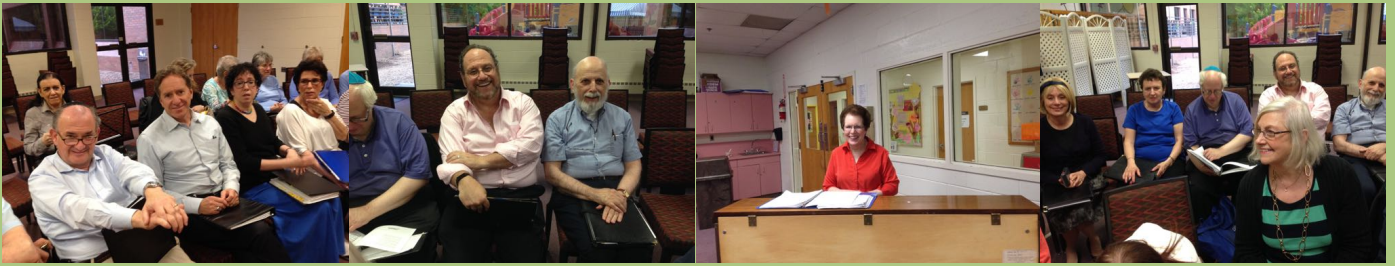


# Shir Delight



B Bar-Nissim, Editor

spring 2015

Free to readers

## June Concert a Rousing Success. Shirah Impresses Audience.

Excitement surged through the room as soon as the choir members took their places on the risers. Dressed in their finest and lightest black clothes they worked their magic under the hot lights. Maestro rated the performance a stellar A+.



With new repertoire on the program, the time flew almost as fast as some of the tempos.

singers through the intricacies of the up and down nature of the music.

### Maestro Mati's Shul Choir

It's not easy to sing in a choir that is accompanying a cantor. Cantors are accustomed to following their hearts, not necessarily the music as written and will take off to higher planes with no notice. The pianist and the conductor have to be alert for the downbeat that seems as if it's never arriving. The choir has to be alert for those alerts lest no one sing early or at all. Though Shirah has sung many a shul chord,



knowingly or unknowingly, the June concert provided plenty of experience for singing in a synagogue choir.

It seemed to this listener that the pitch was mostly perfect, dynamics mostly loud and phrasing mostly praiseworthy. The youngest members were snug in their high chairs while the older members stood staunchly the entire time. Several pieces were obvious hits with the audience. Some were even hits with the choir.

This exceptional concert, in memory of Ruth and Bernie Weinflash, ל"ט was made more exceptional by the presence of Cantor Israel Singer from Temple Emanu-El in Closter, NJ. Both conductors, Mati and Marsha, applied their admirable skills to leading the

Auditions are being arranged for those members who wish to try out for The Great Synagogue of Jerusalem.

# NEWSLETTER TRADITION



## **Shirah Rules!**

If you plan to join Shirah it is good to be familiar with its rules.

There must always be a photo of Libby and Hilary eating in Shir Delight.

You must wear unscented deodorant which is not sold in the US and must be imported from Bora Bora.

Be able to sing flat when you think “higher”.

You must be able to read someone else’s mutli-reproduced, ancient handwritten dark copy with cross-outs and arrows and repeats that repeat repeatedly.

Always look down when told to look up.

Never memorize any part of the music.

Be sure to never look at the conductor.

Avoid bling.

## A Wise Woman

Dear Dr. Plotznik,



Though I've had successes teaching adults to sing several of my friends can't carry a tune. I try not to hold it against them but it grates on my nerves! Imagine how hopeless the task when I told an old and dear friend to sing higher and she said what does that mean? Now this friend wants to join Shirah. It could ruin our friendship. What should I do?



## Horrified in NJ

Dear Horrified,

As troubling as this situation is, I am happy to tell you that there are several solutions. The first is to go to the nearest mirror, look into it, and ask yourself how you manage to have so many wacky friends. When you have the answer, just reverse that behavior. Immediately!! That will improve the outlook for your future, but, alas, will not correct past mistakes.

