



## **PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE 'NARRATED CONCERTS' OF THE SVETE TIKHIJ CHOIR IN PALERMO**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In 2018, a project was started in Palermo whose aim was to enhance the musical wealth present in the city, through performances called “narrated concerts.”<sup>1</sup> This type of performance would allow citizens to discover the liturgical repertoires of the Byzantine Church, relatively unknown in Italy. This idea was defined through musical practice, thanks to the interaction and cultural osmosis between some members of the church of St Mark of Ephesus (Patriarchate of Constantinople) and some members of the Russian church of St Alexander of Comana, (Patriarchate of Moscow),<sup>2</sup> both in Palermo. The subject of a “narrated concert” may be a liturgical service, a feast or a festive cycle from the Byzantine Liturgical calendar. The aim of this paper is to present some preliminary observations concerning such a type of performance.

### **1. ORTHODOXY IN PALERMO TODAY**

To understand the importance of the objectives of a “narrated concert”, it is necessary briefly to introduce the Orthodox world in Palermo, focusing on the first Orthodox church opened in Sicily in modern times, i.e. the church of St Mark of Ephesus.

The following quotation narrates the beginning of the history of the church of St Mark of Ephesus. It is a fragment from an interview with the *protopsaltis* and co-founder of the church, Teresa Amari:

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1 The “narrated concert” is a type of performance that can be applied to various repertoires. The characteristic of the performance, as presented here, consists in its having Orthodox liturgical repertoires as the object and in dialogue with the city, so that the musical, ritual and symbolic richness of the Christian East can be learnt about and disseminated.

2 See the “Православная община в Палермо” page on Facebook (last access 31 January 2020): <https://www.facebook.com/ortodoxia.palermo/>.

Father Gregorio [Goffredo Cognetti] was a scientist, a biologist, and he worked at the University of Palermo. He came from an aristocratic and strongly Catholic family. During a period in Houston, Texas, he frequented Orthodox churches. His wife, Gabriella Amari, then suggested that he begin studying texts on Orthodoxy that were not available in Italy.<sup>3</sup>

Father Gregorio and his wife became Orthodox in North Carolina in 1982. Coming back to Palermo, they had no church to attend. There was, indeed, no Orthodox church in Palermo, or in Sicily, at the time. When, in the following year, Father Gregorio went to Zurich to do some research for his university work, he attended the Russian church and asked the Bishop if it was possible to have a priest sent to Palermo. The Bishop replied that the only priest he could send would be Gregorio himself, if he was ordained priest. If you want, said the Bishop, I can order you. Thus, Gregorio was ordained in August 1984.<sup>4</sup>

The church of St Mark was founded in 1985 and was under the Moscow Patriarchate until 1998, when it came under the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

The parish of St Mark mainly consists of Italian-speaking people. The parishioners come from Catholic families, but have chosen Orthodoxy. From a musical point of view the definition of the musical procedure developed mainly orally, with the adaptation of the Italian texts to melodies heard and recorded in the memory of the

