The background is a traditional Orthodox icon of the Nativity. Mary is shown reclining in a red mantle over a blue gown. The infant Jesus lies in a manger, with the ox and donkey looking on. Angels are visible in the upper corners, and figures on horseback are on the left. The scene is set in a rocky landscape with a dark cave entrance.

RICHARD TOENSING

KONTAKION ON THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

CAPPELLA ROMANA

DIRECTED BY ALEXANDER LINGAS

WITH NEW ORTHODOX
CHRISTMAS CAROLS



RICHARD TOENSING (B. 1940)

KONTAKION ON THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

WITH NEW ORTHODOX CHRISTMAS CAROLS

CAPPELLA ROMANA

DIRECTED BY ALEXANDER LINGAS

Kontakion on the Nativity of Christ: A Choral Concerto (2007)

38:49

For double choir and soloists

Text: St. Romanos the Melodist (6th c.)

Translation by Darrin Morkunas; poeticized by the composer

FIRST MOVEMENT

10:40

- | | | | |
|---|------------|--|------|
| 1 | Proïmion | <i>The Virgin gives birth today</i> | 1:16 |
| 2 | Stanza I | <i>Bethlehem has opened Eden</i> | 2:32 |
| 3 | Stanza II | <i>The Father of the Mother by intent became her Son</i> | 3:16 |
| 4 | Stanza III | <i>O High King, what is there for you among the beggars?</i> | 3:37 |

SECOND MOVEMENT

6:33

- | | | | |
|---|------------|---|------|
| 5 | Stanza IV | <i>As she says such things in the presence of the Ineffable</i> | 1:57 |
| 6 | Stanza VI | <i>As Mary heard all of these astonishing words</i> | 1:56 |
| 7 | Stanza VII | <i>Since they are your people, O Child</i> | 2:41 |

THIRD MOVEMENT

7:44

- | | | | |
|---|-------------|--|------|
| 8 | Stanza VIII | <i>Jesus, who is truly the Christ and also our God</i> | 4:20 |
| 9 | Stanza IX | <i>Receive, then, O Holy Lady</i> | 3:25 |

FOURTH MOVEMENT

13:48

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------|--|------|
| 10 | Stanza X | <i>The Magi hastened at once into the inner room</i> | 2:54 |
| 11 | Stanza XI | <i>"I will tell you," said Mary to the Magi</i> | 2:18 |
| 12 | Stanza XXII | <i>Now when She who is blameless saw the Magi</i> | 3:07 |
| 13 | Stanza XXIV (Epilogue) | <i>Save the world, O our Savior</i> | 5:30 |

RICHARD TOENSING

NEW ORTHODOX CHRISTMAS CAROLS FOR THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

14	O Nations, Let Us Now Prepare	2:16
15	Isaiah, As He Watched By Night	1:35
16	In Olden Days	1:45
17	What Shall We Call You	2:01
18	Now hear, O Bethlehem	2:11
19	The Virgin, as was Said of Old	1:12
20	O Let Creation All Rejoice	1:35
21	Now Christ is Born Upon the Earth	1:55
22	The Rod of Jesse's Root has Bloomed	2:16
23	The Shepherds in the Fields	2:08
24	Once Sorrow had Silenced Zion's Harps	2:07
25	Make Glad, You Righteous	2:13

TOTAL TIME: 62:34

Musical scores for these and other carols by Richard Toensing
may be found at www.antiochian.org/sacredmusic/
or www.richardtoensing.com

CAPPELLA ROMANA

ALEXANDER LINGAS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

SOPRANO

Stephanie Kramer*
Gayle Neuman*
Maria Karlin
Catherine
van der Salm*
Linda Tsatsanis
Melanie
Downie Zupan

ALTO

Kristen Buhler
Virginia Hancock
Heather Roszczyk
Tuesday Rupp*
Amy Russell*
Wendy Steele*

TENOR

Stephen Marc
Beaudoin
Daniel A. Burnett*
Brian Francis*
Leslie W. Green*
Mark Powell*
Cahen Taylor

BASS

Aaron Cain*
Ben Kinkley*
David Krueger*
Jim Rose
Paul Sadilek
Adam Steele*

SOLOISTS IN THE KONTAKION

The Theotokos (The Mother of God): LeaAnne DenBeste, *soprano**

The Christ: Kari Ferguson, *treble soprano* and Mark Powell, *baritone*

The Magi: Blake Applegate, *tenor*, Aaron Cain, *baritone*,* and David Stutz, *bass*

*SEMI-CHORUS FOR THE CAROLS

SOLOISTS IN THE CAROLS

“What Shall We Call You”

Stephanie Kramer, Wendy Steele, Brian Francis, Adam Steele

“Now Hear, O Bethlehem”

Gayle Neuman, Daniel Burnett

“The Shepherds in the Fields”

Stephanie Kramer, Tuesday Rupp, Leslie Green, David Krueger

KONTAKION ON THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

BY RICHARD TOENSING

THE TEXT

I first discovered the wonderful Kontakia (lengthy chanted sermons in verse) of St. Romanos in Archimandrite Ephrem Lash's publication (in translation) *Kontakia on the Life of Christ* (Harper Collins, 1994). Reading the Nativity Kontakion in English spurred me on to study the Greek text, which I found at the University of Colorado Library. Even a cursory analysis of the formal structure of the Greek text was enough to convince me that I was planning to set the words of a poet of uncommon merit, and I proceeded with a mixture of delight, awe, and reverence, which I can only hope that my music reflects.

When I began work on the *Kontakion on the Nativity of Christ: A Choral Concerto*, I expected to set Archimandrite Ephrem's translation of the Nativity Kontakion; but I could not make it "sing" in any way that satisfied me. So I had the Kontakion re-translated. Darrin Morkunas provided me with a literal translation from the Greek. I then took that literal translation and set it into poetic form. Fr. David Mustian of St. Luke Orthodox Church graciously checked the translation for theological accuracy, but any errors are mine alone.

