

## Music Education in Israel: Has the Essence Changed Since 1936?<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Menashe Rabinovitz, head of music schools in Tel Aviv and Haifa in British Mandate Palestine, reported in May 1936 to the Tel Aviv municipality's Education and Culture division, about the First International Conference of the Society for Music Education he had attended that April in Prague as Tel Aviv's delegate. Comparing his insights to the present state of music education in the State of Israel, some positive changes are identified. These include a national curriculum for music teaching in primary schools; the supervision of music classes by an officially appointed general inspector; the promotion of school choirs, and the offering of subsidized concerts by professional musicians in schools. The singing repertoire in the Hebrew-speaking state schools remains essentially unchanged: a variety of songs in Hebrew are its core, responding to the multicultural and heterogeneous Israeli society.

**Keywords:** Music Education; Tel-Aviv; International Congress for Music education; Menashe Ravina (Rabinowitz); Singing in schools; song teaching.

On January 29<sup>th</sup>, 1936, Menashe Rabinovitz, later known as Menashe Ravina,<sup>2</sup>—wrote a letter to Dov Hoz, the recently appointed Tel-Aviv Deputy Major, greeting him on this appointment, sharing with him his view on the music education needs of Tel-Aviv, the first Hebrew city, and asking a private request:

And finally, a request that you see as private, but I think the municipality will also be interested in it: at the beginning of April, an international congress on music education will be held in Prague. In this congress will participate delegates from many cities (Paris, Cambridge, Prague, Brno, Geneva, London, Bratislava, Stuttgart, Belgrade and more). As an educator who has been dealing with pedagogical questions regarding music teaching for many years, I am very interested in this congress, and I hereby ask

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<sup>1</sup> This article is based on a paper presented at “Vom Ersten Internationalen Kongress der Gesellschaft für Musikerziehung in Prag 1936 bis 2016—Ein Beitrag zum Diskurs über “cultural heritage”—Internationaler Kongress in Zusammenarbeit mit der Internationalen Leo-Kestenberg-Gesellschaft (IKG), November 18th–20th 2016, Würzburg, Germany. Judith Cohen read my presentation and suggested strongly to develop it into a journal article, which I did for this Min-Ad special issue dedicated to her.

<sup>2</sup> Menashe Ravina (b. Rabinowitz; Russia, 1899–Tel-Aviv, 1968) was a composer, mostly of songs, many of which are children's songs. He was a music critic who wrote several music history and theory books, a choir director, the director of the Beit Leviym music school in Tel-Aviv, and the founder of the Institute for the Promotion of Music among the People (See Jehoash Hirshberg, *Music in the Jewish Community of Palestine, 1880-1948: A Social History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, mainly pp. 86-99; Jehoash Hirshberg, “Ravina [Rabinowitz], Menashe,” *Grove Music Online*. 2001; Accessed 22 Aug. 2022. <https://www-oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.unl.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000042176>; Sarit Tauber, “Fifty Years of Music Teachers Training in Israel: The Music Teachers training College in Tel-Aviv (1945-1996),” unpublished doctoral dissertation, Tel-Aviv University, 2017.)

to be appointed as Tel Aviv Municipality's official delegate to the congress in order for it to include a representative of the first Hebrew city.<sup>3</sup>

Two weeks later, on February 13<sup>th</sup>, Rabinowitz sent a second letter to Dov Hoz, where he nominates himself for the position of coordinator of music education in Tel-Aviv schools, and adds a reminder regarding his aforementioned request to attend the International Congress in Music Education.<sup>4</sup> There is no record of the deputy's answer, but it is confirmed that Rabinowitz was appointed official delegate. His return was publicized in *Davar* daily newspaper, to which he wrote regularly as its music critic: "Among arrivals, Menashe Rabinowitz, from the International Congress on Music Education in Prague and from visits in educational institutions in Austria and Poland (on behalf of the [Jewish] National Committee, Tel-Aviv Municipality and "Davar" editorial board)"<sup>5</sup>

Three days earlier he wrote a letter to Tel-Aviv Municipality's Education and Culture Division, sharing his insights about music education in Tel-Aviv vis-à-vis his impressions from the congress and from his visits to schools during his stay in Prague.<sup>6</sup> This article compares those insights to the present state of music education in the State of Israel, presenting first the International Congress of the Society for Music Education, its aims, content, and context, followed by the Tel-Aviv music education scene in the 1930s, Rabinowitz's suggestions before and after attending the conference, and finally comparing the situation then and now, aiming to identify the essential changes (if any) that occurred during the almost 90 years that have passed since then.

### **The first International Congress of the Society for Musical Education**

In the near future it [Prague] will again attract a large gathering of musicians and musical educationalists, for between April 4-9 [1936] the first International Congress of the Society for Musical Education, founded in 1934 in connection with the Florentine Music Festival, will take place at Prague.<sup>7</sup>

The announcement of the First International Congress of the Society for Musical Education,<sup>8</sup> was done through a variety of media, such as the article Spitz wrote in *The Musical Times*. Besides announcements in journals, the event was promoted through

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<sup>3</sup> Menashe Rabinowitz, Letter to Dov Hoz, Tel-Aviv Deputy Major, January 29, 1936. *Menashe Ravina Collection* R1/3//9/1. Tel-Aviv Archive. Original in Hebrew: "ולבסוף בקשה שתראה כפרטית אבל חושבני שגם לעירייה ענין בה: בראשית החודש אפריל יתקיים בפראג קונגרס בין-לאומי לחינוך מוסיקלי. בקונגרס זה ישתתפו באי כח ערים רבות (פרס, קמברידג', פראג, ברנו, ג'נבה, לונדון, בראטיסלבה, שטוטגרט, בלגראד ועוד). כמחנך המטפל בשאלות הפדגוגיות של הוראת המוסיקה זה שנים רבות, הנני מתעניין מאד בקונגרס זה ואני מבקש בזאת למנותני כציר לקונגרס מטעם עיריית תל-אביב כדי שיהיה בו גם בא כח של העיר העברית הראשונה."

