



# Cathedral Script

1440 Union Avenue, Montréal H3A 2B8  
cathoff@attglobal.net  
www.montreal.anglican.org/cathedral/

*Editorial Board* William Converse, Krishanu Dasgupta,  
Ann Elbourne, Janet King, Joyce Sanchez, Duncan Shaddick  
*Editor* Beth Adams  
*Design* Jonathan Sa'adah

Christ Church Cathedral, Montréal

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## SYMPHONY OF PSALMS סימפוניית תהילים

by Sheena Gourlay

*Save the evening!*  
*Our annual fundraising concert*  
*is Wednesday, November 5th*

As a community we are used to a certain liturgical and musical style which, while we may not know the history of these traditions, has come to represent a kind of “Anglican identity,” of

us as a cathedral parish if not of the wider Anglican Communion (the Communion, after all, embraces many musical traditions). However we rarely think of the origins of these traditions, especially of the psalms that we sing or recite in our Sunday and daily worship. This year Patrick Wedd and the Cathedral Choirs will be exploring those traditions and the ways that they connect us to our wider community, both religious and secular, in our annual fundraising concert.

The Christian tradition of singing the psalms originates in the Jewish tradition of singing the ancient poems attributed to King David. The term *psalm*, from the Latin *psalmus* (in Hebrew, *mizmor*), originated with the translation of the Greek version of the Old Testament and originally meant “to strike or pluck,” referring to the harp that accompanied the singing of the psalms. The first Christian communities continued this tradition and over the centuries the psalms have continued to inspire new musical forms that reflect the spiritual concerns of their era.

The evening opens with psalm settings in Hebrew by the early Baroque composer **Salamone Rossi**. Rossi was active at the court of the Dukes of Mantua and was well known for his madrigals. However, he was also part of an illustrious Italian-Jewish family and proudly added “Hebreo”, the Jew, to his name. He was also the first to break with centuries of tradition by writing Hebrew motets in *le nuove musiche*, the new Renaissance music, for use in the synagogue. This is followed by the 20<sup>th</sup> century composer **Srul Irving Glick**, who also set the psalms to a new music style, contributing to both synagogue music and to contemporary music in Canada.

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### FALL 2008

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# Welcome Back!

Cathedral parishioners tell:

## WHAT WE DID ON OUR SUMMER VACATIONS

**Maggie and Duncan Shaddick** were in South Korea for the triennial World Conference of adults in scouting. Maggie writes: “Politics were a nothing subject: what we were about, what really mattered was the youth in our countries, how we in scouting could make a difference and how we could work together to make this difference. Every morning at nine o’clock we began with meditation. Catholic, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Protestant whatever, we all seemed to become one.” The Shaddicks also visited Hong Kong and Singapore.

**Vivian Lewin** says, “I went down to Vermont and camped in the rain; photographed a rainbow...it was a good summer for rainbows...and went to the Clark Museum in Williamstown where I ended up copying down the quotes from the artists; their words about the creative process held more light for me that day than their works. I also adopted a beautiful cat who subsequently ran away and has not returned.”

**Joyce Sanchez:** “I spent my summer vacation trying to recover from my Lambeth experience.”

**Rene Sanchez** returned to the Philippines for the first time in 33 years to attend his High School Reunion.

**Kyllikki Pitts:** “In the summer I had a chance to spend two weeks on a language course in Tartu, Estonia. Besides improving my language skills I learnt a lot about the history of the country. I was amazed to see how the hope of independence was kept alive through the decades of occupation. Presently Estonia as an independent country is only in its teen-years, yet so much has been achieved in a short time. The present danger for them may be that the materialistic values of the West become so dominant that their own rich cultural heritage gets pushed aside and forgotten.”

**Janet King** wrote: “I went to a Provincial Guide camp for six days and found out that I was helping one other lady, most of the time, to cook for 75 people three meals

a day on one stove, with central food buying and some help; we did not have to set, serve, nor wash dishes! All meals were on time, but I don’t think I would have volunteered had I known!”

**Jonathan Sa’adah and Beth Adams** spent much of the summer running back and forth between Montreal and Vermont, where they were caring for his father, 99, in the last months of his life. Now they’ve finally put their VT house on the market, but it may take a while to sell it!

