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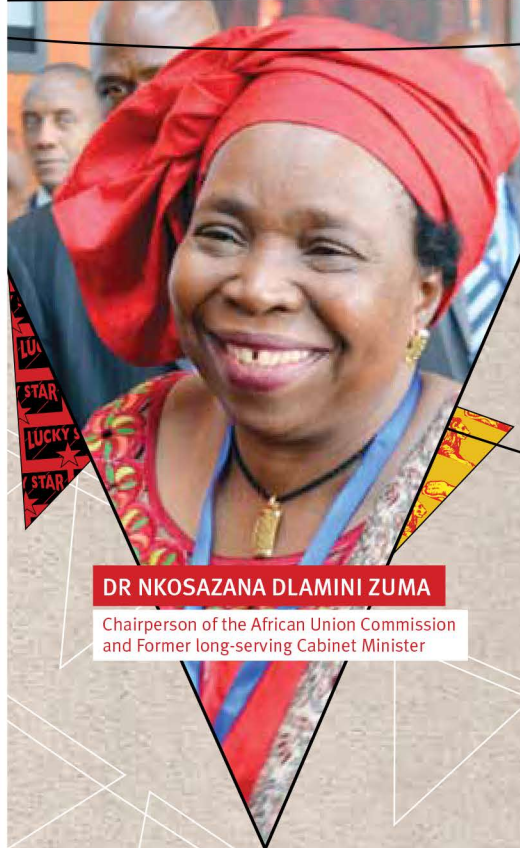
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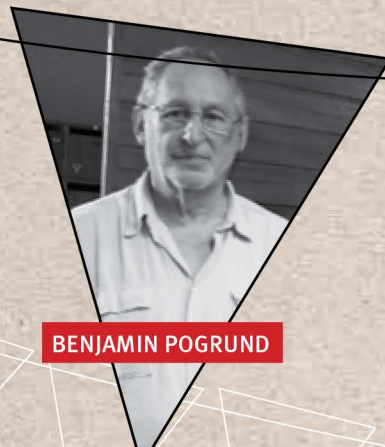
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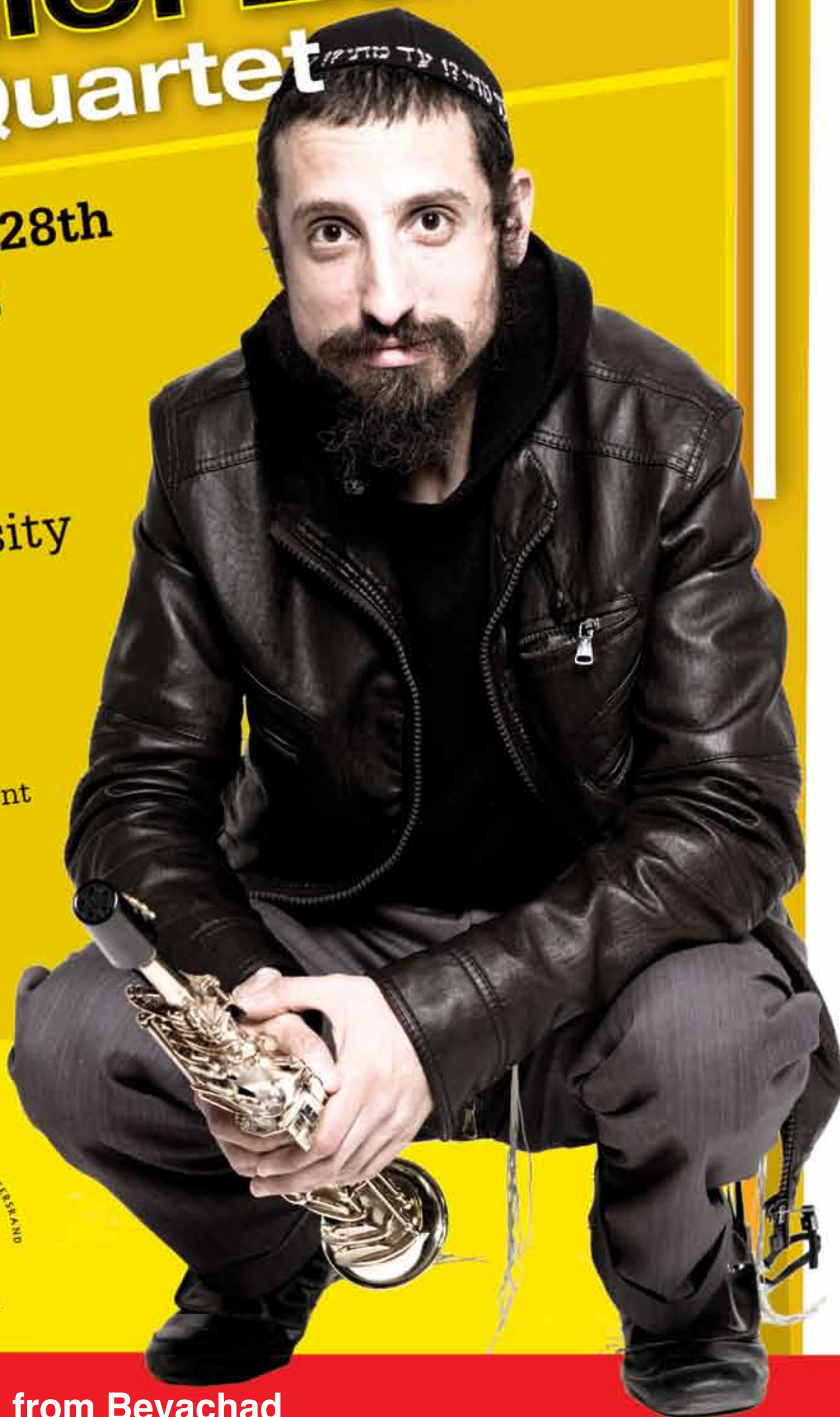
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ISRAELI
JAZZ ARTIST
AT WITS –
COMMUNITY
URGED TO
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(PAGE 3)

South african Jewish Report

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Photo: Howard Sackstein



Limmud rocks!

Last weekend’s three-day Limmud Conference at Fourways, near Johannesburg, was a resounding success, filling the Indaba Hotel with musicians, scientists, Jewish tradition, spirituality and other topics. See our extensive coverage on pages 13 to 15.

What Ambassador Ngombane really told Jerusalem Post Magazine

Jerusalem Post Magazine’s website quotes Ambassador Ngombane out of context, effectively severely affecting his standpoints. We cite the article more comprehensively.

6-7

UOS conference testifies to Union’s strong leadership

“SA Jewry is unique worldwide: we have one Beth Din and one kashrut department, reflective of the unity we enjoy between the rabbonim and community members.”

12

The making of the prestigious Absa Jewish Achiever Awards

An astounding amount of work and expertise is involved in making an enterprise of the magnitude of the Absa Jewish Achiever Awards happen - because it doesn’t just happen.

16

BOEKKOOI: Tribute concert does full justice to Zaidel-Rudolph’s legacy

As a whole it is perhaps one of Zaidel-Rudolph’s richest outpourings of something close to absolute music.

10

Gaborone Jewry: Small in number, but rich in Torah presence

Organised Jewish life in Botswana was launched in the early 1990s by the placing of an advertisement in the local newspaper calling on all “minyan makers” to come forward.

4

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Shabbat Times		
August 16 /10 Elul		
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Parshat Ki Teitzei		
17:30	18:20	Johannesburg
17:59	18:52	Cape Town
17:14	18:05	Durban
17:34	18:25	Bloemfontein
17:30	18:23	Port Elizabeth
17:22	18:15	East London

Achievers Magazine only a click away

This week's edition of the SA Jewish Report includes the spectacular 72-page Absa Jewish Achiever Awards magazine. The magazine is also available as a free PDF download from our website at www.sajewishreport.co.za.

So, if the copy has already been removed by a previous reader of this edition, or if you would like a digital copy for yourself – or to send to family and friends – simply go to the home page of our website and click on the picture of the cover.

Timely wages

In Ki Teitzei we read: “Do not withhold the wages due to your poor or destitute hired labourer... You must give him his wage on the day it is due, and not let the sun set with him waiting for it.”

Our Sages say that G-d performs that which He commands the Jewish people to perform. The service of the Jewish people in their performance of Torah and mitzvot is compared to that of a labourer for an employer.

It would seem that as soon as a Jew finishes performing a mitzvah, he should “on that day” receive his reward.

Why is it then that we find that G-d does not reward the performance of a mitzvah immediately, but delays it for the “World to Come”, like the saying: “Today to do them; tomorrow to receive the reward”?

The Alter Rebbe quotes the saying of our Sages, that “the purpose for which this world was created is that G-d desired to have an abode in the lower realms”, referring to this physical world. It is in this material world that G-d desires to dwell, so that the world will be illuminated with the light of G-dliness.

This is accomplished through our actions and Divine service throughout the period of exile. Our service of Torah and mitzvot refines and elevates the world, drawing down G-dliness within it.

Ultimately, the combined service of all the Jewish people throughout all the generations, refines and elevates the entire world, transforming it into a dwelling fit for G-d.

This will be realised in the times of Moshiach, when evil will vanish from this world and there will be a “revelation of His glory, and all flesh will behold G-dliness together... and the glory of G-d will fill the whole world”.

The spiritual service of all the generations of the Jewish people constitutes a single “job”, the purpose of which is the transformation of the world into an abode for G-d. Moreover, this labour does not require the contributions of a mere “hired hand” but rather that of a contractor - G-d contracted out the world, as it were, to the Jewish people, that we make it into a dwelling for Him.

This explains why the bulk of the Jews’ reward will be in the World to Come, during the times of Moshiach, for the reward will be given to all Jews as one. And this reward will indeed be received immediately upon the conclusion of our labour.

So, we may say, that the service of the Jewish people and their subsequent reward extend into the realm of a partnership; G-d

Parshat Ki Teitzei

Rabbi Ariel Wosnica
Rabbi Eden College

delights, in the successful fulfilment of His desire that the world be transformed: “It is pleasurable to Me that I have commanded and My will has been fulfilled” - and Jews delight in “dwelling in the House of the L-rd”, “all the days of their lives” and “beholding the pleasantness of the L-rd”.

However, it is incumbent upon the partner who relies on the other to do the work, not only to reward him at the end of his labour, but also to give him a daily payment.

So too, in addition to the main reward that G-d will give in the World to Come, He rewards us in this world as well, providing us with our sustenance, so that we may be able to complete our task of transforming this world into a Divine abode.

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Life’s lessons from a father to his children

SHIRA DRUION

In “Trees”, a book on his ethos on life - a compilation of what he sees as life’s most relevant lessons - Stefan Brozin (pictured) hopes to impart these lessons to his children. Because he lost his father at a very early age, “it is a privilege to which I wasn’t privy”.

After tragically losing his father to cancer at the age of seven, his world was severely shaken and turned upside down.

“We were so young and were left without a heritage from my father, which was very painful for me particularly. He died before being able to instil in us the life lessons that every parent hopes to impart to their children. This is what essentially motivated me to write this book for my children and for the general public.

“The immense pain that the loss incurred was the catalyst to begin my journey to make sense of the agony that accompanies losing a parent at such a young age,” says Brozin.

“My father was a beloved man and I was left reeling in profound emotional pain because it made me lose trust in G-d, shaking my faith at a core level which is what eventually motivated me to start searching.

“Eighteen years ago I went to see Rabbi Larry Shain. I told him that I had some spare time on my hands and asked him to advise me on which charity I should devote my time to. He answered me by saying that the greatest service I could do for the world, would be to change myself and to start learning.

“Rabbi Shain thankfully connected me to

Photo: Ilan Ossendryver

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Rabbi Howard Jackson and we have continued to learn everything there is to learn about faith, for nearly the last two decades. He has deeply inspired me and has helped me to become more secure in my relationship with G-d, which has in turn helped me to be more connected, strengthening my faith which is something I struggled with for many years after my father died.”

Through the book he hopes to convey to people the power of being present, the necessity for humility, self-acceptance and many other valuable life lessons.

“People struggle to take their lives in hand and to be cognisant of the fact that every minute of every day is precious and is designed to cater to our exact needs and specifications. Life is about the now, but being able to keep that thought at the forefront of one’s mind can prove to be most challenging for people, “ says Brozin.

“I hope that in some way, the book will affect people positively by highlighting the beauty in the seemingly insignificant and simple things we often take for granted but do not take the time to integrate into our chaotic psyches.”

• The book is available at some Exclusive Books stores, Jewish book stores and on Amazon.

Jewish Report

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Community urged to attend new Wits concert in force

ROBYN SASSEN

August 28 sees a refurbished Great Hall at Wits University hosting the Danny Zamir Quartet. It’s being hosted, according to Wits Vice Chancellor Adam Habib “in lieu of the one that was disrupted.” He refers to the piano concert hosted on March 12, by renowned Berlin-based Israeli pianist Yossi Reshef, which was part of a national tour.

Unbeknownst to the organisers, the concert coincided with Israel Apartheid week. The two elements, formal Jewish culture with ties to Israel and classical Europe and a student mob advocating anti-Israel sentiments, toyi-toying and blowing vuvuzelas, was a volatile mix. The concert was disrupted by students associated with the university’s Student Representative Council, and others, on an anti-Israel rally and the concert had to be aborted.

Eleven students, including nine SRC members, were charged for possible contravention of the university’s code of conduct. The hearings have been beset with protests from the broader student body as well as different political and union-related bodies.