<sup>4</sup> Menashe Rabinowitz, Letter to Dov Hoz, Tel-Aviv Deputy Major, February 13, 1936 *Menashe Ravina Collection* R1/3//9/1. Tel-Aviv Archive.

<sup>5</sup> "בין הבאים: מנשה רבינוביץ, מהקונגרס הבינלאומי לחינוך מוסיקאי. [בין הבאים: מנשה רבינוביץ, מהקונגרס הבינלאומי לחינוך מוסיקאי. בפראג ומביקורים במוסדות חינוך באוסטריה ובפולין] (מטעם הוועד הלאומי, עיריית ת"א ומערכת "דבר").

<sup>6</sup> Menashe Rabinowitz, Letter to the Tel-Aviv Municipality Education and Culture Division, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1936. *Gimmel 4-1960, 1030*. Tel-Aviv Archive.

<sup>7</sup> Charlotte Spitz, "An Educational Congress at Prague April 4-9, 1936," *The Musical Times*, 77 (1117) March 1936: 220-222, Retrieved February 8, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.2307/919690>, p. 220.

<sup>8</sup> At that time, the term used was "musical education" and not "music education," as nowadays.

the Czechoslovakian Foreign Ministry, which supported it formally and personal contacts of the organizers (Czechoslovakian Society for Music Education).<sup>9</sup> Leo Kestenberg, former ministerial councilor and inspector of musical studies at the Prussian Ministry of Art and Popular Education, who was forced to emigrate in 1933, joined the just founded Czechoslovakian Society for Music Education, as head of the International Tasks Section from mid-1934; he was pivotal in spreading the news regarding the upcoming congress.<sup>10</sup>

The Czechoslovakian organizers advertised the congress all over the world. Maybe one of these advertisements reached Rabinowitz? Or, maybe, he read *The Musical Times* article that clearly stated what was planned, such as presentations by invited delegates, workshops, concerts, a visit to the opera, and also –

addresses by representatives of the gramophone and talking-film industries, with the demonstration of records made for educational purposes. Further it is intended to persuade the broadcasting authorities to foster musical appreciation on the part of the listeners, so far as this plan can be reconciled with the manifold objects of international broadcasting.<sup>11</sup>

Rabinowitz might also have received information about the congress directly from Kestenberg, with whom he probably met in his visits to Berlin, where he took conducting classes and music pedagogy courses, and conducted a synagogue choir on the High Holidays in the years 1928–1933.<sup>12</sup>

The fact is that Rabinowitz attended the congress as the Palestine delegate. His name is included in the list of government representatives in the official program, as “directeur du Conservatoire ‘College of Music Beth-Lewiim’, Tel Awiw et du Conservatoire de Musique, Haïfa”.<sup>13</sup> Other countries sent delegates who were headmasters of national conservatories (for example: Austria, Estonia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland), music inspectors (for example: Belgium, Denmark, France), professors at universities (for example: England, Hungary, Japan, USA, Yugoslavia), composers with interest in music education (Heitor Villa-Lobos from Brazil), and ethnomusicology (Constantin Brailoiu from Romania). Joan Llongueras appears as Spain delegate, without any further information, but it was him who introduced, in the early 1920s, the Dalcroze approach in Catalonia.<sup>14</sup> A female

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<sup>9</sup> Marie McCarthy, (1993). The Birth of Internationalism in Music Education 1899–1938. *IJME*, 21, 1993: 3–15 doi:10.1177/025576149302100101, p. 10; Hana Vhlová-Wörner and Felix Wörner, “Leo Kestenberg und die Prager Gesellschaft für Musikerziehung,” in *Leo Kestenberg - Musikpädagogie und Musikpolitiker in Berlin, Prag und Tel-Aviv*, edited by Susanne Fontaine, Ulrich Mahler, Dietmar Schenk and Theda Weber-Lucks. 2008, pp. 205–243, Freiburg: Rombach, p. 209.

<sup>10</sup> Hana Vhlová-Wörner & Wörner, “Leo Kestenberg...”, p. 206–207.

<sup>11</sup> Charlotte Spitz, “An Educational Congress...”, p. 221

<sup>12</sup> דוד זכאי, “מנשה רבינא” (הספד). *דבר*, 5 בדצמבר 1968, עמ’ 1-2.

<sup>13</sup> *L'éducation musicale trait d'union entre les peuples: rapports et discours sur l'éducation musicale dans les divers pays*. (1937). Prague: Orbis, p. 190.

<sup>14</sup> Francesca Comas Rubí, Xavier Motilla-Salas, and Bernat Sureda-Garcia, (2014). “Pedagogical innovation and music education in Spain: Introducing the Dalcroze method in Catalonia,” *Paedagogica Historica*, 50(3), 320–337. doi:10.1080/00309230.2014.887123

delegate attended from China: Mme Siuying Liang.<sup>15</sup> Among the delegates was professor Edward Dent, musicologist, teacher, music critic, and founder of the International Society for Contemporary Music. Dent organized the Anglo-American conferences in Music Education during the late 1920's in Lausanne. He saw Kestenberg's initiative in the organization of an international conference as an opportunity to revive and increase the international exchange.<sup>16</sup>

The congress aimed at –

winning for music the position it merits in the cultural life of the nations: of establishing it as a recognized factor in the life of even the sport-hardened, matter-of-fact populace of today. Conscientiousness and understanding throw down the gauntlet to prejudice and indolence.<sup>17</sup>

This would be done by showing, freely, without any bias, methods, characteristics of each country. The only criterion was quality. Delegates were to feel free to discuss.<sup>18</sup>

Three popular topics were presented or demonstrated: music appreciation, through the novel use of the phonograph, the folksong in the classroom and the use of contemporary music in the school curriculum.<sup>19</sup> The folksong was present especially in the demonstrations and concerts of children's choirs,<sup>20</sup> and maybe it was what attracted the ethnomusicologists and composers interested in the theme (like Villa-Lobos and Brailoiu). The use of contemporary music in the classroom was probably related to the fact that Kestenberg's planning of this congress was born within the International Society for Contemporary Music.<sup>21</sup> Besides the performance of contemporary compositions by children's choirs, and the Czechoslovakia Philharmonic Orchestra, a debate was held by composers and intellectuals titled "What composers expect from music education. What music education expects from composers."<sup>22</sup>

Some delegates presented the music education system of their countries (Denmark, Romania, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Yugoslavia, USA, England, and Czechoslovakia).<sup>23</sup> It is unclear why not all represented countries did so nor, specifically, why Rabinowitz did not present at all, although it is possible that it was because he was appointed as official delegate too close to the congress dates.

