



JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY
FOR ORTHODOX CHURCH MUSIC

Vol. 8:1 (2024), Section III: Obituaries, pp. 84–92

ISSN 2342-1258

<https://doi.org/10.57050/jisocm.147996>

IN MEMORIAM

PROTOPRESBYTER IVAN MOODY

(11 JUNE 1964–18 JANUARY 2024)

The death at the age of 59 of the Very Rev. Dr Ivan Moody, founder of the International Society for Orthodox Church Music, was deeply shocking for anyone who experienced at first hand his seemingly boundless energy and enthusiasm. For decades he had maintained intersecting careers in academic, ecclesiastical, and musical spheres as a composer, conductor, editor, pastor, scholar, teacher, and translator. Fr Ivan sustained this activity by regularly crossing confessional, ethnic, linguistic, and national boundaries. In so doing, he built and maintained a dense network of personal and professional relationships. When I met him in the late 1980s, this meant keeping in touch mainly by post. Later he quickly adopted new communication media as they appeared: faxes, email, websites, electronic bulletin boards and listservs, instant messaging, Facebook, and finally Zoom and other forms of live video.

The cessation of this stream of communication has left a void, still keenly felt, in the lives of Fr Ivan's friends and colleagues. Yet the passage of six months since his repose has also offered an opportunity for preliminary reflection on the magnitude of his achievements in multiple fields. Even a cursory glance at the versions of his biography and curriculum vitae available on the internet is enough for one to conclude that a comprehensive assessment of his legacy as a musician, scholar, and cleric is a project that will take scholars years to achieve. I will therefore limit myself here to a brief tribute concentrating on Fr Ivan's activities relating to the musical traditions of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Ivan William George Moody became an Eastern Orthodox Christian soon after receiving his B.Mus degree from Royal Holloway, University of London in 1985. By this point his parallel interests in the musical inheritances of Western and Eastern Christianity were well established. To perform their historical and contemporary repertoires he founded in 1984 a vocal ensemble known alternately as Voces Angelicae and the Kastalsky Chamber Choir. He demonstrated a commitment to exploring the wider cultural contexts for Christian liturgical music in his *Three Poems of Anna Akhmatova* (1985), a

work for high voice (soprano or tenor) and string sextet that won the Royal Holloway College Prize for Composition. This was an artistic orientation he largely shared with Sir John Tavener (1944–2013), who had been received into the Orthodox Church in 1977 and during Fr Ivan’s final year as an undergraduate student began to offer him private composition lessons.

During the late 1980s Fr Ivan occupied a privileged location at the intersection of historically significant currents in Orthodox Christian spirituality and music. Eastern Orthodoxy in the United Kingdom was then enjoying what was, in relation to its tiny number of Anglophone adherents, disproportionate influence in establishment circles. This emanated from a small group of clerics, scholars, and artists who had achieved prominence as compelling mediators of the artistic, intellectual, and spiritual inheritances of the Russian emigration and the Greek *Philokalia*. These remarkable individuals included Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) of Sourozh, Bishop (later Metropolitan) Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia, Father (now Saint) Sophrony (Sakharov) of Essex, Philip Sherrard, and Sir John Tavener.

Fr Ivan’s first guide to Orthodox liturgical singing was Fr Michael Fortounatto (1931–2022). Fr Michael had directed the choir at Metropolitan Anthony’s Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Dormition of the Mother of God and All Saints in London since 1965, when he had succeeded his father-in-law to the post. Fr Michael and his cathedral choir had established reputations as custodians of the pre-revolutionary traditions of the Moscow Synodal School of Church Singing and, on their own side of the Atlantic, pioneers in the adaptation of its music to English. In his ISOCM obituary for Fr Michael, Fr Ivan recalled being invited to join the cathedral choir prior to his reception into Orthodoxy, after which he became “a regular visitor to [Fr Michael’s] house and plunderer of his library.” Reflecting years later on his initiation into Orthodox liturgical music under Fr Michael’s tutelage, Fr Ivan wrote it was “difficult to overestimate quite how much I learnt from this experience.”

