

Jewish Journal  
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# THE JEWISH JOURNAL OF GREATER LOS ANGELES

## calendar

Solange Borna

### Solange Says...

#### Smoke Gets in Your Eyes

Want to stop smoking but just can't find the will power? Forget the patch and the Nicorette. Instead, head out to the Hollywood Entertainment Museum, 7021 Hollywood Blvd, on Friday, March 15 to see the exhibit "Smoke, Lies and Videotape." The collection of movie and television clips from "Sex and the City," "Breakfast at Tiffany's," "Chinatown," "The Sopranos" and more reveal how Hollywood glamorizes cigarette and tobacco use. Spearheaded by AnimAction founder Clifford Cohen, the project particularly seeks to deter young children and teens from smoking. The exhibit will be open daily from 11 a.m.-6 p.m., excluding Wednesdays.

#### Freedom: The Final Frontier

The Los Angeles Jewish Symphony will perform



"Cantata of the Bitter Herbs" and more, narrated by Leonard Nimoy (above) as part of the "Celebrate Freedom" program, on Sunday, March 10, 7:30 p.m. Beverly Hills High School, K.L. Peters Auditorium, 241 Moreno Drive. For more information, call (818) 753-6681.



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Entertainment Museum, 7021 Hollywood Blvd., on Friday

March 5 to see the exhibit

Smoking: The Choice of

Video. The exhibition of

the television clips

from "Sex and the City"

"Breakfast at Tiffany's"

"Chinatown"

"Southwest and more great

Hollywood stories"

Sign up and take the

Special \$25 tour. Call

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tickets. Tickets are \$15

for adults, \$10 for

seniors and children

12 and over. For more

information, visit

www.entertainment

museum.com

Freedom: The Final Frontier

The Los Angeles Jewish Symphony will perform



ARTS Music



Ernst Toch, composer of "Cantata of the Bitter Herbs," at work

Toch's Touch

by Tom Tugend Contributing Editor

IMMIGRANT COMPOSER ERNST TOCH WAS LIVING IN LOS Angeles in late 1937 when he learned that his mother had died in Vienna. He had been raised in an Orthodox home and, feeling a need to tap back into his roots, Toch went to Fairfax Temple to say "Kaddish." There he met the revered Rabbi Jacob Sonderling, who urged Toch to compose a Passover cantata, with the rabbi himself writing the libretto.

The result of the collaboration was the "Cantata of the Bitter Herbs," which will be performed for the first time in several decades by the Los Angeles Jewish Symphony on Sunday, March 10.

Noreen Green, the Los Angeles Jewish Symphony's artistic director noted that the symphony is increasingly sought out to introduce new and innovative compositions on Jewish themes, like Toch's.

Actor and author Leonard Nimoy will be the narrator, and joining the orchestra will be the Valley Beth Shalom Congregational Choir; the L.A. Zimriyah Chorale, under the direction of Dr. Nick Strimple, and several noted soloists.

Rounding out the "Celebrate Freedom" evening will be the American premiere of Raymond Goldstein's "Pesach Cantata." Goldstein is the resident composer and arranger at the Great Synagogue in Jerusalem and has written more than 500 pieces of cantonal music.

The "Pesach Cantata" incorporates traditional Seder songs and will be performed with the composer at the piano and with two cantonal soloists.

When Toch started composing the "Cantata of the Bitter Herbs," European Jewry was trembling before the growing power of the Hitler regime, and the Anschluss of Toch's native Austria to Nazi Germany was only months away.

Thus the theme of the cantata "was very resonant and particularly poignant at the time," Toch's grandson, Lawrence Wechsler, a veteran staff writer at The New Yorker and director of the Ernst Toch Society, told The Journal.

Although Toch was considered part of the "New Music" movement of the 1920s, he did not fit neatly into any category. According to Wechsler, "he was too modern for the traditionalists and too traditional for the modernists."

Compared to Toch's early work, the "Cantata" is much more accessible and more overtly romantic, notes Wechsler. "Parts of it are extremely beautiful and lyrical," he said. "The particular aria that I love so much, 'When Adonai brought his sons back to Zion,' is very heart-rending."

At the urging of his friend George Gershwin, Toch and his family moved to Hollywood in 1935. He taught at USC and devoted himself to writing musical scores for the movies, mainly to make enough money to bring dozens of relatives to the United States.

Studio executives viewed his musical style as dark and ominous, and he was soon categorized as a specialist in music for crime scenes and horror movies.

Still, his film scores were nominated three times for Academy Awards, and in his fruitful post-war years, when he returned to "serious" music, his "Third Symphony" won the Pulitzer Prize in 1956.

"Celebrate Freedom" will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Sunday, March 10, in the auditorium of Beverly Hills High School, 241 Moreno Drive, Beverly Hills. \$25-\$45. For ticket information, call (310) 753-6681 or visit the Web site at www.lasjsymphony.com. ■