

ZAMIR CHORALE OF BOSTON

Joshua Jacobson, Artistic Director



Songs of Love

Sunday June 6, 2004

7:30 pm

Casey Theatre, Regis College

PROGRAM

Shir Ha-shirim Prologue Charles Davidson
Rollin Simmons and Charles Claus, soli

Shir Ha-shirim III Yehezkel Braun

1. Al mishkavi ba-leylot
2. Metsa'uni ha-shomerim
3. Hishba'ti etkhem
4. Mi zot ola min ha-midbar
5. Apiryon
6. Tsena ur'ena

Rollin Simmons, solo

Seven Sephardic Romances Yehezkel Braun (arr. Jacobson)

1. Don Amadi
2. Esta Rakhel
3. Nani, Nani
4. Durme
5. Por Que Llorax
6. Di Me Rozina
7. Morenica

Jody Weixelbaum and Sharon Brown Goldstein, soli

Shir Ahava Jef Labes

Susan Rubin, solo

— INTERMISSION —

Five Hebrew Love Songs Eric Whitacre

- Temuna
Kala kalla
Larov
Eyze Sheleg!
Rakut

Rollin Simmons, solo; Maya Bernstein, narrator

Erev Shel Shoshanim Josef Hadar (arr. Klebanow)

Dodi Li Nira Chen (arr. Jacobson)

Ha-yoshevet Ba-ganim Nissim Cohen Hav-Ron

Papir Iz Dokh Vais trad. Ashkenazi (arr. Jacobson)
Charles Claus, conductor; Steven Ebstein, solo

Yomeh, Yomeh trad. Ashkenazi (arr. Ullmann)
Allan Friedman, conductor

Ba Mir Bistu Sheyn Sholom Secunda (arr. Jacobson & Bailey)
Deborah West, Susan Rubin, and Dina Berdy, trio

Simona Mi-dimona Shlomo Weissfish (arr. Jacobson)

Aval Ahava Ahinoam Nini (arr. Jacobson)
Jill and Lawrence Sandberg, duet

ZAMIR CHORALE OF BOSTON

Joshua R. Jacobson, Artistic Director

Sopranos

Sharon Brown Goldstein • Jenwa Hsung • Marilyn J. Jaye • Susan Rubin •
Sharon Shore • Rollin Simmons • Deborah Sosin • Julie Smily •
Jody Weixelbaum • Phyllis Werlin • Deborah West*

Altos

Dina Berdy • Maya Bernstein • Sarah Boling • Susan Carp-Nesson •
Liz Carver • Johanna Ehrmann* • Silvia Golijov • Rachel Kohl •
Deborah Melkin • Jill Sandberg • Nancy Sargon-Zarsky • Phyllis Sogg Wilner

Tenors

Charles Claus • Steven Ebstein • Allan Friedman* • Suzanne Goldman •
Daniel Nesson • Leila Joy Rosenthal • Lawrence E. Sandberg •
Gilbert Schiffer • Martin Wahl

Basses

Peter Bronk • Phil Goldman • Andrew M. Greene* • Michael Krause •
Michael Kronenberg • Richard Lustig • Marty Oppenheimer • Richard Samuels •
Peter Squires • Mark Stepner • Michael Victor • Jordan Lee Wagner

*section leaders

Edwin Swanborn, piano

Michael Monaghan, flute

Mark Miller, clarinet

Taki Masuko, percussion

Liana Zaretsky and Hilary Foster, violins

Lisa Suslowicz, viola

Mark Moscovitz, cello

Gregory Holt, bass

Bob Ward, guitar

Bruce Creditor, orchestra manager

*Zamir is funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council and
Combined Jewish Philanthropies, and is Chorus-in-Residence at Hebrew College.*

ZAMIR CHORALE OF BOSTON
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www.zamir.org • 1-866-ZAMIR-20

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Joshua R. Jacobson

Joshua R. Jacobson, founder and director of the Zamir Chorale of Boston, is Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at Northeastern University, and Visiting Professor of Jewish Music at Hebrew College. Dr. Jacobson has guest conducted a number of ensembles, including the Boston Pops Orchestra and the Boston Lyric Opera Company. He has guest lectured throughout North America and in Israel. He has also written articles on choral music, and his published compositions and arrangements have been performed by choirs around the world. His book, *Chanting the Hebrew Bible: The Art of Cantillation*, was published by the Jewish Publication Society in 2002. In May 2004, the Cantors Assembly presented Dr. Jacobson with its prestigious Kavod Award.