For this current mess, give her a BIG folder of music, including the handwritten Abe's melody, plus some songs that have lots of unreadable/unpronounceable Hebrew lyrics, and tell her that she needs to memorize them before the first rehearsal. Hah! But, you say, what if she is crazy enough to do it? I say that in that case she will be way ahead of lots of members who know what high and low sounds like, but can't pronounce the words. And, who knows? Maybe she will stumble into some correct pitches by happy accident. Of course, that is probably being way too optimistic.



Another solution is to give her the BIG folder of music and tell her that she needs to match her voice to the little black things on all those pages. When she asks you what those black dots are and how to do it, just laugh and say, "You have a great sense of humor." And keep laughing and smiling at her as you walk away, quickly.

The next solution is the most foolproof, and almost too easy, given how complex the situation is. Let her come to a rehearsal. When Marsha or Mati are displeased and criticize the singing, which will happen every few seconds, she will automatically think that SHE is being looked at as the one who is singing wrong, because EVERYONE ALWAYS thinks that they are being singled out for bad singing. The ironic twist here is that in her case IT WILL BE TRUE!! If she comes back for a second rehearsal, it will indeed be a miracle.



## Matisms

What do we call 2 formattas?  
2 for Mati!

*Tapeinu!* poor *tapeinu*. We'll be deceased before we get to it.

That's not effective. that's offensive!

Sit up straight unless you want to be Galician Jews.



So many words begin with *shmu*.  
Not this one!

You sound like Mel Brooks after he takes out his teeth.

Even Jerry Mahoney didn't do what you did. Move your lips!.



The difference for you between legato and marcato is like the difference between peanut butter and peanut butter.

You're sluggish. You need to take the other medication

We're doing a run



through. Except for triage.

Sit on the front of the chair. Don't *move* the chair.

The room creates overtones. It does not create diphthongs!

How closely related *boker* to bovine!!!!

We sang it a thousand twenty times. It's the first time you got it right!

You are like a flash mob that didn't flash.



Don't talk. I mean don't whisper.

You sound like 5 year old boys in Borough Park but not above



Utrecht Ave.

You looked at those 5 measures 5 times!

Back to the top. Oh no. Let's work on it a little bit more so you get it right.

You're gonna get a hernia if you look down at that.

If you're looking down we'll have to take you to the hospital.

You are bovining your consonants and vowels.



### The Choir:

Sopranos-it's not the tune!  
Hillary: I'm gonna write that down! It's a bitter pill.  
Arlene: Now you can have empathy.

You may be too loud.  
"There are 7 of us. How can we be too loud?"

# Rehearsals Are Always Long

even if they're not, even if they're amusing, even if the music is simple (never) but they are always inspiring. Join Shirah and be tired with a great singing group.



## The Altos

At a typical rehearsal the altos might be singing 42 Ds in a row.. When they are critiqued for singing them in an un interesting manner, they will shrug their shoulders and continue singing exactly as they had before. But, then will appear some weird double flatted note they can't sing. "Ladies, this is the cornerstone of this masterful, unexpected chord that only a composer who is such a genius could come up with. Without you there is no chord." The altos will be duly impressed but still unable to sing the note. Several months will pass before most altos are finding it

75% of the time. This is what makes the alto section so great. If you're one of the 25%, you can depend upon your neighbor to live up to the composer's genius.



## The Men

There aren't very many of them. In fact, some of the men are women. They are sometimes a bit flat. They tend to be looking down a lot because they are not that sure of their notes but by the end of the final run-through they, too, will be 75%ers. Without them the choir would be lost (although they are lost a lot even with them). The bass part is the foundation of the sound! The tenors often sing filler in notes, not nearly as often as the altos but theirs tend to wander all over and are not likely to be 42 Ds in a row.



## The Sopranos

There aren't many of them, either. No one knows why. They usually produce a beautiful sound. Some of their notes are so high even the altos can't sing them. Imagine their shock when they were accused of drowning out the numerous altos! They think they are lucky because they have the tune but the altos think this could be a cop-out and not challenging enough. On the other hand, the soprano part can take a sudden turn for the nether regions or might require them to enter softly on a high G which no one should be asked to do.

