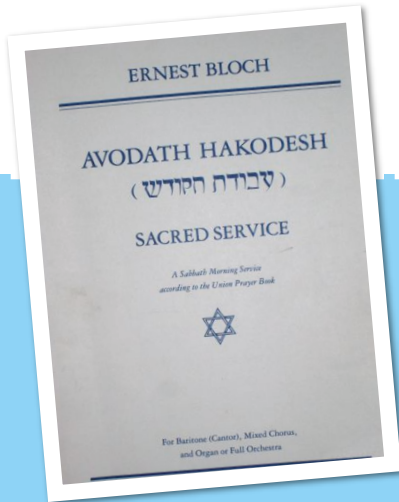


S E C O N D E D I T I O N

# SHIR DELIGHT

A NOT-TO-BE-TAKEN SERIOUSLY NEWSLETTER BY AN ALTO



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Members of Shirah

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## ✧ Choir Concludes Successful-Year of 5769 ✧

### SHIRAH'S 15TH YEAR

Shirah is a choir that has been in existence for 15 years.

Members have come and gone but a core group has remained.

They attend rehearsals faithfully and even look over their music in their

spare time. Conductor Mati Lazar, working with a smaller group than in the past, has

taken the choir to heights not usual with community choirs. A comment made by a former

member who attended Shirah's June concert illustrates this. "I can't believe this is the same Shirah I was in! Its sound



is so different, more professional, with greater nuances. I am just amazed. "

## Celebrations

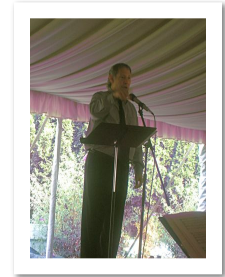
A Shirah style observance of a member's birthday took place in the 'green room' before the June concert at the JCC.

*Even though eating before singing is not such a great idea, the cake was too delicious to pass up. No one worried about buttercream mustaches.*



# *Shirah Sets Exceptional Example*

Shirah's 2009 Choral Festival performance in July was an outstanding event. Performing in front of professional musicians from all over the country they maintained the necessary focus. Pitch and ensemble, dynamics and precision were solid. Shirah had risen to the challenge! Their program of serious music displayed laudable skills. Conductor Mati Lazar's intent had been to present Shirah as a community choir that is capable of learning and delivering a serious program of music and to encourage others to strive for this goal.



Audience members were astounded by the choir's level of musicianship. "I am so impressed with Shirah's performance," said Cantor Vicki Axe. "I know the pieces that were sung and they are very difficult," said another. Cantor Benjie Schiller commented that the choir was excellent. Members of Kol Dodi, another NJ community choir, spoke highly of the concert. "Your precise diction enabled me to discern the text by reading lips," declared one. "You really did sound beautiful," offered another, adding, "You are very fortunate to be associated with such a wonderful group." Shirah members were proud of their accomplishment.

## *Participants Bond in Catskills*

They sat together at Community Sings. They laughed a lot. They wore their Shirah shirts in a display of team spirit. They dined at tables reserved just for them at the banquet. "I'm already looking forward to next year's Festival and hope more of the choir will stay for the whole Festival and join 'Mishpachat Shirah'," declared one member.





## *Musical Moments as Experienced by BBN*

I've always had favorite chords that I listen to over and over. Whenever Mati asks us to listen to chord progressions I feel so privileged to be in the company of someone who experiences its beauty with the intensity I do. Often he will play them on the piano so we can hear what is going on around us. If you are not a soprano you can be surprised to find out what a piece really sounds like when you hear a recording of it. Singing 'mixed' is also an opportunity to experience 'surround sound', something I've missed from my days of being an oboist in an orchestra. But there is always one moment that is even more special. That is when Mati says, "It's the Shul chord". Then I listen more closely and re-experience my childhood wonder at the harmony all around me, my first experience with vocal music.