Zamir Chorale of Boston

Now in its 35th season, the Zamir Chorale of Boston is recognized as "America's foremost Jewish choral ensemble." Zamir, which means "nightingale" in Hebrew, is committed to the highest quality performance of music spanning thousands of years, four continents, and a variety of styles. The Chorale's repertoire includes Jewish liturgical pieces, major classical works, music of the Holocaust, newly commissioned works, and Israeli, Yiddish, and Ladino folksongs. Zamir currently has 16 recordings on the HaZamir label, ranging from Baroque masterworks to seasonal celebrations. Zamir's 1999 tour to Eastern Europe is the subject of the PBS documentary *Zamir: Jewish Voices Return to Poland*. Zamir is Chorus-in-Residence at Hebrew College.

PROGRAM NOTES

Music and love are both universal. Anthropologists have found music of some form in every human society. And love is an emotion that every healthy human being craves. Of course, there are many kinds of love: love of country, love of a parent, love of a child, love of God. In this program, Zamir focuses its repertoire on romantic love. Some of these songs are ancient, but their themes resonate across hundreds of years and thousands of miles.

The earliest love songs of the Jewish people have been preserved in the Hebrew Bible. *Shir Ha-shirim* (*The Song of Songs* or *The Most Sublime Song*) is regarded by some as the work of King Solomon (tenth century BCE), by others as an anthology of women's amorous airs from ancient Israel (perhaps from the third century BCE). Some have questioned why a collection such as this, in which God is not mentioned even once, should have found a place in the biblical canon. Yet Rabbi Akiva (d. 135 CE) considered *Shir Ha-shirim* the holiest of all the writings. Akiva also made it clear that these were not ribald ditties: "Whoever sings *The Song of Songs* in taverns, treating it like an ordinary song, has no place in the World to Come." Indeed, *The Song of Songs* is no "ordinary song." A surface reading does reveal erotic longing and a sensuality evoked through descriptions of visions, sounds, tastes, aromas, and touching. But a careful analysis reveals a deeply spiritual, monogamous "I-Thou" relationship, and, in the words of Carey Ellen Walsh, "a yearning for things unseen."

Sephardic Jews have a rich repertoire of love songs, some of them more than 500 years old. In many of these songs a young man is in such an amorous state he declares he is "dying of love." In others, a woman laments the state of an unhappy marriage and fantasizes about a handsome man who would come to take her away.

After the middle of the nineteenth century, there was an efflorescence of love songs among the Jews of Eastern Europe. Noted folklorist Ruth Rubin suggests that this phenomenon may have stemmed from both the new exposure to modernity and secular literature, and the gradual abandonment of the practice of arranged marriages. Rubin notes, "In eastern Europe of the nineteenth century, of all the categories of Yiddish folk songs, love songs were the most numerous, popular, melodious, and poetic."

The establishment of Yiddish theater troupes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century created a new venue for the promulgation of love songs. The most successful of all love songs from the Yiddish theater was Sholom Secunda's "Ba Mir Bistu Sheyn," which, translated into English, became the number-one song on the 1938 American Hit Parade.

In the cultural climate of the past 50 years, Diaspora Jews, by and large, no longer sing Jewish love songs. Instead, Jewish composers such as Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, Harold Arlen, Richard Rodgers, Lorenz Hart, Leonard Bernstein, Jerry Lieber, Mike Stoller, Carole King, Neil Sedaka, and Barry Mann (to name a few), have made significant contributions to the corpus of American popular love songs. To find Jewish love songs today one has to look to the Jewish State, where Israeli songwriters have produced a stunning repertoire of love songs of all flavors.

—Joshua R. Jacobson

SHIR HA-SHIRIM PROLOGUE

Jewish mystics chant the *Song of Songs* on Friday night, part of the ceremony of welcoming the feminine personification of the Sabbath. Our prologue is taken from Cantor Charles Davidson's jazz service, *And David Danced*.

The Song of Songs of Solomon.
Let him kiss me
from the kisses of his mouth.

