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GEORGIAN

SACRED CHANTS

ON THE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

ZAKARIA PALIASHVILI

Capitol Hill Chorale

Frederick Binkholder, Artistic Director

June 5 and 6, 2010

Capitol Hill Chorale

FREDERICK BINKHOLDER, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

JUNE 4 AND 5, 2010

Georgian Sacred Chants on the
Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom (1909)

Zakaria Paliashvili (1871-1933)



“It is absolutely necessary for churchgoers to have good national chant in the nation's language to help awaken their sense of faith; the kind of chant that is able to charm any non-believer who happens to enter a church, and stir feelings of belief.”

—Zakaria Paliashvili, from his Forward to *Georgian Sacred Chants on the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* (translation by Carl Linich)

On the cover is a facsimile of the Georgian text from the title page of the 1909 edition.
Portrait of Paliashvili by Ucha Japaridze (1906-1986)

Program Notes on Paliashvili's *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*

The Capitol Hill Chorale, under the leadership of Artistic Director Frederick Binkholder, is excited to present the American premiere of Georgian composer Zakaria Paliashvili's setting of the *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*. Although individual sections of the work are known, this stunningly beautiful work is generally unknown in its entirety. Experts at the Tbilisi State Conservatory in Georgia believe that this will be its first performance in Georgian since the Bolshevik revolution.

The Chorale first became aware of Paliashvili's *Liturgy* in a recommendation from Vladimir Morosan, head of the music publishing company Musica Russica in California, to Thea Austen, a soprano in the Chorale with an interest in music from the former Soviet Union. He recommended a recording of the Paliashvili *Liturgy* which Musica Russica carried in its catalog, performed by a Russian group in Church Slavonic, the language of the Russian Orthodox Church. She ordered it and shared it with Fred Binkholder, the Chorale's Artistic Director — who decided the Chorale should perform the work.

When Austen asked if the score were available, Morosan responded that it was not in print, but that he would send a photocopy of a photocopy of a microfilm version of the original 1909 score he had discovered in the Lenin Library in Moscow while on a Fulbright Scholarship, the only edition ever published. From this, and a duplicate copy from the library of the Tbilisi State Conservatory which the Chorale obtained, we have prepared our own edition for modern chorus, including a transliteration of the Georgian text.

Our research into the score led to a fascinating history, mixing musical traditions of Georgia and Russia that date back many centuries.

Zakaria Paliashvili (1871-1933) is a figure of national pride in Georgia, and is considered to be the father of Georgian classical music. Themes from his operas form the basis for the country's national anthem, adopted in 2004. The opera house in Tbilisi, Georgia's capital, is named for him, his operas are performed there each year, and he is buried on the grounds. His portrait appears on one of the bills of Georgian paper money.

At the time of composition, Georgia had been part of the Russian Empire for 100 years. The Russian policy of "Russification" throughout the Empire had increasingly imperiled Georgian musical traditions, including particularly Georgian chant, a unique form of multi-part singing that has existed for more than 1,000 years, and predates the emergence of polyphony in Western European

music. Threatened under Russian rule, the preservation of Georgian chant had become a focus of national cultural preservation. In recent years, since Georgia's independence in 1991, the performance of Georgian chant has gained increasing worldwide interest and attention because of its uniquely powerful sound and spirituality.

In his *Liturgy*, Paliashvili explicitly created "choralized" settings of traditional chants for large mixed choir as a promotion of Georgian chant for Georgian audiences, and an homage to its preservation. The full title of the work is *Georgian Sacred Chants on the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*. On the top line of the original title page (which is reproduced on the title page of this program) is the word "Georgian" in letters twice the size of any others, an indication of the nationalist identity and intent of his composition.

But Paliashvili's musical training deeply immersed him in Russian and Western musical language, both in Georgia and at the Moscow Conservatory where his principal teacher was also the teacher of Paliashvili's Russian contemporaries — Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, Gretchaninoff, Gliere, Chesnokov, and Medtner. In this unusual arrangement for mixed chorus, Paliashvili uses the Western musical language of his training, earning him bitter condemnation at the time from the Georgian "traditionalists." Paliashvili published the work not only with Georgian text, but also with the Old Church Slavonic text of the Russian Orthodox Church so that the work can be performed in Russia, bringing awareness of Georgian chant to Russian audiences. Reflecting the political situation of the time, the work contains a musical blessing to "The Most Pious, Most Sovereign Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich of all Russia," followed by his wife, his mother, his son, and the rest of the family of Tsar Nicholas II. It is not altogether surprising that the only recording is by Russians in the language of the Russian Orthodox Church.

