HYMNS OF KASSIANÍ

Cappella Romana
Alexander Lingas
HYMNS OF KASSIANÍ
The Earliest Music by a Female Composer
Kassía (Kassianí) ca. 810–ca. 865

CAPPELLA ROMANA
Alexander Lingas, music director and founder

Hymns for Christmas
1 Lamplighting Psalms, excerpt, Mode 2 Psalm 140 &c., MS Sinai 1255 5:32
«Κύριε ἐκέκραξα» “Lord, I have cried…”
2 Stícha Prosómoia Kassía, MS Vienna Theo. gr.181 10:11
3 Other Prosómoia Kassía, MS Ambr. 139 6:53
4 Doxastikon of Great Vespers of Christmas Day Kassía, MS Grott. E.α.II 4:51
«Αὐγούστου μοναρχήσαντος» “When Augustus reigned”

Hymns from the Triodion and Holy Week
5 Idiómelon from Great Vespers Kassía, MS Grott. E.α.5 3:17
on the Eve of the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee
«Παντοκράτωρ Κύριε, οἶδα, πόσα δύνανται τὰ δάκρυα»
“Almighty Lord, I know how powerful tears are”
6 Tetraòdion for Great and Holy Saturday, Odes 1 and 3 Kassía, MS Grott. E.γ.II 5:38
7 Tetraòdion for Great and Holy Saturday, Odes 4 and 5 Kassía, MS Grott. E.γ.II 6:04
8 From Great and Holy Wednesday at Matins Kassía, MS Grott. E.α.5 8:07
«Κύριε, ἡ ἐν πολλαῖς ἁμαρτίαις περιπεσοῦσα»
“Lord, the woman found in many sins”
9 Kalophonic Stícheron Στιχηρὸν καλοφωνικόν text: Kassía music: attr. Meletios the Monk 25:554
«Κύριε, ἡ ἐν πολλαῖς ἁμαρτίαις περιπεσοῦσα» MS Sinai 1251
“Lord, the woman found in many sins”

TOTAL 79:40
KASSIANÍ: MORE THAN A ONE-HIT WONDER

The Legend of Kassianí

Each year as the Eastern Orthodox Church follows Christ’s journey to his Passion and Resurrection through the Byzantine services of Holy Week, its faithful encounter a number of beloved hymns. In Greece and other countries where Byzantine chant is the traditional music for Christian worship, one of the most popular comes early in the week at the service of morning prayer (Matins or Órthros) for Holy Wednesday, now customarily celebrated on Holy Tuesday evening. Known universally as the “Hymn of Kassianí,” a title recalling the name of its ninth-century female monastic author, it recasts the penitential hymn for Holy Wednesday. Her story is that of a glamorous court figure who, when jilted by the Emperor for her audacity, retreated to the monastery where she wrote her heartrending lament. Still pining for her beauty, Theophilos is said to have snuck into her convent one day, causing Kassianí to flee from her cell. Upon finding her at her desk the incomplete penitential hymn “On the Sinful Woman,” Theophilos supposedly glossed its reference to the feet of Christ by adding the phrase “whose sound Eve heard at dusk in Paradise, and hid herself in fear.”

Contemporary devotees of Orthodox liturgy may be aware that Kassianí also wrote “When Augustus Reigned,” a splendid hymn sung at vespers on Christmas Eve. Yet for most people in Greece, her popular reputation rests solely on her hymn for Holy Wednesday (with the majority of them probably unaware that it is actually appointed to be sung twice: first at matins and then again at the evening service of vespers). Thus perceived as responsible for only one out of the approximately 50,000 hymns contained in modern Orthodox service books, Kassianí has become the lone female voice in the vast chorus of male Byzantine hymnographers.

Music, as suggested above, is the other reason that the “Hymn of Kassianí” has retained its outstanding reputation. Over the past two centuries it has both been reworked dozens of times as a Byzantine chant and set for various combinations of voices and/or instruments by composers trained in Western art music. Notable among the latter who have set its text in either the original medieval Greek or contemporary translations include Nikolaos Mantzaros (1795–1872), Themistokles Polykrates (1862–1926), Dimitri Mitropoulos (1896–1960), Mikis Theodorakis (b.1925), Anna Gallos (1920–2015), Christos Hatzis (b.1953), Ivan Moody (b.1964), Eleni Traganas (b.1951), and Tikey Zes (b.1927).

The Historical Kassianí (ca. 810–ca. 865)

Modern research has revealed that the historical Kassianí was much more than a “one-hit wonder.” Scholars now view Kassia, as she probably called herself, as the outstanding figure among the small group of women known to have written texts and music for Byzantine public worship. Her independence of thought, accomplishments as a composer, and devotion to Christian religious life have led to comparisons with the later German abbess Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), whose reputation has likewise been recently revived. Unlike Hildegard, however, Kassía succeeded in having her hymns circulate widely and then be incorporated selectively into official service books. Sometimes copied in medieval manuscripts without attribution, they also appear under such variants of her name as Eikasia, Ikasia, Kasia, and Kassiani.

Kassía was born during the early years of the ninth century in Constantinople, now Istanbul but then capital of the East Roman (“Byzantine”) Empire. The first
witnesses to her life are three letters by Saint Theodore the Stoudite (759–826) that Silvas (2005) dates to the 820s. As abbot of the Constantinopolitan monastery of St. John the Forerunner at Studios, Theodore was famous as both a reformer of monasticism and a defender of the religious images known as icons. The veneration of icons had been bitterly contested in Byzantium ever since the reign of Leo III (717–741), who in 730 had made iconoclasm imperial policy. All three letters are replies to correspondence initiated by Kassía, whom he addresses as Κανδιδάτις, a title probably indicating that her father or guardian held the imperial rank of κανδιδάτος. Theodore’s responses show her to have been a teenager precocious in her education, zeal for icons, and aspirations to the monastic life.