St. Romanos' original Kontakion is twenty-four stanzas long. For the sake of dramatic

considerations, the present version is abridged to include the Proïmion (prelude) and twelve stanzas.

THE MUSIC

The choral concerto as a musical genre arose in 17th- and 18th-century Russia, resulting from the introduction of Western European styles of polyphonic choral writing best known to modern audiences through the music of Heinrich Schütz and the Gabriellis. Even the beginning efforts, by composers such as Nikolay Diletsky (c.1630–after 1680) and Vasily Titov (c. 1650–c. 1715), were fairly long works, often for eight-part chorus; Titov also wrote even larger concerti for multiple choirs. The succeeding generation of composers—Maxim Berezhovsky (c.1745–1777), Dmitry Bortniansky (1751–1825), Artemy Vedel (1767–1808), and others—developed the choral concerto into a large-scale work of multiple movements (usually four), incorporating all the elements of the concerted style: soloists vs. tutti, and contrasts in dynamics, texture, tempo, and mood. Baroque composers



of sacred choral concerti frequently set liturgical hymns, but their successors generally favored texts (often drawn from the Psalms) that were not part of the established order of Orthodox worship. These later paraliturgical concerti were sung for spiritual edification not only in secular venues, but also in churches before and after services. Most notoriously, they even frequently displaced the proper psalmody for the reception of Holy Communion at the Divine Liturgy.

The tradition of the choral concerto as a large, sacred, para-liturgical form has continued up to the present day with works by composers such as Sergei Rachmaninoff and Alfred Schnittke. My *Kontakion on the Nativity of Christ* follows in the footsteps of that tradition, although the Proimion and the first stanza of the text are sung liturgically in contemporary practice, and have been for centuries.

The Kontakion for the Nativity of Christ is appointed by Orthodox tradition to be sung in Mode (Tone) 3. In keeping with that tradition, I have used the melodic formulas of the Russian “Greek” chant version of Mode 3 (which seems, to Western ears, to oscillate irregularly between G Major and E minor) as the basis for my setting of the Kontakion. Because the musical resources of Mode 3 are rather limited (essentially four phrases which repeat in a specified order, plus a cadential phrase), I was presented with a challenge at the outset: how to generate musical interest from limited material to cover a large span of time; unity was not the issue—variety was. I decided to use the Mode 3 formulas as a kind of structural skeleton, but to

interpolate original material freely, material that is more or less closely related to the formulas. As Mode 3 is modal and diatonic, so is the music for the Kontakion. Chromaticism is rare, and when it does appear it is used to color the prevailing diatonic musical language.

I decided from the beginning to write a work for soloists and two four-part choirs. The choice of soloists was dictated by the text: St. Romanos gives extensive utterances to the Virgin and to the three Magi. The utterances of Christ are less extensive, but obviously crucial to the whole. The Orthodox have a long tradition of antiphonal double-choir singing, with a choir placed on either side of the church. Such an arrangement presents obvious musico-dramatic possibilities that have enthralled me ever since I first sang a double-choir work in college. They fascinate me still.

Because of the length of the text, the *Choral Concerto* is divided into four movements. The first movement sets the Proimion (which may be sung alone, and without the soloists) and the first three stanzas of the Kontakion, and is centered on G. The mood is spacious and serene, rising occasionally to moments of ecstasy, particularly on the words “He who from eternity is God.” The second movement sets stanzas four, six, and seven, and is characterized both by a quicker tempo and



extensive dialogues between the Virgin and the Magi. The music is centered primarily on D. The third movement (stanzas eight and nine) marked “Serene and calm” is centered on C. The person of Christ, sung simultaneously by the treble and a baritone (symbolizing both Christ’s divine and human nature), dominates this section; the chorus essentially acts as a “frame” for the musical utterances of the soloists. The fourth movement

(stanzas ten, eleven, and twenty-two) begins on G but descends through F-sharp to E (the Epilogue). In this movement are recapitulated many of the elements of the preceding movements: soaring solos by the Virgin, trios sung by the Magi, and chant-like choral passages. The Epilogue ends the work, emphasizing the serene and joyous quality which has permeated the whole.

NEW ORTHODOX CAROLS FOR THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

The Carols had their genesis in the summer of 2003 when Michael Farrow, Vice-Chairman of the Sacred Music Department of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese, suggested that I “write some carols for the Antiochians—the Carpathians have theirs, the Ukrainians have theirs, but the Antiochians have none.” I agreed to try my hand at it, and in September received a bulky envelope from Michael containing the texts of traditional Orthodox hymnody for the Advent-Nativity season set to meter and rhyme by Fr. Jack Sparks. As I read through Fr. Jack’s texts I immediately saw a number that I knew I had to set; and late 2003 through mid-2005 saw me pouring out carols, sometimes as many as three per week. There are now over two dozen carols, twelve of which are recorded here.

In writing the carols, I tried for that freshness and easy singability that seems to me to typify all good

carols; and like all carols everywhere, they vary widely in mood, from meditative to dancelike. Some of them are based on the traditional modes of Greek-Byzantine chant (“O nations, let us now prepare” and “Once sorrow had silenced Zion’s harps”); others sound more “Western.”

Since their introduction at the Sacred Music Institute of the Antiochian Archdiocese in July, 2005, the *New Orthodox Carols for the Nativity of Christ* have gradually been making their way, growing in popularity both in the US and abroad.

