Cherubic Hymn No. 1

KALINNIKOV, Victor Sergeyevich—b. 1870, village of Voiny, Orlov District; d. 23 February 1927, Saltykovka, Moscow District. Brother of symphonist Vasily Kalinnikov. Studied at the Musical-Dramatic Institute of the Moscow Philharmonic School. From 1897 to 1923 was on the faculty of the Moscow Synodal School of Church Singing; from 1922 taught at the Moscow Conservatory. Also worked as a choral and orchestral conductor in various Moscow schools and musical theaters.

Kalinnikov belongs to the group of Russian choral composers whose activities centered around the Moscow Synodal School and its famed choir of men and boys in the first two decades of the 20th century. Along with his fellow "Synodals" Kastalsky, Chesnokov, Nikolsky, Shvedov, and Golovanov, Kalinnikov created sacred choral works of textural richness, timbral variety, and profound spiritual reverence, always maintaining the preeminence of the sacred liturgical text. In particular, his works are characterized by colorful harmonic writing, coupled with subtlety and delicacy of expressive means. Although he rarely used actual chant melodies (only one of his sacred works can be properly termed a chant arrangement), he frequently employed chant-like motives.

Kalinnikov's sacred choral output was not prolific: he only composed 24 short sacred works. But although published individually, taken together, they include most of the main, unchanging hymns of both the All-Night Vigil and the Divine Liturgy, making it possible to program his works in larger liturgical units.

In a liturgical context the Cherubic Hymn serves as a musical backdrop to the Great Entrance, during which the Communion bread and wine are transferred in solemn procession from the Table of Oblation to the Altar Table for consecration. In the course of the procession various commemorations are pronounced, after which "Amen" is sung, and the hymn is concluded. In a concert setting the "Amen" should be omitted.