**Jane Aitkens** says, “My summer vacation never really started, but on the other hand, it seems it hasn’t ended yet... In May, I had surgery for breast cancer and since then I have been off work as I go through chemotherapy. So what does one do with such a long “summer vacation”? As I was not to leave town in case I needed to get to the hospital in an emergency, my household “mess” has received more attention than it has in years. Old, odd pieces of furniture, left curbside, quickly found new homes; new furniture is on tap for delivery. Drawers are still being de-cluttered, old magazines read and tossed and old clothes recycled. I even have electronic clutter – many emails to be deleted.

It has also been a time for reading – a mixture of mysteries based in Venice and Florence, the Cathedral Reading Group selections (spawning a new interest in Tibet), Jasper Fforde’s kooky detective novels, Vladimir Nabokov’s autobiography, *Speak, Memory*, and a fascinating history – *God’s Crucible - Islam and the making of Europe, 570 to 1215* by David L. Lewis.

As People’s Warden, I am sorry to be physically less present at the Cathedral, but the Corporation has come to me for several meetings, so I hope my absence is not felt too badly. My major project for the Cathedral during my long “summer vacation” is to renew the Cathedral website. I am teaching myself how to use a new website authoring system called “Joomla”. The new site has a fresh new look and should allow us to provide not only written sermons, but spoken ones as well. It should be ready to go before the end of October.

**Diana and Jim Bouchard** went to Russia, on a group tour organized by Concordia for alumni of different universities. “We were in Moscow for several days of sight-seeing, and then took a boat from Moscow to St. Petersburg. You have to go to the ballet when in Russia, right? So one of the most special things we did was to attend a wonderful performance of ‘Giselle’ in a small

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## A FLYING PIG IN A TREE

by Ann Elbourne



A flying pig in a tree, a pig wearing hose and garters perched on a roof, Romans in togas saluting visitors to the Baths, plaster

pigs everywhere – 100 of them – and 30 stunningly beautiful diptychs on display in Bath Abbey: a magnificent fan-vaulted Gothic church containing memories of 1,600 years of history. I spent a day of my holiday in England visiting Bath with my sister and two 13-year-old grandchildren. It was a surreal experience – but the South-West of England is a strange and wonderful place where religion and ancient superstitions happily co-exist and where there are many reminders of by-gone political strife and cruel religious persecution. But that’s a story for another time. Today I want to tell you about *One Man’s Journey to Heaven*, the life of Jesus in thirty-five pairs of sumptuously decorated panels which were created by Sue Symons.

The first inspiration for the panels came to Ms. Symons in 1991 when she was living and working as an artist and teacher in Western Canada and she heard a live performance of Bach’s *St Matthew Passion*. However, she didn’t start work on the panels until January 2006 when she began her retirement. It took her 3000 hours and a whole year to complete the project, but I am amazed that she could complete such an intricate work of art in so short a time.

The thirty-five diptychs tell the story of Jesus’ life and ministry, beginning with the Annunciation and finishing with the Ascension. The left hand panel of each pair is a hand-lettered illuminated passage from the bible, the calligraphy and decoration inspired by



medieval illuminated manuscripts such as the Book of Kells. Sixteen of these panels include a few bars of music chosen by Sue’s musician husband Christopher Symons – hymns, motets, antiphons, arias and recitatives. The decorations round the painted texts are mostly abstract patterns featuring flowers and curlicues with an occasional figurative image, such as water pots for the episode of the wedding at Cana. The colours represent the mood of the scene, “dark and close-toned for somber events,” says Ms Symons, “bright and contrasting for the dramas and gold and shining for the times of glory.”

The text panels are beautifully painted, but it was the right-hand panels which I found particularly intriguing. These panels, a mixture of needlework and fabric collage, are “a purely subjective interpretation of the texts.” The designs are abstract and rich in symbols. Christ is represented by a circle, white changing to gold. Mary is seen as a blue circle, Joseph as brown. In the first panel, which shows the Annunciation, the unborn Christ is shown as a small white circle inside a blue circle and the Angel Gabriel is represented by an incomplete circle of gold fabric collage overstitched with gold metallic thread and gold embroidery. The

background is a fabric collage of white, cream and grey decorated with silver thread. The only panels without a circle representing Christ are “Jesus is Crucified” which has just one tiny silver bead in the centre of a stark deep red cross, and “Jesus is taken down from the Cross”, where there is neither a circle nor a bead.