The congress offered a unique opportunity to learn about one of the most important contemporary approaches to music education, Dalcroze Eurhythmics, from Émile Jaques-Dalcroze himself, both in his oral presentation "Sur l'éducation rythmique et musicale," that included demonstrations by students from the Dalcroze Institute in Geneva, and in the course offered during the congress.<sup>24</sup> Rabinowitz was

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<sup>15</sup> Besides her name, no information was given, and no information was found through my bibliographical searches.

<sup>16</sup> Hana Vhlová-Wörner & Wörner, "Leo Kestenberg...", p. 216.

<sup>17</sup> Charlotte Spitz, "An Educational Congress...", p. 222

<sup>18</sup> *L'éducation musicale...* p. 7–8

<sup>19</sup> Marie MacCarthy, "The Birth of Internationalism...", p. 11.

<sup>20</sup> *L'éducation musicale...* p. 198–199

<sup>21</sup> Marie MacCarthy, "The Birth of Internationalism...", p. 10.

<sup>22</sup> *L'éducation musicale...* p. 204

<sup>23</sup> *L'éducation musicale...* p. 190

<sup>24</sup> *L'éducation musicale...* p. 201–202

acquainted with Dalcroze's Eurhythmics, which had been the adopted music education approach in Hebrew speaking kindergartens in Mandatory Palestine,<sup>25</sup> but the opportunity to learn from the master himself was certainly unique.

### **Tel-Aviv music scene around 1936**

Tel-Aviv was founded by Jewish settlers in 1909, just north of Jaffa. Hebrew was the official language of the municipality and of its educational system. This, within the context of British Mandatory Palestine's official three languages—English, Arabic and Hebrew.<sup>26</sup> In 1934 Tel-Aviv was declared a city, and in 1936 it had c.150,000 inhabitants,<sup>27</sup> and became the vibrant economical and cultural center of the *Yishuv*.<sup>28</sup>

Tel-Aviv's musical life was very diverse. It included performances of mainly Western art music in concerts of both chamber and symphonic repertoire; amateur choirs and synagogue services that included choir performances, and also as part of formal celebrations organized by the municipality and other institutions. Announcements of concerts in Tel-Aviv were regularly published in local newspapers both in Hebrew and in English, such as the following, in the "Social and Personal" section of *The Palestine Post*:

Mr. M. Dizengoff, the Belgian Consul in Tel Aviv, has issued invitations to a chamber music concert, which will take place in the hall of the Museum, on Tuesday. The Belgian artist, Mr. Alexander Barjansky, will play works by Bach and Handel. A limited number of tickets are available at the Saphir Music Store and at the museum.<sup>29</sup>

Choir concerts were popular in Tel-Aviv during the 1930s. The workers' choir was considered important both from the musical and the community's points of view, as reported by Rabinowitz—as music critic—in his article sharing the first concert conducted by Max Lempel,<sup>30</sup> and David Rosolio's critique of that concert.<sup>31</sup> In 1937 the Tel-Aviv Choir resumed the activities, conducted by Leo Low (Liow). Around 100

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<sup>25</sup> Sarit Tauber, "Dalcroze Eurhythmics in Eretz-Israel Kindergartens: A National Music Education Program (1920-1948)," (in Hebrew). *Min-Ad: Israel Studies in Musicology Online*, 8(I, II), 2010: 94-105. Retrieved from <https://www2.biu.ac.il/hu/mu/min-ad/>

<sup>26</sup> Aviva Halamish, "The Yishuv: The Jewish Community in Mandatory Palestine," (2009), in *Israel Studies: An Anthology* (Vol. 1), edited by Mitchell Geoffrey Bard and David Nachmias. *Jewish Virtual Library*. Retrieved from <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/israel-studies-an-anthology-the-yishuv>

<sup>27</sup> Tel-Aviv Mayor, "Memorandum of Evidence, submitted by the mayor of Tel-Aviv to the Palestine Royal Commission," December 30, 1936, *David Zvi Pinkas, private archive, 000bpj2, 2-110-7-6-3*. State of Israel Archive.

<sup>28</sup> Tel Aviv Yafo Municipality. (n.d.). [History—A brief history of Tel Aviv](#). Retrieved December 4, 2022, from the website of Tel-Aviv Yafo Municipality.

<sup>29</sup> "Social and Personal," *The Palestine Post*, April 12, 1936, p. 7.

<sup>30</sup> Menashe Rabinowitz, "Likrat HaKontsert shel Makhelat HaPo'alim [Towards the Workers-Choir's Concert]. *Davar*, February 13, 1936, p. 8.

<sup>31</sup> David Rosolio, "Reshimot Musicaliot—Makhelat HaPo'alim," [Musical notes—The Workers' Choir]. *Haaretz*, March 3, 1936), p. 6.

amateur singers of all age groups participated and performed Classical music, Hebrew folksongs and religious/traditional music.<sup>32</sup>

Synagogue choirs performed especially during the High Holidays' religious services, which were announced in the newspapers and sometimes even professional critiques were published.<sup>33</sup> Non-orthodox Shabbat evening services were held in Ohel Shem hall, where the participants joined in singing from specially printed booklets.<sup>34</sup>

Municipal festivities, such as the ones celebrating Purim, included musical performances. The opening show of Tel-Aviv 1935 Purim festivities included "three orchestras: the symphonic orchestra and two wind orchestras, a 100-member choir and many soloists."<sup>35</sup>

Symphonic concerts were announced in the newspaper's music sections:

#### **Music in Tel Aviv – Philharmonic concert**

The second in the series of symphony concerts arranged by the Palestine Philharmonic Society took place under the conductorship of Michael Taube on February 16, in the Ohel Shem Hall.<sup>36</sup>

This concert was performed by what became the Palestine Symphonic Orchestra (and from 1948—the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra). A week later, Bronisław Huberman, the founder of the orchestra, announced that Toscanini accepted his invitation to conduct the opening concert of the PSO,<sup>37</sup> and even the American Jewish Weekly in Chicago published it later in March:

Arturo Toscanini has accepted an invitation to conduct the opening concert of the newly organized Palestine Symphony Orchestra, on October 24, 1936, at [sic] Tel Aviv. This is a cultural item of real significance, and it obtains added importance by reason of the fact that this opening concert will be broadcast from the new radio station in Tel Aviv over the facilities of the National Broadcasting Corporation.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> "Makhelet Tel-Aviv," [Tel-Aviv choir, in Hebrew], *Haaretz*, February 26, 1937, p. 4.

