

# SHIR DELIGHT

June, 2013. A not serious newsletter.

Shirah in rehearsal. Oops, singers looking down. No worries. They all looked up at the concert.



## Shirah 2013 Spring Concert an inspiring performance

By Mishe Kotev

It was a grand night when Shirah presented their spring program. Maestro Lazar led the energetic group with dynamism and precision. Audience members declared this the best Shirah concert ever. Hard work, total discipline and comradeship begat a wonderful sound on the night of June 9<sup>th</sup>

It is known in musical circles that the success of a choir can depend on its shoes. When feet go numb, pitch can drop. When shoes pinch, F can

sound like F#. According to the email sent to members by Lazar, the pitch was right on. Thank you, Nordstroms! Credit must also be given to the elegance with which Lazar kept his thumb pointed up through the first half of the program and maybe the second half.

Shirah makes a fine appearance in their concert dress. As they file onto the risers audience members are unable to keep up the applause, so stunned are they

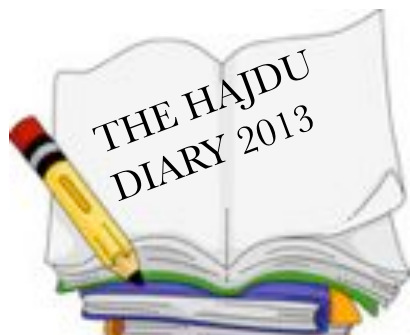
by Shirah's elegant look. Their clean attire without bling, is now being copied worldwide.

Those who bet on the sopranos making it through "the eyes of all" won a ton of money (pledged for Tzedakah).

A lovely and delicious reception for all followed, sponsored by the Weinflash family.

Rumor has it that the board will be giving each member a shoe allowance. Alas, the dues will have to go up.

# They Fought the 4 Sons and Won Kol Hakavod



**Oct:** A new piece of music! Ruth Pernick is excited. It's a piece she has never, ever sung before. This has never, ever happened before. We got to sing it through and we probably won't get to do that again until the concert. Not sure I get the essence of it. I'll keep an open mind.

**Nov:** Working on other stuff. Chanukah coming up.

**Dec:** Chanukah.

**Jan:** On break

**Feb:** Snow

**Mar:** A few sections of Hajdu shaping up. Now I get it. The sonorities of the held chords, the drama of the short sections, the long melody, the fugue, the Haggadah. Fantastic!

**Apr:** I'm away. Any progress?

**May:** Uh oh, Mr. Hajdu. We aren't even at the polishing stage yet.

Marsha: If you let them sing this piece your choir will be pelted with rotten tomatoes.

Mati: I have faith in my troops. They'll do it.

Marsha: Misplaced faith.

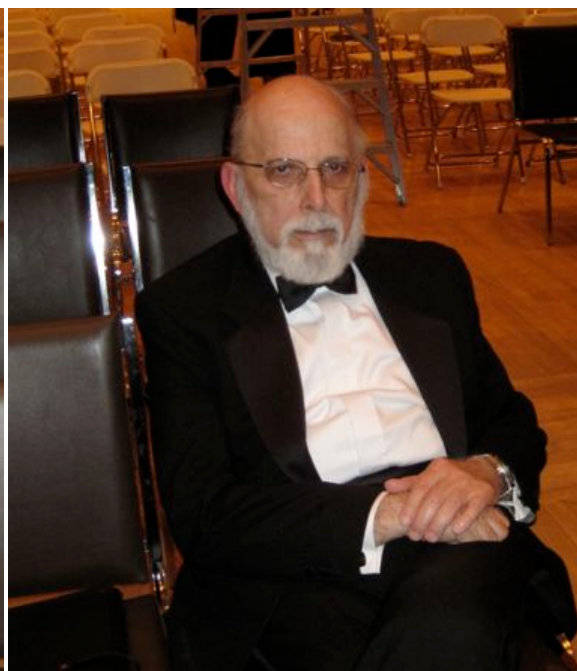
Mati:-Im tirzu.

Beth: Are you crazy? They can't sing this piece.

Mati: You've forgotten how they come through in the end, sometimes.

Beth: My memory is fuzzy on that.

**The  
Troops**  
Ready,  
willing  
and  
tune-  
ful.



# Rehearsals with Mati

## Enjoyed by all

We know that Shirah is Mati's favorite group. Who could be nicer, friendlier and more loyal than they? It is a given that no one ever laughs in Mati's other choirs. True, Mati can be critical. "It's still flat even though you're not singing!" Seriously, does that even make sense? We are sure that none of Mati's other choirs have a secretary to write down these important comments.

"You're refusing to drive the car!"

"That was a moment I can make believe the audience doesn't know you're out of tune."

Altos, you sound like Alvin and the Chipmunks.

Altos, you have that overmedicated look.

You entered a new percentile!

It sounds as if you're asking Rocky what's the next episode.

How many times can we sing the other stuff? Don't answer that question!

"Tenors, you almost came in. What a wonderful moment!"



Even the section head finds something to laugh about!

### What's so Funny?

#### A serious singer says:

As a newcomer I am very sincere about being an upstanding member of Shirah. I study each piece, memorize it and sing it through numerous times a day. I am on time for rehearsals and never absent. I don't talk when Mati says don't talk. I don't sing along with other sections. My cell phone is always on vibrate. I have the latest markings in my music

even if they change between 8 and 8:30. Therefore, I cannot understand the sense of hilarity that underlies rehearsals. When did Jewish texts become comical? Why are people laughing about references to music theory? Whoever heard of a shul chord? Why do so many people have to take the driver's test again? People sing like chelmites and then laugh at themselves. My therapist thinks I take everything too seriously and should learn to laugh more. I would if I ever thought anything was funny.

