



**LEIPZIGER**  
**SYNAGOGALCHOR**  
**(THE LEIPZIG SYNAGOGAL CHOIR)**

Concert Guest Performance  
from Oct. 29th to Nov. 11th 1994

**THE STATE SECRETARY OF THE  
FEDERAL FOREIGN OFFICE  
Dr. Dieter Kastrup**

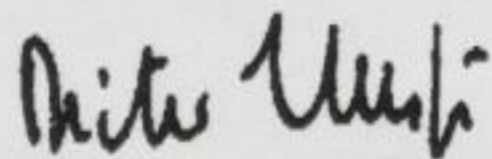
Bonn, August 1994

Message of greeting

In the thirty years or so since its foundation the Leipzig Synagogal Choir has earned an extraordinary reputation as an outstanding musical ensemble which impresses its audiences with its exceptional musicality, its tonal precision and its sensitivity to nuances. The choir is the only one in Germany to devote itself to a repertoire of synagogal music and Yiddish and Hebrew folklore. It thus makes a decisive contribution to the preservation of a Central European musical tradition that was almost completely destroyed by the Nazi regime. The choir's achievement is all the greater as it was by no means easy under the communist dictatorship in the eastern part of Germany to raise awareness of the Jewish and Christian-Jewish roots of western civilization. It is worth remembering that the first Christian-Jewish community in the former GDR was in Leipzig and that it played a part in the political upheaval of 1989.

Against this background I am particularly pleased that the Leipzig Synagogal Choir is now going to introduce itself to a wide public in North America after its successful appearances in Poland, the Czech Republic, Ukraine (Odessa) and Israel. I extend special thanks to those who have organized the concerts and hope that the musicians will meet with the success they deserve. May all who listen to them enjoy an unforgettable, moving musical experience.

Dieter Kastrup



# Synagogal Music

Yiddish and Hebrew folk music in free arrangements

## LEIPZIGER SYNAGOGALCHOR

(The Leipzig Synagogal Choir)

Adelheid Vogel, soprano

Ulrike Helzel, alto

Helmut Klotz, tenor

Eckbert Junghans, baritone

Ulrich Vogel, organ / piano

Conductor:

Helmut Klotz, chamber-singer

Leipzig Opera House

# Program

## Synagogal Music

**Ham'chabe eß haner** - tenor, choir, organ (Samuel Alman)

**L'cho daudi** - alto, choir a cappella (Charles Davidson)

**Haschkiwenu** - tenor, baritone, choir, organ (Samuel Alman)

**W'schomru** - choir a cappella (David Nowakowski)

**Pißchuli** - soprano, alto, choir, organ (Salomon Sulzer / Werner Sander)

**Omar Rabbi Elosor** - baritone, choir, organ (Josef Rosenblatt)

**Kiddusch** - tenor, choir, organ (Kurt Weill)

**Ssißu w'ßimchu** - soprano, choir, organ (Hirsch Weintraub/Werner Sander)

**Naariz'cho** - tenor, baritone, choir, organ (Abraham Dunajewski)

## Yiddish and Hebrew folk music in free arrangements

**Hava nagila** - choir, piano (arr.: Friedbert Groß)

**Hungerik dein Ketzkele** - alto, choir, piano (arr.: Friedbert Groß)

**Shtiler, shtiler** - alto, choir a cappella (arr.: Bonia Shur)

**Oi Channike** - soprano, choir, piano (arr.: Werner Sander)

**Itziki** - baritone, choir, piano (arr.: Werner Sander)

**Jommi** - alto, choir, piano (arr.: Werner Sander)

**A Semerl** - soprano, choir, piano (arr.: Werner Sander)

**As der Rebbe Elimelech** - baritone, choir, piano (arr.: Werner Sander)

**Horra banechar** - choir, piano (arr.: Friedbert Groß)

## The repertoire

The repertoire of the Leipzig Synagogal Choir is largely devoted to composers of the 19th and 20th centuries, mostly Jewish cantors from Eastern Europe. The focus is the synagogal music of Louis Levandovski, Salomon Sulzer, Samuel Alman, Abraham Dunajevski, David Novakovski, Mordechai Zeira and Samuel Naumbourg. The Hebrew texts of the songs are psalms and prayers from the prayer book or deeply religious texts from the Talmud.