<sup>33</sup> S. [possibly Shim'on Samet, who at that time was one of *HaAretz* newspaper's reporters in Tel-Aviv (see <https://www.the7eye.org.il/332087>)], "Leyl Slichot beTel-Aviv," [Slichot evening in Tel Aviv, in Hebrew]. *Haaretz*, September 23, 1935, p. 5.

<sup>34</sup> For example, the booklet prepared by Pooa Grinshpon, *Zemer leyom shishee* [Song for Friday, in Hebrew], Tel Aviv: Ariel, 1930.

<sup>35</sup> "Yiriat Tel Aviv Likrat Chagigot Purim" [Tel Aviv Municipality towards Purim festivities, in Hebrew]. *Hayarden*, March 11, 1935, p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> D.R. [most probably David Rosolio, who wrote music reviews for *The Palestine Post*], "Music in Tel Aviv," *The Palestine Post*, February 14, 1936, p. 14. The date in the review is a typo, of course: that concert actually took place on February 6 (see *Davar*, February 5, 1936, p. 5.)

<sup>37</sup> The daily newspaper *Davar* highlighted Toscanini's visit three times in its issue of February 24, 1936: on p. 1 of its morning edition: "Ha-Kontzert Ha-Philharmoni Ha-Rishon Be-October Be-Nitsucjo shel Toscanini" [the first Philharmonic Concert in October conducted by Toscanini]; on p. 1 of its evening edition: "'Huberman ve-Toscanini" [Huberman and Toscanini]; and on p.4 of that edition, in a special supplement addressing new immigrants, written in easier Hebrew, "Toscanini Yenatseach al Ha-Tizmoret Ha-Eretz-Israelit" [Toscanini will conduct the Eretz-Israel Orchestra].

<sup>38</sup> Louis Israel Newman, "Telling it in Gath," *The Sentinel: The American Jewish Weekly Chicago*, 1936, March 5, p. 12.

The orchestra also offered concerts for children, the first one performed in 1935. The program notes —written by Pooa Grinshpon—were intended as a didactic tool to educate children and, by that, enhance their musical experience.<sup>39</sup>

### **Tel-Aviv music education scene around 1936**

For such a city, the quantity of professional and amateur musicians—mostly immigrants—was impressive. There were many opportunities for children to be exposed to and learn music. Just in Tel-Aviv there were four private music conservatories regularly advertised in the press. For example, several weeks before the opening of the 1937-8 schoolyear, three of these conservatories were separately advertised on one single page in *Haaretz* newspaper: “Shulamith,” headed by Moshe Hopenko; “Machon lehaskala vechinuch musicaliim” [The Institute for Musical Enlightenment and Education], headed by David Schor, and Michael Taube’s Conservatory, named after his director.<sup>40</sup> The fourth conservatory, “Tel-Aviv,” headed by the violinist Harry Blumberg, was advertised exclusively in *Davar* newspaper. “Shulamith,” the first music school in Eretz Israel (founded in 1910), was “certified by the top musical institutions in European capitals. The annual exams in the presence of a music official from London,” as stated in newspapers advertisements.<sup>41</sup> Those besides “Beit Halevyiim”, that Rabinowitz was the director and the “Institute for music playing lessons” directed by Pooa Grinshpon. Students’ concerts were held regularly in those institutions (e.g., Machon leshiurey negeena, 1938)<sup>42</sup>

The Hebrew education system also offered opportunities. This school system, that encompassed all the levels of education—kindergarten, elementary, secondary, teachers’ college and even the teachers’ federation—was fully formed by 1914,<sup>43</sup> and was run by *Ha-Va’ad Haleumi* (the National Council). The number of children in Tel-Aviv schools increased each year:

From year to year the Tel-Aviv municipality is compelled to enlarge its municipal school system. The number of children at municipal schools has grown from 4,867 in 1929-30 to 13,186 in 1936-37; nor does this include the thousands of children who receive their education at private, secondary, and religious schools.<sup>44</sup>

Kindergartens offered musical activities, which consisted of singing and physical exercises accompanied by the piano played by a teacher (Dalcroze Eurhythmics: at that time pianos were common in kindergarten classes). The Head of the Education and Culture Division at Tel-Aviv Municipality asked Rabinowitz, in 1933, to assess the professional education of those teachers. Rabinowitz and Schor wrote in their report that the music teachers’ work is satisfactory in general, but there are issues that need

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<sup>39</sup> Menashe Rabinowitz, “Ha-Kontsert Ha-Rishon Le-Yeladim Be-Nitzucho shel Friedlander” [The first concert for children, conducted by Friedlander, in Hebrew], *Davar*, 1935, February 28, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> *HaAretz*, August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1937, p. 16.

<sup>41</sup> Advertisements in *Haaretz*, August 26, 1936, p. 8; *Davar*, September 4, 1936, p. 5

<sup>42</sup> See more on this subject in the article by Anat Viks, in this *Minad* issue.