“The University has charged the students,” says Habib, “and the matter is still ongoing. Wits has a proud history and tradition of being a vibrant platform and space for diverse individuals and groups to access and engage with its multiplicity of stakeholders in a convivial environment.

“It has always and will continue to advocate for academic freedom and institutional autonomy, the foundation of knowledge and intellectual engagement of any great university.”

Said Board of Directors National Director Wendy Kahn: “We are delighted that the Wits Music Department will be hosting such esteemed jazz musicians. It further enriches Wits as an institution that promotes culture.

“It is encouraging that Wits University is creating free spaces for all its constituent bodies to host diverse academics and artists on this dynamic campus. Wits should be commended for their commitment to free speech and creating an environment in which all members of the community feel welcome and safe. I encourage our community to support this exciting event and celebration of Wits as a university for all.”



Zamir’s music happily marries many cultures

DON ALBERT

Jewish jazz is not only klezmer; it takes on many forms. A perfect example of Jewish jazz fusion will be heard in Johannesburg by the Israeli quartet of Daniel Zamir.

Zamir is a soprano saxophonist with deep roots in John Coltrane, Pat Metheny, Charlie Parker, Charles Mingus and John Zorn. He takes the influences and marries them with Jewish liturgic, Indian and Arabic music.

He says: “As a sax player it’s very natural to turn to jazz, plus I love the freshness in the improvisation and the freedom it gives.”

Composer Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph who is also a professor at the Music Department at

Wits School of the Arts said:”Lovers of jazz and Jewish music are going to be thrilled by the quartet.”

Zamir in explaining the music that will be heard in Johannesburg, put it this way: “We play original music that I composed that could be described as Jewish jazz. It has Jewish scales plus Indian rhythms and metres as well as storming improvisations.”

The quartet comprises pianist Omri Mor, bassist Gilad Abro and the much sought-after drummer Amir Bresler, who was born in Cape Town and settled in Israel in 1991.

The opening band is led by the highly popular experimental composer and bass player Carlo Mombelli with guitarist Jonathan

Crossley and drummer Justin Badenhorst.

This will be Zamir’s first time in South Africa and he says: “ It’s very exciting, and to the jazz fans in South Africa I say: ‘Keep it up!’ By playing and supporting jazz you have a part in keeping the tradition of jazz alive, as well as developing it further. Jazz in my opinion is the deepest form of music in Western civilisation.”

The concert takes place on Wednesday August 28 at the newly-refurbished Great Hall at Wits. Tickets cost R80 and R50 for students and pensioners. They can be obtained online at www.strictlytickets.com or www.webtickets.co.za Tickets at the door will cost R95.



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Small in number, but big in Jewish presence

DAVID SAKS

It has no official synagogue, only a handful of its members are as yet permanent citizens of the country and its numbers remain somewhere below the hundred-mark. Despite this, the Jewish community of Gaborone in Botswana, has emerged as an impressively active and committed presence since its establishment some 20 years ago.

Comprising mainly South African and Israeli temporary residents, it holds regular Friday night and High Holiday services at the home of Avner and Nurit Tzabari and the demand for kosher food is such that Nurit Tzabari has been accorded recognition as a certified kosher caterer by the Johannesburg Beth Din.

Over the years Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, spiritual leader to the African Jewish Congress, has officiated at a number of High Holiday services and bar- and batmitzvahs, and arranged for a mohel to come out for a bris.

Last Sunday, another landmark in the history of the young community was celebrated with the holding of Botswana’s first-ever Hachnasat Sefer

Torah ceremony. The purchase and donation of the Torah was facilitated by Mervyn Lifschitz, an active member of the country’s burgeoning diamond industry.

Among those who attended as the Torah was jubilantly conveyed into the Tzabari home, were Botswana Minister of Science and Technology Johnnie Swartz and Rabbi Silberhaft. At the conclusion of the function, community members undertook to meet every Monday and Thursday at the Diamond Centre for regular Torah Shacharit readings.

Organised Jewish life in Botswana was launched in the early 1990s by the placing of an advertisement in the local newspaper calling on all “minyan makers” to come forward. This led in due course to the establishment of the Botswana Jewish Community, headed by Botswana’s original Jewish “Motswana” (citizen), Richard Lyons.

Lyons also serves as honorary Consul for the State of Israel and has facilitated a number of high level meetings between African Jewish Congress delegations headed by its president, Mervyn Smith and the senior Botswana leadership.

An appeal for funds to tell the Karabus story

ANT KATZ

A book on Prof Cyril Karabus’ incarceration in the UAE is to be written by Suzanne Belling, the respected journalist and author of the 2012 best-seller “The Travelling Rabbi: My African Tribe” with Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft.

Karabus was innocent and exonerated, says his friend and lawyer Michael Bagraim. “It took nine months before the record could be set straight,” he added.

However, the book is in jeopardy of never being published due to a lack of funds – R100 000 is needed. Jacana Media have agreed to release the book early in 2014, but are not prepared to give an advance. This lack of short-term resources may mean this fascinating story may never be told.

“The book reveals all and pays tribute to the efforts of various role-players who worked tirelessly to secure Karabus’ release,” says Belling.

It is hoped that the book, expected to become a best-seller, could go a long way towards securing the financially embattled 78-year-old’s retirement and allow Karabus to be able to repay those who have come to his aid.

The acclaimed paediatric oncologist was arrested last August while travelling through Dubai en route back to South Africa from Canada where he had attended his son’s wedding.

He had been found guilty in absentia by a Sharia Court in 2004 after the death of a young Yemeni leukaemia patient during a locum he had served in 2002.

“This book will depict the full account of Karabus’ incarceration in the UAE and the financial and emotional impact it has had on his



entire family,” says Bagraim. Some of these revelations are:

- Karabus’ wife Jen feared throughout that he “wouldn’t get out of there alive”. She consulted a rabbi about “how we would deal with his passing there”.
- During their 2002 stint in the UAE Jen, then 51, was propositioned by an Arab man who offered her a Mercedes to have sex with him.
- The original Sharia Court convicted Karabus for murder and forgery.
- Karabus has become a different person since his ordeal. “He treads lightly now,” says Jen, “not the lion’s footstep that he used to have.”
- To raise the initial legal fees, one of his daughters, Sarah, bonded her house to the hilt and another, Deborah, contributed her savings which she’d planned to use to renovate her home.
- Each family member was allocated a role – such as Rosh Money, Rosh Publicity, Rosh Translations, etc.

Bagraim is appealing for the community to assist in raising the R100 000 required.

“You have my assurance the money will be used only for this project,” says Bagraim, who will hold all contributions. Contact him at michael@bagraims.co.za or call (021) 422-2860.

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Jewish Report

Another great Limmud

The rich diversity of Jewry was evident in all its glory last weekend at the three-day Limmud 2013, which filled the Indaba Hotel in Fourways near Johannesburg to capacity.

A palpable spirit of community grew among participants, numbering some 900 over the full weekend. Some drove to the event for the day; others spent the entire three days and two nights at the hotel. Most were mainstream Jews from Johannesburg, Pretoria and other nearby areas.

For many people, Limmud is about finding a “Jewish home” where they are comfortable. Sadly, among South African Jewry today there are people on the fringes of the mainstream who earnestly desire a Jewish focus to which they can feel attached, but cannot find it. Limmud also provides that for some of them.

There was music, science, religion, spirituality and a host of other topics, all with a Jewish flavour. Speakers ranged from world experts to ordinary Jews who felt strongly about particular issues and wanted to discuss them with others.

Its leadership tries to ensure that Jews of all stripes feel comfortable there, with Shabbat arrangements, strictly kosher food, and services in a range of formats - Progressive and Orthodox.

Parts of Orthodox South African Jewry are still suspicious of Limmud’s openness and non-judgemental attitude towards the many different “Jewish” journeys of participants. Since the first event, however, attitudes have softened somewhat.

This was shown by the far greater number of kippah-wearing heads among participants this year than have been seen there previously. The kippot ranged from the knitted ones of the Mizrachi and traditional Orthodox, to a few black ones, while even Jews in the garb of the haredi community could be seen.

Inevitably, people compare Limmud with the hugely popular Sinai Indaba driven by Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, which has been running since 2010, and whose success grows year by year. June’s Sinai Indaba attracted several thousand people to its venue at the Sandton Convention Centre.

The two events are constructed very differently, but actually complement each other very well. Limmud is run by volunteers, has a folksy feel and provides a platform for numerous people - including experts on different topics - to engage in a myriad Jewish-related themes.

Sinai Indaba has a power-punch, professional feel, with superstar attractions like Lord Jonathan Sacks. It is not specifically about engaging with speakers, but mainly about listening to high-level presentations on Jewish topics to a large audience.

After the resounding success of last month’s Sinai Indaba, which many people found inspiring, the question was whether Limmud could remotely match its standard. Would it be eclipsed?

By the end of this weekend, most participants would agree that Limmud provided its own special brand of Jewish creativity of an extremely high standard - which shows there is ample room for both. The test of this is how many people attended both events.

It would reflect well on the vision of South African Jewry’s Orthodox leadership if they endorsed Limmud. If they cannot do this for theological or other reasons, then perhaps they could at least take a neutral stance and not object to their rabbis or congregants participating - many congregants already do so.

In a community as small as South African Jewry - numbering some 70 000 - it is a pity for it to be split in this way. Both sides are here to stay and honest engagement would be better than boycotts. Limmud has shown that it is a valuable part of this community.

Many Orthodox rabbis have said privately that they would love to attend and share in the Jewish thrill it offers, but feel constrained and don’t wish to “break ranks” by doing so.

We congratulate the Limmud organisers and their team of volunteers, who have again done a great service to South African Jewry. We are proud that our small community can rise to the occasion by producing two such remarkable - and instructive - events.

What Ambassador Sisa Ngombane told Jerusalem Post Magazine

ANT KATZ

On August 1 the Jerusalem Post Magazine published an interview with South African Ambassador Sisa Ngombane (inset) which they headlined: “For us, Hamas is a national liberation movement”.

This led to a spate of bad press for him. Israel’s new ambassador to South Africa, Arthur Lenk, however, told Limmud last weekend that he felt Ngombane had been unfairly portrayed, (see page 13).

The Jerusalem Post Magazine has given the Jewish Report permission to publish the following extract from their extensive interview:

J-Post:
The relations between Israel and South Africa have seen a number of ups and downs in recent years. Why do you think that is the case?

Ambassador Sisa Ngombane:
Clearly, this has been the case. I think the issue of Israeli-South African relations goes back a few years, actually back to the existence of the State of Israel. South Africa was there and is one of the countries that voted for the State of Israel to exist. And therefore we’ve got a long history, and it’s natural that in a long history like that, there would be highs and lows, as you mentioned.

I think, of course, there was a moment when relations were closer...

Q: In recent months, there have been several incidents in which Palestinian terrorists have fired rockets from Gaza into southern Israel. What is your policy toward the Hamas regime in Gaza and do you condemn the rocket attacks?

A: Of course the rockets create a serious infringement of security for ordinary people, to start with. And we have no problem in condemning the rockets that appear to be shot randomly at every target in Israel, including civilian targets.

The approach that was adopted by our own liberation movement in South Africa was that of course you cannot just use

random violence - you need it to be more precise. If you said the security forces were your problem, you have to engage the security forces. For us, Hamas is an important player in this environment.

It has got its weaknesses, but we think that these are not beyond a situation where it cannot be modified.

And it is encouraging that even Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal has been saying they are ready to look at every issue. I think that means that they are open to reform and the fear was that if we would ostracise anybody just like that, we absolutely drive them to a camp that is more negative and more radical.

I’m saying that Gaza under Hamas is a work in progress and I’ve said we condemn violence.

Unfortunately, once you enter the space of violence, there’s going to be casualties. It is an issue that you cannot avoid. Once violence starts there is always collateral damage.

And of course then it involves human rights and the rights of ordinary people. But we think that the way forward is to convince them that if you use violence, what have you achieved? To drop a few rockets that fall in the field and then bring a reaction from Israel, for which they then feel they must have reprisals is just counterproductive.

Therefore, when there was an announcement of a ceasefire, we welcomed that very much and said it is a beginning of a realisation that violence cannot be the only way to talk, and that only a limited achievement can be made through violence.

Q: Let me be blunt. Do you consider Hamas to be a national liberation movement or a terrorist organisation?

A: To be honest, for us Hamas is actually a national liberation movement. We think that they have got legitimate grounds to exist and this to a certain extent was confirmed by their election.

Q: But what about their use of violence and terror, the rocket attacks and suicide

bombings against innocent Israelis?

A: In discussions with Hamas the issue of indiscriminate violence has been raised, of conducting terror - well, terror cannot be part of the liberation movement’s strategy.

There is a problem there, but that problem is not beyond being repaired, since some people have managed to stay away from terrorism while conducting an armed struggle. So we think that the mere fact that terrorist activities can be linked to Hamas does not qualify the whole group as being terrorist.

We think that they have committed some errors, serious errors of judgement, and we engage with them on these issues. It is an issue that is ongoing and I think at the moment we believe that they are not beyond redemption, so to speak.

Hamas can be convinced to change their direction, because they have got an important role to play.

Q: Palestinian leaders including PA President Mahmoud Abbas have stated that if a Palestinian state were to arise, the Jews living in the area would not be allowed to reside there. Isn’t that a form of racial discrimination and apartheid?