—Richard Toensing



BYZANTINE CHRISTMAS HYMNS

LITURGICAL CONTEXTS

Orthodox Christians possess a rich inheritance of hymns for Christmas, a feast designated “the Nativity according to the flesh of our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ” in the service books of the modern Byzantine rite. With the onset of the pre-Christmas fast in late November, these hymns are gradually introduced into the Church’s daily round of common prayer (the cycle of services beginning each day with vespers and known collectively as the “Divine Office” or “Liturgy of the Hours”). Some hymns are explicitly “pre-festal” (*proeortia*), while others speak directly to the events of Christmas Day.

The number of preparatory hymns sung in Byzantine services multiplies during the weeks preceding December 25 as the fast becomes more intense. On the two Sundays before Christmas when the Orthodox Church recalls the Old Testament lineage of Christ, the usual Sunday hymns from the cycle of the eight musical modes (*Octoechos*) honoring Jesus’ Resurrection are supplemented by a roughly equal number of pre-Christmas texts. Preparation for the Nativity becomes paramount in daily prayer beginning on December 20, when services begin to imitate those of Holy Week. This is most apparent on December 24, which features “Royal Hours”—unusually elaborate versions of the minor daily offices of the First, Third, Sixth, and Ninth Hours—paralleling those sung on Good Friday.

Worship for the feast itself begins with the evening office of vespers on December 24. As on the eves of Easter and Theophany (January 6, the feast of Christ’s Baptism in the Jordan), the normal order of this service is augmented by joyful hymns, a sequence of prophetic readings from the Old Testament, ancient psalmodic responsories, and the celebration of the eucharistic Divine Liturgy of St. Basil. After an interval, worship resumes with a vigil consisting of either Great Compline or (in most modern Greek parochial usages) the Midnight Office, followed by the dawn service of Orthros (equivalent to the Matins and Lauds in the Roman rite). On Christmas day, Orthros is centered on the singing of a pair of “kanons” (described below) written by two great eighth-century “melodists” (poet-composers), St. John of Damascus and St. Kosmas of Jerusalem. The liturgical celebration of Christmas climaxes with the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, during which a number of hymns from the preceding vespers and vigil are repeated.

Regardless of the services in which they are sung, most Byzantine Christmas hymns share a common perspective on the events that occurred over two thousand years ago in Bethlehem. Their authors did not hesitate to dwell on the dramatic and picturesque elements of the Christmas story as related in the Gospels: the baby in a manger, the shepherds watching their flocks by night, the adoration of the Magi, and so on. At the same time, however, they

avoided sentimentality by consistently placing these details within the wider context of God's Incarnation as a human being. Jesus, they remind us, is not only a little baby nursed by his mother in a stable, but also the second person of the Trinity who willingly emptied himself into his material creation:

Today is born of a Virgin, he who holds creation
in the hollow of his hand.

As a mortal he is wrapped in swaddling rags, he
who in his being cannot be handled.

God lies in a manger, who of old established the
heavens in the beginning...

—*Sticheron for the Ninth Royal Hour*
(trans. Archimandrite Ephrem)

HYMNS FOR CONSTANTINOPLE, JERUSALEM, AND AMERICA

The hymns newly set for mixed chorus by Richard Toensing on the present disc are drawn from what were originally two distinct regional traditions of Byzantine worship, namely those of Constantinople and Jerusalem. Between the ninth and the fifteenth centuries, monks and urban clergy juxtaposed ele-

ments of these two traditions in various configurations as part of an ongoing process of synthesis that resulted in the creation of the modern Byzantine rite. St. Theodore and his brethren at the Stoudios monastery in Constantinople began this process within the context of their struggles to defend the veneration of icons, leaving its completion to the hesychast monks of Mount Athos.¹ Even today, however, individual hymns still bear marks of their original liturgical contexts.

St. Romanos and the Kontakion

Until its capture and sack in 1204 by the armies of the Fourth Crusade, the Great Church of Hagia Sophia and other secular basilicas in Constantinople maintained a form of daily prayer known popularly as the “Sung Office” (*asmatike akolouthia*). The Sung Office was textually conservative, consisting mainly of biblical psalms and canticles supplemented by refrains that, in many cases, were originally em-

1 Emerging within late Byzantine monasticism, hesychasm (*lit.* “quietude”) was a spiritual movement that insisted on the active presence of God in material creation through his divine energies, which were held to be distinct from his utterly transcendent and unknowable essence. This movement was partially inspired by ascetics who repeated the Jesus Prayer (“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me [a sinner]”) as an aid to their cultivation of inner stillness, a contemplative state they viewed as helpful for the ready apprehension of God’s energies.



ployed to facilitate congregational participation. It is therefore not coincidental that the one major form of hymnody native to Constantinople, a metrical homily known as the **kontakion**, employs a refrain after each of its sections. Announced by one or more metrically independent prefaces (*proimia* or *koukoulia*), the refrain then punctuates the hymn's series of metrically identical stanzas (*oikoi*), the first letters of which normally form an acrostic. Today these kontakia are almost always reduced to their prologues, except at Orthros when a single oikos is also normally heard. The outstanding exception is the anonymous *Akathistos Hymn* to the Mother of God, all twenty-four stanzas of which remain in common use (and are sung by Cappella Romana in its previous recording of a contemporary setting by Ivan Moody).

St. Romanos the Melodist, the Orthodox Church's patron saint of liturgical music, was the greatest composer of kontakia. Born in Emesa (now Homs), Syria during the late 5th century, he was ordained a deacon in Beirut before moving to Constantinople, where he served at a church dedicated to the Mother of God in the city's Kyros quarter. According to tradition, the Virgin Mary appeared to St. Romanos during an all-night vigil (*pannychis*) and offered him a scroll to swallow. Upon doing so, he ascended the ambo and began to chant his Christmas kontakion "Today the Virgin." Containing episodes of dialogue between Christ, his mother, and the magi, this hymn

recounts and explains the meaning of the Christmas story in a lively and undoubtedly populist form of Greek.

