



SUPER AUDIO CD

Multi-channel

BENEDICT
SHEEHAN
VESPERS

THE SAINT TIKHON CHOIR

BENEDICT SHEEHAN: *VESPERS* (2021)

THE SAINT TIKHON CHOIR

Benedict Sheehan, CONDUCTOR

Talia Sheehan & Zoe Turton, CHORUS MASTERS

Fotina Naumenko, SOPRANO

Helen Karloski, MEZZO-SOPRANO

Timothy Parsons, COUNTERTENOR

Paul D'Arcy, TENOR

Jamal Sarikoki, BARITONE

Michael Hawes, BARITONE

Jason Thoms, BASS

Glenn Miller, BASSO PROFUNDO

1	The Opening Psalm Ps. 103 <i>Soloists:</i> Michael Hawes, Timothy Parsons	9:08	<i>Alto Semi-Chorus:</i> Kit Emory, Amanda Jacobs, Helen Karloski	
2	Great Litany <i>Soloist:</i> Michael Hawes	5:10	<i>Tenor Semi-Chorus:</i> Daniel Burnett, David Hendrix, Mikel Hill, Anthony Maglione <i>Baritone Semi-Chorus:</i> Richard Barrett, Michael Hawes, Mark Powell	
3	Blessed is the Man <i>Soloists:</i> Eric S. Brenner, Paul D'Arcy, Michael Hawes, David Hendrix	3:00	<i>Bass Semi-Chorus:</i> Christopher Jackson, David Morrison, Jason Thoms, Thou Yang	
4	Small Litany <i>Soloist:</i> Michael Hawes	1:36	7 O Gladsome Light <i>Soloist:</i> Fotina Naumenko	4:04
5	The Lamp-Lighting Psalms Pss. 140 & 141 <i>Soloists:</i> Helen Karloski, Mark Powell <i>Soprano/Alto Semi-Chorus:</i> Sarah Tannehill Anderson, Eric S. Brenner, Tynan Davis, Photini Downie Robinson, Helen Karloski, Talia Sheehan <i>Tenor/Bass Semi-Chorus:</i> Sam Anderson, Daniel Burnett, Nathan Hodgson, Christopher Jackson, David Morrison, Mark Powell	3:25	8 The Lord is King Ps. 92 <i>Soloist:</i> Timothy Parsons	2:42
			9 Evening Prayer "Vouchsafe, O Lord"	3:30
			10 The Song of Simeon <i>Soloist:</i> Glenn Miller	5:00
			11 Interlude: The Trisagion Prayers <i>Soloists:</i> Michael Hawes, Jason Thoms	1:54
			12 Rejoice, O Virgin <i>Soloist:</i> Jamal Sarikoki	3:34
6	Stikhira of the Resurrection <i>Soloists:</i> Sarah Tannehill Anderson, Emily Yocum Black, Daniel Burnett, Paul D'Arcy, Tynan Davis, Helen Karloski, Mark Powell, Jamal Sarikoki <i>Soprano Semi-Chorus:</i> Sarah Tannehill Anderson, Emily Yocum Black, Elizabeth Frase, Fiona Gillespie <i>Mezzo Semi-Chorus:</i> Tynan Davis, Catherine Hedberg, Tabitha Lewis	10:00	13 The Closing Psalm Ps. 33 <i>Soloists:</i> Paul D'Arcy, Helen Karloski	6:17
			TOTAL	59:29

For Archimandrite Sergius,
Abbot of St. Tikhon's Monastery

A Composer's Introduction

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

—Genesis 1:1-5

“Like Rachmaninoff?”

The story of this *Vespers*—a choral setting of the evening office of the Orthodox Church—began about six years ago with a simple proposal from Fr. Sergius, abbot of St. Tikhon's Monastery and my longtime friend and employer. He asked that I write a *Vespers* based on traditional Russian chant. “Like Rachmaninoff,” he said.

I first found my way into the serious study of music as a teenager in no small part through Robert Shaw's landmark recording of Rachmaninoff's 1915 masterwork. Thus the idea of trying my hand at a Rachmaninoff-esque *Vespers* of my own had immediate appeal for me. The austere, simple,

and well-worn Russian church melodies used in the piece coupled with Rachmaninoff's gorgeous quasi-orchestral late-Romantic choral writing has always been for me—and for audiences all over the world—a truly magical combination. It has captivated me ever since I first heard it, and it continues to inspire me today. I knew I couldn't just mimic Rachmaninoff's style and approach, though, so where would my own piece come from? Where to begin?

In many ways, I see Rachmaninoff's *Vespers*¹ as standing at the crest of the whole wave of Russian ecclesiastical art and culture before the Russian Revolution, encompassing all the profound and complex beauty and mass of contradictions that is Russian Orthodoxy. His piece was arguably the crowning achievement of the work of the Moscow Synodal School, which was itself a product of nationalist movements in Russian music and culture at the end of the 19th century. The Synodal School actively engaged in parsing out a uniquely Russian voice from the myriad influences represented in the Slavic tradition as a whole—Scandinavian, Central

¹ Rachmaninoff's piece is actually properly called *All-Night Vigil* (*Всенощное Бдение*), in that it sets elements of both *Vespers* and *Matins*, the evening and morning services as combined into a single continuous unit and celebrated on Saturday evenings and on the eves of major holidays. For my piece I chose to focus exclusively on the *Vespers* portion of the service for Saturday evenings, which thus allowed me to expand my settings of psalmody and to include some of the changeable hymnography and liturgical details of *Vespers* (which Rachmaninoff omitted) without making the piece excessively long.

Asian, Bulgarian, Byzantine Greek, Ukrainian, Polish, Italian, Austro-Hungarian, French, German, and others besides. No easy task, to be sure. To my mind, the work of the Synodal School, and of Rachmaninoff in particular, was immensely successful only insofar as it attempted to *synthesize* rather than to *purify*. It accepted inherited cultural complexity as a body of riches upon which to draw rather than as a disordered mess to be regulated and purged of alien elements. Certainly many, if not most, nationalist movements in the 20th century chose purity over synthesis (as did some in the Synodal School). Therefore it's remarkable to me that Rachmaninoff and his colleagues—especially Gretchaninoff, Chesnokov, and Kastalsky—largely chose a different path. The choice between purity and synthesis is one of the most important cultural decisions facing us today with nationalism seemingly on the rise once again. Throughout the 20th century, the thirst for purity in the political sphere resulted in the tragic loss of tens of millions of lives, so with that in mind I think Rachmaninoff's vision of an artistic synthesis between East and West—and between old and new—is more relevant now than ever.

