

SOFIA ORTHODOX CHOIR

Vivian Klochkov, conductor

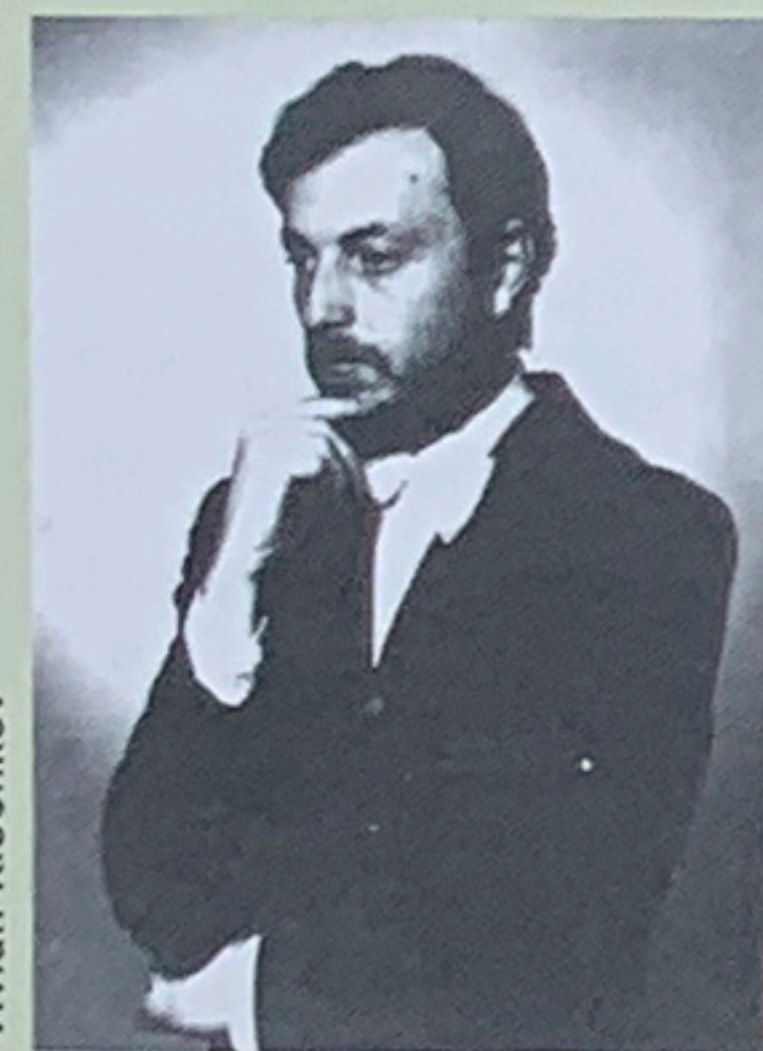
Slavtcho Atanasov
Roman Musev
Lyubomir Chernev
Petar Petrov
Stanislav Kirov

Aleksandar Lalov
Nikolay Veselinov
Dimitriy Gamburtsev
Teodor Hristov
Nikolay Hristov

8pm St Mary and All Saints' Church, Fotheringhay

Great Litany (Velika Ektenia)

Dobri Hristov (1875-1941) (arr. Vivian Klochkov)
'Blessed is the Kingdom of God, blessed is Christ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.'



Dobri Hristov was one of the major composers of the 20th century. He was born in Varna, Bulgaria, and in 1903 graduated from the Prague Conservatory, which was at the time under the directorship of Antonín Dvořák. Hristov returned to Bulgaria where he was instrumental in the development of the country's music culture; he was notable for his use of Bulgarian folklore elements in his compositions. He was conductor of the Seven Saints Choir in the church of the

same name in Sofia, Bulgaria between 1912 and 1928, writing many choral works for them.

Cherubikon (Herouvumska)

A Bulgarian chant dating from the 12th century. The mystic rhythm symbolising the sacrificial heavenly ascent of Christ borne by cherubs is set with lyrical reverence and brilliance.

Terirem

Joannes Koukouzeles (c.1280-1340)

A melody in melismatic style, constructed on the syllables 'te-ri-re' in authentic echoes. This type of melismatic melody is particularly representative of singing practice during the Byzantine era of the Paleologs in the 14th century. The 'Terirem' melody is part of an extensive composition, a callophonic version of lines from Psalm 134.

