

# TESTIMONIALS • 2016 Sacred Music Symposium

CCWATERSHED.ORG/SYMPOSIUM

## **From a young lady (16 years old):**

Thank you so much. I had a wonderful time at the symposium. I'm so grateful to Mr. Ostrowski, Dr. Calabrese, Dr. Buchholz, Fr. Fryar, and all involved in arranging this extraordinary event. I have never participated in such a tremendous event with such great singers and conductors.

The talks and practices were so helpful. I certainly learned a lot from all the teachers about phrasing, dynamics, and understanding what you're singing. We were not just reading the translation of the Latin words, but also feeling them and letting their meaning be reflected in how we sang the music. It really has made a difference. Even though I'm not a schola/choir director myself, I picked up a lot of helpful advice and will be eternally grateful for everything I was taught there.

Words cannot even describe what I felt at the Masses on Sunday and Tuesday. Being in the beautiful church, surrounded by fellow Catholics, singers, Traditional Latin Mass goers of all ages, hearing the organ ringing in my ears, and singing the beautiful plainchant and polyphony pieces was nothing less than a Heavenly experience. I loved hearing the men sing the propers and also the 4 and 5 part harmonies, which were amazing. To be a part of something so Heavenly gave me a wonderful image of what Heaven must be like. For me, I was not only singing, keeping time, and taking breaths, I was praying the Mass more completely than I've ever done before.

Once again, this was a fun and Heavenly experience that our entire group enjoyed. It was definitely worth the 5 hour drive! Thank you again so much and special thanks to Fr. Saguto and Archbishop Gomez for their time and support. May God reward you all and bless you abundantly! I hope to be able to come again next year, God willing!

## **From Honolulu, Hawaii:**

When I decided to attend the Sacred Music Symposium, I was seeking an answer—a prayer of hope to rekindle the flame of love and affirm my decision in music ministry. Jeff Ostrowski is genuine and hit the heart. His talks grasped the real struggles and frustrations the church musician endures and provided a treasure of tips and knowledge to cope with the challenges. It was an affirmation and consolation of hope that lifted the uncertainty from my heart, and I found the answer I was seeking: *Sing, Sing, Sing!!!*

But nothing prepared me the most when I sang movements from Francisco Guerrero under the helms of Dr. Calabrese and Dr. Buchholz because they made it so simple and yet extraordinarily magnificent as they steered the choir with poignant understanding of breathing techniques, pronunciation, and total surrender from the heart. Dr. Buchholtz and Meaghan King's superb organ playing finally ignited the flame. Watching them play and listening to the pipe organ was absolutely magnificent. Thank you for allowing me to sing among the stars to honor the Mother of God on her Feast of the Queenship of Mary. And may God continue to bless ccwatershed—a wonderful apostolate.

## **From Prescott, Arizona :**

The symposium was enlightening, reverent and spiritually uplifting. Did I mention “Exhausting” ... but what a good tired feeling. As symposium participants, we were privileged to participate in two incredibly beautiful masses plus a Confirmation. Having only worked at parishes that celebrate in the Ordinary Form, I was touched by the reverence and respect by each person who worships in the Extraordinary form: from the people’s demeanor and respectful choice of clothing to the unwavering attention to details that enhanced each moment of the liturgy.

Our spirits were joyfully lifted up to the heavens during the prelude, postlude and many improvisations that were played on the beautiful pipe organ by Dr. Bucholtz and the choir’s own organist Meaghan.

Jeff brought together a wonderful team. The clinicians were outstanding. Dr Calabrese gave us great insight into conducting chant and most importantly inspired us to sing chant as our prayer with true grace. He understands the challenges facing parish music directors and he is willing to share his experiences and counsel. Dr. Bucholtz taught and directed masterfully. He is larger than life and all eyes of the chorus were riveted on him. These two men worked beautifully together during rehearsal, they laughed, prayed and shared stories. Both have true love for Christ and sacred liturgy and it was an honor to sing under both batons.

Taking the techniques that were taught and using Jeff’s wonderful polyphonic refrains from CC Watershed can bring your parish music program up to the next level. I plan to teach my choirs the “Ave Maris Stella” next month. I know that I will once again hear the beautiful choral sound of us all singing in St Victor’s whenever I bring out these pieces. The real work is ahead as we are sent out to use this knowledge. It can be done. It is our duty and our privilege as Catholic musicians to bring this sacred art to the forefront of Catholic worship, to reach deep into the time honored tradition of music in our Church, and to cultivate this gift of reverence in our own parishes.

## **From Denver, Colorado :**

I came home expectedly mentally exhausted from the intense concentration required to participate fully in the symposium but spiritually and musically enriched. It was such privilege to have musicians such as Jeff Ostrowski, Horst Buchholz and Alfred Calabrese share their expertise and their wealth of musical knowledge and experience, never losing sight of the all important liturgy.

I am charged with the responsibility of trying to attend both the CC watershed symposium and the CMAA symposium next year.

I cannot wait to share the relevant information with others involved in sacred music, such as other choirmasters, directors of sacred music etc. I am anticipating having a meeting with each of them in the near future to discuss many things, including what I gleaned from the symposium. I hope also to share the information with other choir members and parishioners who are struggling with the change in our church from what I call “Happy Clappy” music to more liturgical and reverent music. What a great experience this was!

## **From Los Angeles, California :**

My mind is still awash with the beautiful chants and polyphonic settings we practiced for three days and performed with such reverence and excitement. Our choir’s sound improved so much and I learned a lot. Seeing our bishop’s face brighten when I introduced a few of us as members of the choir made all the hard work even more meaningful. I am excited about experiencing this symposium again next year.

## **From Sacramento, California :**

I was somewhat intimidated when signing up for the Sacred Music Symposium, as this was both the first time I have sung at an EF mass and the first time I've sung Renaissance polyphony. Jeff was very encouraging when he called for my initial interview and assured me that I would be okay if I practiced with the online rehearsal videos before the event. The practice videos were great and I felt like I was well prepared. I'm very grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in such a beautiful celebration and to meet so many talented people offering their talents for the greater glory of God.

## **From Las Vegas, Nevada :**

There are so many things that could be said about the Sacred Music Symposium this past week. It was truly an illuminating experience! The expertise of Jeff Ostrowski and our conductors Dr. Bulcholz and Dr. Calabrese was considerable and impressive. This Symposium was an opportunity to shake up my usual musical routine and gain fresh perspective on the different possibilities of phrasing and stylistic interpretation. And the conference talks were not only instructive, they were surprising. I heard things I never expected to hear and learned things I never expected to learn. There were many moments when I came away from either the talks or the rehearsals saying "Wow!"

There is so much to mull over from the Symposium, I'm still thinking about it all. Perhaps one of the overarching take-aways is just how timeless sacred music is. In my own small parish, or in the great cathedrals of the world ... today, or 1000 years ago ... sacred music has a continuity of praise and worship in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass that, like God himself, stands the test of time.

It can be a type of stagnation when you constantly live within the narrow confines of your own musical decisions. The Symposium was a rush of fresh, cool water through the swamp of sameness. To understand that you are part of a much, much larger unified picture is absolutely invaluable. I cannot wait for next year to see what new perspectives will be presented, and to take those lessons and apply them to our parish.

## **From Los Angeles, California :**

I started singing the Latin Mass in the mid 80's and I must say that this Sacred Music Symposium has been the best thing I've ever done to improve myself as a Church musician. The Mass, which culminated the Symposium, was incredibly beautiful. Everyone I spoke with afterwards asked me if we will do this again to which I replied, "I hope so!"