Synthesis

Synthesis, then, was my starting point. My *Vespers* is foremost a synthesis of chant with my own background and musical inheritance, a piece at once arising from the Orthodox tradition and solidly within the currents of my own life. As a son of Anglo-Irish-Scottish-French-Dutch-American converts to Eastern Orthodoxy, I'm no stranger to

the notion of synthesis. At least as it exists in this country, Orthodoxy is itself the product of synthesis, a panoply of ethnic traditions and ecclesiastical cultures that have been forced into contact with one another—and with countless other religious traditions besides—here in North America. Russian, Greek, Syrian, Lebanese, Romanian, Albanian, Ukrainian, Georgian (the list goes on), all are united primarily by a common creed and a shared (though richly varied) set of liturgical rites. The music in American Orthodox parishes naturally reflects this diversity, especially in the English-speaking congregations in which I grew up and in which I still work today. Therefore my piece can be seen as an attempt to honor and legitimize this diversity within American Orthodoxy, as well as to create an artistic vision of unity that can be expanded upon, both through my own work and the work of others.

The work of synthesis is difficult, though, both culturally and musically. Diversity is inherently complicated and can often represent a frustrating obstacle to achieving goals efficiently. However, I find that struggling for unity—in a way that leaves inherent complexity intact—ultimately renders much more satisfying solutions than those that hold to an abstract notion of unity under whose sway all complexity must either conform or be eliminated. This has become for me a governing philosophy. One of the specific ways this philosophy manifests itself musically in my *Vespers* is the frequent use of irregular-meter chant melodies. For me, finding a chant that refused to fit into either regular time-signatures or symmetrical phrase lengths was an

exciting challenge and nearly always generated interesting and unexpected musical results. Thus were born *The Opening Psalm*, *Blessed is the Man*, *Rejoice, O Virgin*, and *The Closing Psalm*, all of which are based on rhythmically knotty Russian chants from the medieval monastic tradition and none of which, to my knowledge, had ever been arranged before. If a melody wouldn't fit into a box, I let the melody create its own uniquely shaped container.

Arising out of this, I also took as paradigmatic the inherent rhythmic irregularity of the liturgical texts. Given that every word in *Vespers* (at least as presented here in English translation) is essentially blank verse or prose, rigid metrical treatment of the text seemed to me to be out of place. This is especially evident in the soloist parts in *The Opening Psalm*, *Great Litany*, and *The Trisagion Prayers*—where I went about as far as I could towards notating the actual rhythms of speech—as well as in the trio sections of *Blessed is the Man* and the semi-choruses of *The Lamp-Lighting Psalms*. Maybe it's because I'm a lifelong stutterer, and thus acutely aware of both the immense complexity and elusive beauty of speech rhythms, that I find the rhythmic patterns of the spoken word so endlessly fascinating. My love affair with rap, the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins, and Indian Konnakol (which I only recently discovered) may also have something to do with it. Whatever the reason, I chose in my *Vespers* to treat the inherent rhythmic complexity of the text as a body of musical riches to be synthesized within a larger rhythmic structure rather than as a

thing to be purified of inconsistencies and forced into regular barlines and periods. This is not to say anything against texts that are neatly metered to begin with—I love those too and will happily set them to music—but rather to say that my approach is largely one of accepting things as I find them and then seeing what arises.

Psalmody and Chiastic Structure

The core of Vespers, as of all the daily offices, is the singing of psalms. The cycle of psalms sung at appointed hours of the day establishes the fundamental rhythm of monastic services going back at least to the third century of the Christian era. Psalms are often called the “backbone” of Orthodox services. Like an actual backbone, however, they are frequently ignored in daily practice. Often in Orthodox services today, psalms may be chanted on a monotone by a solo reader, extensively abbreviated, or even omitted altogether in favor of changeable hymnography. Thus, one of my conscious goals in composing *Vespers* was to place a renewed emphasis on the singing of psalms.

Using my late father's wonderful translations, I delved into the Vespers psalms, and, in particular, into the psalms' chiastic structure. Chiastic structure is an ancient poetic device named for the Greek letter *chi* (X) and employed throughout the psalms as well as in many books of the Bible.² Loosely defined, it functions a little like a palindrome

² See Breck, *The Shape of Biblical Language: Chiasmus in the Scriptures*, SVS Press, Crestwood (1994).

where the first line of a section is mirrored by the last, the second by the second to last, and so on towards a center-point.³ According to my father, who studied and wrote about chiastic structure extensively,⁴ the center-point may not be the exact numerical middle of a psalm. He explained to me once that it is frequently offset a little towards the end (which starts sounding suspiciously like the Golden Mean to me, $\varphi = 0.618\dots$). Every psalm has a line somewhere near the middle, or a little past it, that casts light both forward and backward in the psalm. For a composer, a large-scale structural concept like this offers irresistible insights, into the formal organization of a text as well as into its layers of meaning. (Bach and Brahms, incidentally, were also famously interested in chiastic structure.) I used a chiastic approach to a significant extent in organizing the two longest movements of Vespers, *The Opening Psalm* and *The Closing Psalm*.

Once I began thinking chiasmically, though, it was hard to stop, and so it gradually became evident to me that *Vespers* itself could be organized along chiastic lines. Thus *The Opening Psalm* and the musically related *Closing Psalm*⁵ emerged to form

³ An easily-discerned example of chiasm is Psalm 67 (66 in Septuagint numbering), though there are countless others. (My father actually maintained that every psalm is chiastic in some way.)

⁴ See, for example, Sheehan, *The Shield of Psalmic Prayer*, Ancient Faith Publishing, Chesterton (2020); Chapter 5: “Chiastic and Temporal Movement in Psalms.”

