

Tridentine Community News

February 8, 2009

Tridentine Travelogue:

Top 10 Music Programs Outside of Metro Detroit

One of the most identifying aspects of the Latin Mass in both Ordinary and Extraordinary Forms is the sacred music employed. The Church has a vast collection of compositions, both chant and polyphonic, that have been written for her liturgy. A Latin Mass is uniquely capable of making full use of that music.

Indeed, a recurring topic of discussion at St. Josaphat and Assumption-Windsor is our music program. How can we improve it? How can we strike a balance between becoming familiar with a certain repertoire, yet continue to expand that repertoire? We can learn from others: Today's column recaps information presented in previous columns and presents an entirely subjective list of music programs that excel. These are not special-occasion-only sites; their sacred music is dependably exceptional most any non-summer Sunday of the year. This list is based only on places that this author has visited or been made aware of, so it is by no means comprehensive. And there is no particular order to this list.

1. Brompton Oratory, London England (OF and occasional EF): The music at the London Oratory is extraordinary for its level of commitment. Various choirs accompany many liturgies, from the crowded Sunday Novus Ordo Latin Mass, to Sunday afternoon Vespers, to the humble Monday evening Benediction. The music program is simply integral to the life of the parish.

2. St. John Cantius, Chicago, Illinois (EF & OF): This celebrated parish boasts *six* choirs, each of which performs traditional repertoire, for different purposes.

3. St. Agnes, St. Paul, Minnesota (EF & OF): North America's home for Orchestral Masses, St. Agnes offers a staggering number of major polyphonic works during the course of a year.

4. St. Stephen, Portland, Oregon (EF & OF): St. Stephen is the home of America's most accomplished professional choir, Cantores in Ecclesia. Their sound, as well as their efforts to promote sacred music via festivals, a web site, and other means, is unrivaled elsewhere.

5. St. Michael's Abbey, Silverado, California (OF): The setting is spartan: a small, bare, white-walled chapel. But the sound! A glorious, synchronized group of approximately 35 priests and brothers singing Norbertine Chant, a modified form of Gregorian Chant. Most of the singing is a capella. The best part for travelers in Southern California on business: A sung Latin (OF) Mass is offered there every Tuesday and Thursday at 7:00 AM.

6. Sacred Heart, New Haven, Connecticut (EF): Much like the choir at Assumption-Windsor, Sacred Heart's choir is comprised of musicians who have responsibilities at other parishes on Sunday mornings. They come to Sacred Heart at 2:00 PM after those assignments, to sing the music they *want* to sing. A labor of love, their "St. Gregory Society" has put out several CDs of their work.

7. St. Mary, Cadogan Street, London, England (OF): Though attendance at this church nestled in a posh neighborhood is rather small, a surprisingly large professional-grade choir leads the music.

8. St. James, Spanish Place, London, England (OF): Much like St. Mary, above, St. James' choir also has a powerful, professional sound. The choir sings from a third-floor gallery above and to the right of the congregation, completely out of sight.

9. St. Frances de Sales, St. Louis, Missouri (EF): Strength in numbers: This bustling parish offers a music program that involves the congregation to a greater degree than many others. Singing Gregorian Chant resoundingly with 800 others crowding the pews around you can be a transforming experience.

10. St. Paul Church, Cambridge, Massachusetts (OF): Longtime readers of this column know that this church is the favorite of this writer. The church's remarkable acoustics, the Boston Archdiocesan (Boys') Choir School, Men's Schola, and dual antiphonal organs played at the Sunday 11:00 AM Mass provide a musical experience that cannot be matched anywhere else. Go. There. Soon.

What Are Your Favorites?

In your travels outside Metro Detroit and Windsor, have you encountered any particularly noteworthy music programs? The criteria we ask for is that the music be largely in Latin, be for a Catholic Mass, and the program be of a traditional nature. Please e-mail us at the below address with details and your experiences, and we'll publish your nominations in a future column.

St. Patrick, Kinkora Commences Tridentine Mass



Fr. Paul Nicholson is a friend to a number of readers of this column. Currently assigned to historic St. Patrick Church in the farm fields outside of Stratford, Ontario, Fr. Nicholson has been preparing for several months to offer a weekly Extraordinary Form Mass. He is now offering a Low Mass every Sunday at noon, making this the third Tridentine Mass site in the Diocese of London. He hopes to turn it into a *Missa Cantata* if musicians can be organized.

Members of the Assumption Church-Windsor Tridentine Mass Community have assisted with training and supplies: Sharp-eyed readers will recognize that Fr. Nicholson is wearing one of Assumption's chasubles in the adjacent photo from a practice session. St. Patrick's will also be joining the roster of churches using the Assumption/St. Josaphat weekly Latin/English Propers Handouts. For further information, visit St. Patrick's web site at: www.stpatricks.rcec.london.on.ca