Fr Michael had been advising Tavener on matters relating to Orthodox liturgical music for nearly a decade before Fr Ivan joined the former’s choir. All three collaborated on a cassette recording of Tavener’s *Panikhida* and selected ‘Religious Works’ by both composers released on Ikon Records (the cathedral’s own recording label, run by Nicolas Tuckett) in 1988. Fr Michael is credited as ‘celebrant’ of the *Panikhida*, for which he chanted all the texts allotted liturgically to a priest, deacon, and reader. Fr Ivan conducted *Voces Angelicae* in the *Panikhida*, as well as two other works by Tavener (*Ikon of St Cuthbert of Lindesfarne* and *Funeral Ikos*), and his own *Christmas Ikos* and *Canticle at the Parting of the Soul from the Body*, both composed and premiered in 1987. In addition, Tavener directed his *Apolytikion for St Nicholas*. Ikon Records re-released the hymn to St Nicholas and the *Panikhida* in 2002 with *Voces Angelicae* reccredited as the Kastalsky

Chamber Choir on a CD of Orthodox liturgical music by Tavener. With a new booklet note by Fr Ivan, this compilation also contained the 1978 recording of Tavener's *Liturgy of St John Chrysostom*, Opus 32 by The Europa Singers.

After graduating from university, Fr Ivan earned his living by working for leading organisations in the field of Western Early Music. Service as Librarian of the Academy of Ancient Music (1986–87) partially overlapped with managerial and editorial work at the Mapa Mundi publishing house (1986–88), for which he produced editions of polyphonic Latin masses and motets that today remain in print. Fr Ivan then became Musicological Advisor and Administrator of The Tallis Scholars (1988–1990). For them he wrote programme notes and prepared modern performing editions of pre-modern vocal works. Significant amongst the latter were those created for the dawn mass of Christmas according to the medieval English Sarum usage featured on *Missa in Gallicantu* (1988), the ensemble's only recording devoted to plainchant.

Intersections of professional and personal interests and relationships endowed Fr Ivan's relatively short tenure at The Tallis Scholars with lasting significance. Although primarily known for Renaissance polyphony, the ensemble had previously released two albums featuring compositions by Tavener: *Russian Orthodox Music* (1982), which consisted mainly of medieval and baroque polyphony but included the premiere recording of his *Ode of St Andrew of Crete*; and *John Tavener: Ikon of Light – Funeral Ikos – Carol: The Lamb* (1984). Building on their common interests, Peter Philips and Fr Ivan forged what proved to be a lifelong friendship. It was the former who introduced the latter to his future wife, Portuguese singer and string player Susanna Diniz. Tavener served as best man when Fr Ivan and Susanna married in 1990. The couple settled near Lisbon in Estoril and raised three children there: Sebastian, Sofia, and Bárbara.

Fr Ivan and I met at an afternoon rehearsal of the Tallis Scholars in Sherborne Abbey in Dorset in May 1989. The ensemble was preparing for an evening concert of sacred vocal music split between works representing Eastern Orthodox traditions and compositions by Thomas Tallis. Highlights of the programme were the world premiere of *Let Not the Prince Be Silent*, a massive setting of early Christian texts by John Tavener, and Tallis's monumental motet for forty voices *Spem in alium*. Between the rehearsal and the performance Tavener offered a talk at the local manor (Mintern Magna) for patrons of the Summer Music Society of Dorset. Echoing the perennialist thought of Philip Sherrard, the composer told his audience that 'the West' was a 'culture in ruins' that stood in urgent need of the 'primordial tradition' preserved in Eastern Orthodoxy. Related ideas figured prominently in the passionate conversations that Fr Ivan and I had during shared car rides to and from this pre-concert reception (to which I, as a visitor from Canada, had kindly been invited). He had already given much thought to the relevance of Orthodox tradition to contemporary

musical composition and performance, having previously written articles on ‘The Church Music of John Tavener’ (with Peter Philips, *Composer*, Winter 1987), ‘Ikons in Music’ (*Sobornost*, March 1988), ‘Tavener’s *Akathist of Thanksgiving*’ (*Musical Times*, September 1988), and ‘The Music of Alfred Schnittke’ (*Tempo* March 1989).

Tavener’s views on contemporary music as a sacred art began to be widely discussed following the wildly successful 1989 BBC Proms premiere of *The Protecting Veil*, a work for cello and string orchestra that he proffered as a series of ‘musical ikons’ portraying the earthly life and cosmic role of the Virgin Mary as Mother of God. Critics subsequently placed Tavener at the forefront of what they perceived to be a movement to compose music on sacred themes characterised variously by repetition and radical simplicity of musical form, harmony or texture. Bestowing on it the quasi-pejorative name of ‘Mystic’ or ‘Holy Minimalism,’ they identified Arvo Pärt (b. 1935) and Henryk Gorecki (1933–2010) as its other leading exponents because recent recordings of their works had achieved levels of popular acclaim comparable to that of *The Protecting Veil*. These were, respectively, releases on the ECM label of instrumental and vocal works by Pärt set in the austere ‘Tintinnabuli’ style that he initiated with the composition of *Für Alina* for solo piano (1976), and a 1992 album featuring David Zinman directing the London Sinfonietta and soprano Dawn Upshaw in Gorecki’s Third Symphony, op. 36 (1976).

