

MAJOR GIFT TO CREATE ZAMIR CHORAL FOUNDATION'S JEWISH CHORAL CONDUCTING INSTITUTE

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The Zamir Choral Foundation has received a major gift to create the nation's first institute to train conductors of Jewish choirs. The gift by Cantor Robert Lieberman and his wife Rabbi Vicki Lieberman fulfills the long-time dream of Matthew Lazar, founder and director of the Zamir Choral Foundation, to perpetuate excellent Jewish music and community by providing high-level professional training through the Jewish Choral Conducting Institute and its Lazar Fellowship.

The newly formed Institute will perpetuate excellent Jewish music and community by providing high-level professional training through the Jewish Choral Conducting Institute and its Lazar Fellowship.

"By auditioning and training the next generation of conductors, under the leadership of Maestro Lazar, the future of Jewish choral music and its impact on Jewish literacy into the next generation will not only be secured but expanded throughout the United States and Israel," adds Cantor Robert Lieberman.

"When I was a teen, some of my most cherished memories are of singing Shabbat services with my cantor and synagogue choir," says Rabbi Vicki Lieberman. "It is an honor to now help Zamir Choral Foundation engage the next generation of conductors who will enliven the rich heritage of Jewish choral music and inspire, educate and nurture their congregations and audiences."

Each cohort of Lazar Fellows will consist of 12-15 conducting students from the US and Israel who gather at intensive in-person retreats and workshops, monthly online and in one-on-one mentoring sessions with Maestro Lazar and guest presenters, and receive a Certificate in Jewish Choral Conducting upon completion of the program. Fellows will have placement opportunities through Zamir Choral Foundation's network as well as the opportunity to start choirs in other communities.

The Foundation's programming has already helped produce a growing network of multi-generational international Jewish choirs, including: 36 chapters of HaZamir: The International Teen Choir; the Zamir Chorale, the premiere Hebrew-singing choir in the U.S., based in New York; Zamir Noded, a choir for young adults; 8 chapters of a preparatory program for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade singers; and the North American Jewish Choral Festival, now in its 35th year. The ZCF has also commissioned new music through its commissioning arm, the Mandell-Rosen Fund, for over two decades, adding dozens of important new pieces to a growing repertoire for Jewish choirs.

"We are guided by an expansive vision of vibrant Jewish identity through the study and performance of Jewish music at the highest level of excellence," says Matthew Lazar. "The Jewish Choral Conducting Institute will create a pipeline of talent to ensure a strong leadership cadre for the Jewish future."

For further information regarding the Conducting Institute at Zamir Choral Foundation, visit zamirchoralfoundation.org

About Zamir Choral Foundation

The Zamir Choral Foundation, created by Matthew Lazar, promotes choral music as a vehicle to inspire Jewish life, literacy, and community. The Foundation's programs include the North American Jewish Choral Festival; HaZamir: The International Jewish Teen Choir; the acclaimed Zamir Chorale; Zamir Noded for young adult singers; Zamir Conducting Fellows to train the next generation of Jewish choral conductors; and the HaZamir Preparatory Program for middle school singers. Matthew Lazar, Founder and Director of the Zamir Choral Foundation, is the leading force of the Jewish choral movement in the US. He has worked with Leonard Bernstein, Zubin Mehta, Elie Wiesel, Theodore Bikel, Dr. Ruth Westheimer, and others. The Zamir Choral Foundation is guided by an expansive vision of vibrant Jewish identity across the generational, denominational, and political continuums through the study and performance of Jewish music at the highest level of excellence.

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"Choral music lies at the intersection of text, music, and community. It implants cultural identity, history, memory, and catharsis," says Matthew Lazar. "The conductor integrates music and text, with mastery, precision, and excellence, creating inspiring and transformative musical moments. The Institute will provide the specialized, intensive training needed to make all this possible."

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