

For Immediate Release

September 15, 2006

ROMEIKO, LITURGICA ENTER EXCLUSIVE DISTRIBUTION PARTNERSHIP

Langhorne, PA and Aurora, OR. The Romeiko Ensemble, a renowned Byzantine performing group from Pennsylvania, and liturgical music Web giant Liturgica.com of Oregon have entered into an exclusive North American distribution agreement for Romeiko's recordings. The new music sales arrangement is expected to dramatically boost exposure and availability of the choir's works throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Internationally respected for its contributions to performance of classic Byzantine works, the Romeiko Ensemble was formed in 1992 by Dr. Yorgos Bilalis who still directs the group. The ensemble's stated purpose has been to perform authentic interpretations of Christian liturgical chant from the Byzantine and Ottoman eras. To achieve its objectives—and gain the notoriety it has come by as a result—the ensemble has crafted a distinctive approach to its music. Each of Romeiko's musicians are skilled in historical and improvisational performance as well as in the reading of original Byzantine musical notation, *parasemantiki*. To round out its unique blend of skill and vision, Romeiko Ensemble's original musical scholarship has uncovered a number of never-published medieval compositions of which the ensemble has produced the only recordings available anywhere.

Romeiko's new distribution partner, Liturgica B2B (the distribution arm of Liturgica.com), is best known as an end-user web site focused on the history and development of liturgical worship and music in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Its web store offers the largest single selection of liturgical chant CDs available on the Internet. Liturgica also distributes liturgical music for a variety of international music labels in the religious reseller market through its Liturgica B2B arm. It offers a kind of "one stop shop" for parish bookstores and religious retailers for the purchase of a wide range of liturgical chant CDs.

"Unlike many other sources for liturgical music, we specialize in this genre, and always have at least 99% of our offerings in stock," notes Ben Williams, president of Liturgica.com. "This is important for parish bookstores who need to manage their product inventory in order to support the various missions of a local church."

Labels distributed by Liturgica B2B include Harmonia Mundi, Naxos, Opus 111, Gega New, Cappella Romana, Ancient Hymns, Hearken Audio, Byzantine Choir of Odigitria, and the *Sacred Treasures* series on Hearts of Space as well as its own Liturgica Music. Liturgica.com also imports monastic CDs, such as Ormylia, Simonopetra and Vatopedi, from Greece.

Romeiko Ensemble adds a significant new line—and considerable worldwide recognition—to Liturgica’s already extensive offerings. The Byzantine group began its public performance career in 1994 and has traveled extensively to festivals, gala concerts, church and *tekke* ceremonies, and other cultural events throughout the US and Europe. The group rocketed to fame at the 13th International Festival of Orthodox Music in Hajnowka, Poland in 1994, where it was honored with a “special distinction” award among the 37 international choirs taking part. Its subsequent honors include recognition as the most authentic choral group from the US to perform at the Millennium Visit to Detroit of the Patriarch of Constantinople (2000). As of the signing of the agreement with Liturgica.com, the ensemble has produced six CDs which will be covered by the new distribution arrangement, including: *The Sounds of the Parthenon* (1996), *Thy Cross We Adore* (2000), *The Sin of the Fig Tree* (2001), *From Adam unto Joseph* (2002), *Shall We Sing for You...?* (2003), and *Divine Liturgy in Mode I* (2006).

“Our new relationship with Liturgica.com makes most of our recordings readily available to end users on the web, and most importantly, to parish bookstores and other music retailers,” said Dr. Bilalis. “We have recorded and produced a range of award-winning CDs that were mainly available in Europe and now have the opportunity to make them easily available to our American customer base.”

Liturgica B2B’s distribution model is based on the practical need of most parish bookstores: they are staffed by volunteers, don’t have computer inventory systems, and have a difficult time ordering product from many publishers—especially of imported products.

“We are extremely excited about our new distribution agreement with the Romeiko Ensemble,” Williams said, “because it makes available these superlative recordings. Although they are among the top three or four Byzantine choirs in the world, their recordings have not been easy to purchase in North America.”

Liturgica B2B opens wide the door to traditional retail sales of liturgical music by selling on open account, offering standard trade discounts and on-line ordering. Williams also points out that Liturgica generally ships the next business day after an order is placed. A particular advantage to parish bookstores, the trade discount can allow the church store to make a “normal” profit on what it sells. “As a result,” according to Williams, “not only can the church bookstore be self-supporting and avoid burdening the parish financially, but it can actively contribute to advancing the parish’s local mission of education and edification.”

Additional information is available at: www.romeikoensemble.com and under the Trade Accounts link at www.liturgica.com