Let me be a seal upon your heart,
Like the seal upon your hand.
For love is fierce as death.
—Song of Songs 1:1, 8:6

SHIR HA-SHIRIM III

Yehezkel Braun is today considered one of Israel's greatest composers. Born in 1922 in Germany, he was brought to Eretz Yisrael at the age of two. The traditional Jewish and Eastern Mediterranean traditional musics that he heard in his early environment would become an important influence in his prolific career as a composer. In 2001 he was awarded the prestigious Israel Prize. Braun wrote:

I composed *Shir Ha-shirim Gimel* in 1973 at the behest of Shlomo Kaplan from the Mercaz Letarbut Ulkhinukh (Center for Culture and Education) of the Histadrut (The Israel Labor Organization). *Shir Ha-shirim* was my choice, because it is the greatest love poetry ever created, at once the most sensual and spiritual, most down to earth and most elevated, the ultimate expression of oneness of body and soul. I chose Chapter Three because it shows a more or less continuous narrative, or rather drama.

1. Al mishkavi ba-leylot

Upon my couch at night I sought the one I love—
I sought, but found him not.

"I must rise and roam the town,
Through the streets and through the squares;
I must seek the one I love."
I sought but found him not.

2. Metsa'uni ha-shomerim

I met the watchmen
Who patrol the town.
"Have you seen the one I love?"
Scarcely had I passed them
When I found the one I love.
I held him fast,
I would not let him go
Til I brought him to my mother's house,
To the chamber of her who conceived me.

3. Hishba'ti etkhem

I adjure you, O maidens of Jerusalem,
By gazelles or by hinds of the field:
Do not wake or rouse Love until it please!

4. Mi zot ola min ha-midbar

What is this that comes up from the desert
Like columns of smoke,
In clouds of myrrh and frankincense,
Of all the powders of the merchant?
There is Solomon's couch,
Encircled by sixty warriors
Of the warriors of Israel,
All of them trained in warfare,
Skilled in battle,
Each with sword on thigh
Because of terror by night.

5. Apiryon

King Solomon made him a palanquin
Of wood from Lebanon.
He made its posts of silver,
Its back of gold,
Its seat of purple wool.
Within, it was decked with love
By the maidens of Jerusalem.

6. Tsena ur'ena

O maidens of Zion, go forth
And gaze upon King Solomon
Wearing the crown that his mother
Gave him on his wedding day,
On his day of bliss.

—*Song of Songs* 3:1–11

SEVEN SEPHARDIC ROMANCES

Yehezkel Braun is also an avid collector of folksongs. In 1968 he created a suite of seven love songs from the traditions of the Sephardim, Jews who trace their ancestry to pre-1492 Spain.

1. Don Amadi

“Grove, grove,
grove, so fruitful,
have you seen my husband,
have you seen him passing by?”

“Nobleman, where are you going?
Where does this path take you?
Have you seen my husband,
my husband, Amadi?”

“How much do you offer, my lady,
as ransom for your husband?”

“I shall give you three doubloons,
the ones left to me by Amadi.”

2. Esta Rakhel

This is the honorable Rakhel.
God bestowed honor upon her
for she was the wife of whom she was,
the wife of a governor.

One day she went for a walk,
accompanied by her ladies of honor.
She came upon a young man
who fell in love with her.

He sent her many presents—
expensive jewels.

He sent her a fine ring

Gold is worthless,
A precious stone is of great value.
He sent her many letters
that spoke of love.

“But I must return everything to you.
After all, I am a married lady.”

3. Nani, Nani

Nani, Nani.
Nani wants her son,
mother's son, little boy,
to become a man.

Ah, sleep, my soul,
sleep, my life.
Ah, may your father return home soon
with great joy.

4. Durme

Sleep, sleep, my soul, my princess.
Sleep, sleep, have no worries, have no pain.

Listen, listen to the sound of my guitar.
Listen, my precious, to my sad song.

Your slave so desires
to see you dreaming with great love.

5. Por Que Llorax

“Why do you cry, fair girl?
Why do you cry, white flower?”
“I cry because of you, nobleman.
Because you've gone and left me!
You left me, such a young girl,
so small and of tender age!
I have little boys
who cry and ask for bread.
If they ask for their father,
what should I tell them?”
He searched in his shirt
and gave her a hundred doubloons.
“What is this money for?”

For wine or for bread?
If it is not enough,
you know where you'll go!
You'll sell your vineyards and your fields,
half the city—from the border to the sea!"

6. Di Me Rozina

Glorious jasmine flower,
give me rest!
Look at your husband,
what a state he's in!
Tell me, Rozina, what medicine can cure me?
For you see I am nearly speechless!
Sweet image!
Give me courage,
for I am dying of love!

7. Morenica

They call me Morenica, the little dark girl.
I was born fair, but I became like this from the summer sun.