3 Today it is possible to have access to a wide bibliography in Italian: there are texts offering both a general and a deeper view of Orthodoxy. See, for example, Pavel Evdokimov, *L'Ortodossia* (Bologna: EDB, 1981), and a for concise and careful example see Enrico Morini, *Gli ortodossi* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002); for meditations by monks and theologians and historical reconstructions see, for example, Archimandrita Sofronio Sakharov, *Edificando il tempio di Dio in Noi e noi nei nostri fratelli*, trans. monaco Eliseo (Monte Athos: Sacro eremo dei Santi Apostoli Kerasià, 2017); for scientific articles on liturgical chants see for example Alexander Lingas, "Musica e liturgia nelle tradizioni ortodosse", in *Enciclopedia della Musica. Storia della musica europea*, vol. IV, ed. Jean-Jacques Nattiez, (Torino: Giulio Einaudi editore, 2004); also translations into Italian of liturgical texts, for example Stilianos Bouris ed., *La Grande e Santa Settimana* (Bologna: Testimonianza Ortodossa, 2016) and all the publications on the site "ortodossia" [http://www.ortodossia.it/w/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=35&Itemid=334&lang=it](http://www.ortodossia.it/w/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=35&Itemid=334&lang=it) (last access on 31 January 2020); "ortodoxia", <http://www.ortodoxia.it/it.htm> and <http://www.ortodoxia.it/it.htm> (last access on 31 January 2020) and "ortodossia torino", <http://www.ortodossiatorino.net/Documenti3testi.php> (last access 31 January 2020). Moreover, from an ethnomusical point of view the growing interest within the academic world in the musical traditions of Byzantine Catholic liturgical chant (for example see Girolamo Garofalo, "I canti bizantini degli Arbëresh di Sicilia. Le registrazioni di Ottavio Tiby (Piana degli Albanesi 1952-'53)." EM: Rivista degli Archivi di Etnomusicologia dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Year 11, no. 2 (2006), Girolamo Garofalo, "Dai nastri alle pergamene: un approccio diacronico e multidisciplinare alla musica bizantina degli Albanesi di Sicilia," in *L'etnomusicologia italiana a sessanta anni dalla nascita del CNSMP (1948-2008), Atti del Convegno (Roma, 13-15 Novembre 2008)*, ed. Giorgio Adamo e Francesco Giannattasio, (Roma, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, 2012), Girolamo Garofalo, "Ugo Gaisser e Francesco Falsone. Due pionieri della ricerca sulla musica bizantina degli Albanesi di Sicilia," in *Figure dell'etnografia musicale europea: materiali, persistenze, trasformazioni*, eds. Sergio Bonanzinga e Giuseppe Giordano, (Palermo: Edizioni Museo Pasqualino, 2016). There are also important texts concerning new migrant communities in Italy, as shown by the following publications: Alessandro Cosentino and Vanna Viola Cupri, "La Festa dei Popoli e il Giubileo dei migranti," in *Scuola, migrazioni e pluralismo religioso*, eds. Fulvia Caruso and Vinicio Ongini (Todi: Tau Editrice, 2017); Alessandro Cosentino, Esengo. Pratiche musicali liturgiche nella chiesa congolese di Roma (Roma: NeoClassica, 2019); Fulvia Caruso, "Music and Migration. Una ricerca azione nella pianura Padana," in *Scuola, migrazioni e pluralismo religioso*, eds. Fulvia Caruso and Vinicio Ongini (Todi: Tau Editrice, 2017); Serena Facci, "Liturgie Musicali nelle comunità migranti nelle chiese di Roma," in *Scuola, migrazioni e pluralismo religioso*, eds. Fulvia Caruso and Vinicio Ongini (Todi: Tau Editrice, 2017); Serena Facci, "La gioia nel cantare, la bellezza nel pregare. Canto e liturgia nelle chiese di rito orientale a Roma," in *Musica e sentimento religioso*, eds. Maria Teresa Moscato and Cesarino Ruini (Roma: Franco Angeli, 2017); Maria Rizzuto, "Due canti liturgici in diaspora. L'Inno trisagio nella chiesa copto-ortodossa di San Giorgio Megalomartire a Roma e l'Inno cherubico nella chiesa russa di Sant' Alessandro a Palermo," in *Scuola, migrazioni e pluralismo religioso*, eds. Fulvia Caruso and Vinicio Ongini (Todi: Tau Editrice, 2017); Maria Rizzuto, "Il canto liturgico ortodosso presso il monastero dei Santi Elia il Giovane e Filareto l'Ortolano a Seminara e nella Sicilia contemporanea", in *Elia il Giovane. La vita e l'insegnamento dall'età bizantina al mondo contemporaneo*, eds. Patrizia Spallino e Mauro Mormino (Palermo: Officina di Studi Medievali, 2019).

4 This interview with Teresa Amari, protopsaltis of the church of St Mark of Ephesus in Palermo, was carried out by the present author on 8 June 2019.



Illustration 1. Orthodox church of St Mark of Ephesus, Palermo (by the present author).

person who afterwards became *protopsaltis*. The musical tradition in the Church of St Mark is still oral, no notation being used during the rites. Musical material coming from other Orthodox cultures is worked out coherently to define the identity of Italian and Italian-speaking Orthodox faithful people, an identity which differs profoundly from that of ethnic communities present in the diaspora. The musical repertoire has

been further reinforced by an important cooperation with some monasteries and with the people responsible for music in these highly spiritual places, such as Mother Stefania, Igumena of the Monastery dedicated to St Elias the New and St Philaret at Seminara, Calabria,<sup>5</sup> Elena, in charge of the choir of the Russian Monastery of Makhra, and Agathi, a nun at the Monastery of Sts Raphael, Nicholas and Irene in Lesvos, Greece. As nowadays there is no priest at the church of St Mark of Ephesus, most of the Palermo Orthodox faithful have been going to the church of St Alexander of Comana, where they participate in liturgy every Sunday.