⁵ I confess that I made up this title for the purposes of my chiastic scheme. This particular psalm (Ps. 34/33) is actually

the bookends of the piece, with *The Lamp-Lighting Psalms/Stikhira of the Resurrection* and *The Lord is King* surrounding the (slightly off-center) center-point of *O Gladsome Light*. Though not a psalm itself, *O Gladsome Light* (Φῶς Ἰλαρόν, *Lumen Hilare*)—which proclaims Jesus to be the “Gladsome Light of the holy glory of the immortal Father”—is one of the earliest known Christian hymns still in common use and has effectively been the “theme-song” of Vespers for nearly the entire history of Eastern Christianity. Realizing that *O Gladsome Light* was also the chiastic heart of Vespers—something I think I had sensed intuitively from long years in church—I saw that *light*, and in particular, *light from darkness*, was somehow the theme of Vespers as a whole.

Light from Darkness

Vespers is, significantly, the beginning of the liturgical day in Orthodoxy,⁶ not the end of it. Just as the world emerged—or rather, say the particle physicists whom I’ve been reading about lately, continually *emerges*—out of the darkness of non-being, so the Christian liturgical day begins each evening with the setting of the sun. At the risk of waxing philosophical, I observe here that what might seem at first glance to be an accident

the one appointed for the end of Vespers, though it is often omitted in modern practice.

⁶ Likewise, in Judaism, the Shabbat (Sabbath) begins on Friday night with the ceremonial lighting of candles, and is thus one of the precursors to the Christian practice of beginning the liturgical day with Vespers.

of liturgical scheduling becomes, upon closer inspection, a powerful existential symbol, one that sends out threads of connection deep into the realms of cosmology, biology, quantum mechanics, and human psychology. Almost on a daily basis I ask myself, *Where does this infinite universe and all its matter come from? Where do I come from, and why do I exist at all? Where do my thoughts come from, and why are they so often irrational?* Underneath such questions, at least for me, lies a veritable ocean of darkness and my own tiny lights almost always seem comically incapable of illuminating any of it. Yet at the same time within these unsettled depths there also seems to me to be something, or perhaps someone—a presence, a mind, a voice—that says gently, but with tireless insistence, “Let there be light.” And behold, for no apparent reason, there is light—there is meaning, there is form, there is personhood, there is consciousness—and not only is it, but it is *good*.

For me as a composer, these are not merely philosophical or metaphysical musings. These questions are inextricably tied to the actual daily experience of composition. Every artist knows the terrifying and crippling power of The Blank Page. *How can I possibly bring something out of nothing?* And then, as every artist also knows, once you’ve made the monumental effort to produce that *something*, you inevitably ask yourself, *how do I know whether or not it’s good?* This is a very real, and often very bitter, struggle for me, and I know it is for others as well. For myself, I’ve discovered that the way forward is actually encapsulated in

some way in the very first words of Genesis, quoted in the epigraph above. The first task is just to put something—*anything*—on the page, so that it’s not blank anymore. *And God said, Let there be light.* Then, whatever I’ve put there, whether it’s my own idea or someone else’s, I accept it as it is and work with it—I don’t change it or criticize it, at least not at first, but I rather allow it to suggest its own emergent forms and patterns. *And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.* After discovering and rejoicing in the unique qualities of whatever I have to work with, I then gently start organizing it into clearer and clearer shapes and more and more meaningful forms. *And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.* And finally, I have to decide to stop and move on to the next thing. *And the evening and morning were the first day.*

I said at the beginning that Fr. Sergius had initially planted the idea for *Vespers* about six years ago. This seems, at first glance, like rather a long time to write a sixty-minute choral piece. The truth is that for the first few years I kept putting *Vespers* off as other projects—including my *Liturgy*—demanded more immediate attention. I did take a few stabs at three movements, composing a first, much shorter, version of *The Opening Psalm* based on Valaam Chant, which I performed as a standalone piece in 2016; an entirely different *Blessed is the Man*, also based on Valaam Chant, which I premiered in Kansas City in 2018; and an *O Gladsome Light* which I eventually finished last year but that has yet to see the light of day. In the summer of 2019 I started

over again on *The Opening Psalm*, this time with an eye towards setting the entire thirty-five verses of the text, and managed to write the movement in its current form. I felt I had finally made a good beginning, though I wasn't sure where to go from there.

Then, in March of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic swept the globe and sent the world into months of lockdown. Projects were canceled and the music world came to a standstill. Suddenly, with no choirs to conduct or events to organize, I had lots of time to compose. So, in the spirit of accepting things as I found them (what else could I do?), I decided it was time to write *Vespers* in earnest. Beginning that March, and building on the foundation I had laid down the summer before with *The Opening Psalm*, I worked steadily, finishing the rest of the piece almost exactly a year later in March of 2021. During this same period I also managed to finish *A Christmas Carol*, write *Liturgy No. 2* from start to finish, and make a solid beginning on *Akathist*, a forthcoming oratorio for chorus and orchestra. It was an intensely productive time for me. In the midst of one of the darkest periods that many of us have ever experienced, I was privileged to find that there was light.

So perhaps this is the message of *Vespers*, this setting of the ancient evening office that begins each new day: from the descent into darkness comes a mysterious and gladsome light. This has certainly been my own experience over this past year and a half, with all its unresolvable complexities and knotty irregular rhythms: that through it all

something new and bright and *good* might yet be created. I pray that my piece, whatever its flaws and inconsistencies, will bring some light to you as well.

—Benedict Sheehan
August 20, 2021

Benedict Sheehan's *Vespers* was recorded in July of 2021, at St. Stephen's Pro-Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, by the Saint Tikhon Choir, under the direction of the composer. The work is dedicated to Archimandrite Sergius, Abbot of St. Tikhon's Monastery.

