



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Songs of Life International Festival to Showcase Original Oratorio in Bulgaria and Israel

Hundreds of singers and instrumentalists will gather in Bulgaria and Israel Dec. 27, 2010 – Jan. 7, 2011 to perform a newly-commissioned oratorio at the Songs of Life International Festival.

A Melancholy Beauty, an original work by Composer Charles David Osborne and Librettist Aryeh Finklestein depicts the inspiring story of the rescue of the Jews of Bulgaria during World War II. The festival features conductors Dr. Joshua Jacobson, professor of music and director of choral activities at Northeastern University in Boston, and Professor Henry Leck, director of choral activities at Butler University in Indianapolis. The performances will also include a program of lighter works specially selected by the festival conductors.

Performances of the new work are currently also being planned for Washington, DC, New York City and Boston for the spring of 2011.

Thousands participated in the First Songs of Life Festival in 2008, which commemorated the 65th anniversary of the rescue of the Bulgarian Jews during the Holocaust. Through Ernest Bloch's choral-orchestral masterpiece, "Sacred Service," the celebration of thanksgiving sought to transcend both cultural and religious boundaries as it reached out to the Bulgarian people. The 2010-11 festival hopes to build on this vision.

"In sharing the lessons derived from this heroic episode of the Holocaust era," says Kalin Tchonev, international director of Songs of Life "the Festival hopes to champion humanitarian principles and values. It will further serve as a vehicle for the education of students of all ages in demonstrating that one group of people can indeed make a difference even in the most trying of times."

Choirs and individual performers are invited to perform in the festival. The 12-day itinerary includes opportunities for sightseeing and guided tours. Auditors are especially welcome and will be included in all Festival activities and sightseeing tours.

Financial donations will be used to help defray festival costs and develop an educational kit.

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.songsoflife.org

About Songs of Life

Songs of Life was founded by Sharon and Kalin Tchonev of Varna Music Academy (www.varnaworkshop.com). Kalin is a native of Bulgaria and Sharon a native of Israel. Sharon's grandparents are among the 49,000 Bulgarian Jews rescued during the Holocaust. Songs of Life and Varna Music Academy are headquartered in Lexington, S.C.

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