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John Michael Boyer

Associate Music Director

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Jessica Israels

Margaret Lingas

Vakarè Petroliūnaitė

Photini Downie Robinson

ALTO

Hilary Baboukis

Kristen Buhler

Kerry McCarthy

Nadia Tarnawsky

TENOR

Richard Barrett

Rev. Daniel Burnett

Rev. Nicholas Fine

Leslie Green

BASS

John Michael Boyer

Aaron Cain

Benjamin España

David Krueger

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A production of
Cappella Romana

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Heaven and Earth commissioned by the



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Domnition of the Virgin Mary
Greek Orthodox Church &
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Society, Somerville, Mass.

THE BYZANTINE CHORAL INHERITANCE

Thursday, 16 February 2023, 7:30 pm

First Church, Cambridge, Mass.

Friday, 17 February 2023, 7:30 pm

Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New York, N.Y.

I – FROM CONSTANTINOPLE TO CALIFORNIA

conducted by Alexander Lingas, music director

Byzantine Chant and Polyphony after the Crusades

Imperial Acclamations	MS Athens 2406 (1453)
Kontakion of the Annunciation	MS St. Petersburg gr. 674 (13th c.)
Passion Sticheron “Already the Pen”	
1. 2-voice setting	Manuel Gazes the Lampadarios (15th c.)
2. Melody of the Old Sticherarion	MS Duke, K. W. Clark 45, copied by Angelos Gregoriou, pupil of Gazes
Standing by the Cross	Tenor voice from Corfu, MS Platytera Monastery 31 (17th c.) / Polyphony reconstructed by Eustathios Makris

Pioneering Sacred Choral Settings from Athens and Constantinople

We Praise You	Alexandros Katakouzenos (1824–1892)
Megalynarion in Mode 4	John Sakellarides (c. 1853–1938)
Megalynarion for the Meeting of the Lord	Elissaios Giannides (1865–1942)

The Greek Orthodox Choral Music of California

Apolytikion of the Holy Cross	Frank Desby (1922–92)
Kontakion of the Dead	Theodore Bogdanos (1932–2019)
Sunday Communion Verse	Tikey Zes (b. 1927)

INTERMISSION

II – HEAVEN AND EARTH

conducted by John Michael Boyer, associate music director

Heaven and Earth: A Song of Creation

CAPPELLA ROMANA. COMMISSIONED BY THE ST. JOHN OF DAMASCUS SOCIETY

“Come, let us worship... Bless the Lord, O my soul”	John Michael Boyer (1978–)
“Stretching out the heavens”	Boyer
“The deep, like a cloak”	Tikey Zes (1927–)
“He waters the mountains”	Alexander Khalil (1969–)
“He made the moon”	Kurt Sander (1969–)
“There is the sea”	Matthew Arndt (1976–)
“May the glory of the Lord endure to the ages”	Richard Toensing (1940–2014)
“Glory to the Father... Both now...”	Boyer
“Alleluia... Glory to you...”	Toensing

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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 repertoires 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 and Seattle, Washington, in addition to touring nationally and internationally, most recently to Hungary, Serbia, Romania, the UK, Ireland, and the Netherlands. Cappella Romana returned to the Utrecht Early Music Festival in 2021 for the third time with *Lost Voices of Hagia Sophia* performed in the virtual acous-

tics of Hagia Sophia as the festival’s finale concert. Its latest recording *A Byzantine Emperor at King Henry’s Court* is Cappella Romana’s 30th release.

cappellaromana.org

Alexander Lingas (music director and founder of Cappella Romana) is a Research Fellow of the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies (Cambridge, UK) and currently Artist in Residence of the Institute of Sacred Arts at St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary. 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. He was then a Fellow of the University of Oxford’s European Humanities Research Centre (1997–2021) and a member of academic staff in Music at City, University of London from 2006, retiring as Professor in October 2022. 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, the St. Romanos the Melodist medallion of the National Forum for Greek Orthodox Church Musicians (USA), and the Mol-

davian Cross. In 2018 His All-Holiness, Bartholomew I, Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch, bestowed on him the title of *Archon Mousikodidáskalos*.

