

The Virgin Mary Project

The Virgin Mary Project is a cross-cultural project, in which the Finnish chamber choir Novena and mosaic artist Minna Floman combine music and mosaic art in a unique way.

The project culminates in spring 2011 in the publishing of a CD of A Cappella choir music, choir concerts and a mosaic art exhibition – all around the theme Virgin Mary. The project donates pieces of mosaic art to churches, homes for old people and hospitals.



*Stella Maris
Minna Floman 2010*

Virgin Mary is the inspiration for a large number of myths, which have inspired composers from time immemorial. The choir music knows numberless works indirectly or directly praising Virgin Mary. Many of them are well known also to the broad public. In the visual arts, Mary is likewise richly represented in many masterpieces through numerous flowers symbolizing her, like the lily and the rose, but also the violet and the lily of the valley. She is often presented in a blue dress and in the Greek orthodox iconography she may be identified through three crosses on head and shoulders.

The Novena CD will be published on Annunciation Day, March 27th, 2011 on the occasion of a concert conducted by Nina Kronlund in the cathedral of Espoo, Finland. The CD includes among others Anton Bruckner's Ave Maria, Edvard Grieg's Ave Maris Stella, Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina's Stabat Mater Dolorosa and Francis Poulenc's O Magnum Mysterium, but also contemporary and less well known a cappella chamber choir works. On March 27th, 2011 also the mosaic exhibition "Virgin Mary mosaics" will open in Gallery Dix in Helsinki. The exhibition is open until 17th April. During the exhibition, the new Novena CD will play in the gallery.

Novena is the chamber choir of the Swedish Lutheran parish in Espoo, close to capital Helsinki in Finland. With Nina Kronlund as their artistic director, the choir has since its founding in 2004 advanced to one of the important chamber choirs in Finland. Nina Kronlund's other choir Eviva won two gold medals in the Slovakia Cantat competition in Bratislava in April 2010. The choir premiered a Missa Festiva by Finnish composer Timo-Juhani Kyllönen in 2008 with the orchestra of the Finnish National Opera and will premier a jazz mass with a brass orchestra in the autumn of 2010. Nina Kronlund has studied Gregorian music in Finland, France and Estonia and Baroque music for instance within the Tafelmusik programme in Toronto. She has studied old music for Evelyn Tubb and orchestra conducting for Atso Almila. She is a cantor-organist with the Swedish Parish in Espoo, Finland.

Minna Floman is one of the few mosaic artists in Finland. She has studied mosaic art in Finland with the French mosaic artist Virginie Loÿ and the Russian mosaic icon artist Yuri Yarin and in the UK with the world famous mosaic artist Emma Biggs. She has also worked as an assistant to Ms Biggs in the mosaic project "Made in England". Minna Floman has a Master of Mosaic diploma from Orsoni in Venice, Italy. She has shown her mosaic art in four exhibitions, two in Finland and two in the UK. Her early mosaic works brought the ornaments of ancient Finnish brooches to the present with the means of mosaic art. See also www.minnafloman.fi.