

FUNDACJA JUDAICA
Centrum Kultury Żydowskiej

*Chór Synagogałny
z Lipska*

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Kraków*



*Koncert pieśni
żydowskich i hebrajskich*

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JUDAICA FOUNDATION



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The Center for Jewish Culture in Kazimierz, Cracow

UNESCO has a very exclusive list that includes the monuments and places that are truly precious to the common heritage of mankind. Five are listed from Poland.* One of them is Kazimierz, the old Jewish quarter of Cracow, designated in 1978. Founded by King Kazimierz (Casimir) the Great in 1335 as a separate town, in the course of the ages it became part of Cracow. Kazimierz, like much of Cracow, has many associations with the past, but its claim to an eternal place in the creative history of humanity rests on what the Jews did here. Through the centuries they formed a community and a culture whose brilliant achievements could not be erased by tragedy, remaining in literature, in art, in music, in the religious and philosophical legacy of a people. It was in Kazimierz that the famous talmudic scholar and philosopher Rabbi Moses Isserles, known as Remuh, had his academy. Today his grave and his synagogue are places of pilgrimage.

On the eve of World War II the Jews here numbered 70,000, 25% of Cracow's population. Their life as a flourishing community ended in the Holocaust, but their memory remains in the hearts of descendants around the world, in the very stones and bricks of this place.

The Center for Jewish Culture in Kazimierz, Cracow, is one result of the revival of interest in Jewish history and culture in Poland that began in the mid-1980's. Cracow's very lively annual Festival of Jewish Culture, already quite an international attraction after only three years, is another. And the Research Center on Jewish History and Culture in Poland, a department of Jagiellonian University established in 1986, helps to channel and expand this growing interest through research, publications and education.

* The others are Cracow's Old City, the ancient salt mine in Wieliczka, the Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp, and the Bialowieza primeval forest.

Professor Dr. Józef A. Gierowski, historian, organizer and Director of the Research Center, first formulated the idea of the Center for Jewish Culture. The project gathered many supporters from Poland and abroad. Mark E. Talisman made a great effort to secure financial support, and the Polish-American Joint Commission generously undertook to sponsor the project.

The Center for Jewish Culture's main tasks are to help physically preserve the Jewish heritage and to make it more accessible to all. It will provide a continuous series of cultural events, run a library, prepare and distribute publications, promote research on Kazimierz, support restoration efforts, and arrange heritage tour itineraries. It will individually help the descendants of Cracow's Jews to connect to their past by assisting in genealogical searches. In short, the Center for Jewish Culture will do all it can to ensure that the experience of Kazimierz is an encounter with the presence of Jewish culture.

Two principles are basic to the Center's work. The first goes under the motto *L'dor v'dor*, Hebrew for "from generation to generation." It means that we have a duty to transmit the message of the Jewish heritage, which is so closely intertwined with the Polish heritage. The second is that the lesson of Auschwitz-Birkenau can be understood only if we know about the richness of Jewish life before the Holocaust. We must cherish the memory of what was lost, and must celebrate what survived.

After an absence of thirty years, the Polish Jewish writer Jerzy Kosinski came to Kazimierz from America in 1988, directly after visiting the Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp. This is what he said of his encounter with Kazimierz:

- I saw a place that was so alive, as alive as Cracow, because Kazimierz is a part of Cracow.
- For me, Kazimierz is the most important address in history.
- In Kazimierz we have an opportunity to look at Jewish history face to face, and to look deeper into ourselves.
- The 45-minute drive from Auschwitz-Birkenau to Kazimierz in Cracow is a very important and a symbolic distance. That distance should be remembered.
- It is the distance between the four years of the terrible darkness of the Holocaust and the many centuries during which there was an unimaginable eruption of life in all its expressions and of culture in all its forms.

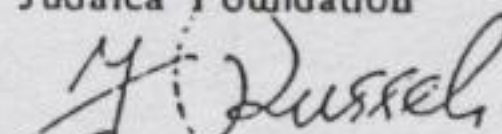
The Center for Jewish Culture is housed in the former Bene Emuna prayer house located at 17 Meiselsa Street, named after Rabbi Meisels. Bene Emunah was built in 1886 by a worship society, on a site where there had been a smelter belonging to the Cracow goldsmiths' guild until the seventeenth century. It was the work of the well-known Cracow architect and builder Jacek Matusiński. The style of the building refers to the trends of the time, with oriental elements. Inside, the most interesting elements were the Aron Ha-Kodesh, the Holy Ark, an iron column in the passageway separating the men's and the women's sections, and a large memorial plaque for the founders and others who were connected with the prayer house. The whole interior was covered with interesting polychromy at the end of the nineteenth century.