After almost a millennium of circulating only in highly abbreviated versions, the full texts of St. Romanos' kontakia are now widely available both in their original Byzantine Greek and in modern translations. Since no syllabic chant settings of oikoi survive from the Middle Ages, the musical recovery of these hymns has been left by default to modern composers. A pioneering effort was Hilding Rosenberg's *Julhymn av Romanus* for soloists, narrator, chorus, and orchestra of 1941, a setting of St. Romanos' Christmas homily "Today the Virgin" in a Swedish adaptation by Hjalmar Gullberg. Richard Toensing sets approximately half of the same hymn in his *Choral Concerto* for unaccompanied double choir and soloists, the vibrant musical idiom of which draws upon Slavic and Western traditions of liturgical music.

From Jerusalem to America

The twelve **New Orthodox Carols for the Nativity of Christ** on this disc were adapted from Byzantine hymns that differ from the metrical homilies of St. Romanos in a number of respects. Whereas kontakia were written for performance between the services of popular vigils in Constantinople and then suffered radical shortening after being removed from their original context, the Greek models for the *Carols* have remained in use since they were composed for insertion among the psalms and canticles of the Palestinian *Horologion*. This "Book



of the Hours” became the basis for virtually all daily prayer in the modern Orthodox Church, while its accompanying hymns are today codified into fifteen volumes. Although not literally homiletic in the sense of St. Romanos’ kontakia, these hymns make biblical psalmody in the Palestinian rite a vehicle not only for praise and supplication, but also for doctrinally rigorous scriptural exegesis and other forms of teaching. Its overall effect in worship is consistent with the views of St. Basil the Great (ca. 330–79):

What did the Holy Spirit do when he saw that the human race was not led easily to virtue, and that due to our penchant for pleasure we gave little heed to an upright life? He mixed sweetness of melody with doctrine so that inadvertently we would absorb the benefit of the words through gentleness and ease of hearing, just as clever physicians frequently smear the cup with honey when giving the fastidious some rather bitter medicine to drink.

—*Homily on Psalm 1* (trans. James McKinnon)

Some hymns for the Palestinian Divine Office are anonymous, but many others are by melodists and hymnographers whose names are found either in manuscripts alongside their works or embedded in the acrostics of their longer texts. Palestinian hymnody originated in worship at Jerusalem’s cathedral of the Holy Sepulchre during the fifth and sixth centuries. Melodists associated with both Jerusalem and its nearby monastery of St. Sabas vastly expanded these hymnodic repertoires during the seventh and eighth centuries with longer and more complex compositions. Following the adoption



of the Palestinian Divine Office by the Constantinopolitan monks of Stoudios at the beginning of the ninth century, composers and hymnographers working throughout the Byzantine Empire gradually completed the repertoires of hymns sung today in the Orthodox Church.

Hymns for the services of the Horologion possess different names according to their form and function. Troparion is a generic term for a hymn, while an apolytikion is a troparion normally sung (at least the first time) at the dismissal (*apolyxis*) of a service. Stichera (*sing.* sticheron) are hymns attached to the verses (*stichoi*) of the *Horologion*’s fixed morning and evening psalms. Their texts may possess a unique melody (*idiomelon*) or be *prosomoia* (a technical term equivalent to the Western “contrafacta”) designed to fit the tune of a well-known model hymn (*automelon*). Model melodies play an especially important role in kanons, the multi-stanza poems designed to accompany the nine fixed biblical canticles of Palestinian morning prayer, therefore consisting of up to nine “odes.” Each ode of a kanon features a model stanza (*heirmos*) followed by one or more metrically identical troparia.

Although undoubtedly poetic, only in exceptional cases—for example, the Iambic kanons of St. John of Damascus—do medieval Greek hymns possess quantitative meter or rhyme. Orthodox hymnography that was created to be sung as Byzantine chant is therefore structurally incompatible with hymn sing-

ing as practiced in the modern West. The texts of the twelve carols on the present disc bridge this gap by recasting Byzantine Christmas hymns in poetic Western forms. The Rev. Dr. Jack Sparks originally made these adaptations to meet an urgent pastoral need, namely that of former evangelical Protestants to assimilate the repertoires of Byzantine hymnography through the medium of their own musical traditions. This ultimately proved to be a musical way station for most members of the Evangelical Orthodox Church, whose reception into canonical

Orthodoxy has been followed by their embrace of more traditional forms of Orthodox liturgical singing. Nevertheless, since the musical acculturation of American Orthodoxy remains very much a work in progress, Richard Toensing's rediscovery of Fr. Sparks' metrical adaptations of Byzantine hymns is an intriguing development. Only through a series of many such steps will Orthodox in the West succeed in eventually creating local traditions of liturgical music comparable to those of the Orthodox East.

—Alexander Lingas



TEXTS: KONTAKION ON THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

St. Romanos the Melodist
(translated, Darrin Morkunas;
poeticized, Richard Toensing)

PROΪMION

The Virgin gives birth today to the One above all
being
And the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable;
Angels give glory with shepherds,
And the Magi journey with a star;
Because for us now is born
A little child, He who from eternity is God.

STANZA I

Bethlehem has opened Eden, come and let us see;
We have found delight in secret, let us receive
The things of paradise within the cave.

For a root unwatered, flowering forgiveness, has
appeared,
And discovered is the undug well
Where David once had longed to drink;
For the Virgin has brought forth a Babe,
Quenching at once both Adam's and David's thirst;
So let us hasten there where has been born
A little child, He who from eternity is God.