In keeping with Jewish tradition and synagogal practice, the compositions are generally performed antiphonally by the choir and cantor with organ or piano accompaniment. A cappella settings are also possible. Folklore music in Yiddish and Hebrew, which comes predominantly from the Jewish centres in Eastern Europe, brims with feeling and temperament. It reflects the fullness of life and is at once humorous and melancholy. It almost always incorporates elements of dance.

The Synagogal Choir performs the majority of the traditional pieces in arrangements by Werner Sander and Friedbert Gross. The songs have been enriched with a virtuoso piano part or chamber music orchestral accompaniment for the concert hall. Soloists play the role of the narrator. Folklore can also be performed a cappella.

The broad-based repertoire and the various possible accompaniments allow the choir's programmes to be shaped to suit the venue, whether large or small concert hall, synagogue or church.

## The Leipzig Synagogal Choir

The Leipzig Synagogal Choir was founded in the former GDR in 1962 by Werner Sander. As the only European ensemble of its kind it remains to this day a secular concert choir of non-Jewish members.

Under its founder the choir had already gained an excellent reputation for the quality of its interpretation of synagogal and Jewish music. In 1972 Helmut Klotz took over as leader of the ensemble. Under his sensitive leadership the choir developed into an ensemble ranking among the best in Europe. The award of the GDR arts prize to the director of the choir testified to the fact that not even the GDR state, with its rejection of religion and particularly of Judaism, could ignore the Leipzig Synagogal Choir.

The ensemble's repertoire covers synagogal music, Yiddish and Hebrew folk music and works by Israeli composers. The tradition of antiphonal singing is maintained: Helmut Klotz sings the cantor's solos from his conductor's position.

The Leipzig Synagogal Choir gives regular concerts in the Gewandhaus and in Leipzig's Thomaskirche, in the Schauspielhaus in Berlin and in the Berlin Philharmonia. It took part in the International Festival of Jewish Art Music (Odessa, Ukraine 1993) and in the European Yiddish Festival (Leverkusen, Germany 1993) and has made guest appearances on many other European stages, including Paris (France), Prague (Czech Republic), Krakow and Wroclaw (Poland). In recent years it has been joined in concert by leading soloists and orchestras.

The highlight of the choir's career to date was a concert tour to Israel in January 1993, during which the choir sang in Jerusalem, Haifa, Tel Aviv, Eilat and elsewhere. After a service with Prof. Eliyahu Schleifer in the synagogue of the Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem, the novelist and academic Prof. Shalom Ben-Chorin wrote: "The congregation and the choir itself were fully aware of the uniqueness of fulfilled prophecy."

(Israel Nachrichten, 21 January 1993)

## Helmut Klotz

Helmut Klotz was born in Oederan, Saxony. Following a basic musical training (violin, piano, clarinet, violoncello) he studied singing and violoncello at the Carl Maria von Weber College of Music in Dresden. During his studies he worked as deputy manager at the Dresdner Staatskapelle.

In 1961 he was employed as a lyric and dramatic tenor at Leipzig Opera, of which he is still a leading member. His repertoire of over 100 parts includes Belmonte ("The Abduction from the Seraglio"), Count Almaviva ("The Barber of Seville"), Raoul ("The Huguenots"), Captain ("Wozzeck") and David ("The Mastersingers of Nuremberg"). He has made guest appearances at major opera houses in Eastern and Western Europe and overseas. As a concert singer he has excelled above all as the Evangelist in the passions and oratorios of Johann Sebastian Bach. In 1972 Helmut Klotz was appointed artistic director of the Leipzig Synagogal Choir by the Association of Jewish Communities of the GDR.

Music-lovers appreciate Helmut Klotz's elegant combination of circumspect conducting, great sensitivity and succinct leadership as cantor.



The Leipzig Synagogal Choir, Thomas Church, Leipzig

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