ORTHODOX CHURCH MUSIC

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"St. Romanos the Melodist (patron saint of church singers everywhere) conducting a choir from his podium, manuscript in hand."

FROM THE EDITOR:

Being informed that the first issue of *Orthodox Church Music* was in preparation, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius, replied: "Church music plays a central role in the liturgy of the Church. Proper understanding and training is therefore required of all church musicians. It is my hope that this publication will be directed not only to our choir directors and teachers of music, but to all those who lend their voices in praise to God."

For this reason, the Department of Liturgical Music decided to publish a magazine instead of a textbook for the professional choir director. Inasmuch as church singing is an integral part of all worship and not a mere decoration, it should be the concern of all. Thus the editorial staff will attempt to publish issues that will cover all aspects of church singing that will prove to be both informative and interesting to all members of the Church.

Orthodox Handbook, Music for the Church, and **Reviews** will be regular features. Handbook articles will be directed primarily to choir directors and those interested in becoming directors or church readers. New settings of church hymns will be featured in Music for the Church; it is hoped that this section will encourage those especially gifted in musical composition to use their specific talent for the benefit of the Church. In addition to book reviews, the next issue will also include reviews of the latest releases of recordings of Orthodox church music.

We hope that you find this initial issue of *Orthodox Church Music* informative and interesting. The frequency of the magazine will actually depend upon the response to this issue; we ask you to help us by encouraging others to purchase copies. We also ask you to share with us your thoughts, reactions, and kinds of articles you would like to see in future issues of *Orthodox Church Music.*

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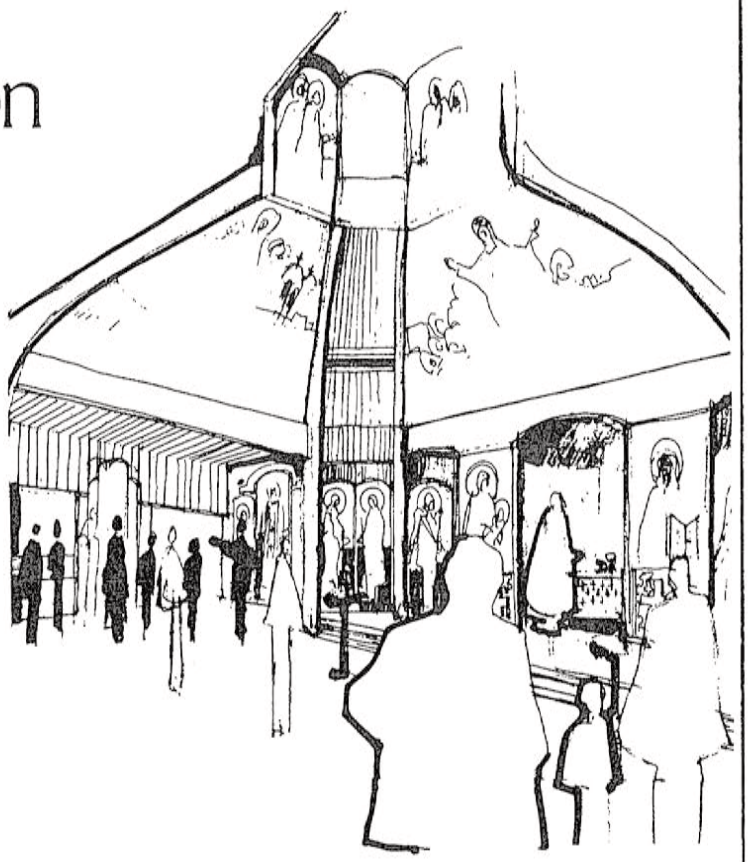
Some Thoughts on Liturgical Music

by Nicholas Lossky



Liturgical music may be studied in many ways. It can be a huge subject, forming part of the general history of music or of the general history of religions. Here, however, it is not a question of either of these, but of a few reflections, by an ordinary user of liturgical music in the Orthodox Church today, on the principles of such music. These principles have been admirably studied and expressed by the musicologist, composer and liturgical theologian, Maxime Kovalevsky, in numerous articles and lectures, (1), as well as in the oral instruction which he has given to many of us. Here we are only extending with footnotes, as it were, the thoughts aroused by his teaching.

The very description of certain music as "liturgical" indicates that there is a relationship between this music and the liturgy (taken not in the narrower sense, usual for the Orthodox, of the Eucharistic Liturgy, but as referring to the whole of the prayer of the Church). This banal assertion is intended to remind us that it is from the very nature of the liturgy that this music will derive its principles.

It is therefore not so much with reflections on the nature of the musical phenomenon that we shall begin, but rather with a reminder of what the liturgy represents. This will in turn enable us to get some notion of how the latter modifies and changes the nature of the musical phenomenon itself.

The liturgy is, by definition, the "common work", the communal work, the prayer of the church as a community of persons gathered together in the house of God. Liturgical prayer is what one might call the "privileged place" for the experience of the Church. And the experience of the Church *is* the experience of the relationship of man to God. The nature of this relationship — as we are reminded by the famous patristic saying that "God became man so that man might become God" — is found in the call to participate in the divine life. It is in the liturgy that we can learn to live out this experience of participation in the divine life, which should enlighten all the other moments of our life. It is in the liturgy that there is truly constituted the community of the Church, which prays to God and glorifies him "with one mouth and one heart", a community of people "steadfast in the teaching of the apostles, in fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers' (Acts 2:42).

But if the liturgy is the privileged place for the experience of the Church, that does not mean in any way that the liturgy is cut off from time, or that it is made up of segments of time cut off from everyday reality. On the contrary, it is a structure which sanctifies time, a structure centered on one culminating point, the Eucharist, which is at once the summit and the source of all life. The Eucharist has as its "prototype" Easter Day and its whole cycle, around which the entire liturgical year is organized.

The community of the Church is thus called to live each moment in the light of this transfiguration of time. Nevertheless, when it is physically assembled for liturgical prayer, it lives in a privileged place and in a priviliged moment of that reality of the Kingdom which is already mysteriously realized.

What has been said above means concretely that nothing that is done liturgically, that is, communally, in the Church is a matter of indifference. Whether it be the word (the composition of texts, or prayers, or preaching) or a gesture during the celebration (a bodily attitude or way of moving), whether it be the iconography (in the realm of visual representation) or the very structure of the services (the "typikon"), whether it be the way in which one prays aloud or proclaims the Gospel, whether it be the chant itself — nothing is neutral. Everything is bound up, in the fullest sense of the word, with the liturgy, that is, with the communal work of the community. Consequently, everything should be the expression of the community of the Church. Everything should combine to express the Church's unity of faith, and of course nothing should contradict that faith, nothing can be theologically false or heretical.

After several centuries of neglect, little by little and thanks to the work of a few theologians, we are in the process of rediscovering the true significance of the icon in the liturgy, (2). The icon is not an additional or optional ornament, the expression of some artist's individual feelings; it is *the* theology of the Church, an expression of the faith of the community — and the communal expression of that faith — in form and in colour. It is the symbolic representation of the transfigured world, with symbol taken here in its deepest sense as the presence of that which is symbolized (3). Thus it speaks in unison with the liturgy. It serves the same purpose.

The Feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy on the first Sunday of Lent commemorates, as we know, the end of the iconoclastic controversy and the restoration of the veneration of icons. But in reality the implications of this feast and restoration touch the very foundations of our faith, for in it we have a confession of the dogma of the Incarnation in all its fullness and with all its consequences for matter, for the body, and for the transfiguration of the created world, which itself is called to take part in the liturgy. The "Triumph of Orthodoxy" is not simply the feast of the icons, but a feast which concerns all aspects of liturgical art — and therefore also music.

For neither is music an additional ornament in the liturgy, something added as an extra for the sake of beauty. Music in the liturgy is not an autonomous element; it is not a separate element, an element on its own. Nothing, in fact, nor any one, can be separate, apart, or independent in the liturgy. All must participate in the communal expression, that is, in the unity of spirit, all should in some way serve this unity. And "all" means here everyone who takes part in the liturgy. For there are no passive spectators at the liturgy; all are co-liturgists and, as a result, responsible.

No participant, nor any element that is used, should be allowed to become an obstacle to this unity by placing itself in some way outside the communion and thereby becoming an impediment to the orientation of all towards a single goal: the consciousness that Christ is in our midst.

No one should be able to become a screen — and, finally, a scandal — by the fact that he substitutes himself for this goal, substitutes himself, with his own particular sensitivity, his own understanding, his own vision, by attracting attention to himself to the detriment of the liturgical action.

When the deacon invites the community to prayer, he carries out a function which the Church has conferred on him; he speaks, therefore, in the name of the Church and in and for the community. It is not right, therefore, that he should substitute for the prayer of the Church his own private emotions, that which he himself has on his heart, or that which comes to his mind and which may not necessarily be edifying.

When the bishop preaches the word of God — that is his particular charism and other preachers are only his delegates — his voice, his intelligence, his whole person are in the service of God, and it is God who speaks through his lips. He teaches the apostolic faith, the faith of the ecclesial community as a whole, assembled together in the liturgy, and not some particular personal *gnosis*. Otherwise, he is not a bishop at that moment.

Nor should the iconographer offer in his icons a personal projection of his own individual interior vision of this or that aspect of Christianity. He, too, must strive to express the communal, apostolic faith of the Church.

Everything is thus at the service of unity. Nevertheless, this unity is not *uniformity* of a totalitarian kind. It is in no way a unique form which has been established once and for all, a tyranny imposed by force or law. Indeed, there exist "laws" — or, more exactly, *canons* — written and unwritten, which concern the way to behave in Church during communal prayer: how to celebrate, how to sing, to read, to paint, how to organize the space in the body of the church. But these canons are not due to the fact that one day somebody or some group of people meeting in council decided to write a code which then became obligatory for ever after. The canons that concern behaviour in the liturgy have been elaborated and written down (or transmitted orally) because they are the expression of the experience of the community in liturgical prayer. It is by praying liturgically that the community discovers a certain number of structural forms — vocal forms, visual forms, and formal gestures — and it is in this way that a canon (which is a *norm* and not at all a rigid code) is formed. (Needless to say, such canons only apply to communal prayer, and not to the prayer of each one of us in the secret of his cell, or in the desert, where the "form", or external appearance, is seen by God alone.)

Liturgical experience belongs to a community of people who respond willingly to the call of God, who together freely confess to God the faith of the Church, who freely glorify and implore God, who freely strive to open themselves to the Holy Spirit, who in their hearts cry, "Abba, Father." But the freedom which is described here is above all freedom in communion, that is to say, freedom within the love of God and of one's neighbour, and therefore with respect for the other, and in the service of the other. It is not a freedom *for oneself*, a freedom of expression for my individuality, which runs the risk of becoming dominant. In the ecclesial community there can be no domination; there is only service, the one of the other, and this whatever "rank" or position one may hold.

Thus nothing should run the risk of becoming a scandal for someone else, for an "other", not for the least of the others; nothing should endanger the unity of spirit. This means, of course, the unity of spirit not only of the community physically present, but of the whole Church, visible and invisible, the Church of yesterday, of today, of tomorrow and of all the ages, down to the end of time. And yet this does not mean that unity of spirit is something immutable and outside time. It means that liturgical experience is "traditional", not in the sense of being an ossified love of the past, but as a listening to the Holy Spirit, who is always new and always the same. It is the same Spirit that blows, but in each moment of history he blows ever anew.

Music should also contribute to unity of spirit in the liturgy. In the Orthodox tradition, both Eastern and Western, the music is provided by chant. Consequently, it is closely linked to the word; it is at the service of the word; it is the vehicle of the word.

But the word under consideration is not a flat and hollow word, a language strictly limited by one particular context in space and time, a word which only lasts for the moment during which it is spoken. Indeed, one might ask oneself if there really do exist, other than in the order of sin, moments closed in on themselves, since the Apostle tells us to be "giving thanks always for all things" (Eph. 5:20), that is, to give every moment to liturgical prayer, while in addition Christ tells us that we shall answer for every vain and empty word spoken in our life (Mt. 12:36).

In the liturgy the word is an *edifying* word in the fullest sense, since it is the Word who is its foundation. The word is the Word of God, it is the prayer of the community, it is teaching (that is, edification), it is the proclamation of the Good News.

Nevertheless, we must never lose sight of the fact that this word is not an end in itself: it is orientated

towards a goal — the infinitely mysterious reality of participation in the divine life. And this reality is inexpressible, unutterable. It is fathomless; it is infinite. It is what Oliver Clement calls "the silence which contains the word". And here silence does not mean the absence of sound, but the fullness of the dynamic vision of God.

As a result, when one speaks of music as a "vehicle", this in no way means that some mean or meager task is given to liturgical chant. On the contrary, the real function of liturgical chant is to transmit the word in such a way that the community may be brought into relationship with the "silence" that surrounds the word, with the reality of contemplation.

The task of liturgical chant — and, in fact, of all words pronounced aloud in the liturgy — is a noble and privileged one. But to speak of privilege is to speak of responsibility and obligation. There are many implications in what has just been said, both as regards all that concerns respect for the fundamental principle of serving the word and, equally, as regards respect for the people to whom the word is addressed or in whose name it is pronounced. We will mention some of the concrete implications here.

The first is obvious: the singing or reading should not hide or cover up the word. The chanting and the reading should be intelligible. Therefore they should be in the vernacular language and take into account the genius of the language and of its syntax in particular. Those who know the language must be able to comprehend it *through* the setting and its execution. To be sure, this goes without saying, yet in practice this implication is rarely respected (4).

However, there should be no misunderstanding as to what is meant by this "intelligibility" of the chant or reading in the vernacular. It does not imply that, on the pretext of making the language understood, one should give way to the fashion of the day and, very quickly, to all the winds of fashion. Understanding does not depend only on the setting and its execution; it depends also to a large extent on the education of the community. It is necessary to add to the general catechism a catechism of a special kind: that of apprenticeship in liturgical prayer. One should, in fact, learn prayer and doctrine together; the one does not go without the other. The rule of prayer *(lex orandi)* and the rule of faith *(lex credendi)* are inseparable. "Intelligibility" depends on a certain type of interaction between respect for the genius of the language at a certain specific time and the education of the community. (5)

The second implication (the order is in no way hierarchical) is that chant and reading in the liturgy

are a kind of service of the Church. In the same way as the episcopate, the priesthood, the diaconate, serving at the altar, iconography and theology, they are a diaconate in the fullest sense and belong to the ministries of the Church. This means that, as in all forms of service in the Church, one should not extemporize or impose oneself in the domain of liturgical chant or reading. One needs, in order to fulfil the function of singer, (a) an aptitude (musical ability, obviously) and (b) a calling from the Church.

There are, no doubt, some parts of the services which should be sung (or recited) by the whole community: the litanies, certain troparia or apolytikia, the Creed, the sung parts of the eucharistic canon, "Our Father" and some others. But there are other parts of the services, notably all that involves proclamation of the word or comment on the word, all that is "homiletic" in character, which belong particularly to the ministry of the choir. This choir may be either a group or a single person: the traditions are not uniform on this point. The ideal is two choirs which sing antiphonally (6). It is for this service that a "vocation" is needed and, in fact, even the blessing of the bishop, and for which baptism and chrismation are not sufficient.

The ecclesial community is a hierarchical community. But this does not mean in any way that some are *more* than others; it means that each has his place and his role as a function of the gifts which he has received and of the needs of the community. All have need of all; no one is excluded or exists by himself.

Another implication which flows from the previous two is the necessity for whoever is engaged in the ministry of singing, whether as composer or as singer, to be truly *at the service* of the community. This means that he or she should not come between the word and the community, not so much, in this case, by the unintelligible character of the setting or the execution, as by the act of imposing upon others his or her own individual psychological sensitivity, however interesting it may be. This implies "schooling" and a very difficult and exacting asceticism.

If it is clear that because of the link between music and the word, a liturgical composer must avoid setting the text in such a way as to attract all the attention to the music and the harmony, thereby turning it away from the word, it is nevertheless much more difficult for him (as for any artist) to divest himself of any kind of *consciousness of self* in his art, and to replace this consciousness of self by the *consciousness of the Church*, acquiring in the process what one theologian has called a "catholic" consciousness (7). To do this he must efface himself in order to give access through his setting to the fullness of the word and to the "silence" which is in it. Such renunciation of oneself also permits the musician to rediscover his richest, most creative personality. God gives it back to him a hundredfold (cf. Mt. 19:29), for through asceticism he obtains true freedom in creation, freedom in community. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (Jn. 12:24) and "whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it" (Mk. 8:35).

In the experience of the Church certain materials are not suitable, because of the very sensuality of their nature, for liturgical iconography: oil painting, for example. But this in no way means that they are entirely carnal and can have no "spiritual" value. The Madonna in the Sistine Chapel, for example, or the Adoration of the Lamb by Van Eyck undoubtably reflect a profoundly spiritual vision of the cosmos on the part of their authors. The same is true of the painting of characters by Tolstoy; yet this is no reason for reading *Anna Karenina* during the liturgy. Similarly, there are musical forms which are not suitable for liturgical expression. Thus purely instrumental music is not admitted in Eastern or Western Orthodox tradition; contrary to what some people think, it does not favour unity of spirit by producing a certain harmonious atmosphere which is independent of the word. The appeal to aesthetic emotion, when detached from common and unanimous prayer, tends to separate instead.

It must be added at once, however, that in Orthodox practice, particularly in Russian practice since the 18th century, this exclusion of purely instrumental music is often only theoretical; for many composers — and choirmasters — tend to use the setting and execution of choral music as if it were a purely musical harmony in which the word is merely a pretext — and in extreme cases, an embarrassment, because it threatens to distract attention from the beauty created by the artist.

Another form which is not at all favourable to liturgical prayer and which nevertheless would have itself considered to be entirely at the service of the word, is a kind of emotional and passionate musical dramatization, which aims to heighten the meaning of the words by artistic emphasis. In reality such a theatrical manner of composition or execution — or of celebrating — tends to empty the word of its meaning by attracting attention to the *manner* of execution and to the musical and vocal emotionalism it involves.

