

YOUTH MUSIC CONNECTION

A Publication of the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians

Welcome to our third issue of the *YouthMusic Connection*, our e-Newsletter for Orthodox Youth Music enthusiasts! This issue is unusual in that I have elected to supplant our regular features with an extended Metropolis Youth Music News section, primarily because of the wonderful response for article submissions that I have received from our readers! This crystallizes the notion that we have *many* dedicated individuals across our Archdiocese who work tirelessly for the future of Orthodox music in America. Although the release of this issue was slightly delayed, I trust that you will find the information useful and interesting. We hope and pray that you continue to send us your news and accomplishments! Lastly, as a reminder of how VERY important our work is, consider the wise words of St. Theophan the Recluse: *"Of all the holy works, the education of children is the most holy."*

In Christ's service,
Joanne H. Kambouris, editor

In the Spotlight!

Archdiocesan District of New York: The hymnology program of the Archangel Michael Greek Orthodox Church in Roslyn, New York has experienced remarkable growth over the past twenty-four years. In its early stages, music classes were held for church school children that led to the development of the Byzantine Youth Choir. Work accomplished with this group eventually led to the founding of the Teen Choir. The combined Youth and Teen choir sings the Divine Liturgy every Sunday at the first service in both Greek and English. Additionally, they sing during the liturgical year for the Heretismoi services and the Lamentations for Holy Friday. Their repertoire also includes many other beautiful spiritual pieces. The children develop their sight singing skills at rehearsals conducted on Wednesday evenings from 7 to 8 pm for youth, ages 9 to 12, and from 8 to 9 PM for teens, ages 13 to 18. Presently, the youth and teen choirs have 52 members within their ranks. In March, they were delighted to celebrate a Hierarchical Liturgy with His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios and His Grace Bishop Savas of Troas for the Archdiocesan District Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians Conference. Music Director Georgia Kaufman believes the light of the Orthodox faith is passed to the next generation by empowering our students with the tools they need to preserve our rich Orthodox musical heritage. As the Youth Choir Liaison for the Archdiocesan District Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians, Georgia is very willing to assist those who are interested in the establishment of new youth music programs in their parishes.



Metropolis Youth Music News

- **Archdiocesan District:** *HolyTrinity, New Rochelle, NY*

During the Paschal season, our Junior Choir sings the liturgy for the Saturday of Lazarus in both Greek and English. On Holy Friday, they sing the responses during the Apokathelosis, and at the end of this service, they sing three verses from each of the Lamentations in English. On Holy Saturday prior to the Anastasi, one soprano and one alto sing a stanza of each of the Katavasies in Greek.

Georgeann Mavrovitis, Director

- **San Francisco:** *Agia Sophia Academy, Portland, OR*

Students in grades 2, 3, and 4 participated in Byzantine Chant classes with Protosaltis (First Cantor) of the Metropolis of San Francisco, John Michael Boyer. Kathleen Powell, music teacher at the Academy, invited

Mr. Boyer to give the classes, which taught children how to sing the Apolytikion of Saint Nicholas from Byzantine notation. The children responded enthusiastically while using not only their musical skills, but their Greek language, mathematical, and scientific reasoning skills as well.



- **Denver:** *Assumption Cathedral, Denver, CO*

We have a wonderful choir with voices ranging from ages 4 - 15. On Holy Saturday Morning, our community was blessed as the joyful voices of our youth sang the entire liturgy. The children worked very hard and truly, they sounded wonderful. They sang for the Archbishop

in the fall of 2006 for the celebration of our Centennial. His comments were bountiful and the event seemed almost unbelievable with his presence. We also had a beautiful Christmas performance in which the children, as usual, rose to the occasion and delighted us all with their special gifts. The children and their parents must be commended for their commitment to our youth choir.

Kyrie Biddle and Aspasia Kyriazi, Directors

• **Denver:** *St Demetrios, Ft Worth, TX*

Practices are going well and we were excited to sing the Cherubic Hymn for Metropolitan Isaiah recently. We have also ordered literature and audio recordings that we will distribute to help the children learn the music and understand more about the Divine Liturgy. We will continue to hold practices immediately following Sunday School.

Marni Martin and Andrea Alexandrides, Directors

• **New Jersey:** *Sts. Constantine and Helen, Newport News, VA*

Our youth choir is open to children in grades 4-8, and currently has nine members, with a big influx of 4th graders anticipated this fall. The choir rehearses on Sundays immediately after Church School for 30 minutes. They sing the special Apolitykia for several holidays, some Communion Hymns, parts of the Liturgy on Sundays, and perform 3-4 songs on the annual church Christmas program. On April 21st, five members of the choir performed for a special all-denominational children's concert to benefit the Menchville House Ministries, a local shelter that provides assistance to victims of domestic abuse. They sang a Kievan version of the Trisagion in English, Ukrainian, and Greek. Our Philoptochos donated \$500 and our Adult Choir donated \$100 to this worthy cause in honor of our children's participation. We are very proud of these children for giving of their time and talent to help those in need.



