens Christus in altum, alleluia.	Christ ascends to the heights, alleluia.
Captivam duxit captivitatem, alleluia.	Captivity he led captive, alleluia.
Dedit dona hominibus, alleluia.	He gave gifts to men, alleluia.
Ascendit Deus in jubilatione,	God ascended in jubilation,
et Dominus in voce tubae, alleluia.	and the Lord in the voice of a trumpet, alleluia.
Dedit dona hominibus, alleluia.	He gave gifts to men, alleluia.

Spem in alium (c.1570)
by **Thomas Tallis** (c.1505–1585)

Few church musicians have had such a tumultuous series of strictures as Thomas Tallis, the supreme English composer of the mid-sixteenth century. When Tallis began his career at the Benedictine priory in Dover in 1530/1, King Henry VIII was in the process of severing the Catholic Church in England from its connections to the pope in Rome. Even after the formal dissolution in 1534, worship in England followed standard Catholic norms: texts were frequently in Latin, and compositional styles continued essentially unchanged. After brief periods at St. Mary-at-Hill in London, Waltham Abbey in Essex, and Canterbury Cathedral, Tallis finally gained a post at the Chapel Royal in 1544. This was the king's personal chapel, the most prestigious group of musicians in England. Tallis thus found himself at the musical center of decades of religious controversy.

After Henry's nine-year-old son, Edward VI, became king in 1547, Protestantism gained a firmer hold. Liturgical worship was performed in English and church music became simpler in construction. Edward became fatally ill in 1553, and his eldest sister, Queen Mary I, assumed the throne. She vigorously attempted to restore England to Catholic worship, going so far as to marry the Catholic King Felipe II of Spain and to order the deaths of prominent dissenters. "Bloody" Mary died in 1558, the crown falling to her half-sister, Elizabeth I, who slowly and steadily established England as a Protestant state. Amid all of these changes, Tallis adapted his compositional style to suit the dictates of each monarch, excelling at every step. He deftly rose in prominence at the Chapel Royal, gaining the illustrious post of Organist in 1570. Scholars now believe that Tallis was at heart a recusant Catholic, but this assertion is based on mostly circumstantial evidence; in any case, his personal beliefs never obstructed his always professional music-making.

In June 1567, the Italian composer Alessandro Striggio passed through London. Among his compositions which gained a hearing on that sojourn may have been his forty-voice motet *Ecce beatam lucem*. That someone could conceive of music in forty independent polyphonic lines was extraordinary (then and now). The Duke of Norfolk is believed to have commissioned Tallis to outdo Striggio's accomplishment, and the result was *Spem in alium*, one of history's most remarkable musical edifices. Early performances may have taken place at either of the principal residences of the Earl of Arundel: Arundel House in London, with its long gallery; or Nonsuch Palace, his country estate, with an octagonal hall complete with first-floor balconies. It was also possibly performed for the fortieth birthday of Queen Elizabeth I in 1573.

Tallis divided his forty parts into eight choirs of five voices each, lending some credence to the possibility of early performances at Nonsuch Palace. He handles these forces in various ways. First he builds from the upper voices of Choir 1 downward to the lower voices of Choir 8. At the fortieth measure, all forty voices sing together, after which Tallis builds in the reverse order. He then tosses the music back and forth among the different choirs. The word "respice" ("consider" or "reflect") yields a particularly magical moment, as Tallis chooses the unusual harmony of A major, which melts into A minor as C-naturals and C-sharps briefly cohabitate. The work concludes with a grand statement of all forty voices.

Spem in alium nunquam habui
praeter in te, Deus Israel,
qui irasceris, et propitius eris,
et omnia peccata hominum,
in tribulatione dimittis.
Domine Deus, Creator caeli et terrae,
respice humilitatem nostram,

Hope in another never have I,
but in you, God of Israel,
who becomes angry, and then gracious,
and who all the sins of mankind,
in his suffering, you do forgive.
Lord God, creator of heaven and earth,
consider our humbleness.

— adapted from the respond at Matins after Trinity, from the Sarum Breviary

When rooks fly homeward (published 1950)
by **Arthur Baynon** (1889–1954)

Arthur Baynon worked mostly as a teacher, serving as music master and organist at St. Michael's College, then known for its focus on Anglican church music, in Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire from 1913 to 1916. From 1920 he directed the music at Caterham School, a boarding school south of London. He was also the organist, a position that traditionally includes the training of the choir, at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in nearby Croydon. Baynon composed songs for voice and piano, choral works, and music for organ. Baynon's church anthem *When rooks fly homeward* sets a text by the Irish poet Joseph Campbell.

