Celebrating Sacred Art and its ties to Hellenic College Holy Cross
Dear esteemed Alumni, I hope this finds you all well during this festal and often very busy time of year!

As we eagerly anticipate our Lord’s glorious incarnation, we sing appropriate seasonal hymns and gaze at various festal images. These glorious hymns and physical items are tools to help us prepare our souls and our homes for His mysterious advent and it is for this reason that we dedicate this issue of *Together Again* to the sacred arts. We hope you take the time to read the various articles submitted by fellow alumni as well as to stay informed of all of the great things happening at your alma mater.

Within these pages, we also hope to keep you informed as to how your generous contributions are being directed by the Alumni Association. From our first live-streamed internet event and Homecoming 2012 to our recent $35,000.00 update of the Alumni Memorial Wall and $5000.00 contribution for renovations in the JC Room in Polemanakos Hall, the Association is making a difference, thanks to your continued generous support. In addition, you can read about the celebration of the 75th anniversary of our beloved school at this year’s Clergy Laity Congress in Arizona and you can see the names of the classes of ’63 and ’88 to be honored in May of 2013 at the alumni reunion.

We hope that you enjoy this issue of *Together Again* (limited hard copies available upon request) and that it serves as a reminder of your open invitation to come visit your alma mater in order to witness all that HCHC currently has to offer. We humbly ask that you continue being ambassadors of our two schools by raising awareness amongst our Orthodox faithful and spreading the word to potential students. Finally, may the sacred art of the church remind each of us that we are the height of God’s creation and therefore that we are each a piece of sacred art. May the Artist Himself be born in the manger of our hearts this Christmas, thus restoring the original beauty of His image and likeness in each one of us, His iconic masterpieces. Amen!

With love in Christ,

Gregory Floor (SOT, ’05)
Director of Admissions/Alumni Relations
# Features

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On the cover: Iconographer George Philippakis  
Photo by Peggy Giovane
Beloved Alumnae and Alumni,

This issue of Together Again with its theme of “sacred arts” offers a focus on an essential aspect of our Orthodox faith. Through our worship, devotion, and teaching, we emphasize the importance of art in our communion with God and our witness of Him to the world. We are blessed as Orthodox Christians with a strong and beautiful heritage of art as liturgy, art as music and chant, art as iconography, and art as architecture—ways in which we take the ability and skills given to us by our Creator, and through inspired human expression offer a witness of His power, of holiness and truth, and of life.

The witness of the power of God through the depth and beauty of the sacred arts is affirmed in words of the Psalmist: Honor and majesty are before Him; strength and beauty are in His sanctuary (Psalm 96:6). In the beauty of song and the witness of our churches and services, God’s power is affirmed and experienced. Through our visual and auditory abilities, we both participate in and are drawn into communion with Him; and in this relationship and through our response of faith, His strength and power become very present and very real.

The sacred arts also guide us in understanding the absolute truth revealed in the Gospel. They are not just art for the sake of beauty and enjoyment, or a guide to the life of holiness, but they ultimately lead to the eternal truth of the Gospel.

You know the multifaceted witness of the sacred arts, because when you attended Hellenic College and Holy Cross School of Theology you received education in liturgics and chanting, learned through prayer in the chapel, and studied the role of iconography and architecture in our Orthodox faith. You also know and experience this witness as you lead and participate in worship in your parish. As graduates of our beloved School and students of the sacred arts, you have a vital role in your communities in striving for excellence in the offering made to God through worship. In addition, together with the members of your parishes, you are called to offer a beautiful and holy witness to the world of the salvation and life we have in Him.

May our good and gracious Lord continue to bless you with strength and wisdom in your service to Him and His people. Through our worship and the sacred arts may we proclaim and lead others to God not only as the ultimate Source of love, justice, and holiness, but also as the source of ineffable beauty.

With paternal love in Christ,

†DEMETRIOS
Archbishop of America
How I wish every Christian Orthodox in America could come to pray, audit our classes, and enjoy fellowship with us here on our enchanting campus. This issue of Together Again is devoted to the theme of sacred arts. As we approach the year 2013, we joyfully anticipate celebrating the 50th anniversary of the opening of our campus Holy Cross Chapel. The entire architecture of our chapel is a witness to the beauty and sensitivity of our Orthodox sacred art. Nestled at the top of one of the highest points of our property, which is also one of the highest elevations southwest of the City of Boston, our gold dome evokes praises to God from all who observe it from afar. All of us who comprise the community of Hellenic College Holy Cross humbly worship and meditate under the icon of our Pantocratora.

Additionally, a most special gift to us is to be silent - silent as we sit in Chapel in personal conversation with our loving God, as we bring our supplicatory prayers to the relics of saints and as we come forward to receive the life-creating Body and Blood of our Savior. Our Chapel truly is the heart of our campus and of our campus life.

We are also privileged to house in the Archbishop Iakovos Library and Learning Resource Center our beloved late Archbishop Iakovos’s artifacts, ecclesiastical vestments, and historic memorabilia. The dome of this museum is now replete with iconography.

Finally, I share with you that the natural beauty of our 53-acre campus with its mosaic of greenery, trees and shrubs, coupled with an array of forest animals, is a beauty of sacred art in itself. I, therefore, again, prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to lead all of our readers on a pilgrimage to our Holy Hill.

In His Service,

Rev. Nicholas C. Triantafilou
President

Dear alumni and friends of HCHC,

I greet you as the recently elected president of the Alumni Board.

First, allow me to thank my immediate predecessor, Fr. George Chioros, for his four years of leadership and hard work as president, as well as all those who have served on the board with me over the years. They have laid a wonderful foundation for us to build upon and we owe them all a debt of gratitude.

This year's Hellenic College Holy Cross Alumni Association has ambitious and exciting goals. Over the next six months, we intend to contact each and every alumnus/a and have a conversation with you about where you are in your life and vocation and how HCHC can be more a part of that picture. We plan on finishing our self-study (begun last year) and publishing the results and the insight we’ve gained about how we have done in the past and where we can go from here as an association. We intend to expand the board in the process, insuring that we have a more representative group of clergy and lay alums from each Metropolis of the GOA as well as from each of the other Orthodox jurisdictions. All of our other programs and projects will also continue and we have already begun having monthly conference calls to keep ourselves on task for all of the above.