A: Yes, roughly, this can be said to resemble racism if Jews are excluded for being Jews. Our starting point is that it is easier to allow each people - Jews and Arabs - to really manage their own affairs, have their own governments, allow religious freedoms and not infringe on others. And the same would apply for Israel, that it allows the Jews to express all freedoms, and for the Palestinians in their own state.

But the idea that you are more strengthened by excluding others - to us it is not a good notion. We think that it is important to say - and some countries have said so - that we have a dominant religion, but we also have other minorities who are able to practise their religions and therefore there’s no harm, there’s no reason, that we should be saying that they should not be part of this society and this community.

To page 7



From page 6

Q: In December 2012, South Africa’s ruling party, the African National Congress, voted in favour of making boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel part of its official policy. The resolution stated that the ANC is “unapologetic in its view that the Palestinians are the victims and the oppressed in the conflict with Israel”. Does your government support sanctions against the Jewish State?

A: We’re not at that stage. I think the ANC took this position to express its unhappiness about the current policies of the Israeli government and to express support for the Palestinians. Of course, the BDS movement exists - and it’s not ANC. It exists by its own self, and of course ANC members will support it, the way they ought to support it.

But as the situation stands now, we have not reached a situation that this has become government policy. As I said, there are people who are travelling back and forth between Israel and South Africa, we have an embassy here, and this embassy is not here to say we are here to enforce a boycott of Israel - it is not about that.

There are no sanctions against goods coming from Israel; all goods are allowed to come. The only thing is that if goods come from “occupied territories” then they’ve got to be marked as such.

Q: South African Jewry remains the largest Jewish community in all of Africa, but nearly half have chosen to emigrate from the country over the past few decades. How do you feel about this?

A: There was a moment in South Africa when the system of apartheid was collapsing, where some people felt they needed to leave and make a better future for their children. And of course they emigrated, in large part to the United States, followed by another wave to Canada, and others to Australia - people who are not Jews, just ordinary white South Africans. And of course there are Jews who have come and settled here in Israel.

And as you said, South Africa still has a large Jewish population. In South Africa, we have over 70 000.

So the bulk is still in South Africa. And they are living happily, and they are doing their business, they are running for every office. We have had a prominent Jewish judge, the late Justice Arthur Chaskalson as head of the Constitutional Court, the highest court in South Africa.

And for that matter, I never even knew that he was a Jew, he was one of those sons of South Africa who stood up and was fighting for justice throughout South Africa. There are many other leaders in their own right.

Q: Many Israelis believe that your government singles out Israel for special treatment. After all, there are countries in the region whose human rights records are truly awful. For example, Saudi Arabia openly discriminates against non-Muslims by not allowing them into the cities of Mecca and Medina, and even has “Muslim-only” roads. The Saudis also ban women from driving cars and legally classify them as the property of their male guardians. Why are there no calls from South Africa to boycott the Saudis?

A: We are unable to make this direct connection precisely because we think the Saudi state has its own origins. It is a monarchy and it doesn’t claim to be democratic, it never claimed that. And therefore they’ve got a system that they run, that is based on religion. So we have said: “Okay, it’s the

system that they’ve chosen for themselves.”

Now, the issue that we have against Israel - and it is not singularly against Israel in this matter - the issue we have is one of a fundamental disagreement on policy. Sometimes it is the way the policies are implemented. Part of the issue that really is at the core of our understanding of the problem that exists here is that there is a population which says: “We have been disempowered by a government which is more powerful, it removes us at will. We thought we would have a state - we don’t have a state.”

When we look at all these activities, they unfortunately resonate with and strike a very key nerve similar with our own past situation, because in the South African environment we had a situation where we blacks didn’t exist! The government of the day decided that “this is our land, only the white people will stay here”. And they thought it was a G-d-given right for them to say that.

Q: Are you actually comparing Israel with apartheid South Africa?

A: We have had the question of

whether Israel is an apartheid state or not, and there are a lot of debates on this matter. And in all honesty, there is a big discussion about it. At the moment, it is clear that Israel is not an apartheid state but there are very strong signals that it is going down that route, that there will be discrimination, that because you are an Arab you won’t be allowed to live here and you won’t be able to buy property there. If that becomes a policy of the state, then it becomes a problem.

Q: How can you say that? There are Israeli Arabs who serve in the

Knesset, an Arab judge sits on Israel’s Supreme Court, and Arabs have filled senior positions in government and the diplomatic service.

A: So I’m saying that we are not now trying to draw a comparison with apartheid, but there are clear signs that the system that existed in South Africa can easily be replicated here. When you separate people and they must go to this bus, they must go this way, then it becomes really some of the things that we have lived through in South Africa, and we grew up there for all of our lives and we know that.



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HAREDI SHOULD CARRY THEIR WEIGHT REGARDING ARMY SERVICE

I'd like to respond to Jonathan Bloom's letter regarding haredi enlistment to the Israeli Defence Forces.

For centuries Torah observant Jews learnt Torah. But that was not a vocation in and of itself. They also had a trade. They earned money by doing something that tangibly benefited the greater community.

They did not rely on contributions from the general Jewish public to support their Torah learning indefinitely.

After the tragedy of the Holocaust, when entire Orthodox communities and many Gedolim perished, Jewish leaders felt it critical to rebuild as much Torah as possible. Thus, kollels emerged in great numbers.

What started as a few hundred men, grew to many thousands all over the world, in full-time Torah learning. They rely on contributions (often from those deemed less religious) for financial support.

This issue is more poignant in Israel, where there is such a stark difference between the haredi and non-haredi worlds in many arenas, particularly security.

Israel is a tiny country surrounded by enemies all over the region and beyond. Therefore, army service is compulsory there. Why should it not be compulsory for all Israeli Jews?

Possibly a compromise could be made where a few hundred really gifted men could continue to sit in kollel in order to ensure that a high standard of Torah learning is kept and for them to eventually teach others (not keep

all their knowledge for themselves), but not the thousands that are currently in kollel.

The haredi community should carry their weight with regard to compulsory army service as well as becoming productive members of Israeli society by way of learning a trade or contributing in other tangible ways.

This would benefit Israel as a whole and the haredi community itself, by becoming self-supporting. There are many benefits to army service. One of them is the exposure to learning a trade.

King David, Joshua, the Maccabees, the Persian Jews of Purim, were righteous and fought. It is not a contradiction. And if Torah study is so important to the haredim, can they not make time to study Torah, as many others do?

Furthermore, the comment: "Well they certainly aren't drafting any Israeli Arabs!" Really? Would you want to be a Jew living in Israel, and being defended by Israeli Arabs in the IDF? Would it be a good idea for Israel to train and give weapons to Israeli Arabs who commemorate Nakba Day (they mourn Israel Independence Day)? I think not.

Lastly, I am sure that sending one's child to army service in the IDF is traumatising, for we know that some soldiers unfortunately do not come home, but do non-haredi mothers love their children less than haredi mothers do?

Michele Engelberg
Johannesburg

RATHER THAN RELY ON 'G-D' FOR HELP, SEE WHAT WE CAN DO OURSELVES

I would like to respond to John Brenner's letter in the Jewish Report of August 9.

Human life is changing at an unprecedented fast pace. In today's world, religions are definitely not the best answer. We may err while trying new ways, but that is a risk we cannot avoid. Stagnation is not an option.

Over the years I have learned how our religion is at least partially responsible for such a deep-rooted, widespread hatred towards us. Anti-Semitism was and is the background for so many tragedies along our history.

We must look for, find and develop new ways to guide and educate our social behaviour, without the "help" of "G-d". It is the time for "Him" to rest. Let's see what we can do ourselves.

Yossi Bogacz
Highlands North, Johannesburg

RESENTMENT'S CIRCLE OF NEGATIVITY CONTINUOUSLY SPIRALS DOWNWARDS...

There is a well-known joke about a Jew who is stranded alone on a deserted island and builds two shuls - one in which to pray and the other to boycott.

I believe our difficult history has in many cases embittered some of us and has made us argumentative. We are often brimming with faribles (resentments). This is one of the negative effects of anti-Semitism.

There are those who are easy to like. These noble souls become likeable because they project goodwill towards others and are free of bitterness. This usually results from support and encouragement received while growing up.

Carrying resentment not only robs us of joy and happiness, but alienates others, giving them additional reasons to dislike us. And so the circle of negativity continues - downwards.

While wallowing in bitterness may provide a sort of grim satisfaction, it is not worth the stress and

disease it often causes. It also impacts us spiritually as most religions emphasise love and forgiveness.

The Torah forbids the bearing of grudges (Vayikra 19:18) and Hillel indicated that to "love your neighbor" is the very essence of Judaism (Pirkei Avot).

A theme in the Talmud is the repeated disagreements between Hillel and Shamai, yet it never became personal. They had the grace to remain the best of friends.

Whether we are Chabad, haredi or Mizrachi or we are Habonim, Betar or Bnei Akiva, let us rather emphasise the many things in common instead of highlighting the few differences.

So, let us rise above any ugliness between us and be a light unto the nations.

Martin Zagnoev
Johannesburg

JUDAISM CALLS FOR JUSTICE FOR ALL, NOT JUST FOR THE OTHER

I would like to respond to Heidi Jane Esakov's letter. She is correct. Jews pride themselves on a tradition of independent thinking and debate. She is correct too, that true Jewish values call for justice for all and a caring for and empathy with all mankind.

And herein lies the crux: Judaism calls for justice for all, not just for the other. And when a Jew calls for justice for others while being blind to the suffering of her own people, then at best this can be seen as ignorance.

When a Jew goes further, and obfuscates facts, twists the truth, contorts events, blatantly lies and turns history upside down with regard only to Israel, the one and only Jewish State, then such a Jew must be seen as Jew-hating, and very uncomfortable in her Jewish skin.

My apologies, Ms Esakov, but until your criticism of Israel, and that of your fellow-travellers, is based on truth and is balanced, and until such time as it condemns the actions and policies of Israel's enemies as it condemns Israel, then your views must be seen as not only anti-Israel but also inherently anti-Semitic.

Monessa Shapiro
Glenhazel, Johannesburg

WARM TRIBUTE PAID TO RABBI MORDECHAI ABRAHAM

Addiction: just as you think you have overcome your own personal traumas, someone you meet tells you about the exact same thing you have been through.

Sheltered it is not; hidden it is, until it's possibly too late.

What I'm trying to say is that behind many a closed door, there are those battling with this terrible life-destroying addiction in some form.

There seems to be more dealers and addicts than facilities and people to help. However, I have met one man who is larger and greater than an army - a dynamic, emphatic leader who has dedicated his life to helping addicts in need.

We don't stop to think where does the funding come from... I don't think that aspect ever enters Rabbi Mordechai Abraham's mind, as I am sure he would give his last cent away to save a life! My wish would be that all the riches of a fruitful happy life could prevail for all those touched by the destruction of addiction. I just want it on the record that I am very grateful for the support and love given to my family by this heroic leader.

Laura Koven
Johannesburg

GREENSTEIN CONVENIENTLY LEAVES OUT RATIONALE FOR 'OCCUPATION'

Ran Greenstein's letter in the Jewish Report of August 9, endeavours to justify anti-Israel criticism by citing "the ongoing Israeli military rule over millions of Palestinian subjects, who are denied basic political and civil rights in the territories occupied by Israel in 1967".

He conveniently fails to mention that the so-called "occupation" was engendered by an invasion against Israel from the very area now justifiably occupied by Israel, to ensure its security!

Israel is doing the best it can to balance a difficult situation and any criticism of its "occupation" policy/actions, especially in light of the fact that the 1967 War was fought by it in self-defence against anti-Semitic enemies, can only be regarded as anti-Jewish.

Joel Wolpert
Atholl, Johannesburg

Looking for heirs to Greta Grosse Eisenstadt

Michael Bleby wants to locate the so-far unidentified South Africa-based heirs to an estate sold under duress in Amsterdam in 1933, of a Jewish businessman who fled Germany in that year, ultimately for New York. One of the paintings of that estate is now in the National Gallery of Victoria: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/visual-arts/van-gogh-mystery-brought-to-a-head/story-fn9d3avm-1226689161003>

Bleby writes from Australia: "I need to try and find the claimants, two sisters who are the granddaughters of the original heir, Greta Grosse Eisenstadt. She died in New York, but her daughter emigrated to South Africa in 1937. The two granddaughters were presumably born in South Africa.


"Unfortunately this is the only information available.


"There is some more info on them from the official Dutch restitution committee, but nothing that identifies them. I've tried to contact their Switzerland-based lawyer (via Linked In), but would love to get in contact with them directly. Unfortunately, I don't have many contacts in Jewish circles and don't even know their surnames (at least one of the granddaughters is married).


I think, however, that this must be a story known in the community and there may be people who can help me locate the sisters."

Bleby may be contacted at mbleby@brw.fairfax.com.au

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Play Station - a very welcome Johannesburg ‘happening’



A view from the back: Play Station comes alive with the Radio Kalahari Orkes, a fortnight ago.

ROBYN SASSEN

Saul Bamberger once had a dream. At some point, he realised that if he didn’t make it happen, it wouldn’t. And he has. This week, he spoke to the Jewish Report at the MOTH Hall in Parkhurst in Johannesburg, about Play Station, a new theatre.

“By day it’s a dance studio, shared with Esther Nasser’s Tswane Dance Theatre.” It’s still used by the Memorable Order of Tin Hats: also known as the Steel Helmet Shellhole.