To sing in Church implies work, both technical and ascetic. One must work at one's voice and one's manner of singing quite as much as, if not more than, for secular singing (and this is in addition to the need to sing in tune). Traditional liturgical chant (Gregorian, Byzantine, Slavonic), as all the specialists stress, is not based on a succession of mathematically calculable "notes", but on the rhythm of the spoken phrase. "Only a cantilena or melody born organically from the text and espousing the subtle rhythms of the breath which carries the words and thought is able to sustain and enrich the language," writes Maxime Kovalevsky. "The chant must therefore be composed on the basis of the inflections of the voice and of a rhythm which is created gradually as the music develops, and not simply from notes and rhythms calculated in advance." He adds: "This is illustrated by the conviction of the first Christian theorists that liturgical music could not be written down, but only transmitted by oral tradition. The first neums, which indicate inflections of the voice and not notes, only date from the 9th century in the West. Similarly the Byzantine neums does not involve the concept of a "note", but simply that of the movement from one sound to another, that is, the notion of an interval (8). Therefore the character of the voice itself must correspond to such a service of the word.

The Fathers of the Church often refer, when speaking about the Christian life, to the true theology (that which is prayer) which requires the descent of the intellect into the heart. This union of the intellect and the heart implies a particular quality of vigilance and attentiveness in relation to all things.

And these same Fathers give us to understand that the intellect which has descended into the heart embraces all the senses of the human being.

Would it be excessively bold to speak in a similar way of a descent of the voice into the heart, in order to sing and celebrate in Church?

This would have several consequences:

a) One must rid one's voice of certain resonances and harmonics which are too sensual and which can be a barrier to others, so as to acquire a quality of modesty in singing. This can be done by patient work under the direction of someone with experience. As in spiritual experience, experience in liturgical singing is acquired by the transmission of an oral tradition.

b) One must acquire great flexibility in the use of the intensity of one's voice. In fact, if the voice is used always with the same intensity, it is practically impossible to respect the syntax and the genius of the sung language, which may then become unintelligible.

c) If the singing is choral, which is an even more exacting school from the ascetic point of view, one must learn to join one's voice with others, and this requires that one sing and listen at the same time. One must, above all, avoid the assertion of one's own voice against and above the others, lest the choir become a competition between soloists.

The proclamation of the word, whether by reading or by singing, should be done in a manner at once affirmative — that is to say, not timid — and restrained and modest, in order to avoid any affirmation of the self. It should not demonstrate the individual piety of the person who sings or reads, and this is why it should be "firm" and without excess. But it must also always remain at the double service of the word and of the community, whose free access to the word must be respected to the uttermost degree. This is why it must be controlled and circumspect, so as not to deflect attention to the beauty of the voice. We must sing "with fear of God", but not in a way that is timid.

These few thoughts might be concluded by adding that liturgical chant, the service of the word in the liturgy (and in particular polyphonic chant), is *in itself* a school, an apprenticeship, and a privileged place in the communal life of the Church: whoever takes part in it must, therefore, be in the service of God and of his neighbour in the exercise of the function which the Church has conferred upon him.

Translated by BENEDICT ROFFEY

(1) See in particular Maxime Kovalevsky, "Le Chant de la Liturgie Chrétienne: Perennité de ses Principes dans la Diversité de ses Manifestations", a lecture given at the Liturgical Congress of Saint Sergius in 1975 and published in *Liturgies de l'Église Particuliere et Liturgie de l'Englisé Universelle, Edizioni Liturgiche, Rome (1976?). This article is an* excellent summary and a bibliography appears in the notes.

(2) See in particular Leonide Ouspensky, *Theology of the Icon* (New York 1978).

(3) See on this subject the excellent discussion of symbolism by Olivier Clément, 'La Beauté comme Révélation,' in *La Vie Spirituelle*, No. 637 (March-April 1980), pp. 256-58.

(4) In this matter of intelligibility three choirs might be mentioned which today approach perfection: (a) in Slavonic, that of Father Matthew Mormyla at the Trinity-St. Sergius Monastery in Russia; (b) in Greek, the ensemble by Likourgos Angelopoulos in Athens; (c) in French, the choir of the Parish of St. Irenaeus in Paris, directed by Anne Marie Deschamps.

(5) This was well understood by the team which composed *Dieu est Vivant. Catechisme pour les families* (Le Cerf: Paris 1979).

(6) See on this subject Maxime Kovalevsky, 'la Musique Liturgigue dans l'Englise Orthodoxe', in *Axes* (January 1974).

(7) See V. Lossky, 'Catholic Consciousness: Anthropological Implications of the Dogma of the Church', *In the Image and Likeness of God* (New York 1974), pp. 183-194.

(8) Op. cit.

THE TRISAGION HYMN

by Dimitri Conomos

In the public and private worship of the Orthodox Church the Trisagion hymn holds a unique place of preeminence. It forms a part of the order in virtually every service — sometimes the requirement is for it to be sung, at other times to be read. How did this simple and short troparion achieve such a distinctive position? What is there in its musical and liturgical tradition that has contributed to its popularity? When we look at its form in the Divine Liturgy, where it appears before the Scriptural lessons, we are confronted by a very curious situation:

Holy God,
Holy Mighty,
Holy Immortal,
Have mercy on us. (3 times)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
Both now, and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Holy Immortal have mercy on us.

Holy God,
Holy Mighty,
Holy Immortal,
Have mercy on us.

Why is the hymn initially repeated three times? Why is only the final phrase sung after the small doxology? Why the last (and fourth) repetition? Finally, why was the Trisagion chosen as *the* hymn to be placed before the Biblical readings? A number of historical factors need to be considered in order to answer these questions. First, it is important to remember that the early Christian liturgy *began* with the entrance of the clergy (the Small Entrance) and this was immediately followed by the lessons from Scripture. The litanies and antiphons which we now sing before the readings are later additions. Secondly, the Trisagion was not originally designed for the liturgy. It was used in penitential processions which went from one church to another in Constantinople and it was sung as the procession moved along. Certain prayers accompanied its singing (these were said by the clergy when the procession made one or more temporary stops) which entreated God to protect the city from natural disasters, enemy invasions, etc. The final element of the chant, *have mercy on us,* bears witness to its supplicatory character as does the Prayer of the Trisagion which today is usually said inaudibly by the priest while the choir sings. In fact, according to tradition, the Trisagion hymn was miraculously transmitted to the people of Constantinople during one of these penitential processions when an earthquake had struck the capital early in the fifth century A.D. It is reported that the emperor Theodosios II and the patriarch Proklos gathered with the people outside of the town and prayed to God to *have mercy* upon them using the familiar invocation *Kyrie eleison.* Suddenly, a young boy was taken up into the air where he heard the angels sing the hymn. When he returned to earth and told the crowd what the angels were singing, the earthquake subsided as everyone took up the new chant. The memory of this miracle is kept in the Orthodox Church on 25 September.

Subsequently, but before its incorporation into the liturgy, the Trisagion was sung in similar penitential processions throughout the city. It was not simply repeated, however, but was chanted antiphonally with the verses of a psalm which were intoned by a soloist. This may have been psalm 79 because today, when a bishop celebrates the liturgy, he intercalates verses 14 and 15 of this very psalm ('Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; and the vineyard which Thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that Thou madest strong for thyself.') with the Trisagion. When the procession approached the church at which the Liturgy was to be celebrated, the singers intoned the doxology and the Trisagion was repeated twice more. Then the procession entered the church and the liturgy began with the readings. This partly explains why the hymn is repeated after the doxology. The final phrase, *Holy Immortal, have mercy on us,* was the concluding element of the refrain (the *akroteleution*) used by the people in response to the verses of the psalm. Now it stands in curious isolation since its function as a versicle-response has been relinquished.

Now we can appreciate how the Trisagion, which was once used only for special processions, was

grafted onto the opening of the ancient Byzantine liturgy. In the sixth century, when the hymn became a fixed part of the service, it was used as the Entrance Chant (Introit) but later it was displaced, probably for the sake of variety, by a number of proper chants appropriate to the day or season. In the form we have today (given above) we can see elements of the opening and ending of the original performance: the original threefold repetition acting as a musical prelude to the verses of the psalm (now suppressed), the closing doxology, and the double repetition at the conclusion. In addition, the position of the Trisagion before the readings recalls its processional function prior to the commencement of the liturgy.

Its striking popularity, however, undoubtedly stems from further considerations. The Trisagion became the subject of dogmatic controversy. At Antioch, the monophysite patriarch Peter the Fuller (c. 470) rejected its Trinitarian basis and recast the text in a form currently used by the Syrian and Coptic monophysites but rejected by the Council in Trullo. Subsequent Orthodox theologians, particularly St. John of Damascus, pseudo-Sophronios and Nicholas Kavasilas, emphasized the Trinitarian nature of the hymn. In a very real sense the Trisagion came to be understood as a common statement of faith, a communal declaration of praise and adoration to the Holy Trinity, an acknowledgement of God's presence in the liturgy, an incomparably appropriate song to prepare the faithful for readings from God's written word and, indeed, for any celebration of the church.

How can the music that we sing to this remarkably succinct and powerful text enhance its inner meaning and liturgical function? We have seen that, originally, it was a chant of the people — sung spontaneously and reverently. The tradition would suggest a simple melody, ideal for congregations with little or no musical knowledge. Our earliest written melodies in twelfth and thirteenth-century Russian and Greek musical sources strongly support such a suggestion. All of the ancient tunes adhere to a standard mould; it is as if the scribes who recorded them are preserving to the best of their abilities that exquisite angelic chant which so captivated the early Constantinopolitans. Irrespective of time, place, occasion or style, early Trisagion settings follow a time-honoured scheme and this undoubtedly explains the conspicuous absence of composers' names beside the settings even though they appear with the music for other liturgical hymns. A valid parallel can be noted in ikonography, where the essential features of the saint or event depicted remain constant despite era, provenance or workshop. What is this traditional design? How was it expressed in musical terms? These are crucial questions, the answers to which, if understood properly, can provide a thoroughly positive appreciation of Orthodox musical settings to liturgical hymns, and can offer to choir directors a measure of confident discretion in selecting items for ecclesiastical performance.

Of fundamental importance for early Trisagion musical settings, as for all Orthodox hymnody, is the principle that the *text* determines both the inner and outer design. The opening two exclamations, *Holy God, Holy Mighty,* are not only rhetorically and metrically parallel (in Greek and in Slavonic), but also musically. Lines 3 and 4, *Holy Immortal, have mercy on us,* contribute a small element of variation or development before coming to a cadence that rhymes musically with the phrases of the first two lines. Essentially, what we have is a musical set of rhetorical exclamations — the settings are very simple, carefully phrased, and they avoid any free elaboration which would destroy the parallelism between music and rhetoric. After all, the music is ideally sung by all of the people and its direction and thrust are intended from the outset to obey the inherent dogmatic and poetical impulses of the text.

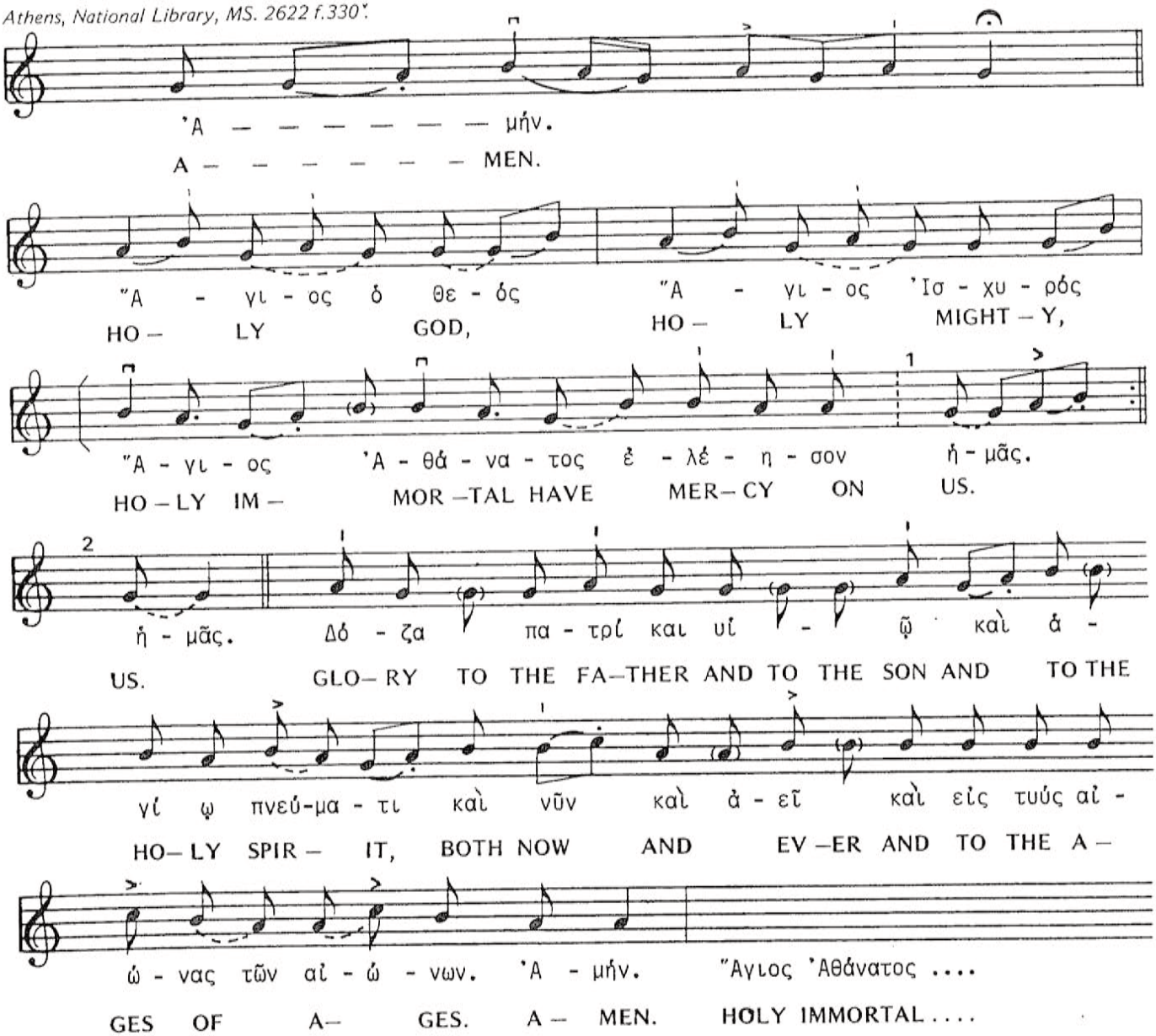
The most recognizable characteristic of the primitive Trisagion settings is that they are all based on the same musical formula which is firmly established in a *g* modality — that is, in the old Byzantine and Slavonic musical systems, Tones II, IV, VIII (or IV Plagal), and, occasionally, VI (or Plagal). It must be remembered that the earliest tunes for the chants of the Divine Liturgy are older than the formation of the Oktoechos (c. eighth century) and that these traditional, congregational recitatives had to be artifically imposed onto the new eight-mode scheme. For this reason there exists a considerable degree of ambiguity in the subsequent modal arrangements of many choral hymn settings. Nevertheless, it is possible to derive a musical ikon for many of the liturgical chants. The evidence demonstrates that most of the ancient ordinary chants were based on the same formula: an elementary *g a b a g*, which underlies the musical fabric for hymns such as the Alleluias before the Gospel, the pre-Credal 'Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,' the Sanctus, the two Amens and 'We praise Thee' of the Anaphora, and for the hymn now under discussion, the Trisagion. In other words, the medieval composers, like their contemporary ikon painters, did not set out to produce new and original creations but merely rearranged the same ancient, communal, authoritative, and traditional material which was deployed into the newly-established oktoechal frame for choral performance.

An example from early fourteenth-century sources (but presumably of much earlier origin) will serve to clarify the points made above (see the accompanying musical example). Clearly, the opening 'Amen' establishes the musico-ikonographic formula for the entire hymn. The two opening lines are perfectly matched while the rest provides some minor embellishment (because of the additional syllables) and cadences in a manner similar to the preceding statements. The style of the hymn and that of the doxology is very constrained and it is obvious that textual accents govern the musical inflections in a manner strongly reminiscent of recitative and certain kinds of Balkan folksong. (I have given the appropriate additional notes in brackets for the sake of the longer English text in the doxology.) Here, then, we have the clear profile of a primitive congregational chant fashioned into a simple choral piece without any radical departures from the traditional mould. Although the fifth-century original is lost, surely we can see in this and other medieval settings the survival of an authoritative and powerful melodic tradition.

The most compelling and challenging question which emerges from this investigation into the music of the Trisagion is whether we today can use the same centuries-old criteria for our English Orthodox liturgical hymnody.

TRISAGION — Mode 2

Athens, National Library, MS. 2622 f.330v.



MUSIC IN THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH

By David Drillock

As the continuation of the Church of the Old Testament, the early Christian Church had at its very beginnings a rather rich sense of grand and solemn service to God. Not only did the early Christian community inherit from the Temple the *concept* of a clearly defined plan of a rite combining prayer and sacrifice, but it also was heavily influenced by the services of the Synagogue, that institution which stressed active participation of the layman in the service of prayer (replacing the sacrifice at the Temple), the reading of biblical passages, and the chanting of the Psalms. Yet, it was clearly a new perspective that the early Church gave to worship. It was a worship "in spirit and in truth," a worship of God by "members of the saints" who through their baptism had entered into the Kingdom of God as revealed and inaugurated by Jesus Christ.

It is only natural that the worship of God is to be expressed in song. Inasmuch as the Christian by his baptism is a "transformed" being, so his praise of God in the worship of the Church should reflect this transformation. His praise cannot be reduced to the "language of this world," stripped of all balance, rhythm, and harmony. The word of God and man's response to it certainly is not just the reflection of an "ordinary" conversation. Rather it is a word charged with emotion and filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. As soon as the word becomes identified with the content of its message, it calls for order (rhythm) and melos (arrangement of pitch), i.e., a musical form. In this way, the perfect word, the fully-developed word, most always has the nature of song.

A distinction has always been made between private prayer and the worship of the Church. "But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you." (Matt. 6:6) However, in the *leiturgia*, the common prayer of the Church, the organic structure of the assembly is most adequately expressed in the raising of voices in common song. Although the voices are indeed diverse, it is "with one mind" that the Church prays. "It is truly a great bond of union that the multitude who form the assembly make up but one single chorus," wrote St. Ambrose. This same concept of unity in diversity is also stressed by St. John Chrysostom, who, describing the singing at the Church of St. Irenaeus in Constantinople, wrote: "The psalm which occured just now in the service blended all voices together, and caused one single full harmonious chant to arise; young and old, rich and poor, women and men, slaves and free, all sang one single melody. . . Together we make up a single choir in perfect quality of rights and of expression whereby earth imitates heaven. Such is the noble character of the Church."

