

The Psalm 103 Project: Orthodox Creative Musical Collaboration in Progress

RICHARD BARRETT*

The Psalm 103 Project is a major creative undertaking of The Saint John of Damascus Society, a United States-based Orthodox sacred music nonprofit organization with the mission statement, “Revealing Orthodox Christianity through its sacred music.” The project involves six very different composers, each a specialist in a different repertory of Orthodox music:

- Matthew Arndt, Assistant Professor of Music Theory at University of Iowa, is choir director at St. Raphael Antiochian Orthodox Church in Iowa City, IA and is a specialist in the sacred music of the Republic of Georgia and the Caucasus.
- John Michael Boyer, Director of Musical Activities at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Portland, OR and Protopsaltis of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco, is a seasoned cantor and composer in the modern received tradition of Byzantine chant, while also being experienced in the medieval Byzantine repertoire.
- Alexander Khalil is a cantor and composer who has studied the styles of Byzantine chant that are sung in Jerusalem and Constantinople; he also plays gamelan and is a researcher for the Temporal Dynamics of Learning Center at University of California Riverside.
- Kurt Sander is a composer, singer, and choral conductor in the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, having taught at Jordanville’s Summer School of Liturgical Music for several years, and he is also Associate Professor of Theory and Composition in the Department of Music at Northern Kentucky University.
- Richard Toensing (+2014) was a composer of modern American art music who served on the faculty of University of Colorado at Boulder for many years, and whose Orthodox musical output represented a synthesis of Russian, Byzantine, and many other elements.
- TikeyZes, emeritus Theory and Composition faculty at San Jose State University, has been a pioneer of a Greek-American polyphonic style bringing together simpler melodic elements from Byzantine chant with a choral harmonic language informed as much by Western Renaissance music as by twentieth century American music.

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