A description doesn’t do justice to the power of these images, and our black and white reproduction cannot convey the richness of the texture and colour of these small panels. If you google “Bath Abbey Diptychs” you can look at the guide. It’s in black and white, but there is a photograph of every panel, a copy of the text used and a good description of the symbols and the materials used to craft each panel. I could have spent many hours in Bath Abbey, but hungry grandchildren dragged me out into the rain to count pigs and look for the restaurant which sells the best hot chocolate I have ever tasted. ■

Photo by Ann Elbourne

*While People's Warden Jane Aitkens has been unable to work through sickness, she has kept her mind and computer fingers active by spending time re-designing the Cathedral's web site. The new site will be up and running in cyberspace in the near future. Meanwhile, as a foretaste, here is a page written by the Dean.*

## **OUR MISSION AND OUTREACH**

*by Dean Michael J. Pitts*

Over the decades of the second half of the twentieth century, the exponents of a more liberal form of Christianity across many churches, including our Anglican Communion, reviewed the meaning of Mission in the life of the church, especially in the light of the experience of the missionary activity of the previous hundred years. Much of that work had been inspired by what is usually known as The Great Commission, found at the end of Matthew's gospel.

*And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)*

But in the carrying out of the great commission, often cultural and imperial values had been confused with gospel values, and as this was reviewed a new understanding of mission emerged, based not on particular Biblical texts, but on a theology of the church as the body of Christ being sent into the world to further God's mission of creation and incarnation.

The church was the presence of the risen Christ in the world. If there was one Biblical text which focused this new understanding it was the instructions given by the risen Christ in John's Gospel.

*Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. (John 20:21-22)*

In Christ Church Cathedral this new way of understanding mission has informed what we have undertaken in our programmes.

### *Baptismal Ministry*

It is in Baptism that a person becomes liturgically a member of the Body of Christ. Our Baptism confers on us a personal and individual responsibility to be part of the Mission of the risen Christ. This primarily is to be carried out in the context of our daily lives. We are to be the presence of Christ in our home, in our work, in our leisure and in our community. A major focus of our Sunday liturgy is to bring us back from a week of mission, to recall and retell in the drama of the liturgy the foundational story of our faith, and, having fed us with the bread of life, to send us back into the mission field of our daily responsibilities.

### *Ministry to the world around us*

As well as this individual responsibility, there is also a corporate responsibility by the church as community, to the world around us. In our inner city life as Cathedral, this brings us into touch with the commercial and business life around us, with the academic world of the universities and with the people who in Montreal,



more than in many North American cities, live in the downtown core. It also provides a task of concern for the poor and homeless who are drawn to the core of the great cities of the world.

This local mission is expressed in many ways. The Cathedral being open seven days a week is an important point of contact, along with the daily liturgy and the music programme. Out of this come many occasions for counselling and support in all parts of the social spectrum of our local world. The music programme in particular provides contact with students, children and their families and others who are drawn by the excellence of our music and the opportunities for musical education.

Nine times a year, on the last Sunday of the month, a lunch is held to which all are invited. Members of the congregation, and other volunteers sit down at tables with those who come and help to serve the meal. This respects the dignity and humanity of all who take part.

#### *Partnership*

In undertaking Christ's mission we can often work more efficiently and effectively, by creating partnerships with others involved in the same task either from religious or secular starting points. Over the years the Cathedral, through its Social Service Society has, with others, founded and maintained contact with many projects working with people in need, among them women, the intellectually handicapped, persons without employment.

#### *The Undercroft*

In recent years the use of the undercroft (rooms belonging to the Cathedral beneath the Ste Catherine Street end of the building, between the nave and the shopping mall below) has been developed in a series of partnerships. As well as the Cathedral's own music and Sunday School and Nursery Programme, the undercroft now provides a home for eMerge, an experimental Anglican ministry for young people, a Saturday meeting of the Kimbangist Church, for some meetings and counselling sessions of the Montreal-Southwest Community Ministries (working with present and former prisoners), for general counselling and art therapy workshops and most recently for Onen'tó: kon, a counseling service for native people and their dependants in relation to chemical dependency.

#### *Further afield*

While our mission begins around us, it extends across our global village. Partnership is also a key concept in our global responsibility. We support the work of the Primate's World Relief and Development fund, and the Partners in Mission programme of our National Church. A number of Cathedral members have worked as Volunteers in Mission. We are part of the Diocesan partnership projects with the Diocese of Athabasca in Canada, the Diocese of Masasi in Tanzania and the Diocese of the Sechelles in the Indian Ocean. As well we have our own Cathedral partnerships with the Diocese of Caledonia in Northern British Columbia, and the newly formed relationship with the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Havana, Cuba. ■



Jonathan Sa'adah

## REFLECTING ON FILMS

A number of films shown at this year's Montreal World Film Festival addressed questions of spirituality, religion, personal morality, and social justice. Film buffs Bill Converse and Beth Adams, who agree that much of the best work in philosophy and theology is currently being done in film, offer some reflections on films they particularly enjoyed.