Parkhurst is replete with communal initiatives. “The residents are very supportive,” says Bamberger, who graduated from Wits University in drama in 1981, enjoyed a short career on stage and then gravitated toward the antique industry.

“I adore chamber music,” he added. “In 1998, I went back to music lessons and fell in love with the Steinway grand my teacher had. ‘If ever you want to sell it,’ I joked, until one day, after I’d stopped going to lessons, he told me he was ready to give up that piano.

“I suggested a swop with my Steinway upright.” It seemed too good to be true. It was. The teacher changed his mind. Years passed. Then he changed his mind again. Bamberger paid it off.

“I kept the piano in my shop, and often played it, with my friend, actor Tony Bentel. We agreed that this was too good not to share, and decided to have concerts, in the shop. Over a few years, audiences grew from 25 to 2 000.

“One day, the CEO of St John came to our concert. Glenshiel, the Herbert Baker priory of St John, in Westcliff, had hosted concerts for years, but they stopped. He invited me to do something. I was too busy with my business, to commit to another project.”

A year passed. Bamberger sold his business. “Glenshiel begged me to come. I did. I began to grow a dream in the back of my head.”

When a music concert blossomed into a show involving dancers, something shifted further for Bamberger. “I met Esther (Nasser). She agreed. And today we share the rent.”

Play Station launched a fortnight ago with Jittery Citizens and the Radio Kalahari Orkes.

“Audiences poured in. We are on the cusp of a golden period in South African theatre,” he added. “A lot of young people are doing extraordinary things.

“When we were young we were isolated. We’d had a British tradition in drama, which was snotty. It was hard to find your voice in that climate. We were under the shadow of apartheid.

“In township theatre, they had nothing. Their work was raw; it was cathartic.”

Bamberger is very enthusiastic about the new work theatre professionals Jenine Collocott, James Cairns, James Cuninghame, Tarryn Bennett and others are producing, now. “I am going to make money,” he adds. “Not through funding and sponsorship. I don’t want to be beholden unto anyone.”

• At Play Station on August 23, Laurie Levine launches a new CD; on August 24, David Butler performs “A Teacher in the Bushveld”, about Herman Charles Bosman. Email Saul on saulb@polka.co.za

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Tribute concert does full justice to Zaidel-Rudolph

Concert: Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph
Tribute Concert (Atrium, Wits)

REVIEWED BY
PAUL BOEKKOOI

Few musicians and listeners will disagree about the fact that music is basically made up of form and content. A lot of elements can be added to the sound palette to make it even richer: Emotions, fantasy, a text, a story, a picture, a bit of mystery... even, if necessary,

anguish. It is in the music of Professor Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph where more of these added qualities illustrate both the originality and diversity of her work. She might write a piece in sonata form which dictates the structural architecture, but not necessary the tonal relationships. Thematic development often shifts around chromatically while contrapuntal techniques abound. And she can also achieve high tension in the way

she applies poly-rhythmic textures. Many of these theoretic elements came to life in her latest work, the Wits Trio Tribute for Piano, Violin and ‘Cello (2013), commissioned by this trio. Malcolm Nay, Zanta Hofmeyr and Maciej Lacny, were totally committed to the driving force we encountered in the two outer movements. They never let their exacting grip on this challenging work go. In the slow middle movement one could feel a yearning mood, while in the dance-like moments in the finale the harsh rhythmic patterns did show up elements of the composer’s roots. As a whole it is perhaps one of Zaidel-Rudolph’s richest outpourings of something close to absolute music. Selected works composed over the past 25 years were heard. Another one created this year, was Hebrotica for marimba solo, dedicated to and performed by the New York-born virtuoso, Alex Jacobowitz. This is a beautifully constructed work combining traditional Hebrew themes from over the centuries with Jewish liturgical melodies in which African elements are subtly incorporated.

Jacobowitz took us on this journey over centuries with a clear, musically infused narrative. Viktor van Niekerk reminded us of the idiomatic richness found in two of the Five African Sketches for guitar (1992), just lacking a bit of the potential spontaneity of the pieces in performance. Caryn Reed took us back to the awe-inspiring diversity found in Virtuoso 1 for piano, although she could have lived a bit more dangerously to demonstrate its full effect. Atmospheric story telling in music unfolded in Masada for string quartet and bassoon (1989). Having heard it a number of times before, its immediate visceral appeal and the thrust by which it moves the attentive listener, does not ever decline - especially not in a performance as shrewdly detailed as this one. Zaidel-Rudolph’s contribution to vocal music always exemplified her natural feeling for lyricism. Through her knowledge of the human voice, her vocal compositions were always challenging, like Michèle Corbin (soprano) and Malcolm Nay (piano) demonstrated in their intense rendering of Boy on a Swing and Hell



Alex Jacobowitz

Well Heaven (1992). The Wits Choir inspired in Innocence from the Youth Oratorio (2009), while they, with the refined sounding tenor soloist Nachie Levin and Zaidel-Rudolph (piano and arranger), gave us a heart-rending interpretation of Avinu Malkeinu by Max Jankowski. Although she is retiring from Wits, we can hopefully expect many more compositional masterpieces from the beloved professor.

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A century plus and JMS still holding its own with grace and vivacity

ROBYN SASSEN

Chairman of the Johannesburg Music Society Avril Rubenstein, reaches to touch her coffee table’s surface. “The JMS started in 1902; it’s still holding its own. Touch wood. “This year, we have seen growth in audiences. Petronel Malan’s concert recently was attended by 600; it’s unprecedented for us.” Fifteen years ago, Rubenstein took over the administrative responsibilities of JMS. Having trained in piano at Unisa under Enrique Barenboim, father of the world-renowned conductor Daniel, she has deep investment in the value of music to our society. “When I became involved in the JMS, Pim Bruwer, South Africa’s prime impresario, emigrated. I realised how important it is to keep serious music alive.” As chairman she does everything: from selecting and inviting artists, to negotiating with agents, booking venues, writing brochures, establishing programmes and selling advertising. “It’s quite a different organisation from 20 years ago,” she says. “I remember the meetings, comprising a committee of elderly people who rejected all my ideas for reform. There were no season tickets. The invitations could only be posted and plan changes were a nightmare, impossible to relay to audiences. Membership was in a shambles.”



Photo by Julia Wesely. Courtesy www.sergeymalov.com

Sergey Malov, with his violincello di spalla.

Next Saturday night, JMS hosts the annual Nabarro Concert. “We’ve been hosting these concerts since 2001, thanks to a bequest made in the name of Margaret Dalziel Nabarro, wife of physicist Frank Nabarro.” An English-born Sephardi Jew, Nabarro and his family had a warm, lifelong association with Wits University and the bequest that feeds the JMS’s annual Nabarro Concert, draws from an investment which was willing to the Wits Foundation. “It costs some R45 000 to stage a concert with the JMS,” points out Rubenstein. “We run off ticket sales and advertising in our programmes, but bequested concerts, like this one and the Percy Baneshik Concert,

which too draws from a trust, make our lives a lot easier. “Russian-born Sergey Malov, 30, performs the Nabarro Concert this year. He’s an internationally celebrated virtuoso on strings, who plays violin, viola and an instrument called violincello di spalla, popular in Bach’s day - the 18th century. It’s like a violin, but is played resting on the performer’s shoulder. Malov is keen to revive and popularise it.” Malov plays Bach’s Suite No 4, transcribed for violincello di spalla; Brahms’ ‘Cello Sonata No 1; Enesco’s Sonata No 3 and Ravel’s Tzigane; in the Nabarro Concert at the Linder Auditorium on August 24: (011) 728-5492 or visit www.jms.org.za



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UOS conference testifies to union’s strong leadership

SHIRA DRUION

The Union of Orthodox Synagogues’ 26th biennial conference, taking place in Johannesburg last Sunday, testified to the outstanding leadership of the South African Jewish community. The panel of speakers consisted of leaders from across the board; ranging from Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein to, UOS CEO Darren Sevitz, to UOS Chairman Jonathan Levitt and the Johannesburg Beth Din’s Rabbis Kurtstag and Rapoport.

Said Levitt: “The past two years have been very positive ones for the UOS. We have been able to make inroads with creating a solid infrastructure to improve the image of the UOS and the services it provides to every member of the Jewish community.

“These services range from kashrut, to the Beth Din services as well as enriching initiatives in the form of international speakers, businessmen breakfasts and various shul initiatives.”

Levitt congratulated the Chief Rabbi for the success he had achieved with the Sinai Indaba and Generation Sinai, applauding him for reaching an international audience as he partnered with over 100 schools in 38 cities worldwide.

Rabbi Goldstein commended the committee for their time and skills

and gave a full report-back on the many endeavours with which the Office of The Chief Rabbi continues to be involved.

He has had a busy and fruitful two years since the last conference, leading projects such as Generation Sinai, Sinai Indaba, CAP security, the growth of the Schools Beit Medrash programme, rabbinical conferences, the dissemination of Torah en masse via weekly e-mails, Israel advocacy and interfaith work, and most recently the Shabbos Project that promises to be a very unifying and inspiring experience for the entire South African Jewish community.

Levitt applauded Brand Manager Dani Silbermann for her innovative and successful approach to rebranding the UOS, as she trail-blazes the way forward in creating a more fluid relationship between the UOS and the community at large.

UOS CEO Darren Sevitz paid tribute to the exemplary devotion of UOS staff, saying that despite the many hiccups that are faced along the way, the staff continue to invest of themselves to ensure that the highest levels of kashrut and service are provided to meet the various needs of the community.

Rabbi Kurtstag commended the rabbonim and community members for upholding a unified front for the UOS.



Dayan Boruch Rapoport; Jonathan Levitt (chairman); Darren Sevitz, (CEO); Clive Ginsberg (treasurer); Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein; and Rosh Beth Din Rabbi Moshe Kurstag.

“The South African community is unique worldwide in that we only have one Beth Din and one kashrut department, which is reflective of the unity that we enjoy between the rabbonim and community members of South African Jewry,” he said.

Long-term service awards were also presented to Rabbi and Reb-betzen Yekutiel Shalpid who served the South African community for 44 years, 20 of which he served the East London community. A long-term service award was also presented to Sidney Weintraub who

served the East London community for 57 years, 56 of which he was a committee member.

Rabbi Goldstein praised their achievements, saying: “Any community which is dedicated to the sake of heaven, will endure forever and the good deeds a person does in his lifetime will remain with him for eternity.”

New committee members:
Harold Novick – president; Rafi Bricker - vice president Gauteng; Solly Kroll - vice president Free State; Denzil Levy - vice president

Eastern Cape ; Alex Zingol - vice president KZN; Jonathan Levitt – chairman; Gary Arenson - vice chairman; Clive Ginsberg – treasurer.

Trustees :
Adrian Chiger; Tony Ellis; Aubrey Gamsu; Greg Narunsky; and Gary Stein. FSWG representative - Dawn Nates. CEO - Darren Sevitz.

Members of management:
Rosh Beth Din Rabbi Moshe Kurtstag; and Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein.

Rabbinical conference a success...

RABBI ARI TABACK

It was an improbable scene. Dozens of rabbis clad in T-shirts and baseball caps, milling about on a glorious beach in KwaZulu-Natal. The sun is setting, and a volleyball net flaps in the breeze as the younger and more energetic clergymen dive and plunge after a bright yellow ball.

What brought some 60 scions of South African Jewish leadership to Durban, was the annual Chief Rabbi CK Harris Rabbinical Conference.

This year’s venue was the new Umhlanga Jewish Community Centre near Izinga. In the last two years, under Rabbi Pinchas Zekry of the Durban Hebrew Congregation, the sugarcane fields surrounding Umhlanga have made way to a community centre, with a shul complex.

The rabbinical conference is organised each year under the auspices of the Office of the Chief Rabbi and has become a fixture in the calendar of Jewish leadership.

Topics this year included the challenges of shifting attitudes among Jewish youth, alcohol abuse in the community, the effects of technology on education, developments in the sphere of kashrut, and recent escalations in campaigns against Israel.

A presentation was also made by the

CSO, updating the rabbis on the security concerns of our community and the constant need to be vigilant and aware. Mary Kluk, national chairman of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies, described to the rabbis the work of the Board in upholding the civil liberties of the Jewish community and reported back on their activities over the last year.

A large part of the gathering focused on plotting visions for new growth and progress for SA Jewry. Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein’s flagship communal “Shabbos Project” occupied centre stage, generating much excitement. Launched at this year’s Sinai Indaba, “The Shabbos Project” will take place on October 11 and 12 with the aim of sharing the joy and beauty of Shabbat observance with as wide a swathe of the South African community as possible.

Another proactive aspect of the convention was professional development. A teleconference hookup with world-renowned halachist and educator Rabbi Yitzchak Berkovitz provided the rabbis with guidance from one of the masters in the field of Torah leadership training, while a conference call with well-known writer and speaker Rabbi Zev Leff, was a highlight.

Skills building was not only limited

to the spiritual realm; practical training included a workshop on creative writing to enhance the rabbis’ use of the written word, as well as an exposition on the art and science of public speaking.

The latter was provided by Kivi Bernhard, who shared his workshop on public speaking entitled “Presentology” as well as his leadership course “Leopardology”. Kivi is the son of Rabbi Norman Bernhard and has made a mark on the US speakers’ circuit. But perhaps the most improbable aspect of the gathering, was the sense of unity and common purpose which permeated the convention.