Morenica, you are the little dark girl.
Graceful, with dark eyes.

The sailors call me: Morenica.
If they call me again I'll go away with them.

Morenica, you are the little dark girl.
Graceful, with dark eyes.

The king's son calls me: Morenica.
If he calls me again I'll go with him!

Morenica, you are the little dark girl.
Graceful, with dark eyes.

SHIR AHAVA

In its first season, the Zamir Chorale of Boston commissioned jazz pianist Jef Labes to compose a work in Hebrew. Premiered in 1970, *Shir Ahava* is an effervescent contemporary hymn to the power of love.

Lovers in our world,
Wake.

Listen to a
Love song.
All children of life
Are filled with love,
Love-filled.
Who rightly
understands
Living
Love-filled life?
Only he
Who fills his heart,
Spirit,
Thoughts and deeds
With love.
Wake up, lovers.
Rise up into love.
—Jef Labes

FIVE HEBREW LOVE SONGS

A Grammy nominee, Eric Whitacre is a rising star in the choral world. The composer recently wrote about the genesis of Five Hebrew Love Songs.

In the spring of 1996, my great friend and brilliant violinist Friedemann Eichhorn invited me and my girlfriend-at-the-time, Hila Plitmann (a soprano), to give a concert with him in his home city of Speyer, Germany. We had all met that year as students at the Juilliard School and were inseparable. Because we were appearing as a band of traveling musicians, Friedy asked me to write a set of troubadour songs for piano, violin, and soprano. I asked Hila (who was born and raised in Jerusalem) to write me a few "postcards" in her native tongue, and a few days later she presented me with these exquisite and delicate Hebrew poems. I set them while we vacationed in a small skiing village in the Swiss Alps, and we performed them for the first time a week later in Speyer.

I had never set Hebrew text before, but I found it to be an exquisite language for music. Each of the songs captures a moment that Hila and I shared together. "Kala Kalla" (Light Bride) was a pun I came up with while she was first teaching me Hebrew. The bells at the beginning of "Eyze Sheleg!" are the exact pitches that awakened us each morning in Germany as they rang from a nearby cathedral. These pieces are profoundly personal for me, born entirely out of my new love for this soprano, poet, and now my beautiful wife, Hila Plitmann.

I. Temuna

A picture is engraved in my heart;
Moving between light and darkness:
A sort of silence envelops your body,
And your hair falls upon your face just so.

II. Kala Kalla

Light bride
She is all mine,
And lightly
She will kiss me!

III. Larov

“Mostly,” said the roof to the sky,
“the distance between you and me is endlessness;
But a while ago two came up here,
And only one centimeter was left between us.”

IV. Eyze Sheleg!

What snow!
Like little dreams
Falling from the sky.

V. Rakut

He was full of tenderness;
She was very hard.
And as much as she tried to stay thus,
Simply, and with no good reason,
He took her into himself,
And set her down
In the softest, softest place.
—Hila Plitmann

THREE POPULAR SONGS FROM ISRAEL

One hundred years ago Zionist ideologues created “an invented tradition” to support a new Hebrew culture. They envisioned a different kind of Jew: strong, sunny, outdoor, secular, hard-working, optimistic, closely connected to the land, and Hebrew-speaking. An effective way to convey this image to Jews all around the world, and to unify all the Jews in the *yishuv*, was through a repertoire of new songs, *zemer ha-ivriy*, rehearsed in school music classes, promulgated through official publications, and heard in live performances, as well as on radio and recordings. Many of these songs crossed the Atlantic and became effective tools for American Jews to express solidarity with

the Zionist enterprise. The lyrics of these songs were often taken from the Hebrew Bible. These were not religious songs, but by quoting or paraphrasing the Bible, the authors of these songs created a vital link with the ancient past.

Erev Shel Shoshanim

Evening of roses!
Let us go out to the orchard.
Myrrh, fragrant spices and incense
are a threshold for your feet.

Night falls slowly
and a breeze wafts, rose scented.
Come, I'll whisper you a secret song
a hymn of love.

Dawn. A dove is cooing.
Your head full of dew.
Your mouth unto the morning, a rose
that I pluck for myself.
—Moshe Dor

Dodi Li

My beloved is mine, and I am his—
The shepherd of the lilies.

Who is she that comes up out of the desert
In clouds of myrrh and frankincense?

You have captivated my heart,
My own, my bride!

