



Zamir Chorale of Boston Presents World Premiere

Renowned chorale performs new work by composer Benjie- Ellen Schiller

On Sunday, November 16, 2003, the Zamir Chorale of Boston opens its 2003-04 season with a world-premiere performance of "Harninu" by American composer Benjie- Ellen Schiller. Performing at a dedication concert for the new sanctuary of Temple Emunah in Lexington, Mass., the Chorale will help celebrate the new sacred space with a musical premiere that itself is also a dedication. Zamir commissioned "Harninu" from Schiller in honor of Rick Boyar, longtime singer, percussionist, and friend of Zamir, who passed away in October 2002.

"Harninu" is a joyous setting in Hebrew of the first six verses of Psalm 81. The seven-minute work is scored for large chorus, piano, hand-drum, trumpet and shofar (ram's horn). After a majestic introduction, the work's pace becomes exuberant at the words, "Sing joyously to God our strength." Schiller sets the phrase "Take up the song" by tossing the melody from voice to voice in a playful exchange. In the middle section the chorus is given a chorale for the words "It is a law for Israel" and fanfares for "Blow the horn on the new moon." The work ends with a recapitulation of the opening music.

"We are delighted to open our season with this beautiful new piece by our friend and collaborator Benjie- Ellen Schiller," said Joshua Jacobson, Zamir Artistic Director. "'Harninu' represents Benjie- Ellen at her best: it reflects her classical training, as well as her love of folk music and her deep commitment to traditional Jewish music and the Hebrew biblical text"

Cantor and composer Benjie- Ellen Schiller received her Bachelor's degree in composition from Boston University and her master's degree and cantorial investiture from Hebrew Union College. As a classical soprano soloist, Schiller has appeared with the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, the John Oliver Chorale, the Zamir Chorale of Boston, and Sine Nomine of New York. Schiller is Professor of Cantorial Arts at the Hebrew Union College- Jewish Institute of Religion, School of Sacred Music, in New York. Since 1989 she has served as the High Holy Day cantor with her husband, Rabbi Lester Bronstein, at Bet Am Shalom Synagogue of White Plains, New York, where she also directs a volunteer choir.

This debut concert of Zamir's 2003-04 season also features repertoire from

Italy (reprising Zamir's successful musical tour to Italy in the summer of 2003), Israel, and around the world. As a special focus of its repertoire in the first half of the season, Zamir is exploring Jews in Musical Theater.

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Zamir is in residence at **Hebrew College**.