Jewish society is at times fractured by internal divisions, highlighted by recent developments in Israel and elsewhere. The SA community has long been a model of harmony, highlighting the potential for different groups of Torah faithful Jews to vehemently disagree with each other’s philosophies while continuing to engage with each other in a spirit of mutual respect.

This year’s conference highlighted that culture of unity begins at the highest level of SA Torah leadership. The camaraderie which flowed freely among the leaders of our community at the convention, bodes well for the continued healthy growth of SA Jewry.

Orange Grove Hebrew Congregation celebrates community chesed



Every year, the Orange Grove Hebrew Congregation hosts an event to celebrate the stalwarts of our community, the organisations and the children who give of themselves to make the community better. Under the leadership of the congregation’s former chairman Morris Behr whose parents, Israel Jacob and Mary Behr are named in the dinner’s title, more than 25 organisations are celebrated, for their chesed offered to the community. Attended by Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, the event this year, celebrated on August 7 also presented certificates to about 10 children from various schools who have distinguished themselves by their good deeds. Pictured is Morris Behr; Craig Snoyman (current chairman of the Orange Grove Hebrew Congregation) and Benjamin Hack, from the Junior City Council, one of the recipients of a certificate. Photograph by Joe Yudelowitz.

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Limmud 2013 sets the bar very high

ROBYN SASSEN

On Friday August 9, at 08:00, the registration table at Limmud was opened. It was busy with a regular trickle, widening and narrowing as the day went. From women in jeans to men in haredi garb, the community and its children thronged the different venues of the Indaba Hotel in Fourways, with enthusiasm and hunger.

“This is the best Limmud I’ve attended,” said Tali Nates, director of the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre. In one of the several sessions in which she participated, she collaborated with Moravian-born Aryeh Shimron, a respected archaeologist, who presented several papers in his own academic right. But in a massively courageous gesture, he spoke of a topic he’s never spoken of before, namely how the Holocaust touched his life when he was a young child in Slovakia.

Taking part in seven sessions was one of Limmud 2013’s stars, Rabbi Nathan Lopes Cardozo. The Dutch-born, Gateshead- and Mir-educated ba’al teshuva, commented on how Jews veered away from comfort zones, as he offered insights into halachic and rabbinical traditions.

Arthur Lenk, Israel’s new ambassador to South Africa, began his talk on the possibilities between Israel and South Africa by referring to the controversy which quickly erupted over a statement made by Sisa Ngombeni, the new South African ambassador to Israel. Lenk said that the ambassador had been unfairly



Limmud’s bookstore in the foyer.

portrayed and quoted out of context in the Israeli press: In the full interview Ngombeni had clarified the points he’d made about Hamas and South Africa’s general attitude towards Israel.

While a squeaking door hinge upset attendees in one of the lecture rooms, and the corridor bearing the coffee and tea dispensers got clogged from time to time with Limmudniks, giving each other quick summations of the fascinating talks they’d been to, and those they were planning to attend, the multiple options sent many into happy intellectual disarray.

“There are so many options,” one Limmudnik told her friend at the bookstore. “I want to hear all of them.”

Respected obstetrician and gynaecologist Theo Kopenhager collaborated with paediatric oncologist Cyril Karabus on possibly the most relayed story in the past few months - Karabus’ detention for nine months in Dubai on trumped-up manslaughter charges.

Israel-born Melbourne resident Manny



Limmudniks at lunch, and blowing the shofar for the month of Elul.

Waks introduced Tzedek, telling of his personal horrors of sexual abuse in a frum community, as a child - trauma that took him years to address.

Photographer Jono David presented his forays into Jewish Africa, while Dov Waxman, political scientist from New York, offered insights into the Arab Spring’s impact.

Gay issues were under the loupe with Rabbi Cardozo, David Bilchitz and Shoshana Boyd Gelfand, while Teddy Blecher explored the ins and outs of Black Economic Empowerment.

Now seven years on the South African scene, Limmud is firmly established as an institution in the country. It’s a context in

which members of the community have been blown sideways by scholars they didn’t even know existed: from Kundalini Yoga specialist Karen Anne Turis to Rob Zagey, fundraising manager at the Chevrah Kadisha; world-celebrated virologist Barry Schoub to mentalist Gilan Gork, the three-day hybrid programme, which offered both day visitors and residential access, was edge to edge with speakers bearing unusual and engaging perspectives.

In the post-Limmud glow, the organisers can be proud of a sterling achievement in bringing together this rich mixing pot of discourse. All that remains is to look forward to Limmud 2014.

Cardozo: Ethics came before halachah, not because of it

GEOFF SIFRIN

“Halachah is being misused! And that is very dangerous. It is Chilul Hashem!” thundered Rabbi Nathan Lopes Cardozo (pictured) to a packed auditorium at Limmud last Friday. There wasn’t an empty seat in the house, and more people were sitting on the floor in the auditorium of the Indaba Hotel in Fourways.

“For example, we have an Orthodox Jew sitting in jail for a serious crime, and yet he asks for glatt kosher!”

He ran off a few examples: There was Yigal Amir, who killed Yitzhak Rabin. And Baruch Goldstein, who killed Muslims worshipping in the Cave of Machpelah in Hebron. And there is the “price tag” policy of today’s settlers, according to which attempts to stop or impede settlement building engenders acts of retaliation or violence against Palestinian property - Israeli secu-



rity agencies treat it as terrorism, although they do not fully call it by that name.

“And Yigal Amir,” declared Cardozo emphatically, waving his finger, “will bring all kinds of halachah to prove he was right to kill Yitzhak Rabin... So what is going on?”

Clearly, Yigal Amir did not read Sefer Bereishit, the Book of Ethics, he said. Amir claimed halachah for

his deeds, but halachah only comes after we have learned ethics. The Jewish tradition is the most beautiful in the world, “and halachah is central to it, holy, something Divine. But we must be very careful with it.”

The Talmud itself, the key Jewish source for halachah, is itself aware of the danger of halachah. Cordozo proceeded to relate a parable about sacrifices in the Holy Temple where stringent adherence to the details of the law above all else caused a man to behave unethically towards his own son.

“Why was the Torah given so late in Jewish history? Abraham is Jewish, yet he has no Torah. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did not eat kosher. For hundreds of years there was no Torah, no Ten Commandments.

“Probably if it had been given to Abraham, the Jewish people were not yet ready to receive it. It was in fact dangerous. Any legal system is dangerous - it tells you how to live your life. It puts you in a box.

“But no law can always cover all aspects of life. Law can also kill life. Nobody needs to be told not to kill. We have an intuition as human beings that killing is wrong.”

The Jewish people needed years to develop ethics and morality, he said, and only then was Torah given. The book of Genesis had no laws. The principle of growing ethically and morally preceded the law, the Torah and halachah.

“People who say: ‘I am a good Jew at heart’, this is nonsense! There is more to life than being a ‘nice guy’. We have to be tzaddikim! There is an imperative to be more than good. Therefore there is halachah - to take us further. Jews are 4 000 years old. We are less than one per cent of mankind, but everybody talks about us. We live in a secular world which wants comfort. But the Jewish tradition rejects this ‘comfort’. We must not be comfortable.

“We Jews are an irritating people,” he said, to the amusement

of the audience. “Our role is to irritate when it comes to morality and ethics. Genesis was called Sefer ha’Yesharim because Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were ‘yesharim’ - they dealt with the idol worshippers in a straightforward way. “

He turned to the age-old question which torments Jews: Why do the anti-Semites hate us?

“For the anti-Semites,” he said, “it’s not that we killed Jesus - it’s because we gave them Jesus! The anti-Semite has never forgiven us for giving them Jesus, with his ethical approach to life.

“What is it to be religious? Nobody is religious. People are only trying to be religious. We have to say ‘wow!’ at life. We cannot explain beauty - the taste of an apple, a beautiful sunset. We just know it is there. ‘Wow’ in Hebrew is: ‘Baruch ata adonay, elokeinu melech haolam, borey pri hagafen’.

“Religion is a protest against taking things for granted.”

SA ambassador’s raw deal in ‘ME remarks’

ANT KATZ

The Jerusalem Post magazine on August 1, published an interview with new SA Ambassador Sisa Ngombane, which they headlined – quoting Ngombane: “For us, Hamas is a national liberation movement”.

This led to a spate of bad press for Ngombane and op-eds in J-Post (Barry Shaw) and the Times of Israel (Zev Shandalov) among others.

At Limmud 2013 in Johannesburg, however, Israel’s new am-

bassador to SA, Arthur Lenk, said he felt that Ambassador Ngombane had been unfairly portrayed in the media after the interview had been published.

Also coming to Ngombani’s defence was former SA anti-apartheid activist who now lives in Israel, Maurice Ostroff, who wrote to J-Post referring to Shaw’s “10 lessons for the South African ambassador to Israel”, saying: “I regret that I must disagree respectfully with my good friend Barry Shaw.

“(Shaw’s) general tone... is

completely unjustified,” he wrote.

“Ambassador Ngombane has shown a deep understanding of the relationship between Israel and South Africa.

“While the article correctly states that the ambassador said he thinks that Hamas has ‘legitimate grounds to exist’, it incorrectly suggests that the ambassador said he supports the armed struggle.” He said: “I’ve said we condemn violence.”

Some of the misunderstanding can be attributed to the new world media order of paid-for

web content. J-Post only put a free “teaser” of this story on their website and only paid subscribers could read beyond the headline and introduction. This may have caused the loss of context that Lenk had referred to.

“I’m not suggesting that I agree with the ambassador’s views of Hamas,” added Ostroff, “but differences of opinion should be discussed in civil discourse.”

- The Jerusalem Post granted permission for Ostroff’s comments to be reproduced.



Israeli Ambassador Arthur Lenk.

LIMMUD 2013

Waks’ disclosure of abuse may save other young Jews

TALI FEINBERG

As a victim of and whistleblower on sexual abuse in his native Australia, Menachem “Manny” Waks has campaigned vigorously to bring abusers to book.

“My motivation for being here is to promote discussion on this important issue,” he said last week in Cape Town at Limmud’s and the Schusterman Foundation’s “Make It Happen” initiative.

Waks, the second oldest of 17 children raised in a tight-knit ultra-Orthodox community in Melbourne, is a Jewish community leader and professional who has challenged the status quo on sexual abuse, having been a victim during his teens while living in a haredi community.

He has campaigned independently and through his organisation Tzedek, to bring abuse perpetrators to book, often at a huge personal cost.

“I want to find justice for past and future victims of sexual abuse, to create a culture where people feel safe to speak out and where these issues are confronted,” said Waks, as he presented his story in conversation with Dr Marlene Wasserman, known as “Dr Eve”.

The talk was opened by local community member Gur Geva, who said: “This may be a sensational topic, but Manny presents it in an un-sensational way.” Geva, emphasised how Waks’ priority was to share his story in order to protect children.

“[Waks] was repeatedly molested by a trusted figure of authority [when he was a teenager],” reported The Age newspaper when Waks first went to the media with his story in 2011.

“The [then] 35-year-old Canberra public servant says he was also abused by another member of the Chabad community. One of the alleged incidents is said to have occurred inside a synagogue,” reported the paper. Another incident is said to have occurred at a mikvah.

Waks explained how he was 20 years

old when he finally told his father of the abuse he experienced from age 11 to 14. Statistically, victims can take an average of 25 years to share their story with others. His father “immediately picked up the phone and called the police”, and has stood behind his son ever since. But this had come at a cost, as his father had essentially been shunned by his community.

In conversation with Dr Eve, the two discussed how abuse can sometimes go undetected in religious communities because of factors like too many children to watch; lack of supervision at shuls, schools, mikvahs and camps; and a culture of keeping quiet about contentious issues.

“I realised that if I don’t lead, no one else will,” said Waks on his decision to share his experiences, explaining that while it had been difficult to confront his community, it had also led to other victims coming forward.

“My aim is for Jewish communities to be a safe place for victims and their families to disclose their stories; for them to not be shunned and to be believed; and to create a conversation with leadership,” said Waks.

“We need to remember that we are part of broader society, and that sexual abuse is prevalent in all communities in this country,” emphasised Dr Wasserman. “It is important to have this conversation in that context,” she added. “This is an issue that affects everyone.”



Manny Waks and Dr Marlene Wasserman (Dr Eve).

From a dreadlocked Jewish maestro to tunes of the twenties



ROBYN SASSEN

Like a thread shimmering in a single strand or knitted into a fabric, music was a significant track in this year’s Limmud. From choral work to klezmer, tango to twenties tunes, chazzonus to jazz, music was played, spoken of, argued over and celebrated from a whole range of angles.

One of Limmud’s overseas guests was Buenos Aires-based Simja Dujov, a young maestro of Latin America, Jewish and Balkan sounds, bearing a Dali-esque moustache, dreadlocks, a silver magen david and a presence that simply made you smile. His work is about dance energy offering insight into how Jewish and gypsy music and tango touch.

While anaesthetist Rodney Katzew sought the Holocaust in modern songs, labour lawyer Andrew Levy took his audiences on a path through klezmer, and Saturday evening saw Yidstock a party to remember, featuring Dujov and saxophonist Rus Nerwich.

“Is there room for a foxtrot?” asked Radio Today presenter, Neil Starr (pictured) who runs “That Gramophone Show”. With his vintage gramophone record player, with a green horn, as well as the “picnic version” of the record player, the “mikkiphone”, he charmed his Limmudniks.