Renee Root, Director

• **New Jersey:** *Holy Trinity, Westfield, NJ*

We have the Angel Choir for boys and girls ages 7-12. They sit near the adult choir in the front of the church and have their own white robes that have been donated. Older children (members of the Byzan-teen Choir) who are not able to make it to rehearsals after Church school due to schedule conflicts, are still permitted to sing with the adults since they are familiar with the basic liturgy (*it's this or we wouldn't get them at all!*). For the past 9 years, both choirs have participated in Lenten concerts in combination with other Orthodox adult and youth choirs in the Westfield area.

Kathy Athanasoulas, Director

• **Chicago:** *10th Annual Youth Music Conference*

On November 4th and 5th, 2006, youth singers from around the Chicago Metropolis gathered together at St. Andrew's Greek Orthodox Church for their 10th annual Youth Music Conference. Thirty young people came from as far south as St. Louis, MO to participate in learning and singing the Divine Liturgy. The music was a traditional setting and was directed by Stacey Cunningham. The children were accompanied by Rosie Cunningham- DeSanto. The children rehearsed and had plenty of free time in between rehearsals to "shoot hoops" and play games. Saturday evening ended with a youth rendition of "Greek-American Idol" and the youth singing Karaoke. On Sunday, the children sang the liturgy to the delight of Metropolitan Iakovos and the parishioners of St. Andrew's.



• **Detroit:** *Holy Trinity, Indianapolis, IN*

Our preschool and kindergarten classes sang in church after the Divine Liturgy on May 20th. Aside from the traditional hymns like Aghios O Theos, they sang praises to God with songs like Rise and Shine, Sing God the Glory, This Little Light of Mine, Go Tell It On The Mountain, and The Guardian Angel Song. These are all finger and hand play songs for which they have shown great enthusiasm all year long. At this age, they prefer to be moving rather than sitting and listening. They move, shake, clap, and sing "Halleluiah!" They love it and so do the teachers and the congregation!

Cindy Hackett, Preschool/Kindergarten Director

• **Atlanta:** *Orthodox Youth Choir of Tampa Bay*

Our choir has had a very busy year, beginning with performances for National Church Music Sunday, Christmas, and St Stephanos' vespers. A highlight of the year was our short concert for His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios in January during his annual Epiphany visit. In February, Holy Trinity Church in Clearwater hosted the Metropolis of Atlanta's annual Hellenic Dance and Choral Festival where our choir received a Gold Medal for their performance of two liturgical pieces and a Greek folk song. As a result of this honor, the Orthodox Youth Choir of Tampa Bay has been invited to participate in the Metropolis of Atlanta's 2008 trip to Greece, together with His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios and our Metropolis adult choir!



Joanne H Kambouris, Director

Director's Corner

Name: Jennie Cocoros Kegel, Director of Music
Parish: Saint Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church,
Baltimore, Maryland

Groups: Youth Chorus, Bell Choir, Youth Ministry
Musical



Mrs. Jennie Cocoros Kegel has a BS degree in music education from Towson University and has done extensive graduate work at Towson University, Loyola College, Westminster Choir College, and Goucher College. She frequently serves as a guest conductor and an adjudicator, as well as being a presenter at music education

conventions. She has produced and directed musical and dramatic productions for the past 30 years, and has directed outstanding student choirs that have performed in a wide variety of forums, including Disney World's Epcot Center, Camden Yards, United States Naval Academy, the Maryland Governor's Mansion, and other venues throughout the United States and Canada. As a lyric soprano, Jennie has performed in opera and concert halls throughout the United States. She has operated a private voice and piano studio for more than 30 years. Many of her private students are professional performers and musicians today.

She presently serves as the Director of Music for Saint Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Baltimore, Maryland. At Saint Demetrios, Mrs. Kegel directs the Adult Choir, Junior Chorus, and the Bell Choir. Also, for the past three years, she has produced and directed the Youth Ministry Musical, where parishioners from the ages of 5-35 have had the opportunity to perform.

One of the most rewarding aspects of Jennie's job at Saint Demetrios is to teach music to the children of the Bilingual Day School, ages 3-5. She teaches vocal and instrumental music to all classes on a weekly basis and also has the opportunity to teach liturgical music. Jennie conducts the liturgical music sessions for the monthly Cherub, HOPE and JOY retreats. During the summer, she teaches music for the Saint Demetrios Summer Vacation Bible School and conducts a three-day liturgical workshop for children where a CD recording is made every year.

Jennie feels that our greatest challenge is to teach our children strategies to successfully lead Orthodox Christian lives in a non-Christian world. Through music, we can offer religious knowledge, fellowship, and Christian values that our children can incorporate into their daily lives.

Jennie is married to Regis and they have two children: Regis Jr. and Michelle, who is married to Kit. You may contact Jennie at: jcocorosk@aol.com

National Forum Resources

2007 Liturgical Guidebook (Youth Music Resources) A comprehensive listing of resource materials for youth music available in our Archdiocese (see pages 152-156). Check with your choir director or priest to see the 2007 Edition.

Starting a Youth Music Program in Your Parish

A practical guide for starting and maintaining a quality youth music program from the ground up. Includes many useful ideas and suggestions, an extensive chapter on available resources, and frequently asked questions from directors of children's choirs. By Joanne H. Kambouris and Lynne Jebeles. Contact Vicki Pappas to order a copy. Cost is \$15 plus shipping and handling.

Please send all correspondence, ideas, and information to:

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