### *Shirah's Crescendos Admirable*

"Every choirboy in the country knows how to sing a crescendo through a note," Mati, told the choir on the first night of the year's rehearsal. New alto, BBN, immediately felt envious of all those choir boys and tried to concentrate on singing a crescendo as Mati directed. It proved to be hard to do because there was so much to think about. Phyllis Rosen assured her that it would become second nature, eventually. "I think I've got it!" said BBN, excitedly, 9 months later. She noted that during other choir's performances at the Choral Festival in July she could hear when a 'choir boy' crescendo could have been used to good effect. "Mati is a master of phrasing.

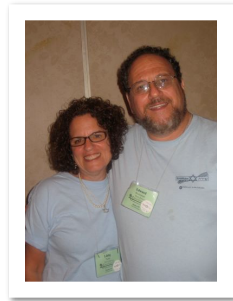
He can take a simple line and turn it into a thing of beauty. I think our crescendos are getting better all the time." stated BBN.

*Mitzvah Goreret Mitzvah or One Good Deed Deserves Another*  
Packing for the Choral Festival and a trip to L.A. in side-by-side suitcases, the 'mitzvah tights' donator mistakenly placed some very important clothing items and a necessary medication for both trips in the wrong suitcase, thus arriving at Hudson Valley in a diminished state. Hearing about this fiasco members of Shirah rushed to help. The incident concluded positively with some snickers about knickers.

## PASSING THE MANTLE

Libby Tulin, the newly retired manager, gave up the reins at the Choral Festival. Her final announcement and line-up was excellent. The new manager, Ed Weissman, has already listened patiently to advice from various members and is open to any help offered. He is looking forward to his share of phone calls from Mati. If his managerial prowess is as strong as his bass voice, he will lead Shirah from strength to strength.

In an example of 'it's a small Jewish world' a recent dinner guest (seated at left) at BBN's house is Ed's vocal teacher.



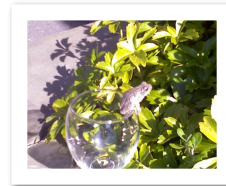
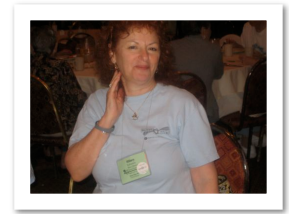
## HUMOR-THE KEY TO IT ALL

Shirah rehearsals are divided between singing and laughing. Mati Lazar, known for his musical genius, is also possessed of a keen sense of humor. His eclectically witty comments invoke Jewish texts, musical references and wry evaluations of the choir singing. He is famous for what are known as 'Matti-isms' which are said to be



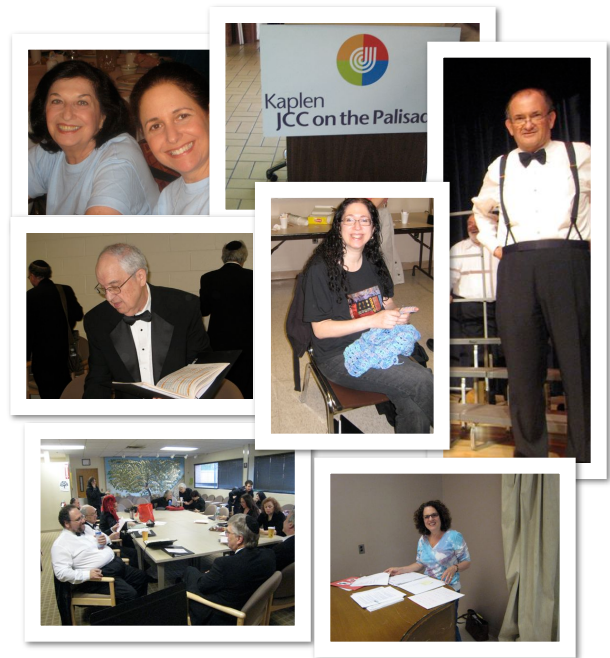
archived in Shirah files.

Choir members do their share of making everyone laugh. Hilary is an ace at witty rejoinders.



Recently, BBN of the alto section, regaled everyone with a tale of the frog in her room at the Hudson Valley Resort.

See you Sept. 13 at Karen's Hudson River House!



## OUR MOTTO

***When you are a member of Shirah  
you are guaranteed sheer delight!***

