

# FIRST MODE

THE EASTERN FEDERATION OF GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH MUSICIANS NEWSLETTER ♦ WINTER 2010

## PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Dear Friends,

A very Happy, Healthy, Prosperous and Peaceful New Year to you all.

Those who attended our conference at St. Luke, Broomall, PA Oct. 15 - 18 remember what a wonderful time we all had. We thank the choir of St. Luke, led by their chairman and choir director, Ginny Botsis for their gracious hospitality and efficient organization. Along with our very musical guest conductor Renee Root and wonderful organist Fifi Nichols it was an experience we will long remember. The addition of the youth choir from Broomall and Media was certainly a highlight as His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos gratefully acknowledged.

Our next conference will be at Sts. Constantine and Helen, Newport News, VA. Oct. 14-17, 2010. I hope more of you will be inspired to attend. The director will be Dr. James Maniatis of Denver conducting the Steven Cardiasmenos Liturgy. This liturgy is beautiful but challenging. Please start early to rehearse it before attending the conference. In this issue chairman Renee Root has given you information as to where to get the music and a recording that will help you in learning it.

Lest we get complacent we are in need of bids for a host for our conferences in 2011 and 2012. Please don't leave it until the last minute to put in your bid.

Your Board continues to be busy. Please let your district supervisor know of your activities and any way we can help your choir. Here are some of the activities your Board has been involved with:

- Delegates attended the National Forum meeting in Detroit, July 4-8.
- Several members attended the Youth Institute Workshop in Boston, MA July 31-Aug. 1.
- A very exciting Church Music Institute is being planned in Richmond, VA on Saturday, March 6. Don't miss it. See flyer

- Your president will be attending the annual President's meeting in Indianapolis sometime in April or May.
- Your Board will be attending the Metropolis Clergy/Laity in Garfield, NJ in May,
- Delegates will attend the National Forum meeting in conjunction with the National Clergy/Laity in Atlanta, GA. July 4-8.
- Our website continues to be a great source of information. It is constantly being updated. Be sure to get acquainted with it. Put it in your "favorites".

<http://newjersey.churchmusic.goarch.org>

May you all continue to sing to the Glory of our Lord and Savior and enjoy being an important part of the Divine Liturgy.

-Kathryn

## Available Now on Our Website

You have been receiving many forms along with the First Mode for many years. These forms will now be posted on our website. In order to "lighten the load" of the mail these forms can be downloaded. Conference registration forms will still be sent by mail.

These are the forms that we recommend you get from the web:

- Scholarship applications
  - Music Review
- Recommendations for Conductors
  - Service Award Certificates
    - Athenagoras Award

Save the Date!!!!

## When “East Meets West”

In Newport News, VA  
October 14-17, 2010

Music: Steven Cardiasmenos  
Conductor: Dr. James Maniatis

For the first time ever, the Eastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians will be joined by the Metropolis of Denver Church Music Federation for a combined Choir Conference at Saints Constantine and Helen in Newport News, VA! Don't miss out on all the fun.

Dr. Maniatis, an Archon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, a recipient of the Athenagoras Award, and the first to receive the Archbishop Iakovos Distinguished Service Award in 2005 from the National Forum, has been conducting Greek Orthodox choirs in the Denver area for over 44 years, during which he has taken the Assumption Cathedral Choir of Denver on concert tours over 25,000 miles and performed over 100 concerts. He has also been Guest Conductor for conferences of the Denver and Chicago Federations.

The Cardiasmenos Liturgy is very beautiful and moving, but it is also difficult, certainly too difficult to sight-read at the conference and learn well enough to perform after only 3 days. Please take the time to prepare the music prior to the conference. Singing this beautiful music with a 100+ voice choir is sure to be an exhilarating and uplifting experience.