# Marsha's unexpected appearance

## Enjoyed by all

By Mishe Matschik

Conductors sometimes get sick and so it happened that Mati called in Marsha from Philadelphia to rehearse Shirah. Who knew she was so funny? (Not as funny as Mati.)



Marsha's Advice.

### On Looking Down at Your Music:

A lot depends on how you look when you perform. If you're looking down it might look as if you have no idea how the music goes or that you're scared! Then the audience will be scared too. Do you really need a personal relationship with those black dots on the page?

### Breathe Before you Come:

Not so original but you can't hear it too often.

### Look Up:

Yeah, yeah

### When You See a Fermatta

When you see a long note with a fermatta, staring down at it doesn't change anything.

### The Tempo.

Guys, you don't get to vote.

### Low Notes:

You can't just sing *your* lowest note. You have to sing the one that's there.

### The Downbeat:

The downbeat gets nauseous. (????)

## A Tale from The Soprano Section

I'm one of the sopranos you never notice. I slip into rehearsal quietly. I sing quietly. I turn my pages quietly. I can never hear myself, no matter what. The altos are too loud. Who cares if they have the third of the chord! The basses are so proud when they finally know the music. Then they drown out the tenors. Do we have any tenors? Maybe that's the problem. Maybe I should switch to tenor. Some of the altos do it, why shouldn't I? I'm sure to blend in.

I've never had a simcha to announce so I've never brought a cake. I don't sign the attendance sheet. I feel as if I'm invisible.

I love it!

## One Voice from The Alto Section

We altos are too numerous to count. We make up the vast majority of the choir and have the largest number of fabulous singers. (Mathematically speaking, of course.) We sell the most tickets and pay the most dues. Probably, we eat the most cookies. So, I ask myself, why bother to come to rehearsals? One alto, more or less, should make no difference. There are enough of us singing the right notes to cover for those who sing the wrong ones. Right?





**Congratulations to Jill Hackell on her Rabbinic ordination. When did she have time to learn her music?**

**Thanks to Deb Wenger for her work on behalf of Shirah. Without her there'd be no song sheets, translations, correct pronunciations, lineups and much more.**



## What members think

By Mishe Shar

Jill Hackel's answer to which do you like better, leading t'filah or singing in Shirah?

I love to sing; it makes me happy. Leading tefillah or chanting Torah/Haftarah gives the opportunity to a non-soloist-level singer like myself to be moved by the pleasure of making music and sharing it with others.

Shirah has taught me about the breadth of good Jewish music and enables me to add my voice to its beautiful harmony;

and rabbinical school has equipped me with the appropriate Jewish background to be able to understand Mati's comments!

Libby's response to what was your experience of Shirah this year?

This year we basically became an a capella choir. Though we all miss Beth tremendously, we became less dependent on the piano and more confident in our own musical ability. Our intonation improved tremendously and we learned some pretty challenging music. We're a special bunch. I love how we support each other in our simchas and in our time of need. We can certainly laugh together even though we are often laughing at ourselves in response to something Mati has said.



Lois answers what do you look forward to on Tuesdays?

Rehearsals. In part because of the learning and growth experience. In part because we get to sing mixed. Can't leave out the spirit of friendship that thrives during rehearsals--core to group cohesion. Although it certainly feels good when we get it right in concert.

Lois asked Barbara which she likes best, concerts or rehearsals?

I don't really like concerts. I have to worry about drinking enough but not too much and fainting. And getting cat hair off my black clothes. I don't even like singing mixed-which is strange because the surround sound is what I like. I find myself standing there and thinking-oh, is this how it goes? Where is my water bottle? So and so doesn't know the music. I don't know the music. I can't see. How come the other altos didn't move yet again? I do love discovering beautiful voices in the other sections.

# Matisms that made the cut It helps to have been there

Not a Long Island K'vodo. An Italian one!

If you have all your teeth, that's what determines the tempo. (*huh?*)

Leo Lom-*who is he?* Lee Amo-*who is she?* Rock Du Li-*do we know him?*

Not E minus-*erroneous key change*

The 16<sup>th</sup> note sounds like you're taking some kind of medication. (*If only you knew...*)

You're still singing below pitch but with more conviction-*(ouch.)*

You used to know that! (*We did?*)

Wanna bring Mashiach? Go to 770-or sing!

Crescendo. You'll pass Italian.

Sopranos, don't fall in love with your own voice. Altos hardly ever do.

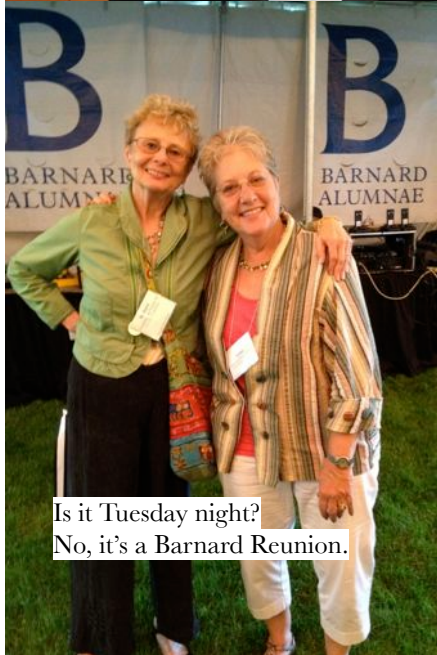
Some of you actually recognized it after someone started singing. A positive development!

Good for you altos, Exactly right. (*What a thrill!*)

It's still flat even though you're not even singing. (*Oy-it must have been the altos.*)

Imitate them even if they don't do it.

You're flatlining!



Is it Tuesday night?  
No, it's a Barnard Reunion.