Illustration 2. Orthodox church of St Alexander of Comana, Palermo (by the present author).



Illustration 3. The choir director, Irina Nedoshivkina Nicotra and the multicultural choir of the church of St Alexander of Comana, during the Divine Liturgy, 6 March 2016 (by the present author).

Moreover, since 2015 some members of St Mark's parish who used to sing there have joined the Russian choir and sing regularly at every liturgy or religious feast together with the Russian members. A cooperative relationship has been established

<sup>5</sup> Rizzuto, "Il canto liturgico ortodosso presso il monastero dei Santi Elia il Giovane e Filareto l'Ortolano a Seminara e nella Sicilia contemporanea."

between these communities, thanks to their common Orthodox faith and Orthodox identity expressed by the *corpus* of texts and by their spiritual life.

The choir of the Russian church of Palermo exists thanks to the will and constant commitment of a group of faithful led by the director, the choir leader Irina Nedoshivkina Nicotra. She is a musician trained in St Petersburg, specialized in choral and orchestral conducting. She has been living in Palermo with her family since 2004. On 8 September 2013, when the church was inaugurated, Irina Nedoshivkina Nicotra was invited, as a musician, by the consul, Vladimir Korotkov, to form and coordinate the future Russian choir. At the same time, Father Andrey Parfenchyk was sent from Belarus to Palermo. He was a great supporter of the choir and helped the musical dimension to grow rapidly, also thanks to frequent services.<sup>6</sup> Today the choir is multicultural, as it is formed by Russians, Italians, Serbs and Georgians.

Not everyone knows music and some Italians sing by reading the texts transliterated into the Latin alphabet. The Italian singers reproduce in the church of St Alexander, the practice of oral learning that characterizes the church of St Mark. The other singers follow the notation.<sup>7</sup> The musical-liturgical praxis in the Church of St Alexander is relevant because of the high level of the choir, which is rarely found in diaspora communities in Italy.

The following photo clearly shows the intercultural relationship between the Slavic Orthodox community and the Orthodox community from Palermo which characterises the praxis (not only musical) of the church of St Alexander of Comana.

This photograph shows four priests: the first one on the right, in green vestments, is Father Alessandro Margheritino, from Palermo, who is now a priest in Cleveland, USA. At the time of the photograph he was in Palermo on holiday. He became Orthodox in the church of St Mark. The one holding the gifts in his hands is the late Father Andrey Parfenchyk. The third priest is Father Sergij Litvinchik who has replaced father Andrey after his death. The fourth is the Sicilian Father Eugenio Miosi, who became Orthodox at Bivongi in Calabria, South Italy. He is now a priest in that region. The two other men are an Italian and an Eritrean. Ever since the church of St Mark has been without a priest, the Eritrean community, one of the first Orthodox nucleuses, albeit pre-Chalcedonian, of Palermo has also attended the Russian church.



*Illustration 4.* This photograph shows four priests: Fathers Alessandro Margheritino, Andrey Parfenchyk, Sergij Litvinchik and Eugenio Miosi (by the present author).

<sup>6</sup> He deserves to be remembered here, because he supported not only the choir, but also the project of the “narrated concerts” with blessings and love, until his premature death in March 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Rizzuto, “Due canti liturgici in diaspora, L’Inno trisagio nella chiesa copto-ortodossa di San Giorgio Megalomartire a Roma e l’Inno cherubico nella chiesa russa di Sant’Alessandro a Palermo and Rizzuto, Il canto liturgico ortodosso presso il monastero dei Santi Elia il Giovane e Filareto l’Ortolano a Seminara e nella Sicilia contemporanea.”

## 2. THE SVETE TIKHIJ CHOIR

The choir of the Russian church of St Alexander slowly started its concert activity with new members joining it. The choir performing at concerts is now composed of members who sing during the liturgical functions and by non-Orthodox members (both amateur and professional singers, Italian and Russian, interested in the chants of Eastern Churches). The choir performing in concerts has chosen the name “Svete Tikhij” (“Joyful Light”) from the initial words of the Evening Hymn.

