



# New release by Cappella Romana

## The earliest music by a female composer

# HYMNS OF KASSIANÍ

On April 16th Cappella Records is proud to present the release of *Hymns of Kassianí* performed by Cappella Romana, Alexander Lingas, music director.

**Discover the world's earliest music by a female composer: 9th-century nun, poet, and hymnographer Kassianí (Kassia).**

The same men and women of Cappella Romana who brought you the *Lost Voices of Hagia Sophia* bestseller (**43 weeks on Billboard**), now sing the earliest music we have by a female composer, including long-suppressed hymns recorded here for the first time.

They close with two medieval versions of her beloved hymn for Orthodox Holy Week (**Orthodox Easter in 2021 is May 2nd**).

**Cappella Romana is the world's leading ensemble in the field of medieval Byzantine chant.** Building on its extensive catalogue of this repertoire, *Hymns of Kassianí* is its 25th release. This is the first of a planned series to record all of Kassianí's surviving works.

### SALES POINTS

- The earliest music by a female composer, **three centuries** before Hildegard von Bingen.
- Ecstatic, never-before recorded works for Christmas and Lent
- Illuminated by the latest research on **historically informed performance** of medieval Byzantine chant.
- **In high-res for downloads, multi-channel surround sound**, produced by multi-GRAMMY® Award winner **Blanton Alspaugh** and the team at Soundmirror (100+ GRAMMY® nominations and awards).
- Cappella Romana has an active presence on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook with over 9,000 followers combined, and their YouTube Channel has nearly 5,000 subscribers totaling **nearly 1 million views**.
- Physical product includes 32-page booklet with extensive essay and bibliography by Dr. Lingas, sample musical edition, facsimile of a medieval manuscript, and complete biographies of all singers. Original texts in polytonic Greek with English translations.

**Featured Track: #9 From Great and Holy Wednesday at Matins, "Lord, the woman"** (Kassianí's most famous work)

YouTube track: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTGELV1dJZM>

Cat # **CR422** **HYMNS OF KASSIANÍ** SACD Hybrid Multichannel

Artists: Cappella Romana, Alexander Lingas  
 Producer: Blanton Alspaugh; Engineering: Soundmirror  
 2.0 Stereo, **5.0 SURROUND. DSM192K/24bit.**

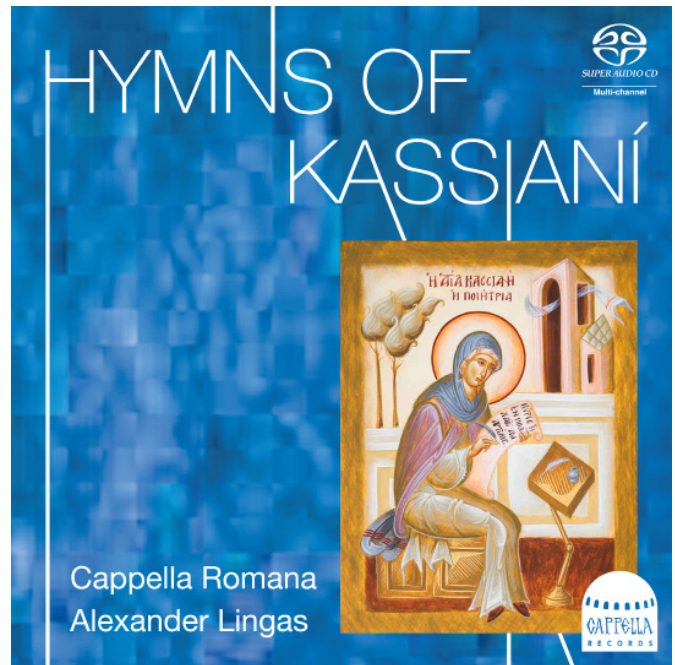
Recorded in DSD. Total time: 76:40.