Whether or not Kassía subsequently participated in the bride show for Theophilos, she eventually did become a nun and then later an abbess. Having achieved her childhood goal, she continued to manifest her brilliance in literary and musical fields previously cultivated by St. Theodore, namely those of poetry and liturgical hymns. Kassía’s non-liturgical epigrams and gnomic verse on topics ranging from monasticism to stupidity reveal her keen eye for mundane human fallibility. She reportedly had come to be a champion of high ideals who retained a love for icons, zeal for icons, and aspirations to the monastic life.

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Kassía and Byzantine Hymnography

Kassía wrote her hymns at a time when churches in Constantinople were playing a crucial role in the formation of the Byzantine rite, the liturgical system employed today by millions of Eastern Orthodox and Greek Catholic Christians. Since the seventh century the imperial capital had fostered two significant traditions of sung daily prayer, each with a distinct version of the cycle of services known collectively in English as the “Divine Office” or “Liturgy of the Hours.” One was the local “Ecclesiastical” rite of Justinian’s Great Church of Hagia Sophia called the Ecclēsiastē’s, while the other was imported from the Holy City (Hagia Polis) of Jerusalem, therefore popularly known as the Hagiopolitē’s (Froyshov: 2020). Until the Crusader sack of 1204, Hagia Sophia and certain other public churches continued to celebrate on a grand scale the stately morning and evening services of the Ecclēsiastē’s. Its archaic repertory of chant—showcased in Cappella Romana’s critically acclaimed recording Lost Voices of Hagia Sophia (2019)—consisted almost entirely of biblical psalmody punctuated by a modest number of refrains, some as brief as the single word “Alleluia.”

The Hagiopolitan rite was in the midst of rapid development at the beginning of the ninth century. It had become an engine for musical creativity during the later seventh century both in Palestine, where Saints John of Damascus (ca. 660–749) and Kosmas of Jerusalem (d. 787) were producing their famous hymns, and in Constantinople. Composers and hymnographers in the imperial capital with Saints Germanos I (ca. 655–ca. 740s) and Andrew of Crete (ca. 660–740) competed with their Palestinian colleagues in a contest to adorn the fixed psalms and canticles of the Hagiopolitan Book of the Hours (Horológion) with ever greater quantities of variable hymns. Use of the Rite of Jerusalem in Constantinople, according to Frøyshov, seems to have been confined at first to a limited number of essentially private monastic and imperial churches.

By Kassía’s youth, occasional or daily celebrations of the Hagiopolitē’s featuring selected elements of the local Ecclēsiastē’s had spread to prominent monastic and public foundations scattered throughout the capital. Notable among these was Studios, for which St. Theodore and his brother Joseph wrote and edited collections of hymns composed mainly in Hagiopolitan genres (Krueger: 2014). Such “Byzantinized” versions of the rite of Jerusalem represented the future of daily worship in the Orthodox Church, displacing completely the original cathedral rites of the Holy City and, by the end of the Middle Ages, of Constantinople as well.

Viewed in this context, Kassía emerges as a significant contributor to the eventual triumph of the Hagiopolitan Divine Office. All 49 of the hymns plausibly attributed to her in medieval manuscripts are for services of the Horologion with melodies composed according to the Octóëchos, a system of eight musical modes likewise originating in Jerusalem. Two are kanons, long multi-stanza hymns consisting of sets (odes) of metrically identical stanzas (troparia) associated with the biblical canticles (also called odes) appointed for morning prayer in the Horológion. The remainder are stichera (singular, sticheron), hymns composed mainly for interpolation between verses (stichoi) of the psalms chanted daily at matins and vespers. Thirteen of these hymns that form a cycle of chants for the feasts of Christmas, Theophany (6 January), and the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (2 February) are stichera prosómoia (contrafacta), with texts written to be sung to the melodies of common pre-existing model hymns (stichera autómela). Kassía’s musical genius is fully revealed in the larger group of
Due in part to the proportion of her Byzantine musical signs called neumes.

Kassía’s stíchera idiómela that commemorate female and monastic saints, scholars have tended to assume that Kassía was writing for worship in her own monastery. Although its community may well have been the first to have sung her hymns, soon both monastic and secular churches employing Byzantinized variants of the rite of Jerusalem took them up. The oldest known source to contain any of her hymns is Sinai gr. NE/ΜΓ 5, a ninth-century hymnal for the basilica of the Anástasis (also known as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre) in Jerusalem itself. By the twelfth century, Kassía’s hymns were being copied in Greek and Church Slavonic manuscripts across a vast geographic expanse from Southern Italy to the Middle East and Mount Athos to Kiev. Rus.

Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos (1256–1335), a church historian and priest of Hagia Sophia, recognized her extraordinary contributions to Orthodox worship by including Kassía as the only woman in his catalogue of leading Byzantine hymnographers. Yet Xanthopoulos may have known only a portion of her output thanks to a winnowing of the corpus of Byzantine hymnody that had begun some two centuries before. Service books of his time regularly contained only a practically manageable selection of the vast number of hymns that had been produced over the centuries for Hagiotopolitan worship. Kanons for the great feasts of Christmas and Easter by Germanos and Andrew of Crete, for example, had been dropped, leaving only those of Kosmas and John Damascene in active use. Kassía’s kanons and stíchera prosómoia were similarly displaced, even as her stíchera idiómela were retained in what Oliver Strunk called the “Standard Abridged Version” of the musically notated hymnal known as the Sticherárion.