To order copies of the Cardiasmenos Liturgy:  
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Denver Music Federation  
12 Tamerlain Court  
Highlands Ranch, CO 80130  
Phone 303-773-0777      Email: [gt demos1@comcast.net](mailto:gt demos1@comcast.net)

To order a CD of a professionally recorded performance of the Cardiasmenos Liturgy:  
Assumption Cathedral Bookstore  
4610 E. Alameda Avenue  
Denver, CO 80246  
Phone 303-388-9314

Questions: Contact Renée Root, 757-303-4924 or [reneeroot@cox.net](mailto:reneeroot@cox.net)

## NATIONAL FORUM

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Musicians was hosted by the Church of the Assumption in St. Claire Shores, Michigan, July 9-11, 2009. Nancy and Stan Takis were our very gracious hosts. Our Eastern Federation delegation was once again the biggest in attendance. The five designated delegates were Kathryn Athanasoulas, Westfield, NJ; Hope Demitry, Trenton, NJ; Nick Kyros, Alexandria, VA; Maria Keritsis, Richmond, VA; Kay Kehayas, Piscataway, NJ; with Paul Mavromihalis, Bethesda, MD as alternate. Susan Karcanes, Westfield, NJ, served as the National Forum recording secretary.

Many of us arrived early on Wednesday and were lucky to take a tour of the Henry Ford Museum. Later in the afternoon we all met at St. George Church in Southgate, Michigan for a wonderful picnic on their beautiful park grounds.

On Thursday morning, July 9<sup>th</sup>, National Chairman Vicki Pappas opened the National Forum meeting after a prayer service offered by Father Michael Varlamos.

The next three days were filled with reviewing past projects and presenting new ones with specific emphasis on completing the Oloi Mazi hymn series and making a recording with a youth choir. In an effort to continue to reach the youth, the National Forum is planning to invite Metropolis Youth Directors to our annual meeting next year at the Clergy Laity Congress. Our goal is to make information and resources available to parishes, the youth, and church musicians.

The National Forum's website and the individual Federation's websites are up and running in conjunction with the Archdiocese. This was a very long process, and now that it's complete, it is easy to say that it was worth the wait. The sites are beautiful and easy to navigate. Please feel free to investigate for yourself. The internet is fast-changing many aspects of the National Forum. Many of our selling items are now on the Market Place; a shopping arena for [www.goarch.org](http://www.goarch.org) Check it out, you can find many nice gifts for your choirs and youth choirs. The LGB (Liturgical Guidebook) will be facing the possibility of the internet sometime in the future, too. This is truly a new age, and we are working towards the future.

On Friday we had an interactive visit with his Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas of Detroit, followed by a superb dinner and workshop on the Paraklesis Service presented by Nancy Takis and Father Anthony Cook. It was very interesting, to say the least, to learn the process it takes to translate our beautiful hymns from Greek to English.

The meeting was adjourned on Saturday, but many stayed through Sunday in order to sing Nancy Takis' liturgy directed by Stan Takis. After a very productive week, it was time to bid farewell to all our old, and some new friends, until next year. We will be meeting in Atlanta next year, July 4-8, 2010, in conjunction with the Clergy Laity Congress. Hope to see many of you then!

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Karcanes

## AXION ESTIN FOUNDATION

The Axion Estin Foundation sponsored its 3<sup>rd</sup> conference on Byzantine Music Education – January 15-17 in New York. This year's conference was entitled "Mostly Orthros Workshop". There was a combination of lectures and chanting workshops. The Chanting Orthros Workshop was offered jointly by Nancy Takis of Detroit (English text – western notation) and teachers Christos Chalkias and Eleftherios Eleftheriadis of Thessaloniki (Greek text-Byzantine Notation). This workshop was partially funded by the National Forum. The EFGOCM was also acknowledged in the credits. Attending from New Jersey were Kathryn Athanasoulas, Tula Christopoulos, Hope Demitry, and Kay Kehayas.

## DISTRICT REPORTS

### VIRGINIA DISTRICT

I was very honored to have been your Guest Conductor for last year's conference in Broomall, PA. It was a thrill to conduct such a large choir in Anna Gallos' lovely Opus 3 in the beautiful Church of St. Luke, and to get to know so many of you. The hospitality of the Broomall community was outstanding, and they so graciously saw to my every need. Thank you to all of you for making it a wonderful experience for me.

- Renée Root

#### Annunciation – Norfolk

Well it seems like we're always talking about our adult choir so I thought I'd report on our youth musicians. Once a month, one of our priests celebrates the Divine Liturgy in our chapel for all of our children and teenagers. This Liturgy is done almost entirely in English and our young congregation serves as the choir. Linda Meares directs with many helpers to make this an interactive, interesting, and spiritual experience for our children. This youth service is an enjoyable experience for the participants, for the priest and the parents who attend. And it exposes all of our children to the beautiful hymns of our church.