John Michael Boyer, associate music director, has been a professional singer, conductor, and Byzantine cantor since 1997. He studied Byzantine Music with Alexander Lingas, Lycourgos 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 the Rev. John Rassem El Massih; their seminal recording, *Sun of Justice*, was released in December, 2017. John is an active composer and has produced new music for several recordings, including *The Divine Liturgy in English in Byzantine Chant* (Cappella Romana), *All Creation Trembled* (Holy Cross), *Sun of Justice* (PRÓTO); as well as Cappella Romana’s forthcoming recording of the Orthodox Funeral Office, music originally composed for the funeral of Sir John Tavener in 2013. He collaborated on the new composition *Heaven & Earth: A Song of Creation*, for the St. John of Damascus Society, and conducted both its premiere in 2018 and its subsequent recording with Cappella Romana (2022). John’s book, *Byzantine Chant: the Received Tradition – A Lesson Book* was released in February 2023, with his *Resurrectionary*, an English *Anastasimatáron* using the translations of the late Archimandrite Ephrem (Lash) (+2016) also slated for 2023. 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 Protopsaltis (chief cantor) of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis (Diocese) of San Francisco, currently on loan as full-time Cantor and Director of Music at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral in New Orleans. In 2018, John married renowned Greek philologist and modern historian, Evangelia Boubougiatzi. They have twin girls and split their time between the United States and Pyrgetos of Larisa, Greece.

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Πολυχρονισμὸς τῶν Βασιλέων

Οἱ ἐντὸς τοῦ βήματος· Πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη τῶν Βασιλέων.

Οἱ ἐκτὸς· Πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη τῶν Βασιλέων.

Οἱ ἐντὸς· Κωνσταντίνου τοῦ εὐσεβεστάτου βασιλέως καὶ αὐτοκράτωρος Ρωμαίων τοῦ Παλαιολόγου, πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη.

Οἱ ἐκτὸς· Κωνσταντίνου τοῦ εὐσεβεστάτου βασιλέως...

Οἱ ἐντὸς· Πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη τῶν Βασιλέων.

Ὁ δομέστικος· Κύριε, σῶσον τοὺς βασιλεῖς.

Ὁ ἕτερος· Καὶ ἐπάκουσον ἡμῶν.

Κοντάκιον τοῦ Εὐαγγελισμοῦ

Δόξα Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ καὶ Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι.
Καὶ νῦν, καὶ αἰεὶ, καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων.
Ἀμήν.

Τῇ ὑπερμάχῳ στρατηγῷ τὰ νικητήρια, ὡς
λυτρωθεῖσα τῶν δεινῶν, εὐχαριστήρια, ἀναγράφω
σοι ἡ Πόλις σου, Θεοτόκε· ἀλλ' ὡς ἔχουσα τὸ
κράτος ἀπροσμάχητον, ἐκ παντοίων με κινδύνων
ἐλευθέρωσον ἵνα κράζω σοι· Χαῖρε, Νύμφη
ἀνύμφευτε.

Στιχηρόν τοῦ Πάθους

Ἦδη βάπτεται κάλαμος ἀποφάσεως, παρὰ κριτῶν
ἀδίκων, καὶ Ἰησοῦς δικάζεται, καὶ κατακρίνεται
σταυρῷ, καὶ πάσχει ἡ Κτίσις, ἐν σταυρῷ καθορῶσα
τὸν Κύριον. Ἄλλ' ὁ φύσει σώματος δι' ἐμὲ πάσχων,
ἀγαθὲ Κύριε δόξα σοι.

Παρισταμένη τῷ Σταυρῷ

Παρισταμένη τῷ Σταυρῷ ἡ Πάναγνος Παρθένος
καὶ τὸν Σωτῆρα βλέπουσα κρεμάμενον ἐν ξύλῳ,
Μετ' ὀδυρμῶν ὀδυνηρῶν ἐκραύγαζε βοῶσα·
Τέκνον ἐμὸν γλυκύτατον, ἠγαπημένον τέκνον, πῶς
ἐκεντήθης τὴν πλευράν, πῶς προσηλώθης ξύλῳ;

Imperial acclamations

[The Clergy] in the sanctuary: May the Kings have many years.

[The Choir] outside: May the Kings have many years.

Clergy: To Constantine Paleologos, the most faithful King and Emperor

of the Romans, many years!

Choir: To Constantine Paleologos, the most faithful King...

Clergy: May the Kings have many years.

1st Domestikos: Lord, save the Kings.

2nd Domestikos: And hear us.