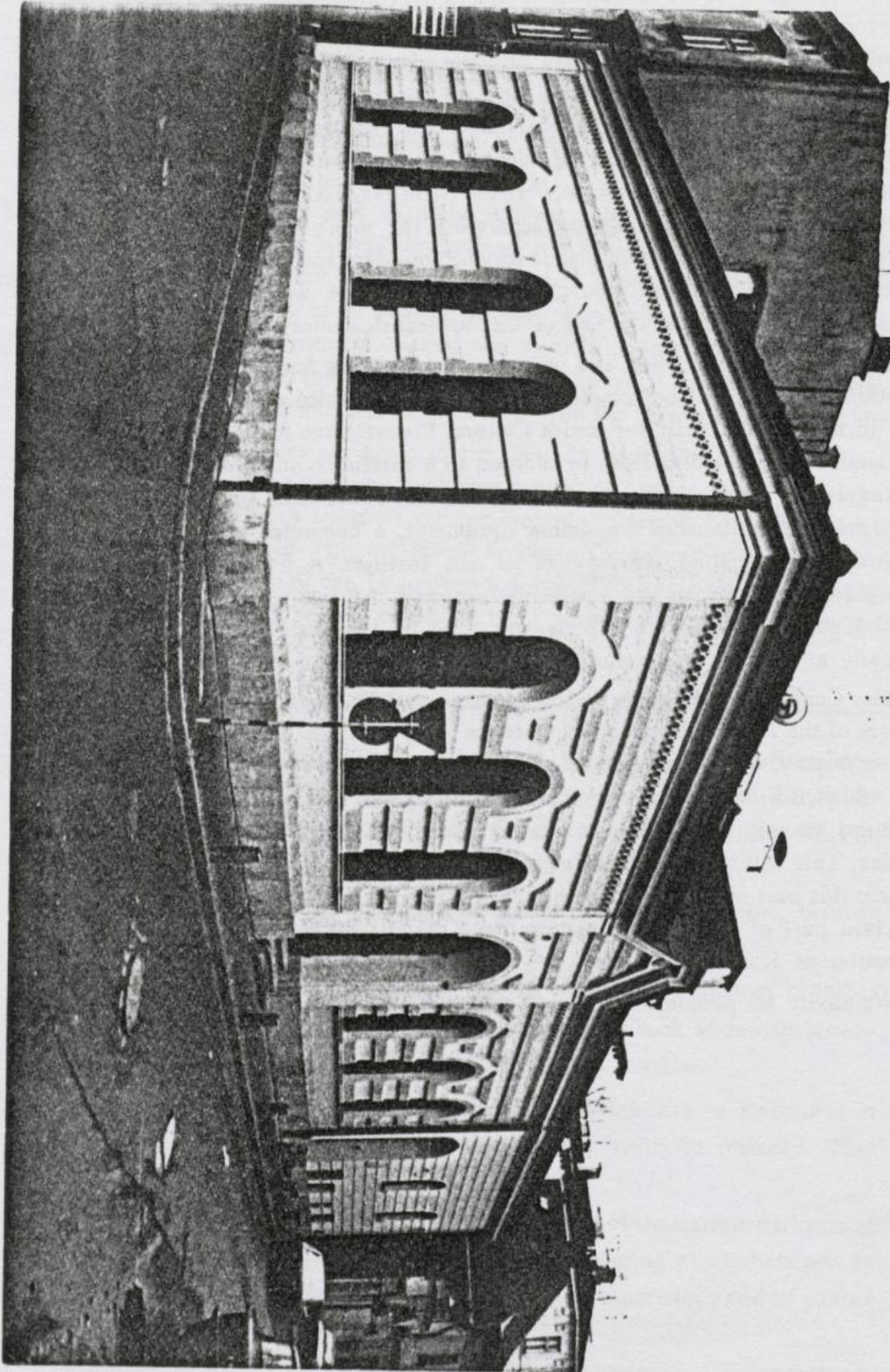
Time, willful destruction and misuse of the building had left it in sorry condition. It needed to be completely renovated, remodeled and extended in order to house the Center for Jewish Culture. Preparations for this began in 1988, and work started in 1990. In addition to a careful reconstruction of the building, it was modernized for its new cultural and educational functions. Air conditioning, simultaneous translation equipment, a computer network and film projection facilities are some of its new features. A library, archives, reading and study rooms are now being furnished. All this work, which has earned high praise from the experts, was done by the Skalski Construction Company as general contractor.

The Center opened at the end of November 1993. It operates under the auspices of the Judaica Foundation. Once the program of the Center is fully in gear, we hope to be able to begin the next stage — to build a second facility next door, which will have much-needed office space as well as a kosher restaurant and guest rooms. A longer-term goal is to build a hotel to complete the complex. This will serve the many who come here from around the globe, and will help this part of Cracow economically. We hope the Center will become an important part of the cultural landscape and that it will give impetus to the restoration of Kazimierz.