STANZA II

The Father of the Mother by intent became her Son,
The Savior of new-born babes as a new-born lay in
the manger.
As she who bore him looks at him she says:
"Tell me, my child, how were you sown, or how did
you grow within me?
I see you, my flesh and blood, and marvel,

For I suckle you, and have not married,
I see you amidst the swaddling-clothes.
But yet my virginity is still preserved,
For you guarded it when it pleased you to be born
A little child, He who from eternity is God."

STANZA III

"O High King, what is there for you among the
beggars?
O Maker of Heaven, why did you come to earthen
vessels?
Did you love the cave or enjoy the manger?
Behold, there is no place for your servant in the inn.
There is no place, not even a cave,
For it too was borrowed from another.
And when Sara brought forth her new-born son
A vast land she received, but I, a den.
I used a cave, wherein you settled willingly,
A little child, He who from eternity is God."

STANZA IV

As she says such things in the presence of the
Ineffable
And prays to Him who knows all that is unseen,
She hears the Magi seeking the new-born Babe.
And at once she cries aloud, "Why did you set out?"
They answer: "Why have you brought forth
A young child such as this?
Who is your father, who is your mother
That you became mother and nurse of a fatherless
son?
Seeing his star we know that he is revealed as
A little child, He who from eternity is God."

STANZA VI

As Mary heard all of these astonishing words
She bowed down and worshipped Him who came
from her womb
And crying out she said, "Great, O my child,
Great are all the things that you have done for me in
my poverty.
For behold, Magi seek you out,
Kings coming from the East
Seek to look upon your face.
The rich among your people pray to see you.
For truly your people are those who know you to be
A little child, He who from eternity is God."

STANZA VII

"Since they are your people, O Child, bid them come
Under your protection, so that they may see
Riches in poverty, honor in beggary,
You I have as glory and pride; therefore I am not
ashamed,
You are the grace and dignity
Of my dwelling and of me. Bid them enter.
My poverty does not trouble me.
For you are my treasure, you whom kings would see,
For kings and Magi have known you to be
revealed as
A little child, He who from eternity is God."

STANZA VIII

Jesus, who is truly the Christ and also our God
Secretly understood his mother's intent and said
"Lead in those whom I led by my word
For my word is that which has shone on those who
seek after me.

To the senses it is a shining star;
But to the mind it is a power.
It went with the Magi as my servant
And it remains, serving its purpose still,
Its rays of light shining where has been born
A little child, He who from eternity is God."

STANZA IX

"Receive, then, O Holy Lady, receive those who
received me,
For I am with them just as I am cradled in your
arms.
I am with you, I also came with them."
She opens the door and receives the company of
Magi,
She, the unopened, opens the door,
The gate which only Christ has crossed
Having been opened, she opens the door,
Still preserving the treasure of her purity,
She opens the door, from whom a Door was
begotten:
A little child, He who from eternity is God.

STANZA X

The Magi hastened at once into the inner room
And seeing Christ, they trembled, for they also saw
His mother there together with her betrothed.
And with fear they said: "Has this son no lineage?
How, O Virgin, do we see
Your betrothed within your house?
You conceived without disgrace
Let not Joseph's living with you be blamed
For malicious people seek the birthplace of
A little child, He who from eternity is God."

STANZA XI

"I will tell you," said Mary to the Magi,
"Why Joseph is staying here together with me in
my house:
To confute all who slander me;
For he will tell all the things he has heard
concerning my child.
Asleep he heard a holy angel
Telling him how I conceived.
A fiery being told him by night
of all the things which were distressing him.
Thus Joseph dwells with me to show that here is
A little child, He who from eternity is God."

STANZA XXII

Now when She who is blameless saw the Magi
bringing
New and radiant gifts in their hands, bowing in
worship
A star showing Him, shepherds proclaiming Him,
She prayed to the Lord and Creator of all and said:
"Receive, O Child, a trinity of gifts,
And grant her who bore you three requests.
I pray to you on behalf of the seasons,
For the fruits of the earth and for all who dwell
therein.
Be reconciled to all through me who bore you
A little child, He who from eternity is God."

STANZA XXIV (EPILOGUE)

"Save the world, O our Savior — for this you came
in grace.
Set everything aright. For this you made grace shine
On me, on the Magi, and on all creation.

For behold, the Magi, to whom you revealed the
light of your face
Prostrate before you, offering gifts,
Useful, beautiful, eagerly sought.
All these I need, since I am about

To flee to Egypt with you and on your account,
O my Guide, my Son, my Creator, and my
Redeemer,
A little child, He who from eternity is God."

TEXTS: NEW ORTHODOX CAROLS FOR THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

O Nations, Let Us Now Prepare

O nations, let us now prepare,
And lay aside all earthly care,
To celebrate the birth of Christ
With all the worthy, good, and wise.

Our minds lift up to Bethlehem,
And with our consciences ascend,
May we within our hearts behold
The Virgin coming through the cold.

For Mary now draws near the cave,
To give birth there to Him who saves;
Our God and holy Lord of all,
The mighty Savior of our souls.

And Joseph all these things beheld,
But thought a human child he held,
Not knowing what would later come,
Through this, the Virgin Mary's Son.

But then, in later years amazed,
Good Joseph, through His works of grace,

Knew Jesus as the Lord of all,
Who grants great mercy to our souls.

*Sticheron by Anatolios sung at Vespers during the
Lamplighting Psalms on December 20; also sung
(in Greek use) as the first Sticheron Apostichon at
the Vespers of December 24
Adapted, Fr. Jack Sparks*

Isaiah, as He Watched by Night

Isaiah, as he watched by night,
Beheld the everlasting Light
That knows no evening poverty,
The Light of Your Theophany,
That came to pass through tender love,
To us from You, O Christ above.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

Isaiah cried aloud, "Behold,
A Virgin shall conceive and hold
The Word Incarnate in her womb,
From which, a Baby, He shall come,
And earth with all her family

Shall then rejoice exceedingly.”
Lord, have mercy upon us.

