

# MUSICA RUSSICA

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## 2013 NEW ISSUES

### Mixed Chorus Sacred WITH ENGLISH TEXT

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CATALOG NO. 2013-SAMXEng

**Martynov ~ The Beatitudes** OMP-CMR011E satb(div) sss soli **\$2.40**

Vladimir Martynov (b. 1946) is a Moscow composer who began with post-modernist avant garde and experimental music and later shifted his attention to the chant of the Russian Orthodox Church. His magical setting of the Beatitudes is simplicity itself: two soprano soloists (later joined by a third, singing a descant) alternately sing the words from the Sermon on the Mount to a folk-like pentatonic melody over a timeless ostinato of barely shifting chords hummed by the chorus. Only in the last verse is the music (along with the listeners' attention) given a new direction—heavenward. The coda, repeated ad libitum, leaves the hearer transfixed and transformed at having experienced something timeless, eternal, and definitely not of this world.

Also available with the original Slavonic text in Cyrillic and phonetics, cat. No. CMR011.

**Chesnokov ~ My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord** OMP-Cn223E satb(div) s solo **\$2.40**

Chesnokov composed this opulent, Romantic setting of the Magnificat for the famous Russian soprano Antonina Nezhdanova (1873–1950), the leading soprano of the Bolshoi Opera during the first half of the 20th century, to whom Rachmaninoff dedicated his well-known “Vocalise.” The soloist sings the words of the Virgin Mary in sweeping lyric lines over a sumptuous choral accompaniment. Suitable for Christmas and general use.

Also available with the original Slavonic text in Cyrillic and phonetics, cat. No. Cn223.

(Recorded by Archangel Voices on their CD, *Panagia: Hymns to the Most Holy Mother of God*, release date: November 2013)

**Chesnokov ~ O Most Holy Theotokos** OMP-Cn251E satb(div) b solo **\$1.85**

Chesnokov incorporates a traditional Russian Orthodox call-and-response melody in this opening piece of his Marian cycle, *To the Most Holy Sovereign Lady*, opus 43. The text, from the Orthodox Intercessory Prayer Service, appeals to the Virgin Mary, called “Theotokos” (“Bearer of God”) in the Orthodox Church, for her prayerful intercession. The composer packs a powerful emotional impact into this urgent appeal, as the vocal lines build, and the textures expand then contract back to unison. Colorful, dramatic choral writing! Suitable as a general Marian anthem.

Also available with the original Slavonic text in Cyrillic and phonetics, cat. No. Cn251.

(Recorded by Archangel Voices on their CD, *Panagia: Hymns to the Most Holy Mother of God*, release date: November 2013)

**Chesnokov ~ O Victorious Leader** OMP-Cn267E satb **\$1.85**

The concluding piece from Chesnokov's *All-Night Vigil*, opus 44, this lyric chant-based hymn to the Virgin is simple in texture and subtle in expression. The text is drawn from the Orthodox Akathist Hymn, an ancient Christian poem in which Mary is hailed as the “Unwedded Bride of God” as well as a defender in times of war and strife. Suitable as a general Marian anthem.

Also available with the original Slavonic text in Cyrillic and phonetics, cat. No. Cn267.

(Recorded by Archangel Voices on their CD, *Panagia: Hymns to the Most Holy Mother of God*, release date: November 2013)

**Johann von Gardner ~ From the Rising of the Sun** OMP-Ga-FTR satb (div) **\$1.25**

This short, brilliant introit hymn is sung in the Orthodox Church to greet the bishop when he enters the church. The text, from Psalm 112 [113], makes this setting useable in many contexts and occasions. Russian composer and musicologist Johann von Gardner (1898–1984) writes in a rich choral style reminiscent of the Russian Moscow Synodal School.

(Recorded by Archangel Voices on their CD, *Master, Bless: The Orthodox Divine Liturgy*.)

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**Alexander Kastalsky ~ Open Unto Us the Doors of Compassion** OMP-Ks004E satb (div) **\$1.85**

Very soon after the publication of his early chant arrangements in the late 1890s, Kastalsky was hailed by colleagues and critics as the inaugurator of a new style in Russian sacred choral music. In this gentle, lyrical prayer of entreaty to the Virgin Mary, the composer pioneers the technique of composing new melodies out of the formulaic melodic kernels of *znamenny chant*. Kastalsky also shows himself to be a master of choral color, varying sonorities and textures in a manner that would later be taken up and expanded upon by Rachmaninoff and other Russian composers of the early 20th century. Suitable as a general Marian anthem.

