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### **Songs of Life International Choral Festival Announces New Performers**

Songs of Life International Choral Festival has announced the addition of Clinician Harold Rosenbaum, Cantors Beny Maissner and Erik Contzius, Conductor Dian Tchobanov and the The Raanana Symphonette Orchestra of Israel to its list of performers.

The festival, which features choirs from the United States, Canada, Europe and Israel, will be held Nov. 21-Dec. 1 in Bulgaria and Israel. The event marks the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the heroic rescue of Bulgaria's Jews during World War II and serves as a celebration of the preservation of life.

"We are extremely fortunate to have Harold Rosenbaum, one of the most accomplished and critically acclaimed choral conductors of our time, participate in this celebration," said Kalin Tchonev, international director for the festival.

"The addition of The Raanana Symphonette Orchestra along with Cantors Beny Maissner and Erik Contzius make this a truly international musical event," Tchonev added.

Rosenbaum currently serves as conductor of The New York Virtuoso Singers, an all-professional choir now in its 20th season and The Canticum Novum Singers, comprised of volunteers and recognized as one of New York's premiere choirs.

An accomplished singer and conductor, Maissner has been featured in major concert halls internationally, including the Mann Auditorium in Tel Aviv, the Jerusalem Theatre and Carnegie Hall. An Israeli native, he currently resides in Toronto, Canada.

Contzius is the Cantor of Temple Israel of New Rochelle in New Rochelle, N.Y. He has performed many distinguished solo presentations around the world the most recent being the *Vergessene Musik—The Forgotten Music of the German Jewish Reform Movement* in Munich, Germany. His music also appears on several recordings including a soon-to-be released CD, *teach my lips a blessing: The Music of Erik Contzius*.

Tchobanov will serve as conductor. He is the principal conductor of the Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra of Bulgaria and the permanent conductor of the Schoenbrunn Vienna Chamber Orchestra. He resides in Vienna, Austria.

Individual performers as well as choirs are invited to perform in the festival. Performers will sing Bloch's Sacred Service in Bulgaria and Israel. The 12-day itinerary also allows for individual presentations by guest choirs and opportunities for sightseeing and guided tours. Auditors are also invited to attend the festival and participate in the tours.

Songs of Life is also seeking financial donations to help defray festival costs, provide educational and travel scholarships to high school and college students and support the attendance of international guest choirs.

For more information or to contribute to the festival, contact Songs of Life, 113 Dupre Mill Court, Lexington, SC 29072, (803) 358-2382 or (803) 520-3626 or visit the website at [www.songsolife.org](http://www.songsolife.org).

### **About Songs of Life**

Songs of Life International Choir Festival was founded by Sharon and Kalin Tchonev of Varna International Tours ([www.varnaworkshops.com](http://www.varnaworkshops.com)). Kalin is a native of Bulgaria and Sharon a native of Israel. Sharon's grandfather is one of the Bulgarian Jews rescued during the Holocaust. Songs of Life and Varna International Tours are headquartered in Lexington, S.C.

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