Because music had such a prominent role in the worship of the Church, it is only natural that one should find clearly defined principles regulating its use. On the other hand, inasmuch as music is and must be a creative art, should there be a great number of "rules" imposed by the Church on its musicians, clearly any creative response would be greatly hindered. It is not surprising, therefore, that the "principles of music" imposed by the Church are most often defined in negative terms, leaving untouched the maximum number of possible correct approaches.

A primary concern of the early Church fathers was the elimination of any element in the liturgical services which might distract the Christian from his prayer. It is for this reason that both the singing of profane (secular) music and the use of musical instruments was strongly discouraged. "Those who sing psalms," writes St. John Chrysostom, "are filled with the Holy Spirit, but those who sing diabolical (profane) songs are filled with the devil." As most of the tunes in vogue at that time came from the stage and usually carried with them implications of licentious actions, the melody could very easily evoke the same thought even though accompanied with the sacred text. For much the same reason does Basil of Caesarea write against the use of the instrument: " Psalteries and zithers increase the drunkenness caused by wine and hinder people from meditating on the words of the Lord." Although our attitude towards instruments is different from that of Basil of Caesarea, the question of the use of instruments in *liturgical worship* is one that should not be answered in great haste.

One of the main reasons for the use of music in worship was functional: to serve as a means for bringing across the text of the psalms and the hymns more clearly, and without personal interpretation. "Let the servant of Christ sing so that he pleases (God), not through his voice, but through the words which he pronounces," wrote St. Jerome. Likewise did the Council of Laodicea in 361 A.D. decree that the chanters "must not employ disorderly cries or

force nature to cry out loud... but rather offer such psalmodies with much attentiveness and contriteness to God." Certainly the singers should chant the sacred hymns with the finest qualities of style — good pitch, fine tone, proper balance, etc. However, the chief concern need not be the music that he sings but the worship that he helps celebrate.

By the fifth century Byzantine hymnographers in ever-increasing numbers were introducing their hymns in the liturgical services of the Church. The earliest type of Byzantine hymn was the *Troparion*, a short hymn of praise which was at first inserted among the verses of psalms. In the sixth century the most important poetic form, the *Kontakion*, made its appearance. The *Kontakion* consisted of 18 to 24 stanzas, each being sung to the same melody. In content it was a poetical "sermon" for the day or feast on which it was to be performed. The ninth century saw the development of the *Kanon*, a new poetic form which replaced the full *Kontakion* in the liturgical services. A *Kanon* consists of 9 odes which are modeled after the biblical canticles. Many see in the replacement of the *Kontakion* by the *Kanon* a strong desire by the Church to re-emphasize the place of Scripture in the services. Be that as it may, one can find in all three forms of this Byzantine religious poetry a display of deep biblical and religious fervor, permeated with themes of repentance and glorification, of sorrow and joy, of a theology based on the tradition of the Fathers, and of the dogmatic achievements of the Councils. In the hymnography can be found an almost complete theology which not only gives to man an understanding of God and the world but shows him the way in which his life can be transformed and united to Christ the Lord. It is sufficient to refer to the richness and beauty of the paschal services and the magnificient Ressurectional Kanon of St. John of Damascus to understand how these liturgical treasurers were to be the main source of knowledge and inspiration in an Orthodox world which would be subjected to centuries of persecution and destruction.

The music which accompanied these poetico-liturgical hymns was the Byzantine Chant. It is purely vocal and inasmuch as there are no traces of polyphony in any of the medieval Byzantine liturgical manuscripts, it can be said that it was performed monophonically. The melodies themselves are modal in structure and the whole corpus of chants is sung in eight modes, which constitute a system known as the "octoechos." This was the chant which was transmitted by Greek missionaries to the Slavs where it was known as "znamenny chant" and which later developed its own tradition. In any study of the Orthodox chants, whether they be Byzantine, Russian, Serbian, etc., one must necessarily treat both the texts and the music together since the two are deeply interwoven and are inseparable components of the Orthodox liturgical services.

In the composition or make-up of the chants is revealed the fundamental relationship between liturgy and worship. Here music is used as the real "handmaid" of liturgy, for the text has retained the primacy which is its due. At the same time the chant is further used to enhance the liturgical meaning of worship. Types of melodies and their forms are closely connected with the liturgical action. As an example, *antiphones*, psalms which are sung at the beginning of the liturgy, employ a chant which is "syllabic" in form and rather simple in terms of melodic content. The musical accents generally are shaped by the text. Such a musical form is used for the antiphon because of its liturgical function — instructing the assembly in the way of God. On the other hand, the music for the *Alleluia* (that *theoforous* or God-bearing word meaning "Praise God," frequently used as a joyful greeting of exclamation) is more elaborate. One of the places in the Liturgy where the *Alleluia* is sung occurs just before the reading of the Gospel, the Word of God. The liturgical function of the *Alleluia*, therefore, is to announce the Gospel. The melsimatic form given to the *Alleluia* corresponds to the exultant character of this acclamation and is one of the "musical" high-points of the service just as the reading of the Gospel which it accompanies is one of the central points of the Liturgy. Music for the Litanies, i.e., the "Lord have mercy," is seldom found in the chant books, and when it does appear, the notation indicates a very simple and syllabic form of chant. Inasmuch as the litany is the response of the congregation to each petition pronounced by the celebrant of the Liturgy, it should be sung by the whole congregation. For this reason, the chant melody is simple and the congregation should be able to respond freely to each supplication.

Certainly the Orthodox Church in America has a rich reservoir of music written for its liturgical services. In addition to the various national chants, individual composers have given to the Church music inspired by the sacred liturgical texts. For those of us who choose the music which is to be sung by our choirs, as well as for those who are writing church music today or who desire to become "church" composers, it would be well to keep in mind the primary purpose of music in the worship of the Church.

INTERVIEW WITH

Fr. Dimitri Ressetar

by Fr. Theodore Heckman

Fr. Dimitri presently lives next to All Saints Orthodox Church in Olyphant, Pennsylvania. It would not be right to say he is in retirement, since he is as active musically as ever. We visited him at home on a pleasant September evening. His wife and he were warm and gracious hosts.

Q.: Let's begin in the beginning: where were you born and when?

Fr. D.: I was born in Mt. Carmel, Pa., October 12, 1899.

Q.: And your parents, were they immigrants?

Fr. D.: Yes, they were from Austria-Hungary; they came to America in 1892.

Q.: Where did you receive your basic musical interest? Were your parents musical?

Fr. D.: They both were musical. Father and Mother played the violin. Dad played the trumpet and clarinet. And my grandfather played the string bass in Franz Joseph's symphony orchestra. He was the soloist. Sixteen string bass players, one-hundred sixty-five musicians.

Q.: Franz Joseph the emperor?

Fr. D.: Yes. And I visited them. Several times. We went over twice on a ship with a band of young musicians, ten to fourteen years of age. It was in 1909 and 1910. We had one-hundred twenty musicians. We played for Franz Joseph; we played for Kaiser Wilhelm and Czar Nicholas of Russia.

Q.: You actually saw the Czar?

Fr. D.: Yes. And the French premier.

Q.: Was it in Moscow that you played for the Czar?

Fr. D.: No. It was at the summer palace. And then, of course, I went to see Grandpa in 1912 with my father, and he gave me two violins he had made — he was a violin maker and repair-man — one half-size (which I gave to my grandson Nicholas), and a big violin. Altogether I had nine violins, one viola, and a string bass . . . The cello I got later.

Q.: Did you visit any churches when you went to the old country?

Fr. D.: Oh, yes! I remember the "best one" in Kiev. St. Vladimirsky Kievsky Sobor. There I met my uncle Peter. He had a factory there. The conductor of the Kievsky Sobor wanted me in the worst way to remain, but I didn't want to leave my parents — as any youngster would not. I was a good singer, a soprano.

Q.: How old were you then?

Fr. D.: It was in 1912. I was about thirteen years old.

Q.: He wanted you to stay to sing?

Fr. D.: Yes. I sang soprano even at our cathedral on 97th Street, the boys choir, until my voice changed. Then after that I was a bass. A deep bass. I could take counter 'A.' And when I had my tonsils out the doctor told me: it's going to go up.

Q.: And did it?

Fr. D.: It did — like a tenor, you know.

Q.: How old were you when your voice changed?

Fr. D.: I was about fourteen and a half.

Q.: Is there anything else of interest from your early travels? Did you visit the monastery in Kiev?

Fr. D.: Yes. The Kievsky-Pechersky Lavra. I was there.

Q.: Did you attend any services?

Fr. D.: Yes, I was at the Vespers and Matins — three hours. I even got music from the director, a monk. I got his "Milost Mira." I can't recall his name. Before the War — the First World War — in 1913, we visited Moscow to see my other uncles. You see, my grandma from my father's side had twenty-one boys and only one daughter. Three times she had triplets, and four times (she had) two. So when my daughter Vera got twins, she said, "Why did I get them?" And my wife's mother was also a twin. So it was there on both sides.

But to return to Moscow, Sunday after Church it was announced that Archangelsky will give a huge concert in the park, that was in Moscow, with five-hundred singers. It was terrific! So I got acquainted with Archangelsky. I was already fifteen years old. I was a musician and I was nosy; I wanted to know too much, as my Dad said. Archangelsky gave me a song — I still have it — "Zhiteyskoye morye" (Beholding the sea of life," from the Panikhida). It's sort of a "concert," beginning with a trio — male chorus, then a trio — ladies chorus, and then the whole chorus comes in. It's a chant in the 6th Tone.

Q.: A Kievan chant?

Fr. D.: Yes, sort of.

Q.: Did you ever set it into English?

Fr. D.: I'm working on it. I think I did finish it, but I haven't yet put it into ink. I'm going to give it to some of my friends who still have good choirs.

Q.: Perhaps we can feature that in a separate article, if you agree to it. Now what about your educational background?

Fr. D.: After I finished my schooling in Mt. Carmel, I entered the Seminary in 1915 at Tenafly (New Jersey). But in those days before you entered, you had to study at St. Tikhon's Monastery all summer — June, July, August, to September 6th. Every student! There were forty-eight students in 1915 at the Monastery. But only twenty-eight entered the Seminary. That's how strict they were. Only twenty-eight passed the examination. After the (Russian) revolution some dropped out. Only nine graduated.

And after the revolution we had to give concerts and plays in different cities. That's how we raised the money. On vacation we were asked to go and solicit, you know. So we went to our area: Mt. Carmel, Shamokin, Shenandoah — we went to the Roman Catholic priests and the Greek Catholic clergy, and they gave. I remember one priest in Mt. Carmel, he gave us twenty dollars and told us to study well so that we would be good priests.

We gave concerts in New York City, in New Haven, Connecticut, in Bridgeport.

Q.: And who were the nine clergy who graduated?

Fr. D.: Joseph Pishtey, Vladimir Prislopsky, John Kivko, Afanasy Hubiak, John Rusin, John Kosakevich, Gabriel Daviduk, John Kulich, and myself.

Q.: At this time what instruments did you play?

Fr. D.: I majored in strings — violin, cello, bass. I played other instruments too, but strings mainly.

Q.: Where did you study music?

Fr. D.: I first studied at home. My dad taught me. And then I had private professors. Rachmaninoff was one of my instructors in harmony, counterpoint, strict counterpoint.

Q.: Rachmaninoff? Where was he living at the time?

Fr. D.: In New York City. He would tell me when he was back from a tour, and I would go there on the train.

Q.: And how long did you study with him?

Fr. D.: I took twenty-four lessons from him, two or three hours each.

Q.: So you had a lot of contact with him.

Fr. D.: Oh yes. And with Feyodor Chaliapin when I was in Cleveland in the Conservatory. He was there for one year giving operas. I had a classmate there, John Suridov — he didn't finish the Seminary. We would go with Chaliapin to the restaurant after the opera. He would order three pounds of steak. I would say, No, Hospodin Chaliapin. He said Oh, that's not too much!

Q.: He must have been a big man.

Fr. D.: A big man. Six foot four, if not more. And heavy, over two hundred pounds. Anyway, I said, you're going to get sick. Oh no, he said, I'll go to sleep at four o'clock in the morning — I'm going to the park to walk it off.

He was a strong man and very religious. *Very* religious. He made many records with Afonsky in Europe.

During the First War, in the Seminary they were having what was called "Six-Liberally-Loaned Drives" to raise money for the government. In the old Hippodrome in New York City with six and one-half thousand people, there I met Maria Michailovna, the great Russian soprano, Galli-Curci, the Italian coloratura, Caruso, and Chaliapin — who sang two numbers. And our Seminary choir, eighty-eight men, sang. That's how I happened to meet these people, because I was the student conductor. Oh, and John McCormack, the Irish tenor. And, you know, the great men — they are as simple as can be; they're humorous and very, very

Q.: What about Rachmaninoff as a teacher?

Fr. D.: Oh, very good!

Q.: Was he patient?

Fr. D.: Very patient.

Q.: Sometimes great performers as teachers, you know are . . .

Fr. D.: Temperamental.

Q.: Yes.

Fr. D.: But not him.

Q.: How about the music in the Seminary at this time. What was that like?

Fr. D.: In the Seminary they taught us mostly the Znamenny rospev.

Q.: Is that right? You sang that normally . . .

Fr. D.: Oh, yes. We thought we were going to use that at the parishes. And not only that but we sang the "square notes," especially for the Dogmatiks. This is how I heard the Kiev-Pechersky monks singing. Over there — in the monastery style — the Dogmatik is not sung on the cleros but in the middle of the Church. The Uniats have the same system. We had it in Mt. Carmel, in Mayfield, and in Olyphant. But no more.

In Kiev about a hundred monks came in the center of the Church, big men; they began in unison, then it developed into two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight-part harmony. No music.

Q.: Really? Just natural harmony, on Znamenny chant?

Fr. D.: The Dogmatik.

Q.: So from this point of view our music has somewhat declined since then.

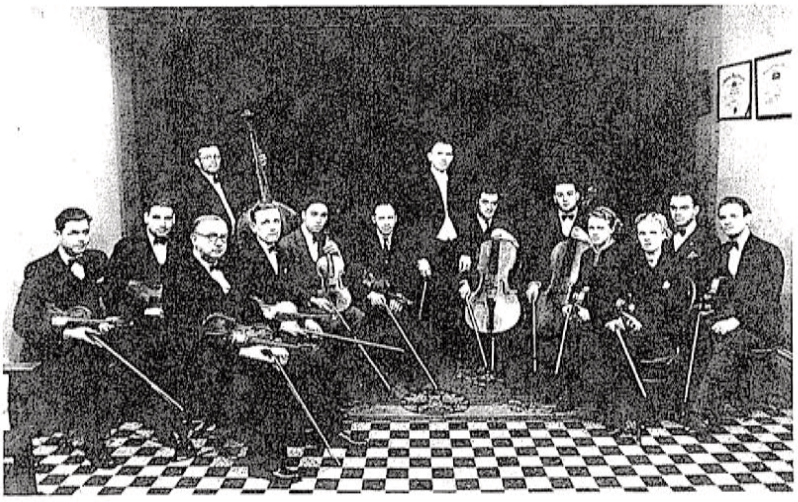
Fr. D.: Well, no one to teach it. See, the professors we used to get from Galicia, the Cantors, at first they sang the Halitsky napev. But originally it was "Sokrushony znamenny" (modified znamenny). And in the Seminary we were also taught the Bakhmetev chant, as sung in the parishes. And they were also teaching us Uhorsky napev. I'll tell you why: for the first fifteen years, many of the Uniat Churches were coming into Orthodoxy, especially in the Pittsburgh area and in Ohio. They had that chant. So they were teaching us that in case we would go to a parish there as choir conductor. Now, most of our students at Tenafly Seminary were choir directors. That's why they were so selective — forty-eight boys, twenty-eight passed, remember, I told you. If they had no ear for music, they didn't go in. Oh, they were very, very strict.

Q.: Then the Seminary graduates went to serve the parishes as choir directors for awhile?

Fr. D.: Yes. For example, Fr. Pishtey was here in Olyphant three or four years before he became a priest. I was from 1921 'till 1939, a choir director. November 18th — a deacon; a priest the next day at St. Tikhon's Monastery.

Q.: Only one day a deacon?

Fr. D.: Yes. But I had the experience by teaching and listening . . . I'll tell you now what led to



my ordination. As a musician in Edwardsville I helped to organize the Wilkes-Barre Symphony Orchestra with Pompilio Forlano; we had eighty-five musicians. When I came here to Olyphant, I had my own little string symphony. I was teaching music appreciation at Scranton College — now it's a university. And I organized the Scranton Philharmonic Symphony in 1939, in this house, down below, two men and myself. We typed one-hundred twenty-five letters and mailed them to all the musicians in Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties (I was a Union man). So one-hundred nineteen musicians came, and only ninety-six remained; the others were not up to par. We used to give five operas, six symphonic concerts . . .

Q.: Per year:

Fr. D.: Per year.

Q.: That's a rather heavy schedule.

Fr. D.: Yes. Of course, I wasn't the real conductor at that time. They had another man after I took sick: Dr. Felix Gotz. He came to replace me because I told him it was too much work for me there in the parish. We were preparing "Parsifal" by Wagner. I got four Russian choirs: Olyphant had over one-hundred singers; Mayfield — about eighty-five singers; Old Forge had about sixty singers; Scranton had about forty-five. And I got fifty men for the German choir, "Liederkranz, — all male. So altogether we had two-hundred fifty singers in the symphonic chorus. We got four artists from New York, soloists from the Metropolitan Opera. Monday, April 4th, was supposed to be the concert. Thursday before, I took sick. I was on the verge of a nervous breakdown. So Dr. Finklestein, a Russian Jewish doctor, told my bishop, Bishop Arsenii: "No more conducting. He studied for the priesthood, — ordain him." So I was ordained sort of accidentally.

Q.: To save yourself . . .

Fr. D.: Yea; but I still like music. I can't help it. I told my dad and mother; it's your fault.

Q.: Now, when in all of this did you meet your wife?

Fr. D.: Oh, when I went to Cleveland — 1924, September 1st. I was choir director with the Very Rev. Joseph Antonov, at St. Michael's Church. Their Church, from the Unia, was organized in 1922, I think, and they served in a big, old dilapidated Protestant church. When I came there the choir was on strike. My wife was one of the strikers. John Oblatilov was the choir director at the time. He told the singers to strike. And so not one came.

Q.: For what reason?