UPC: 746839858992

SRP: \$19.99 USD

Label: Cappella Records

Genre: Classical,  
 Classical|Choral,  
 Sacred|Chant



**RELEASE DATE: 4/16/2021**

<p><b>HYMNS OF KASSIANÍ</b>          The Earliest Music by a Female Composer          Kassianí (Kassia) ca. 810-ca. 865</p> <p><b>CAPPELLA ROMANA</b>          Alexander Lingas, music director and founder</p> <p><b>Hymns for Christmas</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr><td>1</td><td>Lamp-lighting Psalms, excerpt, Mode 2 «Κύριε ἐκέκραξα» "Lord, I have cried..."</td><td>5:32</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td>Stichera Proσόμοια</td><td>10:11</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td>Other Proσόμοια</td><td>6:53</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>Δοξασιόν of Great Vespers of Christmas Day «Αὐγούστου μοναρχήσαντος» "When Augustus reigned"</td><td>4:51</td></tr> </table> <p><b>Hymns from the Triodion and Holy Week</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr><td>5</td><td>Idiomelon from Great Vespers on the Eve of the Sunday of the Pharisee and the Pharisee «Παντοκράτορ Κύριε, οἶδα, πόσα δύναται τὰ δάκρυα» "Almighty Lord, I know how powerful tears are"</td><td>3:17</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>Tetraόδιον for Great and Holy Saturday, Odes 1 and 3</td><td>5:38</td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td>Idiomelon from Matins for the Sunday of the Pharisee and the Pharisee «Ταῖς ἐξ ἔργων κυχθήσεως» "... by boasting of his works"</td><td>3:06</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>Tetraόδιον for Great and Holy Saturday, Odes 4 and 5</td><td>6:04</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>From Great and Holy Wednesday at Matins «Κύριε, ἢ ἐν πολλαῖς ἁμαρτίαις περιπεσοῦσα» "Lord, the woman found in many sins"</td><td>8:07</td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td>Kalophonic Sticheron Σαχρόν καλοφωνικόν «Κύριε, ἢ ἐν πολλαῖς ...» "Lord, the woman..."</td><td>2:54</td></tr> </table> <p style="text-align: right;">TOTAL 76:40</p>	1	Lamp-lighting Psalms, excerpt, Mode 2 «Κύριε ἐκέκραξα» "Lord, I have cried..."	5:32	2	Stichera Proσόμοια	10:11	3	Other Proσόμοια	6:53	4	Δοξασιόν of Great Vespers of Christmas Day «Αὐγούστου μοναρχήσαντος» "When Augustus reigned"	4:51	5	Idiomelon from Great Vespers on the Eve of the Sunday of the Pharisee and the Pharisee «Παντοκράτορ Κύριε, οἶδα, πόσα δύναται τὰ δάκρυα» "Almighty Lord, I know how powerful tears are"	3:17	6	Tetraόδιον for Great and Holy Saturday, Odes 1 and 3	5:38	7	Idiomelon from Matins for the Sunday of the Pharisee and the Pharisee «Ταῖς ἐξ ἔργων κυχθήσεως» "... by boasting of his works"	3:06	8	Tetraόδιον for Great and Holy Saturday, Odes 4 and 5	6:04	9	From Great and Holy Wednesday at Matins «Κύριε, ἢ ἐν πολλαῖς ἁμαρτίαις περιπεσοῦσα» "Lord, the woman found in many sins"	8:07	10	Kalophonic Sticheron Σαχρόν καλοφωνικόν «Κύριε, ἢ ἐν πολλαῖς ...» "Lord, the woman..."	2:54	<p>Discover the world's earliest music by a female composer: ninth-century nun, poet, and hymnographer Kassianí (Kassia).</p> <p>Cappella Romana brings to life Kassianí's music as never before, illuminated by the latest research on the transmission and historically informed performance of her hymns notated in medieval manuscripts.</p> <p>The men and women of Cappella Romana sing Kassianí's powerful works for Christmas and Lent, including long-suppressed hymns recorded here for the first time. They close with two medieval versions of her beloved hymn for Orthodox Holy Week: its expressive original melody followed by a monumental reworking of it in the late-Byzantine kalophonic style.</p> <p>Vocal ensemble Cappella Romana combines passion with scholarship in its exploration of early and contemporary music of the Christian East and West. Its name refers to the medieval Greek concept of the Roman <i>salutaris</i> (salubrious) world, which embraced Rome and Western Europe as well as the Byzantine Empire of Constantinople ("New Rome") and its Slavic commonwealth. <i>Hymns of Kassianí</i> is Cappella Romana's 25th release.</p> <p><a href="http://cappellarecords.com">cappellarecords.com</a></p> <p>CR422 © &amp; ™ 2021 Cappella Records. All rights reserved. Blanton Alspaugh, producer; John Navello, engineer; Mark Donohue, mastering engineer. <b>Super Audio CD (SACD) Hybrid Multichannel, 2.0 stereo, 5.0 surround sound.</b> The SACD can also be played on a regular CD player through an ISM. Made in Germany. SACD and DSD are registered trademarks. Icon of St. Kassianí the Hymnographer by Julius Ekkigt Hayes, <a href="http://www.konotagraphics.net">www.konotagraphics.net</a>. Used by permission.</p> <p>32-page booklet inside with extensive essay and bibliography by Dr. Lingas, sample musical edition, and complete biographies of all singers. With original texts in Greek with translations in English. Με κείμενα στα ελληνικά και αγγλικά.</p> <p> </p> <p>7 46839 85899 2</p> <p><a href="http://cappellarecords.com">cappellarecords.com</a></p>
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PRESS RELEASE  
New from Cappella Romana  
The earliest music by a female composer  
**HYMNS OF KASSIANÍ**