-Drucie Papafil

#### Saints Constantine and Helen – Newport News

Nine members of our choir attended this past fall's EFGOCM conference in Broomall. We all had a wonderful time, and were so pleased with the gracious hospitality of the Broomall community. We took copious notes, since the torch has been passed to us for the next conference.

And yes, the Saints Constantine and Helen community is now deep into the planning stages of this year's EFGOCM Conference, East Meets West, scheduled for October 14-17 here in beautiful Newport News. We are delighted and honored to be hosting not only our EFGOCM choir family, but also our Metropolis of Denver Church Music Federation extended choir family. This is a first ever event, and sure to be fun and uplifting. We will be singing the Cardiasmenos Liturgy, conducted by Dr. James Maniatis of Denver (see the accompanying flyer).

Registration information will be forthcoming in the next issue of *First Mode*, but for those early birds who want

to catch that worm, you may make your hotel reservations at the Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites at any time on line at:

[Federation Choir Conference](#)

Or at:

<http://www.ihg.com/h/d/HI/1/en/rates/PHFNN?groupBookingCode=FCC&IATAno=99801505>

Single/double rooms are \$79 per night, and suites are \$99. The hotel is adjacent to the church, so once you park your car to check in, you will not need it again until you check out! You may print out your confirmation and peruse the hotel website for other important information.

You may contact me at [reneeroot@cox.net](mailto:reneeroot@cox.net) at any time with questions regarding this event. Hope to see all y'all here!

- Renée Root

#### Saints Constantine and Helen – Richmond

Greetings and Happy New Year to all. May your year be filled with many blessings and good health. The Richmond choir has had a busyfall. Several of our choir members attended the annual EFGOCM conference in October under the able direction of Renée Root. She did a fabulous job, and we are very fortunate to have such wonderful talent in our metropolis. This fall has also been interesting, because we do not have an organist, so the choir has to step up to the plate and sing it a cappella. They are doing a great job, although we have had our challenges, such as the Sunday in January when the electricity went out just at the end of the Orthros. The choir used candles to see the music, and sang mostly from the pitch of the Priest. Sometimes it didn't quite work out so well (Nick Kyrus, where were you when we needed your perfect pitch?). The choir director was rather stressed; however, at the exact moment of the Consecration of the Gifts, the lights came on and the power was restored. From that point on, with the aid of a keyboard, the choir sang right on pitch.

December was very busy, as always. On December 6th our community held its first St. Nicholas Day Community Celebration. The choir presented a mini concert and sang the hymn of St. Nicholas, It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas, Carol of the Bells and several other fun and well known Christmas songs. Then the community joined in for a sing a long. This was followed by dinner, a visit from St. Nicholas (Sub Deacon

## DISTRICT REPORTS—CONTINUED

Nick Zachary) who passed out St. Nicholas icon cards, and dancing for all.

The choir also planned to spend two Sunday afternoons visiting and singing at five assisted living places. One Sunday was snowed out (Richmond came to a stand still). Our Sunday School Pageant was also cancelled due to weather. One week during the year our Cathedral participates in the CARITAS (Communities Around Richmond Involved To Assure Shelter) program. We cooked and served dinner; had a sing a long with jingle bells, drums and egg shakers; gave out presents; and prepared their lunches for the next day. Our guests were very appreciative, as well as all of us, once again, seeing how blessed we all are.

The Christmas Eve Liturgy was beautiful. The choir had a little glitch. We had a substitute organist, and somehow the number three “transpose up” button on the organ got pushed in at the beginning of the Liturgy. Okay, singing (or trying to sing) Kypros and Raptis up a step and a half wasn't so bad? The director had been sick and was distressed at how off her hearing was. Of course all the faces that the choir members were making, made her realize it wasn't because she was sick and couldn't hear. Finally, with the push of one button we were back on the correct pitch. That ended 2009. Christ Is Born, Glorify Him.

To start the new year off, our Daughters of Penelope sponsored the second annual dinner and Variety Show. Several of our choir members performed and showed off their wonderful and unique talents.

