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ASACA: It All Began With a Love of Chazzanut

Haim Wiener is a highly successful businessman who has passionately loved Chazzanut, the Cantorial arts, from very early on in his life. He was born and raised in Israel before moving to Florida.

In 1978 he received what was to become a most significant phone call from the brilliant Cantor, David Koussevitzky, OBM. He wanted to meet with Haim and with the then Mayor of Tel Aviv, Shlomo Lahat. Cantor Koussevitzky, OBM, felt that the Cantorial arts had slowly been dying out since the Holocaust and he knew in Haim Wiener and Mayor Shlomo Lahat he would find two men who could help turn the tide on this tragic loss to the Jewish people.

He was right. Haim and Gila Wiener quickly became deeply involved in perpetuating Chazzanut as an art form, establishing a partnership with the city of Tel Aviv that began creating extraordinary concerts which, in a short space of time, filled the Mann Auditorium in Tel Aviv.

In the early 1980's they formed the Israel Institute for Cantorial Arts in partnership with the city of Tel Aviv and Heichal Shlomo (the Jerusalem Great Synagogue), and then, in 1985, they established ASACA, the American Society for the Advancement of Cantorial Arts, a non-profit group that today has become the **largest lay organization** in support of the Cantorial Arts.

Tonight's concert is the brainchild of Rabbi Marc Schneier, who introduced ASACA to Chabad's Children of Chernobyl, a non-profit organization dedicated to saving children from the horrors of Chernobyl. The result is a collaboration that will showcase the celebrated voices of a new Cantorial generation and, at the same time, provide urgently needed aid to children whose lives and health have been profoundly affected by the radioactive poisons emitted by the Chernobyl nuclear explosion.

Rabbi Marc Schneier



Rabbi Marc Schneier is founding rabbi of The Hampton Synagogue in Westhampton Beach and The New York Synagogue in Manhattan. As a manifestation of his lifelong love for Chazzanut, both synagogues are renowned as international centers for liturgical music and prayer. Rabbi Schneier was named by *The Forward* as one of the 50 most prominent Jewish leaders in the United States. He is President of The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding, Chairman of the World Jewish Congress Commission on Intergroup Relations, and is past president of the New York Board of Rabbis and the North American Board of Rabbis.

Meet the Artists

Maestro
Matthew Lazar



Maestro Matthew Lazar is the catalyst and leading force of the Jewish choral movement in North America today. He is the Founder and Director of the Zamir Choral Foundation and has created the North American Jewish Choral Festival; HaZamir; The International Jewish High School Choir; The National Jewish Chorale; the SELAH Vocal Ensemble; The Mantua Singers; and Shirah, the largest independent Jewish choral society in the United States. He has directed the Zamir Chorale since 1972.

Mr. Lazar has been acknowledged by *The New York Times* for his vision and leadership in presenting the music of Salamone Rossi in the first festival and conference of this great master's music, has been praised by *The Times*, along with his "expert ensemble" for performances of Rossi's music. *The Chicago Tribune* described Maestro Lazar as an "expert director" for a program he conducted for the Chicago Symphony's World Music Series. He has prepared choruses for Maestros Leonard Bernstein, Zubin Mehta, Carlo Maria Giulini, Daniel Barenboim and has appeared as guest conductor of the American Symphony Orchestra, El Paso Symphony Orchestra, the Milwaukee Chamber Symphony, the Ra'anana Symphony and the Ravinia Music Festival. Mr. Lazar recently conducted the New York premieres of two works for chorus, soloists and orchestra by Charles Osborne at Lincoln Center: *Souls on Fire* with Leonard Nimoy narrating; and *Kings and Fishermen*, featuring narration by Theodore Bikel.

Mr. Lazar regularly appears with the great cantors of our generation. He has been presenting programs at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center and other major concert halls in the United States and Israel for more than three decades.

Mr. Lazar has served on the faculties of Columbia University and the Jewish Theological Seminary, and is a frequent lecturer and scholar-in-residence in communities and universities across the United States. His recordings include *Chants Mystique*, *Birthday of the World I and II* and *A Taste of Eternity I and II with the Western Wind Vocal Ensemble*, and *Songs for Jerusalem*, featuring a special narration by Nobel Laureate, Elie Wiesel.

Cantor Yaakov Stark



As a child prodigy, at the mere age of seven, Yaakov Stark was already thrilling congregations with his heart rendering solos on the High Holidays. His talent and ability were nurtured by the distinguished cantors in his family: his grandfather, Moshe Avrum Stark, a cantor in pre-War Europe, and his father, Yisroel Stark, a well-known Baal Tefillah. Cantor Stark is the "Shliach Tzibbur" at Congregation Orach Chaim in Manhattan where he is beloved by his congregants. His stirring and eloquent lyric tenor voice has put him

in constant demand to be guest Chazzan in synagogues worldwide.