Finally, we invite you to join us for this year's Alumni Week in May during our school's historic 75th anniversary celebration. We also invite you to tune into the many live video-streaming broadcasts that are happening in the course of the year, highlighting the work our amazing alumni throughout the country and the entire world and which are being archived on our Alumni webpage.

Sound exciting? We hope so. Want to get involved? We want you to be.

In His mercy,

Rev. Theodore Petrides
President of the Alumni Association
50TH AND 25TH CLASSES: A LOOK BACK

CLASS OF 1963
His Grace Bishop Demetrios Couchell
Rev. Fr. Stephen L. Avramides
V. Rev. Fr. Peter D. Costarakis
Rev. Fr. Demetrius T. Dogias
V. Rev. Fr. Nicholas Frangakis†
Rev. Fr. James T. Kyriakakis†
Rev. Fr. Sarantos E. Serviou
George C. Spanoudakis
Rev. Fr. Nicholas C. Triantafiliou
Rev. Fr. Steven J. Vlahos

CLASS OF 1988
HELLENIC COLLEGE
Rev. Fr. Costas P. Keares
Rev. Fr. John N. Kalomas
Rev. Fr. Christ A. Kontos
Athanasios George Papademetriou
Rev. Fr. Paul Paris
John Sbarounis
Rev. Fr. John N. Theodosion
Rev. Fr. Philip Zymaris

HOLY CROSS
Master of Divinity
Rev. Fr. Paul Christy
Rev. Fr. Anthony G. Demetri
Rev. Fr. Timothy J. Ferguson
Rev. Fr. Christopher P. Foustoukos
Achilles Spilios Christos Gacis
V. Rev. Fr. Anastasios G. Garaboa
Rev. Fr. James L. Greanias
Rev. Fr. Jerry F. Hall
John A. Heropoulos
Constantine T. Langis
Rev. Fr. Peter T. Mentis
V. Rev. Vasilios Penteridis
Rev. Fr. Constantine J. Terzopoulos
Rev. Fr. Theodore S. Tsitsilianos

Master of Theological Studies
Dean P. Athens
Rev. Fr. Marius L. Cybulski
John Kapsalis
Terry K. Markou
Ourania A. Papandreou

Master of Theology
Rev. Fr. Peter Avgiropoulos
Dr. James C. Skedros

† Indicates deceased, memory eternal

ALUMNI REUNION
May 15-18, 2013
Join us as we honor the classes of 1963 and 1988 and help us to welcome our newest alumni, the Class of 2013

Hellenic College
Greek Orthodox School of Theology
50 Goddard Avenue, Brookline, MA 02445

HOLY CROSS
50th Anniversary Celebration

SAV E THE DATE
Dear Alumni/Alumnae:

As Hellenic College Holy Cross commemorates 75 years of faith, education, and service, we celebrate with you, the faithful alumni/alumnae, who have laid the foundation and stewarded this vital ministry for our Church and society.

HCHC is preparing a commemorative album documenting its rich history through both narrative accounts and photos and will include a section for donor recognition tributes. We are asking all of our alumni/alumnae to join our sponsorship efforts.

Thank you for supporting your School!

In His Service,

Rev. Nicholas C. Triantafilou
President

Forms available at: www.hchc.edu/75years/commemorative_album.html or by contacting John Papson at (617) 850-1377.
HOMECOMING
2012

A great time was had by all at the Annual Hellenic College vs. Holy Cross Columbus Day football game, complete with visiting homecoming alumni cheering on the sidelines! Hellenic College dominated their elder rivals 35-28.
The Alumni handily defeated the students for the second year in a row at the annual students vs. alumni basketball game! The final score was 57-42.

Members of the HCHC Alumni Association Board of Directors after their fall meetings during Homecoming weekend (October 2012).
Inside the Chora Monastery

Steps from which St. Paul taught near Thessaloniki
Holy Cross has conducted an annual Study Abroad Program in Constantinople, Mt. Athos, and Greece for its rising senior class for almost twenty-five years. The trip consists of equal parts spiritual pilgrimage, historical learning, and intensive foreign language study. Three weeks are spent in Thessaloniki for full-time Modern Greek classes. While the men are on the Holy Mountain, female students visit some of the most important convents in northern Greece. Students also get to visit ancient Greek sites.

Dr. Timothy Patitsas, Assistant Professor of Christian Ethics, has led the trip for many years. Of the experience, for himself and for the students, he says: “At one time or another over the years of the trip, the seminarians have visited almost every monastery on the Holy Mountain. For me as their professor, it has been an incredibly humbling experience to stand alongside the future priests as they venerate the holy skull of St. John Chrysostom. Perhaps the culminating experience of the trip is the annual audience with His All-Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. The gracious love with which we are received by the First Throne of Orthodoxy leaves the students with the feeling that their ministries in the United States are rooted in the solid earth of the Universal Church.”
As part of Alumni Homecoming Weekend 2012, Dr. Philip Mamalakis moderated HCHC’s first-ever live-streaming panel discussion, entitled “The Vital Ministry of the Laity: The Royal Priesthood of all Believers”. The panel was comprised of five lay members of the alumni community, including Gerontissa Foteini, a nun from All Saints Monastery in New York; Elena Khoury, a contract and immigration attorney; Chris Kourlos, a business consultant; Dr. George D. Stavros, Director of the Danielson Institute; and Catherine Varkas, a long-time educator.

Dr. Mamalakis explained that the panel members “shared how they understood their particular vocation as vocation and ministry of the Church.” He highlighted the work of Ms. Khoury as helping the needy through pro-bono legal work, and the work of Ms. Varkas in contributing to the formation of young children. He commented that all of the members of the panel discussed how they strive to present themselves as Orthodox Christians as much as they are able. As a result, as colleagues and clients get to know them, they have the opportunity to get to know the Orthodox Church.