Kontakion of the Annunciation

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

To you my Champion and Commander I your city saved from disasters dedicate, O Mother of God, hymns of victory and thanksgiving; but as you have unassailable might from every kind of danger now deliver me, that I may cry to you: Hail, Bride without bridegroom!

Passion Sticheron

Already the pen of sentence is being dipped in ink by unjust judges, and Jesus is being convicted and condemned to the Cross; and creation, seeing its Lord on the Cross, is suffering. But loving Lord, who for me suffer in your bodily nature, glory to you!

Standing by the Cross

Standing by the Cross and seeing the Savior Hanging on the wood, the immaculate Virgin, With painful lamentations she cried out, saying: My sweetest Son, beloved Son, how is your side pierced, how are you nailed to a Cross?

Σὲ ὑμνοῦμεν

Σὲ ὑμνοῦμεν, σὲ εὐλογοῦμεν, σοὶ εὐχαριστοῦμεν,
Κύριε, καὶ δεόμεθά σου, ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν.

Μεγαλνάριον Ἦχος Δ΄

Ἄξιον ἔστιν ὡς ἀληθῶς μακαρίζειν σε τὴν Θεοτόκον,
τὴν ἀειμακάριστον, καὶ παναμώμητον, καὶ Μητέρα
τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν. Τὴν τιμιωτέραν τῶν Χερουβείμ,
καὶ ἔνδοξοτέραν ἀσυγκρίτως τῶν Σεραφεείμ, τὴν
ἀδιαφθόρως Θεὸν Λόγον τεκοῦσαν, τὴν ὄντως
Θεοτόκον, σὲ μεγαλύνομεν.

Μεγαλνάριον τῆς Ὑπαπαντῆς τοῦ Κυρίου

Θεοτόκε ἡ ἐλπίς, πάντων τῶν Χριστιανῶν, σκέπε
φρούρει φύλαττε, τοὺς ἐλπίζοντας εἰς Σέ.
Ἐν νόμῳ, σκιᾷ καὶ γράμματι, τύπον κατίδωμεν οἱ
πιστοί, πᾶν ἄρσεν τὸ τὴν μήτραν διανοῖγον, ἅγιον
Θεῶ· διὸ πρωτότοκον Λόγον, Πατρὸς ἀνάρχου
Υἱόν, πρωτοτοκούμενον Μητρί, ἀπειράνδρῳ,
μεγαλύνομεν.

Ἀπολυτίκιον τοῦ Τιμίου Σταυροῦ

Σῶσον Κύριε τὸν λαὸν σου καὶ εὐλόγησον τὴν
κληρονομίαν σου, νίκας τοῖς Βασιλεῦσι κατὰ
βαρβάρων δωρούμενος καὶ τὸ σὸν φυλάττων διὰ
τοῦ Σταυροῦ σου πολίτευμα.

Νεκρώσιμον Κοντάκιον

Μετὰ τῶν Ἁγίων ἀνάπαυσον, Χριστέ, τὰς ψυχὰς
τῶν δούλων σου, ἔνθα οὐκ ἔστι πόνος, οὐ λύπη, οὐ
στεναγμός, ἀλλὰ ζωὴ ἀτελεύτητος.

Κοινωνικὸν τῆς Κυριακῆς

Αἰνεῖτε τὸν Κύριον ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν.
Ἄλληλουῖα.

We Praise You

We praise you, we bless you, we give thanks to you,
O Lord, and we pray to you, our God.

Megalynarion in Mode 4

It is truly right to call you blessed, who gave birth
to God, ever-blessed and most pure, and Mother of
our God. Greater in honor than the Cherubim and
beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim,
without corruption you gave birth to God the Word;
truly the Mother of God, we magnify you.

Megalynarion for the Meeting of the Lord

Mother of God, hope of all Christians, protect, watch
over, guard all those who put their hope in you.
In the shadow and letter of the Law, Let us the
faithful discern a figure. "Every male child that
opens the womb shall be holy to God." Therefore the
Son and Word of the Father who has no beginning,
the firstborn child of a Mother who had not known
man, we magnify.

Apolytikion of the Holy Cross

Lord, save your people, and bless your
inheritance, granting to the Kings victory over
their enemies, and guarding your commonwealth by
your Cross. (3x)

Kontakion of the Dead

With the saints give rest, O Christ, to the souls of
your servants, where there is no toil, nor grief, nor
sighing, but life everlasting.