While the Soviets encouraged certain types of traditional folk art, much of the historical material documenting Georgian chant was suppressed or hidden during the Soviet period. However, sections of Paliashvili's *Liturgy* (for example, his setting of "Shen Khar Venakhi") were known and sung privately (often in a traditional 3-part setting) by those interested in preserving traditional Georgian singing during this period. This included, for example, the founder of Rustavi, an ensemble which subsequently played a major role in fostering an appreciation of traditional Georgian music internationally. Paliashvili's *Liturgy* may not have spread awareness of Georgian chant among his Georgian and Russian contemporaries as he had intended, but it did indirectly serve that goal to later generations.

The Russian and Georgian threads that weave together in this piece may help explain the mystery of why this piece has remained little known and

unperformed for 100 years. Too Russian for Georgian traditionalists, too religious for the Soviet period, too Georgian for the Russian Orthodox Church, it has eluded the categories in which musical and cultural history have been carried forward over the last century.

The Chorale is grateful for its expert advisors in Georgian music and Orthodox liturgy from the US and Georgia, including Dr. Lauren Ninoshvili (Columbia University), John Graham (Ph.D. candidate, Princeton University), and Carl Linich of the Georgian vocal trio Kavkasia. These advisors provided expert guidance on Orthodox liturgy, Georgian chant traditions, and the history of Georgian music.

Also assisting was Rusudan Tsurtsumia, head of the International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony at Tbilisi State Conservatory. In addition to answering questions, she kindly made an electronic copy of Paliashvili's *The Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* from the library at Tbilisi State Conservatory (which turned out to be a duplicate of the original 1909 edition we had received from Vladimir Morosan).

A longer discussion about Paliashvili, his *Liturgy* and its historical and cultural context is posted on the Capitol Hill Chorale's website.

— Parker Jayne



The Music

The role of the choir in settings of the Orthodox Divine Liturgy includes extended sections for solo choir and frequent short responses to prayers and exclamations of a priest or deacon, which are usually not written out by composers. In this concert performance, we will be presenting Paliashvili's written music for choir, without the priest's or deacon's words as would be heard in an actual service. We chose this more secular but still reverent approach conscious of Paliashvili's intent in composing the *Liturgy* to spread awareness of Georgian chant.

No. 1 — Great Litany, “Bless the Lord, O My Soul”, “Glory to the Father”, Little Litany. In the Great Litany at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy, the deacon prays for peace and salvation, the Church, her bishops, her faithful, civil authorities, and all mankind. Paliashvili provides three settings for the choral responses, which can be used interchangeably for the three texts: “Amen”, “Lord, have mercy” (‘upalo, shegvits’q’alen’), or “To Thee, O Lord” (‘shen, upalo’).

In the first two antiphons, the choir then chants “Bless the Lord, O My Soul” (‘ak’urthkevs sulī chemi upalsa’), “Glory to the Father” (‘dideba mamasa da dzesa da ts’midasā sulsa ats’da maradis da uk’uniti uk’unisamde’), which will be heard frequently during the Liturgy, and “Only Begotten Son” (‘mkholod shobilo dze’). Concluding the choir sings the responses of the Little Litany: again “Lord, have mercy”, “To Thee, O Lord” and “Amen”. Section No. 2 — “In Thy Kingdom” and the Beatitudes — is an extended chant and is omitted in this performance.

No. 3 — “Come, Let Us Worship”, “O Lord, Save the Righteous”. Paliashvili sets “Come, Let Us Worship” (‘movedit taq’vani vstset’) for female choir, which is as close as the score gets to “traditional” Georgian chant: three voices, all one gender, and no octave doublings. The full choir joins for “Save us, O Son of God” (‘aghdgomil mk’vdreti mgalobelni sheni.’). Section 3 concludes with “Lord, save the Righteous and hear us.” (upalo, atskhovne k’etilmsakhurni da ismine chveni’)

No. 4 — Trisagion Hymn. The choir sings “Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal” (‘ts’midao ghmerto, ts’midao dzliero, ts’midao uk’vdavo’) three times, followed by “Glory to the Father” and a return to “Holy God”. We are omitting Section No. 5, in which Paliashvili provides an alternate setting of “Holy God”.

No. 6 — “To Thy Cross”, “As many of you who have been baptized”.

This is the first of several instances in which Paliashvili includes material not part of the regular Divine Liturgy. “To Thy Cross” (‘jvarsa shensa taq’vanis vtsemt meupeo’) is a festal hymn for feasts of the Cross, of which there are two during the year. It is also one of the most beautiful sections of Paliashvili’s Liturgy. Then follows the Anti-Trisagion Hymn “As many of you who have been baptized in Christ” (‘raodenta krist’es mier nategvighebies’) which is sung instead of No. 4 “Holy God” on major feast days of which there are twelve in the Orthodox year. Section No. 7 – Eight Tones – is omitted from this performance.