Recovering the Medieval Melodies of Kassía’s Hymns

Copies of hymns for the Hagiopolitēs with evidently musical annotations first appear in papyri dating to the late seventh or early eighth century. These and all forms of Byzantine musical notation through the final quarter of the twelfth century lacked the means to convey with precision a sequence of musical intervals. Oral tradition must therefore have played a substantial role in the early transmission of Kassía’s music. Nevertheless, there are good reasons to suppose that her melodies remained fairly stable prior to their emergence in Middle Byzantine Notation (MBN), an interzivalically precise system of neumes first attested to in 1177 and employed through the early nineteenth century. One reason supporting melodic stability is the graphic continuity between early “Palaeo-Byzantine” and MBN manuscripts that contain her hymns. Another is that medieval manuscripts produced across the Byzantine world with MBN exhibit a high degree of melodic uniformity.

Comparable levels of consistency are to be found today within received traditions of Orthodox music, but these traditions are separated to varying degrees both from each other and the liturgical chant of Byzantium by centuries of cultural development. Therefore in their efforts to recover the medieval melodies of Kassía’s hymns, scholars have tied their work closely to a wider quest to interpret MBN in modern transcriptions and performances. Such inquiry was in its infancy when H.J.W. Tillyard (1911) wrote a pioneering musical study of Kassía with transcriptions into staff notation reflecting Hugo Riemann’s misguided theory that MBN should be read through the prism of ancient Greek metrics and modes.

For much of the twentieth century the dominant interpretation of MBN in Western academia was that formulated in 1931 by the Monumenta Musicæ Byzantinæ (MMB), of which Tillyard was a founding member along with Carsten Høeg and Egon Wellesz. Taken at face value, the original transcription system of the MMB offered scholars a convenient way of representing in staff notation the intervallic sequence of Byzantine neumes with apparently minimal editorial interpretation. Addressing potential performers, however, Tillyard and Wellesz explicitly stated that their transcriptions of Byzantine chants in “free rhythm” were to be rendered in a manner that was stylistically compatible with Gregorian chant as then recently “restored” by the French monks of the Abbey of Solesmes (Lingas: 2003). This “Gregorianizing” interpretation of MBN rapidly provoked what became decades of often fierce criticism made varyingly on technical, historical, and cultural grounds. Some of the most vehement objections to its transcription system
came from Greek academics and cantors appalled by its inventors’ implicit (and sometimes explicit) rejection of the received oral and written traditions of Byzantine chanting.

Scholarship has now largely moved on from these debates, with the MMB itself having published in 2011 a revised method of transcription for academic purposes. Despite this, the medieval melodies of Kassía’s hymns have continued to circulate in print primarily as staff-notation transcriptions made essentially according to the old system of the MMB (for example, Touliatos-Banker: 1984). Some of these “Gregorianizing” scores have even been used in recent performances and recordings.

Since its founding in 1991, Cappella Romana has embraced new interpretations of MBN arising from scholarly reflection on historical relationships between written and oral tradition. These have shaped our approaches to rhythm, ornamentation, and the use of chromatic modes or inflections in medieval Byzantine chant. With this recording of chants for Christmas, Lent, and Holy Week, we inaugurate a collaborative project to prepare from manuscript sources chosen by me and me and high-voiced eunuchs), choirs of female and male monastics, and even groups of children.

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Chants for the Vespers of Christmas Eve

On Christmas Eve the modern Byzantine rite adorns the Lamplighting Psalms (140, 141, 129, and 116 in the numbering of the Septuagint) of Hagiotopalian vespers with a sequence of stichera idiomela, only the last of which is by “Kassiani the Nun.” Manuscripts of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, however, contain multiple sets of stichera prosómoia for the same occasion, two of which some sources attribute to Kassia. Both groups are in the same musical mode as her idiomelôn “When Augustus Reigned,” with each featuring a different model melody now rarely encountered in printed service books.

We preface Kassía’s complete hymns for Christmas with an abbreviated version of their introductory psalmody, presented as it might have been heard in a Byzantine public church. The choirs commence the Lamplighting Psalms by singing in alternation their verses, each of which is capped by the refrain “Hear us, O Lord.”

Subsequent verses introduce the stichera prosómoia, each set of which is proceeded by a fresh intonation of the Second Mode: Neanés.

The psalmody concludes with the sticheron idiomelôn “When Augustus Reigned,” designated a Doxastikón because it follows the lesser doxology “Glory to the Father.” Theologians and political historians have noted how Kassía embodies the providential ideology of Christian Romanitas in Byzantium. Parallels drawn in her text between political union under the Roman Empire (Romanitas) and the spiritual union of all humankind in Christ are reflected musically in paired phrases sung to the same melody.

Penitential and Holy Week Chants

Constantinopolitan monasticism of the ninth century significantly enhanced the worship for the penitential seasons of Lent and Holy Week with additional commemorations and many new hymns. These contributions were systematized in a volume called the Triodion, a title recalling its many three-ode kanons composed by Theodore and Joseph of Stoudios. On the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee, the first of four preparatory Sundays with gospel readings foreshadowing the Lenten call to repentance, the Triodion features two stichera idiomela attributed in medieval manuscripts to Kassía. The first sticheron recalls not only the tax-collector from the parable in Gospel of Luke (18:9–14), but also the “sinful woman” who anointed the feet of Jesus in Luke 7:36. This unnamed woman is, as already noted above, the subject of the endurably popular “Hymn of Kassianí” for Holy Wednesday. Eastern Orthodox tradition emphatically does not identify her with Mary Magdalene (whom it regards as “Equal to the Apostles”), nor does it offer a unified view as to whether similar accounts by the other three evangelists of a woman anointing Christ’s feet (Matthew 26:6–13, Mark 14:3–9, and John 12:3–8) even refer to the same person.