Sunday Communion Verse

Praise the Lord from the heavens.
Alleluia.

INTERMISSION

HEAVEN AND EARTH: A SONG OF CREATION

Translation by Archimandrite Ephrem Lash of blessed memory (1933-2016), commissioned by The Saint John of Damascus Society

John Michael Boyer (1978–)

**“Come let us worship...
Bless the Lord, O my soul”**

Glory to you, O God. Alleluia.

Come, let us worship and fall down before the King,
our God.

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ,
the King, and our God.

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ,
himself, the King, and our God.

Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, you
have been greatly magnified.

You have clothed yourself with thanksgiving and
majesty, wrapping yourself in light as a cloak,

“Stretching out the heavens”

stretching out the heavens like a curtain, roofing his
upper chambers with waters,
placing clouds as his steps, walking on the wings of
the wind,
making winds his messengers and flames of fire his
ministers,
establishing the earth on its sure base; it will not
totter to age on age.

Glory to you, Father; glory to you, Son; glory to you,
Holy Spirit.

Glory to you, O God. Alleluia.

Tikey Zes (1927–)

“The deep, like a cloak”

The deep, like a cloak, is its covering; waters will
stand upon the mountains.

At your rebuke they will flee; they will quail at the
voice of your thunder.

Mountains ascend and plains descend to the place
that you established for them.

You fixed a limit that they will not pass, nor will they
return to cover the earth,

sending out springs in the valleys; waters will run
between the mountains.

They will give drink to all the beasts of the field; the
wild asses will await them to quench their thirst.

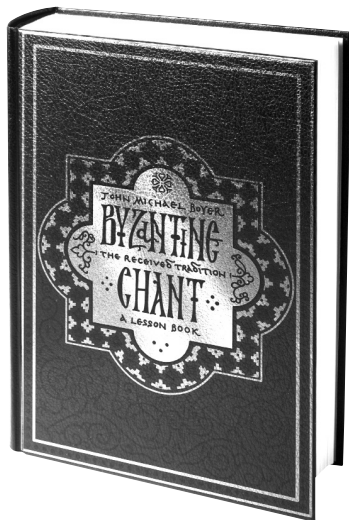
Beside them the birds of the air will make their
dwelling: from among the rocks they will sing
their song.

Glory to you, Holy One; glory to you, Lord. Glory to
you, Heavenly King.

Glory to you, O God. Alleluia.

BYZANTINE CHANT THE RECEIVED TRADITION A Lesson Book

by John Michael Boyer



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Alexander Khalil (1969–)

“He waters the mountains”

He waters the mountains from his upper chambers;
the earth will be filled from the fruit of your works.
He makes grass spring up for the cattle, and green
shoots for the service of mankind;
to bring bread out of the earth, and wine makes glad
the human heart;
to make the face cheerful with oil, and bread
strengthens the human heart.
The trees of the plain will be satisfied, the cedars of
Lebanon that you planted.
There the sparrows will build their nests; the heron’s
dwelling is at their head.
The high mountains are for the deer; and rocks a
refuge for hares.

Glory to you, Holy One; glory to you, Lord. Glory to
you, Heavenly King.

Glory to you, O God. Alleluia.

Kurt Sander (1969–)

“He made the moon”

He made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun
knew the hour of its setting.
You appointed darkness, and it was night, in which
all the beasts of the forest will prowl;
young lions roaring to plunder and to seek their
food from God.
The sun rose and they were gathered together and
they will lie down in their dens.
Man will go out to his labor; and to his laboring
until evening.
How magnified are your works, O Lord. With
wisdom have You made them all, and the earth
has been filled with your creation.

Glory to you, Godhead in three persons: Father,
Son, and Spirit; you we worship and glorify.

Glory to you, O God. Alleluia.

Matthew Arndt (1976–)

“There is the sea”

There is the sea, great and wide; in it there are
creeping things without number, living creatures
small and great.
There ships go to and fro; this dragon which you
fashioned to sport in it.
All things look to you to give them their food in due
season. When you give it them, they will gather it.
When you open your hand all things will be filled
with goodness. But when you turn away your face
they will be troubled.
You will take away their spirit, and they will perish
and return to their dust.
You will send forth your spirit, and they will be
created, and you will renew the face of the earth.