Starr played 78rpm records in pristine condition, of songs by Irving Berlin from the height of Ragtime, Jerome Kern and more. “There wasn’t a Jewish contribution to music of that era,” he said. “There was a monopoly.”

He explained how he uses a gramophone needle for a single use, for fear of damaging the record, giving his

feet-tapping, head-wagging audience delicious insight into “Yiddishe Charlstons” that would have energised dance floors of hotels at the time, each of which would have featured a big live band, with maybe 24 performers.

Arranger Benjamin Baruch Ambrose formed part of the litany, as did Sophie Tucker (born Kalish) who made her name in blackface, until she one day left her make up at home and emerged as an overweight Jewish girl, rather than a black mama.

At a different timbre, choral and orchestral conductor Adam Golding, founder of the Lewandowski Chorale, spoke of music “so divinely written it makes atheists question their atheism”, and illustrated this point by conducting the Chorale in a marvellous extract from L’Orfeo by Monteverdi, popularly considered the first opera written.

Taking his audience through the trajectory of vocal music, Golding explained how shul choirs had brought about the “denigration and degradation of shul music in terms of how it is performed today and how it was meant to be”.

In offering clear insight into the complex, often contentious role of women in shul choirs, and of how composers and arrangers like Louis Lewandowski worked, he told the brief history of the Lewandowski Chorale, formed last January, comprising amateurs and professionals, men and women, who love Lewandowski’s work. Last year, the Chorale travelled to Berlin for the Lewandowski Festival.

Following this track of Limmud left participants with a complicated bounce in their step, reflecting a bit of a capella, some big band arrangements, some tango and lots of context.

What makes Jewish identity tick - without being prescriptive

ROBYN SASSEN

The 2012 documentary Punk Jews directed by Jesse Zook Mann and produced by Adon Olam productions, screened during Limmud, was more than a foray into a bizarre association between punk culture and Hassidism. Rather, the film offered a sensitive exploration of Jews who exist out of the conventional framework. It was



Yitz Jordan, who calls himself Y-Love, an Orthodox Jewish black hip-hop artist.

grist for the Limmud mill.

Yishai Romanoff a haredi punk rocker from Long Island heads a band called Moshiach Oi. “My work is about what it means to be a Jew on my own terms.”

He has evolved from haredi life into punk, and back again. Romanoff might headline the documentary, but the director has cleverly splayed the idea of punk wide, offering glances at non-conformist Jews across the board.

We meet Kal Holczler, from New Square, New York. As a child, Kal was sexually abused by a respected member of his community. He lived with shame and self-hatred through his childhood, but then, developed courage to expose the deed, creating Voices of Dignity, an organisation aimed to end the cycle of abuse in Orthodoxy.

“I risked persecution.” The community closed ranks – even his parents refused to talk to him. “Home was not a place I felt comfortable coming home to. The mentality of how if we do not talk about it, it will go away, prevails.”

The camera switches to a rollicking mass of humanity, celebrating Israel



Celebrants at Tel Aviv’s Gay Pride.

Day in New York, with all factions present, from modern Zionists to radical haters of Israel in both the BDS movement and the haredi enclave, the camera pans dizzyingly between people touched by Israel in a way that makes them celebrate it, almost contradictorily.

Turning underground, we encounter “Cholent”, Jews “from the fringes of everywhere. Cholent is the first step a haredi person takes into the outside world,” says Isaac Schonfeld, its founder. “It’s a dis-organisation. Haredi convention is anti-growth and anti-change; this is the opposite.”

Amy Harlib calls herself the yoga yenta. With a martial arts background - her age isn’t mentioned, but it’s clear she won’t see 50 again - this woman does more than yoga. She’s a contortionist, who has reinvented herself as a side show.

Again, the camera pans away; we rush blithely and briefly through Gay Pride in Tel Aviv. “It’s the biggest and warmest in the Middle East,” says the narrator.

“Unity elevates, divisions destroy,” says Yitz Jordan aka Y-Love. He’s black, with dreadlocks and a talent for hip-hop poetry; he’s also Jewish.

“Jews are not necessarily white,” says this co-ordinator of a website called MaNishtana.net “Black Jews have to prove their identity all the time.”

Jenny Romaine, David Mandelbaum and Shane Baker are Yiddish theatre practitioners: “Sukkos Flash Mob” is their bit of Jewish frippery. They go around in the broader community, performing in Yiddish to arbitrary strangers. It’s a cross between repertoire theatre and a Purim shpiel, “We’re the kickass side of the Jewish world,” Mandelbaum says.

Painting conventional Judaism dull, Punk Jews extrapolates on what makes the Jewish identity tick, without being prescriptive.



Haredi punk rocker Yishai Romanoff.

ME peace and pessimism: Are Israeli-Palestinian talks the last chance to achieve it?

GEOFF SIFRIN

Middle East political analyst Dov Waxman started his Limmud talk by asking audience members who believed the new Israeli-Palestinian peace talks in Washington would succeed to raise their hands. One in 10 did.

“That’s how pessimistic people are about solving the conflict. These talks are the fourth round. The first was in 2000 between Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat. Then 2005, with Ariel Sharon, then 2010 with Ehud Olmert. If these fail, will people give up on a negotiated settlement? No-one has much hope. Each side wants to appear that they were not the cause of the talks’ failure.”

Israelis are sceptical, believing the Palestinians don’t want peace, and cannot offer security if Israel withdraws from the West Bank. The Arab world is in upheaval - who knows what leaders will arise. Land for peace is a fallacy. Look at what happened after withdrawals from South Lebanon and Gaza.

Palestinians feel previous talks failed because Israel is not sincere. It wants more settlements and “talks” are a game. And if a Palestinian state is granted, would it be viable? It would be just a form of autonomy.

Analysts like himself, however, believe the sides are actually not that far apart and know what a settlement would look like. But can they take the leap? Main issues are borders, Jerusalem and refugees.

“Most concessions have been Israeli ones up till now,” says Waxman. “This reinforces Palestinian intransigence - they know more Israeli concessions are possible.”



Dov Waxman in discourse with Selma and Jules Browde.

What does each side want? For Palestinians, 100 per cent of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem because they say: “We already gave up 78 per cent of Palestinian territory, we won’t give more.”

They want a capital in East Jerusalem - this is a pan-Islamic issue, not only a Palestinian one; unconditional right of return of refugees and their descendants, numbering perhaps five million today - in practice the return could be symbolic, plus compensation to those who don’t return.

What Israel wants isn’t clear. Israeli PM Netanyahu (Bibi) is not open about it. “A guess is giving back 60 per cent of the West Bank; no Palestinian right of return; no division of Jerusalem; long-term Israeli military presence in the Jordan Valley; and the PLO must recognise Israel as a Jewish state.”

Waxman believes neither side

can budge very much. “Abbas is too weak, and Bibi is so strong there’s not much pressure on him to compromise. Also, his government restrains him - major elements oppose a two-state solution and could bring down his government.

“But Bibi might surprise us. He has done so before. And he could bring the Israeli public with him.”

What would an agreement look like? There would be land swaps to give 100 per cent of West Bank area to the Palestinians; Jerusalem would be divided on ethnic lines; the Old City would have shared or international sovereignty; the Palestinian state to be demilitarised; the Jordan Valley to be controlled by an international force, probably Nato; implementation the right of return would be symbolic, perhaps 50 000 – 150 000 people.

Would Israelis say yes to this in a referendum? Waxman thinks they

would: “They know Israeli control over the West Bank is unsustainable.”

But implementation would be difficult. “There are spoilers on both sides. Hamas’ charter rejects Israel, because Islam forbids giving up Islamic land. But Hamas is weaker today through losing backers like Egypt and possibly Iran - they might accept ‘accommodation’ with Israel, if not ‘recognition’.”

Jewish West Bank settlers could be spoilers. There are 350 000 in more than 100 settlements. Under the agreement, the 80 per cent residing in the major blocs to be annexed to Israel won’t have to move. But about 70 000 will have to leave their homes.

The extremists may resist violently. There are already signs of this in the “price tag” policy. Also, the IDF contains many settlers, especially in combat units and would struggle to

implement a settler pullout.

Can the status quo carry on, where the conflict is essentially “managed”? No, says Waxman. Regular violence goes on, like missiles from Lebanon and Gaza. There will be more, possibly a third Intifada.

Palestinians might give up on negotiations completely. They achieved observer status at the UN, and aim for the International Criminal Court, which could cause problems. BDS will increase, making Israel a pariah state. People will give up on the two-state solution and agitate for one-person-one vote. Abbas is old - who will replace him?

What if peace talks fail? “There could be an interim solution, saying we cannot solve the 1947 issues, but we can address the 1967 ones, meaning withdrawal from the West Bank, leaving other things for later. Or there could be unilateral withdrawal.”

One ray of light, says Waxman, is that today peace is an Arab interest, including compromise on Jerusalem. The Arab League wants it, Arab monarchs already have problems controlling their populations and the Palestinian issue is a radicalising one.

An audience member asked whether a one-state solution would destroy the state’s Jewish character.

“Yes,” Waxman answered. “In the beginning, the two populations would be about 50:50. But the Palestinian population will increase more than the Jewish one because of their birthrate and return of other Palestinians. Laws will be passed decreasing the state’s Jewish character. The Jews will not stand for it. Violence will increase.”



The making of the prestigious Absa Jewish Achiever Awards

ANT KATZ

The annual Absa Jewish Achiever Awards were presented last night (August 15) at a gala event. An astounding amount of work and expertise is involved in making an enterprise of this magnitude happen - because it doesn't just happen.

The 2013 theme is "Painting a Brighter Future" and a team of individuals with day-jobs, supported by a corps of professionals, give of their time and effort to ensure the quality and integrity of the event.

This year there were more than 250 nominations which had to be whittled down to a list of finalists - each of whom was interviewed by an eminent panel of judges in a marathon session one Sunday in July.

Despite the exhausting task, the eminent judges come back year after year to carry out their gratuitous duty. The integrity of the business awards is ensured by a panel convenor - SA Jewish Report non-executive chairman (and executive chairman of Metalmin) Howard Feldman - and is audited by Garron Chaitowitz, head of private sector assurance at Grant Thornton. Neither has a vote.

The annual Jewish Achievers event predates the Jewish Report itself (1998) and has been an essential fundraiser - ensuring that SA Jewry get a weekly free newspaper.

The event has been a sell-out success year after year - but it raised the bar after the appointment of Jewish Report director Howard Sackstein as Jewish Achievers chairman in 2011.

Under Sackstein's stewardship the event has upped its game. The first planning meeting was held in January. Sackstein is supported by a band of volunteers, a top-notch

professional team and representatives from the event's elite sponsors.

The logistics are overwhelming. Literally thousands of documents are circulated and scores of meetings are held.

Nominations and judging

The Absa Jewish Achiever Awards is, after all, a recognition and celebration of achievement and it is recognised as such throughout South African society. The process, therefore, has to be conducted with the utmost of integrity.

There are two main categories of Awards:

- Four non-business and special Awards adjudicated by the directors of the Jewish Report; and
- Three Absa Business Achiever Awards - adjudicated by eminent judges after interviewing each finalist - in person or by Skype call - in a process that is audited every step of the way.

Interviewing the Absa Business Award nominees took place by scheduled appointment on a Sunday in July in a marathon 14-hour-long process.

The four judges were:

- **Steven Blend** - Johannesburg-based international entrepreneur and director of Alpha Holdings (Pty) Ltd which has tentacles globally;
- **Banie Claasen** - Absa's head of retail sector, franchise and new business - who says he is always "astounded" at the quality of the nominees - and that this year was no exception;
- **Dr Len Konar** - BCom, PG dip in Acc, CA



(SA), MAS, Cert in Tax Law, D Com, is a serial businessman but only admits to be chairman of Exxaro Resources Ltd, Mustek Ltd and Steinhoff Investment Holdings Limited; and

- **Geoff Rothschild** - head of government and international affairs at the JSE, director of Nepad Business Foundation and patron of Education Africa and Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital.

This is arguably the most heavy-weight judging panel of any business award in South Africa.

The Business Achiever judging processes required copious amounts of information to be collated into "judging packs" which overflowed a full-size lever arch file.

Logistics and co-ordination just for the judging is immense. Appointments are made for each finalist interview - for those out of town or country, it is done via Skype. Each finalist has to have their picture taken and a

short video clip made.

The winners are selected by the end of the day - but much still has to be done before the Awards process is concluded. Certificates printed for each finalist and signed by representatives of the SA Jewish Report and Absa CEO Maria Ramos and other sponsors - then off to the framers.

Trophies must be made and engraved, speakers arranged to introduce each Award-winner and dignitaries to present each Award. The elite gala event is merely the culmination of six months of frenetic activity.

The Absa Jewish Achiever Awards is indeed a highlight of the Jewish community's social and business calendars - but it is also one of the most prestigious business award events in the country. And so, as is the case each year, devoted attention to detail and integrity has come together to ensure that winning an Absa Jewish Achiever Award remains a sought after goal.

City aims to put the rose back into Rosebank



STAFF REPORTER

Huge financial investments are being made into the Rosebank area with R6,8 billion being pumped into the suburb since 2010 when the Gautrain station was built.

Lael Bethlehem, chairman of the Rosebank Management District and Central Improvement District, (RMD) said Rosebank was emerging as a critical node because of the large developments taking place there.

