



# The Resurrectional Divine Liturgy according to the Ukrainian Byzantine Rite

An original composition by Fr. John Sembrat OSBM

Project Outline and Objectives



## THE RESURRECTIONAL DIVINE LITURGY:

A COMPOSITION OF FR. JOHN SEMBRAT OSBM

Fr. John Sembrat, a priest of the Order of St. Basil the Great, composed an Easter setting of the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom for male voices. The composition began in earnest in 2000, and was completed in 2014.

In 2011, Fr. Sembrat, along with members of the Axios Male Choir from Edmonton, Alberta, under the direction of Boris Derow, began to plan how best to record the composition. Since the work was demanding and expansive, it was determined to carry out a trial recording of a handful of selections, in order to see whether there would be future interest in completing the entire opus. An ad hoc organizing committee invited Oleh Mahlay, conductor of the renowned Ukrainian Bandurist Chorus (UBC), to lead members from various choirs in and around the Edmonton area, as well as others who were members of the UBC from Toronto.

Mahlay agreed, and a choir numbering 34 singers recorded five selections over a weekend in June at St. Basil's Ukrainian Catholic Church. It was a success, and furnished the necessary motivation to record the entire composition.

Initially, the concept was to record a regular Sunday setting of Fr. Sembrat's new Divine Liturgy. After much consideration, however, it was deemed that the Easter setting (including all of the musical and textual content for the clergy) would be the final choice of liturgical backdrop on which to focus the recording. The reason for this approach was due to the lack of unabridged Resurrectional liturgical recordings and works. There are many, of course, that feature compilations of music based upon Easter texts, but few Canadian recordings that place them into their specific context in liturgical praxis from the beginning to end.



*“I found the composition to be outstanding, drawing me in with its beauty and musicality.”*

*David Lucs- OCA director and composer, ISOCCM board member*

With the new focus in mind, the organizing body began to deliberate how to proceed. Owing to the full-scale nature of the work, inquiries were made as to whether a professional ensemble might wish to participate and direct this recording project to its completion. With generous donations from an anonymous donor and the Ukraine Millennium Foundation, we had a sufficient financial base from which to start the work. Pro Coro Canada was considered as a potential partner, due to their reputation within the choral community in Canada, as well as their growing international reputation-and their fortuitous location in Edmonton. We approached Pro Coro’s Artistic and Principal Conductor Michael Zaugg to review the Easter Liturgy and ascertain whether the composition was worthy of their consideration. He quickly agreed that it was a high-quality work and that they were interested in helping bring it to light. Furthermore, he perceived a return benefit to the singers of Pro Coro that demonstrated the truly exciting potential synergies for this recording project:

*"I am very excited about the learning opportunity this production provides for our male singers! The sonority of these ensembles is unique and will hopefully resonate through our regular season."*

Michael Zaugg

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Owing to the triumphal tone of the composition, as well as its multifaceted layers and overall breadth, it was decided that the most effective means to convey and record this work was to assemble a medium-to-large ensemble that combines the precision and intonation of Pro Coro with the native talents of some of the best choristers from Ukrainian choirs across Canada, as well as professional singers from Ukraine.

We will mark the release of this unique and premium recording through a series of performances throughout Western Canada. The concert tour is entitled

### **RESURRECTION: MUSIC FROM THE UKRAINIAN SACRED CHORAL TRADITION**

March 30: Regina @ Holy Rosary Catholic Cathedral

March 31: Divine Liturgy @ St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church

April 1: Saskatoon @ Knox United

April 2: Edmonton @ St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Basilica



The assembled choir will feature 55 singers and soloists from the following ensembles:

Pro Coro Canada

Boyan Ensemble of Kyiv

Homin Municipal Choir of Lviv

National Philharmonic of Ukraine

Chorus of the Armed Forces of Ukraine

Vydubychi Church Choir (Kyiv)

Ukrainian Bandurist Chorus (Detroit)

Axios Men's Ensemble (Edmonton)

Ukrainian Male Chorus of Edmonton

Hoosli Ukrainian Male Chorus of Winnipeg

It will be conducted by Michael Zaugg of Pro Coro Canada

For more information about this project and to procure tickets, you can visit our website at [www.resurrectionalliturgy.com](http://www.resurrectionalliturgy.com)

## PROJECT OUTPUT

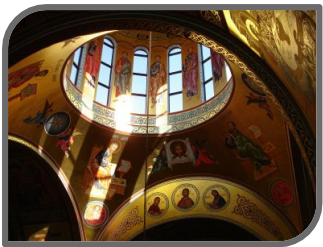
A double-CD comprising a recording of the full Easter Sunday Divine Liturgy, including priest-celebrant and male choir, with choral music composed by Fr. John Sembrat, and accompanying booklet. The recording took place in Edmonton from June 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> at St. Basil's Ukrainian Catholic Church.

## PROJECT AND TOUR OUTCOMES

In the overall scope of this project there are a number of aims we hope to achieve, or expect will result, from our expansive proposal. They are:



1) We wish to engage a reputable and artistically sound choral ensemble to advance and introduce this composition to the general public. We believe by combining the best musical resources available within our Ukrainian community as well as from outside—under the capable hands of a European-trained conductor whose reputation is rising meteorically both in Canada and abroad—we will be able to galvanize interest in both spheres. Combining singers from across Canada and Ukraine, we strongly believe, will further interest in the recording and composition, as well as provide a base from which to promote Fr. Sembrat's worthy composition on the national and international stage, within the Ukrainian Church and throughout the general community.



2) We are convinced there is much value and importance in promoting the work of an original composition of Eastern sacred music. We hope that this will provide inspiration for aspiring Canadian musicians, both Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian, to compose original works that can be performed and used on a regular basis.



3) Fostering high-level choral ventures will provide and aid in the development of current and future choristers for years to come. A high choral standard can serve just as easily as an inspiration for singers to improve their current abilities as can the quality of the composition. We hope that by amassing a large and talented roster, we can stimulate and better the standards in our community at large.



4) Increase knowledge and awareness of our traditional liturgical rites. By providing the Easter Divine Liturgy in its complete format, faithful Eastern Christians, as well as those unacquainted with our customs, can better know and explore the richness of our sacred musical legacy.

We thank you for allowing us the opportunity to seek funding in the development of this project. Such an endeavor requires a sufficient quantity of funds to ensure its success, as well as to help offset expenses that will not be covered by ticket and cd revenue. If you decide to contribute, we in turn would provide the required designation of your financial sponsorship, as is appropriate.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you need any further information.

Yours in Christ,

Damein Zakordonski & Ksenia Maryniak

Committee Chair & Secretary

All donations can be made care of:  
Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Parish  
5705-51 Street  
Vegreville, AB T9C 1H8

Please mark "Resurrection" in the memo line  
All donations over the sum of 25.00 will receive a tax receipt.

Any inquiries regarding the Fr. Sembrat Recording  
Project can be made care of  
[damein@paschalliturgya.com](mailto:damein@paschalliturgya.com)