Glory to you, O Father without beginning;
glory to you, O Son, as well without beginning;
glory to you, O Holy Spirit, consubstantial and co-
reigning.
O Holy Trinity, glory to you.

Glory to you, O God. Alleluia.

Richard Toensing (1940–2014)

“May the glory of the Lord endure to the ages”

May the glory of the Lord endure to the ages. The
Lord will rejoice at his works,
He that looks upon the earth and makes it tremble.
He that touches the mountains, and they smoke.
I shall sing to the Lord while I live; I shall chant to
my God while I exist.
May my meditation be pleasing to him; as for me, I
shall rejoice in the Lord.
May sinners perish from the earth, and the wicked,
so that they are no more.
Bless the Lord, my soul!

The sun knew the hour of its setting: you appointed
darkness, and it was night.

O Lord, how magnified are your works. With wis-
dom have You made them all!

Glory to you, O unbegotten Father; glory to you, O begotten Son; glory to you, O Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and resting in the Son, O Holy Trinity, glory to you.

Glory to you, O God. Alleluia.

Boyer

“Glory to the Father... Both now...”

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

Toensing

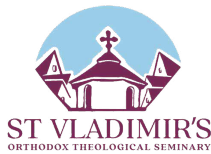
“Alleluia”

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Glory to you, O God.

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Dormition of the Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church

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NOTES

The Eastern Roman Empire—commonly called “Byzantium” after the ancient name of its capital Constantinople—not only survived the downfall of Rome by a millennium, but also created a tradition of sacred choral singing that remains both alive and influential today. On the first half of this evening’s concert Cappella Romana will follow this music from its origins as medieval chant, through various historical efforts to enrich it sonically with additional voice parts, to the Greek Orthodox choral music of modern California.

I – Greeks and Latins in the Eastern Mediterranean

The Crusades transformed the Eastern Mediterranean into a multicultural patchwork of shrinking remnants of the once mighty Byzantine Empire, Western colonies, and Islamic (both Arab and Turkish) states. We begin our concert with chants for a Sunday Divine Liturgy (Eucharist) as it might have been celebrated in Justinian’s Great Church of Hagia Sophia during the reign of Constantine XI Paleologos (1449–53). Roman acclamations wishing the emperor “many years” are followed by the *Kontakion* of the Annunciation, a hymn of thanksgiving addressed to the Virgin Mary by a personified Constantinople, which proclaims her as the city’s “Champion and Commander.”

Following the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, Byzantine chanting continued to flourish on islands ruled by Venice. The most of important of these was Crete, where the composers Manuel Chrysaphes and Manuel Gazes, both of whom had held the title of “Lampadarios” in Constantinople’s imperial chapel, settled. In addition to being skilled in the florid *kalophonic* (‘beautiful sounding’) style of Byzantine chant pioneered by St. John Koukouzeles, Chrysaphes and Gazes experimented with simple, usually improvised, forms of multi-part singing practiced by their Italian colleagues. Gazes went so far as to compose several two-part works notated in parallel lines of Byzantine musical signs (neumes), among which is a prologue to the Passion hymn “**Already the Pen.**” We perform it along with its standard medieval melody as it appears in Duke University (Kenneth Willis Clark) 45, a fifteenth-

century manuscript copied by Gazes’ Cretan pupil Angelos Gregoriou.

Elsewhere in the same source Gregoriou records one of the earliest notated Greek folk songs, the vernacular lament “Standing by the Cross.” Written in fifteen-syllable verse and recorded by Cappella Romana on *Venice in the East*, this song in demotic Greek presents the Virgin Mary lamenting the crucifixion of her Son in words often echoing those of Byzantine liturgical texts. This evening we perform a seventeenth-century descendant of that lament from Corfu (*Kerkyra*), another Venetian-ruled island that became a refuge for Greeks fleeing the Ottoman conquest of Crete in 1669. It is contained in a bilingual (Greek and Latin) manuscript featuring music for ecumenical processions during Holy Week rendered in Byzantine chant notation. Like most of the works in this Corfiote manuscript, “Standing by the Cross” is recorded as a single voice part destined for polyphonic elaboration. A table of contents near the beginning of the manuscript offers instructions as to the proper starting pitches for four voice parts, each of which would follow rules learned by ear to generate a polyphonic texture resembling that of Western Renaissance polyphony (realized in our performing edition by Dr. Eustathios Makris of the Ionian University in Corfu).