*1st Kanon for the Orthros of December 24 (sung
the previous evening at Compline in Slav use)*

Ode V, Heirmos

Adapted, Fr. Jack Sparks, altered, R.T.

In Olden Days

In olden days pure Mary came
To be enrolled in Bethlehem,
With Joseph, now a quite old man,
Thus travelled they, the two of them.

For Mary was of David's seed,
And in her womb, of no man's seed,
She carried there the holy Lamb,
The Son of God, now Son of Man.

But when the time of birth drew near,
No place had they in village near;
The cave to Mary did appear,
A palace full of homely cheer.

And in the cave shall Christ be born,
For Him, the mystic curtain torn,
The likeness that had suffered fall,
Now He shall raise to save us all.

Vespers of December 24

Apolytikion

Adapted, Fr. Jack Sparks

What Shall We Call You

What shall we call you, full of Grace?
Shall “Heaven” be your name?
For shining forth from You has come
The righteous Son, the same.

Or shall we name you “Paradise”
For God's immortal Flow'r?
Or shall “the Virgin” be your name?
All-pure by God's own pow'r.

“Pure Mother” shall we call you then,
Who held the holy Son?
O pray to Him, the God of all,
To save us every one.

First Royal Hour, Christmas Eve

Theotokion after the Troparion

Adapted, Fr. Jack Sparks

Now hear, O Bethlehem

Now hear, O Bethlehem, the call,
For Eden opens wide for all;
Prepare, O Ephrata, for the birth,
The Tree of Life has blossomed forth.
For to a cave the Virgin comes,
A Paradise is now her womb,
In which is planted, all-divine,
The plant from which we all shall dine.

For eating from the Plant is life,
And not the death that Adam died;

For Christ will now be born for all,
To save the race from Adam's fall.
So hear, O Bethlehem, the call,
And Eden, open wide for all,
And glorify this holy birth,
Whereby our Lord has come to earth.

Vespers, December 20–23

Apolytikion

Adapted, Fr. Jack Sparks

Altered, Richard Toensing

The Virgin, as was Said of Old

The Virgin, as was said of old,
In visions ancient prophets told,
Has now conceived as God had planned,
And brought forth God on earth made man.
So let us praise the Virgin mild,
Who us to God has reconciled,
And let us sinners sing her praise,
The Theotokos' honor raise.

Orthros, Christmas Day

Kanon by Kosmas, Ode V, Troparion II

Adapted, Fr. Jack Sparks



O Let Creation All Rejoice

O let creation all rejoice,
And greatly raise its hymns of joys,
For our Creator makes Himself
To be created, here to dwell.

And He who was before all things,
To earth Himself as human brings,
Our God on earth in flesh revealed,
Almighty glory there concealed.

O let the Magi come to Him
And travel far to Bethlehem,
And let the shepherds clap their hands,
At wonder come to earthly lands.

O let our humble, mortal race
Rejoice in His immortal grace,
And join the angel hosts who sing,
Their praises to the Savior bring.

*1st Kanon for the Orthros of December 24 (sung
the previous evening at Compline in Slav use)*

Ode IX, Troparion III

Adapted, Fr. Jack Sparks

Now Christ is Born Upon the Earth

Now Christ is born upon the earth,
Come, sing His glory bright!
From heaven Christ has come by birth,
Come, meet Him in the light!
Yes, Christ is on the earth today,

Lord, be exalted high!
Let all the earth in every way
Lift up the joyful cry:

Refrain: Christ is born, Christ is born, glorify Him!

Come, sing your praises to the Lord,
For He is glorified!
Come, sing with joy forevermore,
For He is magnified!
Yes, Christ is on the earth today,
Lord, be exalted high!
Let all the earth in every way
Lift up the joyful cry:
Refrain

*Orthros, Christmas Day
Kanon by Kosmas, Ode I, Heirmos
Adapted, Fr. Jack Sparks*

The Rod of Jesse's Root has Bloomed

The rod of Jesse's root has bloomed,
Has budded from a Virgin's womb;
For you have come, O Christ our Lord,
All-praised and blest and all-adored.

For from the mount of shadow dark,
You come as from a holy ark,
Incarnate of a Virgin Maid
O Lord of glory, human made.

O immaterial, spiritual One,
The One-begotten God the Son,

All glory to your might, O Lord,
All glory, Christ, the all-adored.

*Orthros, Christmas Day
Kanon by Kosmas, Ode IV, Heirmos
Adapted, Fr. Jack Sparks*

The Shepherds in the Fields

The shepherds in the fields received,
A vision of the light revealed,
And terrified, were filled with fright,
At such a wondrous, holy sight.

Refrain: Christ is born, Christ is born, glorify Him!

The glory of the Master shone,
And all around them night had flown;
An angel cried, the silence torn,
“Give praise, for Christ the Lord is born!”
Refrain

“Sing praise unto the God of all,
Who comes to make creation whole,
O God, our precious fathers knew,
All-blest and holy, Lord are You.”
Refrain

*Orthros, Christmas Day
Kanon by Kosmas
Ode VII, Troparion I
Adapted, Fr. Jack Sparks*

Once Sorrow had Silenced Zion's Harps

Once sorrow had silenced Zion's harps,
Whose children kept themselves apart,
Among the strangers did not sing,
Nor hymns of joyful praises bring.

But shining forth in Bethlehem,
The Lord destroys all Babylon.
Her error and her music there,
Releasing Zion's praises there.

So let us lift our song of praise,
And everyone our voices raise,
"Let all creation praise the Lord,
Exalting Him forevermore."