Fr. D.: I don't know. He just told them. Gradually then they began to come back one by one. When I first came there I was crying when I got home — pickup choir; they couldn't even sing "do, la, fa." They never sang. But thanks to Professor Ignatovsky from Fr. Kappanadze's Church, the Cathedral, he gave me three sopranos, two altos, a tenor, and Suridov, my classmate, a bass. We had two short rehearsals. And when the striking choir all came to Church — my wife tells me this — they said, "My, this professor means business." I said nothing to them; I didn't know who they were in the first place. I didn't even know my wife at that time.

Q.: So they heard the singing.

Fr. D.: Yes. Well, within a month's time we were singing very nicely. Simple things; nothing elaborate. We even gave two recitals in Protestant Churches — in the evening. I had sixty-five in my new choir, young boys and girls. They sang very nicely. And all the "old" singers came to the recital. At the next rehearsal three or four came back; then gradually, you know, the rest. They had some very good singers at that time. My wife was a very good soprano.

Q.: Were they singing the Uhorsky Chant?

Fr. D.: Yes. Luckily I knew a little of it. But although I had forgotten it since I had not been using it.

Q.: Did you teach them the other Russian music then?

Fr. D.: Oh, yes. We sang Archangelsky and many others. I was a lover of Archangelsky. Kastalsky — some, but he is a little difficult, you know. We did sing Kastalsky's "c Hamn Gor." But even that I simplified a bit.

I happened to meet my wife in November, I'll never forget; the parish had a dance, and I met her there. When she returned to the choir, she got about ten more girls to return with her: sopranos and altos. We kept company until June; on the 6th we were married — in 1925.

Q.: You were married there in St. Michael's Church:

Fr. D.: Right! In the old Church. Shortly after, we went to Akron, Ohio, to Fr. Afanasy Hubiak's Church, an old wooden Church. That was in July. I worked in the Goodyear Rubber and Tire Company, in the foreign department, because I knew the languages. We used to send samples out to different countries, and letters, and I had to do the writing.

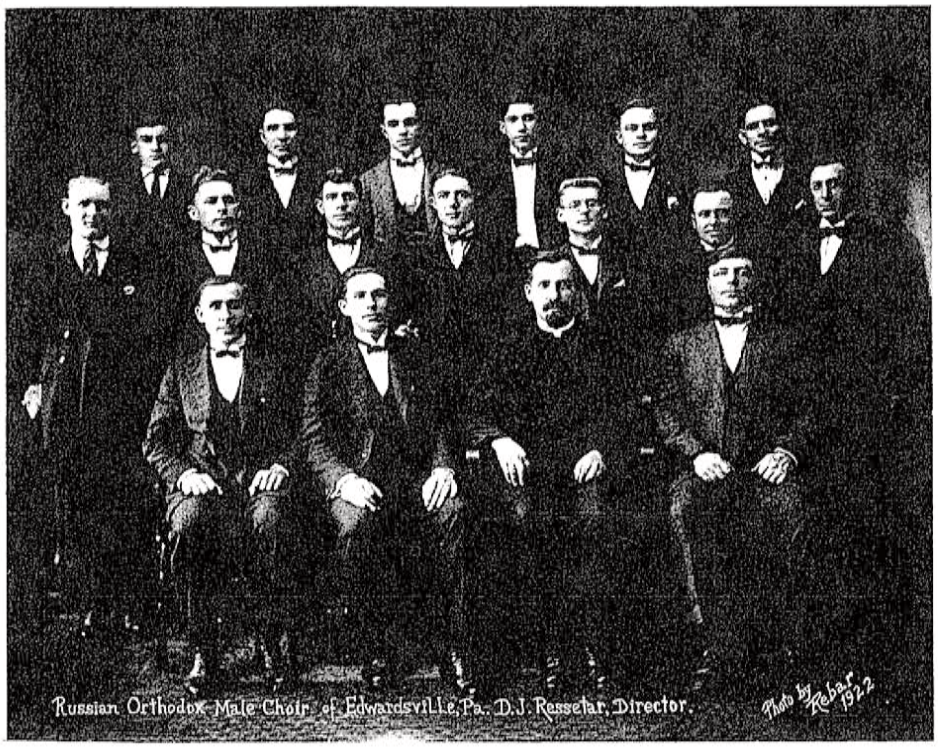
Q.: What languages did you know?

Fr. D.: Polish, Slovak, German — the "high Deutsch," Russian, of course, and the dialect in Austria: "Halits," they call it. And at the same time I was the choir director. It was a nice choir there, about fifty singers.

Q.: Just for the record, what other parishes did you serve as choir director?

Fr. D.: St. John's, Edwardsville, with Fr. Archimandrite Rapella. Then I was transferred (in those days the Bishop would transfer choir directors) to Olyphant. Then from Olyphant I was ordained.

My first parish as priest was in Lopez, Pennsylvania. When I came to Lopez the Starosta said, "Father, we can't afford to give you any more than $60 a month. (I was getting $125 as choir director before.) And with four children. But the farmers were good. I very seldom saw money. They brought food: cheese, butter, bread, everything. I had one wedding. The farmer said, "Father, I'm going to bring you a calf." "What will I do with that?" I said. "Sell it,"



he said. "To whom?" "Oh, I'll get you the buyer, too." He got the buyer, and I got $35. I never got that much for any wedding all my life. And when I left — February 11th — to Stamford, Connecticut, they had a farewell banquet for me. I got a $200 check.

Then from Stamford — 1940 — I was transferred to Jersey City, SS. Peter and Paul Church, where I didn't want to go.

Q.: Why?

Fr. D.: Many priests refused to go there because two priests died there. And the saying is that if two priests die in one parish, the third one also.

Q.: Well, you're still here.

Fr. D.: But it's funny, I was sick. I wasn't well there for three years. Then I was transferred to Coaldale, July, 1947. We were there thirteen years. From there in 1961, we went to Mayfield. I stayed there until 1967. When I took sick I lost my voice; I had two polyps. When I went to the old homestead in Clifton, New Jersey, my brother, Dr. Mike, got me two throat specialists, and they got them out. When I went to see Metropolitan Ireney, he didn't believe me. He said, "Sing for me!" When he saw I was all right he said, "I'm going to give you a pretty rough parish — in Meriden, Connecticut." I said, Vladiko, that's nothing new." Anyway, when I came there they were the nicest people you could find. I was there from August, 1967, until 1972.

Q.: That's where I first met you, when I was choir director in New Britain.

Fr. D.: Yes, with Fr. Lazor.

Q.: That's where I first met *my* wife.

Fr. D.: I knew your wife before you met her, before you came.

Q.: Yes, she was known for her beautiful voice.

Fr. D.: Nice, voice, yes; and a nice personality, too. A very lovely girl. And there in Meriden when I took sick, Dr. Krockmal told me, "Father, you want to live a couple more years?" I said, "Yea." (I had had a mild heart attack.) "Then you better retire . . ." he said. So I retired.

Q.: How old were you then?

Fr. D.: I was seventy-three years old. I'll be eighty-one in October, the 12th. They were nice people in Meriden. I didn't find any bad people anywhere. My wife often scolds me: "Oh, you would have been good with the devil." I say, "If he doesn't bother me."

Q.: But sometimes he does.

Fr. D.: He does, yes, it's true.

Q.: So then you retired from Meriden.

Fr. D.: I came back here (to Olyphant) in the latter part of April because my daughter lives here. And I know so many people because I was here for over ten years; not only the Russian people, but I was involved in the community. I was attached, naturally, to All-Saints Church. I served with Fr. Chanda on Sundays and Holy Days. Even now I serve in Uniondale as a choir director, but on Holy Days I help Fr. David. I'm his altar boy for Saturday — for Vespers and Matins.

Q.: Tell me, in the past when you worked with those large choirs, did the singers come only for Sunday Liturgy, or did they sing the Vigils and Feast Days?

Fr. D.: They came to Vigils and Feast Days when they didn't work — during the day.

Q.: How about Saturday nights?

Fr. D.: They came! I had a choir always. I never sang alone.

Q.: And they sang the whole Vespers and Matins?

Fr. D.: The whole thing. I had three choirs here. I had a Matins choir, a Vespers choir, and the children's chorus of two-hundred sixty-five children — from the Russian school. In the evening they used to come for an hour and a half to the Russian school.

Q.: Every day?

Fr. D.: Every day.

Q.: And you taught them the Russian language?

Fr. D.: Yes. I'm teaching Russian now, in Dundaff.

Q.: And music every day, too?

Fr. D.: Yes, I taught them the scales, and Christmas carols, music for the services, everything. They sang very well.

Q.: And did they also have instruction in doctrine?

Fr. D.: Oh yes. We had what we called "catechism."

Q.: Since there were these large choirs, they came faithfully to the services, isn't it sort of sad now to see so few singers left? Do you look at this as a sad development?

Fr. D.: Well, I tell you, you can realize yourself: before, very few parishioners had radios; there was no television; very few had photographs. That's one thing! And then, of course, the families were more attached to

one another, much more so than now. They didn't have the cars. Now in one home there are three, four cars. Before, very few had any, and the parishioners lived mostly around the Church.

Q.: So they could always walk to services.

Fr. D.: They could walk. For Christmas caroling, you know, we walked to Scranton. We went caroling up in Throop. I had to divide my choir. They all wanted to go, but they couldn't fit in any house. So I said, take twenty-five or thirty one day, a different group the second day . . . For two weeks we were caroling. We walked to Scranton, then we took a bus back. The fare was only six cents in those days. (Now it's fifty cents.) But the people were more "knitted" together then than they are now.

Q.: You mean as a parish? The parish was more like a family?

Fr. D.: More like a family, yes. And they were eager to work. We had picnics; we had many different things. Now you can't even get them to join the Church Council. Of course it isn't everywhere. My son Dan has a parish of good workers. They come to Church very well. When I served there several times when Fr. Dan was away, I was impressed.

Q.: To conclude now, is there any advice you have for singers and directors today?

Fr. D.: Well, I believe we should not discard the Slavonic entirely.

Q.: As a cultural and spiritual connection to the past?

Fr. D.: Yes. Some Churches, though, go too far in keeping the old languages. The Greeks, for example, and some others. I was once asked by the Greek Archbishop — Athenagoras — to help teach the singers in a Greek parish during the time when their organ was broken. After a while we received many letters from parishioners telling us to keep the organ broken.

Q.: Did you teach them Russian-style music?

Fr. D.: Russian style. Through the years I provided music for Greek, Syrian, Romanian, all kinds of parishes.

Q.: I'm sure we could continue for many more hours. But I wish to thank you now, Fr. Dimitri, for spending this time answering my questions and providing us with a fascinating insight into Orthodox musical and church life through the years of your service. Your experiences span the greater part of this century, and you were in the middle of everything, so this exchange has been very valuable. Thank you once again.

Fr. D.: Thank you! It was my pleasure.

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A Closer Look at Our Hymnography

The PODOBEN or 'Special' Melody

by Fr. Stephen Meholick

More and more of the standard service books of the Orthodox Church (Festal Menaion, Lenten Triodion, Oktoechos, etc.) are now available in the English language. Anyone acquainted with these books immediately recognizes that the bulk of hymnographic material is prescribed to be sung according to a particular "tone." The singers then apply the particular mode and/or pattern of the tone to the sacred text. While most singers are generally familiar with at least one particular system of eight tones, whether it be Byzantine, Kievan, Carpatho-Russian, etc., many express bewilderment when the direction appears as: Tone 6 — to the special melody — "Having set all your hope . ." or perhaps Tone 8 — to the special melody — "O Most Glorious Wonder." In order to help clarify this "enigma" in our service books we would like to present a brief explanation of the meaning of these directions along with an example of one of these "special melodies."

Many of the principle stikhiri assigned to one of the eight tones are titled *idiomela* or samoglasny. Originally this literally meant that this verse had its own distinct development of the basic melodic patterns. Thus, while following the basic mode or tone prescribed, the musical setting was specifically developed and embellished to fit the particular sacred text. (The Znamenny chant version of the eight "dogmatics" at Saturday evening vespers are fine examples of this principle.) Since the music here is thoroughly wedded to the text — indeed inseparable from it — this system represents the most ideal and highly developed chant form.

On the other hand, since originally many hymnographers were singers themselves, many stikhiri were composed with a definite literary pattern joined to a specific corresponding melodic pattern which differed from the standard eight modes. These originals were called *automela* or *samopodobny*. Because of their usually "catchy" melodic pattern they were very easily memorized. Others then often copied the literary pattern of the poetic verse and of course conveniently set them to the melodic pattern of the originals. These new compositions were called *prosomoia* or podobny which simply means "similar to." A familiar example of a samopodoben and podoben in secular music may be found in comparing the British anthem "God Save the Queen" with the later "America" ("My Country 'tis of Thee").

The literary style of a podoben may be illustrated by comparing the following two stikhiri. The first (samopodoben) is the first Apostikha verse at Great Vespers for the Elevation of the Cross. The second is a stikhira in honor of St. Herman of Alaska.

> 1.) Rejoice! Life-giving Cross,* unconquerable trophy of godliness,* door to Paradise,* succour of the faithful,* rampart set about the Church.* Through thee corruption is utterly destroyed,* the power of death is swallowed up,* and we are raised from earth to heaven:* invincible weapon,* adversary of devils,* glory of martyrs,* true ornament of saints,* haven of salvation* bestowing on the world great mercy.
>
> 2.) Rejoice, Life-giving Cross,* unconquerable trophy of godliness,* and door of paradise* that opens to enlighten a new land,* and the corruption of idolatry is abolished,* and the reign of death is trampled down,* and those born of earth are raised to heaven.* Rejoice, ye faithful and be glad,* for the glory of the Life-giving Cross, the hope of new martyrs* and Saint Herman,* is proclaimed in a new land* and to all faithful doth grant* great and abundant mercy.

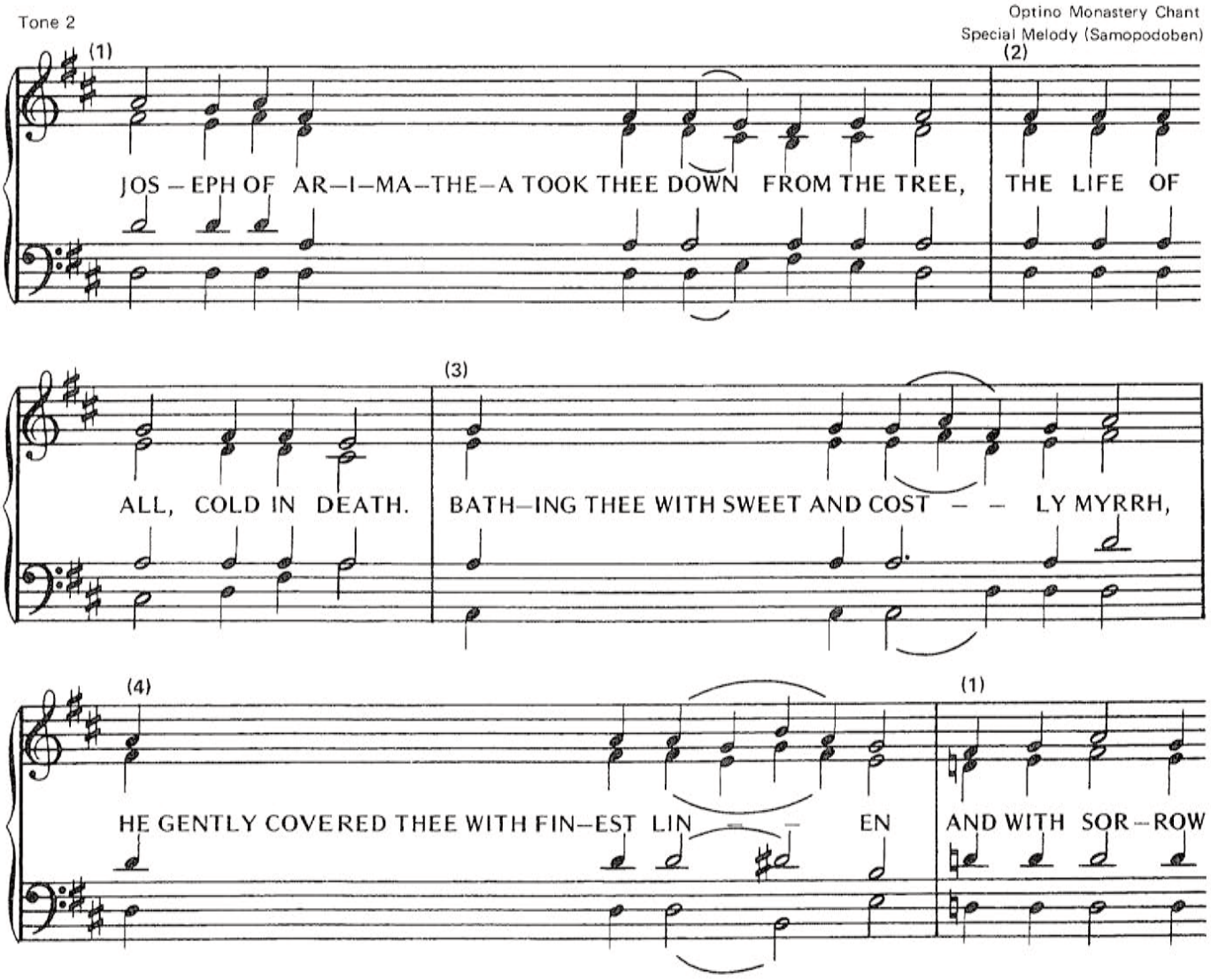
Until recently, however, the actual practice of singing the "special melodies" fell into relative obscurity and became limited to a few monasteries and isolated communities. Now fortunately the quadratic notation for many of the more commonly used melodies has been reprinted in the "Psalmist's Companion" ("Sputnik Psalomschika") published by Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, New York. A few of the melodies have been adapted to fresh English translations by the monks of New Skete. Also many examples have appeared on recordings from the Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra in Zagorsk and St. Sergius Academy in Paris. It is further noteworthy that several Carpathian variations have been rather well preserved by parishes using the traditional plain chant.