The members of the choir taking part in the “narrated concerts” are: Mitì Teresa Amari, Eleonora Chiavetta, Picci Ferrari, Elena Ilardi, Antonella Lo Giudice, Irina Nedoshivkina Nicotra, Carla Papa D’Amico (sopranos); Anna Cordio, Fortunata Prinzivalli, Irina Romanova, Anastasia Zabelina (mezzo sopranos); Aurelio Invernale, Marco Pintacuda, Federico Roccati (tenors); Renato La Placa, Marco Pavone (basses). The following table shows the names of the members of the choir. The first column contains the names of Orthodox people from Palermo, the second refers to Russian Orthodox people and the third one lists non-Orthodox Italians, who have joined the choir because they are fond of singing. As already said, some of these are amateur singers, some are professionals, but all of them are fascinated by the musical repertoires of the Eastern Churches. Some of them are also becoming interested in the Orthodox faith.

Teresa Amari Eleonora Chiavetta	Irina Nedoshivkina Nicotra Irina Romanova Anastasia Zabelina	Elena Ilardi Antonella Lo Giudice Carla Papa D’Amico Anna Cordio Fortunata Prinzivalli Aurelio Invernale Marco Pintacuda Federico Roccati Renato La Placa Marco Pavone
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It is a noteworthy fact that most of the singers are not Orthodox and that they started because of their cultural and musical interest *stricto sensu*, also facing the difficulties deriving from studying this type of choir music. One of the problems the singers have to face while studying the chants is linguistic: the chants are mainly in Slavonic, but also Greek and Georgian. For this reason it is necessary to transliterate the texts and study the correct pronunciation. What might seem an obstacle, i.e. knowing neither Slavonic nor its alphabet, has been seen by the Italian members of the choir as an opportunity to learn something new. When the Italians have to start learning a new piece, they meet Anastasia Zebelina beforehand, and learn from her its correct pronunciation. These moments of studying together also become occasions to reinforce the personal relationship between the members, and cultural interchange. Pauses during the rehearsal are also often used to clarify doubts about the text (its meaning, its role, etc.); those who could not attend the preliminary session with Zabelina, are supported by the other members who help them writing the transliteration under the Slavonic text, on the stave. Since liturgical texts in the Byzantine world are identical in all the languages, being a *corpus* expressing the unity of faith, non-Orthodox members of the choir ask the Orthodox Italians the translation of what they are going to sing, in order to understand its meaning.

The choir can perform in three different ways: female singers only; female and male singers together; “narrated concert.” The choir’s repertoire includes liturgical chants from different periods, of various genres, styles, languages and geographical origins: from ancient Slavic singing to Russian composers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries such as Glinka, Balakirev, Tchaikovsky, Bortnyansky, Chesnokov, Hristov, Allemanov and Rachmaninov.

### 3. THE ‘NARRATED CONCERT’

The interaction between Irina, the singers of St Mark’s and the author of this paper, who studies musical dynamics as an ethnomusicologist, gave birth to a project whose objective was, and is, to allow those who have no idea about the relationship between rituals, symbolic meanings and chants, to begin to learn about it. In 2018, two needs met: on the one hand, the author felt the need to find a modality that went beyond academic and ecclesial boundaries in order to bring the liturgical chants beyond the perimeters of two areas hardly accessible outside the walls of the church. It has to be remembered that the Orthodox Church is a minority in Italy and that very little is known about Orthodoxy, which is identified with the ethnic churches founded by those who were Orthodox in their native lands and arrived in Italy for various reasons. Palermo, however, has a different reality, since the Orthodox Church was founded by Italians, who have chosen to become Orthodox, abandoning all their security, even economic, derived from their Catholic families of origin. Therefore, the awareness of being Italian and living an Eastern spiritual, cultural and musical heritage led me to the decision of revealing this world to the city of Palermo, and of sharing it with non- Orthodox people. At the same time, a similar urge was felt by the Russian choir director, Irina Nedoshivkina Nicotra, who had so far organized small concerts of the choir in the church, mainly during Christmas time. As the level of the choir was already high, after three years from its birth Irina felt the need not only to start a proper concert activity, but to interact with the city.

From the union of these two needs, cooperation was started which led to the idea of what was to become known as “a narrated concert,” in April 2018.

A “narrated concert” is a performance, different from a concert lesson, and more similar to theatre than to a lesson, in which the narrator accompanies the listeners in a journey through ritual, musical, symbolic and linguistic worlds foreign to the sensitivity of the city. What may appear strange to the ear of the listeners at the beginning of the “narrated concert,” becomes familiar thanks to the narration.

The objectives of the narration are:

- to accompany the listeners in their musical experience
- to involve them in the chants and hymns
- to help them understand what is sung, providing them with Italian translations of the texts
- to help them understand the ritual action and the projection of some symbolic aspects, unknown to Italians
- finally, to enjoy the musical harmonious strength of the hymns that otherwise would be inaccessible to Italian listeners who do not know the repertoire.