(Recorded by Archangel Voices on their CD, *Panagia: Hymns to the Most Holy Mother of God*, release date: November 2013)

**Alexander Nikolsky ~ The Angel Cried Out** OMP-Ni083E satb (div) **\$1.85**

Alexander Nikolsky (1873–1943) was a prominent member of the Moscow Synodal School faculty, who, like Chesnokov, went on to teach choral music at the Moscow Conservatory. His choral writing is vivid, harmonically colorful, and imbued with an energy derived from the spirit of Russian folksong, quite appropriate for this joyful Paschal text. The chant melody used in this piece figures prominently as a lyric theme in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Russian Easter Overture*. Drawn from the Orthodox Paschal Liturgy, this piece is suitable for use throughout Eastertide.

(Recorded by Archangel Voices on their CD, *Panagia: Hymns to the Most Holy Mother of God*, release date: November 2013)

**Nicholas Reeves ~ Lord, Now Lettest (St. Symeon's Prayer)** OMP-Re001 satb (div) **\$1.85**

New York-based Orthodox composer Nicholas Reeves (b. 1981) gives an epic sweep to the words of the "Nunc dimittis" New-Testament Canticle (St. Luke 2:29-32). Flowing chant-like lines set the stage for waves of the "Light" that comes to enlighten the Gentiles. Though clearly a modern-day work in terms of harmony and counterpoint, Reeves' setting maintains a connection with the sense of awe and mystery that characterizes Eastern Orthodox liturgical music and reflects a traditional embodiment of otherworldly beauty. Suitable for Christmas and general anthem use.

**Kurt Sander ~ All of Creation Rejoices in Thee** OMP-Sa001 satb (div) **\$1.85**

Kurt Sander (b. 1969) is a Midwest-based composer of works in a variety of genres, whose conversion to the Orthodox faith has led him to compose many works based on Eastern Orthodox liturgical texts. A number of these pieces are featured on the CD *As Far as the East Is from the West*, by the East/West Festival Chorale, Peter Jermihov, cond. (Musica Russica cat. No. I-101). Sander's writing incorporates some of the finest sonorous traditions of Russian choral composers, from the Moscow-School masters to Sviridov, yet it is unmistakably contemporary. His setting of the Hymn to the Theotokos from the Liturgy of St. Basil combines moments of intimate lyric tenderness with passages of mighty grandeur, as befits this rich and profound text. Suitable for Christmas and general anthem use.

(Recorded by Archangel Voices on their CD, *Panagia: Hymns to the Most Holy Mother of God*, release date: November 2013)

**Kurt Sander ~ Virgin Theotokos, Rejoice** OMP-Sa002 satb (div) **\$1.85**

In this setting of the traditional Orthodox version of the *Ave Maria* Kurt Sander invents an expressive and subtle chant-like melody rooted in *znamenny chant* formulas and creates three choral variations, each with a richer and fuller texture than the preceding one. The composer's creative yet traditional approach demonstrates the "timelessness" that is characteristic of the best examples of true liturgical art, regardless of the era in which it is created. Suitable for Christmas and general anthem use.

(Recorded by Archangel Voices on their CD, *Panagia: Hymns to the Most Holy Mother of God*, release date: November 2013)

**Richard Toensing ~ Bless the Lord, O My Soul** OMP-To-BTL satb and congr. **\$2.40**

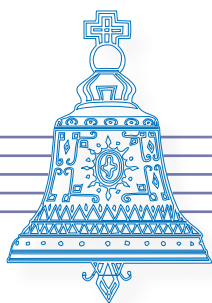
A prolific composer of music in many genres, Richard Toensing (b. 1940) converted to the Orthodox faith in 1997, and has since devoted his energies to composing works on Orthodox liturgical texts. This setting of the "Psalm of Creation" (Ps. 103 [104]), the Introductory Psalm of Orthodox Vespers, is inspired by the practice of antiphonal singing, which, tradition tells us, goes all the way back to St. Ignatius of Antioch in the first century A.D. In the present instance, however, the "antiphony" is between choir and congregation, rather than between two choirs. The serene and joyful character of the setting makes it particularly appropriate for festive celebrations of Vespers, as well as general anthem use.