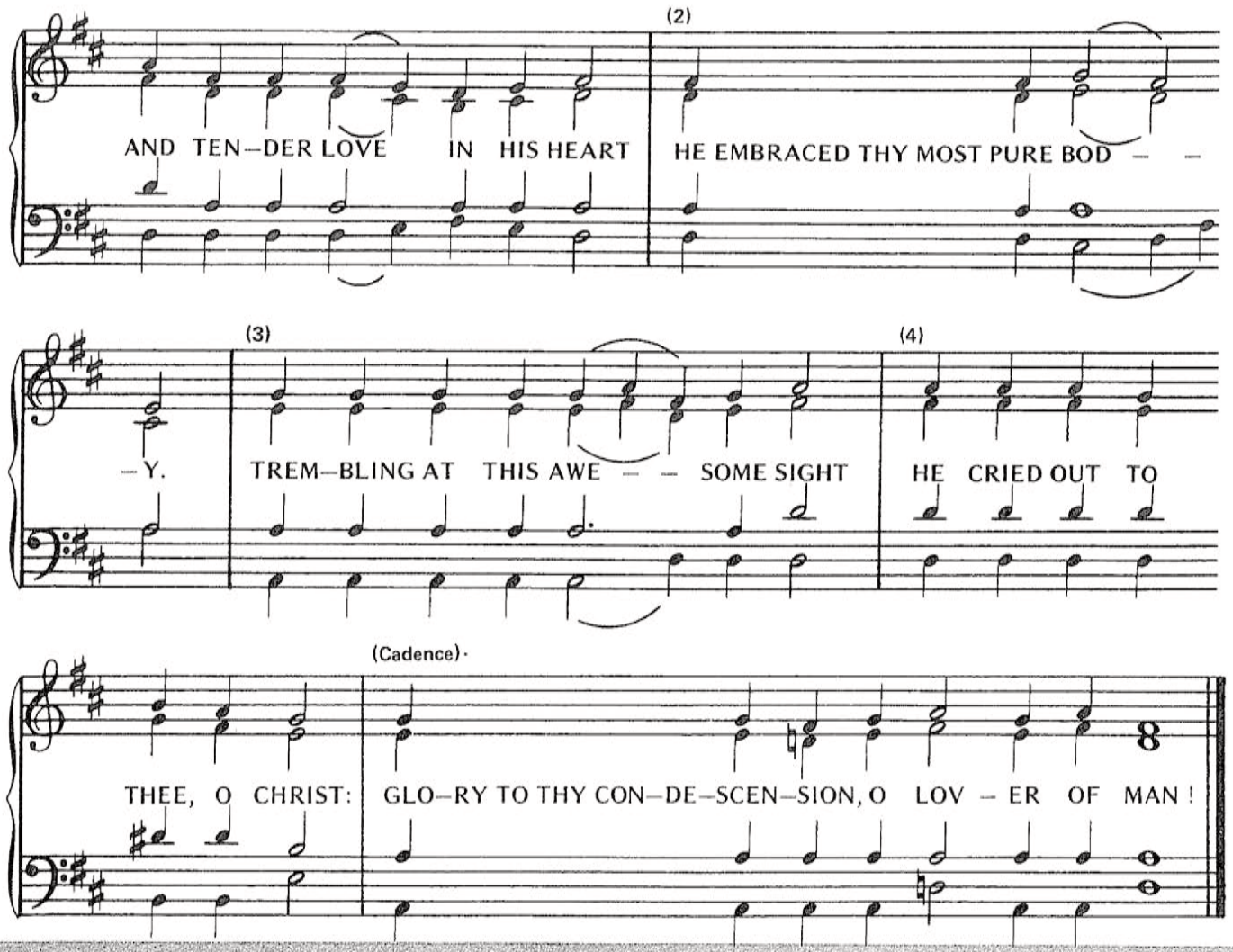
In conclusion, it must be emphasized that a renewed interest in the podoben implies much more than mere liturgical archeology. The key to their significance is the intrinsic relationship of music to text, a principle which will always remain the ideal in sacred music. Because of this factor, wherever the podobny have been revitalized a remarkably positive direction in church singing has been realized. Instead of merely executing this or that musical composition in the course of a service — or yet worse, the trite recitative chanting of a given verse just because it is prescribed by the typikon for that day, the sacred hymnography — the "lex orandi" of the church — is spontaneously communicated in a most authentic dimension of liturgical experience.

Tone 2 — SAMOPODOBEN "Joseph of Arimathea took Thee down from the Tree"

This is the first verse of the Apostikha at Great Vespers on Holy Friday. It is sung just prior to the bringing out of the "winding sheet" or shroud. It forms the model for many important stikhiri — the Lord I Call verses for the Feast of St. Nicholas, many Stavrotheotokia of the 2nd tone, and most appropriately, the verses sung at the "last kiss" at the funeral service.

The Apostikha





TWO NEW MUSIC PUBLICATIONS FROM ST. TIKHON'S SEMINARY PRESS

Available since August 1982, **Offertory Hymns of the Eastern Orthodox Church** is a book of Cherubim Hymns for the Divine Liturgy, the Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, and the Liturgies of Great and Holy Thursday and Saturday. Eighteen settings are presented — all in English — mostly from the Russian tradition, but included are a Byzantine setting, three Carpatho-Russian examples, and a Serbian chant.

The term "Offertory Hymns" was chosen since it includes all the hymns which accompany the Great Entrance, and to bring to mind the specific actions which take place at this time at the Altar: the completion of the acts of offering begun at the Proskomedia, the incensing, and the procession with the Holy Gifts about to be offered and consecrated (or in the case of the Presanctified, already consecrated) on the Holy Throne. The music accompanying these liturgical acts should assist the worshippers in their participation in the profound act of offering, rather than draw attention to itself.

The second book is entitled: **Music for Divine Services — Traditional Chants and Chant Settings.** Except for one Litany (by Kastalsky) and the Kuskokwim Alaska melody, all the music in this volume reflects the ancient chant traditions of Slavic Orthodoxy: Znamenny, Kievan, Greek, Bulgarian, Valaam, Carpatho-Russian, Serbian, Romanian chants, and more. The tonality in many cases is decidely "modal"; one must be careful to avoid slipping into the conventional major/minor tonalities. Other settings have a "folk" sound — which is certainly not less prayerful. Some melodies have been left unharmonized. Many of the original Slavonic settings have been included — useful even in an all-English parish to touch again the "foundations" at least in rehearsals.

Section I includes music for the Divine Liturgy — all the *fixed* parts. (Troparia, Kontakia, Prokeimena, and Communion Hymns have been left for a forthcoming volume.) Section II includes a very few selections from Vespers and Matins.

An Introduction to The Interpretation of Liturgical Music

by Fr. Sergei Glagolev

Preface

What seemed to be at first thought a fairly simple paper noting some considerations in interpreting liturgical music is turning out to be much more involved. Music as worship is a triune discipline requiring the combination of three skills artfully blended. But the blending itself of these skills is a most delicate matter of taste, talent and experience.

The blending skills of musical art as worship — like all skills — are acquired: they are necessarily learned. People serious about church music must admit that this is the most difficult emotional block to overcome: to convince those who are otherwise quite competent that music in church is not emotion but art, not feeling but skill — not that art is unemotional, not that skill has no feeling, but that taste, talent and experience must be learned like every other art form.

First we must consider the three skills artfully blended in church to be musical, lingual and liturgical, without which no decent interpretation is likely. There is no way to be able to interpret music with understanding what music is, without having learned the necessary musical skills, without being grounded in the study of musical theory. Here again, it is difficult to convince people that the loss of responsive simplicity is precisely the lack of learned skills. The most complex Bach fugue is less complicated than a theory exercise handed in by a student Freshman. The one follows predictable rules delightfully hewn from years of talented practice and grace, the other is putting pieces together the best he can. Needless to say, it should be obvious why the simplest piece of music in church sounds so cumbersome when rendered by the unpracticed without skill. The practice of no practice, the singing without studied skill is a spiritual disaster long before any discussion of learned liturgics.

Second, we must understand that music in church is always a lingual-lingustic art form. People who say church music sounds terrible in English are usually right (mostly because they don't realize it's just as bad in other languages but nobody expects to comprehend the meaning of the utterances being sung). What we are doing to English as a worship vernacular is incredible. "Explaining" what is being sung theologically is not the solution. The singing itself is meant to explain, edify, enlist and enable all to knowingly participate in worship.

Language is an art. In church music this becomes crucial, because this art form must be most perfectly blended with music which gives it utterance. Having the musical skills is basic only in as much as it is the voice by which the art of language is expressed in all its poetic power and beauty. But the words themselves have their own music, in motion and pause, as they pulse like life itself forming intricate connections through flowing nuance and inflection, rhythm and phrase, carrying within them the vision and revelation of life being given to be celebrated as worship.

The absence of language skills is fast becoming the second disaster area in our church music. English simply doesn't sound like English; and in the hands of an unskilled musician, the music by which it is sung makes the muddled, halting cacophony even worse. A church musician must be a poet with reverence for language as an art. The crudest translation can be made to meaningfully sing in the hands of a musical poet. But we have all heard what happens to the most beautifully God-inspired Psalms, Hymns and Canticles in the thrashing hands of the uninspiring unskilled.

Finally, in church neither music nor language are artistic ends in themselves. The function of music and language is liturgical, and liturgics is a

theological discipline. Ultimately it is theology that reveals what the music and language means. But the ultimate synthesis of the church musician's skills is to celebrate precisely what the theology is saying in the music and language as the given means. More: the very order of worship, what is being said, what is done, what is celebrated, is shaped by how, when and what is being sung. Without an acute liturgical sensitivity to the slightest ripple of the movement of worship and a studied docility to its moving theological content, music and language are dangerously idolatrous graven images leading the worshippers astray.

But this preface began as its premise the interpretation of liturgical music as the blending of musical, lingual and liturgical skills. Blend is a matter of balance and proportion, hopefully achieved by a developing sense of good taste. Such interpretative skills are akin to transforming water into wine. What we experience too often is the good wine of our musical tradition turned either into vinegar or grape juice, and occasionally we behold with amazement how some church musicians have actually managed to turn wine into water.

I.

So much for preface. The purpose of this introductory paper is to outline twelve basic principles for the interpretation of liturgical music, based on the first principle as the primary premise, that *Music in Church is Worship.* Obviously, we will have to deal in depth with each principle distinctly in subsequent papers, particularly because so little has been specifically written to which the reader can be referred.

In Church, music is worship. In Church, music prays and prayers sing. In Church, "singing the triumphant hymn, shouting, proclaiming and saying" are all sacred utterances of song. Nothing is simply spoken. Singing is characteristic of the Church's very expression of herself. Scriptures — both Old Testament and New — consistently characterize the Body of Christ, the Redeemed People of God, as the Gathered *Singing Assembly,* both on earth as it is in heaven.

Music is not a conjunct to worship. It is the way the Church worships. Music is neither supplementary to, nor an enrichment of, worship. It is the expression of worship itself. It is not an accompaniment, a background, a preparation, a moodsetter, a filler, or any such thing, and it is certainly not a divertimento. Unless this is understood by those who sing in church, we will advance no further in our interpretation. Church music as an art can only be interpreted according to its own true liturgical function.

The reaffirmation of the Resurrection of Christ, the celebration and recommitment, the proclamation of this life-saving Gospel of the Good News of the Resurrection, is the living heart-beat of all Orthodox worship. Everything leads to and deploys to witness to the Paschal Event — that Paschal Night greeting the never-ending Day of Christ's Kingdom in which "nothing is read, but everything is sung." This is a key to an understanding of what music in church is all about.

This Paschal Ideal already has its roots in the Old Testament — no one simply "said" Scriptures or "read" prayers in the presence of God. A future paper must discuss these insights at length. Sacred music and the idea of the holy are akin to the theological foundations of iconography: sacred music is a holy icon, not a religious pretty picture in verse, rhythm and tone.

Since the function of music as worship is liturgical, it will be necessary for us in our study to clearly unfold this function as:

(a) Synactic — to assemble the sacred gathering for celebration

(b) Rubrical — to order time, place, space, dimension and relation by giving substance to the movement and material of worship

(c) Ritual — to take the rubrical substance of what is being "said" in the dialogue, didache, kerygma and the prophecy of sacred worship and give it voice in sacred melody

(d) Ceremonial — to give what is being "done" the eternal pulse of worship in movement and sound

(e) Synoptic — to bring together the whole matter and form of worship into the general plan and the complete view in all aspects making up the whole of worship, the participation, the commentary, the exhortations and expressions, the revelation, the doxological responses to God's Presence — musically *holding all elements together contextually as worship*

Music, then, is seen as the means by which we function liturgically. Music is the way we do what we are doing in church and the way we say what we are saying. Truly, it is a "sacramental" and a "symbol" in the ultimate sense of these words. In church, music has no other purpose, and must be interpreted accordingly.

II

Having established our basic premise that music in church is worship, we can go on from this principle to outline the other principles that would follow as rules of interpretation. Here we will give outlines. In the future we will attempt to develop each section into areas of study.

Church Music well-interpreted does not call attention to itself. Badly sung music calls attention to itself. Badly sung music is predictable when music and voices are misused, when poorly written and adapted hymns are used, when hymns are poorly chosen (the wrong time and place for the wrong choir in the wrong church with the wrong focus), when the tempi are inappropriate either for text or musical setting, and when there is "unrealistic striving" (the choirmaster must understand his limits and that of his choir), and when the music is either unfamiliar or altogether too familiar (a problem of interpretation of both music and situation).

There are occasions when music is sung ostensibly "too well," for the sake of calling attention to itself. Such is the problem of "over-interpretation": "improving" on what is honestly given in the music and text, or the choirmaster putting his "signature" on what is being sung (his little "trademarks"); sometimes the overdoing comes from lack of sensitivity and taste — too much being as bad as not enough or too little.

Examples abound. There is a little of the "Maxwell Smart" in all of us, and one simply has to come to appreciate through practice and experience that every exaggeration — every understatement or overstatement — creates caricatures unbefitting music as worship.

III

Church Music does not "imitate" anything at all — neither angels nor bells, nor any such thing — but is true to its own calling. Here the interpretative problem is the choirmaster's "reading into" the music all kinds of "impressions" suggested by the music, time and text. Even if the composer himself has been stricken by a romantic notion, the temptation towards impressionistic expression for the sake of "authentic" interpretation should be sensibly cooled. Once is once too often to have heard from even the best among us about how the composer at this point wants the women "to sound like angels" (what does an angel sound like?) or the men "to sound like bells." We are better disposed making the choir sound like a choir. This is difficult enough to do, so we shall see, as we develop our musical art.

IV

In Church Music, text and melody are inseparable without subordination: a perfect marriage begetting music as "the heightened speech of worship." We all know the historical precedents of melodic and textual subordinations. If we are to develop a liturgical theology of music, however, we must have courage enough to question subordinations, particularly in singing English as English rather than Slavonic or Greek as English (and understanding the difference). There is no justification for imposing a text upon melodic line or forcing a melody upon a text. Preserving the integrity of both is the highest skill of interpretation, keeping the clarity of the thought units of *both* the word groupings *and* the melodic kernals in stichs, lines, verses, strophes, etc., attending to their parallels and their melodic formulae as unsubordinated melody and text complementing one another.

Thought units are both melodic and textual. Legati, emphases, breathing and voice-control in the "matching" of melody and text as *unity* of balance and line is the interpretative goal. Particularly difficult is the understanding and unjamming of "English" intonations, mediants and cadences, e.g., anacruses up front, connecting phrases across middle measures, and singing to the end of the line with the notoriously mixed soft and hard cadential endings of properly voiced English. Good musicians spend hours working at these, thinking them through, constantly and consistently looking for ways to blend melodic and textual thoughts without mixture or confusion.

V

Rhythm and motion, rather than elements of "feeling," are the foundation of both liturgy and music. *Thus rhythm and motion are the connecting links in worship between liturgy and the musical arts.*

The principle above is no argument against honest emotion, certainly not against the dynamics of natural expression. But the choirmaster must come to grips with motion as the heartbeat of worship and music as its rhythmic pulse, without which melody and words — no matter how sincerely expressed and expertly interpreted — remain lifeless. Compensating with feeling sounds artificial at best (it's like Charlie Brown asking why his team keeps losing when they're so sincere . . .) It's the mastery of movement and grace in moments "well put-together," in the things "done decently and in order," as St. Paul says, that brings worship to life.

There is, on the other hand, a temptation to impose a false sterility on liturgical music to make it sound "spiritual." Somehow I find this more difficult to bear and end up gasping for breath. Somehow one can bear a mercilessly long Vigil in languages half-understood when they pulse and move, in contrast to carefully sterilized English Services. It's like the poor grape some Welch has taken the yeast out of to prevent it from becoming the zesty wine God intended it to be.

The breathing of prayer is rhythmic reiteration and contrast, rather than static contemplation of feeling or unfeeling. Nothing is more crucial to the choirmaster's interpretative task in moving music to worship. The crisis of music as worship today is the *rhythmic organization* in the English language, without which music exists neither as true worship nor true art. We must study serious questions of metrical rhythm, free rhythm, the speech rhythms of poetry, prose, free verse, metrical chant patterns, the formulae of Scriptural cantillation as music, blank-verse-versifications, syllabic rhythms and principles of pointing, tonic accents of verse members and/or the *tone* units (deriving critical insights from the Hebrew tonic accents of the Jewish Scriptural antecedents to Christian hymnody), etc. To this point these questions almost have been universally ignored. We have been pasting English words under Byzantine and Slavonic melodies without any thought to the breath they must give by their rhythm and motion. Our music is "skeletal" at best: unfortunate bones without flesh and blood.

VI

Melody: if liturgy is to step into the eternal movement of "prayer without ceasing," then *we must break from the tyranny of the bar-line* and interpret Church Music (at least in its chant-forms) in the restoratative style of *endless melody.*

To begin with, we must understand the *melodic idea* before waving one's hands: free, type, or centonized melody in syllabic, neumatic or melismatic forms, for example. We must understand the melodic kernals and formulae in relation to the versification, phrasing, bars, measures, beats and cadences. We must rediscover the contextural melodic legato nuance sustaining verses "to the end of the line," in contrast to the hatchet job and shovel singing to which musical texts are being subjected. We've already mentioned the crucial melodic-textual-textural musical interpretation of the final note(s) of the cadence of the melodies. We must develop concepts of *tonality* in solving concepts of melody and text ("tonality," we shall discover, is more than pitch; tonality is a creative challenge of the developing character of a melodic line).

VII

Texture: Settings of music and text, be they monophonic, homophonic, or polyphonic, must always be *the interweaving of colored lines moving forward.* Whether one line or many, one voice or many, there must be an understanding of the horizontal and vertical configurations of musical textures (and the distortions of same). "Touch" is to texture what "taste" is to the art of blending. Textural color is not only seen and heard, but also has "touch."