The “narrated concert” is divided into narration and singing. The narration is written by the author of this article as a scholar studying the music of Eastern Churches (Byzantine and Coptic Orthodox). This guarantees the scientific nature of what is narrated with an evocative and synaesthetic language which involves the

deployment of the imagination of the listeners. Thanks to the narration, they may sense an echo of the ritual dimension of the experience which can be lived during a liturgical service.

The narration consists, on the one hand, of a part specifically created for the performance, and, on the other hand, of the translation into Italian of the liturgical chant which is going to be heard. Both the texts written to accompany the translation and the presentation of the concert have a dialogical function. During the concert, the narrator is in touch with the public and observes the expression of the people's faces, of their eyes, also considering their non-verbal language, so that the right intonation and emphasis on the various passages of the texts written for the performance can be given. This observation is meant as a useful tool to understand the silent questions of the public and to provide an answer to them. The narrated part of the performance is built on the interaction between the spoken word and the listeners' non-verbal answers. Thus, the narrator becomes an instrument helping people attending the concert to understand and have an awareness of what is said, and to prepare them to listen to the chant in the best possible manner. The chant then reaches "fertile soil." Listeners are empathically involved thanks to the narration that opens culturally interesting cracks into which the execution of the chant is going to be inserted. In such a way, their listening becomes deeper and more conscious.

To reach this objective, the author works from the very beginning with the choir conductor in a dialogical way: they choose together the order of the chants (each "narrated concert" focuses on the chants of the liturgical period corresponding to the date when the concert is going to be held); the narrator studies the pieces suggested by the choir master; she takes part to the rehearsals and discusses with the choir members any doubts and queries about the ritual meaning and role of the chants to be sung. This preparatory work leads then to co-operation during the concert, when narration and chant alternate, mutually reinforcing each other, within the broader liturgical context evoked and re-enacted by the chants performed.

The perceptible beauty of the singing opens up through the narration and allows everybody to taste a beauty that is wider than the already remarkable harmony of sounds. The sound of the chants and the sound of the narrated word thus become as two hands which accompany the listeners through an exciting discovery of unexpected universes. Some comments by the listeners at the end of the concerts are remarkable as they often underline the unexpected sweetness that touched their hearts or the feeling of hidden treasures being revealed to them.

#### **4. PLACES OF LITURGICAL CHANTING**

Rehearsals take place in the church of St Alexander, usually every Wednesday from 19:00 to 21-21:30; more rehearsals take place when the date of a concert is established: the choir would meet then more than once a week.

The first "narrated concert" took place in the church of St Alexander on 24 March 2018, when the service of the vespers was introduced and explained.

Gradually the choir has become known and has been invited to perform in important places, such as chapels, museums, and on significant occasions. This is a challenge the choir has accepted because it widens the scope of the "narrated concerts" and allows a greater diffusion of Eastern Christian musical cultures.

The Chapel of the Ladies is a private place which has a great symbolic value for the strict Catholic aristocracy of Palermo. Thirty or forty years ago, to perform

Orthodox liturgical chants was unthinkable, because of the strong presence of the Catholic Church in the city. It is very interesting to note that the family that founded the first Orthodox church of St Mark belonged to this high social stratum and that they renounced every privilege, also economical, for the Orthodox faith. They were considered foolish and heretical for a long time. Most of the Italians who have converted to the Orthodox faith still face many problems within their own families, which have a lukewarm Catholic faith but still feel betrayed by a religious choice they cannot understand. For this reason it was considered a very important opportunity to be invited to sing in this chapel.



*Illustration 5. A “narrated concert” on “Liturgical and Evening Chants” held in Palermo at the Cappella delle Dame [The Ladies’ Chapel], on 19 April 2018 (by anonymous).*

Among the various “narrated concerts,” some have a particular resonance in the city because they were held during city festivals such as that held during the Festival of Migrant Cultures at Salinas Archaeological Museum in Palermo (20 October 2018) and that given during the Week of Cultures at the Oratory of San Mercurio (19 May 2019), an oratory famous for its 18<sup>th</sup>-century sculptures.

### **5. TOWARDS A BETTER UNDERSTANDING: AN EXCERPT FROM AN EASTER “NARRATED CONCERT” HELD BY THE SVETE TIKHIJ CHOIR**

To give an idea of the choice of chants and of the style of narration, the “narrated concert held within the ‘Settimana delle Culture’ [Week of Cultures] will be examined. The concert was held at the Oratory of St Mercurio on 19 May 1919. The repertoire of the concert was centred on Easter chants.

