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Joshua Jacobson, Artistic Director
June 5 & 6, 2016
Slosberg Recital Hall, Brandeis University



The Gentle Spirit of Israel

A Tribute to Israeli Composer Yehezkel Braun

I. Popular Songs

Shibbolet Ba-Sadeh (Grain in the Field) **1962**

Lyrics and Music by Matityahu Shelem; Arr. Yehezkel Braun

Uri Tsafon (Awake, O North Wind) **1975**

Lyrics from the Song of Songs 4:16; Music by Dov Carmel; Arr. Yehezkel Braun

Ronu Na (Rejoice) **1956**

Lyrics by Gershon Plotkin; Music by Alexander (Sasha) Argov; Arr. Yehezkel Braun

II. Wisdom

Hem Ameru (From the Sayings of Our Forefathers) **2005**

Lyrics from Mishnah Pirkey Avot; Music by Yehezkel Braun; Soloists: Anne Levy, Sharon Goldstein, Naomi Gurt Lind, Steven Ebstein, Hal Katzman, Devin Lawrence

1. *Moshe Kibel Torah Mi-Sinai* (The Transmission of the Torah)
2. *Al Shelosha Devarim* (What Keeps the World Going)
3. *Aseh Lekha Rav* (Have a Master and a Friend)
4. *Hevey Marbeh Lakhkor* (Cross-examine the Witnesses)
5. *Ehov Et Ha-melakha* (Love Your work)
6. *Im Eyn Torah* (Torah and Common Decency)
7. *Eyze Hu Khakham* (Who Is Truly Wise?)
8. *Ha-kin'ah* (Envy, Greed and Honor)
9. *Ha-Lomed Yeled* (Learning in One's Youth)
10. *Ha-Lomed Min Ha-ketanim* (Learning from Inexperienced Youths)
11. *Ha-kin'ah* (Envy, Greed and Honor)
12. *Hafokh Bah* (Delve Deeply)
13. *Lefum Tsa'ara Agra* (No Pain, No Gain)
14. *Moshe Kibel Torah Mi-Sinai* (The Transmission of the Torah)

III. Popular Songs

Yerushalayim Shel Zahav (Jerusalem of Gold) **1989**

Lyrics and Music by Naomi Shemer; Arr. Yehezkel Braun; Soloist: Maayan Harel

Vayyimalet Kayyin (Cain Flew) **1973**

Lyrics by Yaacov Shabtai; Music by Yehezkel Braun; Soloist: Hal Katzman

IV. Song Cycle

Shirey Ha-Yonah Ve-Ha-Shoshan (Songs of the Lily and the Dove) **1956**

Lyrics by Leah Goldberg; Music by Yehezkel Braun, Cantor Louise Treitman, soprano

1. *Beruakh Arbayim* (The Cool of the Evening)
2. *Yayin Atik* (Mellow Wine)
3. *Le'an Halakh Dodekh* (Where Has Your Beloved Gone?)
4. *Ba'ani Ha-Laila* (The Night Has Enclosed Me)

V. Love

Shir Ha-shirim III **1973**

Lyrics from Song of Songs chapter 3; Music by Yehezkel Braun; Soloists: Elana Rome, Gail Terman, Lawrence E. Sandberg, Peter Bronk, Naomi Gurt Lind

1. *Al Mishkavi Ba-leylot* (Night after Night in Bed)
2. *Metsa'uni Ha-shomerim* (The Night Watchmen Found Me)
3. *Hishbati Etkhem* (Swear to Me)
4. *Mi Zot Olah Min Ha-midbar?* (Who Emerges from the Wilderness?)
5. *Apiryon* (King Solomon's Palanquin)
6. *Tsena Ur'ena* (Come Out and See)

VI. Shofar

Hilkhot Tekiyat Shofar (Festive Horns) **1980**

Lyrics from Mishnah Rosh Hashanah; Music by Yehezkel Braun

Soloists: Anne Levy, Steven Ebstein

1. *Kol Ha-shofarot Kesherot* (Shofars That Are Proper for Use)
2. *Shofar She-le-Rosh Hashanah* (The Shofar for New Years)
3. *Ba-ta'aniyot* (On Fast Days)
4. *Shaveh Ha-yovel* (The Jubilee Shofar)
5. *Shofar She-nisdak* (A Damaged Shofar)
6. *Ha-tokeya Letokh Ha-bor* (The Echo of a Shofar in a Cistern)

VI. Hallel

Halleluyah (from *Hallel*) **1979**, revised **1984**

Lyrics from Psalm 113; Music by Yehezkel Braun

Thank you for turning off all cell phones and pages.