VIII

Sonority: The sonoric images and patterns that appear are not so much the result of the instrumentation of voices as the weaving skill of the choirmaster who knows *what to do with the voice fabrics and how to orchestrate the sonant textures.*

The human voice is a delicately crafted musical instrument with infinite possibilities for making beautiful sounds. "Not having the voices" is the usual excuse we hear for the questionable sounds coming out of choirs. Not so. It would be more accurate to say the choirmaster doesn't know what to do with the voices in his choir, or still more accurately, *what to do with the sound of these voices.* But the question is larger than voice culture. Even the finest voices must be *orchestrated* for choral singing. What we might call a "liturgical sonority" is dealing with voices as instruments of prayer, the voicing of worship, the orchestrating of the sound of music as worship.

Granted, in most parish situations, the choirmaster's expertise is used up dealing with the strange combinations of sounds he inherits as his "choir." But he can learn to do reasonable things with these sonant textures. He must have sonoric images in mind. He must critically *hear* what his choir really sounds like. We must work to improve voice quality, voicing combinations, orchestrate our voice-lines more skillfully, and choose what we attempt to sing more wisely.

IX

Periods, Forms and Styles of Church Music: it is simplistic to suggest that only a particular "type" of Church Music is "spiritual." Here there is material enough for an interpretative essay all by itself. Here is where our experiential tastes, prejudices and bias really show through. Often it is a simple lack of

familiarity with the broad thesaurus of Orthodox liturgical music in every age that makes our judgements a little too simple. Some, of course, call this being "principled," to rule out "Western influences," for example (Byzantine culture supplies no roots to Western civilization? — what a self-defeating myth). More alarming is the bias built on an unwitting "coverup" for superficial acquaintance and learning of large segments of church music, as is the case of many plain chant and regional folk chant forms.

Since I myself have been guilty of knocking periods of music, from Bortniansky to Bachmetev, I feel my penance might be to write a chapter "In Defense of Bortniansky and Bachmetev" someday. Really, we interpret the Bortniansky to sound like "The Marriage of Figaro" and the Bachmetev to sound like a Barber Shop Quartet, and then blame them for being "non-liturgical."

Then there is the fashionable infatuation with Znamen Chant — "if it's Znamen, it's got to be good." But *every* period of church music has *both* good moments and bad, and even some of the Znamen based on the purest forms of "angelic chant" have been embellished literally without any sense of rhyme, rhythm or reason, and imposed upon totally unprepared worshippers by equally unprepared singers.

X

Dynamics: If Icons are not black-and-white, neither is Church Music. *But the coloring is not an added or special effect.* Dynamics are the bright movement of colors of the natural nuances of the lines of rhythm and sound in motion.

Church music is not unemotional. But it does not seek to manipulate feelings to produce effects by affectations. Since I prefer to treat dynamics as part of the study of motion (rather than simply as loudness and softness, entrances, contrasts and cadences, etc.), I also would consider tempo a dynamic (particularly since the classical mistakes are made dynamically with accelerandi and ritardandi). When a typical mistake is made — for example, slowing down for "soft," speeding up for "louder" — there is usually some hidden connection with the tempo.

XI

"Authenticity:" Restoration of authenticity at this point should not be so much a concern over manuscript, text and notation, etc., as the restoring of the proper *function* of each liturgical piece, e.g., antiphons, verses, refrains, "anthems," psalms, hymns, canticles, etc., should *do* what they are *called.* This is not simply an exercise in liturgical theology.

Authenticity in the sense of liturgical music is a call for *the choirmaster's interpretation to allow the music to define itself in terms of what it's supposed to be doing.* Now, in terms of composed, arranged and adapted pieces, often we have to consider whether the composer, arranger or adapter himself may not have been mistaken, balance these values, and decide where the priorities lie. An example that comes to mind is Chesnokov's 1st Antiphon (Bless the Lord, O My Soul . . .), written beautifully as an *anthem* in the style of the Western corruption of the word "antiphon" into "anthem" — a usage reflected liturgically. It may be, sometimes, that an "authentic" rendering of a composer's intentions should not be sung in Church because it is, in the end, authentically extra-liturgical. This certainly is the case of many hymns called "Concert," authentically rendered in a *concert,* but not necessarily as a "Communion Hymn" which is a Psalm-Verse Refrain having an entirely different liturgical function. Obviously, this is where the choirmaster is going to have to know something about liturgics if he is going to function.

What has happened in some parishes, on the other hand, is that a well-intentioned "liturgically-minded" choirmaster will drop all "concerts" at communion-time and have "something read." Clearly, this is a complete misunderstanding. There is in fact a specific *Communion Hymn* to be rendered, a specific Psalm to be *sung* with Refrain, and in many cases, some fairly decent musical settings of the same already existing within our liturgical tradition. These short paragraphs on "authenticity" only scratch the surface of the needed study.

XII

Interpretation is "in the hands," literally, of the choirmaster. The bottom-line is the conducting skill of the choirmaster. How does the choir interpret the choirmaster? *What they see is what you get.*

When choirs sound bad, it may be so not because the singers are not paying attention to the choirmaster but because they are reading him all too well. The choirmaster's movements, expressions, postures, attitudes, etc., are an open book. His conducting skill is no less than teaching his own body to pray. The lack of the choirmaster's

(continued on page 31)

The Choir Director

by David Drillock and Helen B. Erickson

"No two conductors conduct alike." Such a generalization, at the same time both true *and* false, has led not a few aspiring students of conducting immediately to conclude that conducting is only a personal and subjective matter, something that can be neither studied nor taught. Yet, the truth is that only after thoroughly mastering the basic elements of conducting and establishing a strong technical foundation can a musical director begin to develop his or her own "personal" style of choral conducting. It is certainly true that if a conductor spends enough time with a particular choral group, repeatedly rehearsing certain simple musical compositions, he will probably manage to keep the chorus together and even bring the performance of such works to a more or less successful conclusion by using gestures and motions that are totally foreign to the usual and traditional conducting patterns. However, if the beginning conductor wishes to be able to conduct more than one choral group and needs to do so without scheduling an enormous number of rehearsals, or if he wishes to conduct music of a more complex nature, or, even more important, if he wishes to give his singers the opportunity to develop their own musical abilities — so essential to full musical participation — he soon will discover the necessity of using the standard conducting patterns and procedures which have been effectively used and refined by choral conductors over a great many years. Without these fundamentals of choral conducting, a director's "personal" style may amount to meaningless arm waving.

Obviously a choral conductor must have an adequate musical preparation. Although most church singers can be considered amateurs, in the best meaning of this word, it is precisely for this reason that the *director must* be equipped with the necessary professional training. A teacher can teach only that which he himself knows, and it is the choir director's teaching responsibility to provide the stimulus for growth and improvement of the untrained singers who comprise the majority of our church choirs. While it is occasionally possible for an untrained person to rely on spirit, personality and even his own voice as his chief tools in "leading" a choral ensemble, his lack of musical knowledge and technical skill will result in lengthy rehearsals which achieve minimum results and very little learning, growth or development. It will not be too long before the singers discover their director's limitations, which, in turn, limit the quality of *their* performance. At this point one of two situations usually develops: either the singers decide to *tolerate* his leadership, despite their lack of respect for his professional capabilities, or it will become necessary for the director to resign his position.

What can be considered necessary musical requisites for the choir director? Certainly he must possess at least a basic education in music — sightreading, theory, harmony, and some piano. He should have a well-trained ear, capable of discerning not only "wrong" notes, but also of distinguishing whether or not a note is sung on pitch. The director of an Orthodox Church choir who does not possess a well-trained ear is at an extraordinary disadvantage, especially as all of our church singing is unaccompanied by instruments. For this reason a conductor should devote some time every day — be it only twenty minutes — to continuing to train his ear. Such daily exercises could begin with the singing of step-wise scale patterns, followed by singing all possible intervals found in those same patterns. The rule should always be: sing first, then check by playing on the piano or on some other instrument. Next, the pitches and notes for those hymns that will be taught or reviewed at the week's rehearsal should be practised. Such eartraining sessions should also include sightreading from an unfamiliar score, selecting at least one passage from each vocal part. It might be wise to purchase one of the excellent books now available to help musicians increase their musicianship.

The choir director must be able to read a "full" score. In other words, he must be able to follow all the voice parts (soprano, alto, tenor and bass) of any piece he conducts. Although vocal scores for church music are quite simple compared to the full scores for orchestral compositions, it is unfortunately true that many of our church choir conductors are simply unable to read a full vocal score. If a musical composition is to be performed correctly, the director must have a complete knowledge of all the parts. How can he teach or direct a piece he does not really know? Of equal importance is the conductor's ability to correct with his own voice a mistaken

passage sung by one of the voice parts during a service or performance. This situation can occur more frequently than one might wish, especially if one's choir sings all the regularly-scheduled liturgical services in the parish. The ability of the choir conductor to sing on the spot any part of a given hymn can mean the difference between an acceptable completion of the piece and the disaster of having to stop the singing and begin again.

Teaching music to the choir is one of the chief responsibilities of the director. It is primarily for this reason that some ability as a pianist is desirable. In working with amateur choirs, a piano can be an invaluable rehearsal aid. The director who can play rehearsal parts for himself will not have to depend on an "accompanist" who may or may not be able to transmit adequately the tempo (speed) or style of the piece being rehearsed. For similar reasons the director should possess an adequate command of his singing voice. Although he certainly need not be a "professional" singer, the choir director must be able to provide an adequate vocal illustration of that which he is attempting to teach. He must be able to place himself in the position of chorister in order fully to understand the problems which singers regularly encounter, i.e., breath control, tonal production, vocal projection, proper pronounciation, etc. The choir director whose education reveals a great deficiency in piano score reading and vocal training almost certainly will encounter insurmountable obstacles in the performance of his duties as a teacher of music.

Since a choir director is responsible for the musical development of his group, he should make every effort to increase his singers' musical understanding. This may be achieved, among other ways, by introducing at rehearsals *short* rhythmic training games (such as echo clapping), harmonic listening exercises disguised as choral warmups, and elementary sightreading techniques. There are a multitude of books available containing materials to use in this way. Another source of good ideas is to be found in the many short workshops, courses and conferences designed for music educators in schools and colleges, but which are equally useful to the director of an amateur choir. Advertisements for these courses can be found in the *Music Educator's Journal*, or write directly to local colleges or conservatories asking for information on musicianship" courses.

The question of whether or not a choir should be taught to sightread is inevitably raised when it becomes desirable to learn more repertory than can be taught by rote. Most American schools today teach elementary sightreading by means of relative solfege — that is, using the syllables Do-Re-Mi-Fa-Sol-La-Ti-Do for the eight ascending tones of the major scale. This presents a conflict with traditional Russian musical training, which uses these syllables to indicate fixed pitches. (Do is always C, Re is always D, etc.) Both of these systems have considerable musical validity, and experts in the area of music education are in disagreement as to which system is more valuable. Experience in working with amateur church choirs seems to indicate, however, that the relative solfage system is certainly the best sightreading vehicle at the elementary level of most of our singers. Training in this area is often referred to as the "Kodaly Method," and courses in it are available at most conservatories and larger colleges.

Today's church choir director may often possess most, if not all, of the technical skills discussed above. Few if any will debate their necessity to anyone who plans to become a serious conductor. Of greater significance, however, is the spiritual preparation of the choir director. In his capacity as teacher he can be likened in many ways to the priest and it is not just mere coincidence that the canons of our church regard those responsible for church singing in much the same way as those who are "ordained," "set-aside" for service to God.

In consequence, the choir director not only should be able to provide his singers with proper musical direction, but also must be capable of explaining to his singers the meanings of our hymns — their theological teaching, spiritual depth and liturgical significance. It is only when the choir director has this understanding that a discussion of appropriate liturgical musical repertory can begin. It was the spiritual deficiency of choir directors that in 1905 prompted the following remarks by the diocesan bishops of Russia concerning church reforms:

> We must direct our attention to church singing at the Divine Services and make it obligatory to all rectors and choir directors to use at these services only such chants which correspond strictly to the spirit of the Orthodox services. At the present time a great arbitrariness and disorder reigns in the selection of the singing; numbers which are pretentious, which roar and shout in the spirit of Italian music, are selected. The temple of God is therefore converted into a music hall, while the religious-prayerful atmosphere is transformed into an artistic-aesthetical display.

These same words can and should be repeated today. A solution to this continuing problem will be found only when our choir directors come to the realization that their essential training comprises not only technical knowledge but also spiritual development.

As the priest must, first of all, be an example to his flock, so the choir director must be an example to his singers. The canons of the Orthodox Church are very strict concerning this matter and call for the excommunication of the choir master who does not adhere to the principles and rules which govern the lives of all who wish to be full members of the Church. Thus, "for those teachers of church singing who do not adhere to the rules of fasting, let them be deposed"; let any chanter or psalmist who wastes his time by playing dice, or getting drunk, either let him desist therefrom or be excommunicated"; "disorderly shouting of the singers in Church is unacceptable . . . let those who do this be defrocked from their rank and not sing in Church anymore." The Church considers those responsible for sacred singing to be among the ranks of those actually "ordained", and thus requires of them a stricter mode of life than it does of laymen. The choir director is expected to provide an example of Christian behavior, both in the church and outside it. If a choir director has been selected, appointed and "set-aside" by the church to lead its believers in prayer and worship, then he must be fully conscious of the awesome nature of this responsibility — a responsibility to be judged not by music critics but by the Eternal Judge of all creation, God Himself. St. Symeon the New Theologian sums it up best when he says: "If they ask you to act as the canonarch of the choir, do not act carelessly and lazily, but rather thoughtfully and with great attention, as though you were spreading with your voice and hand the divine words to your brethren, in front of the King of All, Christ."

Having this understanding of his position, it is obvious that a choir director must search out for himself the best possible spiritual training and must develop in himself an inner wakefulness, fear of God, piety, humility and understanding — an understanding not only of what he is chanting, but also of the important purpose which he has been appointed to serve."

The Interpretation of Liturgical Music

(continued from page 28)

eurhythmic dexterity and docility to the music as prayer is not just an interpretative problem. It is also a real liturgical disaster.

Rather than learn these conducting skills, one is tempted to ignore this discipline and say the music will speak for itself. And indeed, the music will speak, loudly telling all that it lacks interpretation, and this distraction to prayer is without question the fault of the choirmaster.

Summary Thoughts

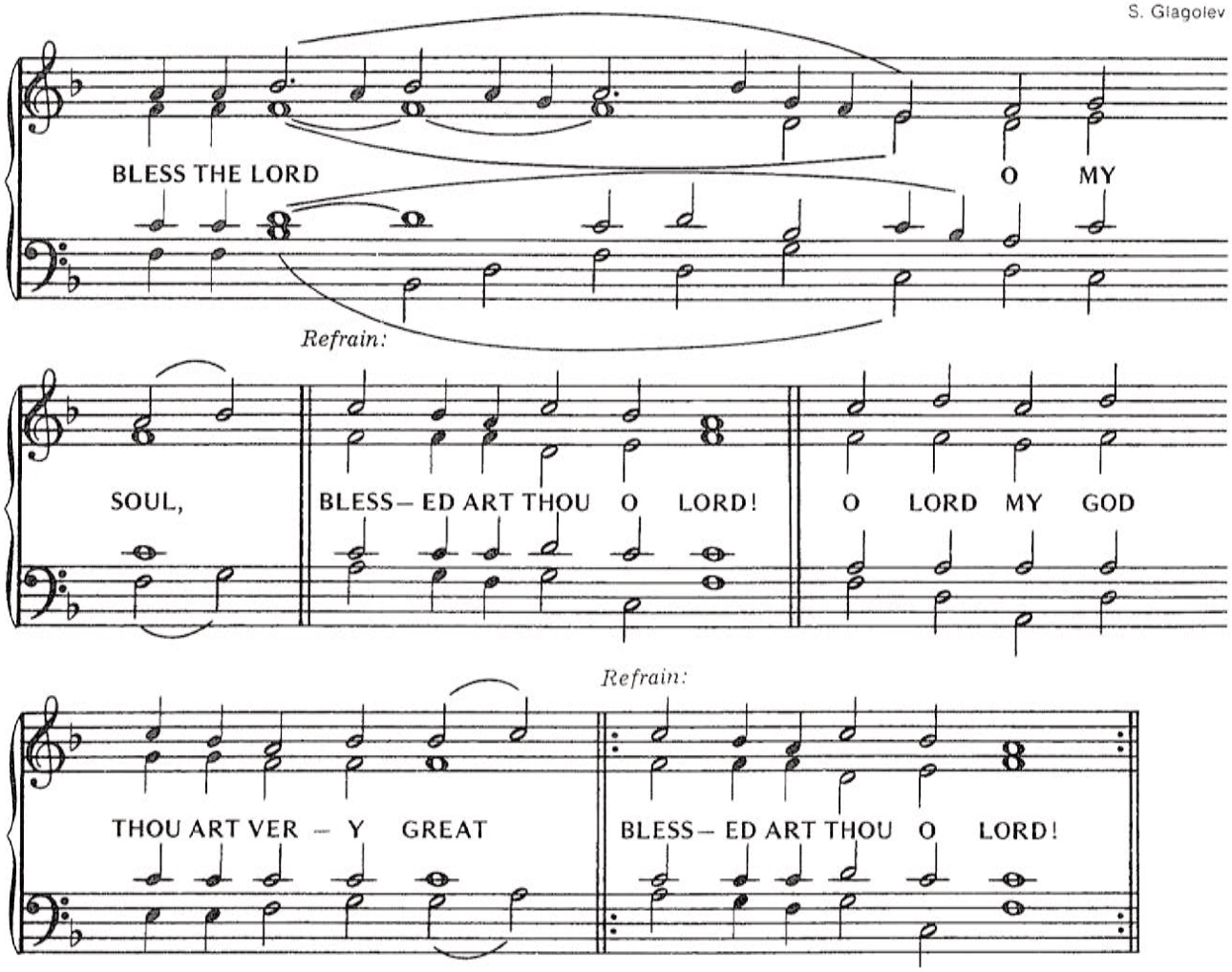
Here, then, is an introduction to a study of the interpretation of liturgical music. I would propose that each of the twelve sections be presented separately for in-depth review before we can come to a synoptic and draw working conclusions.

MUSIC FOR THE CHURCH

At the Liturgical Institute of Music and Pastoral Practice held at St. Vladimir's Seminary in June, 1980, the music section concentrated on the theme of *Psalmody in the Church.* For the vigil service celebrated during the conference, Fr. Sergei Glagolev composed the following chant setting for the opening Vesperal Psalm. The setting, using the pattern as it appears in the old monophonic Russian chant books, utilized chanters, choir, and full congregational participation in the singing of the refrains. All verses of the Psalm were chanted.