<sup>43</sup> Tobe Shanok, “A Jewish Millet to a Jewish National State-Within-A-State,” *Israel Studies*, 25(2), 2020, 25-48. doi:10.2979/israelstudies.25.2.02

<sup>44</sup> Tel-Aviv Mayor, “Memorandum of Evidence...” p. 28.

improvement: some pianos were not in-tune, and this may affect the children's music ear; most of the music classes are dedicated to Dalcroze Eurhythmics and not to singing; the content and musical range of the songs that are taught are not suitable to children.<sup>45</sup> As a consequence of this report, the Municipality's Education and Culture Division asked Rabinowitz and Schor to develop music courses that were offered to kindergarten teachers under the aegis of the Kindergarten Teachers' Union.<sup>46</sup>

In municipal primary schools singing was taught once or twice a week.<sup>47</sup> This was done since 1922, at least as described in the urban primary school curriculum: "In singing classes the teachers will pay close attention to the nice quality of the children singing. It should not be loud, but in good taste and with emotion."<sup>48</sup>

Rabinowitz described what he saw in his visits to Tel Aviv's schools:

The teaching of singing in general [primary] schools is considered a "free" subject, no supervision, no guidance, and I know that many singing teachers would willingly agree to put their teaching activity under regular supervision if they were promised guidance and help.<sup>49</sup>

He suggested launching a supervision system to help interested teachers and a pedagogical center that will focus on selecting and classifying singing repertoire by its adequacy according to students' ages, holidays and special days, games, processions, etc. "over time it will be possible to compile a collection that will be approved by the center after working with singing teachers."<sup>50</sup>

He pointed out to the need not only of organizing the singing repertoire but also to develop didactic tools:

In the pedagogical conversations the question of the singing instruction as a whole will undoubtedly also arise, it is clear that unsystematicity must be fought. I do not mean to establish a single method for the whole forum. Teachers should be given freedom of action in their departments. But a minimum program needs to be set. This will motivate the teacher to look for the method that best suits his role.<sup>51</sup>

In his vision, the center would also organize –

concerts for students in the afternoon. For a long time, the municipality has been looking for cultural enterprises that will enrich our students' free time after the school day. I am sure that light concerts with an informative lecture can very much fulfill the demand of the municipality.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Menashe Rabinowitz, letter from 1933, in Sarit Tauber, "Fifty Years...", p. 33.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.; see also Sarit Tauber, "Dalcroze Eurhythmics..."

<sup>47</sup> Reshef & Dror, 1999 in Sarit Tauber, "Fifty Years..." p. 34

<sup>48</sup> *Curriculum for urban primary schools, 1922*, published by the education department of the Zionist Leadership in the Land of Israel (in Hebrew).

<sup>49</sup> Menashe Rabinowitz, Letter to Dov Hoz, January 29, 1936..., p.1.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Idem., p. 2



Rabinowitz's suggestions to Tel-Aviv municipality were based on his experience as music school director, teacher, composer—mainly of songs—and organizer of concert-lectures for lay audiences. It is interesting that in spite of him also being a choir conductor he did not address this subject in his January and February 1936 letters. He did so when he returned from the congress in Prague, describing what he saw and heard, and suggesting the development of the children and youth choir scene in Tel-Aviv:

The choirs that performed in the congress astounded [the listeners] with their singing, and the children who participated in these choirs showed great mastery of polyphonic singing and even of atonal complicated singing. There can be no doubt that such great performances are admirable and it would be highly desirable to follow in the footsteps of these choir conductors and establish a number of exemplary choirs here as well. But it should not be forgotten that among the choirs were those that have been performing for years in concerts in the centers of Europe and they have actually become professional bodies and not educational centers for youth.<sup>53</sup>

Regarding the teaching of music in schools, he compared what he saw in the congress and in his visits to schools in Prague and Vienna. His impressions were that the teaching of singing in Tel-Aviv was not so bad:

The situation of the teaching of singing in municipal primary schools in Israel is not very bad and it can be easily corrected anyway. There are countries where the weekly hours allotted for singing in schools is higher than in our country (Romania for example) [...] as far as the teaching itself is concerned, there are some teachers here who try to get the most out of their teaching hours and their achievements deserve encouragement and appreciation.<sup>54</sup>

He suggests again, as he did in his previous letters to the municipality (January and February 1936) to set up a pedagogical center and a supervision system. Maybe he was encouraged to suggest it after meeting music inspectors and directors of national institutes in the congress. In this letter he expanded on the areas of singing repertoire, a basic music curriculum, mainly regarding solfeggio, pedagogy, didactics and children's choirs in schools. These areas will be compared to the present situation in the following section.

### **Music teaching in schools: 1936 and 2022**

The obvious change that occurred since 1936, is that in 1948 the State of Israel was founded and the education system formally organized. During the interceding 86 years, Israel's population naturally increased. While Rabinowitz related only to the Jewish-Hebrew speaking population in Tel-Aviv in the 1930s, that numbered c. 150,000

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<sup>53</sup> Menashe Rabinowitz, Letter to the Tel-Aviv Municipality Education and Culture Division. May 18, 1936, p. 1 *Gimmel 4-1960, 1030*. Tel-Aviv Archive.

<sup>54</sup> *Idem.*, p. 2.

inhabitants, the Israeli education system caters for all students within a population of 9,500,000.<sup>55</sup>

“The teaching of singing in elementary schools is thought of as a ‘free’ subject,” argued Rabinowitz,<sup>56</sup> not only meaning that there is no curriculum, but also that it is not a compulsory subject. Nowadays, the teaching of an art-related subject (music, visual arts, drama, dance, film and media) is compulsory, but the choice among them is the prerogative of the School’s headmaster. These subjects are mostly taught by licensed teachers who are employed by the Ministry of Education. Since last year, the schools’ headmasters have been given a budget and the freedom to directly hire and teachers and enact curricula, chosen from a vast pool of programs approved by the Ministry, c. 500 of which pertain to the area of music teaching in elementary schools (Israeli Ministry of Education, n.d.a).<sup>57</sup> Each subject area, including music, is supervised by a general inspector (who also is one of the instances that approved the external program), who supervises the teaching of the subject and the teachers employed by the Ministry of Education.

