



הקרן לירושלים
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**Jerusalem Conservatory Hassadna
From Risk to Opportunity
Musical Scholarship Program
2010-11**

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The Jerusalem Foundation strongly believes that culture and the arts are an irreplaceable part of a society. Especially in a city like Jerusalem where so many diverse communities live together, culture has a significant positive impact on every person's life. It brings people from different religions and heritages together and builds a bridge between the many diverse groups that exist in Jerusalem. Art is not supposed to align these groups with each other, but rather to give them an opportunity to get to know 'the other' by working with them in a playful, relaxed and creative atmosphere. Culture vitalizes the city and strengthens the social living together. But this can only happen when residents with troubled or difficult backgrounds that are not able to pay for cultural activities get access to arts institutions. In order to come closer to the goal of building an equal multicultural society, the Jerusalem Foundation supports the Jerusalem Conservatory Hassadna.

Hassadna - The Jerusalem Conservatory:

Hassadna is a unique musical institution in Jerusalem that was established in 1973. It is a non-profit organization that believes that every child in Jerusalem should have equal rights and opportunities, irrespective of their religious or socio-economic background. Therefore, Hassadna built a unique scholarship program that enables children from difficult homes to receive high quality music education that otherwise would be absent in their lives.

Arts education in general has a significant impact on the life and the personal growth of a child – it has proven to encourage the creative process, reduce violence, enhance intelligence, reduce isolation, and increase a child's self-confidence. Knowing these important influences, Hassadna established educational programs that serve the purpose of introducing children from troubled or disadvantaged backgrounds to the magical and healing world of music, helping them to overcome their difficulties at home.



Today, Hassadna serves as a second home to some 550 children, aged 3 to 18. The music therapy department currently includes student from 5 to 22. The children are instructed by a dedicated faculty of 80 professionals. Under their guidance, the students receive instrument, voice, or dance classes, and are given the relevant tools to acquire the necessary skills and to improve highly.

"From Risk to Opportunity" Program

The scholarship program is entitled "From Risk to Opportunity" and consists of three tracts: "Youth At-Risk" seeks to address the needs of children from troubled backgrounds, placed in abusive situations or without real parental





supervision; the "Children of Ethiopian Descent" tract supports Ethiopian children who come from the lowest social economic background and exhibit a desire to learn music; the "Children with Special Needs" tract offers both individualized instrument instruction to special needs children.

The scholarships include weekly one-on-one instruction, chamber music, ensembles and orchestra, group classes for students who play in a chamber music or orchestral atmosphere, music theory, jazz workshops, home tutors, enrichment programs, and master classes, exposing students to various artists.

The annual funding for the "Risk to Opportunity" program is \$4,000 per child. The scholarships range from partial financial support (usually 60-90 % of the child's tuition) to complete financial aid.

During the 2010/11 school year, Hassadna had **10** youth-at-risk students, **30** children of Ethiopian descent, and instrumental instruction for 14 children with special needs in a unique track adapted to their needs

Children of Ethiopian Descent

"The instrument has become my daughters best friend, calming her down and making her feel better when she is sad. It is so comforting for me to know that she has this beautiful thing in her life which brings her happiness and eases her pain during this difficult period."
- *Mother of a student from a troubled home*

During the 2010-2011 academic year, "From Risk to Opportunity" made a profound impact on the lives of 28 children of Ethiopian descent aged 6 to 16. Thanks to the tremendous commitment of friends and supporters, students in the program continued to grow and develop, building on musical and personal achievements from previous years. Program participants are represented in every department of study at the Jerusalem Conservatory Hassadna and constitute a visible and notable presence in the school.