More than 50 students, alumni, and guests attended the discussion, which addressed how we strive to live out our priestly ministry in our professional lives. The panel also marked the beginning of live-streaming discussions at Hellenic College Holy Cross over the Internet. 110 online viewers participated in the session. These viewers were able to interact with the panel via email, and one online viewer remarked, “I appreciate the time and effort that you expended to conduct this online session. Although I am not a graduate of HCHC, I had the blessing to attend the Diaconate Program classes over the last few summers. I was able to listen in to this session while working at my desk…”

Following on the success of this panel, Hellenic College Holy Cross hopes to have at least one live-streaming discussion, lecture, or event per month throughout the course of the academic year. Recordings of all live sessions will be uploaded to our YouTube channel, HCHCMedia, will also be accessible on our website.

Article by Melanie Pappas
Hellenic College Holy Cross sponsored a reception for all attending the Clergy Laity Congress in Phoenix. This was the second consecutive CLC reception hosted by the school. The event, made possible through the generous support of Trustee Helen Carlos and her husband Ron Hilliard, was attended by several hundred people.

The highlight was the presentation of the Alumni Association’s Distinguished Ministry Award to Protopresbyter Spencer Kezios. Father Spencer was clearly moved by the recognition. His acceptance speech was humble and gracious. He has been the heart and soul of Narthex Press, which he founded many years ago with the late V. Rev. Dr. Leonidas Contos, a former president of the school. The press has provided outstanding translations of the services of the faith.

The award read: The Alumni Association of Hellenic College and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology presents the 2012 Distinguished Ministries Award to Rev. Fr. Spencer Kezios in honor and recognition of his many years of facilitating the translation and publishing of liturgical texts. “Well done good and faithful servant.” (Matt. 25:21)
Orientation staff, made up of current students, welcome new students as they lend a helping hand!
Music and art find their true beauty and meaning by their use in the service of the Church.

Article by John Papson

This is all the more obvious when we encounter them in sacred space. The Byzantines were fascinated by concepts relating to time and space. Their society was permeated with theological thought and spiritual practice. The eschatological took its place alongside the secular and the practical. Theological discourse occurred in all strata of society. So how do time and space become sacred?

Almost every New England town has a Protestant church with a tall, narrow spire that soars into the sky. It is said that this represents an attempt to reach up to heaven. We Orthodox see things differently. Heaven came to us when the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. (John 1:14) He Who existed before the ages condescended to exist in finite time. The timeless One entered time and space and showed both to be bearers of spiritual meaning. So it was that our churches, our sacred spaces, came to represent heaven on earth and the style of architecture so familiar to us as Orthodox was developed to express that very real relationship that exists between heaven and earth.

And in that sacred space the human voice, the greatest musical instrument and the only one not made by man, joins with the human hand, through which the iconographer creates images inspired by the Holy Spirit, to uplift us during our services. Music and art become liturgical arts.

The space of the narthex is relatively small and confined, so that when we enter the church proper we are physically, and hopefully spiritually, uplifted. We move from the physical bonds of our finite life to where we can experience a taste of the life that knows no bonds. The dome represents heaven in which Christ Pantocrator reigns majestically. Prophets just below Him foretell His coming. The Evangelists in the four corners proclaim the continuity of the faith from old wineskins to new; old uses must be adapted to proclaim a new message. (Matt. 9:17) The Platytera, that is, she who is wider than the heavens because she contained the Uncontainable One, located halfway between heaven and earth, welcomes us with outstretched arms. The Liturgy of the Apostles in the altar, attended by angelic hosts, reminds us of the heavenly liturgy that accompanies our liturgy on earth. And the great liturgists, St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil, etc., connect us directly to our faith from earliest times. We understand and experience how space becomes sacred as we participate in the Divine Liturgy. The icons on the iconostasis, when depicted properly, seem to be looking at us regardless of where we are in the church, making a personal connection. This expression of the faith continues unabated throughout the church.

Our sense of sight is further enhanced by chanting. This keeps us focused. This induces us to pray. This very real experience helps to explain what is depicted in the iconography that surrounds us. All of our senses, in fact, are addressed in a most pleasant way: sight by icons; hearing by chanting; taste from the Eucharist, antidoron or kolyva; smell from incense; touch as we cross ourselves or venerate icons. The entire human experience is invited to participate in sacred space. Music, art, and architecture combine to provide us with a sacred space. Indeed, the liturgical arts lift us up to let us experience, to the extent that we can in this life, the promise of the life to come.

On the following pages, the sacred arts are celebrated through the work of those who are connected to Hellenic College Holy Cross.
George Filippakis is one of the best-known iconographers in the United States. Originally from Crete, he began his apprenticeship at age eleven under master iconographer Stylianos Kartakis. He attended the School of Fine Arts in Athens. His work appears in about 90 churches throughout the United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe.

He has installed several icons in the Holy Cross Chapel: The Annunciation, The Hospitality of Abraham (Holy Trinity), The Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria, The Extreme Humility, and Above on the Throne and Below in the Grave. He also installed iconography in the dome of the Archbishop Iakovos Library and Learning Resource Center Museum (see below and page 34).

“You have to love the work and you have to have faith. God gave you this talent, but you have to believe in it. I always pray to God for each piece to be a success.”
George Kordis received the ThM from Holy Cross in 1989 and his doctorate in theology in 1991 from the University of Athens. He is currently assistant professor in the theory and practice of iconography on the theology faculty at the University of Athens.

Among his many publications is *Icon as Communion*, published by Holy Cross Orthodox Press. He has become a renowned iconographer who studied with the Cypriot master iconographer Fr. Symeon Symeou. He has worked on Mt Athos and in Greece, Lebanon, Italy, and the United States.