Because of its economic importance, it had been selected by the City of Johannesburg as one of the 35 key priority areas which the council would focus on. This meant that the city would aim at a 70 per cent improvement in service delivery.

Rosebank, said Bethlehem, had an unusual attributes which included it mixed use of residential, retail, offices and hotels.

The area was also relatively green and "walkable" because of the many pedestrian

walkways, which were also currently being improved. Rosebank had benefitted from Government's investment in the Gautrain and from the city's decision to encourage more intensive land use around Gautrain stations.

The Central Improvement District was an important resource in the area and drew on residential as well as corporate membership, she said.

The area was also well-served with public transport with the Gautrain, Rea Vaya and a strong Metrobus service and mini bus taxis.

However, the huge investments made in the area were bringing their own challenges, she said.

Developers alone had contributed R4,1m in bulk service contributions to the city, but these had not been well-spent, and in some cases, not spent at all.

"The problem areas are that the infrastructure is not geared for such big growth.

The roads have also deteriorated because of the large volume of construction vehicles.

"The parks in the area have largely been underdeveloped and uncared for," she said.

Other problems were the encroachment of developments into the residential part of the suburb, and not enough parking facilities for minibus taxis and metered taxis.

City of Johannesburg Mayor Parks Tau recently visited the area and reinforced its importance as a business and residential node. He said no money had been spent on Rosebank in recent years because of the construction of the Gautrain and other developments.

When major construction projects were complete, developer contributions could be used for road upgrading, he said.

Tau admitted a critical error the city's planning department was making was not providing sufficient parking space for minibus taxis in Rosebank.

"There are rules about parking spaces for cars, yet (minibus) taxis are the main form of transport for many people who work in the area," he said.

Bethlehem said there were many plans by the RMD to improve the area. The RMD had organised a Sunday public performance project involving community-based arts and culture.

The organisation had also funded and co-managed a traffic and transport study for the area and had reached an agreement with the city on the layout of the parks, she said. Included in this was helping the city to make the area more pedestrian-friendly.

Other plans were: to revise the relationship with neighbouring areas; ensuring the private sector was not crowding out public facilities such as libraries and parks; providing two formal facilities for metered taxis; finding land for a larger taxi rank and promoting walking and cycling paths.

Links Youth maddies switch to a higher gear

SEAN KORB AND LIOR FEIGIN

The madrichim of the Linksfield Senderwood Hebrew Congregation, known as “Links Youth”, powered by Bnei Akiva, took some time out from building the youth of the community to focus on building themselves to be greater madrichim. With words of inspiration from the inspiring rabbi known as the “English voice” of renowned Rav Shalom Arush and the English translator of books such as “The Garden of Emunah”, Rabbi Shalom Brody, the madrichim discussed ideas such as the role of the madrich in our world, and to be happy as a Jew.

This was not possible without the Hachnasat Orchim of the Matthews family who were instrumental in bringing Rabbi Brody to South Africa.



The madrichim with the children.

A 700 km ride for chesed and bonding

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Chesed was the order of the day as the 35 grade 11 cyclists in Cycalive 2013 - from Johannesburg to Durban - from Torah Academy, Pace Commercial College and Moletsane High School, as well as cyclists from Israel brought out by Partnership 2Gether, carried out this mitzvah en route to Durban during their 700 km ride off the main highways.

The cyclists, accompanied by photographer Ilan Ossendryver, stopped off at the Newcastle Hospital, Greylingstad Primary School and the Ethembeni School in Inchanga, “a school of hope for children with physical disabilities and visual impairments”.

Young patients in the hospital received gift packs and other treats sponsored by a Torah Academy parent, while the schools were presented with stationery, food and sporting equipment.

On arrival in KZN, the team taking part in the 16th Cycalive - an official event on the Nelson Mandela Day calendar

for the past four years - was met by Durban cyclists, the Field Band from KZN and had a police escort to the Moses Mabhida Stadium, where they received a rousing welcome from Durban municipal and Jewish dignitaries.



The Cycalive team is greeted by the Jewish community of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban.

My Ohrsom Tour experience



CALLI JORDAN CRESWICK

A unique spice-up to the Ohrsom Tour was about to take place with the 2013 group, filled with eager Jewish young adults from Johannesburg and Cape Town.

From day 1, I felt connected to the people I was with and the tour I was on as a whole, with lunch on the breath-taking heights of the grottos in Rosh Hanikra. It was, simply put, incredibly special!

Where else can you have an action-filled quad biking experience with laughs and bruises accompanied by wine-“tasting” as the refreshment, but the best part of that day for me, was the unforgettable Shabbat we had in the old City of Tzvat that evening, where I felt an unbelievable sense of camaraderie, an overall sense of belonging and spiritual upliftment while we prayed and brought in Shabbat with the residents of this holy city.

Having been to Israel a number of times before, I had the preconception that I had seen Israel and all the “main” attractions it’s so famous for. Was I wrong! From a party boat on the Kinneret to Amuka straight after, the holy grave where people come to pray from all around the world, everything was new and exciting and meaningful.

This action-packed tour encompassed all as-

pects of the most fun-filled and team building of activities such as canoeing on the Jordan River, abseiling in the dessert, City of David and Old City Tunnel Tours in Jerusalem, and water sports, to the gorgeous sunrise while floating in the Dead Sea.

I experienced unique places and growth amidst unique friends, rabbis and madrichim. The level of self-determination each of us were given to interpret and experience this journey, whether religiously, spiritually or culturally, even a mixture of all three, was what made it for me, an encounter like no other.

I learned so much about my friends, my religion, my homeland and my Jewish identity and equally important; myself, a greater sense of community was instilled in me.

The young men and women ages 18 through 24 who came on this journey as separate friendship circles, pairs or individuals, all sharing the same feelings of excitement, willingness to learn and experience new and wonderful things in the Holy Land, was undoubtedly achieved as a unity of close friends with kindled friendships that would definitely remain strong long after the last supper in Tel Aviv.

This is evident in the several reunions that occurred post-touch down at OR Tambo. This tour is clearly an important stepping stone and an experience of a lifetime.

Rode Events 2013

A number of events have been organized by Rode & Associates to take place countrywide during the month of August, and which will address the many challenges currently facing the property market.

For more details and to book your place at any of these events, please contact Angelique Claasen on **021 946 2480** or alternatively, please visit our website at **www.rode.co.za**.

If you are a Professional Valuer or Professional Associated Valuer, the SACPV will recognise your time at any of these Rode events as CET hours.

Conference: Cape Town

Tuesday, 20 August 2013 | Spier Wine Estate, Stellenbosch
Sponsored by Airports Company South Africa Properties

Bookings close on 15 August 2013, at noon.

Breakfast: Port Elizabeth

Thursday, 22 August 2013 | Protea Hotel Marine, Port Elizabeth
Sponsored by Airports Company South Africa Properties

Bookings close on 19 August 2013, at noon.

Conference: Johannesburg

Friday, 23 August 2013 | Emperors Palace, Kempton Park
Sponsored by Airports Company South Africa Properties

Bookings close on 20 August 2013, at noon.

Breakfast: Bloemfontein

Wednesday, 28 August 2013 | Ilanga Estate, Bloemfontein
Sponsored by Airports Company South Africa Properties

Bookings close on 23 August 2013, at noon.

Breakfast: Durban

Friday, 30 August 2013 | The Oyster Box, Umhlanga Rocks
Sponsored by Airports Company South Africa Properties

Bookings close on 27 August 2013, at noon.

Don't miss out on a gala evening with Moshe Arens

The Gala Evening for Moshe Arens will now take place at Beyachad

Please note change of venue and time

Time: 7:45 pm
When: 17th August 2013
(Saturday evening)

RSVP: Miriam Garb
miriam@beyachad.co.za
Tel number (011) 645-2531
Fax number (011) 640-1992

Donation: R150
For security reasons ID numbers are required

Attractions:
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Light Finger Meal (Mehadrin Commission)



Above Board
Mary Kluk
National Chairman

Last week, we welcomed newly-arrived Israeli Ambassador to South Africa Arthur Lenk. We have had numerous prior opportunities of engaging with him and look forward to working with him now that he has taken up his post.

I would also like to acknowledge the contribution made by his predecessor Dov Segev-Steinberg and wish him all success in his future assignments.

It is significant that one of the first places that Ambassador Lenk visited was Liliesleaf, one of the most significant heritage sites associated with our national liberation movement.

In general, we have been impressed at how he has gone about educating himself regarding the history and current situation of this country. While realistic as to what kind of expectations to have, he is positive about going about meeting the challenges that will undoubtedly arise.

Members of our community will have the opportunity of meeting Mr Lenk at the Board’s national congress on August 25.

An exciting Israel-flavoured event at Wits

We are happy to report that on August 28, the Wits Music Department will be hosting a concert by a renowned Israeli jazz quartet, headed by Daniel Zamir, in the Wits Great Hall. Bookings can be made through our offices (contact Karen by SMS at 074-841-0555 or by e-mail at zamirjazzconcert@gmail.com) and we strongly encourage our community to attend.

In addition to the high calibre of the artists, this event will also be an important public

demonstration of the right to freedom of expression at our universities. As we know, earlier this year a piano recital by Israeli-born Yossi Reshef was forcibly disrupted by anti-Israel radicals.

Wits strongly condemned the incident and implemented disciplinary procedures against those responsible. It has also unequivocally asserted the right to protected free spaces on campus for all in the Wits community, including for Israeli artists, and in this regard has committed itself to ensuring that the forthcoming concert will be allowed to proceed without being disrupted.

The more successful the concert is in attendance, the stronger the message that freedom of expression is an inalienable right in this country and people can choose who they wish to listen to, regardless of political affiliation or nationality.

Interfaith outreach an important facet of the SAJBD’s work

Fostering relationships with civil society and other faith groups is a core part of SAJBD’s mandate. In this regard, the Board’s Associate Director David Saks, travelled to Nelspruit last Sunday to participate in the Church Leaders Israel Briefings session of a Bridges for Peace seminar.

He addressed the group on a range of subjects relating to Judaism, Jewish history and what his Jewish heritage means to him. He was warmly received and his visit much appreciated. There is a tremendous groundswell of goodwill towards and support for the Jewish people in wider society, which our community is largely unaware of.

It is important for Jewish leaders to reciprocate this goodwill by likewise extending a hand of friendship and building bonds of friendship and understanding with our fellow citizens.

• Listen to Steven Gruzd on Jewish Board Talk on 101.9 ChaiFM every Friday 12:00 - 13:00.

This column is paid for by SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Fascinating, insightful account of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

ANT KATZ

One of Israel’s most inspiring political, business and academic leaders, Professor Moshe Arens (88), arrives in SA today (Thursday) to participate in several events at which his latest book, “Flags over the Warsaw Ghetto: The Untold Story of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising”, will be available. The book has not previously been available in hard-copy form in South Africa.

“We especially imported a few hundred copies from the publisher,” says Likud-SA Chairman Leon Reich. The books will be sold at landed cost, says Reich, and will be signed by the author on request.

Arens has been brought out by Likud and Betar South Africa in association with the SA Zionist Federation. His first order of business will be to address a function for Likud and Betar at Beyachad on Thursday evening.

Arens’ only public engagement will be on Saturday evening, August 18, when he will be the keynote speaker at a gala night at Beyachad. It will begin with him officially opening the World Betar Exhibition, a cocktail dinner (Mehadrin Commission), a 30-minute documentary commemorating the centenary of Menachem Begin’s birth and Arens’ address. The new Israeli ambassador, Arthur Lenk and several senior communal leaders will speak as well. Bookings can be made with the SAZF.

Arens is an Israeli aeronautical engineer, former diplomat and politician. He was a member of the Knesset for 25 years and served five terms in the Cabinet. He also served as Israeli ambassador to the US.



Jewish Report arts editor Robyn Sassen, in her review of Arens’ book, says “the reality of the Warsaw Ghetto - a step before the total annihilation of Warsaw’s Jews, one of the biggest communities in the world at the time, and the ghetto uprising which happened in 1943 - are inflammatory ones that historically has set the imagination of writers, playwrights, choreographers alive. It’s a tale of horror and the power of good, which is terrifyingly defeated.

“Arens’ book reads with the verve and excitement of a novel, but it offers its readers considerably more. Tracing a line of Revisionist involvement and ostracism throughout the story, Arens highlights where the Revisionist and paramilitary movement Betar fitted in.

“Ideologically, the movement, began by Ze’ev Jabotinsky in the 1930s, was at direct loggerheads with the different perspectives on Zionism articulated by other leaders, and the melee of values surrounding both Zionist and self-preservation ideals in Jewish Poland at the cusp of the war makes for a rich and valuable trajectory into a true story that has not, until the publication of this book, seen mainstream light of day.

“We meet the characters infused with a sense of life-and-death urgency in saving Jews and in breaking down the Nazi ethos. Generally, these young men and women are described by names, ages and gestures in the struggle for life and in the realisation of what deportations meant in Eastern Europe. And yet, from this scant information, we meet young men and women of fervour, people willing to die for their community and their beliefs.”

SAJR at forefront of celebrating Jewish Johannesburg



Chabad assistant Jade Lee, and passerby Greg Aveling at last week’s “Say Yes To a Better Year” lead-up event, celebrating the Jewish Report as one of the fabulous things that make Jewish Johannesburg what it is.