Joannes Koukouzeles was a medieval composer, singer and reformer of Eastern Orthodox Church music. He was one of the most eminent and influential Byzantine musicians during the Paleolog dynasty (1261-1453) and was later made a saint of the Greek Orthodox Church. Koukouzeles became famous at the imperial court for his exceptional voice, but at the height of his fame as a singer he left Constantinople to enter the monastery of the Great Lavra on Mount Athos. He introduced the melodious callophonic style and repertoire and created a system of notation which is named after him. About ninety of his works in all church styles have survived.

Kyrie Eleison (Gospodi pomiluj)

An 18th century Bulgarian chant from the Elena region.

Psalm 135: verses 7-8

A 15th century Byzantine chant from Latrinos. This is connected with a particularly solemn moment in the Byzantine festive morning service; it is a 'song of triumph, glorifying God's wonderful deeds and the salvation of Man through Jesus, the Son of God'.

Te Cantamus (Tebe Poem)

An 18th century Bulgarian chant from the Elena region, relating to the mystic ritual of the Eucharist, the transformation of bread and wine into Christ's flesh and blood.

Doxology – Glorification (Veliko Slavoslovie)

A Byzantine chant from the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, usually completing the song cycles of the polyeleos Psalms 134



and 135 in the Septuagint numbering – the word 'polyeleos' means 'much mercy' and derives from the repeated refrain 'his mercy lasts forever'.

Interval

Credo (Verouyu)

Alexander T. Grechaninov (1864-1956)

The confession in the name of peace, harmony and love is rendered in an expressive recitative (solo bass) against gently mingling choral harmonies.

The Russian composer Grechaninov studied composition and orchestration under Rimsky Korsakov in St Petersburg and owed much to the older composer's support and encouragement. He wrote symphonies, operas, chamber music, a song cycle and theatre music as well as music for the Russian Orthodox Church.

Mercy of Peace (Milost Mira)

Nikolai Rimsky Korsakov (1844-1908)
(arr. Vivian Klochkov)

A Eucharistic canon that strictly follows the ritual. The music suggests anxiety and fear, awe and peacefulness of the soul in expectation of the Eucharistic sacrament.

We Hymn Thee, We Bless Thee (Tebe Poem)

Dobri Hristov (1875-1941)

A hymn of the Eucharistic ritual.

The Judicious Villain (Razbojnika Blagorazumnago)

Petar Dinev (1889-1980)

An Exapostelarian for Good Friday. An Exapostelarian is a hymn chanted near the end of Matins. The term is related to the word 'Apostle', which itself is derived from a Greek word meaning 'sent out', and the hymn is so called because originally a singer would be sent out from the choir into the centre of the church to chant it. The words call upon God's grace, asking Him to enlighten the minds of the faithful that they might worthily praise the Lord. During Holy Week the Exapostelarian is of great significance and is solemnly chanted in the centre of the church by three singers, sometimes by the entire choir.

Our Father (Otche Nash)

Nikolai Kedrov (1871-1940)

Through its musical setting Christ's devotional text suggests humbleness and respect for God, and hope and faith in His mercy.

In Thy Kingdom (Vo Zarstvie Tvoem)

Dobri Hristov

This choral work was originally part of a mass.

To Thy Cross (Krestu Tvoemu)

Dobri Hristov

A special Trisagion for the third week of Lent (Adoration of the Cross) and for Exaltation of the Cross. 'Trisagion' means 'thrice-holy' and is a standard prayer in Orthodox Divine Liturgy, the words being: 'Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal one, have mercy on us'.

Blessed is the Man (Blazhen Mouzh)

Grigoriy Ljubimov (1900-1960)

In this chant, typical of Russian church music, the soloist and choir alternate with responses in the tradition of evening service psalmody.

The **Sofia Orthodox Choir** was founded in 1985 and is composed of between ten and sixteen professional singers, according to the programme being performed. Their rich repertoire of Byzantine and Orthodox music, liturgies, Gregorian chants and traditional Slav song has taken them across Europe and Japan for concerts, recordings and broadcasts; they have released seven CDs.

Vivian Klochkov was born in Sofia and began his musical career as a violinist. He graduated from the Sofia National Music Academy in 1978 and has been conducting the Sofia Orthodox Choir since its formation. He is celebrated for his work in early music, reviving the original Byzantine and Bulgarian church singing characteristic of the Late Middle Ages.

Refreshments available before the concert and during the interval.

The concert ends at 9.40pm.

The Sofia Orthodox Choir's visit to the UK is supported by British Airways.