Dr. Kordis says about iconography: “The faithful, through the picture, can flavor what the Realm of God offers. In order for this communication to exist, the painting style of the icon should suggest the characteristics of the Kingdom of Heaven and supply his senses with quietness, catharsis, peace, and simplicity. All these spiritual qualities demand the preservation of the tradition of the Church and the continuity of the art of the old masters. Perseverance, of course, within this tradition, should not, under any circumstances, be considered a reproduction of figurative solutions of the past, but as a creative relationship with them.” His website is www.giorgoskordis.com.
Albert Qose is originally from Albania. He has worked at Hellenic College Holy Cross since 1999 and is a 1987 graduate of the Academy of Arts in Tirana. Albert manages the mail room and since 2005 he has taught painting classes in the College. Albert is a master sculptor. His works can be found in the Gallery of Arts in Tirana and in private collections.

He has also designed alumni awards for the Alumni Association and designed and painted the double-headed eagle that adorns the gymnasium floor.
Khalil Samara
SOT ’05

Khalil Samara is a 2005 graduate of Holy Cross. His interest in iconography peaked during his 2004 Senior Trip to Turkey, Greece, and Mt. Athos.

As he says: “Becoming an iconographer was never something that I set out to do. Through working for the church in various capacities, doors continued to open where I had the opportunity to learn about icons, the techniques of iconography, and the tradition of the Church. I am thankful for the opportunities that I have received, the teaching and guidance of iconographer Presbytera Erin Kimmett, and the blessings God has given me.”

Khalil and his physician wife, Mariah, recently became the proud parents of their first son, Jonah. They reside in Westlake, Ohio. Visit his website at: www.khalilsamara.com.
Tom (Athanasios) Clark attended Hellenic College. He studied iconography in Thessaloniki, Greece, for five years with master iconographer Kostas Tsilsavides. Since then he has worked in churches throughout the United States. Tom has very deep feelings about his chosen profession.

"Iconography is a gift for which I am very grateful. It has allowed me to serve God and to work in parishes across America with others who love and consider God’s House their house and who have been a constant source of inspiration to me.

For 30 years I have been blessed to participate on teams of dedicated and hard-working people in communities who have joined their gifts and talents - through sacrifice and love - to those who have preceded them and for those who will follow.”

Tom and his wife, Sophia, currently live in Athens, Greece. They are the parents of five sons. Visit his website at: www.tomclarkicons.com.

Used with permission, photo by Ted Richardson of the News and Observer of Raleigh, North Carolina.
Fr. Anthony Salzman is a 1989 graduate of Holy Cross. He studied Byzantine iconography and art history in Thessaloniki, Greece. His work is in many churches in the United States. He is the parish priest of St. Philothea Greek Orthodox Church in Athens, Georgia, and the OCF coordinator for the Metropolis of Atlanta and the Southeast Region.

Fr. Anthony says of icons that they are “vehicles of worship and faith. That goes with the theology of the church - when we enter the church we are leaving time and space and entering eternity, the Kingdom of God.” He has conducted workshops, seminars, and college courses in iconography. His website is www.imageandlikeness.com.
John Papson is a 1966 graduate of Hellenic College and a 1969 graduate of Holy Cross. He has been involved in the restoration of the Chapel while working at the School in a variety of capacities. He assisted with the installation of new iconography and the restoration of the iconostasis. A self-taught woodworker, he has made a relic chest, a podium, a table for the altar area, a cross for above the Royal Doors and a frame for an icon of St. Nicholas.

“This work has been particularly gratifying for me because the Chapel was built and decorated while I was a student at the school and I spent many afternoons in the Chapel watching Demetrios Dukas installing the iconostasis and mosaics. And the icon of St. Nicholas was done by him. I look forward to when we will be able to add more iconography in the Chapel.”
The framework of faith and worship, to which the icon belongs, is the Christian liturgy. The art of the icon is liturgical. It is a visual system which underlies and underlines the spiritual events that constitute the foundation of the entire liturgical drama. This means that in order to understand somewhat the icon, one must first understand somewhat these spiritual events that constitute the foundation of liturgy.

The icon primarily depicts what is known as the Christian view of the world. It is the Christian creed in pictures. Just as the symbol of faith, so also the icon presents a theology, a teaching about creation, an exposition of events in the life of the God-Man… that together constitute the Christian economy of salvation. In this sense, the icon teaches the dogmatic truths of the Christian faith.

The icon reveals and reminds: it is a sign-post that directs us towards the knowledge and acceptance of the convictions and ideas which constitute the content of Christian faith.

Ultimately, the art of the icon aims at the transfiguration of the person that approaches it, in order that he no longer see any opposition between the worlds of eternity and of time, between spirit and matter, between divine and human, but that he sees these as united in one reality.

“Time and nature are made new”: worldly space is transfigured; perspective, which puts man in the position of an outside observer, no longer exists. The believer, the pilgrim, is a guest at the Wedding. He is inside, and sees the whole world from the inside. History is interpreted differently: the events of divine Economy are not past and closed but present and active. They embrace us, they save us. What we have in the icon is not a neutral, faithful historical representation but a dynamic liturgical transformation. In iconography the events of salvation are not interpreted historically but expressed mystically and embodied liturgically; they interpenetrate with one another. They become a witness to the “different way of life” which has broken through the bounds set by corruption. They invite us to a spiritual banquet, here, now.

The faithful do not know the Lord and His saints through recollection or by looking back into history. They have the Divine Liturgy, the holy icon. Being baptized into the joy of the new creation, they enter into the iconographic and liturgical world where they find the Lord and the saints alive. They come into immediate contact and communion with life. They sing the triumphal hymn with the blessed spirits. They offer worship for forefathers, fathers, patriarchs, prophets... (the unity of the faith and the communion of the Holy Spirit. It is not the creation or improvisation of some genius. It does not serve merely artistic ends. It does not divide up history. For the world of the icon, distance in space and the passing of time do not exist. What the icons expresses is not the fragmentation characteristic of the present age, but the unifying power of the Liturgy. The ethos of the Orthodox saint and the expression of Orthodox hagiography are akin: both combine humility and magnificence. In both life wells up behind an outward appearance of motionlessness, and there is a “hidden beauty.” Nothing laughs frivolously and wounds the sorrowful. Nothing shows an insconsolable misery that brings death. Victory is a certainty, and everything is expressed with the calm and joy of contrite devotion that tames what is wild and brings to life what is mortal.