THE SAINT TIKHON CHOIR

Founded with a mission to foster and build up the American Orthodox choral tradition at the highest artistic level, the GRAMMY®-nominated **Saint Tikhon Choir** has been steadily breaking new ground since its inception in 2015. It is the first professional ensemble associated with an Orthodox monastery in America. Its debut recording, *Till Morn Eternal Breaks: Sacred Choral Music of Benedict Sheehan* (2015), was heralded as “delicate and subtle... at other times powerful and opulent... [a] cause for joy and hope” (*Orthodox Arts Journal*). In 2018, the Saint Tikhon Choir took part in a monumental world premiere of Alexander Kastalsky’s *Requiem for Fallen Brothers* (1917) at the Washington National Cathedral, performing in collaboration with the Clarion Choir, the Kansas City Chorale, the Cathedral Choral Society, and the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, under the baton of Leonard Slatkin. The project was heralded as one of the “Top Ten Performances of 2018” (*Washington Classical Review*) and “an unforgettable performance” (*Washington Post*). The recording of this historic project, released in 2020 on the Naxos label, debuted at #1 on the Billboard Traditional Classical charts and received a 2021 GRAMMY® nomination for

Best Choral Performance. The Saint Tikhon Choir’s recent recording of Benedict Sheehan’s *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, which debuted at #2 on Billboard, has been garnering critical acclaim as “simply beyond praise for excellence... beautiful...luminous, blended tone” (*Fanfare*), “radiant...superb...a masterstroke” (*MusicWeb International*), “fresh and vibrant...spot on...a superb effort” (*Audiophile Audition*), “extravagantly beautiful” (*The American Organist*), and “a new standard for excellence in the American choral landscape” (*The Living Church Magazine*). Benedict Sheehan’s *Vespers* is the Saint Tikhon Choir’s fourth recording.



Sopranos

Sarah Tannehill
Anderson
Emily Yocum Black
Elizabeth Frase
Fiona Gillespie
Rachel Hill
Tabitha Lewis
Christine McDonald
Rita Michalak
Fotina Naumenko
Photini Downie
Robinson
Zoe Turton

Altos

Eric S. Brenner
Tynan Davis
Kit Emory
Lydia Given
Catherine Hedberg
Olivia Insignares
Amanda Jacobs
Helen Karloski
Timothy Parsons
Anastasia Serdsev
Irene Sheehan
Talia Sheehan

Tenors

Sam Anderson
Richard Barrett
Rev. Daniel A. Burnett
Paul D'Arcy
Brad Given
David Hendrix
Fr. Mikel Hill
Nathan Hodgson
Anthony Maglione

Basses

Dn. Michael
Abrahamson
Br. Andrew Busscher
Michael Hawes
Christopher Jackson
Stephen Jacobs
Caleb Lewis
Glenn Miller
Ryan Miller
Fr. David Morrison
Mark Powell
Jamal Sarikoki
Jason Thoms
Izaak Thoms
Thou Yang



GRAMMY®-nominated conductor and composer **Benedict Sheehan** has been called “a rising star in the choral world” (*Catholic Sentinel*). He is Artistic Director and Founder of The Saint Tikhon Choir and the

newly created Artefact Ensemble, as well as Director of Music at St. Tikhon's Monastery and Seminary in Pennsylvania. His recently released *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, on which he conducts The Saint Tikhon Choir, has been garnering critical acclaim as “simply beyond praise for excellence” (*Fanfare*), “radiant...superb...a masterstroke” (*MusicWeb International*), “fresh and vibrant...spot on...a superb effort” (*Audiophile Audition*), “inventive, moving, and extravagantly beautiful” (*The American Organist*), and “a new standard for excellence in the American choral landscape” (*The Living Church Magazine*). Benedict's work as a Chorus Master on the 2020 Naxos release of Kastalsky's *Requiem for Fallen Brothers* earned him a 2021 GRAMMY® nomination. He appears frequently as a guest conductor with the professional vocal ensemble Cappella Romana, where one performance had a reviewer so “emotionally overwhelmed” that she was “attempting to hold back tears” (*Oregon ArtsWatch*). His innovative choral “story score” was featured on Skylark Vocal Ensemble's 2021 GRAMMY®-nominated album *Once Upon A Time*, and has been hailed as “evocative” (*Gramophone*), “quite

extraordinary” (*Limelight*), “brilliant” (*MetroWest Daily News*), and “otherworldly” (*Boston Musical Intelligencer*). His newest story score, based on the Dickens classic *A Christmas Carol*, was recently recorded by Skylark and will be released in late 2021. In autumn 2021 Sheehan conducted the Schola Cantorum and Artefact Ensemble in the world premiere of Arvo Pärt's newest work, *O Holy Father Nicholas*, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Sheehan's music is published by Oxford University Press, Artefact Publications, Musica Russica, and others.

Paul D'Arcy is in demand nationally as a soloist and chamber musician. Recent oratorio solo appearances include the Austin Symphony, Tucson Symphony, American Classical Orchestra, True Concord, and Ensemble viii. He has performed on numerous recordings for Harmonia Mundi, Reference Recordings, Naxos, and PBS, including the 2015 Grammy winning album, *The Sacred Spirit of Russia* with Conspirare. Performances include the NY Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra of St. Luke's, American Classical Orchestra, Skylark, Musica Sacra, St. John the Divine, Trinity Wall Street, Los Angeles Philharmonic, NYC Ballet, National Sawdust, Wordless Music at BAM, Essential Voices, San Diego Bach Collegium, Ensemble Origo, Seraphic Fire, Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Cape Cod Symphony, and Spire.

Mezzo-soprano **Helen Karloski** has been praised for her “genuine mezzo timbre” (*Opera News*) and

a voice “beautifully suited for oratorio” (Santa Fe New Mexican). She has been gaining recognition particularly in her portrayal of the oratorio repertoire. In 2015, she was the recipient of the Ellen Lopin Blair Award for First Place in the Lyndon Woodside Oratorio Solo Competition. Ms. Karloski made her Lincoln Center debut in Mozart’s Solemn Vespers with the Mostly Mozart Festival under the baton of Iván Fischer and her Carnegie Hall debut performing Mozart’s Mass in C Minor under the baton of Kent Tritle with the Oratorio Society of New York. Recent solo appearances include Pergolesi’s Stabat Mater with Harry Bicket and the Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Dvořák’s Stabat Mater with the Omaha Symphony, Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony with the American Classical Orchestra, Handel’s Messiah with TENET Vocal Artists, Copland’s In the Beginning with Sacred Music in a Sacred Space and the Alto soloist in Mendelssohn’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream with the New York City Ballet. Other solo engagements include Vivaldi’s Gloria with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Beethoven’s Missa Solemnis with the Choral Society of Grace Church, and Brahms’ Alto Rhapsody with St. Andrew’s Music Society. An accomplished ensemble singer, Ms. Karloski has appeared with Conspire, where she was featured on the GRAMMY-winning recording The Sacred Spirit of Russia, as well as with Voices of Ascension, Musica Sacra, Skylark, True Concord, and the Santa Fe Desert Chorale.