PROGRAM

Cantor Netanel
Hershtik



Cantor Hershtik is Cantor of The Hampton Synagogue. Almost before he could talk, Netanel Hershtik was already showing clear signs of his extraordinary, unparalleled musical talent. As a small child, he began singing as a soloist in Jerusalem's Great Synagogue with his older brother Shraga, his sweet voice moving the souls and stirring the hearts of everyone who heard him. By seven he had already become world-renowned, touring Australia, America and Europe with his father, the incomparable cantorial giant, Naftali Hershtik, and his brother. His rich, melodious tenor voice has been heard with the finest choirs in the Jewish world and in the greatest synagogues. This multi-talented, highly gifted musician also plays a number of instruments and founded a unique musical ensemble that combines Hassidic, Jazz and other varied musical styles.

Cantor David
Weinbach



Cantor Weinbach is a fifth generation Israeli with a voice so eloquent and stirring that he is in constant demand at prestigious synagogues throughout Israel. His exquisite tenor voice won him the esteemed prize in Tel Aviv and helps him to regularly appear on the Israel Music jubilee. Whether on the bimah or on stage, Cantor Weinbach's voice evokes the memory of Yossele Rosenblatt.

Cantor Tzadok
Greenwald



A protégé of the great Cantor Moshe Stern, Cantor Greenwald's talent and ability stirs the soul. *The Jewish Press* wrote of Cantor Greenwald's highly acclaimed New York debut:

"The audience was mesmerized by Cantor Greenwald's warm, sweet and powerful voice..." and "It appeared from the audience reaction that he would be one of the next top cantors of his generation".

Moscow Male
Jewish Hasidic
Cappella Choir



Throughout the world, wherever they have appeared, the Moscow Male Jewish Hasidic Capella Choir, under the direction of the renowned Sasha Tsaliuk, has never failed to profoundly move audiences of all ages and descriptions with its stirring, emotionally-laden, majestic performances. Established in 1989, this extraordinary choir performs a broad repertoire of Jewish vocal music: folk song, liturgical, modern Jewish and Israeli vocal and choral compositions. Their base of operations is the celebrated, historic Maryina Rostcha Jewish Community Center. The choir has performed to sold-out solo concerts as well as with the most prominent and eminent cantors of our day.

PROGRAM

The Tel Aviv
Cantorial Institute
Choir



"A phenomenon amongst Jewish choirs!" This is how the Tel Aviv Cantorial Institute Choir, under the exceptional direction of master cantor, Naftali Hershtik, has been described. This unique and masterful group, with its thrilling sounds, combines 30 young cantorial voices performing a wide and varied range of cantorial compositions, beloved Yiddish and Hebrew songs, and enchanting Hassidic Zemirot. They are accompanied by the TACI Quartet, with its beautiful flute, clarinet and cello, and the famous Raymond Goldstein at the piano. The performances of this illustrious group are skillful and elegant and call to mind the giants of the golden era of the cantorial world.

The New York
Synagogue Choir



They have come together from opposite ends of the world, from the United States and Russia. Among them are some of the most stirring, soulful and achingly beautiful tenor and baritone voices imaginable. They form the extraordinary New York Synagogue Choir under the skillful direction of the incomparable Itzchak Haimov. The Choir's majestic, soul-stirring sounds have been heard around the world, often in concert with some of the most gifted and talented cantors of our time. Conductor Haimov, who immigrated to Israel in 1990, has been the musical director of many cantorial concerts and festivals in Israel and abroad as well as having founded the Renanim Choir which performed around the world for nine years.

They conduct Shabbat and holiday services with Cantors Dudu Fisher and Netanel Hershtik at The Hampton and The New York Synagogues.

Edward Kalendar



As pianist of the New York Synagogue Choir, Edward Kalendar wears one hat. But he is also a composer of extraordinary fame and renown with a talent that is vast and prodigious. He has won a huge number of major prizes in musical competitions in Moscow, Eastern Europe and Asia and was bestowed with the prestigious title of "Honored Artist of the Republic" in Russia in 1988. Among his brilliant and dazzling repertoire are numerous songs, the scores for 24 films and 17 musicals, operas, operettas, symphonies, concertos and chamber music.

Raymond Goldstein



Holding the prestigious post of arranger/composer (associate conductor) to the world-renowned Jerusalem Great Synagogue Choir, Raymond Goldstein has over 600 magnificent, soul-stirring works to his credit. He is also senior teacher at the Tel Aviv Cantorial Institute where he serves as musical director and accompanist. His concert tours have taken this enormously talented musician to Australia, the U.S., and Western Europe. He has made professional recordings with the most acclaimed cantors and singers. As accompanist and/or arranger his name appears on more than 200 CDs, cassette tapes and DVDs. Included in his wide repertoire is a chamber opera, two cantatas, a concert Kabbalat Shabbat service, orchestrations, works for chamber ensemble and numerous arrangements (more than 1800 in total) both sacred and secular.