### **Folle de Dieu** (*Madwoman of God*)

This is a remarkable film by Jean-Daniel Lafond, a former teacher of philosophy and husband of Governor General Michaëlle Jean. It is the NFB's principal contribution to the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of Quebec City.

The film presents a nuanced portrait of Marie Guyart (1599-1672), who founded the Ursuline convent in Quebec City in 1639.

Born in Tours, France, she was married at the age of seventeen and had a son (Claude) by the time she was eighteen. Her husband died shortly afterwards, a bankrupt. After settling his affairs, she moved in with her sister and brother-in-law and lived with them until 1631 when she entered the Ursuline order in Tours, taking the name Marie de l'Incarnation. She took her vows in 1634. After reading accounts in the Jesuit *Relations*, she received permission to go to New France to work among the Native Americans. She left her 12 year old son in the care of her sister.

This is a both an art film and an experimental film. The actress Marie Tifo, who plays the part of Marie de l'Incarnation, is shown preparing for a play, written for the film by Jean-Daniel Lafond, with the help of theatre director Lorraine Pintal. (Pintal has since turned the scenario into a real play, *Marie de l'Incarnation ou La déraison d'amour*). Marie Tifo interviews writers and dramatists as well as a number of experts on the period, including archivists, historians, feminists, members of the Ursuline order and a geologist who corroborates the report of a powerful earthquake.

*Folle de Dieu* is a documentary film, one of more than fifteen films that Jean-Daniel Lafond has produced during his career as a filmmaker. The film had an unusually long gestation period. The director first suggested his idea for a film about Marie de l'Incarnation to Marie Tifo in 1981. It draws extensively on archival materials,

especially her extensive correspondence. There are dramatic readings of passages from her journals as well as from her frank and sometimes disturbing letters to Claude who later entered a monastery. The tensions between the religious community and the Roman Catholic authorities in Quebec, especially Mgr. Francois de Laval, are explored. Marie's ecstatic states are beautifully choreographed, with the help of choreographer Marie Chouinard.



**Arrival of the first nuns in Quebec.** Hotel-Dieu, Quebec, QC. (Masselotte, 1911)

Marie de l'Incarnation, known as "the Madwoman of God" (whence the title of the film), is recognized today as an important 17<sup>th</sup> century French mystic, along with the French Quietist writer Madame Guyon (1648-1717). Her *Relation*, written in 1654, at the direction of her confessor, is now considered her autobiography.

The film was shot on location in Quebec City at the Ursuline convent which houses a museum with a large collection of 17<sup>th</sup> century artifacts.

*Folle de Dieu* premiered in both Montreal and Quebec City; it is in French, without subtitles, and is 75 minutes in length.

— Bill Converse

## **Ce qu'il faut pour vivre** (*Necessities of Life*)

During one of my first visits to Montreal's Royal Victoria Hospital, I saw a government van unloading in the parking lot. Getting out of the van were several Inuit women, looking around with dazed and worried eyes, and I immediately wondered if they had been sent to southern Quebec for medical treatment, and now found themselves in an utterly alien world.

*Ce qu'il faut pour vivre*, a new film by Quebec director Benoit Pilon, tells the story of Tivii, an Inuit hunter who contracts tuberculosis and is sent to a Quebec sanatorium in 1952. (The star of the movie, Natar Ungalaaq, is the same man who stunned many of us with his performance in *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* a few years ago.)

It's a simple story, really — you can probably imagine its trajectory yourself — but the film is beautifully directed, strong, and compelling, anchored by the convincing performances of Ungalaaq, who loses his will to live when he cannot communicate with the French doctors, nuns, and fellow patients who surround him, and Evelyne Gelin as the nurse who takes this unusual patient on as her personal responsibility. Like its title, the movie asks the viewers what would be necessary for *us* to live, and that is the question I still found myself musing days later. But in addition to the more obvious cultural and personal challenges depicted in the film, I found it fascinating to simply see this careful portrayal of the Catholic Quebec of the 1950s, because that too has changed so utterly — perhaps even more than lives of the Inuit themselves.

The audience, which packed Theatre Maisonneuve for the international premiere, gave the film, director, and cast a standing ovation. The film later won the People's Choice award at the festival, and is currently playing in Montreal.