No. 8 — “Alliluia”, “Glory to Thee, O Lord”. These are short choral sections that occur in the Divine Liturgy in response to the reading of the Epistles and the Holy Gospel. “Glory to Thee, O Lord” (‘dideba shenda upalo’) is followed by the Augmented Litany, in which the choir repeats “Lord, have mercy” (‘upalo shegvits’q’alen’). No. 9 provides alternate settings of the same litany, and is omitted.

No 10 — Cherubic Hymn. This extended section is one of the masterpieces of Paliashvili’s Liturgy. It begins with a three-part setting for female voice “Let us who mystically represent the Cherubim” (‘romeli kerubinta saidumlod vemsgavsennit’). The full choir joins at “And who sing the thrice-holy hymn” (‘da tskhovels mq’opelisa samebasa ts’mida...’)

No. 11 — Litany After Cherubic Hymn, “Father and Son”. These are short choral responses that occur following the Cherubic Hymn, and include “Lord, have mercy”, “Grant it, O Lord” (‘mogvmadlen upalo’), “To Thee, O Lord” (‘shen upalo’), and “Father and Son” (‘mamasa da dzesa’). No. 12 — the Creed — is an extended section in chant and is omitted.

No. 13 — “A Mercy of Peace”, “Holy, Holy”. This is part of the liturgy when the gifts are consecrated for Holy Communion. This section includes several short choral responses, beginning with “A Mercy of Peace” (‘ts’q’aloba mshvidoba.’). It concludes with an extended section “Holy, Holy, Holy” (‘ts’midao, ts’midao, ts’midao’).

No. 14 — “We Praise Thee”. This section is frequently translated “We hymn thee” or “We sing to thee” (‘shen gugalobt. shen gak’urkhevt’), and is one of the most beautiful settings in the Paliashvili Liturgy.

No. 15 — “It is Meet”. Also known as the Hymn to the Mother of God, this is an extended section for choir that begins “It is truly fitting to bless you, Mother of God” (‘ghirs ars ch’eshmarit’ad rata...’). It ends with settings for several choral responses: “And all mankind” (‘q’ovelta da q’ovlisatvis’), “And with thy spirit” (‘da sulisatsa sheni’), “Lord, have mercy”, “To Thee, O Lord”, and “Amen”.

No. 16 — “Our Father”. The Georgian text begins ‘mamao chveno romeli khar tsata shina’. This section concludes with “One is holy” (‘ert ars tsi’mida’).

No. 17 — “Praise the Lord from the Heavens”. The Georgian text begins ‘akebdi upalsa tsatagan’, which is sung while the clergy are receiving Communion. This section ends with “Receive the body of Christ” (‘khortsi kristesi movighot’) which is sung while the congregation is receiving Communion.

No. 18 — “You are a Vineyard”. Not part of the liturgy proper, ‘shen khar venakhi’ is one of Georgia’s most famous and popular hymns. As a religious piece it honors the Mother of God, but it also serves frequently as a wedding hymn. It also has patriotic connotations to Georgians and was heard often during the Russian incursion into Georgia in August 2008. One observer described it as akin to “We Shall Overcome”.

We are omitting No. 19 — “Blessed is He that Comes” — which are a number of short choral chanted responses. We are also omitting No. 20 — “Blessed is the Name of the Lord” — which is an extended choral chant, blessing church and civil authorities. The first blessing in Paliashvili’s score is for “The Most Pious Sovereign Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich” and the rest of the family of Nicholas II, the last Emperor of Russia.

No. 21 — “Christ is Risen From the Dead”. This section is the main festal hymn for Easter, sung during the Divine Liturgy and other services during the 40 days between Easter and Ascension. The Georgian text begins ‘krist’e aghsdga mk’vdretit’.

No. 22 — “Many Years” (in Georgian, ‘mravalzhamier’). This is not a canonical element in the Orthodox liturgy, but a Georgian traditional song that is frequently sung after the liturgy has ended as the faithful approach the priest to receive his blessing. There are many versions throughout Georgia, and indeed in Russia, Bulgaria and other Orthodox countries. In his Forward to the Liturgy, Paliashvili writes that he has drawn this version from western Georgia to illustrate a contrast with all of the other sections which are drawn from eastern Georgia. The song is a blessing that God grant the listener many years of life.

About the Capitol Hill Chorale

2009-2010 marks Frederick Binkholder's tenth anniversary as the Chorale's Artistic Director. Fred's knowledge, high standards, and vision have benefited the Chorale immensely. In Fred's honor, the Chorale has commissioned a work by Boston composer, Kevin Siegfried, to be performed next season, the second work commissioned by the Chorale from Mr. Siegfried during Fred's tenure. Please join the Chorale in congratulating Fred on this major milestone.