We invite all people of good will to join in this effort.

Director
Judaica Foundation


Joachim Russek



Lomir singn dort un dort - arr. Friedbert Gross (sopran, chór, fortepian)
Zaśpiewajmy tu i tam. Mojżeszu weź swoje skrzypce i zagraj tę starą piosenkę o kózce (Chad - gadjo). Piosenka ta znajduje się na końcu Hagady, czytanej w wieczór Sederowy, w który zaczyna się święto Pesach.

Her nor, du szejn wejdele - arr. Friedbert Gross (chór, fortepian)
Ostrzegano dziewczynę, aby nie wychodziła za mąż za biednego mężczyznę. Ona jednak chętnie pierze pranie dla obcych ludzi, zadawała się chlebem i wodą, śpi na słomie, aby być tylko razem ze swoim ukochanym.

Szirn (Z Pieśni nad Pieśniami) - Werner Sander (alt, głosy żeńskie chóru)
Ten klasyczny wiersz z czasów biblijnych jest kanwą tej piosenki.

Di mame iz gegangen - arr. Friedbert Gross (baryton, chór, fortepian)
Młody chłopak ma się zenić. Matka przyprowadza mu ładne dziewczyny z czarnymi włosami i białymi zębami. On myśli jednak z tęsknotą tylko o jednej dziewczynie, którą kiedyś kochał, a nie może z nią teraz być.

Rejzele - arr. Friedbert Gross (sopran, tenor, chór, fortepian)
W tej piosence Mordechaj Gebirtig, stolarz i genialny poeta ludowy z krakowskiego Kazimierza, który został zastrzelony w 1942 roku, opowiada o miłości swojej córki. Każdego wieczora na małej zacisznej uliczce, młody chłopak - Dawid - gwizdza pod oknem do dziewczyny. Matce dziewczyny to się nie podoba.

Szabes, Szabes - arr. Dieter Knorrn (chór a capella)
Niech nastąpi szabat, wiosna, a przede wszystkim pokój.

A pastechl - Werner Sander (tenor, fortepian)
Ta ludowa żydowska piosenka opowiada o biednym młodym pasterzu, któremu zaginęła owieczka. Nikt nie jest w stanie mu pomóc w jej odnalezieniu. Pasterz pyta różnych ludzi po żydowsku i po polsku, ale nikt nie potrafi mu pomóc - nawet sam Bóg.

Dajenu (Z Hagady) - Philip Moddel (chór a capella)
Rabi Akiha wylicza wiele dobrodziejstw, które Pan okazał swojemu narodowi. W tej pieśni wymienione są dwa. Wyzwolenie z niewoli egipskiej i ofiarowanie Tory. Gdyby Bóg dał tylko te dwie rzeczy byłoby to wystarczające.

Lajla - Werner Sander (alt, chór, fortepian)
Kolysanka o symbolicznej treści. Jeźdźcy zmerzają na pole walki, ale w drodze albo gną albo błędzą.

Mosziach - Werner Sander (baryton, chór, fortepian)

Wus wet sem as Mosziach wet kimen? Co będzie kiedy Mesjasz nadejdzie?

Ofn pripeczik - Werner Sander (sopran, chór, fortepian)

To jedna z najbardziej znanych żydowskich pieśni ludowych.

W pokoju znajdującym się w jednym z byłych żydowskich gett w Polsce, przy ciepłym piecu gromadzą się dzieci ze swoim nauczycielem. On uczy je alfabetu hebrajskiego i napomina, aby pilnie studiowały Torę.

Sza stil - Werner Sander (alt, chór, fortepian)

Chasydzi, zwolennicy ruchu religijnego poświęconego śpiewom i tańcom przypominają żartobliwie o spokoju, zeby niezgrabny rabin mógł sobie tańczyć, śpiewać, modlić się i nareszcie położyć się do snu.

A ganejwe (Kradzież) - Werner Sander (baryton, chór, fortepian)

Ta pieśń ludowa opowiada o biednym rabinie, króremu ukradziono „trzy razy siedem” rzeczy: koszule, świeczniki, kury. Ale wszystko było w marnym stanie. Koszule z plamami, latami i dziurami, świeczniki bez ramion, a kurom brakowało głów albo skrzydeł.

Hora banechar - arr. Friedbert Gross (chór, fortepian)

Nie bądźcie smutni, przyjaciele. Rabin powiada: Bądźcie weseli! Całe nasze życie jest smutkiem, dlatego zapomnijcie o żałowaniu! Pijcie wino i piwo! Starsi i młodzi winni zatańczyć „Horę” w obcym kraju.