

Church Ministries / Departments

Department of Liturgical Music and Translations

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Accomplishments/Progress Since the 13th All-American Council

During the 13th All-American Council in Orlando, FL, three years ago, a group of more than 100 church musicians met to discuss many areas of concern and hopes for future development of liturgical music and translations within The Orthodox Church in America. With the reorganization of Church ministries after the 13th All-American Council, the V. Rev. Paul Lazor assumed the responsibility, as chairman of the Department of Liturgical Music and Translations, of setting the direction for this important department. Because of health reasons, it became necessary for him to step down from this position in the summer of 2004. The Orthodox Church in America is grateful for his contributions in the reactivation of the department. Professor David Drillock took over the chairmanship in August 2004. Despite the challenges of budget constraints and the very busy schedules of the department members and consultants, progress has been made in several key areas, with goals set to expand work in others.

The Department of Liturgical Music and Translations continues to produce sheet music on a weekly and seasonal basis for the "Liturgical Music Downloads" section of the OCA web site which was instituted in January of 2002 in order to provide to the parishes music for troparia and kontakia for the commemorations that fall on the Sundays in the given year. Particular attention is paid to troparia and kontakia from the Menaion, since this material is not always readily available. The goal of the project is to systematically provide troparia and kontakia for every day of the year.

Because of the diversity of musical traditions in the parishes, a variety of chant traditions are represented, including Russian Common Chant [Obikhod], Kievan, Russo-Greek, Galician, and Carpatho-Rusyn. Whenever prescribed by the Typikon, settings using Special Pattern Melodies are also provided.

Taking advantage of advances in technology, the troparia and kontakia are available through the internet on the OCA web site. Not only are distribution expenses kept low (especially when compared to the cost of printing and mailing music), but new settings can be added very easily. They can also be downloaded easily from virtually anywhere through a computer with access to the internet.

Prepared according to music industry standards, the troparia and kontakia are posted as PDF files which can be read and printed using Adobe Acrobat®, available free of charge on the internet. Through May 2005, approximately 865 files have been posted, and new settings are being prepared and posted every week. This total number includes material necessary to the singing of troparia and kontakia: "God is the Lord..." and "Glory / Now and Ever..." and Resurrectional Dismissal Theotokia in all Eight Tones. In addition, music for Lent, Pascha, and the Pentecostarion

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period, music for the North American Saints, and Akathist hymns are also available from the department's web page on the OCA web site.

The music can be downloaded and tried without an up-front cost. This is made possible through financial support of the Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards which supports the work of the department. In addition, those who use the settings are asked to also provide financial assistance to the extent to which they benefit from the project. This voluntary financial support will enable the Department of Liturgical Music to produce more high-quality materials in the future.

Coordinators for this project since its inception have been Dr. Paul Meyendorff [St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY] and Walter Obleschuk [Holy Trinity Cathedral, Boston, MA].

Plans for the Future

Plans are under way to expand the web site offerings to include audio files of recorded choral music. Currently being recorded are the "Lord, I call..." in both Obikhod and Kievan tone arrangements. Juxtaposing audio and visual components will provide a much needed educational piece to enable church musicians to sing text in traditional tonal systems.

Accountability

The department also answers numerous email questions regarding a wide variety of topics that include finding musical arrangements in English and other languages, suggestions for future projects, inquiries about Orthodox liturgical music, questions about rubrics, etc. The emails are always answered promptly and forwarded to the appropriate department consultant for consideration.