Awake, O north wind!
Come, O south wind!
—after *Song of Songs* 3:6, 4:9, 4:16, 6:3

Ha-yoshevet Ba-ganim

Woman of the gardens,
People are waiting to hear you sing.
Let's hear you!

“Hurry, my beloved,
Swift as a gazelle or a young stag,
To the hills of spices!” —*Song of Songs* 8:13–14

THREE YIDDISH LOVE SONGS

In "Papir Iz Dokh Vais," a young student tries to concentrate on his books, but is distracted by memories of a girl he has glimpsed. "Yomeh, Yomeh" is the song of a girl who dares to tell her parents that she is ready for love. "Ba Mir Bistu Sheyn" is a bold confession of love, but expressed in a wry Yiddish humor.

Papir Iz Dokh Vais

Paper is white and ink is black.
Sweet love, how my heart yearns for you!
I could sit for three days without stop
Kissing your pretty face and holding your hand.

Last night I went to a wedding.
I saw many pretty girls there.
Many pretty girls, but none to compare
With your dark eyes and black hair.

Your figure, your manner, your gentle ways!
In my heart burns a fire that none can see.
No man can feel this burning.
My life and death are in your hands.

Yomeh, Yomeh

[The mother:] Yomeh, yomeh,* sing me a song
about what my little girl wants.

[The father:] Your little girl wants a pair of shoes.
So we'll order them from the shoemaker.

[The daughter:] No, mother dear, no.
You don't understand.

You don't know what I want.

[The mother:] Yomeh, yomeh, sing me a song
about what my little girl wants.

[The father:] Your little girl wants a hat.
So we'll order one from the milliner.

[The daughter:] No, mother dear, no.
You don't understand.

You don't know what I want.

[The mother:] Yomeh, yomeh, sing me a song
about what my little girl wants.

[The father:] Your little girl wants a husband.
So we'll order one from the matchmaker.

[The daughter:] Yes, mother dear, yes.

Now you understand.

Now you know what I want.

*diminutive of the name Benyomen (Benjamin)

Ba Mir Bistu Sheyn

Even if you were as dark as a Tatar,
Even if you had eyes like a tomcat,
And even if you limped a little,
Or had wooden footsies,
I say that wouldn't bother me.

And even if you had a foolish grin,
And even if you had no more brains than Vayzasa,
Even if you were as wild as an Indian,
Or even you were a Galitziyaner,
I say it wouldn't bother me.

Tell me, how do you explain this?
I'll soon tell you why.

To me you are pretty,
To me you are charming,
To me you are one of a kind.
To me you are good,
To me you've got "it,"
To me you are more precious than gold.

Many pretty boys/girls have
Already wanted to take me,
And out of all these I have chosen
Only you!

—Jacob Jacobs

TWO SONGS FROM MODERN ISRAEL

Recent songs from Israel are less likely to be rooted in the biblical past. Simona lives in Dimona, a new town built for needy immigrants from North Africa. Shalmoni's exuberant song resonates with issues of ethnicity and class distinctions. Noa's song, by contrast, is a delicate flight of whimsy that is completely universal in its appeal.

Simona Mi-Dimona

Every day on the heights of Dimona

there she stands.
 She's sad,
 she's dark, and her name is Simona,
 and she's waiting for a boyfriend.
 I'm burning with love
 for this black beauty!
 And my heart sings, yes sings
 for Simona from Dimona!
 I'll put my hat on
 and trudge through the heat!
 I'll climb 800 meters up
 from Sodom to my Simona!
 —Chaim Shalmoni

aval ahava

love
 love i sing i say love
 love i hear i give love
 morning eyes light love
 delicious kiss thanks love
 sweet little girl love
 sweet big girl love
 beautiful new blouse love
 what a wonderful smell love
 who is knocking at the door
 here for sure love
 sometimes i'm afraid but love

date! Save the date! Save the date! Save the date! Save the date! Save the date! Save the date! Save the date!



ZAMIR CHORALE OF BOSTON
36TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Zamir celebrates 36 wonderful years of glorious singing
 throughout the 2004–05 season.

A special anniversary weekend of events is planned for June 3–5,
 2005, including an alumni reunion and open sing.

Mark your calendar now for a
Spectacular Gala Concert!
 Sunday, June 5, 2005, 7:30 pm
 Sanders Theatre, Cambridge

date! Save the date! Save the date! Save the date! Save the date! Save the date! Save the date! Save the date!

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