II – Choral Music of the Contemporary Greek Orthodox Church

Despite the long history of improvised harmony in the “Cretan” tradition of Byzantine singing, polyphonic choral music is a relatively recent innovation that has become common among only the Greeks of North America. The earliest modern attempts at harmonizing Byzantine chant were made by Greek émigrés in Vienna during the 1840s. Greek Orthodox polyphonic choral singing was firmly established in mainland Greece with the founding of a male choir for the chapel of King George I and his Russian-born Queen Olga by Alexandros Katakouzenos (1824–92). Born in Trieste and trained in Vienna, Katakouzenos was called to Athens in 1870 from Odessa, where he had spent a decade directing a polyphonic choir.

Whereas Katakouzenos chose to adapt and then imitate contemporary Russian Orthodox choral music, the Athenian cantor John Sakellarides (1853?–1938) sought to purge Byzantine chant from alleged Oriental contamination. He did so by proffering a reformed repertory of his own devising that he rendered in both Byzantine neumes and Western staff notation. Although most of his work is monophonic, Sakellarides published many frequently used chants (especially those of the Divine Liturgy) in simple two- and three-part harmonizations. This music was widely adopted in Greek schools, including the Athenian *Arsakeion* for girls where Sakellarides himself taught for a period. A typical example is the ordinary Megalynarion from the Divine Liturgy, with a simplified Byzantine melody harmonized mainly in parallel thirds.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Church of Greece both initially greeted modern attempts to create polyphonic choral music from Byzantine chant with blanket condemnations. Official opposition in Greece gradually moderated over several decades, allowing polyphony to flourish in some churches up to middle of the twentieth century, after which its position gradually declined in the face of vigorous revival of more traditional forms of Byzantine chanting. Today in Greece the former ubiquity of four-part male choruses in major urban churches has largely been forgotten.

Even less well known, however, is the tentative opening toward polyphonic singing that occurred among the Greek Orthodox of the late Ottoman empire. Greek musical periodicals in early twentieth-century Constantinople published not only contrasting views as to whether Byzantine chant could or should be harmonized, but even some musical settings for male and mixed choruses. One of the strongest advocates for harmonization was the Constantinopolitan polymath Stamatios Stamatiades, who obtained a doctorate in mathematics from the University of Montpellier and published in a wide range of fields under the pen name Elissaios Giannides (1865–1942). His musical works include technical discussions of how the modes of Byzantine chant could be to a certain degree be respected in polyphonic music, procedures that he went on to demonstrate in several volumes of sacred choral

works eventually published in Athens. From these we sing his setting of the Megalynarion for the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple (2 February).

The efforts of Giannides and others to assimilate traditional Byzantine melodies to contemporary styles of European choral music ultimately failed to prosper in the churches of their native lands. Transplanted by Greek immigrants to United States, however, they flowered. The most influential figure was Sakellarides, whose music until recently dominated the Greek Orthodox churches of North America. Initially his music was simply reprinted in American editions or lightly adapted for mixed chorus. This began to change after World War II, when a second generation of Greek American church musicians began to transform the legacy of Sakellarides through a partial return to earlier chant repertories and more sophisticated approaches to arranging Byzantine melodies.

Director of Music at St. Sophia Cathedral in Los Angeles from its opening in 1952 until his death in 1992, Frank Desby (born 1922 as Photios Despotopoulos) led the development of a “West Coast School” of Greek Orthodox choral composition. Working regularly also as an orchestral musician and conductor, he acquired postgraduate degrees at the University of Southern California for dissertations on medieval and post-Byzantine chant. He began his career as a church musician by applying this knowledge to reshape Greek American liturgical singing in two ways. The first was to apply the style of performance developed by the monks of the French abbey of Solesmes for Gregorian chant to the performance of Byzantine chant. The second was to set Byzantine chants for mixed chorus in ways that, as Giannides had advocated, somehow respected their modal system. How these approaches differed from traditional Byzantine chanting may be heard in our performance of three versions of the *Apolytikion of the Holy Cross*: as published in a Constantinopolitan anthology of 1882 and as transcribed into staff notation and harmonized by Desby in 1948.

