

01/02/2024

Remarks By His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America For the Hellenic Education Fund Benefit Concert



Maestro Athanasios Zervas,

Wondrous Performers,

Beloved Sisters and Brothers in the Lord,

What a moving and inspiring evening we have experienced! I offer my congratulations and the thanks of all for such stirring and uplifting performances.

The Feast of the Three Hierarchs and of Greek Letters has certainly been well-honored and observed tonight. And the dedication of this event to the Hellenic Education Fund adds a dimension to our enjoyment, because we have collectively dedicated the merit of these marvelous aesthetic achievements to the furtherance of our culture, our language and our shared heritage.

Tonight's profound entertainments take place against a visual backdrop that is most illuminating. We behold the Parthenon, Hagia Sophia and the Saint Nicholas National Shrine at Ground Zero.

Each of these icons of faith and culture manifests the evolution presented here this evening. From our most ancient roots, we see the Parthenon of Athens, which was a temple dedicated to the Theotokos longer than it was to Pallas Athena.

We also see our Hagia Sophia, unrighteously seized to an alien purpose again, but still standing as the consummate symbol of the Orthodox Christian Faith. Her present disguise does very little to cover the truth of the Gospel, which still sings in Her stones.

And finally, we behold our own Saint Nicholas National Shrine – the little Greek Orthodox Church destroyed on September Eleventh, and which was resurrected by the sheer will and efforts of Greek-Americans, to make an everlasting statement about what true religion really means.

The producers of tonight's program chose all three images to convey the breadth and depth of the musical selections. Their sounds have merged with the images to give a rounded and complete experience that invigorates our souls, while pleasing our minds.

Maestro Zervas has shown not only his skill, but his amazing scope, in weaving together a fabric of sound that showcases the Great Three Hierarchs: Basil the great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom.

Inasmuch as tonight's program benefits the generations to come through the Hellenic Education Fund, it is particularly thrilling to have our Archdiocesan Cathedral Children's Choir, under the direction of Maestro Costas Tsourakis.

Hearing the voices of our children soar in this very special place reminds all of us of what we are fighting for. Our Greek Culture, Philosophy and Language are the basis for the appearance of Western Civilization. Of this there can be no doubt. And it is for us to pass along to our children the best of this incredible tradition.

Tonight, we have commenced with a truly inspirational program of music and song, which opened our minds and hearts to the illumination of God's Holy Light.

That is why our Luminaries, these Church Fathers – Basil, Gregory and John – are so rightly honored by this evening's offerings, on this, their common Feast.

We are so very grateful for all who made this evening possible – the organizers, the performers, the donors and all who attended this outstanding event. We trust this will be the first of many more concerts to come.

Therefore, as we depart from this Music Hall and the strains continue to resound in our souls, let us recommit to the values and principles that made this evening possible – a powerful dedication to our Faith, our Culture, our Language and our Traditions.

May we always hold to them with fervor and love, through the intercessions of the Holy Three Hierarchs and all the saints.

Amen! And a blessed evening to you all!

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