Photography and recording of these performances are prohibited.





Notes from the Artistic Director

Yehezkel Braun was born in Breslau, Germany in 1922, and was brought to the land of Israel with his parents when he was two years old. Braun recalled that his earliest musical memories were on the one hand the recordings of Italian opera that his father would often play, notably *Madame Butterfly* and *La Bohème*, and on the other hand the indigenous singing of Yemenite women who would pass by his home on their way to work. Braun studied composition with Alexander Boscovic, who believed that composers should strive to cultivate an “Israeli” style by consciously incorporating rhythms and melodic motifs borrowed from traditional Jewish chant. Braun was certainly attracted to traditional Jewish melodies; he collected them and used many of them in his compositions. But he also was attracted to Gregorian Chant, in which he immersed himself with several sojourns to the Solemnes Monastery. He studied music at the Tel Aviv Academy, from which he graduated in 1953, and then returned to academia two decades later to study for a bachelor’s degree in Classics at Tel Aviv University.

One can hear all these influences in Braun’s music. Braun’s love of vocal melodies is certainly appreciated by anyone who sings his music. Many years ago Braun told me that he doesn’t compose harmonically, rather he composes “horizontally,” conceiving of each voice part as its own melody. And as Jehoash Hirshberg pointed out in a recent article, Braun never thought about composing while he was composing. Braun wrote, “I gave up on two things: on thinking about music and on thinking what to think and how to think, to compose while thinking. It used to cause me torment and terrible emotional pain. One day I said to myself: the hell with all that, I will write what I hear. ... Music is something that either happens or does not.”

And for Yehezkel Braun, music certainly did happen. In his 92 years he produced an enormous output of works for orchestra, chamber ensembles, solo piano, chorus and solo voice. In his vocal works, the music flows from the text, expressing it but never overpowering it. His adherence to principles of classical form makes his music readily understood and appreciated by all audiences. And his use of melodies and styles extracted from folklore give much of his music a sense of groundedness. But above all else, Yehezkel Braun’s music reflects the personality of Yehezkel Braun, noble yet humble, gentle but principled, generous and loving. May his memory—and his music—be a blessing.

In 1982 Yehezkel Braun was a visiting faculty at Brandeis University. On March 28 of that year the Zamir Chorale of Boston participated in a concert of Braun’s music at Brandeis’s Slosberg Recital Hall. Tonight Zamir returns to Brandeis to perform a tribute concert in memory of this great composer. The program reprises three works that were presented at the 1982 concert, *Song of Songs Chapter Three*, *Songs of the Dove and the Lily*, and *Festive Horns*. In addition, we are performing the American premiere of *Hem Ameru* (from *Mishnah Pirkey Avot*, composed for Zamir’s 36th anniversary), *Halleluyah* (from the *Hallel Service*), *Vayimalet Kayin* (originally composed for the popular Yarkon Bridge Trio), and Braun’s arrangement of four popular Israeli songs, *Shibbolet Ba-Sadeh*, *Uri Tsafon*, *Ronu Na*, and *Yerushalayim Shel Zahav*.

We reproduce below the notes that Braun wrote for the 1982 program:

Shir Hashirim III (Cantici Canticorum Caput III) This work is a setting, for mixed choir *a cappella*, of the third chapter of Song of Songs. The melodic idiom is inspired by, but not based upon, biblical cantillation. I envisaged a sort of musical texture and style that would bring out the words as clearly as possible, as they would be pronounced in spirited, rhythmical, speech. Moreover, I had in mind the double nature of this unique poetry: as a collection of charmingly innocent love and wedding songs of an ancient people and as the greatest and most profound expression of the special bond between the people of Israel and the Holy Presence.