These concerts are part of the Capitol Hill Chorale's seventeenth season of concerts on Capitol Hill. Since its first program in December 1993 at the Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church, the Chorale has performed a wide range of repertoire, from the Bach *St. John Passion*, the Brahms *Requiem*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* and other major works in the choral canon, to works by Byrd and Tallis and other early music masters, to works by Poulenc, Britten and other contemporary composers, and to works representing many other genres of choral literature.

These performances of Zakaria Paliashvili's *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* are not the first American premiere presented by the Chorale of a major Orthodox work. In its first year, under the direction of its first Artistic Director, James Turk, the Chorale gave the American premiere of the *All-Night Vigil*, Opus 59 (1912) by the Russian composer, Alexander Gretchaninoff. Since then, the Chorale has also performed both the Rachmaninoff and Tchaikovsky settings of the *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, Rachmaninoff's *All-Night Vigil*, and many other shorter works by Russian and other Slavic composers.

Originally an affiliate of the Capitol Hill Arts Workshop, the Chorale recently established itself as an independent 501c(3) organization. As part of this move, the Chorale renewed its commitment to performing a broad range of choral literature at a highest possible level, to maintain a strong connection among current and former singers, and to build strong ties with the Capitol Hill business and residential community.

For more information about the Chorale, visit our website at www.capitolhillchorale.org



FREDERICK BINKHOLDER, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

A native of St. Louis, Artistic Director Frederick Binkholder sang with the St. Louis Symphony Chorus, St. Louis Chamber Chorus and toured with the Cornerstone Chorale. He also served as Director of the Vocal Jazz ensemble at Washington University, and was a private voice instructor at the St. Louis Conservatory and School for the Arts (CASA). In 1995, he accepted a fellowship for the Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting at Atlanta's Georgia State University. While in Atlanta, he directed the Vocal Jazz Ensemble, the GSU Choral Society and Choral Lab. Outside of school, he conducted two early music ensembles, Schola Cantorum and Atlanta Tapestry, and served as interim voice instructor at Mercer University.

Fred moved to Washington, D.C., in 2000, accepting the post of Artistic Director of the Capitol Hill Chorale. He is also the Director of Music at the Kingsbury Center, Music Minister at St. Alban's Episcopal Church in Annandale, Virginia, and Director of the Chamber Singers at Georgetown University. He lives on Capitol Hill with his wife, Mikyoung Cho, and son. Mikyoung is Music Director at Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church.

JINSUN CHO, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Jinsun Cho joined the Chorale as accompanist in February 2008. She brings a depth and breadth of experience spanning performance, accompanist, musical leadership and academic roles in the Baltimore/Washington area, and her native South Korea. Previous appointments include: Organist, Somang Presbyterian Church in Seoul, Korea, Minister of Music, Christ Lutheran Church in Bethesda, Maryland, and Harpsichordist, Peabody Baroque Ensemble, Baltimore, Maryland. She has served on the music faculty of Yonsei University, Mokwon University, South Korea, and the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

Dr. Cho holds the Bachelor of Music Degree from Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea. During her undergraduate studies, she traveled and studied extensively in Switzerland, Italy, Germany, and Netherlands. After receiving the Master of Music degree and Graduate Performance Diploma from the Peabody Conservatory of The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, she completed the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Organ Performance from the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. She also won numerous organ competitions included the first prize in the Arthur Poister Organ Competition, the second prize in the San Marino Organ Competition in 2000.

Currently, she is the accompanist and assistant director of the Capitol Hill Chorale, and the organist at St. Alban's Episcopal Church in Annandale, VA.

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RECOGNITION

The Chorale wishes to thank Anne Harrison, assisted by Amanda Blasko, Paul Crego, Lisa Kaestner, Zachary Kiknadze and Marekh Khmaladze, and also Silvio Eberhardt for their work with the Chorale on Georgian language.

The Chorale also wishes to thank Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church, where we are performing, and Lutheran Church of the Reformation, where we rehearse, for their generosity and hospitality.

We also wish to thank the Georgian Association in the United States of America, Inc., Mamuka Tsereteli, President, (<http://www.georgianassociation.org/>) for its support of this concert.

RECEPTION

Please join us in the first floor Parish Hall for a post-concert reception, with Georgian wines, generously provided by Georgian Wine House (<http://www.georgianwinehouse.com/>) and Potomac Wines and Spirits (<http://potomacwines.com>).

We are grateful to Niavi, DC's Georgian music ensemble, Andrea Harris, Director, for performing at the reception.

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