Orthros, Christmas Day
Canon by Kosmas
Ode VIII, Troparia II and III
Adapted, Fr. Jack Sparks

Make Glad, You Righteous

Make glad, you righteous, and rejoice,
And heavens, mountains, dance for joy;
For Christ is born on earth today,
And angels sing in bright array:

Refrain: Christ is born, Christ is born, glorify Him!

Now like the holy Cherubim,
The Virgin makes a throne for Him,

And at her bosom carries God,
Made flesh to dwell on earthly sod.
Refrain

The shepherds glorify the Child
And kneel before His Mother mild;
The Magi offer gifts to Him,
The Master born in Bethlehem.
Refrain

The angels sing their praises high,
And lift a glad rejoicing cry,
O Lord, past thought and knowing, too,
All glory ever be to You.
Refrain

Orthros, Christmas Day
Sticheron 1 for Lauds (Pss. 148–50)
By Andrew of Jerusalem
Adapted, Fr. Jack Sparks



RICHARD TOENSING

Richard Toensing's compositions span a variety of styles, from the gestural, free atonal work of the sixties and seventies to a renewed interest in various



forms of diatonic music in more recent years. He has written numerous works for chorus, chamber ensembles in various genres, and for large ensembles.

Recognizing that he has traveled through the atonal revolution, Toensing is now at home

with the stability of modal/tonal writing, which serves for him as an analog for the stability of Orthodox theology. And it is that theology, Toensing believes, that satisfies humanity's most deeply felt spiritual needs.

In all of Toensing's works, a listener is most struck by the transparency of sound. By placing but a single idea in each register, Toensing achieves what many composers have attempted but few (Berio, Bach, Machaut, and Mozart come to mind) have accomplished: a sparkling clarity of parts.

Born in Saint Paul, Minnesota in 1940, and raised in the Lutheran faith, Richard Toensing converted to the Eastern Orthodox Church in 1997, the end of a long journey begun when he was a teenager. Initially drawn to the Eastern arm of Christianity through its holy art—the gold-leafed icons of Byzantium and the sonorous music of the Russian church—

Toensing early became fascinated with Orthodoxy's rich traditions, centuries-long continuity and, ultimately, its teachings.

The Kontakion on the Nativity of Christ, written for Cappella Romana in 2007, is the most Orthodox of all Toensing's works. The traditional tonal formulas of the Russian "Greek" chant, the mystical nature of St. Romanos' text, at once both intimate and powerful, and the Orthodox tradition of antiphonal double choir writing combine with 21st-century choral textures to create a deeply felt work rooted in the tradition, and yet new in many significant ways.

Toensing's earlier major choral work, *Responsoria*, composed in 1995 before his conversion to the Eastern Church, perhaps represents the composer's own symbolic bridge spanning the thousand-year schism between Latin and Byzantine churches.

Responsoria is based on the three books of chanted Roman Catholic prayer services for Holy Week. These responsorial texts have been set by several composers, most notably the 16th-century madrigal writer Gesualdo, whose setting inspired Toensing's *Responsoria*.

Toensing has won numerous awards for composition, including the Joseph H. Bearnes Prize from Columbia University, two BMI student composer awards, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and a commission from the National Endowment for the Arts. He has been a MacDowell Colony Fellow three times. He received his B. Mus. degree with honors from St. Olaf College and his M.M. and D.M.A. degrees from the University of Michigan, where he studied with Ross Lee Finney and Leslie Bassett.

Toensing held an academic appointment at Upsala College in New Jersey prior to accepting a position at the University of Colorado in Boulder, where he served as a professor of composition and as the Director of the University's Electronic Music Studio, New Music Festival, and New Music Ensemble. He served as Chair of the Composition/Theory Faculty at Colorado from 1984 to 2001. Toensing makes his home near Boulder, Colorado.



Its performances “like jeweled light flooding the space” (Los Angeles Times), **Cappella Romana** is a vocal chamber 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. Founded in 1991, Cappella Romana's 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. Each program in some way reflects the musical, cultural and spiritual heritage of this ecumenical vision.

Flexible in size according to the demands of the repertory, Cappella Romana is one of the Pacific Northwest's few professional chamber vocal ensembles. It has a special commitment to mastering the Byzantine and Slavic repertoires in their original languages, thereby making accessible to the general public two great musical traditions that are little known in the West. Leading scholars have supplied the group with their latest discoveries, while its music director has prepared a number of the ensemble's performing editions from original sources. In the field of contemporary music, Cappella Romana has taken a leading role in bringing to West Coast audiences the works of such European composers as Michael Adamis, Ivan Moody, Arvo Pärt, and John Tavener, as well as promoting the work of North Americans such as Fr. Sergei Glagolev, Christos Hatzis, Robert Kyr, Peter Michaelides, and Tikey Zes.

The ensemble presents annual concert series in Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington. Critics have consistently praised these for their unusual and innovative programming, including numerous world and American premieres. The group has also frequently collaborated with such artists as conductor Paul Hillier, chant-specialist Ioannis Arvanitis, and composer Ivan Moody.

Cappella Romana tours regularly and made its European début at the 2004 Byzantine Festival in London with concerts at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, St. Paul's Cathedral, and the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of St. Sophia. The same year the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York presented the ensemble and released its CD *Music of Byzantium* for the exhibit *Byzantium: Faith and*

Power 1261–1557. The J. Paul Getty Center has presented Cappella Romana twice, commissioning a newly researched program of Sinaïte chants for the exhibit *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground: Icons from Sinai*. Other appearances include concerts for such academic institutions as Princeton, Yale, and the Pontificio Istituto Orientale (Rome), in addition to music festivals in Canada, Ireland, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the USA.