Although Fr Ivan rejected ‘Holy Minimalism’ as an adequate description of the phenomenon, manifesting the sacred in contemporary art was the dominant theme of his subsequent scholarly and creative work. As a prolific author and editor working in journalistic and scholarly styles, he contributed regularly to the study, understanding, and modern performance of the historical repertoires of Christian sacred music. More influential, however, were his efforts to advance discussions of spirituality in modern music. The special issue of *Contemporary Music Review* (12/2, 1995) that he edited on the theme of ‘Contemporary Music and Religion’ provided a comprehensive survey of the evolving state of the field. In this volume Fr Ivan presented his own thoughts on the topic (expressed in an essay entitled ‘Music as a Sacred Art’) alongside contributions by a remarkable group of musicologists, composers, and performers including Michael Adamis, Paul Hillier (conversing with Steve Reich), Wilfred Mellers (writing on Pärt’s *Passio*), Pärt (as interviewed by Jamie McCarthy, Tavener, and Einojuhani Rautavaara).

‘Contemporary Music and Religion’ proved to be an early manifestation of the breadth of vision and generosity of spirit that were typical of Fr Ivan’s academic work. Since this is not the place for a thorough account of his many contributions to musicological and theological scholarship, I will offer only the general observation about their overall trajectory. A journey toward greater depth, rigour, and sophistication is evident in his long succession of conference papers, keynote addresses,

record reviews, edited collections, and published studies. Representative examples run from his articles for the 2001 edition of the *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, through his monograph *Modernism and Orthodox Spirituality in Contemporary Music* (2014), to the volume *Orthodox, Music, Politics and Art in Russia and Eastern Europe* (2020) that he edited with Ivana Medić.

Affiliation with the Centro de Estudos de Sociologia e Estética Musical (CESEM) of Lisbon's Universidade Nova from 2002 onwards gave Fr Ivan an institutional base close to home to pursue his scholarly endeavours. Financial support came in the form of several postdoctoral fellowships, the first of which he received in 2010–2012 for the research project on Eastern Orthodoxy and modernism that culminated in his 2014 monograph. Fr Ivan also taught frequently outside of Portugal as a visiting artist, lecturer, supervisor, and examiner at universities in Brazil, Canada, Finland, Ireland, Serbia, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. His only teaching position with full academic responsibilities was that of Professor of Church Music in the Department of Orthodox Theology at the University of Eastern Finland. His brief (2013–2014) service in that post was only his most intense period of engagement with that institution, which in 2001 under its previous name of the University of Joensuu had awarded him a Diploma (Approbatur) in Orthodox Theology. Another institution with which Fr Ivan maintained a longstanding relationship was St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Yonkers, New York. Having first been invited to the seminary in 2004 for a symposium on the Octoechos (the ecclesiastical system of eight musical modes), Fr Ivan entered a new phase of more regular collaboration with its faculty in 2016 when Professor Peter Bouteneff invited him to participate in a symposium of scholars and practitioners entitled 'Rethinking the Sacred Arts.' He remained thereafter a key contributor to initiatives on theology and the arts that St Vladimir's pursued with the support of two major grants (2016–2019 and 2019–2022) from the Henry Luce Foundation. These led to the establishment of an Institute of Sacred Arts with Fr Ivan as one of its inaugural roster of affiliated scholars and artists. Before his declining health had made it unlikely, Fr Ivan had been looking forward to an extended period on the seminary campus as 'Artist in Residence.'

Fr Ivan followed a parallel path of maturation as a composer. He scored an early success with *Canticum Canticorum I* (1985), an exquisite setting for ATTB voices of three texts from the *Song of Songs*. Premiered and later recorded by the Hilliard Ensemble, it remains one of his most popular works. Foreshadowing his later music, it demonstrates an acute sensitivity to words combined with an extraordinary ability to create expressive musical textures through technically economical means.

Other compositions of late 1980s and early 1990s show Fr Ivan labouring to integrate into his compositional style elements of the Greek and Slavic musical traditions that he had embraced as a performer, scholar,

and Orthodox Christian. Representative examples of his efforts at the preliminary stages of this process are two multilingual works for mixed chorus: *Canticle of the Mother of God* (1987) and his first setting of *The Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom* (1991). He treats the musical heritage of the Byzantine rite with significantly greater assurance in *Passion and Resurrection* (1992), an oratorio for soloists, chorus, strings, and percussion, and *Epitaphios* (1993), a purely instrumental work for solo cello and string orchestra. Both pieces quote traditional Orthodox liturgical music verbatim and are linked by their use of a received Byzantine melody for ‘Today is hung upon the tree’ (Σήμερον κρεμᾶται), a *sticheron idiomelon* (office hymn with a unique melody) for Matins and the Ninth Hour of Great and Holy Friday. The soloist representing Christ in *Passion and Resurrection* sings the chant plainly over a drone, while in *Epitaphios* it forms the basis for the entire composition.