Glenn Miller is well-known for his unique basso profundo voice. His singing career includes numerous performances, recordings, and tours as

a member of the Clarion Choir, The Saint Tikhon Choir, Cappella Romana, Audivi, the Yale Choral Artists, Conspire, the Robert Shaw Festival Singers, the St. Thomas Church Fifth Avenue Choir of Men and Boys, the PaTRAM Institute Choir, Skylark Vocal Ensemble, the Choir of St. Paul’s Cathedral London, Santa Fe Desert Chorale, and Vox Early Music Ensemble in Ann Arbor. As a soloist, he has appeared with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and has been featured in operatic productions in Bonn and Prague. He is Music Minister of Our Lady Star of the Sea Church, Grosse Pointe Woods, Michigan.

Fotina Naumenko, soprano, has been praised for her “radiant voice” (*Boston Globe*), described as both “angelic” (*MusicWeb International*) and “capable of spectacular virtuosic hi-jinks” (*Boston Musical Intelligencer*). Fotina’s singing encompasses a wide variety of vocal genres including oratorio, opera, art song, choral and contemporary music, both as a soloist and chamber musician. Festival appearances have included Ravinia, Constella, Olavfestdagene, and Tanglewood; her performances of David Lang’s *just* and Castiglioni’s *Cantus Planus* at the Tanglewood Festival of Contemporary Music were hailed as “a beautiful performance” by the *New York Times* and “a stunner” by the *Boston Globe*. Ensemble credits include Grammy® award-winning Conspire, the Experiential Chorus; Grammy®-nominated groups Skylark, Clarion, The Saint Tikhon Choir, and PaTRAM; as well as Cappella Romana, Coro Volante, Alium Spiritum, and

Cincinnati's Vocal Arts Ensemble. She is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music (Rochester, NY), the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (Cincinnati, OH), and the Rimsky-Korsakov State Conservatory of St. Petersburg, Russia, where she completed a Fulbright grant specializing in Russian vocal repertoire. Fotina serves on the voice faculty of Shenandoah Conservatory in Winchester, VA.

Timothy Parsons, countertenor, has been hailed as a "most dazzling contributor", a "heldencountenor, ready to sing Wagnerian roles in his powerful falsetto" (San Francisco Chronicle). International appearances include the Montreal Bach Festival, the Festival Internacional de Música Sacra de Quito, the Stavanger Kammermusikfestival, St. John's Smith Square, and the Utrecht Early Music Festival. A frequent performer of new music, Timothy has been part of the premieres of two Pulitzer Prize-winning operas, Du Yun's *Angel's Bone* and Ellen Reid's *prism*. He is a member of the Grammy-nominated Choir of Trinity Wall Street and previously served as Alto Lay Clerk with the Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. Season highlights include performances in TENET's Keeping Time series and two premiere recordings of music by Benedict Sheehan. He spent his formative years in New England, holds a B.M and M.M from the Manhattan School of Music and now resides in Vermont.

Bass-Baritone Singer and Trumpet player living in Chicago, **Michael Hawes** is Music Director at Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Parish in Chicago, where he leads Music from the piano and organ as Cantor, Choir Director, and Trumpeter. Incredibly

honored to sing the music of Benedict Sheehan with the wonderful Saint Tikhon Choir, recent seasons have also brought him to New York singing with the Clarion Choir, Boston with Skylark Vocal Ensemble, Seraphic Fire of Miami, and others. As a trumpet player, he has also performed with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the Music of the Baroque Orchestra in Chicago, and the National Symphony of Taiwan. Recent performances have taken him to Taiwan, Russia, the Dominican Republic, France, England, Canada, and all across the United States. His 2021-22 season brings him to Serbia singing the music of Rachmaninoff, and across the country to Portland, Seattle, Madison, New York City, Massachusetts, Florida, and across the Chicagoland area. In his free time, he enjoys chasing frisbees into Lake Michigan as thrown by his wife Nini. You can learn more at michaelhawesmusic.com.

Jamal Sarikoki has been praised for his "rich resonance, expressive tone, vocal agility and legato line" (*Sarasota Herald Tribune*). He currently serves as Associate Conductor of Key Chorale, Minister of Music and Worship at Venice Presbyterian Church, and Artistic Director of the Venice Community Concert Series. Jamal studied conducting, voice, and organ at Nyack College and was a part of the graduate conducting program at Bard Conservatory. During his tenure in New York, he spent three years serving as a music associate at West Point Cadet Chapel U.S. Military Academy under the tutelage of world-renowned organist Craig Williams. Later, he served as Senior Organist and Director of Instrumental Music at Calvary Baptist Church

in Manhattan and was a regular guest conductor of Nyack College's Symphonic Chorus. Jamal has conducted Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*, *Choral Fantasy*, *Piano Concerto No. 5*, *Christus am Ölberge*, Mozart's *Requiem*, and various works for orchestra and chorus. As a baritone, he studied with renowned basso profundo Ken Cox, tenor Rufus Muller and bass-baritone Joel Jameson. Jamal has sung the role of *Elijah*, Bach's *B Minor Mass*, the *St. Matthew Passion*, Handel's *Messiah*, and is looking forward to his solo role in Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with the Columbus Indiana Philharmonic in March 2022.

Dr. Jason Thoms is the Director of Choral Activities at Bismarck State College in Bismarck, North Dakota. He is also the Founder and Artistic Director of the Dakota Pro Musica and host of *Dakota Sings*, a radio show on North Dakota choirs, composers, and choral music. Dr. Thoms is a professional bass soloist and chorister and

has sung with many of the top choral ensembles in the US including the Santa Fe Desert Chorale, South Dakota Chorale, Yale Choral Artists, Spire Ensemble, and has been a member of The Saint Tikhon Choir since its inception in 2015. He sang the role of Deacon in The Saint Tikhon Choir's recording of Benedict Sheehan's *Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom* released in 2020. Dr. Thoms is in demand as an oktavist in Russian Orthodox music and sings throughout the country in that role.

Text of the Vespers, with notes by the Composer

1 The Opening Psalm: Psalm 103

Alto Solo, Baritone Solo, SATB Chorus

Psalm 103 LXX (104), translated by Donald Sheehan (copyright 2013 by Wipf & Stock, used with permission). The first psalm of Vespers, recounting the creation of the world and glorifying God for his mighty works. Based on a bold and lively irregular-meter chant from the ancient Valaam Monastery, founded in the 14th century in Karelia on the shores of Lake Ladoga. My choral setting of the entire 35-line psalm—the first of its kind in the Orthodox tradition—uses material from the original chant melody throughout, but with extensive composed additions and modifications.

Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God,
how magnificently dost thou exist, clothed in
thanksgiving and majesty,

Arrayed in light as with a garment, stretching out
the heavens like a curtain.

He covers his high halls with the waters, appointing
the clouds for his staircase, ascending on the wings
of the wind,

Making his angels his spirits, his ministers a flame
of fire.

He established earth on her sure foundations, she
shall never give way unto ages of ages.

The deep like a garment is his clothing, the waters
shall stand upon the mountains.

At thy rebuke they shall flee, at the crash of thy
thunder, they shall tremble with fear.

The mountains rise up, the valleys sink down, to the
place thou hast founded for them.

Thou didst set a boundary never to be passed, the
waters shall never again cover the earth.

Sending the springs into the valleys, he shall make
the waters flow between the mountains.

They shall give water to every beast, the wild asses
shall quench their thirst.

The birds of heaven shall dwell by them, from
amidst the rocks they shall sing forth.

He waters the mountains from his upper chambers.
The earth shall be satisfied with the fruit of thy
works.

Growing the grass for the cattle, raising green plants
to serve man, he brings forth bread from the earth

And wine to gladden man's heart, oil to make bright
his face and bread to strengthen his heart.

The trees of the plain shall be fed, the cedars of
Lebanon that thou didst plant.

In them shall the sparrows make nests, the heron's
home greatest among them.

On the high hills are the deer, the cliffs are a refuge
for the hyrax.

He made the moon to mark seasons, the sun knows the time to set.

Thou makest darkness and it is night when all the forest beasts will prowl,

The young lions roaring for their prey, seeking their food from God.

When the sun rises, they will gather and lie down in their dens.

Man shall go out to his work and shall labor until the evening.

O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom thou hast made them all. The earth is filled with thy creations,

As is this great and spacious sea that teems with countless things, living things both small and great.

There the ships ply their way, there is that Leviathan that thou madest to play there.

All of them look to thee alone to give them food in due season.

When thou givest they shall gather in, when thou openest thy hands everything shall be filled with goodness.

But when thou turnest thy face away they shall be deeply troubled, when thou takest their breath away they shall die back again to dust.

Thou shalt send forth thy Spirit and they shall be created, thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

May the Lord's glory endure forever; the Lord shall be glad in his works.

He gazes on the earth and it trembles, he touches mountains and they smoke.

I will sing to the Lord all my life, I will sing psalms to my God for as long as I have being.

May my thoughts be pleasing to him, and I shall be glad in the Lord.

May the sinners vanish from the earth, may the wicked wholly cease to be. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

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

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, glory to thee, O God. (*Thrice*)

2 The Great Litany

Baritone Solo, SATB Chorus

Texts and translations by Anonymous. Beginning with the words "In peace, let us pray to the Lord," the responsorial *Great Litany* begins all of the major sung services in Orthodox worship. Here I take the unprecedented step of precisely notating the complex speech rhythms typical of Russian Orthodox clerical chanting. A gentle and subdued setting with simple choral refrains, the *Great Litany* should allow the listener to meditate and enter a space of inner peace and calm.

Deacon: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Singers: Lord, have mercy. *(after each petition)*

For the peace from above and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of the holy churches of God, and for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord.

For this holy house and for those who enter it with faith, reverence, and the fear of God, let us pray to the Lord.

For our Metropolitan Tikhon, for His Grace, Bishop Alexis, for the honorable priesthood, the diaconate in Christ, and for all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord.

For the Right Reverend Abbot of this holy monastery, Archimandrite Sergius, with all his brotherhood in Christ, let us pray to the Lord.

For this country, its President, for all civil authorities, and for the armed forces, let us pray to the Lord.

For this city, for every city and countryside, and for the faithful dwelling in them, let us pray to the Lord.

For reasonable weather, for abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

For travelers by land, by sea, and by air; for the sick and the suffering; for captives and their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

That we may be delivered from all affliction, wrath, danger, and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by thy grace.

Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary with all the saints, let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

Singers: To thee, O Lord.

Priest: For unto thee are due all glory, honor, and worship, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Singers: Amen.

3 Blessed is the Man

TTB Trio, SATB Chorus

Selected verses from Psalms 1, 2 & 3, translated by Donald Sheehan (copyright 2013 by Wipf & Stock, used with permission). Based on an obscure but majestic medieval chant of the Moscow Dormition (*Uspenskii*) Cathedral, my setting is inspired by the harmonic language of 17th-century *znamenny* polyphony, a fascinating body of harmonized chants that predates the wholesale adoption of European-style part writing in Russia.

Trio: Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly.

Singers: Alleluia. (*after each petition*)

For the Lord knows the way of the righteous and the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice in him with trembling.

Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Arise, O Lord, save me, O my God.

Salvation is from the Lord and thy blessing is upon thy people.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, glory to thee, O God. (*Thrice*)

4 Small Litany

Baritone Solo, SATB Chorus

Essentially an abbreviated reprise of the *Great Litany*, the *Small Litany* allows the listener once again to pause and meditate before diving into the more intense movements that follow.

Deacon: Again and again in peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Singers: Lord, have mercy. (*after each petition*)

Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by thy grace.

Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary with all the saints, let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

Singers: To thee, O Lord.

Priest: For unto thee are due all glory, honor, and worship, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Singers: Amen.

5 The Lamp-Lighting Psalms | Psalms 140 & 141

Treble Semi-Chorus, Bass Semi-Chorus, SATB Chorus

Psalms 140 & 141 LXX (141 & 142), translated by Donald Sheehan (copyright 2013 by Wipf & Stock, used with permission). The Lamp-Lighting Psalms are the psalms of evening worship, going back even to ancient Temple worship in Jerusalem. They still form the centerpiece of the Orthodox evening office today, though in the Slavic tradition they are typically only read aloud by a reader and are often significantly abbreviated. My setting, inspired by motifs from Byzantine Chant, Mode 1, uses an ancient responsorial form for psalm-singing with a gently repeated choral refrain of “Hear me, O Lord.” As far as I know, it is the first through-composed

polyphonic setting of the Lamp-Lighting Psalms in the Orthodox musical tradition.

