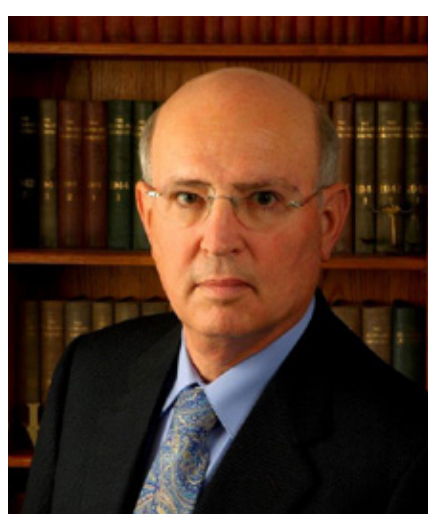


JAMD in June

Pamela Peled



Adv. Yair Green

The changing of the guard at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance is an auspicious affair. Yitzhak Navon, the 5th President of the State of Israel, served for eleven years as Chair of the JAMD Board of Directors, and it was he who brought Advocate Yair Green aboard. Green, who is now retiring from office after fourteen years, has been an impressive Chairman. A recent recipient of the 'Yakir Yerushalayim Award,' he has been a successful Real Estate, International Law, and Corporations lawyer for fifty years. But Green, as Yaakov Aizner, the Chair of the Board's financial committee attests, is much more than an acclaimed advocate.

"Yair is hugely dedicated to whatever he does," says Aizner. "His volunteering and contribution to so many causes is exceptional." A dancer and choreographer in his youth, with an abiding passion for music and dance, Green is also Chairman of the acclaimed "Hora" Folk Dance Group. His endless volunteering includes serving as the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Ben Gurion University, Chairing the Israel Camerata Jerusalem and serving on the board of the beautiful Eden Tamir Music Center in Ein Karem. He also founded the Green Fund to encourage learning and

education, which has awarded hundreds of scholarships to students over the years. With Honorary Doctorates from Ben Gurion and Bar Ilan Universities, Yair Green, who is married to Gavriella and has three children and ten grandchildren, is a man of many accomplishments. He could be forgiven for believing that his way is the right way, or that he always knows best.

Yet, the JAMD Board of Directors members are unanimous in their warm praise of Green's patience, and understanding, coupled with his respectful attitude to problem solving. "He always listens to all opinions, and is unfailingly caring and pleasant," says Dr. Sarah Hershkowitz, who has served on the board for ten years. It's Green's "Rosh Patuach" that impresses his colleagues – his "open mind" and grasp of the big picture. Micha Tal, former JAMD Director General for 33 years and a current Board member, explains that Green doesn't interfere where there is no need, but has a knack of bridging gaps and steering the team to agreement.

Prof. Yinan Leef, President of JAMD, concurs. "Yair's budgetary responsibility, side by side with his great respect for the academic and artistic outcome of JAMD, his wonderful interpersonal skills and approach to and solving of conflicts, his excellent connections with the Jerusalem City Hall, and his genuine interest in the life of the Jerusalem Academy, the High School and the Conservatory have been enormously helpful in many fields," explains Leef. Green cemented the Kushner donation for the Kushner Family Building now under constructions. He was also instrumental in formulating the "Generation B" agreement with the Senior Faculty Association – a very tricky contract between the Academy and the teachers – creating a consensus between all parties. Together with Professor Leef he got the deal done.

"I always strive for excellence," explains Green. "As Chairman of the Board of Directors of JAMD it was not my role to make academic decisions, but I wanted to ensure excellence in teaching and learning. I especially wanted to ensure that excellent and also needy students could receive scholarships." In accordance with his philosophy that "without flour there is no learning" he did his best to obtain funds for the Academy, in addition to donating from his own pocket.

Board members say they'll miss his opening jokes, his availability and expertise, and his dapper style of dressing. "At last, during a Corona zoom, we saw Yair in a regular t-shirt," smiles Hershkowitz. "He always attended meetings in a suit and tie – he's a very smart dresser!"



Mr. Yaron Gazit

So far nobody knows what Yaron Gazit's sartorial style will be, or whether, indeed, Board meetings will continue (in slippers) on zoom forever. But not having face-to-face meetings is the least of the issues that Gazit, the incoming Head of the Board will have to deal with in the wake of Covid 19; life at JAMD has obviously been impacted by the lockdown on all fronts.

Yet, if anyone can step into Green's (smart) shoes and step up to the challenges it's Gazit. A successful businessman with a string of start-ups under his belt and leading positions in Coca-Cola, UPS, Solar Energy, and the Chairman of Globbrands Ltd., Gazit is used to thinking on his feet and getting the job done. His interests are so varied that it's hard to imagine when he sleeps: he headed the Friends of the Netanya Kibbutz Chamber Orchestra for six years, and has served on the Advisory Board of the external division of the Rimon School of Music. He's a drummer in his spare time and involved in "Jazz Way" – an organization to promote jazz in Israel. Gazit, a Major (Reserves) in the Golani Brigade, volunteers with an organization that helps Golani soldiers in need, and impressively, he is also involved in an advisory capacity with Space IL.