Cappella Romana has previously released ten other compact discs: *Tikey Zes Choral Works* and *When Augustus Reignèd* (Gagliano Records); *The Akáthistos Hymn* by Ivan Moody, *Epiphany: Medieval Byzantine Chant*, and *Gothic Pipes: The Earliest Organ Music* (Gothic Records/Loft); *Music of Byzantium* (in cooperation with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, selling over 12,000 copies); *Lay Aside All Earthly Cares: Music by Fr. Sergei Glagolev, The Fall of Constantinople, Byzantium in Rome: Medieval Byzantine Chant from Grottaferrata*, and *The Divine Liturgy in English in Byzantine Chant* (CR Records).

Forthcoming recordings include *The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* in a choral setting by Peter Michaelides, *Mt. Sinai: Frontier of Byzantium* (Medieval Byzantine Chant from the Monastery of St. Catherine, Sinai), a disc of choral works of the Finnish Orthodox Church directed by Ivan Moody, and a disc of 15th-century Greek and Latin music from the island of Cyprus.

ALEXANDER LINGAS

Alexander Lingas, Cappella Romana's founder and artistic director, is currently Senior Lecturer in Music at City University in London and a Fellow of the University of Oxford's European Humanities Research Centre. He was formerly Assistant Professor of Music History at Arizona State University's School of Music. Dr. Lingas has also served as a lecturer and advisor for the Institute of Orthodox Christian Studies at the University of Cambridge.

He has received a number of academic awards, including Fulbright and Onassis grants for musical studies with Lycourgos Angelopoulos, a postdoctoral fellowship from the Canadian government for theological study under Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia, and a British Academy Postdoctoral Research Fellowship held at St. Peter's College, Oxford. During the academic year 2003–2004, Dr. Lingas lived in Princeton, New Jersey with a membership in the School of Historical Studies of the Institute for Advanced Study and as a recipient of an NEH Area Studies Fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies. In January 2004, he gave the annual Alexander Schmemmann Memorial Lecture at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in New York. His publications include articles for the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*. He is currently working on a study of Sunday Matins in the Rite of Hagia Sophia for Ashgate and a historical introduction to Byzantine Chant for Yale University Press.

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(Minneapolis, MN)

Recording Engineer: Bill Levey, Via Audio (Seattle, WA)

Editing preparation: Richard Toensing, Alexander Lingas

Digital Editor and Mastering Producer: Steve Barnett

Mastering Engineer: Preston Smith (Perfect Record, Saint Paul, MN)

Graphic design/booklet editor: Mark Powell

Photography: Photograph of Richard Toensing courtesy of the composer. Icon of the Nativity courtesy of the Monastery of St. John, Patmos.

Editions: *Kontakion on the Nativity of Christ: A Choral Concerto*, (BMI), published by Troparion Music LLC. *New Orthodox Carols for the Nativity of Christ*, Music copyright © Richard Toensing. For scores, visit www.richardtoensing.com. *The translation of the Kontakion is based upon a number of sources including the original Greek text by St. Romanos, the translation by Darrin Morkunas, and that by Archimandrite Ephrem (Lash).*

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Acknowledgements:

St. Agatha's Catholic Church, Portland, Oregon: Rev. Slider Steuernol, pastor; Michelle Wodtli, Music Director; Karen Blodgett and Gerri Ballas, Office Managers

Steve Barnett
Maria Boyer
Stephanie Kramer
Archimandrite Ephrem (Lash)
Amy Russell
Rev. Dr. Jack Sparks
Melanie West

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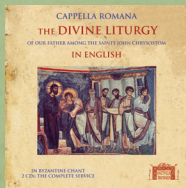
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This recording is made possible in part thanks
to a substantial grant from the
Argosy Foundation Contemporary Music Fund
and to major support from the following benefactors
to whom we are profoundly grateful:

Lee and Palmer Carlin
Barbara and Christian Finger
Thomas Higley
Amy Melina Lynn
Denise and Jerry McIntyre
Dorothy Ann Schaeff
Carol and Richard Toensing



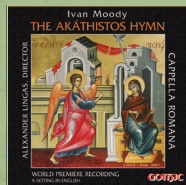
CAPPELLA ROMANA ON CD www.cappellaromana.org



The Divine Liturgy in English in Byzantine Chant
The complete service on two CDs, featuring music drawn from the most authoritative traditions of Byzantine chanting. 40-page booklet with extensive essays on liturgy and Byzantine chant.



The Fall of Constantinople
Cappella Romana's most in-demand 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.



The Akathistos Hymn
British composer (and Orthodox priest) Ivan Moody blends Byzantine chant with richly textured Russian style choruses in this 2-CD set of the hymn in English with its refrains in Greek.



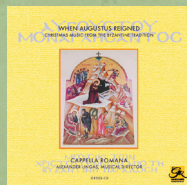
Lay Aside All Earthly Cares: Orthodox Choral Works in English
Russian-styled music in English by the visionary priest, composer, and teacher Fr. Sergei Glagolev (b. 1927). Conducted by Vladimir Morosan.



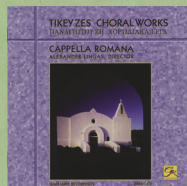
Music of Byzantium
With over 12,000 copies sold, this disc was released for the Metropolitan Museum of Art's 2004 exhibit "Byzantium: Faith and Power." Features Byzantine music from 1261 to 1557.



Byzantium in Rome: Medieval Byzantine Chant
Led by Ioannis Arvanitis, this 2-CD set bears witness to Constantinopolitan music from before the Latin conquest of 1204, as recorded at Abbey of Grottaferrata near Rome (founded 1004).



When Augustus Reign'd: Christmas Music from the Byzantine Tradition
Features a *cappella* choral works by Adamis, Michaelides, Desby, Zes, and Vergin, and medieval Byzantine chant.



Tikey Zes Choral Works
A collection of sacred and secular compositions in Greek and English by Greek-American composer, Tikey Zes. Includes his elegant choral setting of "Soma Christou."