Some of the supported children and their achievements are highlighted below:

Avraham Terifa and **Shmuel Alouch** – As noted in previous reports, in November 2009, a quartet of Hassadna students, including two from the program, were invited to perform at a festive concert organized by the Jerusalem Foundation in Toronto, Canada. The performance took place in the presence of the Mayor of Jerusalem, Nir Barakat. Barakat was so impressed with two of the young musicians – Avraham Terifa (a 13 year old





violinist of Ethiopian descent) and Shmuel Alouch (a 14 year old flutist from an ultra-orthodox family) – that he requested their participation at numerous major events sponsored by the city. Due to this initial exposure, Hassadna has been inundated with requests for additional performances. In the last academic year alone, in addition to internal concerts at Hassadna, the pair performed for the public on six different occasions, which was a tremendous honor. The events included the Jerusalem Foundation's Teddy Kollek Award, the Mayor's Conference, and the Excellence in Education Award. Undoubtedly, the pair portrays Jerusalem in a positive light, highlights beautiful contributions of the Ethiopian aliyah to Israeli society and emphasizes the special nature of the "From Risk to Opportunity" program.

Avraham Terifa continues to impress. This year he joined the Conservatory's representative chamber orchestra directed by Prof. Michael Gaisler and is currently the youngest member of this prestigious group. Joining the orchestra was a significant step for Avraham; through it, he draws inspiration from Hassadna's most talented and experienced musicians. Every minute with this group is precious to him – he has suddenly become extremely punctual when arriving at rehearsals and concerts. This orchestra will be travelling to London in November 2011 and Avraham is extremely excited. He told From Risk to Opportunity's Program Coordinator "Why can't November be tomorrow? I can't wait that long."



Yisrael Molla, a 12 years old trumpet player is a member of Hassadna's Young Wind Orchestra. Together with the orchestra, he had the honor of attending a national conference for youth wind orchestras in Netanya, in March. This was the first time he had ever performed outside of Jerusalem and it was a very special experience for him. He very much enjoyed spending the day with his friends from the orchestra; it strengthened his bonds with his peers and increased his desire to continue to invest in his music education.



Elizabeth Gevarmadin, nine years old, studies piano and goes to the Experimental Elementary School. She comes from an impoverished home and suffered from persistent feelings of inferiority in relation to her peers, impeding her social integration. However, all of this changed with the introduction of piano lessons at the Conservatory. Elizabeth's school teacher told us: "In the last two years, Elizabeth has undergone an unbelievable transformation. She went from being almost invisible to becoming the star of the class. During each recess she plays piano and all of the children crowd around her to listen. I see a new spark in her eyes."



Avishag Mizrachi, an 11 year old, studies violin and goes to the Evelina Elementary School. She told Hassadna proudly, and with a note of disbelief and shock in her voice, that the school principal had not only noticed her playing but was so impressed that he called her at home to personally request that she perform at a number of major school events. Her school's music coordinator commented "I have observed Avishag's progress and the progress of other students in this program over the past two years and am left speechless when attempting to express my praise and gratitude for this incredible opportunity."

Program Tutors

As time has passed, Hassadna has come to recognize the critical role tutors play in the personal and musical development of children in the program. Gradually the assignment of specific tutors to individual students has become a required component of each student's educational program; accordingly, this year is the first year in which every child of Ethiopian descent had their own tutor who visited them at home once or twice a week. The tutors served as musical and personal mentors and role models.

"Through Avraham's music studies, he is exposed to a new way of thinking and given the tools to function more independently in Israeli society. My meetings with Avraham are like a place of refuge for both of us and something that we both cherish. " - *Yonatan Valfer, tutor of the student Avraham Terifa*

Playing With and For Others

Hassadna believes that playing with others is the ultimate goal of music education; it enables each musician to experience music at its finest and has the power to draw people together in the service of common goals. For all of these reasons, integrating students of Ethiopian descent into various ensembles is so crucial and is the ultimate goal of the educational program.

In addition to theory lessons, over half of the children in the program participated in orchestras and ensembles the past year. This is a notable improvement over past years and reflects not only the growing musical competencies of students, but the success of the programmatic model.

