INTRODUCTION
At the beginning of this year, a significant milestone was achieved with the recognition of the
*Romanos O Melodos Greek Orthodox Chanters Society of Greater New York* as a Domestic Not-For-Profit Corporation of New York State. This designation allowed the Society to move forward with its official establishment and the creation of its first ever Executive Board. Inaugural elections were held in January, and the following individuals were elected to serve a two-year term:

- Evangelos Zaharatos, President
- Achilles Tsingas, Vice President
- Dimosthenis Papaioannou, Treasurer
- John Mavrogiannis, Secretary
- Christopher Tripoulas, Public Relations Officer
- Christos Stavropoulos, Advisory Member
- Christos Vitelas, Advisory Member

MISSION
This endeavor has been two years in the making now, and we are extremely excited to finally be able to declare the Society as officially established. Its membership is made up by the cantors of our District’s parishes, who have joined together in a dedicated effort to preserve, promote and teach the Sacred Psaltic Art of Byzantine Chant in the Greater New York Area.

The Society seeks to facilitate and nurture fellowship amongst cantors in the District, and to provide a unified voice for matters concerning the professional development and welfare of its members. It also aspires to raise awareness on the connection between Byzantine Chant and Greek traditional folk music through various public concerts, seminars and other cultural events. Furthermore, the Society aims to offer lessons, workshops and other functions for the in-depth study of Byzantine Chant, together with its customary music performances and singing of our Church’s liturgical services.

VASILOPITA CUTTING
In February, the Society had the special honor of hosting His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America for their Annual Vasilopita Cutting & Dinner at their official headquarters located at the Transfiguration of Christ Greek Orthodox Church in Corona, New York. At this gathering, His Eminence administered the Oath of Office to the inaugural Executive Board and offered his Archpastoral blessings and commendation to all the Society’s members, thanking everyone for their efforts and dedication, which made this endeavor possible.

In turn, with the paternal blessings of His Eminence, the President of the Society announced his desire to further enhance the major festal celebrations of our District’s parishes through the participation of the Society’s choir in the chanting of these important divine services. Other goals also included: training new cantors in Byzantine Music and traditional instruments; engaging our youth in the sacred art of chanting; promoting ecclesiastical music in the parish setting; and implementing educational initiatives in our youth camps and parochial school programs related to the teaching of Byzantine Chant.
CLASSES
Weekly in-person lessons in Byzantine Chant, as well as in Greek traditional folk music and instruments, are offered every Monday from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Transfiguration of Christ Greek Orthodox Church in Corona, NY. Classes are free to all members of the Society, and complimentary parking is available on site.

Currently, around 12 students are enrolled for lessons in Byzantine Chant, together with an additional 6 individuals for traditional folk song and instruments.
- Chanting classes are taught by Mr. Eleftherios Eleftheriades, Head Cantor of Saint Nicholas Church in Flushing, NY.
- Lessons in Kanun or Qanun (κανονάκι) and Greek folk song are offered by Mrs. Lambrini Kampoura.
- Oud (ούτι) lessons are taught by Mr. Demetrios Kehagias, Head Cantor of Kimisis Tis Theotokou Church in Brooklyn, NY.

EXPANSION
The Society aims to be the cornerstone of Byzantine Music education within the Archdiocesan District. To this end, we welcome your support and encourage you to share our Society’s news with your community’s cantors and faithful. We are looking for parishes in the District that are interested in hosting lessons, workshops and seminars in order to better facilitate the geographical needs of our communities. In expanding our in-person educational programs, we can better serve our parishes and produce competent cantors who can properly chant the divine services.

Please encourage your parish’s cantors to join the Society and to actively participate as teachers in this initiative. We welcome everyone! If each community of our District supports this effort by offering even just one individual who is interested in learning Byzantine Chant, we can potentially produce 60-plus well-trained cantors over the next few years. This will greatly assist our parishes in acquiring knowledgeable, home-grown cantors who can properly execute the singing of church services, and thus alleviate the need to search for individuals overseas who require cumbersome and expensive visas to reside in the United States.

CONTACT INFORMATION
If you would like to remain informed of the Society’s news and events, or if you are interested in becoming a member, you are welcome to communicate directly with the Society’s Executive Board at the following e-mail address: info@romanosomelodos.org. You may also use this address to contact the Society if you are interested in inviting them to your parish for a service, or if you are looking to find a chanter for your community.

For further information on how to support the Society and its mission, as well as other details, please visit the Society’s forthcoming website at https://romanosomelodos.org/. Here you will be kept up to date with the Society’s initiatives and will be able to follow its activities on social media.