Beauty is an objective principle in the world, revealing to us the divine glory... Art brings about the transfiguration of the world and renders it conformable to its true image... Things are transfigured and made luminous by beauty; they become the revelation of their own abstract meaning.

Does the music used today in Greek Orthodox churches sound the same as the music that the “Byzantines” used? This is one of the most common questions HCHC students ask in introductory Byzantine music courses. And it has an easy, albeit simplistic, answer. We have no recordings from the Middle Ages, so we cannot be certain what the music of the “Byzantines” sounded like. Nonetheless, we can examine the issue more closely, provided that we don’t lose sight of the fact that music is like a living organism. Living organisms change. They are born, they grow, they mature, they produce offspring, they decay and are eventually replaced by their offspring, which retain the core genetic material of their ancestors. Music is certainly no biological entity, but it has a similar natural “life.” Hence it changes. But the change is organic and almost seamless. And the new retains elements of the old. With these points in mind we can replace our original question with a couple of more substantive questions. Does the music used today in Greek Orthodox churches belong to the same musical tradition as the music the “Byzantines” used? Is there continuity in the Psaltic Art?

In its over-one-thousand-year-old history, the Psaltic Art has undergone several changes. Its notational system started out in the mid-10th century as an unstable and adiastematic notation, and after a long series of gradual and organic developments it was officially reformed into a more prescriptive, non-stenographic system in 1814 by the “Three Teachers” in Constantinople. Over the centuries new styles and genres emerged, eponymity of composition was established, changes in compositional technique and in the treatment of modal elements were introduced, some secular melodies or melodic fragments were incorporated into the ecclesiastical repertoire.
Furthermore, there was cross-fertilization between the Psaltic Art and the surrounding musical culture, especially in the multiethnic Ottoman Constantinople. Yet in its core essence the sacred art of chanting has always retained the same musical DNA.

The main safeguard of continuity in Byzantine chant is the inherent conservatism of ecclesiastical arts in the Orthodox East. Innovation is often met with suspicion and changes are not easily accepted without adequate theological justification. The Church established sacred canons to protect and preserve its liturgical music as early as the 4th century, and as late as our own 21st century the Ecumenical Patriarchate has promulgated encyclicals cautioning against deviations from the received musical tradition not only in repertoire, but also in minute performance details and aspects of style. It is hard to imagine how uncontrolled divergence could have been possible in such a regulated environment.

Numerous musicological observations support this claim. First of all, the basic defining characteristics of the Psaltic Art have remained the same.

The music of the Church is still vocal, monophonic, modal, and composed almost exclusively of pre-existent, often centuries-old, melodic formulae, called theses. Second, elements from ancient Greek musical theory and practice, such as the paramount role of the tetrachord and, in some cases, the theoretical internal intervallic structure of scales, appear to have survived in the Byzantine musical tradition. Even the previously highly contested existence of chromaticism, defined by the interpolation of an interval of an augmented second between two smaller intervals in a tetrachord, in medieval Byzantine chant, which was in the past considered a later Ottoman incursion, is now widely accepted by the musicological community. Notwithstanding the great caution that should be exercised in the interpretation of interchronological theoretical similarities, chromaticism in Byzantine chant can be seen as an element of ancient Greek music that survived into medieval Balkan music and, subsequently, into contemporary ecclesiastical music. Third, the unbroken thousand-year-old tradition of written sources is a significant indication of continuity. Not only was the older repertoire preserved through meticulous copying by Byzantine and post-Byzantine codicographers for hundreds of years, but revered composers, such as Ioannis Koukouzelis, Manuel Chrysaphes and others, were so highly regarded that it was considered a virtue by later composers to imitate their style and technique. Moreover, it has been argued that the more or less stenographic character of the older notational system made it relatively difficult to incorporate secular or foreign elements into the body of ecclesiastical melodies, which were built up from pre-existent theses. Modern musicology has established that, despite the inevitable qualitative and quantitative enrichment of the corpus of theses throughout the centuries, certain genres (e.g., the cherubic hymn) have maintained
numerous theses from the Middle Ages, while theses found in the medieval repertoire can also be found in post-Byzantine, peripheral musical traditions (e.g., in Venetian-occupied Crete). Besides, the existence of Byzantine theses in the ecclesiastical music of non-Greek Orthodox nations, such as Romania, is a further testament to their structural and preservative role in psaltic compositional technique.

Additionally, the melodic content of many hymns has stood the test of time. Certain melodies one hears performed today are strikingly similar to their Byzantine and early-post-Byzantine forebears. This is especially true in the case of contrafacta hymns (prosomoia). At a recent concert of the distinguished musical ensemble “Capella Romana” on the HCHC campus, students were surprised to realize that the rendition of three prosomoia to Saint Catherine, which was based on a transcription from a 15th-century manuscript, was essentially identical to the contemporary manner of their performance. This can be explained by the immense popularity of prosomoia throughout the Byzantine and post-Byzantine periods. Composition of contrafacta is a practice of venerable antiquity, as is amply demonstrated by the inclusion of prosomoia in the earliest extant copy of the Typikon of the Great Church of Hagia Sophia, MS Patmos 266, which dates from the late 9th or early 10th century. And in the words of musicologist Katy Romanou, “hymn tunes” (the reference applies especially to prosomoia) were so popular into the early 19th century that they “were used at school to teach geography, rules of grammar and arithmetic, or tease friends or foes.” It is quite clear that the popularity and extensive usage of prosomoia in the two most musically rich services of the Orthodox Church, namely Vespers and Orthros, must be seen as an indisputable factor of continuity in Byzantine chant.

Based on these observations, the answers to the questions stated in the introductory paragraph are rather evident. The music used in Greek Orthodox churches today undoubtedly belongs to the great “Byzantine” musical culture. A long and uninterrupted oral and written tradition has ensured its continuity. There was never a break in this continuity and previously propounded theories of post-Byzantine “corruption” of chant are untenable. The Psaltic Art has undergone various developments, but, to indirectly quote the eminent musicologist Gregorios Stathis, it has always been one and the same “tree” that produces different but “consubstantial fruits,” fruits that emit the sweet fragrance of Orthodox life and spirituality.
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Entire peoples throughout history have converted to Christianity upon experiencing its splendor: those elaborate ceremonies executed according to intricate rubrics, visually featuring processions, vestments, incense, and icons, and audibly adorned with exquisite ecclesiastical poetry and refined chant. This beautiful audible art is often heard at its best in a concert setting. But its native and intended venue is the sanctuary, and the divine services of the worshiping Church.