Bless The Lord

S. Glagolev



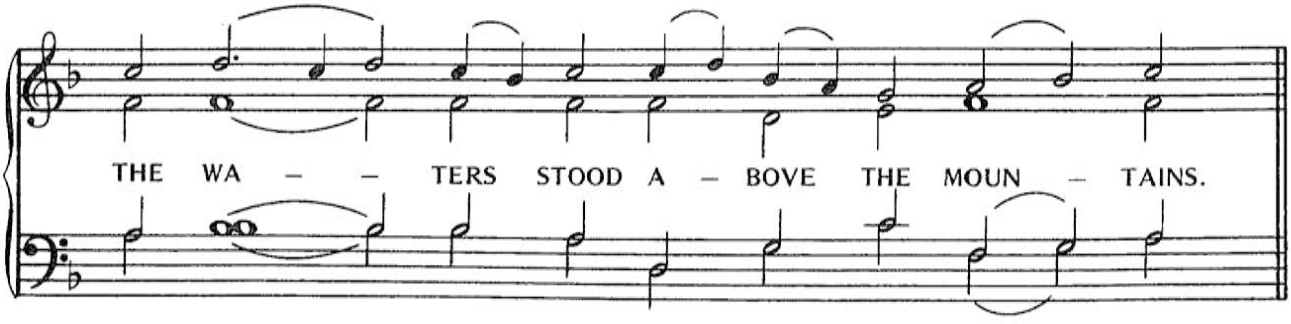
Chanter: THOU ART CLOTHED IN MAJESTY AND SPLENDOR, ROBED IN LIGHT AS WITH A GARMENT.

Refrain: *Blessed art Thou, O Lord!*

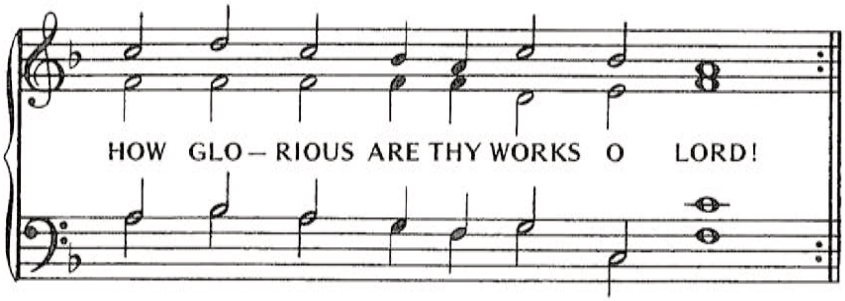
Chanter: THOU HAST STRETCHED OUT THE HEAVENS LIKE A TENT; THOU HAST LAID THE BEAMS OF THY CHAMBERS ON THE WATERS. *(Refrain: Blessed...)*

THOU MAKEST THE CLOUDS THY CHARIOT; THOU RIDEST ON THE WINGS OF THE WIND. THOU MAKEST THINE ANGELS SPIRITS, AND THY MINISTERS A FLAMING FIRE. *(Refrain: Blessed....)*

THOU DIDST SET THE EARTH ON ITS FOUNDATIONS SO THAT IT SHOULD NEVER BE SHAKEN. THOU DIDST COVER IT WITH THE DEEP AS WITH A GARMENT.



Refrain:



Chanter: AT THY REBUKE THEY FLED; AT THE SOUND OF THY THUNDER THEY TOOK TO FLIGHT! THE MOUNTAINS ROSE; THE VALLEYS SANK DOWN TO THE PLACE WHICH THOU DIDST APPOINT FOR THEM.

Refrain: *How glorious are Thy works, O Lord!*

Chanter: THOU DIDST SET A BOUND WHICH THEY SHOULD NOT PASS SO THAT THEY MIGHT NOT AGAIN COVER THE EARTH. THOU MAKEST SPRINGS GUSH FORTH IN THE VALLEYS; THEY FLOW BETWEEN THE HILLS. *(Refrain: How glorious....)*

THEY GIVE DRINK TO EVERY BEAST OF THE FIELD; THE WILD ASSES QUENCH THEIR THIRST. BY THEM THE BIRDS OF THE AIR HAVE THEIR HABITATION; THEY SING AMONG THE BRANCHES. *(Refrain: How glorious....)*

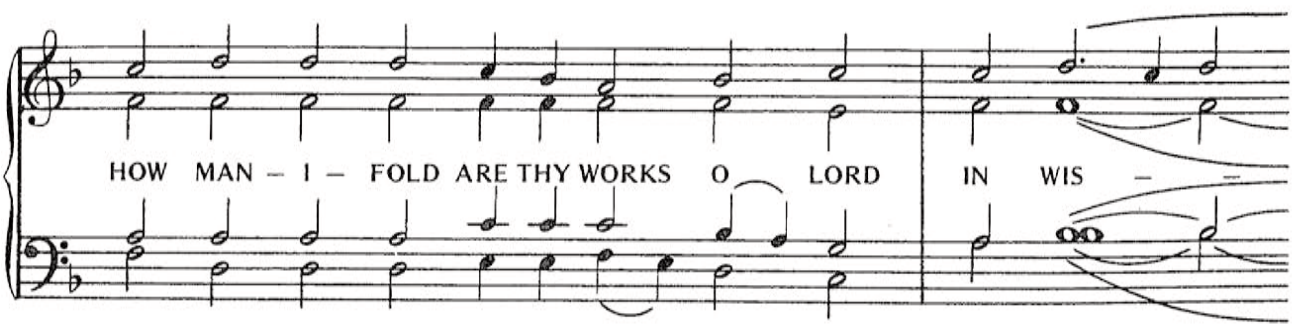
FROM THY LOFTY ABODE THOU WATEREST THE MOUNTAINS; THE EARTH IS SATISFIED WITH THE FRUIT OF THY WORKS. *(Refrain: How glorious....)*

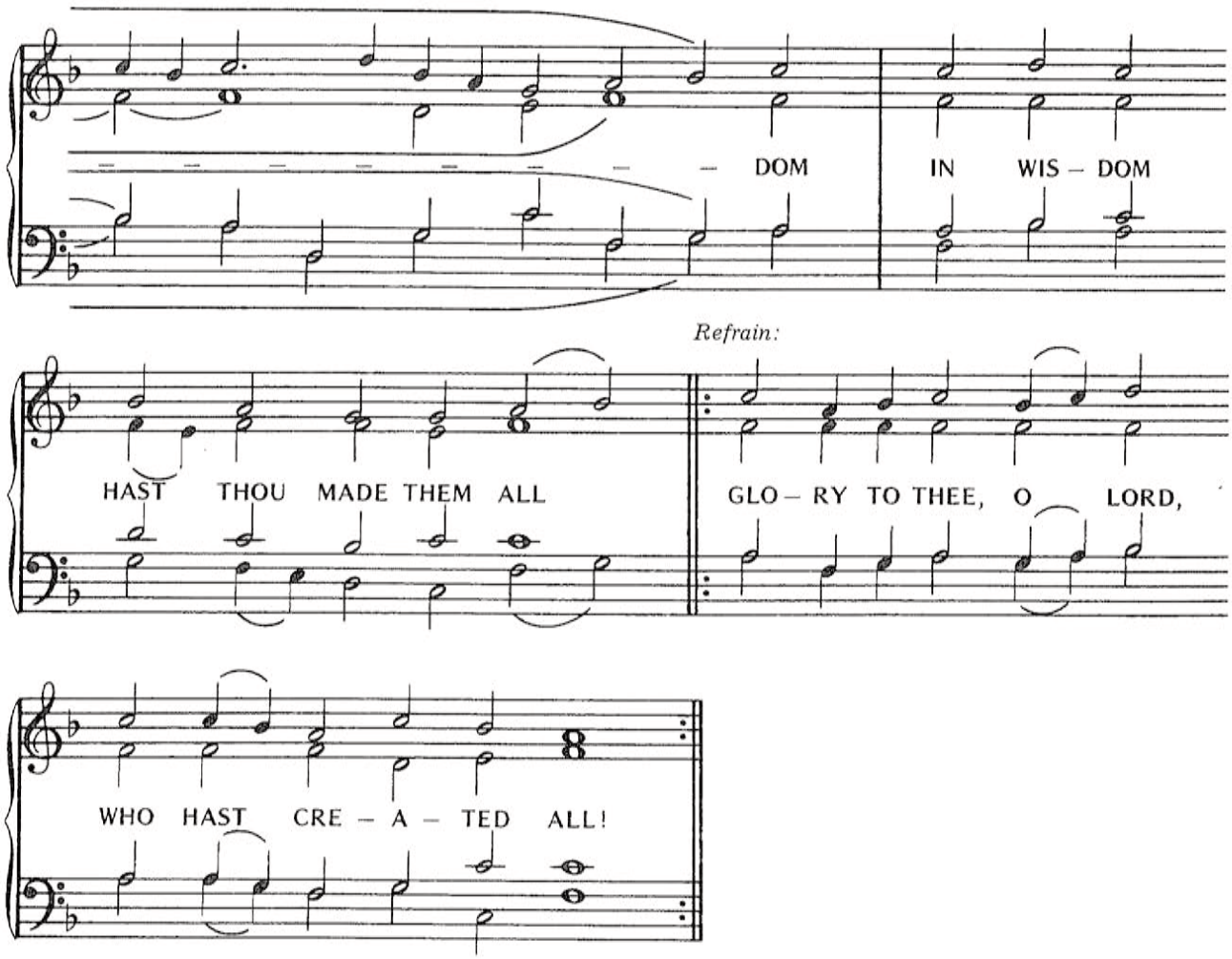
THOU DOST CAUSE THE GRASS TO GROW FOR THE CATTLE, FODDER FOR THE ANIMALS THAT SERVE MAN, THAT HE MAY BRING FORTH FOOD FROM THE EARTH AND WINE TO GLADDEN THE HEART OF MAN, OIL TO MAKE HIS FACE SHINE, AND BREAD TO STRENGTHEN MAN'S HEART. *(Refrain: How glorious....)*

THE TREES OF THE LORD ARE WATERED ABUNDANTLY, THE CEDARS OF LEBANON WHICH HE PLANTED. IN THEM THE BIRDS BUILD THEIR NESTS; THE STORK HAS HER HOME IN THE FIR TREES. THE HIGH MOUNTAINS ARE FOR THE WILD GOATS; THE ROCKS ARE A REFUGE FOR THE BADGERS. *(Refrain: How glorious....)*

THOU HAST MADE THE MOON TO MARK THE SEASONS; THE SUN KNOWS ITS TIME FOR SETTING. THOU MAKEST DARKNESS, AND IT IS NIGHT, WHEN ALL THE BEASTS OF THE FOREST CREEP FORTH. *(Refrain: How glorious....)*

THE YOUNG LIONS ROAR FOR THEIR PREY, SEEKING THEIR FOOD FROM GOD. WHEN THE SUN RISES, THEY GET THEM AWAY AND LIE DOWN IN THEIR DENS. MAN GOES FORTH TO HIS WORK AND TO HIS LABOR UNTIL THE EVENING.





Chanter: THE EARTH IS FULL OF THY CREATURES! YONDER IS THE SEA, GREAT AND WIDE, WHICH TEEMS WITH THINGS INNUMERABLE, LIVING THINGS BOTH SMALL AND GREAT. THERE GO THE SHIPS, AND LEVIATHAN WHICH THOU DIDST FORM TO SPORT IN IT.

Refrain: *Glory to Thee, O Lord, Who hast created all!*

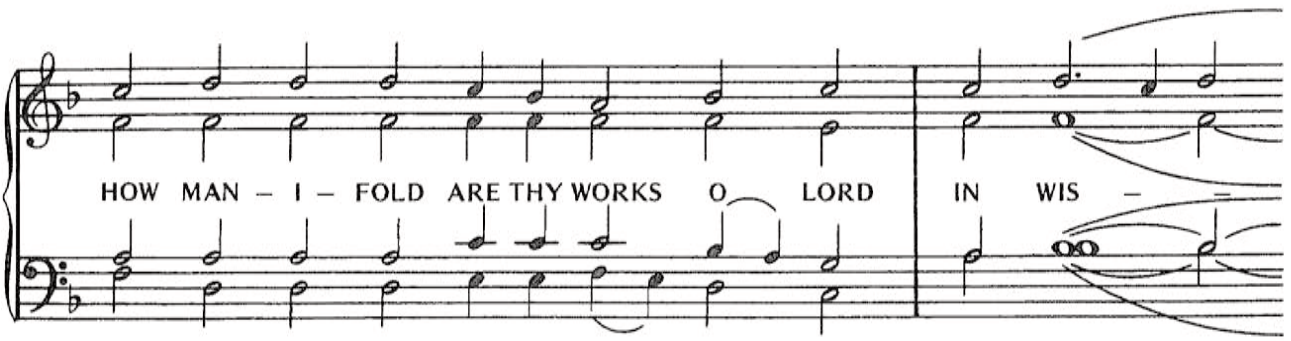
Chanter: THESE ALL LOOK TO THEE TO GIVE THEM THEIR FOOD IN DUE SEASON. WHEN THOU GIVEST IT TO THEM, THEY GATHER IT UP; WHEN THOU OPENEST THY HAND, THEY ARE FILLED WITH GOOD THINGS. *(Refrain: Glory to Thee, ...)*

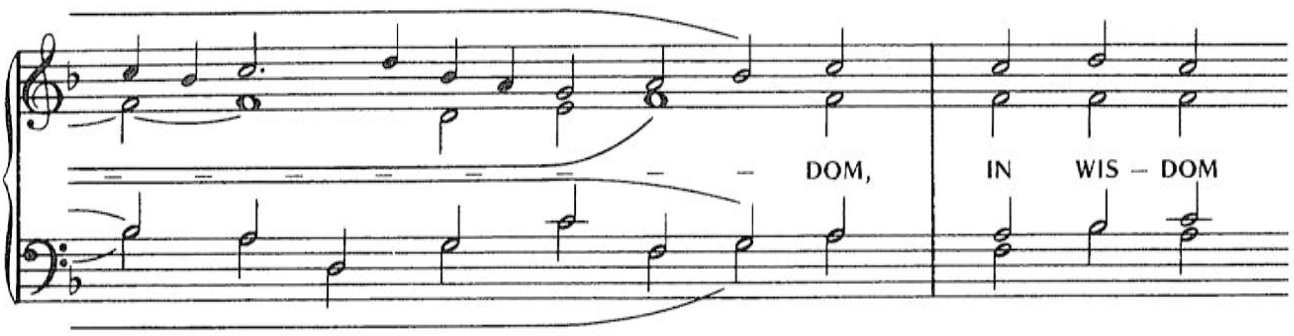
WHEN THOU HIDEST THY FACE, THEY ARE DISMAYED; WHEN THOU TAKEST AWAY THEIR BREATH, THEY DIE AND RETURN TO THEIR DUST. WHEN THOU SENDEST FORTH THY SPIRIT, THEY ARE CREATED, AND THOU RENEWEST THE FACE OF THE EARTH. *(Refrain: Glory to Thee, ...)*

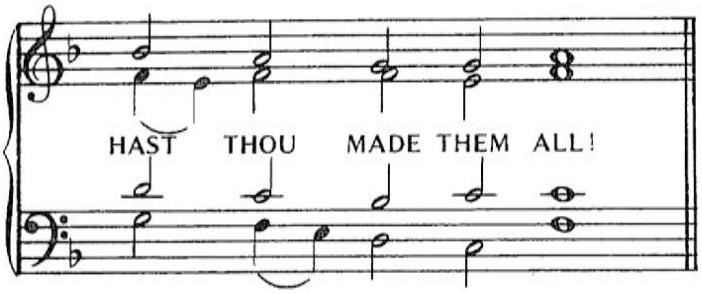
MAY THE GLORY OF THE LORD ENDURE FOREVER! MAY THE LORD REJOICE IN HIS WORKS! HE LOOKS ON THE EARTH AND IT TREMBLES. HE TOUCHES THE MOUNTAINS AND THEY SMOKE! *(Refrain: Glory to Thee, ...)*

I WILL SING TO THE LORD AS LONG AS I LIVE; I WILL SING PRAISES TO MY GOD WHILE I HAVE BEING. MAY MY MEDITATION BE PLEASING TO HIM, AND I WILL REJOICE IN THE LORD. LET THE SINNERS BE CONSUMED FROM THE EARTH, AND LET THE WICKED BE NO MORE. BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL! *(Refrain: Glory to Thee,....)*

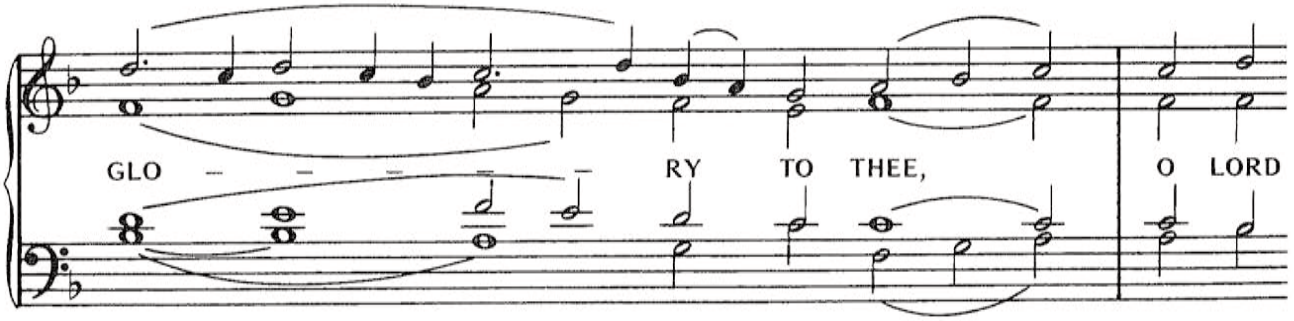
THE SUN KNOWS IT TIME FOR SETTING. THOU MAKEST DARKNESS, AND IT IS NIGHT.