From late Antiquity it had become customary in Constantinople to prepare for the Passion and Resurrection of Christ with three days of personal repentance, the last of which was dedicated to Luke’s “sinful woman” (Arentzen: 2020). This commemoration
was recorded in the local liturgical calendar (*Synaxarion*), which followed earlier Syriac traditions in explicitly stating that the woman's sin was prostitution:

On holy and great Wednesday the most godly fathers ordered that the commemoration be kept of the harlot who anointed the Lord with sweet myrrh, because this occurred shortly before the saving passion. (trans. Archimandrite Ephrem Lash)

Ninth-century rubrics for Holy Wednesday vespers in the rite of Hagia Sophia echo this only in appointing Matthew 26:6–16 as the gospel reading. In this *pericopē*, however, the woman with the alabaster box is praised for anointing Christ's feet with precious myrrh without any commentary on her moral state.

For musical depictions of Luke's "sinful woman" in Constantinople on Holy Wednesday prior to Kassía, we must look to two other traditions. The first is that of the kontakion, a genre of originally paraliturgical hymns written to accompany the official services of the Ecclēsiastē's. Arentzen has observed that two such hymns are appointed for this day, both featuring dramatic monologues by a prostitute bewailing her frenzied lust and sexual misdeeds. One is "On the Harlot" by St. Romanos the Melodist (ca. 485–560), and the other is an anonymous text by a presumably later author that has bequeathed its prologue and first stanza (*oikos*) to the modern Byzantine office of matins on Holy Wednesday. The second is the Hagiopolitan Divine Office. By the time Kassía composed her *sticheron idiomelon* "On the Sinful Woman," the services for Holy Wednesday from the Hagiopolitan Divine Office already featured multiple references to a repentant prostitute in hymns by the Palestinian composers Kosmas and John the Monk.

Given this background, it is notable that Kassía omitted any mention of harlotry in her account of “the woman fallen into many sins.” She concurs with Luke in depicting the woman as expressing her repentance bodily through tears and the wiping of Christ's feet with her hair. Unlike Romanos and the Palestinian hymnographers, Kassía has the woman lament her passions and temptations without any reference to their physical enaction:

"Alas!," she says, “for night is for me a frenzy of lust, a dark and moonless love of sin.”

The present recording contains two settings of the "Hymn of Kassianī." The first is a version of its standard medieval melody from the 13th-century *Sticherarion* Grottaferrata E.a. 5. This south Italian manuscript differs from other *Sticheraria* mainly through its inclusion of two florid modal intonations written out in full using red ink. Most intonations, such as those heard elsewhere on this recording, are short phrases on non-semantic syllables identified with the one of the eight modes of the Octoechos. Often written in shorthand by scribes as modal signatures (Gk *martyria*, literally "witnesses"), intonations may optionally be sung by a cantor to name the mode and/or establish the pitch of the succeeding text phrase. Here the extended melodic variations on *Neāghie*, the customary intonation of the Fourth Plagal Mode, are more abstractly decorative than functional, offering moments of musical contemplation at key points in Kassía’s text.

Abstraction is elevated to a basic structural principle in the monumental arrangement of the "Hymn of Kassianī" that concludes this recording. It appears anonymously in its earliest known source: Sinai gr. 1251, a manuscript copied by the Cretan composer, music theorist, and cleric John Plousiadenos (1429–1500). Centuries later Chourmouzios the Archivist (ca. 1770–1809) attributes his "exegesis" of this chant into the reformed New Method of Byzantine notation to a certain "Meletios the Monk" (MS Athens MIT 733, f. 246r), an identification that older sources have yet to confirm. Whoever its author may have been, it represents an effort to rework Kassía’s elegant *sticheron* in the kalophonic ("beautiful-sounding") style of Byzantine chant, a florid and often virtuosic musical idiom that came to maturity in the late thirteenth century. The result is an expansive work lasting over 25 minutes in this performance. Phrases are rhetorically repeated and extended through variation, transposition, and modal transformation. Discursive speech and modal intonations occasionally dissolve into extended passages of non-semantic syllables, interludes of vocables known as *échēmata* or *teretísmata* that later commentators associated with angelic song. Only at its end do singers and listeners return to earth and the composer reintroduces the final phrase of Kassía’s music from the ordinary *Sticherarion*.

A tenth-century chronicle sometimes attributed (wrongly) to “George the Monk” states that Kassía actually made two noteworthy contributions to the services of Holy Week: in addition to her famous *sticheron* for Holy Wednesday, she had also written a four-ode (*tetraódion*) kanon for the matins of Holy Saturday to supplement an older *tetraódion* by Kosmas of Jerusalem. The reason that this second work is virtually unknown today may have been, if Theodore Prodromos (c. 1100–c. 1170) is to be believed, the result of active suppression. Prodromos gives an account of how ecclesiastical authorities during the reign of Emperor Leo VI (886–912) became uncomfortable using hymns by a woman on the solemn eve of Easter Sunday. Kassía’s work was consequently effaced by reattributing her model stanzas (*heirmoi*) and commissioning Mark of Otranto to write thematically similar replacements for their metrically identical *troparia*. Simić (2014), however, has shown that some Greek and Slavic scribes working as late as the thirteenth century continued to copy *troparia* by Kassía.
Regardless of whether there was indeed a coordinated effort at the highest levels of the Roman state or church to suppress Kassía’s contribution to Hagiopolitan worship on Holy Saturday, the result was ultimately the same: only stanzas attributed to Mark and Kosmas appear in modern Greek service books. For Cappella Romana, this recording of her tetraódion along with her equally neglected hymns for Christmas represents what we hope will be only the beginning of a sustained effort on our part to dispel the notion of “Kassianí the one-hit wonder.”