Theologically speaking, our Church’s liturgical worship does not simply endeavor to engage the membership from time to time, but actually manifests the Church itself. In addition to this existential dimension, the enactment of worship benefits the worshipers. During the services and ceremonies, attendees are edified, reminded, instructed, exhorted, guided, healed, uplifted, inspired.

Contained in no less than sixteen separate books, there are over 50,000 hymns in current use; on a typical day, the services include about 150 hymns from at least three different books. The selection and order of hymns to be used in any given service is determined by a sophisticated system of rubrics.

Parish Worship

In the parish, there is a measure of flexibility regarding rubrics, since there are several factors that can affect the content of a service like Sunday Matins. The existence or not of trained personnel often determines whether or not the service is done at all, which parts will be done, and whether they will be sung or simply read. Time constraint is also a factor. A parish may allot a time frame for Sunday Matins that does not allow for all the content to be used. So, more or less of a service is performed depending on time and personnel. The more or less church services conducted in a parish are for some people their only contact with the Church, and the only time they actually pray, however substandard that may be. Therefore, it is important that services not be conducted in a manner that is haphazard or ill-prepared, but attractive, spiritually uplifting, and therapeutic, and in a sacred manner befitting the divine. After all, it is in the context of these services that worshipers may partake of the Church’s sacraments.

The worship services in the Orthodox Church require the participation of the clergy and the people. It is a basic expectation of every parish that their priest knows both what and how to sing. Seminary programs include training in church music. It is also an expectation that the parishioners in the pews will participate in the services, usually following along with a service book in hand. But it is neither the priest nor the parishioner in the pew, but the designated church singers who actually enact the music ministry.

In the typical parish of the GOA, there is a mixed voice choir that sings at the Divine Liturgy on Sundays. If they have any training, it is in reading music and singing, but not in the liturgical order. In other words, their training is in how to sing, but not what and when to sing. There is also a chanter or group of chanters who sing whatever the choir does not sing, i.e., Matins, Vespers, Holy Week, etc. The head chanters might be trained, but often they do not read music. They usually have an understanding of what and when to sing, but this usually comes not from formal training, but from unmonitored experience. Choirs and chanters, trained and equipped or not, are ultimately the ones who enact the Church’s music ministry. The distinction between chanters and choirs has meant that the larger group of dedicated church singers, i.e., choir members, has been shut out from singing at more services.
Reimagining the Parish Choir

At St. Nektarios Church in Charlotte, NC, they have reimagined the parish choir. “They” means the priest, parish council, and parish singers, who agreed and decided to develop the parish’s music ministry in a specific way. To this end, they hired me as full-time Music Director. There is no distinction between chanters and choir. Two choirs on the solea, ten men on the right and ten women on the left, sing antiphonally from digital chanters’ stands. The choirs sing at virtually all scheduled services, i.e. Matins, Liturgy, Vespers, Lent and Holy Week. Weekday services are sung by those choir members who are able to attend. The skills and training needed for this ministry are those generally found in most parishes, namely a basic reading knowledge of Western notation and a leader for each choir. The music is monophonic chant, in Western notation, primarily in English. The digital library of texts and music are prepared by me, and an installer/updater program was built, which allows choir members to access texts and music of upcoming services at home in order to practice.

Virtual Chant Instructor

Perhaps the biggest challenge the Church’s music ministry faces on the parish level is the shortage of trained and equipped personnel. Seminary is where training for parish ministry takes place. It is no secret that the liturgical music learned and used at the Seminary is markedly different from what is typically used at the parish. The fact, however, that our bishops approve of what is taught and used at the Seminary has to be understood as their preference for it and their unspoken hope that the Seminary’s liturgical music experience will somehow be transmitted to the parish along with everything else future priests are learning in preparation for their ministry. Virtual Chant Instructor is a tool that seminarians as well as parish singers can use as they learn church music and also as they perform the services. Virtual Chant Instructor accesses the AGES integrated digital library of liturgical texts and associated musical scores and audio recordings. The interface gives the student access to the text and musical score of a selected hymn, in whichever language and notation is desired, and links the score to an audio recording. Thus, through frequent listening and singing along, the student will learn to sing accurately and quickly becomes proficient. Imagine what an impact this could have on the overall quality of music in our churches, for example during Holy Week, if the designated singers were able to prepare in this manner. All that beauty and majesty of our Orthodox Christian worship, featured at concerts and on CDs, can be in the parish as well, our own local “heaven on earth.”

Orthodox Christian worship, with all its beauty and majesty, has been described as “heaven on earth.”

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Together Again December 2012

“At each step of the developmental journey, children are in a spiritual process of discovering God’s love.”

Catherine Varkas
SOT, ‘83

Drawing from her own experience as a Montessori educator and founder/director of nationally accredited Palm Harbor Montessori Teacher Education Center, Catherine has constructed a teacher-training course with the endorsement of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Department of Religious Education that provides an environment for adults to nurture their own understanding of the Faith while learning how to present it to children. Through hands-on activity with materials rich in theological and cultural traditions of our Faith, she shows teachers, parents and other Orthodox faithful how to teach Orthodoxy to children by emphasizing Orthodoxy’s sensorial nature. In doing this, the method retains the beauty found in the One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church without unnecessary adaptation or condescension. Interestingly, it was 25 years after graduation from Holy Cross that Catherine finally put herself fully into this ministry.

Upon revisiting the campus for her 25th class reunion, she was moved into action. Catherine believes that familiar phrase “The Holy Hill.” She says, “It surely is a holy place. Every time I come here, I am inspired and renewed. When I go to the chapel and I pray, my world then changes. After that reunion visit to HCHC, I was able to sit down and write clearly, the curriculum flowed. I had more or less shelved the project and then it all came together. I am still awestruck by the whole experience.”