Psalm 140

A Psalm of David

Soloist: O Lord, I called upon thee, hear me.

Chorus: Hear me, O Lord. (*after each verse*)

O Lord, I called upon thee, hear me, receive the voice of my prayer when I call upon thee.

Let my prayer arise in thy sight as incense, let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice.

Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth, a strong door about my lips.

Incline not my heart to evil words that ease the way for evil men to work their wicked deeds; let me not join their inner circles.

The righteous man shall chastise me with sweet mercy, and correct me, but the sweet oil of sinners shall never touch my head, for my prayer shall continually be against their delights.

Their judges were smashed on the rock, although they had heard my words, heard how sweet they were.

Their bones were all scattered in Hades, like an earth-clod broken on the earth.

For my eyes, O Lord, Lord, look to thee, in thee have I hoped, let not my soul slip away.

Preserve me from the snares they have spread out for me, from the stumbling block set out for me by the workers of wickedness.

Let the wicked fall into their own nets, all of them together, while I alone pass through.

Psalm 141

*Instruction by David, when he was in the cave,
praying*

With my voice I cried out to the Lord, with my voice I prayed to the Lord.

Before him I shall pour out my prayer, in his presence declare my afflictions.

When my spirit fainted within me, then thou knewest my paths, for on the way I was going they had hidden a snare for me.

I looked on my right, and I saw that no one had recognized me,

that all flight had failed me, that no one saw deeply my soul.

I cried out to thee, O Lord, saying: Thou art my hope, my share in the land of the living.

Attend unto my prayer for I am brought very low, free me from my tormentors for they are stronger than I.

Soloist: Bring my soul out of prison, O Lord,

Chorus: that I may sing praise to thy name.

6 Stikhira of the Resurrection

Treble Semi-Chorus, Bass Semi-Chorus, Sop., Mezzo, Alto, Ten., Bar., Bass Soli, SATB Chorus

Texts by St. John of Damascus and Anatolius the Hymnographer (trans. Anonymous), with interpolated verses from Psalm 129 LXX (130) translated by Donald Sheehan (copyright 2013 by Wipf & Stock, used with permission). The Stikhira of the Resurrection are hymns from Saturday evening Vespers, Mode 1, celebrating the Resurrection of Christ, woven into the concluding verses of the Lamp-Lighting Psalms. My musical setting is inspired by motifs from Byzantine Chant, motifs that evolve gradually from unison melodies over a pedal tone—a texture typical of Byzantine music—into a triumphant multi-part choral texture in the movement's final sections. To my knowledge, it is the first through-composed choral setting of all of these hymns in English.

First Stikhiron: Accept our evening prayers, O holy Lord. Grant us remission of sins, for thou alone hast revealed the Resurrection to the world.

Verse: The righteous shall patiently wait until thou shalt deal richly with me.

Second Stikhiron: Encircle Zion and surround her, O people. Give glory in her to the One who rose from the dead. For he is our God, who has delivered us from our transgressions.

Verse: From out of the depths, O Lord, I have cried out to thee, O Lord, hear my voice.

Third Stikhiron: Come, O people, let us hymn and fall down before Christ, glorifying his Resurrection from the dead. For he is our God, who has delivered the world from the enemy's deceit.

Verse: Let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

Fourth Stikhiron: Be glad, O heavens! Sound trumpets, O foundations of the earth! Sing in gladness, O mountains! Behold Emmanuel has nailed our sins to the Cross; granting life, he has slain death. He has resurrected Adam as the Lover of man.

Verse: If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord who could stand? For with thee is forgiveness.

Fifth Stikhiron: Let us praise him who was willingly crucified in the flesh for our sake. He suffered and was buried, but rose again from the dead. By orthodoxy confirm thy Church, O Christ. Grant peace for our life as the gracious Lover of man.

Verse: For thy name's sake, O Lord, I have patiently waited for thee, my soul went on patiently waiting for thy word, my soul has hoped in the Lord.

Sixth Stikhiron: We stand unworthily before thy lifebearing tomb, O Christ God, offering glory to thine unspeakable compassion. Thou hast accepted the Cross and death, O Sinless One, to grant the world resurrection as the Lover of man.

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

Seventh Stikhiron: Let us praise the Word, coeternal with the Father. He ineffably came forth from the virginal womb. He freely accepted the Cross and death for our sake. He was raised in glory. Glory to thee, O life-giving Lord, the Savior of our souls.

Verse: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Dogmatikon: Let us praise the Virgin Mary, the gate of heaven, the glory of the world, the song of angels, the beauty of the faithful. She was born of man, yet gave birth to God. She was revealed as heaven, as the temple of the Godhead. She destroyed the wall of enmity. She commenced the peace, she opened the kingdom. Since she is our foundation of faith, our defender is the Lord whom she bore: courage, courage, O people of God, for Christ will destroy our enemies, since he is all powerful.

7 O Gladsome Light

Soprano Solo, SATB Chorus

Text and translation by Anonymus. O Gladsome Light (Φῶς Ἰλαρόν, Lumen Hilare) is one of the oldest Christian hymns, dating from the late 3rd century or perhaps even earlier. My setting is based on Byzantine Chant, Mode 1 Plagal (Mode 5). The chant is sung here by a soprano soloist, perhaps

giving the sense that the Virgin Mary—herself the subject of the hymn immediately preceding this movement—is now singing to Christ. This is the central movement of *Vespers*, both structurally and dramatically.

O gladsome Light of the holy glory of the immortal Father, heavenly, holy, blessed, O Jesus Christ: now that we have come to the setting of the sun, and behold the light of evening, we praise God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For meet it is at all times to worship thee with voices of praise, O Son of God and Giver of life; therefore all the world doth glorify thee.

8 The Lord is King | Ps. 92

Countertenor Solo, SATB Chorus

Psalm 92 LXX (93), translated by Donald Sheehan (copyright 2013 by Wipf & Stock, used with permission). This exuberant setting of a *prokeimenon*, an antiphonal psalm meant to introduce a scripture reading, is inspired by the Baroque-style melodies of the Kiev Caves Monastery, thus turning a normally simple bit of responsory into a mini-concerto for countertenor and chorus.

Soloist: The evening prokeimenon in the Sixth Tone: The Lord is King, he is robed in majesty.