Over time Fr Ivan developed ever greater fluency, freedom, and variety in his use of traditional musical material whilst remaining open to new sounds and languages. He received academic recognition for his musical achievements in 2008 when the University of York awarded him a Ph.D. in Composition. His thesis, prepared under the supervision of Professor William Brooks, was a portfolio of nine works accompanied by extended analytical and aesthetic commentary. Frequent travel abroad as a composer, performer, and researcher had assisted Fr Ivan in broadening his sonic horizons and discovering special affinities for the musical traditions of Bulgaria, Finland, and Serbia. His international network of contacts fed the stream of musical commissions that Fr Ivan received from soloists, ensembles, and cultural organisations around the world. Particularly fruitful in this regard were his longstanding associations with British tenor John Potter, the American pianist Paul Barnes, the English Chamber Choir, Singer Pur, the choir of St George’s Cathedral in Novi Sad, Trio Medieval, and Cappella Romana.

It is the last of these relationships that I, as founder (in 1991) and Music Director of Cappella Romana, know best. Based in the Pacific Northwest of the USA, our ensemble began performing Fr Ivan’s music in 1994. Two years later we presented the North American premiere concerts of *Passion and Resurrection* in Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington. Inspired by its capacity to sing in both Byzantine and Western choral styles, Fr Ivan set about composing for Cappella Romana what became his largest work to date: the *Akathistos Hymn* (1998) to the Mother of God. Scored for solo tenor and mixed choir, it is a complete musical setting of an anonymous ancient (ca. sixth century CE) stanzaic hymn (kontakion) from the liturgical tradition of Constantinople that remains central to Marian piety in Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Its text consists of two prologues and twenty four stanzas (*oikoi*) united by recurrences of two refrains (‘Hail, Bride without Bridegroom’ and ‘Alleluia’) and, in the original Greek, an alphabetic acrostic. Fr Ivan set mainly an English translation

of the hymn by Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia, but retained Greek for the choral refrains sung after each stanza. Musical textures in the *Akathistos Hymn* range from solo chant to double choir in twelve parts, with some sections paraphrasing Byzantine chant and others early Slavic polyphony. Only the Greek refrains directly quote traditional melodies, which are those heard on a then recent recording by the Greek Byzantine Choir (whose director, Lycourgos Angelopoulos, kindly forwarded scores for transcription by me into staff notation). Cappella Romana premiered the *Akathistos Hymn* in 1999 and then recorded it with guidance from the composer in August 2002. The arrival of a heat wave transformed recording sessions in the un-airconditioned Agnes Flanagan Chapel of Portland's Lewis and Clark College into a test of physical endurance and patience as takes were repeatedly interrupted by loud cracks from the wooden roof as it expanded and contracted in reaction to the sun.

Two months after these recording sessions Fr Ivan joined Cappella Romana in Southern California to direct *Passion and Resurrection*, which Chris Pasles of the *Los Angeles Times* described as “deeply moving ... like jewelled light flooding the space” (14 October 2002). For the next two decades he returned at regular intervals to lead the ensemble in performances for its annual concert series. Fr Ivan not only conducted his own compositions, but also introduced Cappella Romana's audiences in Portland and Seattle to many sacred choral works by Slavic and Finnish composers. A 2008 concert programme of the latter was recorded and later released as *Arctic Light: Finnish Orthodox Music* (2014). This album includes Fr Ivan's own Finnish-language setting of the Exaposteilarion for the Dormition of the Mother of God (*Te Apostolit*) alongside music by Pekka Attinen, Leonid Bashmakov, Boris Jakubov, Peter Myrolybov, Timo Ruottinen, and Mikko Sidoroff.