Currently, Catherine offers multiple versions of the course in locations spread across the United States, the shortest in duration taking ten days for completion. The instructional class, spread over two weeks, is intended to offer an in-depth examination of the methodology and provide adult learners with the opportunity to grow in their own knowledge and understanding of the Faith. The latest two-week training session took place at Hellenic College, where one of the classrooms became a laboratory modeling both the prepared environment and manner of material presentation.

An online version of the course reaches people on other continents who may not be able to attend a face-to-face course. Dimitra Dinos of South Africa wrote to Catherine, “What an inspiring way to introduce the topics. The parables, the Mystical Supper model, and the Jerusalem model are just amazing. After every lesson I am more and more inspired and excited to get started with the children. It is evident that you enjoy your work very much and that you put your heart into the presentations you do. It has really been a great experience for me. I feel confident that together with your instruction and the videos I should be able to carry out the lessons in the children’s room.”

How Does This Ministry Serve Our Children?

Fostering the spiritual formation of Orthodox children means beginning as early as possible. At each step of the developmental journey, children are in a spiritual process of discovering God’s love. That relationship flourishes when experience is supplemented with both activity and structured curricula, calling for response in an environment that brings our faith right into their hands.
The classroom, called the Children's Room, is a specially prepared environment designed to satisfy the child's natural inclination to movement and to spirituality by providing hands-on biblical and liturgical activity. Once the activity has been demonstrated by the teacher, the children are free to repeat it, to retell the Bible stories while manipulating the pieces, and to proceed to other connected activity for carefully selected biblical stories, Orthodox hymns, prayers, and liturgical traditions.

The program is designed to address a most sensitive time for spiritual formation, ages three to six, providing an authentic Orthodox experience where the spiritual child is honored, nurtured, and given a place for reflection and expression of faith. When movement and mental activity are combined, the child is able to give himself totally to the present moment, resulting in enhanced concentration. The body, mind, and heart of the young child act in unison, as they have not yet reached the age of reason and division among their parts. Mental, spiritual, and physical developments are interconnected and interdependent. Children hear the Word of God and experience worship with their whole beings. The hearts of children are naturally able to realize God. The Children's Room supports the child's discovery of the presence of God.

As one OCSF graduate states, “Sharing this with the children sometimes feels like all I'm doing is giving them language for what they already know, like all I did was create a place for them to express it. They get the opportunity to actively engage with the Faith and with Christ, while I get the opportunity to observe the simple and natural way in which they do so. We help each other love God, the Church He gave us, and one another in the Body of Christ, a little bit more every time we’re together.”

Upon going into church and seeing that which has become familiar, children become most at home in the House of God. They build awareness of the role the priest, that of his vestments, even liturgical items and gestures, church hymns, biblical stories, and feast days. It is so beautiful to observe children as they spontaneously recall and name the Archangel Gabriel and the Holy Theotokos upon viewing an icon of the Evangelismos. They remember the story because it was read to them from the Holy Bible, and while retelling the story, they were able to manipulate the icon figures provided in the Children's Room.

Impressions received between birth and age six can be life-lasting. No other language is learned as well or as easily as the mother tongue, because it has been learned during the sensitive period of language formation. Faith experienced during the sensitive period of spiritual formation can be forever. The child before six years of age is in a unique formation period. It is the role of the adult to provide the environment that nurtures the youngest members of our Church.

How does this ministry serve adults?

Orthodox faithful are called to serve the Church. Some as clergy, others are lay assistants, youth advisors, choir members, and a variety of volunteer opportunities. Orthodox Christian spiritual formation provides another vital ministry, serving the young child and the family. Bringing the faith experience for family discussions, the program builds a lifelong relationship between the child, his/her family, and the Church. This is one of the central tenets explored in the course.
An adult may choose to become trained in the full course or only the religious segment of the training. The full course provides training which prepares leaders to open a parish school serving three- to six-year-old children, including kindergarten. With over 70% of families now with working parents, preschool-aged children must be cared for, if not with an extended family member, than where are they to go? When offered a quality preschool that celebrates Orthodoxy daily, naturally the family will choose their home parish, as opposed to a secular daycare or preschool. In turn, the church is providing for its families and offering adults a valuable career path serving the church community. The religious segment of the training provides adults with all that is necessary to set up a proper weekly program or a home school religious curriculum. During the course, the adults learn much about Orthodoxy, as dogma and Orthodox Tradition are expounded upon throughout the presentations.

Anna Chilcote, who has attended OCSF summer courses offered at Hellenic College, said, “Before attending the Orthodox Christian Spiritual Formation course, I thought I knew a thing or two about the Faith and children. I knew nothing. Even though the course was only a couple of weeks, I left feeling like a whole new kind of Orthodoxy had been introduced to me. Of course, it was the same Faith as my Baptism, it had just never occurred to me to still myself long enough to see how beautiful it really is.”

**How does this ministry serve the Parish?**

Children experience and grow in their faith while participating in the Children's Room. As children share their experience, parent interest peaks. Some parents, who had stopped coming to church, returned in order to enroll their children in the hands-on-style Sunday school. The day school generates income for the parish, as it makes use of classroom space during the week, and community is built as parishioners become involved in the program.

**Endorsements:**

His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta and His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios of Boston have offered their blessings for this program. Dr. Anton Vrame, Director of the Religious Education Department for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, endorses the course and hopes to see it flourish.

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Dearest Alumni,

I would like to share with you two recent happenings of the Student Government Association.

In the wake of hurricane Sandy, our community came together to raise nearly $2,500. On Saturday, November 10th we brought about 1,000 diapers, 10 mops, 6 brooms, 60 flashlights, 100 lbs of dog food, 100 lbs of cat food, 12 bottles of rubbing alcohol, 192 AA batteries, 48 D batteries, 2,000 rubber gloves, 1,600 baby wipes, 12 gallons of bleach, 9 gallons of PineSol, 128 carpenters’ bags, 180 towels, 190 masks, 25 pairs of leather work gloves, and 7 rolls of duct tape to Staten Island. We also donated money to Holy Trinity – Saint Nicholas in Staten Island. They will use the money to buy gift cards to home improvement stores for people to buy building supplies as they rebuild their homes.