Rabinowitz pointed out in his three aforementioned letters (January 29<sup>th</sup>, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, and May 18<sup>th</sup> of 1936) the need for a coordinator of, or supervisor over, the teaching of singing in Tel-Aviv’s municipal primary schools. He offered himself for these basic roles, until sufficient budget is available. These included the management of the music teaching in primary schools, and the setting up of a music library.<sup>58</sup> Music, as a teaching area, is now supervised by a general inspector, appointed by the pedagogical secretary at the Ministry of Education. This person supervises the teaching of music in primary and secondary schools as well as in subsidized conservatories. The general inspector consults with a statutory subject committee (Israel Ministry of Education, 2020).<sup>59</sup> The changes, over the last 86 years, are therefore remarkable: not just a general supervisor, also six district directors employed by his office (Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa, North, center, and South), and over 20 supervisors and coordinators for the diverse sectors according to specific (ethnic, denominational, and other particular) sub-areas: Arab; Druze and Circassians; Bedouin; Jewish ultra-orthodox (“Haredi”); children at risk; special projects of instrument playing in primary schools; singing projects; conservatories; digital pedagogy, and school choirs, as well as for junior high and high school music major departments such as performance examinations; matriculation exams; students’ final projects; alternative evaluations;

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<sup>55</sup> For more information on the Israeli Education system see Nachum Blass, “The Israeli Education System: An Overview: a Chapter of The State of the Nation Report 2018,” Jerusalem: Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel, December 2018. Retrieved from the Taub Center: <https://www.taubcenter.org.il/en/research/the-israeli-education-system-an-overview/>

<sup>56</sup> Menashe Rabinowitz, Letter to Dov Hoz, January 29, 1936.

<sup>57</sup> Israel Ministry of Education, [Tochniot Chinuchot Chitzoniot](#) [External educational programs, in Hebrew] n.d.

<sup>58</sup> Menashe Rabinowitz, Letter of February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1936.

<sup>59</sup> Israel Ministry of Education, The Supervision on Music Teaching: “[MiShulchan Ha-MFMR](#)” [From the General Supervisor’s Desk, in Hebrew], November 11, 2020.

Haredi music major; music major departments' conventions; national youth orchestra; gifted students; pop; rock and jazz pedagogical contents, and Western art music theory.<sup>60</sup> The Ministry of Education's Music Supervision website hosts all the information, documents and materials that can be included in specific curricula.<sup>61</sup> These, especially those relevant to primary schools, are compared to Rabinowitz's suggestions.

#### *a. Singing repertoire*

In the 1930s music was not taught in primary schools; the subject was called "singing." Nowadays, singing is one of the musical performing skills included in music classes, as stated in the national curriculum.<sup>62</sup> Rabinowitz suggested to compile a collection of songs, in consensus with the teachers.<sup>63</sup> He presented the context, the problem and the solution in his letter upon his return from Prague. Each of his arguments regarding singing in schools is presented vis-à-vis the present scene.

to identify a number of songs worthy of singing in all schools. Unfortunately some teachers tend to teach only their own [composed] songs. Once the center committee publishes the list of selected songs each teacher will be morally obligated to teach them to his students.<sup>64</sup>

The issue of singing repertoire is addressed in the national curriculum (Israel Ministry of Education, 2011/2020), within the aims of singing we find: "get to know a selected and varied singing repertoire from a variety of cultures and musical genres; to create an intergenerational continuum for the heritage of songs in the circles of the family, the community and the Israeli culture."<sup>65</sup> The curriculum does not include a list of suggested songs, but to each stage (1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> grades), it does state the aims. Within these aims, the characteristics of the songs are described. For the younger ones the songs' range should be within one octave, and the melody should be mainly stepwise, its intervals should be small, and the tonality—clear. The older students will be able to sing songs within a range of a tenth with slight modulations.

The website of the Ministry of Education offers links to a variety of didactic singing resources, some of which include scores. Other links lead to audio and visual recordings. Among these, two are collections of songs aimed primarily at the classroom teacher, but additionally at the music teacher. This is not surprising, since none of these was created by the sole initiative of the music inspectorate.

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> See Israel Ministry of Education, (1) "[Tochniot Chinuchot Chitzoniot](#)" [External educational programs, in Hebrew], retrieved May 10, 2022; (2) Portal Ovdey Hora'a: HaMerchav HaPedagogy: "[Chomrey Hora'a U-Lemida](#)" [Teaching and learning materials, in Hebrew]. Retrieved May 10, 2022; (3) Portal Ovdey Hora'a: HaMerchav HaPedagogy, "[Shirat Makhela VeShirat Rabim](#)" [Choral singing and community singing, in Hebrew]. Retrieved May 10, 2022.

<sup>62</sup> Israel Ministry of Education. [Musica: Tochnit Limudim LebBeit HaSefer HaYesody](#) [Music: A curriculum for elementary schools, in Hebrew], 2011/2020, Tel-Aviv: Ma'alot.

<sup>63</sup> Menashe Rabinowitz, letter of January 29<sup>th</sup>, 1936.

<sup>64</sup> Menashe Rabinowitz, letter of May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1936, p. 2.

<sup>65</sup> Israel Ministry of Education. *Musica: Tochnit Limudim*...p. 24.

The "Song of the Day" program is the result of cooperation and action between the Heritage Department and the Supervision of Music in the Pedagogical Secretariat and the pedagogical director and teaching staff, and it offers elementary schools to open the school day with singing—which contributes to a pleasant atmosphere and meaningful opening for all school students.<sup>66</sup>

The compilation, accessible only online, is directed only to the Hebrew speaking students of state and state-religious elementary schools. The repertoire varies in genres (e.g. folk, pop, rock, paraliturgical), styles (e.g. "Eretz Israel," Mediterranean), and publication date (within the last 80 years). The program is organized around values such as family and respect for the parents, "love thy neighbor as thyself," friendship and tolerance, and solidarity. Each song includes its score, the lyrics, information about the song, writer and composer, a link to a Youtube recording, a glossary for some words, proposals for activities regarding moral values, feelings, language literacy, musical activities (e.g. solfege, singing and playing, music literacy).<sup>67</sup> Most of the activities are not aimed at a specific age. The songs varied in their ranges and other musical features, and do not comply with the aims of the music curriculum. Some of the suggestions for musical activities do not include singing. This compilation is not necessarily, then, a prescriptive collection that students are supposed to sing.