Alexander Lingas

Selected Bibliography


Εἰς τὴν Γέννεσιν τοῦ Κυρίου ·
Εἰς τὸν Ἑσπερινόν

1 Οἱ Ἐπιλύχνιοι Ψαλμοί
Ἦχος β´
Κύριε ἐκέκραξα πρὸς σέ, εἰσάκουσόν μου, εἰσάκουσόν μου, Κύριε. Κύριε, ἐκέκραξα πρὸς σέ, εἰσάκουσόν μου· πρόσχες τῇ φωνῇ τῆς δεήσεώς μου, ἐν τῷ κεκραγέναι με πρὸς σέ· εἰσάκουσόν μου, Κύριε.

Κατευθυνθήτω ἡ προσευχή μου, ὡς θυμίαμα ἐνώπιόν σου; ἔπαρσις τῶν χειρῶν μου θυσία ἑσπερινή · εἰσάκουσόν μου, Κύριε.

Θοῦ, Κύριε, φυλακὴν τῷ στόματί μου, καὶ θύραν περιοχῆς περὶ τὰ χείλη μου · εἰσάκουσόν μου, Κύριε.

Μὴ ἐκκλίνῃς τὴν καρδίαν μου εἰς λόγους πονηρίας, τοῦ προφασίζεσθαι προφάσεις ἐν ἁμαρτίαις · εἰσάκουσόν μου, Κύριε.

Σὺν ἀνθρώποις ἐργαζομένοι τὴν ἀνομίαν, καὶ οὐ μὴ συνδυάσω μετὰ τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν αὐτῶν · εἰσάκουσόν μου, Κύριε.

Παιδεύσει με δίκαιος ἐν ἐλέει, καὶ ἐλέγξει με, ἔλαιον δὲ ἁμαρτωλοῦ μὴ λιπανάτω τὴν κεφαλήν μου · εἰσάκουσόν μου, Κύριε.
Verse: For your name's sake I have waited for you, O Lord. My soul has waited on your word. My soul has hoped in the Lord.

When you appeared, Savior, who reigns through the ages, you were worshipped reverently by the Magi having been led by a star to you, sun of glory; they were astounded by your poverty and offered gifts to you lying in a manger, gold, frankincense and myrrh. Lord, who through the deepest compassion put on flesh and deified the garment of mortals, glory to you.

Verse: From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch, let Israel hope in the Lord.

When you appeared, Christ, to dwell on earth and in sympathy with others became poor, the whole creation offered you as Lord the people rejoicing bring a hymn of thanksgiving, to the one who bore you the earth offered the cave and the Magi the gifts; Lord, who through the deepest compassion put on flesh and deified the garment of mortals, glory to you.

Verse: Praise the Lord, all you nations. Praise him all you peoples. The sun of glory came forth from your radiant womb, O highly favored all-blameless, ordained to spread with its rays the light of salvation; you remained a virgin after the birth as you were before it, something unexplainable; and you covered him with swaddling clothes as a cloud, he who enlightens those who cry out with faith, benefactor of all, glory to you, Lord.

Verses: For his mercy has been mighty towards us, and the truth of the Lord endures to the ages. Creation was enlightened by your birth on earth, Lord, and the heavens praised you with fear along with Magi reverently glorified you when they saw you, O Logos, being poor.
καὶ σπάργανα φοροῦντα
di’ ἀν πάντων ἔλυσας, οἰκτίρμοιν,
σειρὰς τῶν ἐγκλημάτων
τῶν ἐκβοώντων σοι·
καὶ σπάργανα φοροῦντα
di’ ὧν πάντων ἔλυσας, οἰκτίρμοιν,
σειρὰς τῶν ἐγκλημάτων
συνδήσας ἀφθαρσίᾳ 
τὴν ζωὴν
τῶν ἐκβοώντων σοι·
εὐεργέτα τῶν ἁπάντων,
Κύριε, δόξα σοι.

4 Doxastikón

Δόξα Πατρί, καὶ Υἱῷ, καὶ Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι.
Και νῦν, καὶ ἀεί, καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν
αἰώνων. Ἀμήν.

5 Κυριακὴ τοῦ Τελώνου καὶ τοῦ
Φαρισαίου Ἐν τῷ Μεγάλῳ Ἑσπερινῷ
Εἰς τὸ Κύριε ἐκέκραξα Στιχηρὸν
5 At Great Vespers on the Eve of the
Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee
At the Lamplighting Psalms, Sticheron
at the “Glory” Mode Plagal 4

Pantokrάτορ Κύριε, οίδα, πόσα δύνανται
tά δάκρυα· Ἐζεκίαν γὰρ ἐκ τῶν πυλῶν τοῦ
θανάτου ἀνήγαγον, τὴν ἁμαρτωλὸν ἐκ τῶν
χρονίων πταισμάτων ἐρρύσαντο, τόν δὲ
Τελώνην, ὑπὲρ τὸν Φαρισαῖον ἐδικαίωσαν,
καὶ δέομαι, σὺν αὐτοῖς ἀριθμήσας,
ἐλέησόν με.

6 Τετραώδιον τῷ Ἁγίῳ καὶ Μεγάλῳ
Σαββάτῳ Ἦχος αʹ – Ἦχος πλ. βʹ

Ο Εἱρμός
«Κύματι θαλάσση
τόν κρύψαντα πάλαι
dιώκτην τύραννον
ὑπὸ γῆν ἔκρυψαν
τῶν σεσωσμένων οἱ παῖδες
ἀλλ’ ἡμεῖς ὡς αἱ νεάνιδες
τῷ Κυρίῳ ᾄσωμεν·
ἐνδόξως γάρ δεδόξασται».