When we got to Staten Island we were taken aback to see the total destruction that happened in the neighborhoods nearest to the shore. Homes were knocked over, burned down, moved across the street, and were so damaged by flooding that they needed to be totally gutted. Cars were marked on the windows by insurance companies, thrown over fences, moved into yards, and totally destroyed. Emergency vehicles and military trucks were going through the neighborhoods like a war zone. Some of the schools are still closed because they don’t have power weeks after the storm. One local elementary school we passed is being used as a morgue because the death toll continues to rise; one house we walked by as we were handing out supplies had two bodies found in it the day before.

In all of this horror and destruction we did, however, see the body of Christ, working as each part together to heal itself. The Greek Orthodox Church in Staten Island that we were working with had so many supplies and not enough hands to give them out. A Muslim relief group centered in Manhattan had too many hands and not enough supplies. Somehow, they heard about the church and came to us in a U-Haul to get supplies out to people in need in Queens. How beautiful it was for me to see the parable of the Good Samaritan played out in reality on Saturday and then to hear it in Liturgy on Sunday.

This past homecoming was a great time for us and for the alumni who came. I always enjoy spending time with alumni when they visit and hearing their stories of the “good old days” and the trouble they would cause. It was particularly nice to be invited to participate in the Alumni Board meetings. My favorite part of the meeting was when the Board pledged $5,000 to the student body to help us revitalize the game room of Polemanakos Hall. By the end of the year we will put all new games, put up a wall to make a small theatre room, put in all new furniture, decorate, and paint with vibrant colors. On behalf of the students, I would like to thank all of you for this.

With love and respect,

Andrew J. Pavlakos
President, SGA
The Collection is located on the top floor of the Archbishop Iakovos Library and Learning Resource Center, which opened in 1999. The Collection displays personal effects of the Archbishop which were either purchased by him or were personally presented to him by friends and dignitaries alike. Included are antique vestments, ecclesiastical items, commemorative gifts, awards, and memorabilia, as well as a separate Archive Room, which contains the personal archives of the Archbishop.

Recently put on display, and of notable importance, was His Eminence’s collection of Greek, Roman, and Byzantine coins, reliquary crosses, and bread stamps. This portion of the collection was curated by the Very Reverend Dr. Joachim Cotsonis, Director of the Archbishop Iakovos Library and Learning Resource Center and a Byzantine art scholar, and by Dr. Maria Kouroumalis, Director of the Mary Jaharis Center for Byzantine Art and Culture and Assistant Professor of Byzantine Studies at Hellenic College Holy Cross.

The room itself was the gift of George D. and Margo Behrakis. The room is crowned by a large dome that contains iconography donated by Randall James Katchis in honor of his grandparents,
Erasmia and John Tchakurides and Victoria and Theodore Katchis. The iconography is through the hand of the noted hagiographer George Filipakis. Depicted are Christ Pantocrator, the four Evangelists, SS. Peter and Paul, liturgists, and Old Testament prophets.

The importance of the entire collection was noted by the Archbishop himself: “This collection portrays the vibrancy and dedication of you, the faithful members of the Greek Orthodox community of the Americas. It is the crowning glory of the lifelong contributions of our people who have become an integral and valued part of the pluralistic mosaic of this great land. The awards and memorabilia housed within the collection are a lasting tribute to a people who, within a span of eighty or so years, have been blessed to see their dreams become reality. It is, therefore, your collection which I humbly and lovingly offer to you.”

The Collection room is available for viewing by individuals or groups when the Library is open. The website link to the collection is http://www.hchc.edu/library/archbishop_iakovos_collection.
Fr. Stephen, SOT ’06, and Presbytera Kelley Lawrence, along with their two sons Alec and Zac, welcomed baby girl Lucía Carolina on July 24.

Fr. Conan, SOT ’07, and Presbytera Stephanie Gill, along with son Nikolaos, welcomed baby boy Andreas Conan on August 20.

Fr. Conan, SOT ’07, and Presbytera Stephanie Gill, along with son Nikolaos, welcomed baby boy Andreas Conan on August 20.

Khalil, SOT ’05, and Mariah Samara welcomed Jonah Khalil Samara on September 29.

Fr. Gregory, SOT ’05, and Presbytera Eleni Cristakos had a son, Ambrose Uriel on July 16th of this year. He was born at home weighing 7 lbs. 7 oz. and joins big sisters Vaia and Raphaela.

Paul Lundberg, SOT ’08, and Eliana Marianes were engaged on September 14th.

Fr. Larry, SOT ’03, and Presbytera Jennifer, SOT ’03, Legakis welcomed Lukia Katherine, born October 12. She joins big brother Nicholas and big sister Vasilia!

Dcn. Dan Hoarste, SOT ’08, was ordained to the Holy Diaconate on Saturday September 29, 2012, by His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America at St. George Cathedral in Detroit, MI. He is completing his doctoral studies at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, Italy, to earn a ThD in Dogmatics/Liturgics.
Archimandrite Gregorios (Tatsis), SOT ’06, of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America was recently elected ruling bishop of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church of the U.S.A. On Tuesday, November 27, he was consecrated to the episcopacy, becoming Titular Bishop of Nyssa, with laying on of hands by His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios of America. Co-consecrators were His Eminence Archbishop Anthony of the Ukrainian Orthodox of the U.S.A., His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta, His Eminence Metropolitan Savas of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh, and His Grace, Bishop Daniel of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the U.S.A.

Bishop Gregory was then enthroned as the fourth ruling bishop of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church of the U.S.A. He received his Master of Divinity degree from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in 2006.
Sonia Belcher’s
HELLENIC COLLEGE HOLY CROSS AMBASSADORS

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- Trained by our faculty & staff
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Visit our updated website at www.hchc.edu and check out the new Virtual Tour of the HCHC campus!

Access the “Virtual Tour” at www.hchc.edu/tour