

Department of Sacred Music Report: July 26, 2017

Paul Jabara – Chairman

Prepared for His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH and His Grace Bishop ANTHONY, Hierarchical Overseer

This has been a blessed year for the Department of Sacred Music. Both the Winter and Summer Sacred Music Institutes had record attendees; the local music workshops were highly successful and helpful to chanters, director and clergy alike. The new hyperlinks on the Online Liturgical Guide are up and running, and we celebrated our first winter Youth Music Ministry. We have begun reviewing each of the 1500 pieces of music in our online PDF library, updating music and texts, removing music and replacing it with music approved by Deacon John El-Massih and myself. Each of our projects has a specific, dedicated team, and together, we are working tirelessly to help more chanters, directors and clergy improve their musical skills, for the glory of God. This report is structured as requested by His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH, for the April 2017 Department Heads meeting at the Antiochian Village.

1) How, if at all, did your department change or develop in light of last year's meeting?

Because the budget request submitted at last year's meeting was denied, we had to make cuts to our programs to balance the existing budget. But because we had already prepaid costs for both 2017 Sacred Music Institutes, we were able to move forward with the 2017 Summer SMI at Antiochian Village. Our concern now is for the future. Without additional funding, the Youth Music Ministry will be substantially reduced and the Music Outreach Program (local workshops working with choir, chanters and directors) cut by at least 60%. However, the Music Department has moved forward with projects requiring less money, such as much-needed updates to Byzantine Music Project to make it more user-friendly, including a hyperlinked version of the Online Liturgical Guide.

2) A statement of the overall mission of your department

The Department of Sacred Music of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America guides chanters, choirs and congregations to musical excellence in worship for the glory of God.

3) The exact nature of the work that is performed by your department

We strive to help church singers, directors and clergy alike improve their musical and theoretical skills, helping broaden their knowledge of theology as it relates to music. Ultimately, our goal is to help beautify our liturgical services throughout the Archdiocese. With a series of musical institutes, an online music library, a Youth Music Ministry, mentorship and various other projects, we try to be as creative and inspiring as possible.

4) The specific measurable goals and accomplishments which were achieved in 2016

The Music Department, over the past two years, has created a detailed plan of action, further developing the projects introduced at last year's meeting in addition to launching new projects.

- a) Summer Sacred Music Institute
- b) Winter Sacred Music Institute
- c) Youth Music Ministry
- d) Recording Project: NAC Teen SOYO with the Youth Music Ministry

- e) Music Outreach Program
- f) Social Media
- g) Online Liturgical Guide: collaboration with Liturgics Department
- h) Missions Project

5) Based on #4 above, an honest assessment as to whether your department met, did not meet or exceeded its goals

- a) Summer Sacred Music Institute – exceeded goals with record attendance. Anticipated number of attendees – 95. Actual number of attendees – 192
- b) Winter Sacred Music Institute – exceeded goals with record attendance. Anticipated number of attendees – 50. Actual number of attendees – 88
- c) Summer Youth Music Ministry – exceeded goals with record attendance: 30 teens
Winter Youth Music Ministry/Houston – met goals; set a successful precedent with 13 teens
- d) Youth Music Ministry Recording with NAC Teen SOYO, *Grace Shining Forth*. met goals: the CD was recorded last summer and is presently available for sale.
- e) Music Outreach Program – held 5 workshops in 2016 and two more this year. They are proving to be tremendously helpful at a local parish level, having skilled and experienced teachers working with directors, chanters, priests improve their music and technical skills. Our goals could not be met due to insufficient funding.
- f) Social Media – our Facebook page increased from 591 members last year to 737 today. Our YouTube page became available two months ago, and presently has 21 videos with 78 subscribers. More work needs to be done in this area. A specific team dedicated to social media is forthcoming.
- g) Online Liturgical Guide – met our goals; launched at the beginning of this year, it is one of the biggest and most important projects the Music Department has ever embarked on. It involves reassessing each piece of music in our online PFD Library (an estimated 1500 pieces). Byzantine music is edited/arranged/composed by Chris Holwey and Deacon John and approved by Deacon John, and choral music reviewed and approved by Paul Jabara and select advisors. A very special thank you to Deacon John, Peter Samore and Chris Holwey who have dedicated extreme amounts of time to make this project possible.
- h) Missions Project – In conjunction with the Department of Missions and Evangelism, our goal is to provide missions, from the moment they are created, with the musical and theological tools they will need for a prosperous future. This includes teaching musicians and clergy how to apply the correct structure of services as well as provide musical resources, both choral and chant, which have been approved by the Archdiocese. Our objective is to make sure that Missions learn correctly, from the beginning. Our goals for this project have not been met; we have put it on hold for the time being, due to a lack of funding.