— Beth Adams

## **Okuribito** (*Departures*)

*Okuribito*, directed by Yojiro Takita, follows an out-of-work Japanese cellist who leaves Tokyo, goes back to his hometown, and becomes an undertaker. The term means something rather different than it does in the west: in Japan, the specialty our cellist learns is “en-coffinment” - the preparation of the body of the deceased and placement into the coffin prior to cremation. This is performed in an elaborate, slow ritual in front of the family, and involves washing the body (while

concealing any nudity from the family), dressing it, and making the deceased as beautiful and natural as possible — with utmost respect, and affection. This task, formerly done by the family, is now entrusted to a profession. Like us, Japanese people who have never witnessed the preparation of the dead seem to think of the profession as macabre, even creepy, but (and this was one major point of the film) when performed by an artist, the ritual is moving, beautiful and cathartic, helping to release both the spirit of the deceased, and the grief and healing of those left behind.

At times, the film is also extremely funny: in fact its balance between humor and wrenching emotion was absolutely sure-footed. I felt that rare sense of bonding within the audience itself: we laughed together, but also cried: when was the last time you heard audible sobs from a dark movie theater? I think some of the catharsis portrayed in the film was transmitted to the audience. This view of the elaborate Japanese ritual goes beyond religion into the culture itself, and ultimately beyond culture to touch our most basic, universal struggles as social beings painfully aware of our mortality and the finiteness of human relationships.

At the time we saw the film, my husband and I had just been through the death of his father — I myself had washed and dressed his body — so the film was especially powerful for us. It was oddly comforting to witness a fully-developed ritual that affirmed the same instincts I've felt, and acted upon to the best of my ability, when caring for the bodies of loved ones immediately following their deaths. Islam and Judaism contain specific instructions for the treatment of the dead, but in western Christianity, with our great discomfort with death and, especially, with corpses, we have nearly forgotten the tender responsibility once carried by family members. As a result we've relinquished a big part of what those immediate hours have to teach us. Trying to reclaim that myself, and confronting and overcoming my own fears and discomfort, has been a profound inner journey in my own life.

This was a remarkable film on so many levels: about relationships, culture, life and death, and especially, perhaps, about what art is at its core. *Okuribito*, which won the top prize at this year's festival, ranks as one of the best films I've ever seen, and also did what movies do best, opening a world of specific human experience and emotion that flows between the characters and the audience, enlarging life itself.

— Beth Adams

Continued from page 1

The Reformation in Europe inspired new musical settings for the psalms for use in the Protestant churches. The second half of the evening begins with psalm settings in French by the 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch composer, **Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck**, based upon chorales from the Geneva Psalter. It concludes with **Igor Stravinsky's** *Symphony of Psalms*, a concert work in Latin. However, it also marked Stravinsky's return to the Orthodox Church following a sixteen year hiatus. He himself remarked that "it is not a symphony in which I have included *Psalms* to be sung. On the contrary, it is the singing of the *Psalms* that I am symphonizing."

We hope that you will come and enjoy this wonderful evening in support of our cathedral music programs on **Wednesday, November 5th, 8:00 p.m., at Christ Church Cathedral**, 635 St. Catherine Street West (McGill Metro). Tickets: \$20 adult; \$15 students/seniors; \$40 including reserved seating and wine and cheese reception. Information: (514) 843-6577.

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theatre at the Hermitage that had been built around the same time the ballet was composed."

**Robert Camara and Gabriele Spina** were in Italy this summer. "We traced some of the roots of early Christianity in Rome; one particular place we visited was St. Clement's church, which is 1st C BC below ground and 1st C CE above," said Robert. Gabe added that besides the time they spent in Rome and Florence, a particular highlight was visiting Assisi, "which felt like actually living in a medieval town, but not a museum – one that is still very much alive. It was so real that we could imagine turning a corner and running into St. Francis!" ■

*Have you news or stories you'd like to share with the cathedral community? We'd like to make this a regular feature of Script, so please contact any member of the newsletter committee and we will include your news in a future issue.*

**Welcome Back Supper, September 30th: A Tribute to Al Backman, our retiring verger**

Joyce and Michael presented Al with a bagful of funny gifts for his retirement. The flower is so he won't forget to "smell the roses."



photos by Jonathan Sa'adah



Watching the after-supper entertainment: an interpretation of "Tea for Two" presented especially for Al by the cathedral liturgical dancers.