**Nazo Zakkak ~ Today Is the Beginning of Our Salvation** OMP-Za001 satb **\$1.25**

San Diego-based Orthodox composer Nazo Zakkak (b. 1987) is a composer and pianist whose background includes work in the fields of improvisation, minimalism, jazz, ambient music and experimental music. Having been introduced to the spiritual music of the Russian Orthodox Church, he shifted his focus to composing Orthodox liturgical music. The present work, a setting of the Orthodox Troparion for the Feast of the Annunciation, demonstrates the composer's ability to use economical means (accessible even to a parish choir of modest capabilities) to eloquently express the aura of both mystery and grandeur contained in this festive text. Suitable for Christmas and Annunciation.

(Recorded by Archangel Voices on their CD, *Panagia: Hymns to the Most Holy Mother of God*, release date: November 2013)

—Notes by Vladimir Morosan



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## 2013 NEW ISSUES MIXED CHORUS SACRED Original Slavonic Text and Phonetics

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CATALOG NO. 2013-SAMXSlav

**Cn015 Chesnokov ~ Come, Let Us Worship (Priidite, poklonimsia) \$1.85**

Chesnokov captures one of the most solemn moments of the Orthodox Divine Liturgy in this majestic setting of the Entrance Hymn. Effectively mixing choral colors by juxtaposing the men's voices against the treble voices, the composer builds to a brilliant culmination on the word "Alleluia."

(Recorded by Conspirare on their CD, *The Sacred Spirit of Russia*, release date: Fall 2013)

**Cn256 Chesnokov ~ O Fervent Intercessor (Zastupnitse userdnaya) \$2.40**

From Chesnokov's cycle of Marian hymns, To the Most Holy Sovereign Lady, opus 43, this Troparion to the Kazan Icon of the Virgin Mary embodies the spirit of Russian piety and veneration of the Most Holy Mother of God. Intensely supplicatory and evocative chant-like recitatives alternate with full choral sonorities characteristic of Chesnokov, making this work a potential crown jewel of a choral program.

**Cn251 Chesnokov ~ O Most Holy Mother of God, Save Us (Presviataya Bogoroditse) \$1.85**

Chesnokov incorporates a traditional Russian Orthodox call-and-response melody in this opening piece of his Marian cycle, To the Most Holy Sovereign Lady, opus 43. The composer packs a powerful emotional impact into this simple appeal, as the vocal lines build, and the textures expand, then contract back to unison. Colorful, emotional choral writing!

**Cn269 Chesnokov ~ O Most-Sweet and All-Compassionate Jesus (O, presladkiy i vseshchedriy Iisuse) \$1.85**

This piece is part of the choral cycle In Days of Battle, opus 45, written in the difficult early days of World War I. Chesnokov fashions a sacred concerto from a prayerful appeal to the Lord Jesus, drawn from an ancient prayer dating back to at least the 13th century. With great effect, the composer mixes Russian folk-style polyphony and a modal tonality in the opening phrases with massive block-like harmonies and imitative motives. Emotionally intense, this colorful choral piece represents some of Chesnokov's finest writing, as the composer was honing his compositional skills as a graduate-level student at the Moscow Conservatory.

**Cn272 Chesnokov ~ O Mother of God (Mati Bozhīya) \$1.85**

This intense supplicatory prayer to the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, is the best-known movement from Chesnokov's cycle In Days of Battle, op. 45, written during World War I. The evident success of this piece led the composer also to make an arrangement for men's choir and alto solo, shortly after the publication of the original version for mixed choir. The powerful homophonic chords of the opening, employing rich Romantic harmonies, are followed by an insistent, litany-like repetition of a pleading melody in the top voices with murmured responses of the men's parts. This is richly emotional music, expressing misfortune and desperation turning into hope and comfort.

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**I1001 Ilyashenko ~ We Should Choose to Love Silence (Liubiti ubo nam) \$1.85**

Andrei Ilyashenko (1884–1954) showed great promise in his earliest sacred pieces, published before the 1917 Revolution, employing a fresh harmonic and contrapuntal approach that certainly distinguished him among his Russian contemporaries of the early 20th century. Forced to flee his homeland, he lived out his life as a music teacher in Belgium. The full scope of his choral musical legacy has yet to be revealed. His sacred concerto for the Nativity of Christ, written in 1922, alternates long chant-like vocal lines of his own invention with bold harmonies in richly scored block chords. The music captures the elements of mystery and majesty that are inherent in the Incarnation of Christ, while the text reflects poetically upon the difficulty experienced by hymnographers to compose music and texts that are sufficiently lofty for praise and true worship.