6) The specific measurable goals which have been set for 2017/2018.

The projects of the Department of Sacred Music are ongoing and long term. Our measurable goals need to be reassessed due to insufficient funding. The feasibility of future Sacred Music Institutes at the Antiochian Village must be re-evaluated until funding can be secured. We will, however, continue working on and improving our online music PDF library as well as continuing our music workshops, however limited. We will also begin phase two of the Byzantine Project which is to record all the music in our library. Originally scheduled to begin in 2019; we hope to begin the Fall. In addition, a Byzantine Music Institute is planned for this October in Montreal – hosted and partially funded by St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church, Montreal. The Institute, focusing on technical, theological and theoretical aspects of Byzantine music, including Byzantine notation, is a first for our department.

7) A specific action plan for achieving these goals

Each of our projects has its own team and specific plans of action. We are awaiting budget approval before we can move forward with certain projects

8) How the department/organization is staffed, including the names of the staff members.

The Department of Sacred Music has a large team of volunteers which makes what we do possible. The executive committee is comprised of the following members.

- a) Bishop ANTHONY – Department Overseer and Advisor
- b) Father Joseph Purpura, advisor
- c) Paul Jabara – Chairman
- d) Emily Lowe – Coordinator, Sacred Music Institutes
- e) Deacon John El-Masih – Coordinators, Byzantine Music Project
- f) Chris Farha – Coordinator, Youth Music Ministry
- g) Regina Roum – Coordinator, Fundraising

Conclusion

The Music Department is blessed in so many ways. We have a clear vision and an incredible team to help realize our goals. We are determined to help as many people as possible while working within budgetary restraints. Interest in the music department and what we do is at an all-time high. I would like to thank His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH for supporting this department and for his love of beautiful church music. As he often reminds me, whether it be Byzantine or choral music, Greek, English or Arabic, if the music inspires us to prayer, then it is good church music.

Respectfully submitted, in the name of Jesus Christ,

Paul Jabara, Chairman,

Department of Sacred Music

Youth Music Ministry

In the summer of 2012, the Department of Sacred Music implemented a new program that generated great excitement and success: the Youth Music Ministry (YMM). For five years now, this program has run parallel to and in conjunction with the adult track of the Sacred Music Institute. YMM gives its participants, ranging in age from 14 to 18, the opportunity to study Choral Music, Byzantine Chant, Proper Vocal Production and Technique. They learn challenging new music, perform with their peers and participate in every Divine Service. They chant and sing, listen attentively to the Keynote Speakers and classroom teachers, asking pertinent and poignant questions. They come to understand their role in Sacred Music and their contribution to the music of the Church, a ministry that will be with them throughout their lives. This program brings together youth of like mind and spirit with a love for music and a desire to serve their Church, allowing them to work together for a common goal – to love God and serve with understanding. We have witnessed them making connections and lasting friendships that keep them grounded and linked to the Church during the most challenging years of their young lives. In our five years, over 130 registrants have been accepted. Last year, the YMM produced a CD that is now available for sale. This year, the inquiries have begun with excited teens asking when the registration and scholarship forms will be available. Truly, this is a program with a proven track record of success.

In order to be accepted into the YMM Program, each teen must complete an application, write an essay and request a letter of recommendation from their priest. In the past, we have been able to underwrite the registration fee for our teens and the travel expense has been paid by either their families, their parishes or through individual fundraising activities. We hope and pray that this investment in our youth may continue. We know we have gained a great return on investment when we receive feedback from priests and choir directors, thanking the Department for helping develop future singers. This powerful YMM recommendation came from a priest who said that after having attended for two years, a teen from his parish had “improved tremendously, acquiring the knowledge he needed to help in the services and he has applied it. He is motivated to search, learn and find the resources to improve and prepare each week. “

The vision set forth by the Department of Sacred Music to help develop dedicated young Archdiocesan musicians has taken shape and become a reality. We thank God for everyone who had the foresight to break untrodden ground and invest in our young musicians, to plant seeds that will bear a lifetime of fruit. We thank each Diocese for supporting this ongoing project and the parishes who have underwritten expenses or held successful fundraising efforts. As you read this and wonder what you might do to help, consider the following: Please take note of the youth of your parish; encourage those who have a gift for music to apply to attend Youth Music Ministry; nurture them, love them, help them stay rooted; pray with them and pray for them, that the hymns of the Church live and flourish in their hearts; help guide them on the same path that we all began at our baptism with the first prayer, “...Make *him* to rejoice in the works of *his* hands, and in all *his* generation; that *he* may render praise unto Thee, may **sing, worship and glorify** Thy Great and exalted name always, all the days of *his* life...”