Tροπάρια
Ἄφρον, γηραλέε,
ἀκόρεστε, Ἅδῃ
χανὼν ὑπήδεξαι
τὴν τῶν ἁπάντων ζωήν·
καταπιὼν γὰρ 
emean μέσει
ὅτι δεδόξασται.

Ἰησοῦ, Θεέ μου,
ὑμνῶ σου τὰ πάθη·
ἑκὼν γὰρ τέθνηκας
ὑπὲρ τῆς πάντων ζωῆς
καὶ σινδόνι και σμύρνῃ
κηδευθῆναι κατηξίωσας
τὴν ταφὴν δοξάζω σου
ὑμνῶ σου καὶ τὴν ἔγερσιν.

6 Tetraádion of Holy and Great Saturday
Ode 1 – Mode Plagal 2

The Model Stanza
He who once
Hid the pursuing tyrant
In the waves of the sea,
Was hidden beneath the earth
By the children of those he had saved.
But let us, as the maidens,
Sing unto the Lord,
For he is greatly glorified.

Tropária
Senseless, old,
Insatiable, gaping
Hell, receive
The life of all mankind.
For you will be sick devouring
The souls of the righteous
that you had swallowed down;
The Lord will strike you down
Because He is glorified.

Christ, my God,
I sing in praise of your Passion,
For you willingly died
On behalf of everyone's life
And consecrated to be buried
In a sheet and with myrrh;
I glorify your burial
And I offer praise to your raising.

Ode 3

The Model Stanza
When the creation observed you
Hanging on Golgotha,
Who without hindrance hung the whole
earth / Upon the waters,
It was filled with great astonishment
And cried out, “There is no one holy
Except you, O Lord!”
Τροπάρια

The Jews placed you in a pit
And in the shadow of Death,
O long-suffering Savior,
The free one among the dead,
The one who crushed the barriers Of hell, O master,
Raising those who had died.

To all those shackled
With the indestructible chains of hell
The Lord shouted:
"Those in bondage burst forth,
Those in darkness be free."

Our King is delivering
Those in the earth.

7 Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee

At Matins
Sticheron at the “Glory” of Lauds
Mode Plagal 4

O Lord, you condemned the Pharisee who justified himself by boasting of his works, and you justified the Tax Collector who humbled himself and with cries of sorrow begged for mercy. For you reject proud-minded thoughts, but you do not despise a contrite heart. Therefore in abasement we fall down before you who suffered for our sake: grant us forgiveness and great mercy.

8 Tetraódiom of Holy and Great Saturday

At Matins
Sticheron at the “Glory” of Lauds
Mode Plagal 2

O Lord, you mortified the soul-destroyer
Descending into hell, you crushed its barriers and as God Raised the forefather,
And by your death granted to the faithful Peace and life And exultation.

You who breathed life into mortals Lived with those in hell To those in darkness you told to come out And to those in bonds to be released, To the destruction of the enemy; And when you called those who had died before To rise up, I came to life.

Lord, the woman who had fallen into many sins, perceiving your divinity, took up the role of myrrh-bearer, and with lamentation brings sweet myrrh to you before your burial. "Alas!," she says, "for night is for me a frenzy of lust, a frenzy, a dark and moonless love of sin. Alas! Deneitananene anechnenanena... Accept the fountains of my tears, you who from the clouds draw out the water of the sea; Accept the fountains of my tears! Bow yourself down to the groanings of my heart, you who bowed the heavens by your ineffable self-emptying. Bow yourself down to the groanings of my heart, kaiananene nenano nechcheneianena... I shall kiss your immaculate feet, I shall kiss and wipe them again with the locks of my hair, those feet whose sound Eve heard at dusk in Paradise, and hid herself in fear, and hid herself. Atata tantantatatata atanenanecha... The multitude of my sins and the depths of your judgements? Say: Who can search out my Savior, savior of souls? Who can search out the multitude of my sins and the depths of your judgements? From the choral setting: Do not despise me, your servant, for you have mercy without measure."
At Great Vespers on the Eve of the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee
At the Lamplighting Psalms Sticheron at the “Glory” Mode Plagal 4
Performing edition by Ioannis Arvanitis
MS Sinai 1251, f.402r., opening of the kalophonic sticheron, «Κύριε, ἡ ἐν πολλαῖς» “Lord, the woman…”
CAPPELLA ROMANA

"Chords unfurl in reverberant bloom” New York Times
"Like jeweled light flooding the space” Los Angeles Times

Cappella Romana is a professional vocal ensemble dedicated to combining passion with scholarship in its exploration of the musical traditions of the Christian East and West, with emphasis on early and contemporary music. The ensemble is known especially for its presentations and recordings of medieval Byzantine chant, Greek and Russian Orthodox choral works, and other sacred music that expresses the historic traditions of a unified Christian inheritance. Founded in 1991, Cappella Romana has a special commitment to mastering the Slavic and Byzantine musical repertories in their original languages, thereby making accessible to the general public two great musical traditions that are little known in the West. Critics have consistently praised Cappella Romana for their unusual and innovative programming, including numerous world and American premieres. The ensemble presents annual concert series in Portland, Oregon; Seattle, Washington; and San Francisco, California, in addition to touring nationally and internationally, most recently to Hungary, Serbia, Romania, and the UK. Cappella Romana returns to the Utrecht Early Music Festival in 2021 for the third time with Lost Voices of Hagia Sophia performed in the virtual acoustics of Hagia Sophia as the festival’s finale concert. Hymns of Kassianí is its 25th recording.
cappellaromana.org

Alexander Lingas, music director and founder of Cappella Romana, is a Professor of Music at City, University of London, and a Fellow of the University of Oxford’s European Humanities Research Centre. He completed his doctorate on Sunday matins in the rite of Hagia Sophia at the University of British Columbia and then, with the support of a SSHRC postdoctoral fellowship, moved to Oxfordshire to study theology with Metropolitan Kallistos Ware. His present work embraces not only historical study but also ethnography and performance. His awards include Fulbright and Onassis grants for musical studies in Greece with cantor Lykourgos Angelopoulos, the British Academy’s Thanksgiving to Britain Fellowship, research leave supported by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, and the St. Romanos the Melodist medallion of the National Forum for Greek Orthodox Church Musicians (USA). In 2018 His All-Holiness, Bartholomew I, Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch, bestowed on him the title of Archon Mousikodidáskalos.