*Zemer Lach Lagil HaRach* is a collection of five volumes assembled as an initiative of the Israel Ministry of Education preschool division.<sup>68</sup> Intended for preschool children, the collection "exposes the preschool children to a repertoire of quality, the role of which is to preserve the Land of Israel's tradition and to deepen both its value and the Israeli identity."<sup>69</sup> The volume includes around 100 songs, all composed within the last 80 years. Each song is presented with its score, lyrics, information about the writer, composer, the song itself, suggested activity for its presentation in class, and follow up activities. The collection also includes illustrations by children, and a CD with commercial recordings of the songs. The lyrics of all the songs are relevant to young children's life and realities. The range of most melodies is an octave, but sometimes more. Several songs include melodic leaps of a fifth and more, and some light modulations. Considering both the musical characteristics of the singing repertoire as well as the proposed activities, it seems that children are not supposed to sing those songs accurately, but rather join in the teacher's singing or the given

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<sup>66</sup> Israel Ministry of Education, [Shir Shel Yom: Madrich LaMore](#). [Song for the day – a teacher's manual, in Hebrew]. (2017).

<sup>67</sup> Israel Ministry of Education, 2017. The [website of the song inventory](#) has connections to activities. For example, for the song "[Brosh](#)" ("Cypress")

<sup>68</sup> Judith Finkiel (ed.) [Zemer Lach LaGil HaRach](#) [Songs for young children, in Hebrew]. Israel Ministry of Education, 2009; Judith Finkiel (ed.) [Zemer Lach LaGil HaRach: Chagim](#) [Songs for young children: festivals, in Hebrew]. Israel Ministry of Education, 2011; Judith Finkiel (ed.), [Zemer Lach LaGyl HaRach: Shirey 'Onot](#), [Songs for young children - seasons' songs, in Hebrew]. Israel Ministry of Education, 2012; Judith Finkiel (ed.), [Zemer Lach LaGil HaRach: Shirim LiKtanim ULiGdolim](#) [Songs for young children: songs for young and old, in Hebrew]. Israel Ministry of Education, 2014; Judith Finkiel (ed.), [Zemer Lach LaGil HaRach: Shirim Le'Eruyim Meyuchadim](#) [Songs for young children: songs for special occasions, in Hebrew], Israel Ministry of Education, 2016;

<sup>69</sup> Judith Finkiel, *Zemer Lach LaGil HaRach*, p. 3.

recording and react to it in some way (for example verbally or by drawing, or with motion).

A program based on a compilation of *Pyyutim*—Jewish para-liturgical poetry and songs—is the initiative of the Music Inspectorate.

The basic approach of the program sees *piyyut* as an important component of Jewish culture. The program reflects the nature of the Jewish multicultural society in Israel, and its emphasis is on the musical aspect of *piyyut* within an ethnomusicological and multidisciplinary approach.

The program includes the best musical repertoire of the various communities of Israel, and provides a glimpse into the iron-clad assets of a magical cultural-musical world. Students learn a repertoire of songs and works from the musical traditions of the various Israeli communities, in a multidisciplinary context.<sup>70</sup>

This program is presented in shared online folders, that include scores, information on the liturgical poem, musical tradition, audio recordings, and suggested musical activities. On that site there also are arrangements for choir and/or instruments.

The vocal abilities of children were hardly taken account of in choosing the *Pyyutim*. The principal criterion in all three collections seems to be the poetic content of each *Pyyut*, as expressed in its lyrics. These are seen as a means to reinforce the Hebrew Jewish identity, both of the individual and of the community. Israel is not the only country that sees a common singing repertoire serving the cause of promoting or strengthening a national identity;<sup>71</sup> Rabinowitz's also aimed at a shared community identity:

Every year you will hear a demand for new songs from us. Both kindergarten teachers and singing teachers pick up and look for new songs claiming that they are tired of old songs. This tendency must be fought. The new student is unfamiliar with the song; in any case, he does not know how to sing it correctly and express it correctly, and the teacher's role is to interest the student in the song, to bring him closer to his heart and make him his spiritual property. The center committee will have to list in its list the best and most desirable list of songs.<sup>72</sup>

Some singing and kindergarten teachers in Rabinowitz's time wrote and composed their own songs (for example, Pooa Grinshpon and Sara Levy-Tanay), since there were not enough Hebrew songs for children.<sup>73</sup> Consequently, there was no common repertoire. This lack was already noticed at the beginning of this century,<sup>74</sup> and it is not surprising,

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<sup>70</sup> Israel Ministry of Education, [Al hatochnit Shirim veShorashim](#) [About the program "Songs and Roots," in Hebrew], January 16, 2019.

<sup>71</sup> See, for example, Alexandra Kertz-Welzel, "The Singing Muse? Three centuries of music education in Germany," *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education*, 26(1), 2004: 8–27.

<sup>72</sup> Rabinowitz, Letter of May 18, 1936, p. 2

<sup>73</sup> Claudia Gluschkankof, "Music everywhere: overt and covert, official and unofficial early childhood music education policies and practices in Israel," *Arts Education Policy Review*, 109(3), (2008): 37–44.

<sup>74</sup> See, for example, Ma'ayan Amir, "'Lo Hikarti Af Shir': Meafyeney Repertuar Shirey Chag HaChanuka BeGaney Yeladim Hayom—Beyn Shimur LeChidush" ["I did not recognize any song" Repertoire Characteristics of the Hanukah Songs in Kindergartens Today—Preservation Versus Innovation, in Hebrew]. Unpublished M.Ed. final project, Levinsky College of Education, 2012; Claudia

considering the multicultural and heterogeneous Israeli society. The response of the Ministry of Education was to develop programs such as those presented above.

***b. Curriculum, pedagogy and didactics.***

As already stated (see “Tel-Aviv music education scene around 1936” section), Rabinowitz pointed out that “a minimum program should be set”,<sup>75</sup> and that “a minimum program which each teacher is obliged to fulfill in the teaching year” is needed.<sup>76</sup> Regarding didactics, he considered that “teachers should be given freedom of action in their departments,”<sup>77</sup> and he emphasized this point upon his return from Prague: “the committee does not have to determine a teaching method. Every teacher is free to walk the path that is close to his heart.”<sup>78</sup>

The Israeli Music National Curriculum conforms to Rabinowitz’s suggestions: it states the contents that each teacher should teach, but does not include its didactics, stressing the fact that music should be practiced: “The curriculum emphasizes that music is a *practical, dynamic, and living* essence, to be experienced through intensive activities of *listening, performing, and creating*.”<sup>79</sup> Performing is divided into singing and instrumental playing. This curriculum expands the scope of the 1930s singing class: students do not only sing, but play, create their own music and listen to recorded music. It is interesting that listening to recorded music through the phonograph, which was an ongoing concern for music educators in those times, and was presented several times in Prague’s congress,<sup>80</sup> was not commented in Rabinowitz’s report, and he did not suggest including it in class.