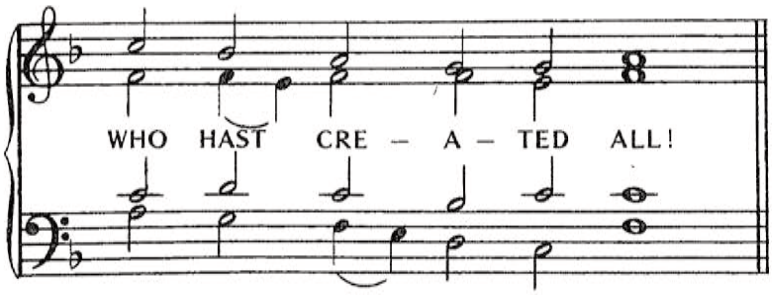




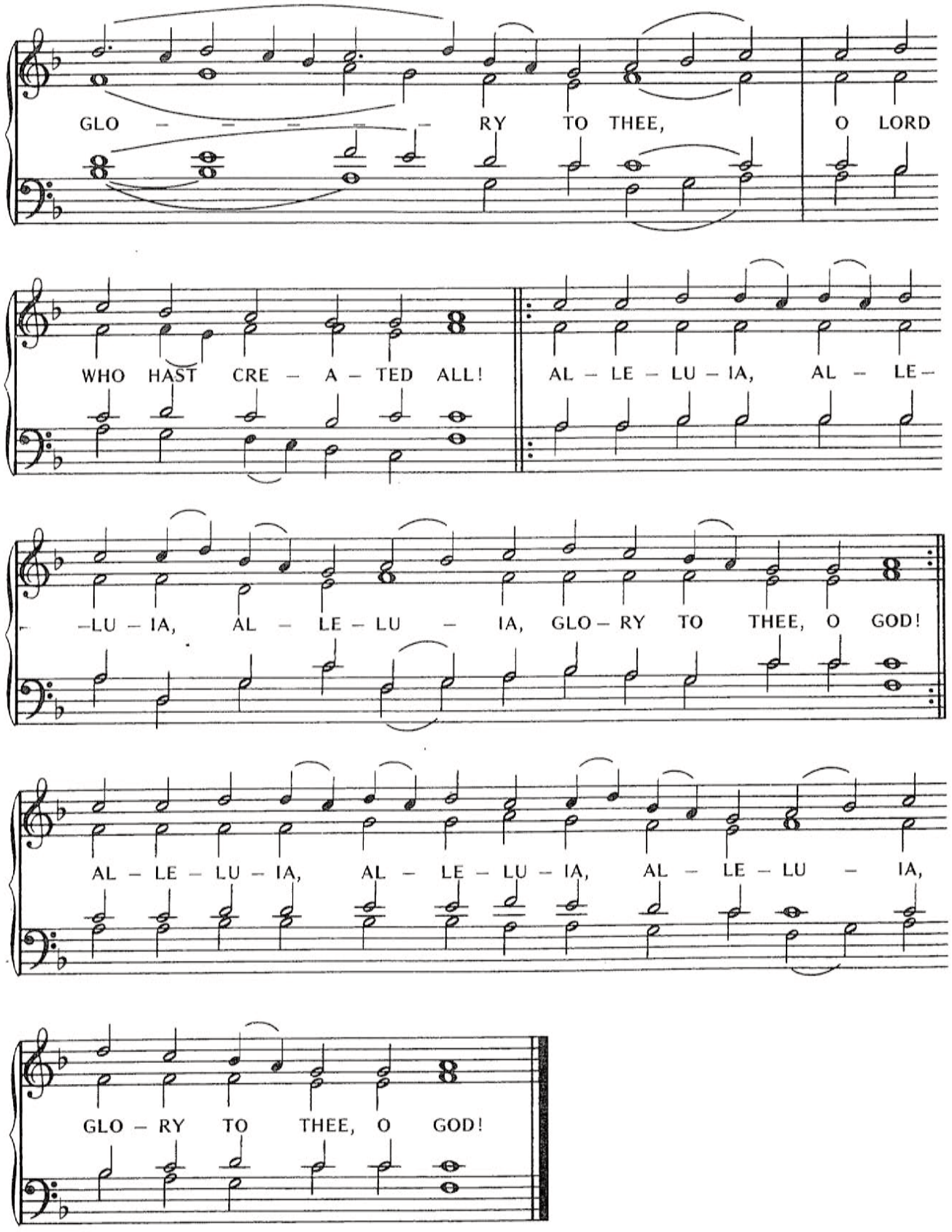


Chanter: GLORY TO THE FATHER AND TO THE SON AND TO THE HOLY SPIRIT.





Chanter: NOW AND EVER AND UNTO AGES OF AGES. AMEN.



Reviews —

Studies in Eastern Chant, Vol. IV, ed. Milos Velimirovic, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1979. Paper $10.95

The fourth volume in the series *Studies in Eastern Chant* (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1979) is a collection of twelve scholarly articles devoted to various aspects of Eastern Orthodox liturgical chant. Edited by Milos Velimirovic, the volume is dedicated to the memory of Egon Wellesz (1885-1974), the noted Austrian scholar and composer, who was one of the guiding forces behind both this series and the series *Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae,* and who did so much to put the scholarly investigation of Byzantine music on the academic map.

Although the contributors to the present volume represent ten different countries, nine of the articles are in English; the remaining three are in French. A broad breakdown of the contents by subject matter shows that seven articles deal with the Graeco-Byzantine tradition, and one article each is devoted to the Serbian, Moldavian, Coptic, Hebrew, and Syro-Byzantine traditions, respectively. A brief summary of each article follows:

Michael Adamis' "A Reference to the Relation of Eastern and Western Chant" is a very short, three-paragraph description of a hitherto neglected reference to the fact that in the 12th century the Greek and Latin Churches shared identical or similar ecclesiastical melodies.

"Deux chants characteristiques de la Semaine Sainte Copte" (Two characteristic Coptic chants for Holy Week), by Ilona Borsai, describes the contemporary practice of celebrating Holy Week services in the Coptic Church of Egypt. Several different manners of chanting, both in Coptic and in Arabic, are described and illustrated by examples. The article concludes with a musical analysis of two versions of an extremely florid chant for a prokeimenon performed during the Sixth Hour of Great and Holy Monday and Great and Holy Tuesday, respectively. The transcription of these traditional melodies in modern Western notation serves as a remarkable illustration of the ornamentation techniques employed by Coptic precentors.

"The Iviron Folk-songs — A re-examination," by Dimitri Conomos is an instructive study that illustrates how, in the field of transcribing medieval Byzantine neumes, thorough and better-informed scholarship may revise earlier results obtained through less than accurate methods. The object of the study are 13 Greek folk-songs found in a musical manuscript belonging to the Iviron Monastery on Mt. Athos, the only known secular songs written down in Byzantine Round Notation. As an appendix to the study, Conomos supplies his newly-revised transcriptions of the folk-songs.

Enrica Follieri's "The 'Living Heirmologion' in the Hymnographic Production of John Mauropus, Metropolitan of Euchaita" is essentially a statistical study of that writer's 156 known kanons. While it is replete with tables and charts, the article offers very little in terms of description, analysis, or historical perspective.

Christian Hannick's "Les Lectionnaires Grecs de l'Apostolos avec Notation Ekphonetique" (Greek Epistle-Books containing ekphonetic notation) offers an updated inventory of the aforementioned MSS from the 10th-14th centuries with an indication of the library where they are located.

In an article entitled "Noveaux fragments musicaux sur papyrus" (New musical fragments on papyrus) Denise Jourdan-Hemmerdinger seeks to find an explanation of hitherto mysterious dots that can be found in certain ancient liturgical (and non-liturgical) manuscripts. After a painstaking categorization of the various locations (relative to the line of text) in which these dots appear, Jourdan-Hemmerdinger concludes that the dots are the precursors of a musical notation used for ekphonetic reading.

"Seven Akoulouthiai from Putna" by A. E. Pennington is a preliminary study of seven 16th century musical anthologies from the Moldavian monastery of Putna. The article deals with the MSS descriptively and includes a table of the hymns contained therein; a careful concordance identifies a certain Evstatie the Protopsalt as an important composer of the period.

Danica Petrovic's brief comparative study "Hymns in Musical Manuscripts and Modern Editions in Honor of Serbian Saints" demonstrates that there is no musical relationship between the melodies found in 18th-century manuscripts from the Chilandar Monastery and the melodies for the same hymns found in printed editions of Serbian Chant published by Mokranjac and Cvejic. The study is illustrated by several musical examples, but overall, raises more questions than it answers.

E. J. Revell's article "Hebrew Accents and Greek Ekphonetic Neumes" compares the accentuation systems employed in the chanting of Hebrew and Greek Biblical texts and examines the possibility that the former influenced the latter. In a highly technical study the author disputes previous attempts to demonstrate such a relationship and

concludes that, although there are marginal similarities between the two systems, it is unlikely that the Greek system of ekphonetic reading was derived from the system of accentuation used for Hebrew Biblical texts; at most, it could have been related to the type of chant used for Hebrew Rabbinic texts.

Nanna Schidt and Bj. Svejgaard's a Method for Indexing Byzantine Music" is a brief account of how a computer may be used for the identification and classification of Byzantine hymns. Sample computer readouts are given.

Gregorios Sthatis' article "An Analysis of the Sticheron Τὸν ἥλιον κρύψαντα," subtitled "The Old 'Synoptic' and the New 'Analytical' Method of Byzantine Notation," is the longest and, in some respects, the broadest and most accessible article in the present volume. It addresses itself to the controversy between Western musicologists who approach Byzantine chant historically on the basis of ancient manuscripts, and modern-day Greek "traditionalists" who see themselves as heirs to what they consider to be an age-old oral tradition of liturgical chant. When these two parties deal with a given chant, using their present respective methods, they come up with markedly different results. According to Sthatis, this is because they do not speak the same analytic language. The key to the solution seems to lie in the 17th and 18th centuries, when certain notational changes began to occur in Byzantine chant, culminating in the "New (Chrysanthine) Method" introduced and officially approved in 1914. But only the method of notation changed, while the melodies remained the same. Using the Sticheron for the Holy Friday procession with the Epitaphion, composed by Germanos, Bishop of New Patra, the author demonstrates how the "New Method" accurately notates a complete melody (exegesis of the melos), quite apart from the results that would have been obtained using other methods.

Edward Williams in his article "The Kalophonic Tradition and Chants for the Polyeleos Psalm 134" uses settings of the Polyeleos found in 14th- and 15th-century manuscripts as a basis for comparing three different musical traditions: those of Constantinople, Thessaloniki, and the so-called *Iatrinos* tradition. Relating his findings in the present study to previous investigations of the kalophonic (highly ornamented) style of singing, Williams concludes that the Thessaloniki tradition was a likely source of inspiration for compositions in the kalophonic style by such singing-masters as Ioannis Koukouzeles and Xenos Korones.

It is important for the continued growth of Eastern chant scholarship that a publication such as *Studies in Eastern Chant* provide scholars in this field with the opportunity to publish the most minute, the most technical, and, in some instances, the most inconsequential pieces of their research. At the same time, it must be recognized that such a policy on the part of the editors severely limits the potential readership of this volume. In the interests of attracting a somewhat broader spectrum of readers (e.g., cultural historians, musicologists from other areas of specialization, practicing musicians in the field of church or concert music, etc.) contributors to future volumes might be encouraged, in some cases, to report their findings in the context of a wider historical perspective, to define, at the outset, certain obscure technical terms, or to postpone publishing their research entirely until a synthesis of some consequence can be derived from their work. The effects would likely be more educational for the reader and, ultimately, more rewarding for the scholars involved.

—Vladimir Morosan

Russian Church Singing: Orthodox Worship and Hymnography. Johann von Gardner. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1979. Paper $6.95

One of the recent publications of St. Vladimir's Seminary Press is the first volume of Johann von Gardner's *Russian Church Singing: Orthodox Worship and Hymnography*. It is easily the most important work, in English, on Russian sacred music since Alfred Swan's *Russian Music and its Sources in Chant and Folk-song* (Norton, 1973) and Gerald R. Seaman's *Russian Music from its Origins to Dargomyzhsky* (Praeger, 1967). Unlike the works of these other authors, Gardner's book deals with sacred music exclusivly, discussing it in great detail, going beyond the usual elements of music history and musicology to such important areas as church history, liturgics, philology, and linguistics.

The first volume is divided into four chapters (plus informative prefaces by the author and the translator). Chapter I, "The System of Orthodox Liturgical Singing: Concepts and Terminology," basically defines the ideas and terms to be used throughout the remaining parts of the book. It is a veritable "Everything you ever wanted to know about Orthodox church music, but were afraid to ask," touching on areas such as styles of performance, hymnography, the aesthetics of liturgical singing, and types of hymns. (It is unfortunate that the translator chose to translate as "hymn" both a

specific type of liturgical song and as a general designation of all music that is sung. It does result in some ambiguity.)

In the second chapter, entitled "The Liturgical System of the Orthodox Church," the author outlines the liturgical services — primarily Vespers, Matins, and Divine Liturgy in their various forms — in the light of the intriguing concept of musical tension curves. These curves represent the relative activity and repose that these services have inherent in their structure, such as the repose and inactivity of the Litanies of Catechumens and Faithful, followed by the activity of the Cherubic Hymn and Great Entrance. Comprehension of these tension curves could contribute significantly to singing services with greater understanding and spiritual purpose. How many musicians — this writer included — have put together services with no thought of an overall plan, resulting in a musical hodgepodge made up of personal favorites, bombastic concert works, and expedient "tone" settings?

In Chapter III, "The System of Russian Church Singing," Gardner discusses the difference between canonical and non-canonical Orthodox church music. On the topic of canonical singing (i.e., "melodies contained in official liturgical singing books" — basically all chants), the author goes into great detail discussing in turn each of the major single-line chant systems, such as the Znamenny and Kieven, their historical and musicological background, its makeup, and its notation.

The final chapter, "Periodization of Russian Liturgical Singing," provides a thumbnail sketch of the history and development of liturgical music in Russia. The author divides Russian church singing into two major "epochs" — the "monophonic" and "polyphonic" — and their specific stylistic traits, as well as the indigenous and foreign influences which affected each. He discusses further the sub-divisions within each epoch as put forth by other Russian and Soviet musicologists. One suspects that this short, overall view of Russian liturgical music is merely a foretaste of a more detailed study to be presented in the second volume, to which this writer looks forward with eager anticipation.

One thought that struck me in reading this marvellous book was the enormous amount of musical material that exists — with even more yet to be found — and the great limitations that we have set on ourselves as Orthodox church musicians. We perform music by Bortniansky, Vedel, Archangelsky, Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Kastalsky, Kedrov, and Ledkovsky. Yet the music of these composers (and we do not even begin to touch *their* complete *oeuvres*) covers only 150 years out of the nearly 900 year span of Russian sacred music production. We, who so often pride ourselves on our Slavic heritages, have lost through disuse over 80% of the legacy of liturgical music left to us by our forefathers!

Though the subject matter herein covered is vast and complex, Gardner's grasp of it is so complete he can present it in a concise manner, weaving together the copious strands of information into an understandable whole. He is ably aided by a fine translation, by Vladimir Morosan, which is extremely clear and easy to read. The explanatory notes of both the author and the translator are very helpful, especially for non-Orthodox musicians unacquainted with some of the basics of our musicology and liturgics. One hopes that at the end of the next volume there will be an extensive index which would make the book all the more useful, especially as a reference tool.

This book is highly recommended, in particular to those people who have interest or involvement with Orthodox church music. In fact, if every choir director would have this book (and its subsequent second volume), along with his tuning fork as required "tools of the trade," we would undoubtedly have better *informed* directors and better *performed* services.

-Alexander Ruggieri

Poets and Hymnographers of the Church. Book 9, *Saints of All Ages.* Constance Tarasar. DRE-Orthodox Church in America, 1982. Paper $3.25

Recently the Department of Religious Education of the Orthodox Church in America published a series of 10 booklets on Saints for All Ages. Book nine focuses on the major "Poets and Hymnographers of the Church." Though this book is written simply and not with a great deal of technicality, I find it to be a tremendous source book for anyone interested in the hymns and writers of church music.

For the Orthodox Christian, worship and singing are synonymous. The Orthodox tradition is so rich in hymnography and prose that "praising God in song" has always been the core and important means of worship. In order to begin to understand the fulness of our worship we must not only respond enthusiastically, but also constantly study the sacred liturgical cycle.

In the early church, many of the sacred hymns were based exclusively on the words of the scriptures. But often hymns were written in order to interpret the teachings of the scriptures as well as to glorify the rich theology and spirituality of the church. Unfortunately, as the church developed, some new hymns written by heretics contained false teachings about Jesus Christ. We read in this book how saintly men such as Ephrem the Syrian, Auxentius of Bithynia and John of Damascus composed many hymns to express the correct teachings of the church.

For most choir directors and choirs, just learning the music properly for any given feast or festal season seems an almost overwhelming task in itself. Yet I feel that if one were to inject some information on the writers of the early church hymnography and prose (which we usually know so well that we often take its meaning for granted), not only would the singer or chanter be enlightened, but the timbre of the hymnography would take on new brightness and joy. A stronger sense of conviction in our praise of God would become evident.

The book is actually a history of the major forms of Orthodox hymnography as developed by the most significant writers and composers of the church in its formative years. Each section focuses on the biographies of the poets and musicians who developed these forms and the reasons why or how they developed. Thus we read of Ephrem the Syrian and Auxentius and the early development of poetry and troparia, Romanos and the kontakion, John of Damascus and the Kanon, etc. From a brief description of the lives of Romanos the Melodist and Andrew of Crete we see how these men constantly "sought to give people a better understanding of the scriptures in their hymns." We learn that these saintly hymnographers did not lead such uncomplicated lives that they were free to worship and glorify God at will, but often were confronted with life-threatening perils. Those such as John of Damascus and Theodore the Studite have left us a legacy of hymns, but both were also involved in the defense of icons against the iconoclastic heresy.

One refreshing aspect of this book is the chapter on Nicetas of Remesiana, pretty much an unknown or even forgotten figure in church hymnography. A bishop and theologian, he loved to compose hymns and often sermonized to his people on the importance of congregational worship. He felt that each and every believer should take the singing and glorification of the church's teaching seriously, no matter what their background, and with a devoted love for God and all His creation. He preached that hymns edify the soul and help us to express our thoughts and emotions. He firmly felt that everyone has the ministry of singing, though he cautioned those who did not sing well to take care that they did not dominate the singing and distract others.

An added and handy feature of the booklet is the glossary at the end. Often in the service books, terms are used that are not in the common vocabulary of a singer or director. Not only are these definitions an aid to the singer, but the stories of how the different hymns and terms developed provide a basis from which to build a discussion or even a mini-workshop for the choir.

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