

# SACRED SOUNDS

A Publication of the Cantors Assembly

Special 2017 Convention Edition



## You're Invited to the Cantors Assembly's 70th Annual Convention!

In days gone by, when Cantors Assembly conventions were held in the Catskill Mountains, scores of congregants, lovers of Jewish liturgical music attended our annual gatherings. Historically, unlike most professional associations, the CA has long sought the attendance of non-cantors at its annual conferences. Music is most effective when it is shared among performers and listeners. The CA has always understood this. Regrettably, the Catskill resorts are long gone, though wonderful memories remain. More importantly, the need to bring cantors and congregants together periodically, away from the synagogue, is stronger than ever.

And so, with that in mind, we have decided to implement a new initiative at this year's CA convention, the addition of a concurrent lay track. While we will all be together most of the time, notably for musical events and guest lecturers, during those sporadic occasions when sessions focus on facets of the Cantorate likely to be of interest only to cantors, we will offer parallel courses, which will be taught by our members. The topics for this track have been carefully selected.

Concerts will focus on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem, Jewish influences found in the music of Leonard Bernstein, a showcase of the next generation of cantors, and Jewish Rock Radio. Session offerings include: Innovative Services for Shabbatot, Festivals and Tots (3 separate sessions); BDS and the College Campus; and Increasing Your Congregation's Potential for Fundraising. Daily recitals will be presented as well, featuring some of the CA's most gifted vocal artists.

That is just a sampling of what you will experience when you are with us. The halls of the Seaview resort, for 5 days, will be filled with the glorious voices of a few hundred cantors. Above all, you will enjoy the camaraderie of talented, dedicated, fun-loving cantors, from throughout North America. Registration will be available after January 1, 2017, online at [www.cantors.org](http://www.cantors.org) or through our office at 330-864-8533. Best wishes for a joyous Hanukkah.

Cantor Stephen J. Stein  
Executive Vice President

**This year's CA  
Convention will  
be held at the  
Stockton  
Seaview Hotel  
and Golf Club,  
just outside  
Atlantic City,  
May 21-25, 2017**

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# A Focus on Special Needs

By Cantor Steven Stoehr



'I Love You' in ASL

At this year's convention we will be listening to a presentation by MATAN. MATAN educates Jewish leaders, educators and communities, empowering them to create learning environments supportive of children with special needs, through training institutes and consultations across North America.

Though over the past 5-10 years many new books, articles and the like have been published on the topic of inclusivity of those with disabilities in the Jewish community, so much is yet to be learned about how we as a Jewish world can become more accessible. The range of concerns in this realm is vast, as "disabled" may refer to physical or cognitive needs, and "special needs" may be defined on so many different levels. The Ruderman Foundation has done heroic work in championing the discussion of the necessity of addressing these issues to the foreground of our conscience as they have with government officials, as well as seeking funding and policy changes to benefit this community.

At the convention this year we are planning to have an ASL (American Sign Language) interpreter at several of our concerts and sessions. If asked, "is there a defined need for such", I would say not yet, but the presence of an ASL interpreter may spark the awareness in someone of the need for such in their community, and that is of infinite value enough to the chair people of the convention. With our theme of *Kol Kol*, every voice has intrinsic value, we want to be sure to emphasize the value of hearing the voice from within from each person, no matter one's ability to produce decibel measurable sound.

The families of special needs members that we all encounter are heroes, offering love and quality and an ocean of patience. And what do they need from us? Pity? Not at all. Charity? No. According to one expert in the field, we do not need to do things *for* people with disabilities, we need to do things *with* people with disabilities. As Jay Ruderman, a national proponent for the special needs community has said, "this is a matter not of courtesy or simple right and wrong, it is more so an issue of civil rights." As we learn from Isaiah 56:5, "For my house shall be a house of prayer for all people."

Jewish tradition teaches us of our obligation to ensure equal access for all people and to help facilitate the full participation of individuals with disabilities in religious and public life. We are taught "Do not separate yourself from the community." (Pirke Avot 2:5); accordingly, we must prevent anyone from being separated from the community against their will. May it be that the Cantors Assembly, along with all of the congregations that we serve, emulate the teachings of Torah and treat one another, no matter how different we may all be, with compassion and honor, respect and dignity. May each person come to be able to express themselves fully and uniquely in this sacred place "and all the people shall say, 'Amen!'" (Deut. 27:18)



## Tech Check

By Cantor Zachary Mondrow



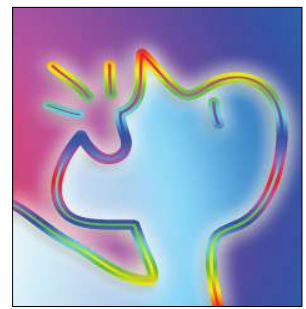
Everyone who attends our convention—whether professional Hazzan or lay person—will be able to utilize our innovative technology to help navigate. Two years ago the Cantors Assembly, in an effort to cut down on overall paper usage at conventions, turned to the web to help those at convention find their way around. [www.ca-convention.org](http://www.ca-convention.org) (also directly accessible under the convention tab on our website) was launched in order to house our convention schedules, award recipients, vendors, concert programs and all other vital information to get our convention attendees where they need to be. The interactive schedule feature allows users to add specific items to their phone calendar enabling them to get alerts when sessions are beginning. Likewise, it allows attendees to sort sessions by category so that you'll never miss a meal!