From Risk to Opportunity in the Community

Over the past year, "From Risk to Opportunity" has become increasingly interwoven into the fabric of the local community, in particular due to activism of





program founder Ruth Mason and dear supporters Bella Savran and Audrey Sher. On December 4th, Ruth Mason initiated a major community event at Yedidya Synagogue in Baka, Jerusalem. Some 200 people were exposed to many of the challenges faced by Israelis from Ethiopia through a film and personal testimony by members of the community.

The Hassadna students had a prominent role in the event; **Ronit Taklo** played piano, a jazz ensemble including **Sara Taklo** on contrabass performed, **Yisrael Mollo** wowed the crowd with his trumpet and **Avraham Terifa** showed off his skill in violin. **Meron Mollo** was the event's M.C. – she also treated the crowd to a singing performance. The event raised significant funds and awareness and further strengthened Hassadna's connections with the local community.



Children with Special Needs

The Jerusalem Conservatory Hassadna's program for special needs children was founded in 2002, in cooperation with ALUT (The Association for Autism in Israel). The program offers young people with disabilities individualized instrument instruction that is adapted to their special needs. Their course of study serves both as a therapeutic intervention and as musical instruction which contributes to their social, emotional and physical development, as well as their musical talents.



Students enjoy intensive and on-going work with instructors. In addition, participants in the program play in ensembles with students from other conservatory departments and perform together in concerts. These activities are an essential component of the program; by making music together, Hassadna students learn about each other, grow to appreciate the contributions that each person brings to the group and experience a tremendous sense of pride in their abilities. Performing in public normalizes the young people in the eyes of others while concretizing their complete integration into our student body.

Currently, 12 young people are enrolled in the program - youth with Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, blindness, autism and physical and mental disabilities. They range in age from seven to 22 years old; all are instructed in piano while





some also learn voice. Each individual is unique and has their own special set of strengths and challenges which reveal themselves over a long process of trust and relationship-building with instructors. Many program participants have been with Hassadna for several years contributing not only to their musical abilities but also to their motor skills and social and emotional development.

Some of the supported students and their achievements are highlighted below:



Rasha Hamad, who is blind, autistic and mentally disabled, lives in an institution for people with special needs. Her day to day life is characterized by enormous insecurity – she depends on weekly piano lessons to keep her mentally stable as this is the only consistent factor in her life. Staff at the institution where she lives have told us that when she lacked access to these lessons, she became physically and mentally ill.

Yisrael Lasri, age 17, has been studying piano in the program since February 2008. Being born with Down's Syndrome has not prevented him from making music a meaningful part of his life. Yisrael learns from a special program of study which combines traditional basic piano training (including note reading, ear training and technique) with improvisation. This has greatly contributed to his fine and gross motor development. His instructor, Deborah Schramm, commented that: "Yisrael has gone through a very inspiring learning process. In addition to his musical and social development, his motor skills have improved."



"From an early age Yisrael has loved music. Since he started studying piano he loves music even more. Playing makes him happy and he enjoys playing for us and making us happy, too."
– *Yisrael's sister*



Jacob Osipovitch who is blind and has an unusual body structure, including distorted hands, has mastered a number of new ways to manipulate his hands. He is now able to rapidly move his hands and combine his movements in complex ways and





with ease. This is significant given that he can't actually see his hands. Over the past year, he has made tremendous leaps in figuring out ways to move around the keyboard with much greater ease.

Eli Rodenko, an autistic 22 year old, studies piano and voice at the conservatory. Eli was recently hired to work at the Shaare-Zedek Hospital in medical supplies and at a candle factory run by the NGO Shekel (an organization which operates services and programs for children and adults with physical, mental and emotional disabilities). This is a wonderful accomplishment for Eli.



Eli loves playing, singing and listening to classical music. The ability to master an extensive and varied repertoire reflects Eli's emotional development and greater maturity. His teacher told us that she can now conduct a meaningful dialogue with him. For example, when she wanted to inspire Eli to play a dramatic section in a Haydn sonata, she asked him, "What makes you angry?" Using his answer, she demonstrated how the music gets angrier and angrier. She told us: "Then a magical moment occurred -Eli started to play from his own emotion. This is quite unusual for people with autism. And this magic produces some transcendental moments for us."

