



**NATIONAL FORUM  
OF GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH MUSICIANS**  
*The musical arm of the Archdiocese that strengthens and perpetuates  
Greek Orthodox liturgical music in America*



**Position Statement Regarding  
THE USE OF THE ORGAN**

The National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians recognizes that the use of the organ in our parishes, either as an accompaniment for the choir or as background music during services, is an element introduced into the Greek Orthodox Church in America after the beginning of the 20th century. Further, the Forum understands that the traditional form of music for Orthodox music is the unaccompanied human voice.

However, since the majority of choirs throughout America are composed of volunteer singers, many of whom lack formal musical training, we accept the fact that the organ has become a necessary adjunct to the choir and to congregational singing --- primarily to maintain accurate intonation, to support the vocal sound if the choir lacks proper balance between sections, or to perform an independent accompaniment if such is provided in the composition. Such situations, we feel, constitute judicious and musically intelligent uses of the organ, provided they do not disrupt or overpower the voices, nor introduce a musical element that is not conducive to prayer and meditation.

Organ misuses that should be avoided include the following:

- *Pitches sounded by the organ before hymns and responses that are audible to the congregation. Much preferred are pitches given by pitch pipe and/or hummed quietly by the director.*
- *The use of organ stops or combinations which overpower vocal sound or otherwise produce effects that do not complement the character of Orthodox Church music.*

The National Forum of Church Musicians will continue to promote and encourage the development and use of acceptable of Orthodox music for the organ to supplement the prescribed role of the choir as necessary during Holy Communion, the offering, or while the celebrant distributes antidoron, and during sacraments. In addition, the National Forum has developed materials regarding the appropriate use of the organ and has identified resources to assist church musicians in carrying out these guidelines. Further information may be obtained by contacting the National Chairman.

*(Adopted June 1985; Reviewed and updated July 2014)*