

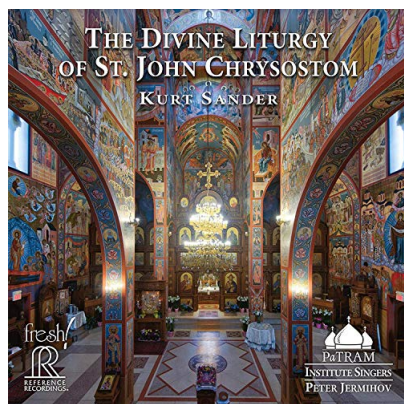


## FEATURE REVIEW by [J. F. Weber](#)

 SANDER Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom • Peter Jermihov, cond; PaTRAM Institute Singers • REFERENCE 731 (2 CDs: 90:06 )



### [Divine Liturgy St Chrysostom](#)

#### [Audio CD](#)

#### [Reference Recordings](#)



Kurt Sander (b. 1969) is an American composer whose interest in the music of the Orthodox Church led him to convert in 1993. The title of his work can mean many things. I have a dozen recordings of traditional versions of the liturgy sung variously in Greek, Old Slavonic, and English. I also have 19th- and 20th-century settings of the same texts by at least seven composers (there are others), the most familiar and most often recorded being those of Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff. Sander has one of the longest modern settings (all of the others fit on one disc), setting most of the texts found in the longer traditional recordings. His style is strongly influenced by the traditional settings, using a basso profundo soloist in the manner of Russian composers. The conductor writes that it is “rooted in the 19th Century Russian models of such masters as Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov, Grachaninoff, and others,” confirming the sense that struck me on first hearing it.

Jermihov states: “The recording presents the entire Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom with all clerical exclamations and litanies.” I miss the epistle, the gospel, and the creed, but the contents otherwise correspond more or less to the longer recordings of the Divine Liturgy on two CDs, including the Romeiko Ensemble in Greek at 155 minutes, the Vatopaidi Monastery on Mount Athos in Greek at 132 minutes, the Capella Romana Ensemble in English at 107 minutes, the nuns of the modern Ormylia Monastery near Mount Athos in Greek at 97 minutes, and the monks of Holy Transfiguration Monastery in English at a skimpy 86 minutes. None of these have been reviewed here. All the settings in Old Slavonic have been recorded to fit on a single CD. Differences are partly due to the prayers that change during the liturgical year, and partly due to the repetitive litanies that can be abbreviated.

Sander's music bears interesting comparison with the other two recordings in English, for Capella Romana set a new translation of the Greek text to Byzantine melodies, while the Holy Transfiguration Monastery (near Boston) mentions nothing about the origin of its translation or music except for the arranger of Psalm 102. The singing on the latter pair of discs is far inferior to the excellent work of Capella Romana, which has a dry, close-up studio acoustic. **The PaTRAM Institute Singers, [Peter Jermihov, Conductor] sings in a much warmer acoustic, and the music has a 19th-century warmth of its own that makes this an altogether remarkable experience of Orthodox liturgy. The venue was a monastery near Chicago. The singers bring a vast dynamic range to the music and exquisite tonal quality throughout. The basso profundo is Glenn Miller, who has been heard in similar repertoire. This is quite spectacular. J. F. Weber**

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