> When rooks fly homeward and shadows fall,
> When roses fold on the hay-yard wall,
> When blind moths flutter by door and tree,
> Then comes the quiet of Christ to me.
>
> When stars look out on the Children's Path
> And grey mists gather on carn and rath,*
> When night is one with the brooding sea,
> Then comes the quiet of Christ to me.

> — Joseph Campbell (1879–1944), from *The Gilly of Christ* (published 1907)

* carn = cairn, a pile of stones constructed as a landmark or monument
  rath = round, or ringfort, an ancient circular earthen fortification

The Blue Bird, No. 3 from Eight Partsongs, opus 119 (1910)
by **Sir Charles Villiers Stanford** (1852–1924)

Though born in Ireland, Charles Villiers Stanford left as great an impression on English music as any native. The son of one of Dublin's most prominent lawyers, Stanford studied classics and music at Cambridge University in the 1870s. He conducted the orchestra of the Cambridge University Musical Society, giving the British premiere of Brahms's First Symphony. He later taught at Cambridge (1887–92), but it is as a teacher at the Royal College of Music from 1883 that his legacy is most deeply felt. Among his students were Frank Bridge, Herbert Howells, John Ireland, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and several others who rank among the most prominent English composers of the early twentieth century.

Stanford composed prolifically in every genre, ranging from orchestral works to chamber music and songs, including ten operas and over thirty major works for chorus and orchestra. His Anglican church music has remained consistently popular. Among his secular choral works, the partsong *The Blue Bird* is especially beloved. Stanford knew choirs well, as conductor of the Bach Choir in London from 1886 to 1902. The lower voices represent the still lake, sustaining long, steady chords, while the sopranos take the part of the bluebird hovering above.

> The lake lay blue below the hill.
> O'er it, as I looked, there flew
> Across the waters, cold and still,
> A bird whose wings were palest blue.
>
> The sky above was blue at last.
> A moment, ere the bird had passed,
> It caught his image as he flew.
> The lake lay blue below the hill.
>
> — Mary Elizabeth Coleridge (1861–1907)

Mosquitoes, No. 5 from *Due North*: Five Songs of Nature (1991)
by **Stephen Chatman** (born 1950)

Stephen Chatman was born in Minnesota and studied at the Oberlin Conservatory in Ohio, the Hochschule für Musik in Germany, and the University of Michigan. His early works are highly modernistic, but it is through his far more approachable choral works that Chatman is best known. Since 1976 he has taught at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, and he is now one of the most prominent composers in his adoptive Canada.

One of Chatman's most often performed works is *Due North*, a choral cycle celebrating several features of nature in the Pacific Northwest, including mountains, trees, woodpeckers, and thrushes. "Mosquitoes" is the cycle's final movement. Here the choir dispenses with words, resorting to an onomatopoeically appropriate buzzing.

Ezekiel saw the wheel (published 1942)
traditional spiritual, arranged by **William Levi Dawson** (1899–1990)

Born in rural Alabama, William Dawson began composing at a young age. At age fifteen he began studies at the Tuskegee Institute. He eventually relocated first to Kansas City, where he played jazz trombone and taught in a public high school. Later in Chicago he played bass with Louis Armstrong and other jazz greats, and gained a Master's degree from the American Conservatory of Music. He was also music director of Ebenezer Baptist Church, where he began to make arrangements of traditional African-American spirituals. His final post was on the faculty at his alma mater, the Tuskegee Institute, where he led the choir to international fame. His *Negro Folk Symphony* of 1934 received its premiere by the Philadelphia Orchestra and Leopold Stokowski, helping to integrate African-American composers into the mainstream.

Dawson's spiritual arrangements are invariably well crafted and closely fit to the spirit of the text. *Ezekiel saw the wheel* recounts the Old Testament prophet's vision of four cherubim flying through the air: "their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel" (Ezekiel 1:16). The final minute of the arrangement demonstrates Dawson at his most clever. The altos and basses repeat short phrases, as a small wheel moving quickly, while the tenors and sopranos sing the principal melody, as a slower, larger wheel. He repeats this four times, each time adding another layer to the larger wheel.

Ezekul saw de wheel,
'Way up in de mid'l of de air,
Ezekul saw de wheel,
'Way in de mid'l of de air.

De big wheel run by faith,
An' de lit'l' wheel run
By de grace of God,
A lit'l' wheel in a wheel.

Better mind, my brother,
How you walk on de cross.
Your foot might slip,
An' yer soul get lost.

Ole Satan wears
A club-foot shoe.
If you don' mind
He'll slip it on you.

Some go to church
For to sing an' shout.
Befo' six months
Dey's all turn'd out.