Singers

John Michael Boyer (baritone principal soloist, associate music director) has been a professional singer, conductor, and Byzantine cantor since 1997. He studied Byzantine Music with Alexander Lingas, Lykourgos Angelopoulos (+2014), and Ioannis Arvanitis. Having sung with Cappella Romana since 1999, he was made associate music director in 2017. John is founder and artistic director of Próto, a collaborative duet with Lebanese-American cantor Deacon John (Rassem) El Massih; their seminal recording, Sun of Justice, was released in December, 2017. John is an active composer and produced new music for recordings Divine Liturgy in English in Byzantine Chant (Cappella Romana), All Creation Trembled (Holy Cross), as well as Próto’s Sun of Justice, which was subsequently published in a digital volume of same name. In 2013, John set the English liturgical texts to traditional Byzantine melodies for the funeral of Sir John Tavener. He collaborated on the new composition Heaven & Earth: A Song of Creation, for the St. John of Damascus Society, and conducted its premiere in 2018 with Cappella Romana. John’s book, Byzantine Chant: the Received Tradition – A Lesson Book is slated for publication in 2021, along with his Resurrectionary, an English Anastasimatárion using the translations of the late Archimandrite Ephrem (Lash) (+2016). John is founder and director of the Saint John Koukouzelis Institute of Liturgical Arts (koukouzelis.net), which offers instruction in Byzantine Music and Liturgics. He is protosaltis (chief cantor) of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Portland, Oregon, and of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis (Diocese) of San Francisco. In 2018, John married renowned Greek philologist and modern historian, Evangelia Boubougiazitzi. They have twin girls and split their time between Portland, Oregon, and Pyrgos of Larisa, Greece.

Kristen Buhler (alto) is a native Oregonian, and has performed, recorded, and toured with Cappella Romana since 2006. Praised for her “smooth and heartfelt” singing (Artslandia), she has sung professionally with many ensembles including Portland Baroque Orchestra, The Saint Tikhon Choir, The Julians, In Mulieribus, Cantores in Ecclesia, Resonance Ensemble, and Oregon Catholic Press. She earned B.A. degrees from George Fox University in both Vocal Music Performance and Writing/Literature, then went on to Portland State University where she garnered a M.M. degree in Choral Conducting and a M.S. degree in Special Education. By day, Kristen teaches braille to visually impaired students. She has
been a co-author of a national braille curriculum entitled *Building on Patterns* for the last thirteen years. In her spare time, she is always up for a dinner party, pub quiz, or a spur of the moment trip to anywhere.

**Photini Downie Robinson** (soprano) has performed with Cappella Romana since 2007 and serves on the Board of Directors. She earned her Bachelor of Music from DePauw University with a double major in Vocal Performance and Computer Science. Photini is the founder of Yphos Voice Studio where she teaches vocal technique and Byzantine Chant. She is the Lampadária (second cantor) at the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Portland and is one of the country’s leading advocates for integrating women into the Psaltic Art. She is preparing to pursue a Master of Divinity at the Portland Seminary and is concurrently studying for her Byzantine Chant Certification at the Hellenic College Holy Cross School of Theology. Upon completion of her M.Div., she plans to build a second career that combines pastoral ministry/chaplaincy with chanting and teaching.

**Nicholas Fine** (tenor) is an avid singer of Orthodox liturgical music from both the Byzantine and Slavic traditions. In addition to singing with Cappella Romana, he is a regular tenor with the Kliros Ensemble, and a chanter and collaborator with the recently formed Byzantine chant ensemble, Dynamis. Nicholas is currently a seminarian at St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary in New York pursuing a Master of Divinity.

**Erik Hundtoft** (bass) is a singer, performer, and teacher, working and living in Portland Oregon. For over twenty years he has appeared regularly in Oregon choral and operatic ensembles including Portland Opera, Opera Theater Oregon, Obsidian Opera, Portland Summerfest, The Oregon Symphony, The Ensemble, The Resonance Ensemble, and Cappella Romana. Erik is a member of the St. Mary’s Cathedral Choir and the Portland Opera Chorus.

**Constantine Kokenes** (baritone) is in his 15th season with Cappella Romana. He formerly performed Byzantine Chant with the Romeiko Ensemble and Axion Estin singers in New York and elsewhere, and is co-founder of The Liturgical Arts Academy of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta. Also a physician, he can sometimes be found in Honduras or Guatemala on medical missions.

**Stelios Kontakiotis** (tenor principal soloist) was born in Athens, Greece and grew up in the island of Amorgos (Cyclades-Greece). In 1990 he began his studies in Byzantine Music at the Conservatory of Athens with Mr. Lazarus Kouvzinopoulos and the late Spyros Peristeris as his teachers and with a scholarship from the Archdiocese of Greece. In 1994 he took his first degree in Chanting and in 2000 his Diploma in Byzantine Music from the National Conservatory of Greece. He has served as a professional chanter starting 1992 in the Churches of Saint George (Palaiο Iraklio), Nativity of Christ (Paiania) and Holy Trinity (Ambelokipoi) all in the Athens greater area.

