

Byzantine Choir of the Faculty of Theology

The Byzantine Choir of the Faculty of Theology of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki consists of talented undergraduate and postgraduate students who are trained in Byzantine Ecclesiastical and Traditional Music. Students chant archaic and byzantine liturgical hymns within the framework of the tutorials provided by the Faculty of Theology.

Present choirmaster and teacher of the Choir is arch priest Spyridon St. Antoniou. He is also an assistant professor of Byzantine Musicology, the Art of Chant and Hymnology at the Department of Worship, Archaeology and Art of the School of Pastoral and Social Theology of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

The Choir participates in various cultural events, performing byzantine and post-byzantine music. It also performs in conferences organized by the Faculty of Theology and the Aristotle University in general, as well as in anniversary ceremonies and events organized by other institutions. Over the last ten years, the Choir has successfully performed sixty concerts in many Greek cities, with the aim to promote the work of institutions and cultural societies of Thessaloniki and support them by raising funds. It has also performed concerts in the USA (Boston, New York), Cyprus and Istanbul. The Choir has received a lot of accolades for its performances in important ceremonies and events by the Ecumenical Patriarch, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchs of Jerusalem and Alexandria, the Archbishops of America, Albany, and Athens, as well as by eminent politicians.

The Choir aims to promote the Greek Orthodox cultural heritage, which consists of some of the oldest pieces of written music, in Greece and abroad. In addition, it has committed itself to systematic research, promotion and musicological analysis of unknown repertoire.

The Choir performs works by outstanding byzantine composers, such as Ioannis Koukouzelis, Nikephoros Ithikos, Ioannis Kladas, Xenos Koronis, Manuel Chrysaphes, Germanos Neon Patron, etc., as well as choral parts of ancient Greek drama and Greek folk songs. It has cooperated with Choirs from Boston, Belgrade, Istanbul, etc.

The Byzantine Choir often performs in the Ceremony Halls of the Aristotle University and in other important venues in the city of Thessaloniki, such as in the Church of Agia Sofia, the

Church of Agios Demetrios, the Church of Agios Georgios (Rotunda of Galerius), the Church of Panagia Dexia, the Museum of Byzantine Culture, etc. Many of its performances of Byzantine repertoire have been videotaped for broadcast on channels, such as TV 4E, ET3, and TV 100. It has recorded CDs that include hymns of the Octoechos, old Byzantine and post-byzantine Christmas chants, and chants about the fall of Constantinople. The Choir has also participated in the Demetria Festival of Thessaloniki. Moreover, it has recorded and published a selection of hymns of the feast day of Agios Demetrios in honour of the patron saint of the city of Thessaloniki, many of which were performed for the first time.

The rehearsals of the Choir are held once a week, on Thursdays or Sundays, from 20.00pm to 22.00pm in the building of the Faculty of Theology. New members must audition to be accepted into the Choir.

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