Primate of Greek Orthodox Church attends concert of Russian church music in AthensPrimate of Greek Orthodox Church attends concert of Russian church music in Athens

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On December 12, 2011, a recital of Russian church music was given at the Megaro Mousikis palace in Athens by the Moscow Synodal Choir, the children's choir of the Moscow Choral Academy and the orchestra of the Center of Greek Music in Athens. They performed 'Christmas Oratorio' by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk.

Present at the concert were Archbishop Hieronymos of Athens and All Greece of Athens and All Greece, Metropolitan John of Pergamon (Patriarchate of Constantinople), Greek hierarchs and clergy as well as political and public figures.

Before the concert, Metropolitan Hilarion addressed the audience, saying in particular,

'I greet you on behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and the millions-strong Russian Church which has always been with the Greek people in their joys and sorrows, in their victories and defeats...

'Today we will hear how the Old Testament humanity expected the coming of the Saviour to the world, and how an angel appeared before Virgin Mary and announced that she would give birth to the Son of God, and how the Enfant Christ was born in Bethlehem and was placed in a manger because there was no place for Him in the inn. We will hear about the mysterious star that brought the magi to the Enfant Christ and about the angelic song heard by the shepherds: 'Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!' We will hear how Hirod beat infants in Bethlehem and how the Holy Family escaped to Egypt. This story will go before our eyes, the story of God's love of man, the story of God's meeting with man'.

'May today's concert become a gift for all of you from the Russian Church. Let us forget at least for a moment about our earthly difficulties and sorrows and move mentally to Bethlehem, Nazareth and Jerusalem and glorify God who became for our sake a helpless Infant'.

After the concern the numerous public gave the composer and performers a lasting ovation.

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