Choirs of the Sistine Chapel and Tretyakov Gallery execute Western and Eastern hymns

On May 26, 2014, a joint concert was given by the Sistina Choir of the papal Sistine Chapel directed by Massimo Palombella and the State Tretyakov Gallery Choir directed by Alexy Puzakov.

Among those who assembled in the hall were hierarchs of Local Orthodox Church. The concert was also attended by the Apostolic Nuncio in the Russian Federation, Archbishop Ivan Jurkovic, and the head of the Catholic Archdiocese of the Mother of God in Moscow, Archbishop Paolo Pezzi.

After the choirs' performance the audience was addressed by the head of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, who said in particular:

"We have just heard an amazing concert in which works of Italian and Russian composers of various periods were performed by two choral teams of exceptionally high quality – the famous Sistine Cappella Choir with its ages-old history and the State Tretyakov Gallery Choir, which is not so old but has already

written a solid page in the history of our home musical culture. We thank the Sistine Chapel for this remarkable gift with which this choir has come to our country. Never before have I heard the Sistine Cappella singing Bortnyansky's music, nor do I remember the Tretykov Gallery Choir performing works by Giovanni Palestrina.

"But we know that there is a direct genetic link between our church music and the music of the Catholic Church. The same Bortnyansky, just as other church composers, was a disciple of Italian masters who would leave their Italian opera houses to come to Russia in order to direct our court choir. And we can hear striking parallels in intonation and stile in these two musical cultures…

I would like to express the hope that the spiritual unity revealed in today's concert will also be reflected in relations between the Russians and the Italians and in relations between the Roman Catholic and the Russian Orthodox Churches. These relations have not always been cloudless and we can see problems arising today too, but we can also see that the Orthodox and Catholic Christians, if there is a wish, know how to work together. And the most important thing is that they know how to glorify God together".

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