We conclude the first half of this concert with with elegant sacred choral works by two other Californians who, like Desby, were honored by

the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople as Archons of the Great Church of Christ. Although by academic training and profession specialist in medieval literature, Theodore Bogdanos (1932–2019) had a long and distinguished career of service to the Greek Orthodox Church as a cantor and choirmaster. His **Kontakion of the Dead** sets a Byzantine chant in web of polyphony that recalls the efforts of European composers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to appropriate the Renaissance style of Palestrina. The prolific Tikey Zes (b. 1927) was a younger contemporary of Desby at USC and then served alongside Bogdanos as a professor at San Jose State University. His **Communion Verse for Sundays** was written and dedicated in 1984 to Frank Desby, who in 1956 had composed a popular choral setting of the same chant by Sakellarides.

—Alexander Lingas

HEAVEN AND EARTH

Voice and light, mystical and practical

In the Orthodox tradition, light signifies truth: both supernatural and natural, mystical and practical. To know the uncreated light of the Transfiguration is the goal of hesychastic spiritual contemplation. Constantinople's Hagia Sophia manifested this contemplation materially: the cathedral's surfaces reflected and amplified natural sunlight visually as well as human voices acoustically. Hagia Sophia mingled the two into a single sensory experience that replicated heaven on earth for the worshipper.

Heaven and Earth: A Song of Creation (2018) focuses on these parallel aspects of light—supernatural and natural—in Orthodox spirituality. In setting the psalmist's paean to the divinely created order—Psalm 103 (LXX)—the six collaborating composers focused their attention on created light. This is the light of creation that reveals God through the natural world: “You have clothed yourself with thanksgiving and majesty, wrapping yourself in light as a cloak[.]” In *Heaven and Earth*, the light of the physical universe is not radically separate from the uncreated light that the disciples saw on Mount Tabor in the Transfiguration

account. Rather, Creation itself is an epiphany, a divine manifestation of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Heaven and Earth is a dynamic, ecstatic work that explores the relationship between voice and light. The composers aimed to present a musical “unity in diversity” that reflects the psalmist's depiction of the diversity of the cosmos. To the extent that God is openly virtuosic in his divine creation, so too are the composers virtuosic in their human subcreation. Their collaboration results in a musical kaleidoscope—differently shaped fragments of the same material reflecting the same light in diverse ways that come together into something new. The unified whole of the experience elevates everyone's work into something transcendent.

Other composers have emphasized symmetry in setting Psalm 103. Benedict Sheehan's recent setting overlays a chiasmic (ABCBA) framework over the text, for example (see Sheehan's *Vespers* of 2021). With *Heaven and Earth*, however, the composers built their collaboration around a linear structure. John Michael Boyer sets the opening statement with the refrain, “Glory to you, O God, Alleluia” in received-tradition Byzantine chant in mode Plagal IV followed immediately by the invitatory of Byzantine offices, “Come let us worship and fall down before God our King...” He then hands the melody from voice part to voice part, treating each as a unison antiphonal Byzantine chant line. He builds his movement around the *théseis* (“formulae”) idiomatic to Byzantine music and hands it off between the burnished timbre of the men to the glittering sound of the women. This firmly establishes the refrain's melody in its own idiom while also hinting at the sonic journey to come.

The composers then set their sections of the psalm in their own compositional voices, with the refrain as a vital leitmotif. This leitmotif unifies the musical material, serves as a point of development, and marks off the overall structure of the work. Tikey Zes (“The deep, like a cloak”) reframes the choral approach to the material, drawing heavily from Renaissance modal polyphony and the vocabulary of his own Orthodox choral works. He alternates between dense homophonic part writing and independent

moving lines, concluding his section with a majestic statement of the refrain.

Alexander Khalil (“He waters the mountains”), like Boyer, employs the melodic *théseis* of Byzantine chant, but devises yet another choral configuration, writing for a unison ensemble with a seamless four-octave range. The sections overlap as the singers each enter and exit the chant within their own personal vocal ranges.

Kurt Sander (“He made the moon”) contributes a lush, flowing anthem strongly influenced by Slavic choral traditions. The grand climax of his movement is, fittingly, the text central to Heaven and Earth’s concept: “How magnified are your works, O Lord. With wisdom, you have made them all.” His sweeping vocal gesture tapers into a simple intonation by a soloist, fading out with a still, controlled statement of the refrain.