And finally, be sure to join us in Richmond on March 6<sup>th</sup> for the Church Music Institute with Chrissellene G. Petropoulos and Marina Alexander. See the flyer and registration information included in First Mode. We hope you will attend, even if you've seen their workshop before, and look forward to hosting you!

-Sondra Awad

### NEW JERSEY DISTRICT

A very Happy New Year to you all from New Jersey.

About 5 years ago we were asked to do a short program of our favorite Greek Folk songs for a benefit luncheon for St. Basil's Academy. Those attending, including His

Eminence, enjoyed it very much so they asked us to repeat it this year for the same purpose on Sunday, March 7. We are having a lot of fun putting it together. We recruited choir members from our email list.

On Friday, March 26 our New Jersey District singers will present our “Spirit of Lent” concert at St. Demetrios, Perth Amboy. We are celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> year since we started this tradition with Dennis Spyros of blessed memory. This year we are very fortunate to have a guest appearance of one of our professional baritones, Constantinos Yiannoudes. We also hope to expand our Youth singers who have been a part of this program since 1994.

-Marie Devino

### Youth Singers Workshop

On October 24, 2009 the Eastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians (EFGOCM) New Jersey District sponsored the first Youth Singers Workshop of the Metropolis at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Westfield, NJ. The youth throughout NJ were invited. We had a total of 27 talented youth singers from 5 parishes and their ages were from 8 – 19.

Marina Alexander was the clinician and guided the youth through breathing and vocal warm-up exercises; song/hymns in both Greek and English of choral and byzantine styles; a wonderful lunch and great fellowship was had by all. The day concluded with a short program of some of the pieces learned during the day. The youth wore the T-Shirts that were provided for them in their packets and they looked and sounded great. Since our Metropolitan was traveling with the Patriarch, Chancellor Fr. George Nikas represented His Eminence and spoke to the youth.

At each of our workshops or CMIs we ask the participants to complete an evaluation form. The youth responded positively in their evaluation and they gave us their highlights and impressions of the day. One of the questions was... would they like to be informed of any other workshops and the response was an overwhelming “yes”. We look forward to sponsoring other workshops for our youth.

-Hope Demitry

## DISTRICT REPORTS—CONTINUED

### PHILADELPHIA DISTRICT

#### St. Luke, Broomall, Pennsylvania

On National Church Music Sunday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, the St. Luke Parish honored all of our Church Musicians with flowers and a gift. This year Father Christ Kontos presented each of us with the CD *Agni Parthene*, chanted by the monks of the Monastery of Simonopetra on Mount Athos.

Two weeks later we were pleased to host the EFGOCM Conference at our Parish from October 15<sup>th</sup> through the 18<sup>th</sup>. Nearly 100 Church musicians attended from Staten Island, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. We even had a member from the Chicago Metropolitan join us! The Conference was planned to coincide with St. Luke's Feast Day on October 18<sup>th</sup> and was an especially celebratory weekend for our Parish. We thank all of you who attended and helped to make the weekend so successful.

To Renee Root, Conductor; Fifi Nichols, Organist; Sondra Awad, Youth Choir Director; Paul Mavromihalis, Vespers Conductor; and Kathryn Athanasoulas, EFGOCM Presi-

dent, we extend our gratitude. His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos, Chancellor Father George Nikas, Rev. Father Christ Kontos, and Rev. Father Christopher Grecu celebrated the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning as the Conference Choir sang the music of Anna Gallos, Opus III. One of the highlights of the morning was the sound of the 20-voice Youth Choir. We especially thank Helen J. Beldecos (St. George, Media, PA) and Dena Papadopoulos (St. Luke, Broomall, PA) for coaching the children who participated in the Youth Choir.

On Christmas Eve our Choir participated in the Annual Christmas Pageant with the St. Luke Sunday School. Following the success of the Youth Choir at the Conference, a Pageant Youth Choir was organized, under the direction of Dena Papadopoulos. We hope this is the beginning of more participation by these young singers.

The St. Luke Choir extends best wishes to all for a very happy 2010.

-Virginia Botsis

## MOMENTS FROM THE 2009 EFGOCM CONFERENCE



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KEEP GETTING THE MODE

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