**HYMNS OF KASSIANÍ**

Portland, Ore. — On April 16th Cappella Records is proud to present the release of *Hymns of Kassianí* performed by Cappella Romana, Alexander Lingas, music director.

Discover the world's earliest music by a female composer: 9th-century nun, poet, and hymnographer Kassianí (Kassía).

The same men and women of Cappella Romana who brought you the *Lost Voices of Hagia Sophia* bestseller (44 weeks on Billboard), now sing the earliest music we have by a female composer, including long-suppressed hymns recorded here for the first time. They close with two medieval versions of her beloved hymn for Orthodox Holy Week.

Cappella Romana is the world's leading ensemble in the field of medieval Byzantine chant. Building on its extensive catalogue of this repertoire, *Hymns of Kassianí* is its 25th release. Performed by an ensemble of female and male singers, this is the first of a planned series to record all of Kassianí's surviving works, released on SACD in high resolution and surround-sound.

In this current century, when "firsts" by women are unfortunately still notable, Kassianí was a trailblazer for women nearly a thousand years ago. Hers is the earliest music by a female composer.

Her story is a modern one from the 9th century. Born into a wealthy and influential family, Kassianí was a beautiful, intelligent woman who was nonetheless censored. Some of her hymns and poetry were reattributed to men or were replaced with those by men in liturgical books.

She fearlessly spoke her mind. As a candidate in a brideshow, she rejected the advances of the emperor Theophilos, who was drawn to her beauty. He challenged her by saying "It is from woman that evil comes," referring to Eve's transgression. She replied "And also from woman came the very best," referring to the Virgin Mary. Her terse rebuttal wounded his pride. The emperor rejected her and chose another as his wife.

Kassianí left her noble life to found a monastery and become its first abbess. She went on to write both secular and sacred poetry and hymns of notoriety. In her secular poem, *Misó* (I hate) she wrote the prescient line "I hate silence when it is time to speak."

While known primarily known to Greek Orthodox today for her famous hymn in Holy Week, she is also familiar through popular culture, her character appearing in the television series "Viking," and on an album (*No Man's Land*) by English punk singer/songwriter Frank Turner, who used lyrics directly from the same hymn from Holy Week.



