

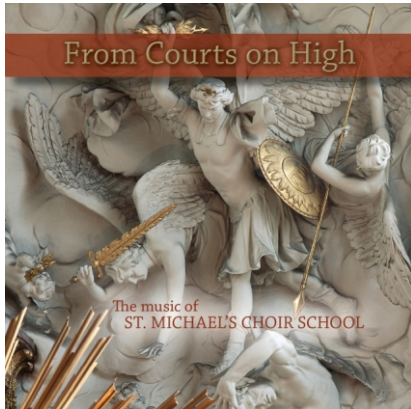


ST. MICHAEL'S CHOIR SCHOOL

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Heritage that resonates: a recording seventy years in the making

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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[TORONTO] Once again, the heavens are telling. It is with pleasure that **St. Michael's Choir School** proudly shares news of its latest recording. **"From Courts on High"** is a stunning collection of sacred choral and organ music performed by the internationally acclaimed choristers of St. Michael's Choir School. This remarkable recording is in many ways a reflection of the very soul of the renowned music school, and aptly celebrates the school's 70th anniversary.

Twenty-five thoughtfully chosen selections are presented on "From Courts on High" spanning generations of both the school's history and repertoire. Each featured piece was composed by one of the Choir School's music directors or close associates of the school. This recording reaches back in history to works from the school's founder, Monsignor John Edward Ronan, onwards to those of the distinguished past choral director Monsignor T. Barrett Armstrong, and finally to the artistic vision of the school's current choral director Dr. Jerzy Cichocki.

The Reverend John-Mark Missio, Director of St. Michael's Choir School, states, "...the music chosen for this recording illustrates ways in which the Choir School has furthered the Church's treasury of sacred music, giving the Church in Canada a 70-year legacy of composers and arrangers who have created or enhanced our liturgical music through successive generations of the school."

The heritage and the legacy of St. Michael's Choir School are both evident in this recording. Each of the school's choirs has contributed to the rich layers of the recording, from the sweetness of the Elementary Choir, to the finely balanced harmonies of the Junior Choir, and the depth and resonance of the Senior Choir and alumni soloists. The recording culminates with the fullness of a 250 voice finale.

"From Courts on High" features outstanding pieces. Gregorian chant is reverently rendered in selections such as *Ave Maria* and *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes*. Original works such as *Magnificat* and *Jubilate Deo* will enrapture devoted followers of the school, as well as listeners new to choral music. Variations of Gregorian themes performed on organ will bring to mind a church's acoustic grandeur. In keeping with the tradition and innovation that together define St. Michael's Choir School, several new choral gems make their debut. Included among these are *De profundis*, *Prayer of St. Francis* and *Iustorum animae*.

Perhaps most impressive of the premieres is the recording's namesake. *Thou Royal Knights from Courts on High* was originally composed in the 1940s by the school's founder, Monsignor Ronan. The hymn pays tribute to the school's patron saint, St. Michael the Archangel. The original hymn has been masterfully rearranged by alumnus Kola Owolabi. The premier recording of this arrangement features every student of St. Michael's Choir School and brings "From Courts on High" to a rewarding pinnacle.

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Three symbols are one. At the centre of the Choir School's academic effort to make the universe (circle) intelligible to growing minds, is an experience of music (treble clef) for the praise of God in Jesus Christ (Chi Rho cross).