Matthew Arndt (“There is the sea, great and wide”) brings to bear an extensive harmonic and rhythmic vocabulary, taking inspiration from the so-called “contrasted” polyphony of Georgia and the Caucasus, with three partially improvised sung parts. He paints the more unsettling aspects of the psalm with liberal dissonance and metrical ambiguity, especially at “this dragon which you fashioned to sport in it.” He ends likewise with harmonic ambiguity, building his concluding statement of the refrain from fifths and octaves.

Richard Toensing (“May the glory of the Lord endure to the ages”) directs the ensemble to configure itself into one final variation, a double choir of eight voices each. Imbuing the melodic line with momentum through the movement, he narrows and expands the vocal texture, building to a dramatic, ethereal restatement of the crux of the entire work: “O Lord, how magnified are your works. With wisdom, you have made them all.”

Liturgical context

In *Heaven and Earth*, the composers have consciously crafted concert works as communal experiences that acknowledge a common liturgical shape. The piece builds on the use of Psalm 103 in

worship to meditate on the exterior, created order. In addition to the invitatory, the composers also refer to the *Anoixantaria*, the practice—peculiar to the Byzantine chant repertory—of singing the last ten verses of the Vespersal psalm slowly and melismatically, troping each with a Trinitarian doxological statement and the refrain “Glory to you, O God. Alleluia.”

Byzantine-informed performance

In Cappella Romana’s presentation of this work, as well as others, a “Byzantine-informed” performance practice emerges. While *Heaven and Earth* is not chant composition in and of itself, it nonetheless borrows and quotes chant material. To execute this appropriately, the performers must be aware of the musical tradition beyond what is indicated on the page. Key to this awareness is a sensitivity to the cantorial concept of *hyphos* (“style”), referring to the execution of unwritten specifics of performance practice. Alexander Khalil describes two ways of explaining *hyphos*: 1) musical expression, or “proper presentation” of the notated line, and 2) interpretive melodic realization—that is, the realization of the notated line and the freedom to do so within unwritten, internalized constraints.

How both understandings of *hyphos* inform the performance practice of Byzantine-influenced works is a much-debated question. This is true even within Byzantine chant itself. Western chant scholars in the early 20th century tended to interpret medieval psaltic manuscripts through a lens heavily tinted by Solesmes’ Gregorian chant revival. In response, Greek cantors and musicologists made an aggressive case for greater continuity of performance practice. Marcel Pérès and Lycourgos Angelopoulos pioneered the application of this latter approach to Western music in Ensemble Organum’s recordings of Old Roman chant manuscripts, an undertaking fundamentally shaped by Angelopoulos’ expertise as a Byzantine cantor. Their collaboration has served as a key source of inspiration and guidance for Cappella Romana’s own related work. For example, John Michael Boyer has guided ensembles in the interpretation of Byzantine-influenced works such as those of Sir John Tavener, coaching Chanticleer and

other groups to execute borrowed Byzantine material with sensitivity, lest it devolve either into a non-specific vocal oddity or a clumsy appropriation.

Cappella Romana's performance of *Heaven and Earth* as well as other Byzantine-inspired works relies on awareness of *hyphos*. The performance tradition and sound world that the chant borrowings imply are treated as central to and inseparable from the notated melodies themselves.

Heaven and Earth reflects "Byzantine-informed" performance in both its composition as well as its execution. As already discussed, in setting Psalm 103, the collaborators drew influence and structure from the Byzantine Anoixantaria with its tropes and refrain. The refrain's common Byzantine chant melody serves as unifying thematic material, providing clear cohesion to what *would* otherwise be very disparate sections.

At the same time, the refrain is also the motivic engine for the composers to exercise musical creativity within each's own idiom. Here is a clear synergy between composers and ensemble; Boyer, along with Tikey Zes, Alexander Khalil, Kurt Sander, Matthew Arndt, and Richard Toensing (+2014) are all able to mold the refrain into a new idea, at once identifiable as itself while also sounding of a piece with their respective compositional outputs. Throughout *Heaven and Earth's* musical tapestry, Boyer's direction always ensures that Cappella Romana sings the chant as chant—with the appropriate *hyphos*—while also bringing to life each composer's reshaping of it with sensitivity to the intended approach. The ensemble thus highlights the Byzantine material appropriately in each musical language while also keeping the compositional approaches distinct. The chant refrain allows the sections to cohere and to be themselves, a true unity in diversity: "How magnified are your works, O Lord! With wisdom, you have made them all."

—Richard Barrett

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