Cappella Records    [cappellarecords.com](http://cappellarecords.com)  
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## KASSIANÍ (KASSÍA) CA. 810–CA. 865

Born around 810 into a wealthy and influential family in Constantinople (now Istanbul), the capital of the Byzantine Empire, Kassianí was beautiful, educated, and wrote both secular poetry and sacred hymns. She remains a popular figure among Greek Orthodox, known primarily today for her colorful backstory and a single famous hymn sung in Holy Week.

Modern research has revealed however that the historical Kassianí contributed far more than a single “hit” to Orthodox services. Scholars now view Kassía, 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, Kassía succeeded in having her hymns circulate widely beyond her own immediate orbit, incorporated into official service books. However some of her hymnography was either actively or passively suppressed. Sometimes copied in medieval manuscripts without attribution, or reattributed to male composers, her hymns also appear under such variants of her name as Eikasía, Ikasía, Kasía, and Kassianí.

Kassia was first recorded by Byzantine historians as taking part in an imperial bride show. This was an event at which Byzantine emperors and royalty would choose a wife from among the most eligible women in the empire. The bride show in which Kassia participated was thrown for the young soon-to-be-emperor Theophilos, who was immediately captivated by her. When Theophilos approached Kassía to test her, he stated that “It is from woman that evil comes,” referring to Eve’s transgression. She replied cleverly with a play-on-words in Greek, “And also from woman came the very best,” referring to the Virgin Mary. Theophilos was taken aback by Kassía’s biting rebuke, rejecting her in favor of another, Theodora.

After opting out of her chance to become Empress of the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium), Kassía founded an abbey in 843 outside of Constantinople and served as its first abbess. Historians have suggested that Kassía’s move into monastic life was a response to her rejection by Theophilos, but modern scholars now believe that it was more likely a reflection of the intense religious fervor of the day. Her move to the cloister combined Kassía’s desire to have access to the books and to the centers of learning that were part and parcel of Byzantine religious life.

Towards the end of her life, Kassia left the Abbey and traveled to Italy for a brief period, before eventually settling on the island of Kasos in Greece. She died there sometime around 865. Following her death, Kassia was canonized by the Orthodox Church as Saint Kassianí, also known as Kassianí the Hymnographer.

## ALEXANDER LINGAS

**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 Lycourgos Angelopoulos, the British Academy's Thank-Offering 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 Mousikodidaskalos*.

### **CAPPELLA ROMANA**

Vocal ensemble **Cappella Romana** combines passion with scholarship in its exploration of early and contemporary music of the Christian East and West. Its name refers to the medieval Greek concept of the Roman oikoumene (inhabited world), which embraced Rome and Western Europe as well as the Byzantine Empire of Constantinople ("New Rome") and its Slavic commonwealth. Its most recent release, *Lost Voices of Hagia Sophia* just finished a 43-week run on Billboard's Classical chart. In the fall, Cappella Romana will make its third appearance at the Utrecht Early Music Festival, with its program *Lost Voices of Hagia Sophia* as the festival finale of this prestigious event, sung in the virtual-reality acoustics of that great cathedral. [cappellaromana.org](http://cappellaromana.org)

### **CAPPELLA RECORDS**

**Cappella Records** is the label operated by the vocal ensemble **Cappella Romana**. Founded in Portland, Oregon, in 1991, the company combines passion with scholarship in its exploration of early and contemporary music of the Christian East and West, both on its own and in collaboration with peer artists and ensembles all over the world. **Cappella Records** has released over 25 titles, including the recent Billboard chart-topping *Lost Voices of Hagia Sophia* and Benedict Sheehan's stunningly beautiful *Liturgy* in English. [cappellarecords.com](http://cappellarecords.com)

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**For more information:**

**Julia Sheridan | Media Relations**

[media@cappellarecords.com](mailto:media@cappellarecords.com) | 503-236-8202