Eli particularly enjoys performing in front of an audience. While he already participates in all Hassadna concerts, this wasn't sufficient for him. He decided to host a concert at his home for people in his life. Eli invited numerous friends and relatives - many of whom he hadn't seen in years - to show off his talents. Clearly, Eli derives tremendous pride and satisfaction from music and the lessons are improving his confidence, contributing to his social development and helping him to become more independent.

Highlights and Accomplishments

Many exciting concerts and festivals took place during the 2010-2011 year, such as the **Arts Festival Tzamid**: The festival takes place every year in Jerusalem and celebrates special needs people's unique and important contributions in a very public way. In 2011, from June 12-16th, over 300 artists participated in 60 dance, music and acting performances. For the third year in a row, Hassadna hosted a celebratory concert highlighting the accomplishments of the exceptional young people in our program. The concert took place on the evening of June 13th with nearly every student in the program performing. They showcased their talents in a variety of formats: in solo, with their instructors, with siblings, in ensembles with young people from other departments, and together with other students in the program. The event concluded with each





participant receiving a certificate of participation. Many aspects of the concert were particularly moving, for example:

Yotam Totter, a 14 year old with cerebral palsy, played the Beatles song “All you need is love” on the piano. He was joined by his parents on the recorder, his sister (15) on the violin, his brother (17) on the cello, and two other 15 year old Conservatory violinists. This small orchestra was a real celebration for Yotam’s family and the entire audience. Yotam did not stop smiling the entire performance.

Participation in Tzamid, and the hosting of this concert, was significant on a number of levels. It gave people who often feel isolated in dealing with their own challenges the all-too-rare feeling of community and family. Instead of focusing on the difficulties inherent in working with this population, the event brought people together to celebrate their strengths. The students, likewise, felt a tremendous sense of pride in their accomplishments while, in some cases, those in their lives began to regard them in a completely different light. Children with special needs are often ‘hidden’ or out of sight; Tzamid celebrated them in a very public way while providing a forum for them to bring joy and beauty into the lives of others.

Because Hassadna believes that music is best experienced in community, their goal is to help each child reach a level where they are able to perform for others. Thus, in addition to Tzamid, the conservatory hosts **internal concerts** throughout the year.

Instructors

Instructors and students have continued to grow and develop along with the program. Teaching staff meet regularly with a music therapist and discuss everything from moral and ethical issues, to dealing with the complicated interpersonal dynamics that this population can stimulate, to new pedagogical strategies. These are important opportunities for support, sharing and learning.

Significantly, Hassadna has made a strategic decision to focus on, and invest in, direct instrument instruction as a therapeutic tool. Many institutions offer meetings – either individually or in groups – with music therapists as a therapeutic intervention. However, a significant number of young people who have been through these programs want to take the next logical step in their growth and musical development and seek opportunities for direct instrument instruction. Learning to play an instrument, in addition to encouraging the acquisition of complementary skills, offers limitless opportunities for creativity and growth. The Special Needs program now exclusively focuses on answering this unmet need while further refining and developing our unique programmatic model.





Hassadna in Conclusion

The 2010-2011 year continued to bring profound benefits to program students and families while greatly enhancing their quality of life. With the support of the Jerusalem Foundation and other generous friends and donors who have supported "From Risk to Opportunity" financially, morally and with their time, Hassadna has been able to provide these most special children with the singular opportunity to study music in the supportive environment of the conservatory. Hassadna hopes that every eligible young person will have the opportunity to access this life-changing experience and is grateful to all of those who enabled this dream to come true for them, their students, their families and their community.



The Jerusalem Foundation is proud to support this program, and thus having a significant positive impact on the lives of so many disadvantaged children and young people in Jerusalem, giving them the opportunity to experience the magic of music and to receive instruction of the highest quality, irrespective of their background.