Fr Ivan balanced his busy schedule of foreign travel with musical and pastoral work closer to home. He was a core member of Ensemble Alpha, a Lisbon-based musical group founded in 1996. According to the biographical note printed in the booklet for its CD *O Divina Virgo* (2003), the ensemble specialised in medieval music “with a special concentration on the music of Orthodox countries and the Iberian peninsula.” It both names Fr Ivan as “Ensemble Alpha's musicological director” and, as an example of how its members bring “their own diverse and specialised experiences,” briefly mentions his ecclesiastical roles as “protopsaltis and choir director of the Greek Orthodox Church in Lisbon.” Behind this passing reference is a deep legacy of pastoral service that his fellow parishioner, academic colleague, and friend Svetlana Poliakova elucidated last January when interviewed for a special memorial episode of *Luminous*, the podcast of the Institute for Sacred Arts. For decades the Moody family worked assiduously to sustain and develop the liturgical and community life of their multilingual and multinational mission Orthodox parish in Estoril. Profound commitment to pastoral ministry led Fr Ivan to the discernment of a priestly vocation. After ordaining him to the diaconate (9 September 2007) and holy priesthood

(7 October 2007), His Eminence Metropolitan Polykarpos of Spain and Portugal (Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople) later elevated him to the ecclesiastical ranks of Stravrophore Ekonomos (November 2008) and Protopresbyter (December 2012). Fr Ivan and his community of St John the Russian transferred to the Serbian Orthodox Church in early 2022, after which the Estoril parish adopted a second dedication to the Transfiguration of the Lord.

Tending to the pastoral needs of his home community did not prevent Fr Ivan from continuing to make significant contributions to ministries of the Orthodox Church elsewhere. When the World Wide Web was in its infancy Fr Ivan became a regular participant in online Orthodox discussion groups. Among those concerned with liturgical music, he rapidly emerged a core contributor to the discussion group of the Pan-Orthodox Society for the Advancement of Liturgical Music (PSALM), an American-based organisation founded in 1999. To serve the needs of subsets of its members, Fr Ivan created and moderated separate groups for addressing relatively technical matters relating to Byzantine chant, liturgical rubrics, and publishing (respectively the Byzantine Chant, Typikon and Ekdosis discussion groups). Specialist websites and the rise of Facebook and other social media eventually displaced these technologically basic electronic fora. By then the many hours that Fr Ivan had devoted to their maintenance in their heyday had already provided church musicians, scholars, and clergy with unprecedented opportunities to share their knowledge and experiences of sung worship in the Byzantine rite across geographic and jurisdictional borders.

Fr Ivan pursued many of the same aims through the International Society for Orthodox Church Music. After he played a central role in its creation, he served it as its Chair from the time of its foundation in 2005 until his untimely death earlier this year. His leadership helped to ensure that the biennial conferences of ISOCM in Joensuu were joyful events. Embracing virtually every facet of Fr Ivan's rich life as a scholar and practitioner of Orthodox sacred music, they welcomed a distinctive and thoroughly international assortment of specialists and enthusiasts. He also guided carefully the expansion of ISOCM's activities to embrace publishing and additional conferences held on both side of the Atlantic.

Fr Ivan later found another, somewhat more rarified, forum for inter-Orthodox exchange in the International Orthodox Theological Association (IOTA), becoming Co-Chair of its Church Music Group upon its founding in 2017. IOTA's second mega-conference during the second week of January 2023 in Volos, Greece provided what turned out to be my last opportunity to spend time with my old friend Fr Ivan, whom I had not seen in person since before the COVID-19 pandemic. Since declining health had already reduced significantly both his capacity for long-distance travel and his short-range mobility, I was especially grateful that he had come to Volos. Our visit concluded with me driving him back to Athens in my rental car.

Nearly thirty-four years after our first car journey together in Dorset, we once again shared perspectives on the Orthodox Church and its musical traditions, our views tempered now by decades of experience.

After we said goodbye at the Athens airport, Fr Ivan and I remained in touch through the usual electronic means. He continued to serve his parish, write, and compose around periods of illness until cascading health problems finally made him cease toward the end of 2023. Even for those of his friends who knew the severity of his condition, Fr Ivan's death on 18 January 2024 was a profound shock. We mourned not only his relative youth and undimmed creativity, but also his sudden absence after becoming a regular part of our lives through his frequent texts, emails, and posts on social media.

News of Fr Ivan's passing spread rapidly through these same networks. Relatives, friends, and colleagues throughout the world were soon offering messages of condolence and prayers for the repose of his soul. With the passage of time these have been supplemented by growing numbers of preliminary tributes to his rich legacy as a cleric, musician, and scholar. Six months after his repose, these have included literary reflections, the special episode of *Luminous* mentioned above, and concerts in New York, Lisbon, London, Portland, and Seattle. Among the musical works performed were new choral pieces in Fr Ivan's memory composed by Robert Kyr for Cappella Romana and Rufus Frowde for the English Chamber Choir. Further commemorative events have already been planned for 2024–2025 and more are sure to follow.

May his memory be eternal!

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