

From the Conductor

"Edutainment," a new buzzword in computer software, refers to programs that both educate and entertain—perhaps a method whereby people learn without realizing that they're learning because they're having so much fun. Well, Zamir has been in the business of edutainment for twenty-seven years now. When people come to a Zamir concert they not only become intellectually aware of their culture, they are actively enjoying their Jewish heritage.

It is said that there are seventy facets to the Torah, that our most ancient and venerable texts can be comprehended in a multiplicity of ways. In the Passover haggadah we read, "keneged arba'ah banim diberah hatorah" - the story of the Egyptian exodus is told in four different versions, making allowances for four different styles of comprehension. The sages taught that one should teach each student in the manner that speaks best to him or her as an individual. What is clear to one person may be totally obscure to another.

People have long recognized the power of music as a pedagogical vehicle as well as a stimulus for spiritual and physical inspiration. The Talmud records that the oral law used to be taught by singing the words, thereby making it easier for the students to memorize the texts. The Bible records that when King Saul was in a foul mood, and no one could get through to him, his advisors hired a music therapist, the shepherd David son of Jesse, who played such entrancing harp music that the king snapped out of his depression.

Modern therapists are quite familiar with the multifaceted power of music. Many children who are autistic can communicate with melodies but not with speech. People who stutter when speaking never stumble when singing those very same words. A recent study showed that expectant mothers who used music as a relaxation cue required less medication during labor and delivery and went through an average two hours less labor than the control group. A group of 153 premature infants that had Brahms' "Lullaby" piped in underneath their incubators six times a day gained weight faster and were discharged an average of one week sooner than the control group. College students who listened to Mozart saw a significant jump in their IQ scores.

Is it any wonder that music is a most effective means of communicating and teaching? Every January Zamir performs a special concert in which we shamelessly exploit the musical art for the sake of getting children excited about their Jewish heritage. Last Spring we produced a concert in which we traced the cycle of Jewish festivals through their musics. The program was not only entertaining and uplifting, but also educational. This coming December we will perform an entire concert dedicated to the music of Salamone Rossi. What better way to learn about Jewish participation in the Italian Renaissance than to listen to its music? Next June we will celebrate the 3000th anniversary of the establishment of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel with a program of music about the Holy City. Through multimedia presentations, our audience will experience the excitement of being in Jerusalem, Al Quds, Yerushalayim. They will feel the very special attraction that the citizens of the world have felt for this city throughout the ages.

So come to another Zamir concert. We guarantee you'll be edutained!

- Joshua R. Jacobson

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Zamir News

Two New [Recordings](#)

Many of the recordings of Zamir you have enjoyed over the years have one thing in common: they were taken directly from live concert performances. Many musicians will tell you that live performances have an energy that can not always be duplicated in the recording studio. They will also admit that the final product will contain coughs, sneezes, paper shuffling, glasses clinking, and other unintentional sound effects that, while they certainly give the listener the feeling of "being there," lose their charm after a few listenings. It is also true that, though the social hall of Mishkan Tefila may be a wonderful spot to enjoy a Zamir "Pops" concert, its recorded sound leaves a little to be desired.

Zamir was thrilled, then, to be able to do true studio recordings of two of last season's concerts. *Hear Our Voices*, a concert of music written in and about the Terezin concentration camp, was performed last November at [Hebrew College](#) and last March at the [U.S. Holocaust Museum](#) in Washington D.C. *Seasons of Our Joy* was Zamir's spring "Pops" concert, presented last April in the social hall of Congregation Mishkan Tefila. Funding by Northeastern University and a host of other sources allowed Zamir to undertake the *Hear Our Voices* project, while a generous donation by David and Clare Weinstein allowed us to re-record *Seasons of Our Joy*.

Late May and early June saw the Zamir Chorale singing late into the night in recording sessions held at Regis College in Weston and the sanctuary of Congregation Mishkan Tefila in Chestnut Hill. Some solos and narrations were recorded in the studio at Northeastern University. Both projects were edited and assembled, and cassettes were available by the time Zamir performed at the North American Jewish Choral Festival in early July! Compact Disc pressings were finished shortly afterward.

The wonderful sound we were able to get in a studio setting gave us a recording that was clean enough to go to CD, the first time in many years Zamir has been able to do so. The CD format also let us print more texts and other information that we could not fit on cassette inserts. In short, we have two new recordings of which we can be very proud. *Hear Our Voices* is currently available in gift shops in Holocaust museums both in Washington and Jerusalem. We are very grateful, particularly to the Weinstains, for the funding that let us complete these projects, and we look forward to many more late studio nights for the Zamir Chorale

Zamir Receives Grant

In September, Zamir was notified that its Operating Support Grant from the [Massachusetts](#) Cultural Council would be renewed for the 1995-96 season (the third of a three-year grant), and increased from \$3,400 to \$4,250. This reflects an increase in the MCC's budget of about 13%. We are very grateful both to the Council and to the state legislators who have realized the importance of increased cultural funding in Massachusetts.

North American Jewish Choral Festival

As has become traditional, the Zamir Chorale's performance opened the 1995 North American Jewish

Choral Festival in July at the Concord Hotel in the Catskills. About thirty chorus members performed to a thrilled and appreciative audience, and several Zamir members participated in the remainder of the five-day event, which included classes, workshops, and choral performances. Next year's Festival will take place in Israel, as part of the overall Jerusalem 3000 celebration. For information, call 212-650-4224.

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The Alumni Column

After a recent rehearsal, a group of us became involved in a conversation concerning camaraderie in choral groups. As we headed towards our cars, we thought about what gives a choir its own personality. Is it the repertoire that draws a singer towards a specific chorus? Is it the reputation of a choral conductor? Is it the people that sing with the chorus? Many members of Zamir have sung in other choruses and what we all discover is that Zamir is unlike any other choir that we have ever been (or probably will ever be) a part of. All of us are "up to our ears," yet year after year (and for some, it's after year after year...) we return. We had to ask ourselves, Why do we do this? What is it about Zamir?

My husband Dan joined Zamir in 1977. After many years, he found that work constraints didn't allow him to commit to the choir's busy schedule, so he had to leave the chorus. Eventually, his job took him out of the state. Dan found that an element of his life was missing, but he couldn't put his finger on what it was. Finally, it came to him. He missed the venue that Zamir offered for expressing his Jewishness through music! It was like being bereft of family. This void (as well as a new job and a new bride) drew him back to Boston. Dan very eloquently expresses what it is that draws most of us back to Zamir each September:

"The two elements that make our chorus unique are the nature of the music and the nature of the singers. When together, we sing the different Jewish musics that span different times and diverse locales; it connects us with all Jews across temporal and geographical boundaries. This is what it means when we say that we ALL stood together at Sinai. Despite our various levels of ritual practice, all of us in Zamir are compelled to return. We are drawn together like an extended family, interwoven like a genetic helix. While the parts may be identifiable, the power of the whole is incomparable."

As we begin the New Year, I am thankful for my health, for my family and friends, and for the privilege of being able to call myself a "Zamirnik." I know that there are at least fifty other people who strongly concur.

-- Sue Carp Nesson

Mazal Tov!

born

to Roselyn and Larry Nelson
a daughter, Eleanor Marie
April 1995

married

Gail Javitt to Sam Osofsky
May 1995

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This page maintained by [Andrew Greene](#).