(Recorded by Conspirare on their CD, *The Sacred Spirit of Russia*, release date: Fall 2013)

**Ks035 Kastalsky ~ Blessed Is the Man No. 2 (Blazhen muzh) \$2.40**

Part of Kastalsky's numerous hymn settings for the All-Night Vigil, this piece stems from the Church's ancient practice of sung psalms as the basic building blocks of worship. The psalm verses are sung to an energetic, muscular melody, alternating with the refrain "Alleluia." In this setting, dating from 1900, Kastalsky shows himself to be a master of choral color, varying sonorities and textures in a manner that would later be taken up and expanded upon by Rachmaninoff and other Russian composers of the early 20th century.

**Ks108b Kastalsky ~ Gladsome Light No. 2b (Svete tikhiy) \$2.40**

This most ancient of Christian hymns, in continuous use by the Orthodox Church since the late third century, inspired four different musical settings by Kastalsky. Combining motives drawn from medieval Russian chants, the composer weaves a contrapuntal tapestry that shines and undulates like the rays of the eternal, gladsome, never-setting Light. With this edition, all of Kastalsky's settings of this text are now available (catalog nos. Ks107, Ks109, and Ks151), enabling conductors to explore all four and decide which one is their favorite.

**Ks123 Kastalsky ~ Great Doxology No. 2 (Slavosloviye velikoye) \$3.95**

Kastalsky's masterful setting of the Great Doxology (incorporating the "Gloria in excelsis" and additional texts in Orthodox usage) shows the composer's intense sensitivity to choral color, textual inflection, and fine shades of meaning within the text. While based on motives drawn from znamenny chant, the composer is not bound so much by the cantus firmus as by the expressive declamation of the text, with its numerous contrasts and nuances, spanning prayerful emotions ranging from praise, worship, and exaltation to contrition, repentance, and supplication. Requiring a mastery of the lengthy text (facilitated by a Musica Russica's Audio Diction Guide), this piece offers choirs and audiences a wealth of satisfaction by virtue of its multi-dimensional depth and beauty.

(Recorded by Conspirare on their CD, *The Sacred Spirit of Russia*, release date: Fall 2013)

**Ks006 Kastalsky ~ A Mercy of Peace No. 1 (arr. of znamenny chant) (Milost mira) \$2.90**

Very soon after the publication of his early chant arrangements in the late 1890s, Kastalsky was hailed by colleagues and critics as the inaugurator of a new style in Russian sacred choral music. This setting of "A Mercy of Peace"—the Eucharistic Canon from the Orthodox Divine Liturgy, incorporating the Sanctus and Benedictus—shows off Kastalsky's masterful handling of the chant, as he clothes the ancient znamenny melody in a new polyphonic garment, alternately surrounding it with modal harmonies, treating it imitatively, and developing it motivically. Paying homage to the original anonymous composer(s) of the chant, he preserves the lengthy melismatic passages (fitas) that were used to highlight and beautify specific words in the text and embellishes them further by his own inventive and imaginative counterpoint.

(Recorded by Conspirare on their CD, *The Sacred Spirit of Russia*, release date: Fall 2013)

**CMR011 Martynov ~ The Beatitudes (Zapovedi blazhenstv) \$2.40**

Vladimir Martynov (b. 1946) is a Moscow composer who began with post-modernist avant garde and experimental music and later shifted his attention to the chant of the Russian Orthodox Church. His magical setting of the Beatitudes is simplicity itself: two soprano soloists (later joined by a third, singing a descant) alternately sing the words from the Sermon on the Mount to a folk-like pentatonic melody over a timeless ostinato of barely shifting chords hummed by the chorus. Only in the last verse is the music (along with the listeners' attention) given a new direction—heavenward. The coda, repeated ad libitum, leaves the hearer transfixed and transformed at having experienced something timeless, eternal, and definitely not of this world.

Also available in English translation, cat. No. CMR001E.

(Recorded by Conspirare on their CD, *The Sacred Spirit of Russia*, release date: Fall 2013)

—Notes by Vladimir Morosan