The “Say Yes” street team has been and will continue to celebrate and applaud Jewish Johannesburg’s unique products and services up until the annual “Say Yes To a Better Year” event, hosted just before Rosh Hashanah, on August 20 at 20:00 in the Maroela Room of the Sandton Sun Hotel. There will be a donation of R50 required.



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What's On

Today, Friday (August 16)

- ORT SA with Sasfin and Deloitte is hosting Prof Moshe Arens at a breakfast. Time: 07:00 for 07:30. For more information and to RSVP: (011) 728-7154.
- UZLC hosts Mannie Zar on "Some Humour in the Law" Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Contact: Gloria, 072-127-9421 or (011) 485-4851.
- Beyachad hosts Prof Moshe Arens; the new Israeli Ambassador to SA Arthur Lenk; a film on Menachem Begin; and Betar World Expo at a finger supper (Mehadrin Commission). Venue: Beyachad. Time: 19:45. Cost: R150. Booking essential. Miriam@beyachad.co.za

Saturday evening (August 17)

- Johannesburg Light Music Society hosts Mike Kimmelman who will present a tribute to Johnny Mathis, followed by Benny Michel who will also pay a tribute to the late singer and his band. Venue: Roosevelt Park Recreation Centre. Time: 14:00 sharp. Enquiries: Ron, (011) 793-2383 or Marilyn, 072-243-7436.
- WIZO Etgar hosts a breakfast with Dr Eve, on "Hot Flash Havoc". Venue: Theatre on the Square. Time: 09:00 for 09:30. Cost: R250. For bookings contact Zee 083-377-5644.
- Sydenham Highlands North Community Centre again hosts a breakfast for working moms, titled "The Liberty Working Mom's Guide to Reinvention" at the centre, with guest speaker Mandy Ramsden, a single mother of four talking on how to find and re-invent ourselves in the face of the onslaught that is work and motherhood and how to be inspired along the way. Time: 09:00 for 09:30. Contact: (011) 640-1989 or 072-492-0664.

Sunday (August 18)

- Johannesburg Light Music Society hosts Mike Kimmelman who

Monday (August 19)

- UJW hosts Lael Bethlehem, HCI industrial sociologist, on "Cross-Racial Adoption". Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R30. Contact: (011) 648-1053.
- Bnoth Zion WIZO in CT screens the award winning documentary "Hot Flash Havoc" on menopause, followed by a panel discussion led by Dr Eve (sexologist); Dr De Villiers (gynaecologist); Dr Wilkinson (plastic surgeon); Kim Hoffman (nutritionist); and Kathy Wolstenholme (Nia dancing). Snacks and welcome drink will be served. Venue: President Hotel, Bantry Bay. Time: 18:00 - 21:00. Cost: R250. Contact: (021)-464-6729 or bza@ctjc.co.za. Snacks and a welcome drink will be served.
- UJW hosts musicologist Estelle Sher on Beethoven. Venue: 1 Oak

Tuesday (August 20)

- Bnoth Zion WIZO in CT screens the award winning documentary "Hot Flash Havoc" on menopause, followed by a panel discussion led by Dr Eve (sexologist); Dr De Villiers (gynaecologist); Dr Wilkinson (plastic surgeon); Kim Hoffman (nutritionist); and Kathy Wolstenholme (Nia dancing). Snacks and welcome drink will be served. Venue: President Hotel, Bantry Bay. Time: 18:00 - 21:00. Cost: R250. Contact: (021)-464-6729 or bza@ctjc.co.za. Snacks and a welcome drink will be served.
- UJW hosts musicologist Estelle Sher on Beethoven. Venue: 1 Oak

Wednesday (August 21)

- SA Jewish Museum CT hosts Lance Herman Eliezer, giving a live music performance. Venue: SA Jewish Museum, Gardens. Time: 18:30 for 19:00. Cost: R60. Booking essential, (021) 465-1546 or info@sajewishmuseum.co.za
- UJW CT adult education programme hosts Dr Alan Alperstein on "Innovations in Gyneacology". Venue: Stonehaven, Sea Point. Time: 10:00 for 10:30.

Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R30. Contact: (011) 648-1053.

• Bnoth Zion Association WIZO screens the entertaining, humorous award-winning documentary, "Hot Flush Havoc". All you need to know about menopause. Followed by a talk by Dr Eve and a panel of experts. Venue: President Hotel, Bantry Bay. Time: 18:00. Cost: R250. Contact: (021) 464-6729.

Cost: R20. Enquires: (021) 434-9555 (until 14:00).

• UJW hosts Dr Lorraine Chaskalson, former lecturer in the Dept of English at Wits, on part 4 of her series on "Contemporary Poetry". Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R30. Contact: (011) 648-1053.

• Second Innings hosts an "Outing to Van Gaalen Cheese Farm in the Hartbeespoort Area". Meet the bus at 08:30 sharp in front of Golden Acres. Cost: R180 members, R200 visitors. Contact: Grecia, (011) 532-9718 or 082-561-3228.

Friday (August 23) to Friday (August 30)

- Elise WIZO Gift Shop and WIZO Johannesburg are selling their wares at the Yomtov Market at the Norwood Mall. Exciting range of gifts. Enquiries: WIZO office, (011) 645-2515.

Maccabiah an overwhelming success for Team SA



ROCKING THE BOAT
Jack Milner

The Maccabiah is over, everybody is back and Maccabi South Africa Chairman Cliff Garrun has declared this year’s event a roaring success. With the medal tally still not finalised, Garrun believes Team South Africa won around 54 medals, 18 of which were gold. The gold medals went to senior and junior cricket, junior rugby XV and sevens teams, Kevin Evans for road race cycling, the men’s trips bowls team, Shireen Sapiro for Para 100m backstroke (she also won two silvers) and Jacqui Boyd for tennis open doubles. Masters squash player Peter Garrun won the singles event while the SA team, comprising Garrun, Dennis Bass and Mike Charnas, won gold in the team competition. The Masters swimmers came away with seven gold medals, five of which went to Durbanite Peter Letschert and two to Ivan Schlapobersky. “Dave Letschert’s performance was one of the

highlights of the Games for us,” said Garrun. “He swam some of the fastest times in the tournament and broke a number of records.” Before the Games Letschert also swam at the Bosphorus Cross-Continental race, a 6,5km race, finishing 16th overall and first in the 45 to 49 age group. “Other highlights include Kevin Evans’ cycling win in which he beat a former under-23 world champion from Ukraine,” said Garrun. “Our senior cricket side had a tough tournament. They only took 12 players and one got injured in the first game so they only had 11 players to complete the tournament. They made the final on net run rate, which went down to a few shots in their last round robin match against Israel and then easily beat Israel in the final. What was very pleasing was the junior rugby team. Rugby has the highest number of spectators and the standard is improving. It’s very professional. “There were some tight games which they got through and there are enough guys who will come into the senior sides.” Garrun also complimented Paralympic swimmer Shireen Sapiro. “Shireen is fantastic and she was wonderful across the board. She stayed with the juniors and helped with the manage-

ment.” He added that once again the junior cricket dominated completely. “However, we need to keep the momentum going. What struck me overall was the improvement in standards, especially from the Israeli teams. They dominated the entire Maccabiah. They won the rugby for the first time and in previous years they could not even make the finals. “Of the 9 000 participating athletes, 2 500 were from Israel. Their sport is far better organised, their coaching has improved and they are getting more competitive.” The Maccabiah is never without its controversy but this time the South Africans were the victims. “We took a basketball team for the first time. It was an under-18 squad, all of whom are from Cape Town. They did not win a match outright but they tried extremely hard and were competitive to the end. They were given the Fair Play award at the ceremony which was fantastic,” said Garrun. However, they managed to win one game in the boardroom because Turkey illegally fielded an under-16 player who was a top goalscorer, in their under-18 squad. “They sneaked him under a false name into their side and he scored most of their goals. Fortunately it was spotted by our coach.”



South African junior rugby captain Justin Sher goes over for a try on the team’s way to their gold medal at this year’s Maccabiah.

Heading the junior delegation was advocate Mannie Witz who represented the team at the hearing and won the day for South Africa. “It was overwhelmingly a hugely positive event for us,” said Garrun. “We participated in 20 sports and in 14 of those came away with medals. Our great achievement is that 200 of the 360-strong squad were under-20. “Our primary function now is to keep the brand alive and relevant. Our fundraising did well and we managed to capture the imagination of the community. I feel we have depth in our leadership and we have the momentum to build for the future.”

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Dynamic Shlomo Nimrodi makes things happen

SHIRA DRUION

Shlomo Nimrodi (pictured), CEO of Ramot at Tel Aviv University (the university’s technology transfer company) boasts an astounding list of achievements and a glittering CV. As an above knee amputee as a result of a war injury sustained while serving with the IDF, Nimrodi has completed 14 Olympic distance Triathlons as a challenged athlete. He has never accepted adversity as a handicap. He is currently actively involved with several initiatives in the US and in Israel with the FIDF through the STRIDES programme, helping and educating young people who have been injured either in wars or terror attacks, with the challenges of life by sharing his own life experiences. He has 20 years’ international experience in healthcare, broadcast graphics, digital printing, telecommunications, financial services and clean energy. Nimrodi started his professional career in 1983 with the Israeli Ministry of Defence as an economic adviser to the Defence Minister and was involved in several major Israeli initiatives. His passion to constantly achieve his best is evident in the numerous business success stories which are a living narrative of his career. He has directed global operations and activities from a grassroots level, is a catalyst in implementing positive change, igniting stagnant operations, and utilising out-of-the-box thinking to resolve complex strategic, operational and organisational challenges and has pioneered the huge success of several companies going public. As CEO of Ramot, his initial objective is to establish a win-win relationship between academia and industry, taking into account the demands of university research environments and industry’s needs. He scouts for new innovation, accesses funding for new projects, and essentially facilitates the process that translates products from university labs into the global market. “When I returned from spending 15 years working in the US, I received a call from the chairman of Tel Aviv University. He said: ‘Shlomo, you have excelled in your business career, now it is time to do something for your country’,” he said during a recent visit to South Africa, where he met with academics at Stellenbosch University and advised them on how to create similar infrastructures for products that are developed there. Today, Tel Aviv University is the largest in the country with 15 000 people doing research and is the single largest source of innovation in Israel. It is uniquely positioned in how it deals with major concerns of society including central nervous system cures and cyber security. Nimrodi remains humble about his accomplishments despite an MA and MBA with Honours from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and an advanced Management Programme certificate from Harvard Business School. “I think the secret to success is to be bold and to lead by example, to be creative, to persist, to be humble by listening to people, to have stamina and to be innovative. I always tell my kids it’s okay to make mistakes, but be original and don’t make the same mistake twice. “You have to believe in something to do and go at it with your heart,” says Nimrodi. “That is the root to success. If you don’t believe in the endeavour, you will not make a success of it.”

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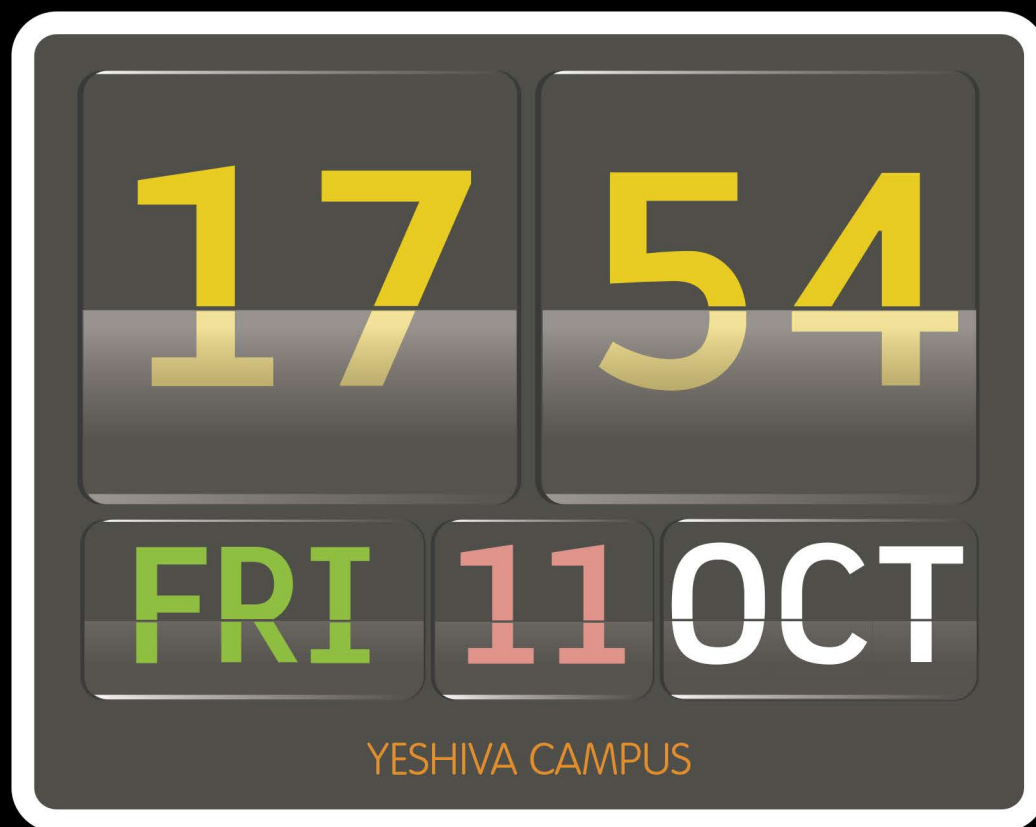
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