He also founded and conducted a Byzantine Music Choir consisting of young adults that performed in many concerts and religious services throughout the Greater Athens area. During those years (1990-2000) he took voice classes and later on he joined the National Radio Choir (ERT) as a tenor (1994). As a member of that choir he took part in numerous Operas, Oratorios and Concerts throughout Greece and Europe (France, Italy, Cyprus etc.). He also participated in other choirs and vocal ensembles such as: the choir of “The Athens Megaron” concert hall in Athens, “Emmeleia” choir of Athens, the early music vocal ensemble “Polyfonia”, the choir of the municipality of Athens, the choir of the municipality of Leivadeia, etc. He also recorded songs in cartoon movies translated into the Greek language from the English original such as: the Prince of Egypt (DreamWorks), Pinocchio, the Little Mermaid, Cinderella, Pocahontas (Disney), etc.

In April 2000 he assumed the position of *protopsaltis* (master-chantor) and choir director at Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Washington, DC until 2008 where he auditioned for the same at the Holy Temple of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary in the sacred island of Tinos, Greece, one of the most prominent places throughout Greece, where he has served since then.

**David Krueger** (bass) is grateful to have been performing, touring, and recording with Cappella Romana since 1997, as a bass II and isokrat. His experience includes theater, jazz, folk, world, and sacred music, and he has worked with a number of fine ensembles throughout the Northwest. He loves traveling and being a dad.

**Margaret Lingas** (soprano) was born in Cyprus, raised (mostly) in Oxfordshire, and earned her BMus in vocal performance with linguistics at the University of Victoria, where she studied with Benjamin Butterfield. While in North America, she was a member of Cantores in Ecclesia and the Pacific Opera Victoria chorus, and a soloist with groups including the Victoria Baroque Players, the Sooke Philharmonic, Christ Church Cathedral Choir, and Fretwork. In the UK, Margaret has performed with groups including Schola Cantorum of Oxford, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Christ Church Cathedral Choir, Schola Pietatis Antonio Vivaldi, and The Queen’s College Choir. She recently graduated from young artist programmes with The Sixteen and Ex Cathedra, teaches for Oxford Girls’ Choir, and is a current member of Ex Cathedra, Magdalen College’s Consort of Voices, and New Chamber Opera.

**Kerry McCarthy** (alto) has sung with Cappella Romana since 1994. She is a musician and author known for her work on the English Renaissance. She sings in the Gregorian chant group at Holy Rosary in Portland and is a regular collaborator with many local ensembles. Her new biography of the composer Thomas Tallis came out with Oxford University Press in 2020. She is now working on her fourth book, an exploration of the lives of professional singers in Tudor England. She also enjoys cooking, bicycling, and her multilingual duties as Cappella’s music librarian.

**Mark Powell** (baritone) has sung with Cappella Romana since 1995, and also serves as its executive director. He earned a B.A. in music from Seattle Pacific University and an M.A. in musicology from the University of Washington with a thesis on the music of Arvo Pärt. Devotion to the choral art and to early music form the twin pillars of his career both as performer and executive. As a singer, he has toured and recorded extensively with Cappella Romana and with a number of professional vocal ensembles in the US and in Europe, including The
Tudor Choir, Seattle; the Chœur de Chambre de Namur, Belgium; Wakefield Cathedral Choir, England; and the Saint Tikhon Choir, Pennsylvania. He has also served as a choir director, cantor, and composer/arranger for Greek Orthodox churches in Seattle and Portland.

Catherine van der Salm (soprano) is a versatile musician praised for her “agile, supple and richly expressive” voice (The Oregonian). She is an active collaborative artist singing with Cappella Romana, In Mulieribus, Cantores in Ecclesia, Portland Baroque Orchestra, Resonance Ensemble, Trinity Episcopal Cathedral Chamber Singers and Oregon Catholic Press. She has appeared as a guest artist with 45th Parallel, Newport Symphony Orchestra, Third Angle, Willamette Master Chorus, Musica Maestrale and Bach Cantata Vespers at St. James Lutheran Church. Catherine makes her home in Vancouver, Washington, with her husband, Ruud, and their daughters Juliana and Annelies.

Anya Thetford Seidel (soprano) comes to Cappella Romana with experience in both Byzantine and Slavic liturgical music traditions. Anya graduated from the University of Chicago, where she performed with the Motet Choir and earned degrees in psychology and social work. She spends her days working as a behavioral health consultant in the Portland area and is grateful to be raising four children together with her husband Robert.

David Stutz (bass) is a singer who has enjoyed over fifty years of performing early music professionally, both as a soloist and as a member of numerous ensembles. He is also a composer who continues to explore the intersections between computers, music, theater, and the abstract world of pure mathematics. When not holding drones or reading proofs, he has collaborated on full-length biographical intermedia theater pieces about Alan Turing and Douglas Hofstadter, incidental music for plays, ballets, and films, as well as experimental vocal music to accompany Neal Stephenson's book Anathem. David also enjoys live improvisation, which for him often takes the form of creating ambient soundscapes by using computers, modular synthesizers, and algorithms to alter and enhance field recordings and sampled sounds.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Producer: Blanton Alspaugh, Soundmirror
Recording Engineer: John Newton, Soundmirror
Mixing & Mastering Engineer: Mark Donahue, Soundmirror

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HYMNS OF KASSIANÍ - CAPPELLA ROMANA - 18

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The Fall of Constantinople Cappella Romana’s critically acclaimed program of Byzantine chant and polyphony c. 1453 and motets by Guillaume Dufay explores the musical legacy of New Rome—caught between Latin West and Islamic East.

Good Friday in Jerusalem Medieval Byzantine chant for commemorations of Great and Holy Friday in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, invoking an elaborate stational liturgy that encompassed the sacred Christian topography of the city of Jerusalem.