The convention site is only part of the CA's web plan. The Cantors Assembly aspires to continually evolve and be on the cutting edge of technology. The recent re-launch of [www.cantors.org](http://www.cantors.org) has been a fantastic success. Here, the general public has the opportunity to learn more about the Cantorate and the amazing things cantors do. After all, singing is just the beginning. You can learn about our members, why they became cantors, and many of the selfless acts they do every day to enrich the lives in their communities. In the videos section you can hear many highlights of our membership doing what they do best, singing! Our online store offers a large inventory of Jewish music resources. Have you ever wanted to learn how to lead services? Well, with the Pinchas Spiro series, you can! Our collaborative project with the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs, the Minyan of Comfort, is a resource that allows you to learn how to lead a weekday mincha/ma'ariv service for Shiva homes. There are also wonderful free volumes on Jewish music in our Journal of Synagogue Music

We hope to see you at convention, where you can interact with our technology first hand  
(not to mention a couple hundred cantors)!

# Every Voice

By Cantor Alisa Pomerantz-Boro



“God’s presence infuses our world when every voice is heard.”



Not too long ago, I was listening to Samuel Barber’s *Agnus Dei*, a choral piece which moves me deeply and inspires me every time I hear it. I dwell upon what makes it so dynamic, so powerful, and so utterly magnificent. It is the voices. Barber brilliantly weaves and overlaps those voices in and out. Each successive voice builds on and responds to the previous one. Sometimes one voice shines above the others, and sometimes they come together in unison or in harmony. The effect is uplifting and spiritual. Each of those voices plays with and against each other, each distinctive, each melodic, and so necessary for those beautiful moments when they all come together.

Another beautiful moment when all of our voices come together will be at our 70<sup>th</sup> Annual Cantors Assembly International Convention, May 21-25, 2017. Hundreds of Hazzanim will gather for five days of learning, sharing, music and *chevruta* at the Stockton Seaview Resort in South Jersey.

I began thinking about our upcoming convention several years ago, as soon as I knew when my term as president would arrive. I assembled an amazing group of colleagues to form our convention team: Hazzanim Steve Stoehr, Joanna Dulkin, Matt Axelrod and Zach Mondrow. With the assistance of our Executive Vice President, Hazzan Steven Stein, and Cindy Preston of the Cantors Assembly office, we began the exhaustive planning process. This included finding the appropriate venues and kosher catering, as well as concert planning, session proposals, meetings and programming discussions. We are looking forward to welcoming all of you to sessions including innovative davening, wellness issues, legal matters, and special needs programming. I also began thinking about the message that I want to share.

I have always felt that my voice mattered. As the daughter of a rabbi and a Jewish educator, I was given the opportunity to speak, to question and to lead. I learned that everyone’s voice deserves attention. Each human voice is as unique as a snowflake. To make a difference in the world, each of us has to find our own voice. The personal triumphs and tragedies we each face modulate our voice. When I become a mother of a very special, miraculous and sick child, that message was brought home in a very real way. My responsibility as a mom and as a Hazzan is to enable every voice to be recognized for the blessings that it brings. For the shy student, for the nonverbal who use a device to be heard, for the grandmother reading Torah for the first time, for the Russian immigrant celebrating in freedom, for the battered and the broken; every voice deserves attention.

At our convention, we will hear from many unique voices. We will be inspired by words and by music; by singing together and by listening. God’s presence infuses our world when every voice is heard. That is why the message I choose to share includes having every voice heard at my installation concert which will held on Wednesday evening, May 24 at 7:00 pm at my shul, Congregation Beth El in Voorhees, New Jersey. Highlights will include the Clergy Boys, Divas on the Bima, and the premier of a piece commissioned specially for this event, *Kol Kol, Every Voice*. This beautiful choral piece allows us to hear every voice, but not individually...we will all blend together as our voices become one.

One of my favorite prayers is the *Sh’ma Koleynu*, Hear Our Voice. It is specifically written in the plural form. It is not *Sh’ma KOLI*, but rather *Sh’ma KOLEYNU*. It is the voice of each individual coalescing into one magnificent crescendo of prayer that gives the *Sh’ma Koleynu*, and public prayer in general, its power. The collective voice of the community rises as one, and inspires each of its participants alone and collectively.

The Cantors Assembly is filled with wonderful voices. Each voice is distinctive, yet can weave in and out of the collective sound. When we raise our voices together in song with others, we declare our common humanity, and allow the power of music to express the deepest hopes and prayers for all people, for every voice. My prayer is that we learn to view our world like a beautiful choral fugue, with each voice able to contribute the necessary and wonderful sound, to make a marvelous and integral whole.

On behalf of my colleagues, I invite each and every one of you to join us! Open your mouth, for every voice counts!



**Meet our 2017  
Convention  
Leadership Team:**

Cantor Steven Stoehr  
(Northbrook, IL)

Cantor Joanna Dulkan  
(Princeton, NJ)

Cantor Matt Axelrod  
(Scotch Plains, NJ)

*Convention Chair &  
President Elect,*  
Cantor Alisa  
Pomerantz-Boro  
(Voorhees, NJ)

Cantor Zachary Mondrow  
(West Bloomfield, MI)



**Come  
Join  
Us**

**Stockton Seaview Resort  
May 21-25, 2017**

70th Annual Cantors Assembly  
International Convention



Every Voice כל קול  
Jersey Shore 2017

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**CANTORS ASSEMBLY**  
*singing is just the beginning*

The Cantors Assembly promotes the profession of the Cantorate, serving our members and their congregations by supporting our colleagues in their roles as vibrant, engaging, vital clergy and musical leaders.

Beyond offering our members opportunities for mentorship, professional development and personal growth, we also provide essential services such as placement, insurance and retirement planning.

Affiliated with the Conservative/Masorti movement, we serve congregations from across the denominational spectrum. We seek to ensure that our members are fully prepared to lead synagogues and the whole Jewish community through an ever-evolving musical and spiritual landscape.