The order of the pieces sung was as follows:

1. Paschal Stichera, “Voskresenie Tvoe, Khriste Spase,” tone 6, Kievan chant;
2. Paschal Hours: “Voskresnaja pesn’,” tone 6;
3. Astafiev, Paschal Troparion (in Greek, Latin and Slavonic)
4. D. Hristov “Milost’ Mira,” Old Bulgarian chant;
5. S. Rachmaninov, “Bogoroditse Devo;
6. D.V. Allemanov, “Vzbrannoij Voevode”;
7. Paschal Troparion and Kontakion, Georgian chant;

8. Exaposteilarion, Znamenny chant;
9. Paschal Megalynarion, “Angel vopijashe”, Valaam chant, harmonized by M.A. Balakirev;
10. Magnification of the Resurrection of Christ, Znamenny chant.



*Illustration 6.* Paschal “narrated concert” performed during the Week of Cultures at the Oratory of San Mercurio in Palermo, 19 May 2019 (by Francesca Chimento).

The concert began with the Paschal Troparion sung three times, with a short introduction to the text, of the use of the expression “Christ is risen”, and finally with the announcement of the number of pieces that were going to be sung as well as with the motivation for their choice. The first part of text presented during the ‘narrated concert’ is here reproduced:

Christ is risen from the dead,  
Trampling down death by death,  
And upon those in the tombs  
Bestowing life. (3 times)

This is the text that celebrates Easter, one of the most important hymns of the Eastern Churches and in the life of the faithful. This hymn is sung everywhere the Byzantine rite is celebrated, from Japan to Alaska, from Russia to Greece, from the United States to Australia, from Georgia to Sicily, as well as in all the places where the Alexandrian rite is celebrated (i.e. Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea). The hymn is heard for forty days the time leading to the Ascension of Christ. From a ritual point of view, this hymn resounds constantly at the beginning, at topical moments, and at the end, of every celebration, for forty days.

The initial phrase of the hymn, “Christ is risen” is so important in the rhythm of the life of the faithful that it has become the way Orthodox people greet each other when they meet, the answer being “He is risen indeed!” The everyday usage of such a formula enlarges on a symbolic and spiritual level the blessing beyond the liturgical service.

*Pause – Breath*

Today's concert will bring you ten musical pieces beginning with "Christ is risen from the dead." Following the *fil rouge* of the Resurrection, we are happy to share with you some of the nuances of the manifold colours, characteristic of Eastern Church sound experience.

#### *Pause – Breath*

In churches following the Byzantine rite, the celebration of Easter consists of various services.

On the Holy Saturday night, the rite starts within the Church, and develops then outside the sacred space and returns to it with the people singing together with the priest the hymn "Christ is risen from the dead/Trampling down death by death/And upon those in the tombs/Bestowing life."

The triumph of the Resurrection, expressed in this hymn, is preceded by a short hymn sung many times continuously while marking the rhythm of many and different ritual actions: starting from within the iconostasis; in the inner, more intimate and symbolically more important part of the church, the priest circumambulates the central altar table; the same hymn accompanies the procession going outside the church, in the dark, with a lighted candle only. It still occurs in Slavic Orthodox countries, marking the time of three other circumambulations around the church building, until the great blessing when the choir and the faithful answer by singing "Christ is risen from the dead/Trampling down death by death/And upon those in the tombs/Bestowing life."

The second hymn we are going to listen to is the following:

"Your Resurrection, O Christ our Saviour, the angels sing in heaven [...]"

The faithful on earth prepare while the angels are already exulting. This quiet, intimate, nearly whispered hymn expresses the poetic text through its melody and hides the soul's wish to see confirmed what has been promised, and is already sung by the angels. The meditative melody, in the sixth tone, contrasts with the solemn triumphalism of "Christ is risen" which opens the concert and that we are going to hear sung in Slavonic.

The third hymn will proclaim the Resurrection and the faithful are invited to recognise how joy has entered the world through the Cross and the Resurrection.

Thus, thanks to the "narrated concerts," the cultural elements of the experience and, for the faithful, the spiritual power and strength of chanting transcended the boundaries of the profession of faith and the visible and invisible perimeters of the church. Through the "narrated concert," liturgical chant, and therefore a blessing for the faithful, expanded into the city, enriching Sicilian soundscape with repertoires and procedures which did not exist until ten years ago.

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