

# Jewish Symphony Finds Kindred Spirits in Gospel Choir

**A** gospel choir might seem a somewhat odd bedfellow for a Jewish music ensemble, but Noreen Green, artistic director of the Los Angeles Jewish Symphony, and Ray Barnes, project coordinator of the First African Methodist Episcopal Church choir, say they have always been kindred spirits.

So it should be no surprise that more than 100 singers from First AME Church will join the Jewish Symphony in the aptly named program "Kindred Spirits," a benefit concert at Walt Disney Concert Hall on June 5 aiming to raise humanitarian aid funds for Magen David Adom, Israel's medical emergency lifesaving service. The event marks the first appearance of the Jewish Symphony at the celebrated home of the Los Angeles Philharmonic in downtown Los Angeles.

"They don't look at your credentials when you're lying on the floor bleeding," said Green of First AME choir's support for Israel. "It's not about the color of your skin. It's about crossing the barrier between Jewish music and other types of religious music."

The eclectic program will range from classical, contemporary, Sephardi, Israeli, American and gospel music, all the way to Barry Manilow. "You Raise Me Up," a popular song written by Norwegian composer Rolf Lovand, is scheduled to open the concert.

"Music is a universal way to promote the human spirit. Our chorus sings straight from the heart," Barnes said. "We have been good friends with the Jewish community for many years and are so happy to work with them on this."

The concert was organized by Temple Beth El of San Pedro's newly founded fundraising organization, called Kindred Spirits, which emerged from a desire to bring diverse people together — not only in the orchestra, but the audience as well, Green explained.

Presenting the concert during Israel's 60th birthday "was a bonus for Kindred Spirits," Barnes said. The non-political event focuses on reconstructing the 20th-century relationship between Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., said Temple Beth El's Cantor Ilan Davidson, who produced the concert and also will perform. The Jewish Symphony and First AME Choir will be joined



(From left) Cantor David Propis, Ray Barnes, Noreen Green, Cantor Alisa Pomerantz-Boro and Cantor Ilan Davidson, photographed in the founder's room at the Walt Disney Concert Hall, May 22.

on stage by Davidson, along with cantors Alberto Mizrahi, Alisa Pomerantz-Boro and David Propis.

Celebrity guests include Valerie Harper, star of the play "Golda's Balcony," reading an excerpt by Golda Meir; actor Ed Asner reading the words of David Ben-Gurion; and Millie Perkins, who starred in the 1959 film "Diary of Anne Frank," reading a piece from the young teen's famous diary.

Humanitarian awards will be distributed at the concert to the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's daughter Dahlia Rabin, and Teva Pharmaceutical Industries, Ltd., for their continued support of Israel and contributions to society.

For tickets and more information, call (310) 833-2467 or visit [jewishjournal.com](http://jewishjournal.com).

— Celia Soudry, Contributing Writer

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