## **Marsha-isms**

### **Oft heard:**

NONONONONONONO. You may not! No! Don't.

### **Medical:**

I'm getting emphysema listening to your over-breathing.

It's the C section

I stopped because of the emphysema. It's becoming contagious.

### **The Zoo**

I'm flapping my wings.

This piece is jaunty. you can't be an 800 lb. hippopotamus.

### **Breathing:**

You sang *one* measure. You don't have to take a breath!

What? A breath? Honestly, you'll faint from too much air.

Breathe earlier. Breathe the day before.

There are breathing marks and if there are, don't.

You can't breathe and you can't rest in the Negev.

Breathe early. Yay verily.

I gave you a place to breathe but you don't need it because you breathed already in the wrong place.

Whatever else happens in the world don't breathe there.

### **Danger:**

We are getting perilously close to the concert.

There are going to be a lot of dead sopranos. Why should you be dead? Just sing the note. Oy, stop, stop, stop.

If you breathe there I will decapitate you!

You kill me when you breathe there.

I'm an old lady. By the time you get there I'll be dead and buried and long gone!

Guess which section never noticed the wave.

### **Advice:**

Sopranos, float up to the D. Don't scoop and hope you'll find it.

Don't chew the wad so early.

There's no work that preparation wouldn't solve.

The floating sopranos. Altos- ignore them and push the water

You're a cyber choir, singing one millimeter after your neighbor.

It was not awful till then.

Tap the tempo. The same tempo.

Altos, you can join the tenors and wallow in their harmonies.

Ladies, that was pitiful.

Guys-you sound like schleppers, not the West Point Choir. You can do it. We're supposed to be plotzing from you.

### **On finding the place:**

It's the A section. I mean the B section, like the C section. I mean- be happy!

### **Basses:**

Stop wallowing in your bassitude.

You sang a wrong note but you didn't sing any of the right notes.

There does come a time when we're less interested in your part.

Guys, he's playing the piano while you're taking a nap.

### **Cheers:**

You're almost as the bar. Don't stop till you get there.

2,4,6,8. Who do we appreciate? Gila, Gila Gila.

You sound like a convention of drunken centipedes.

### **X Rated:**

Don't take this the wrong way....an understated explosion.

You forgot to pp.

Phrasus interruptus

Be careful how you pronounce *boneh*. It calls for a swell.





Awfully relaxed before the concert.  
What have they been drinking?



Marsha  
looking  
gorgeous.



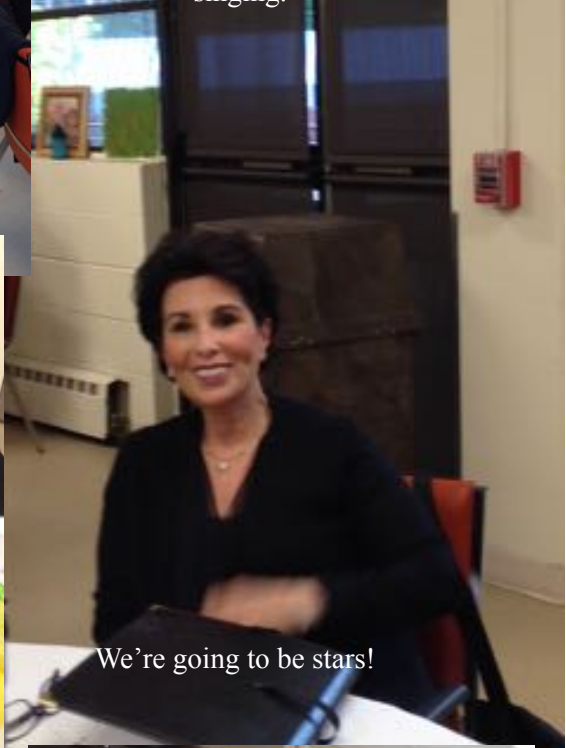
Sure they're looking  
up. They're not  
singing.



Caught looking in the wrong direction



The Green Room



We're going to be stars!



Finally!



It's all gonna be fine!.



Whenever we  
sing At Adama  
I have to eat  
potato chips.