Gazit's vision is to further expand JAMD's recognition both internationally and in Israel, to all music and dance lovers. "The Academy is already considered excellent on a worldwide scale," he says. "This should be more widely known." According to Gazit Israel's Government Cultural funding is ranked last in OECD countries, so donors and supporters are of paramount importance. More visibility for JAMD could also translate into more financial support from private sources. Fund-raising, of course, has become even more challenging in these troubled times of the Corona virus.

One of the pillars of Academy support is the friendship of Mr. Younes Nazarian, Honorary Chair of the JAMD International Board of Governors, and his wife Soraya, whose dedication to higher education in Israel and generosity to JAMD has enabled the Academy's flagship Younes and Soraya Nazarian Program for Excellence in Chamber Music which attracts students from Israel and abroad. The program's reputation in this competitive world of training young musicians to excellence has placed the Academy firmly on the international map.

This year 49 participants, all recipients of full merit scholarships, are honing their skills in the Nazarian program.

This is only possible because of the generous, loyal support of the Nazarian family and the Ima Foundation. Additional scholarships were contributed by board members Yeheskel Beinisch and his wife Dorit in memoriam Ran Baron, Shosh Carmel, Yair Green, Rita and Charles Salfeld, Marsha and Michael Segal, Dov and Graziella Seltzer and Peter Tollman in memoriam Yoni Tollman, and by the Clore Foundation, the Sherover Foundation and the Claire Hasson Fund in memoriam Reuven Hasson.



Dr. Sharon Nazarian, greeting the recipients on-line

This year the artistic program – the last movement of Mozart's string quartet K.421 and Schumann's piano quintet Op. 44 – was broadcast from the Academy stage into living rooms in line with Covid-19 regulations. Some students zoomed their wares straight from their homes. Dr. Sharon Nazarian, President of the Nazarian Family Foundation, warmly congratulated the recipients and reaffirmed the Ima Foundation and the Nazarian family's commitment to the program and the Academy. Light refreshments for the audience were served in everyone's individual kitchen; viewers turned off their laptops and opened their refrigerators. Not quite the same as in years gone by.

But lucky are those who have tubs of ice-cream in the fridge; many Academy students are now cutting back on luxury goods. Covid has hit students hard. Before the pandemic many music and dance students taught part-time in schools and were the first put out on leave without pay. Many of them are not even eligible for unemployment benefits. Students who freelanced in orchestras or dance companies or shows face the same fate: with all performances cancelled, pay has been slashed. Private music lessons have gone, waiters were out of work;

even when some jobs started opening up students who live at home with parents at risk were hesitant to go back into the workplace. Add to that students from complicated family backgrounds and international students who were unable to return home ... it's quite a chaotic situation. "We quickly understood that many more students would need help," explains Dean of Students Dr. Ido Ariel, "and we started an emergency fund in response to Corona. By our first deadline of mid-May we were able to assist 68 students, thanks to the generosity of our patrons, supporters and friends, and since then we have added about 20 more." Ariel reckons that between 10-15% of all students need financial help; grants range from 1,000 shekel to 3,500 depending on individual financial circumstances. The scary part, of course, is that no one knows when this is all going to end.

In other crises – wars, missiles, terrorism – performers raise our spirits by staying on stage as bombs rain down and battles rage. Leonard Bernstein, Isaac Stern – all the greats have come to Israel to play to us when times were tough. And we still need a shot of music, even as we huddle in our homes alone. That is why pianist and scholar Dr. Ron Regev, who inherited the JAMD Concert Series from founder Prof. Assaf Zohar eight years ago, decided that the show must most definitely go on.



Dr. Ido Ariel, Dean of Students

"These concerts function as a Display Window into the Academy," explains Regev, "where audiences can see Faculty members performing together with students and international artists. It's a very successful and exhilarating part of our program." Each year the series is built around a theme – this year, 250 years after he was born, the concerts honour Beethoven. "Corona hit just before we started rehearsing for our largest concerts," recalls Regev, "and we thought all was lost."

Then the whole Academy rolled into Zoom mode, and suddenly the top faculty had evenings and other time slots free. In ten days Regev, together with Chana England, producer of the series, organized three concerts which were broadcast on Facebook and YouTube to hundreds of people. The concerts are recorded, and have each registered up to 2000 hits since they've been online, providing great exposure for the Academy.

The big question is whether audiences, accustomed now to tuning in to gorgeous concerts for free, and watching them in bed with a cup of tea, will return to halls and tickets and driving through the traffic. I am betting that just as a virtual hug will never ever replace the real thing, live music will always pull in the people. Let's get this pandemic over, and we will see what happens.



Dr. Ron Regev, Director of the Academy's Concert Series

photo: Matan Raizman

photo: Yonatan Dior

photo: Carlin Ma