The Akko Opera Festival

In the spirit of JCC Association's Centennial Celebration, which includes 22 JCCs have creating musical events through Making Music Happen, we want to share a little insight into an aspect of Israel’s music scene— and something that is not generally thought of as Israeli. The story and history of opera in Israel could be the plot of one of the most exciting operas ever written. The story of opera in Israel is a story about pioneers who relentlessly fought to maintain their artistic dreams in a nation yet to be born. It is a story of struggle and love, of faith and despair, a story that eventually, 93 years later, puts Israel very proudly on the international opera map.

In 1982, the Ministry of Culture and Education decided to cease its funding of the Israel National Opera, but Israeli society quickly felt the void. The Council for Arts and Culture worked to find a solution. The Israeli love of art and music, set in the backdrop of historical significance continues to fuel the growth and devotion of opera throughout Israel. Israeli National Opera productions feature leading opera artists from all over the world side by side with Israeli opera artists.

The Akko Opera Festival will take place for the fourth consecutive year in the Old City’s Crusader Fortress, a UNESCO World Heritage site, over the weekend of August 3-5. The city of Akko, north of Haifa, is one of Israel’s greatest archaeological and historic sites. History, like the arts, tells a story. Around the world, opera is often performed in historical settings, so it’s fitting that Israel, a country thriving with culture and steeped in history, can stage music events in such ancient locations as Akko.

Tourists and visitors attending this annual festival can enjoy an exceptional cultural experience, thanks to the unique combination of enchanting music, productions created especially for the festival and the spectacular setting of the Crusader fortress.

The 2017 festival program includes:

Giulio Cesare in Egitto

Giulio Cesare in Egitto by George Frederic Handel, one of the greatest operas of the baroque, is a new production created especially for the festival. Ethan Schmeisser, who will participate for the third time in the festival, will conduct the Israel Camerata Jerusalem Orchestra. The director of the production is Tomer Zvulun and the soloists include Yaniv D’aor in the part of Julius Caesar, Claire Meghnaghi as Cleopatra, Alon Harari as Tolomeo, Anat Czarny as Sesto, Nitzan Alon as Cornelia, Yair Polishook as Achille, Tal Berqman as Nireno and Yoav Weiss as Curio. Also participating are Israeli dancers from the Vertigo group under the choreography of veteran American choreographer Donald Byrd in his first cooperation with the Israeli Opera.

Thursday, Aug. 3 and Saturday, Aug. 5, 2017 at 8:30 p.m.  
Tickets: NIS 300 (Appx $85 U.S.)

“Made in Israel”

Soloists from the Israeli Opera and guest artist Miki Gabrielov, under the direction of David Sebba, will perform in this tribute concert to the late Israeli singer and songwriter Arik Einstein, with operatic renditions of his most popular compositions. Among the soloists: Goni Knaani, Yael Levita, Moran Aboullof, Daniela Skorka and Yair Polishook and the singers of the Meitar Opera Studio.
Friday, Aug. 4 at 9 p.m.
**Tickets:** NIS 140 (Appx $40 U.S.)

**The Magic Flute for the entire family**

In a special production for children, Mozart’s ever-popular opera *The Magic Flute* will be performed in Hebrew (translated by Ehud Manor) in the enchanting setting of the Knight’s Halls.

Saturday, Aug. 5 at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.
**Tickets:** NIS 60 (Appx $17 U.S.)