Songs of the Dove and the Lily This is a setting for voice and piano of a cycle of four poems by Leah Goldberg. The poems are about tender love, cruelly frustrated. The dramatic climax is reached in the third song. The last song is an echo of the first, but, emerging from the depths of despair, the dove, symbol of hope, reappears.

Festive Horns This work for choir and brass octet is a setting of six passages from the Mishnaic tractate “Rosh Hashanah”, dealing with rules and customs of blowing the shofars and trumpets on the High Holidays and on other occasions. The choir presents the Mishnaic text while the brass instruments, evoking in a stylized manner the memory of the ancient ritual horns and trumpets, weave a musical commentary around the text chanted by the choir, much in the manner of later Rabbinical commentaries that used to be set around the Mishnaic text. —Y. B.



Conductor and Artistic Director



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 and Senior Consultant in the School of Jewish Music at Hebrew College. He has guest conducted a number of ensembles, including the Boston Pops Orchestra and the Bulgarian National Symphony and Chorus. He has guest lectured and taught work-

shops for schools, synagogues, festivals, and conventions throughout North America and in Israel. He has written two books, dozens of articles, and over 100 published compositions, editions, and arrangements. Dr. Jacobson holds degrees in music from Harvard College, the New England Conservatory, and the University of Cincinnati.

Accompanist



Edwin Swanborn, accompanist, studied with Dr. Anthony Newman at the Juilliard School of Music in New York, and has participated in master classes with Gustav Leonhardt and Anton Heiller. He is Music Director of the historic First Parish Church in Duxbury, and the Artistic Director of the Candlelight Concert Series of Duxbury, a nationally recognized chamber music series. Founder-Director of the Boston Baroque Chamber Players and harpsichordist of the Atlanta Virtuosi, Ed also serves on the music staff of Northeastern University.

Brass Octet

Horns: Whit Hill, Lauren Winter, Fred Aldrich

Trumpets: Joseph Foley, Mark Emery

Trombones: Alexei Doohovskoy, Joseph McEttrick

Tuba: Jerome Stover

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The Zamir Chorale of Boston

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Music with a Mission

Founded in 1969, the Zamir Chorale of Boston's mission is to serve as "a musical and educational organization dedicated to raising awareness of the breadth and beauty of Jewish culture through performances, recordings, symposia, publications, and musical commissions." Led by Founder and Artistic Director Joshua Jacobson, the Chorale comprises experienced volunteer singers who perform music spanning thousands of years, four continents, and a variety of styles, both classical and popular. Zamir's repertoire includes Jewish liturgical pieces, major classical works, music of the Holocaust, newly commissioned compositions, and Israeli, Yiddish, and Ladino folksongs. Zamir's music is enjoyed by people of all ages, religions and races. Concerts can be designed to meet special requirements and always provide an educational component.

In addition to enjoying a devoted following in the Greater Boston area, Zamir has achieved a far-reaching reputation through its 19 recordings and frequent tours throughout the United States, as well as in Israel and Europe. The documentary film, *Zamir: Jewish Voices Return to Poland*, has been shown across the country on public television stations. In January 2006, Zamir was invited to perform at the United Nations General Assembly for the first International Day to Commemorate Victims of the Holocaust. Zamir was honored to represent the United States at the first Louis Lewandowski Festival in Berlin, Germany, in 2011 and again in 2014.

An important component of Zamir's mission is to develop future leaders in Jewish choral music. Graduates of the program have gone on to conduct choirs of their own in Boston and beyond. Zamir also mentors other Jewish community choruses through joint rehearsals and performances.

The Zamir Chorale of Boston, Choir-in-residence at Hebrew College, is funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council and by Combined Jewish Philanthropies. Zamir is a member of the Greater Boston Choral Consortium, a cooperative association of diverse choral groups in Boston and the surrounding areas, and the Newton Cultural Alliance.





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A Tribute to Israeli Composer Yehezkel Braun

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