Respectfully submitted by:

Chris Farha, Youth Music Ministry Coordinator

Summer Sacred Music Institute

The Summer Sacred Music Institute, or SMI, has been the single largest annual project of the Department of Sacred Music. Now in its thirty-second year, the SMI was originally a weekend workshop for choir directors, appropriately titled the Choir Director's Seminar. It was a place where directors could meet and improve their musical skills. Courses from choral and vocal technique as well as theory, sight-singing and theology were offered. Rather primitive at first, the program eventually grew to include teaching tracks in Byzantine music, albeit for just a few hours during the Institute.

The early years of the SMI were quite wondrous in many aspects. We were heading into uncharted territory, never knowing what to expect from year to year. The SMI was the only place where directors could share with others the music they sing in church. The term social media, or even cell phone for that matter, was unheard of. Directors would attend the Institute and place photocopies of their music on long tables to be shared with other directors.

The early 90's were a period of growth for the Department. There was a greater demand for Byzantine music. The DSM quickly recognized this demand and began offering a few courses in basic chant. Byzantine Choirs throughout the Archdiocese were being formed, many whose leaders, like most of us at the time, were "faking" it. The DSM was determined to provide chanters the tools necessary to improve their knowledge and skills. They dedicated an entire day and a half to the development and teaching of Byzantine chant. The rest of the SMI still focused primarily on western 4-part choral music. Clearly, more had to be done.

The Summer Sacred Music Institute continues to grow. Because of the 2016 mandate by Metropolitan JOSEPH that each parish send at least one chanter or choir director to the Institute, we had a record number of attendees, Glory to God!

Winter (West Coast) Sacred Music Institute

The West Coast Sacred Music Institute was an initiative of Metropolitan PHILIP of blessed memory. He recognized that traveling to the Village from the west coast was timely and expensive and wanted to offer the same experience for everyone. In 2002, His Eminence appointed Father John Finley coordinator of the Institute, and combined with the Department of Missions and Evangelism's annual conference, the first West Coast SMI was born. Though considerably smaller in numbers than the Summer East Coast SMI, it nevertheless proved to be quite helpful to those who attended. These Institutes were held at conference centres, often at the Casa de Maria in Santa Barbara. For the last five years, Chris Farha organized this Institute and our numbers grew to about 50.

This year, we changed the name of the West Coast Sacred Music Institute to the Winter Sacred Music Institute, moving it from California to Houston. We had more attendees (88) than we ever had, and introduced a Byzantine music track and Youth Music Ministry. People as far as Alberta and Alaska attended. I am confident that with funding for this project, this Institute, within the next few years, will be either as large, or larger, than the summer Institute at the Village.

Music Outreach Program

One of the most important initiatives of the DSM, the Music Outreach Program offers choir workshops to individual parishes. Technical instruction in voice, conducting, choral rehearsal technique, chanting and theology are offered, providing the participants a better understanding of what they are singing and why. These are intensive workshops. The leader of the workshop will also become the mentor for that parish, ready to answer questions and provide invaluable advice to directors and singers alike, throughout the course of the year.

To date, the most successful course included in the Music Outreach Program is what we are calling a "Working Liturgy". This is in fact an extended rehearsal involving all chanters, choirs, priests and deacons. We rehearse a complete liturgy, and stop at each point where there are either technical issues, musical issues, tuning with the clergy, fluidity etc.

Clearly, the demand is out there as we have already accomplished so much. There is an immediate need for these workshops and the Department of Sacred Music did not wait to fill the demand. We will provide as many workshops as our budget allows.

Online Liturgical Guide

The Departments of Sacred Music and Liturgics have teamed up to make things easier for our chanters and choirs by now providing hyperlinks to pieces of music, built right in to the PDF versions of the Liturgical Texts of the Online Liturgical Guide. Now, you can click on the hyperlinks from any computer or smart device for many of our hymns arranged by composers of the Antiochian Archdiocese. Each of the blue-colored links will take you to directly to the music itself. Internet access is required either through WIFI or data networks. This will provide a much easier and quicker way to go through each service with the text and music needed at that point in time. The response to this project has been overwhelmingly positive.