

**A Unique Musical Experience:
the Leipzig Synagogal Choir to perform in Washington**

Twenty-six men and women forming the only non-Jewish ensemble of its kind in Europe devote themselves to synagogue music primarily from the 18th and 19th century, as well as Jewish and Hebrew folk songs arranged for concert. The traditional titles originate particularly from old Jewish congregations of Lithuania, Ukraine, Poland and Romania. In addition, the Choir's repertoire includes synagogue music by Louis Lewandowski, Salomon Sulzer, Samuel Naumbourg, Samuel Alman, Abraham Dunajewski, David Nowakowski and Mordechaj Zeira. The Hebraic texts to the liturgical melodies are derived either from psalms and prayers or the deeply religious texts of the Talmud. The compositions are arranged for choir, cantor and organ or are sung as a cappella pieces.

In the 30 years of its existence, the *Leipziger Synagogalchor* - winner of the Leipzig city award - has acquired extraordinary renown both at home and abroad. The Choir was founded in 1962 by Werner Sander, Chief Cantor of the Jewish Congregation of Leipzig and Dresden, and has been under the artistic direction of chamber singer Helmut Klotz since 1972.

The quality of the artistic director's choral instruction has brought the ensemble to the stages of notable German and international concert halls, among them the *Leipziger Gewandhaus*, the *Berliner Schauspielhaus*, the *Berlin Philharmonic* and the *Alte Oper Frankfurt/Main*. The Choir has also given concerts at the Dresden music festivals. Outside Germany, the *Leipziger Synagogalchor* has performed in Paris, Wroclaw, Cracow, Prague, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. The Choir has since produced four album recordings offering a representative sampling of the Choir's repertoire and illustrating its highly developed artistic niveau.

The *Leipziger Synagogalchor*, an amateur choir whose members are employed in various professions, is funded by the Council of the City of Leipzig and the Free State of Saxony. The Choir members dedicate many hours of their spare time to preserving the tradition of Jewish music. Every year the Choir sings at a memorial service held in St. Thomas Church of Leipzig, recalling the pogroms against the Jews that occurred on the night of November 9, 1938, in Germany. These kinds of concerts in particular express the clear humanistic aspect of the Choir, one that is rooted in a clear ecumenical belief. This year's concert tour, which will also bring the Choir to New York, Harrisburg and Boston, is organized by the American Forum for Jewish-Christian Cooperation and the German Music Council and is supported by the Federal Foreign Office and the German Embassy in Washington.

For further information, please contact Ms. Sheila Cooper, at the National City Christian Church (Tel.: 202/232-0323).