

## ~ CHORAL MUSIC ~

Harmonized choral music for the Church did not originate in America. Greeks living in France and Germany experimented with harmonizations. Eventually, at the turn of the century attempts at harmonized Byzantine chant was introduced by the Athenian master, **John Sakellarides**.

The influence of public school choral music, and its existence in local non-Greek churches, was strong enough to introduce in our churches some experimentation with choral music and a participating group ~ the choir. Separated from the Mother Church, the Greek Church in the U.S. was not under the watchful eye of anyone objecting to innovations. So, in the first quarter of the 20th Century, the Greek Church of the New World introduced choral music on a permanent basis.

No one knows for sure where and when the first choir was formed in America's Greek churches, or when organ accompaniment was introduced, but many have laid claim to being the originators. Among the early choir directors are the Sakellarides group especially those who had their training under the Athenian master. **Nicholas Roubanis** who had come under Sakellarides' influence was one of many choir directors (*served as Holy Trinity's Choir Director in the 1950's*) singled out because he contributed published material to our churches (*his song "Misirlou" became an international hit in the popular music field*).

Our Holy Trinity Choir grew, learned and changed-not without strains, but certainly towards a fuller understanding of, and commitment to what it means to be an Orthodox church musician, and the satisfaction that comes with that. Our choir members, all volunteers, have given many years and hours of dedicated service to our Church as have our chanters, directors and organists.

My sister Sappho and I have been life-long members of Holy Trinity and choir members for over fifty years. As we celebrate the 75th Anniversary of Holy Trinity, it is good to remember the past and to use the wisdom of those experiences to ensure continued progress. Just as the past has been an exciting journey, so may the future lead us to even greater service to the people of our Church through the beautiful hymns of our faith.

Teaching our children today the spiritual meaning of the music at hand is important, for these tots will be the adults of tomorrow. Hopefully, we will be seeing more young people following in our footsteps wanting to learn to chant, and to fill the roles of choir members as they retire from parish services.

May God grant many years of health and strength to all who continue to serve our Holy Trinity Orthodox Church and its music ministry.



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