Chorus: The Lord is King, he is robed in majesty.
(Repeated)

Soloist: The Lord is robed in strength and has girded himself, for he has established our lands so that they shall never be shaken.

From of old is thy throne prepared, from all eternity, thou art.

The rivers, O Lord, have lifted up, the rivers have uplifted their voices, the rivers shall raise their strong floods with the voices of many waves.

Wondrous is the surging of the sea, wondrous is the Lord on high.

Thy testimonies were steadfastly made, holiness befits thy house, O Lord, unto length of days.

9 Evening Prayer | “Vouchsafe, O Lord”

SATB Chorus

Text and translation by Anonymous. A gentle and subdued setting of the Vespers prayer “Vouchsafe, O Lord.” Based on gestures from harmonized Russian Common Chant, but with a distinctly American character. (This movement works particularly well as a stand-alone anthem.)

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this evening without sin. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy Name forever.
Amen.

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, as we have set our hope on Thee.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me thy statutes.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, make me to understand thy commandments.

Blessed art Thou, O Holy One, enlighten me with thy precepts.

Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever: despise not the works of thy hands.

To Thee is due praise, to Thee is due song, to Thee is due glory: to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.
Amen.

10 The Song of Simeon

Basso Profundo Solo, TTBB Chorus

Luke 2:29-32. The *Nunc Dimittis*. A solemn song of departure at the end of Vespers, the *Song of Simeon* combines a well-known Kievan Chant melody (used by both Gretchaninoff and Rimsky-Korsakov in their settings of Passion Week) with a freely composed part for basso profundo. My setting is, I believe, the only work for basso profundo solo in Orthodox literature in English. It is dedicated to the great American basso profundo Glenn Miller.

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy

salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people: a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

11 The Trisagion Prayers

Reader: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (*Thrice*)

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

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us: Lord cleanse us from our sins; Master, pardon our transgressions; Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for thy name's sake.

Lord have mercy. (*Thrice*)

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

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Priest: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Reader: Amen.

12 Rejoice, O Virgin

SATB Chorus (with optional Baritone Solo)

Text and translation by Anonymous. The *Ave Maria*. A hymn to the Virgin Mary sung at the conclusion of Vespers, my setting is based on a little-known chant of the Monastery of St. Cyril on the White Lake (*Kirillo-Belozersky*). The plaintive, wandering, melismatic chant is arranged in a dense and shimmering choral texture and conjures up a feeling of mystery and awe at the Incarnation of Christ. My setting is, as far as I know, the only choral arrangement of this particular chant.

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Mary full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, for thou hast borne the Savior of our souls.

13 The Closing Psalm | Psalm 33

Mezzo-Soprano Solo, Tenor Solo, SATB Chorus

Psalm 33 LXX (34), translated by Donald Sheehan (copyright 2013 by Wipf & Stock, used with permission). Using the same Valaam Chant melody from the first movement, I bookend my *Vespers* with a complex multi-section setting of the final psalm of Vespers. As the piece develops, the motifs of Valaam Chant subtly evolve into melodies reminiscent of American folk music, thereby drawing a connection between the past, present, and future of Orthodox liturgical music in America. The movement's ecstatic

final section in 7/8 time completes an unanswered cadence from the first movement, thus giving the whole work a kind of internal unity.

I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

My soul shall be praised in the Lord, the meek shall hear of it and be glad.

O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together.

I sought the Lord and he heard me, and delivered me from all my afflictions.

Come close to him and be illumined, and your countenance shall never be shamed.

This poor man cried out and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

The angel of the Lord shall encamp around those who fear him, and deliver them.

O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who puts his hope in him.

Fear the Lord, you his saints, there is no want to those who fear him.

Rich men have turned poor and starved, but those seeking the Lord shall not lack any good things.

Come, children, listen to me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

Who is the man who desires life, who loves to behold good days?

Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.

Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, his ears are open to their supplications.

The Lord's countenance is upon evildoers, to uproot their remembrance from the earth.

The righteous cry out and the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles.

The Lord is near those shattered in heart, the humbled in spirit he will save.

Many are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivers them out of them all.

The Lord shall guard all their bones, not one of them shall be broken.

The death of sinners is evil, and those hating the righteous shall go wrong.

The Lord will redeem the souls of his servants and none will go wrong who put their hope in him.

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

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, glory to thee, O God. (*Thrice*)

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Producer: Blanton Alspaugh, Soundmirror

Recording Engineer: Brandon Johnson and John Newton, Soundmirror

Mixing & Mastering Engineer: Mark Donahue, Soundmirror

Operations Manager: Lydia Given

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For booking the Saint Tikhon Choir: info@sainttikhonchoir.org

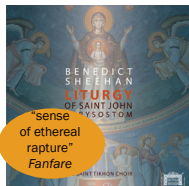
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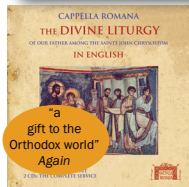
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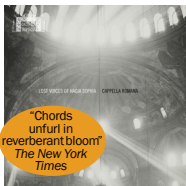
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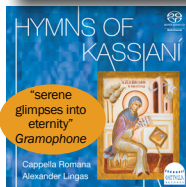
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"Chords unfurl in reverberant bloom"
The New York Times

Lost Voices of Hagia Sophia For 1000 years, Hagia Sophia was the largest domed interior in the world. Its stunning reverberation—of over 11 seconds—is re-created here, transporting you back in time to medieval sound and ritual in Constantinople as an aural virtual reality. Top 5 on Billboard!



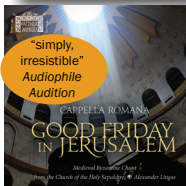
"serene glimpses into eternity"
Gramophone

Hymns of Kassani Discover the world's earliest music by a female composer: ninth-century nun, poet, and hymnographer Kassiani (Kassia), including long-suppressed hymns recorded here for the first time. Includes two medieval versions of her beloved hymn for Orthodox Holy Week.



"adventurous music ... recommended"
Fanfare

Arctic Light: Finnish Orthodox Music Original works composed in Finnish in the 20th century that marry a shining Northern clarity of sound with a sonic richness clearly linked to the traditions of Russian choral singing. Directed by Fr. Ivan Moody.



"simply, irresistible"
Audiophile Audition

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