Within the curriculum, one chapter is dedicated for each type of the above musical experiences. Each chapter includes (1) an introduction defining and describing the specific musical experience, (2) general objectives, (3) teaching contents (4) the expected outcomes in each stage (1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> grades). The expected outcomes serve as benchmarks for the teachers to evaluate the teaching and learning process. Those chapters belong to the second section of the curriculum, its first part being an introduction stating its foundations.<sup>81</sup> The third section suggests didactic tools (movement, drawing, language and notation); the fourth presents the optimal conditions for music teaching in schools, its place in the school culture, concerts, and infrastructure. The curriculum includes short four appendices (music education approaches; music cognition; music as a means to develop extra-musical skills; music

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Gluschkof and Nathan Shaha, *Mekoma VeTafkida shel HaGanenet BeChayey HaMusica BaGan* [The Place and the Role of the Kindergarten Teacher in the Kindergarten's Musical Life, in Hebrew], research supported by The Mofet Research Institute and The Research Authority, 2004, Tel-Aviv: Levinsky College of Education and Beit Berl College.

<sup>75</sup> Menashe Rabinowitz, letter of January 29, 1936, p.1.

<sup>76</sup> Menashe Rabinowitz, letter of May 18, 1936, p. 2.

<sup>77</sup> Rabinowitz, letter of January 29, 1936, p.1.

<sup>78</sup> Rabinowitz, letter of May 18, 1936, p. 2.

<sup>79</sup> Israel Ministry of Education. [\*Musica: Tochnit Limudim LebBeyt HaSefer HaYesody\*](#), p. 4, English translation in Amira Ehrlich, “Dictating ‘Diversity’: A case of how language constructs policy in Israeli Music Education.” *Finnish Journal of Music Education*, 2016, 19(2), 30-46, p. 37.

<sup>80</sup> Mary McCarthy, “The Birth of Internationalism...”

<sup>81</sup> For a critical analysis of the curriculum see Amira Ehrlich, “Dictating “Diversity”...”



and feeling) that relate to terms and assumptions that permeate the curriculum. It serves not only as a prescriptive document but also as advocacy for teachers and supervisors.

Rabinowitz did not “mean to establish a single method for the whole forum. But a minimum program needs to be set. This will motivate the teacher to look for the method that best suits his or her role.”<sup>82</sup> Indeed, the present curriculum complies with Rabinowitz’s suggestions in the sense that it does not openly subscribe to one methodology. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Education Music Supervision website does include didactic suggestions, such as stages to teach songs<sup>83</sup> and detailed activities on extra-musical themes (e.g. seasons, celebrations),<sup>84</sup> listening (guided listening activities to specific pieces, most of them instrumental and Western art music). In addition, it offers teachers the opportunity to share their own suggestions with the community:

Do you have an idea? If you too have a great lesson plan or an original or an original, interesting idea that ignites the imagination, awakens the senses and breathes life into the lessons—share and help students be happy.<sup>85</sup>

The website offers a vast array of didactic material. It arises questions: if the curriculum does not dictate specific repertoire and specific didactics, why does the inspectorate offer it? Is it because the inspectorate identified a need, sort of a down-to-top request?? Is it intended to motivate teachers? These questions are worth of future research.

### *c. School choirs*

Upon his return from the Prague conference, Rabinowitz strongly advocated for school choirs:

As a result of all this [the high quality singing of classes — C.G.], a joint action of children's choirs should develop... The choir must serve as a final goal, crowning the singing lessons.<sup>86</sup>

It is interesting that he addressed the school’s choirs issue in his report. Maybe the children’s choirs at the congress, and the choirs in the schools he visited made an impression on him, and motivated him to make the suggestions.

Rabinowitz’s suggestion resonates in the inspectorate website:

Many schools are engaged in the field of vocal work—shaping and cultivating the human voice - systematically and continuously throughout several years of study. This vocal work leads to the establishment of school choirs that represent high quality singing as well as a diverse and challenging repertoire... The school choir occupies a central and significant place in its being. The Music inspectorate works hard to promote

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<sup>82</sup> Menashe Rabinowitz, Letter of January 29, 1936, p. 1.

<sup>83</sup> Sarit Tauber, “[Shlabim lehora'at hashit](#)” [Stages of teaching a song, in Hebrew], 2022. Retrieved from the website of the Israel Ministry of Education, Mazkirut Pedagogit, Musica.

<sup>84</sup> Israel Ministry of Education, “[Chomrey Hora'a U-Lemida](#)” [Teaching and learning materials, in Hebrew], n.d. from Portal Ov'dey Hora': HaMerchav HaPedagogy.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Menashe Rabinowitz, letter of May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1936, p. 3.

and cultivate the culture of singing in music classes and school choirs. (Israel Ministry of Education, n.d.c)

A school choir can operate only if there are singing and music classes, because the basis of singing is developed in the music classes. The choir should sing in front of all the school, but it “is not just a decoration on holidays and festivals. Although even in this role it has great value, but we should not limit it only to those occasions.”<sup>87</sup>

The music inspectorate sees the singing in choir itself a means to develop many extra-musical skills, mainly social ones, resonating with the aims of the Ministry of Education:

In addition to the many musical values that choir singing imparts, the choir singing experience develops patience and tolerance, teamwork, acceptance of the other, encourages artistic taste development among students and cultivates social and cultural rules of behavior leading to proper communication. Choir singing builds bridges of hope and presents the singers with a human and exciting challenge, especially in the technological age in which we live.<sup>88</sup>

The inspectorate website suggests musical arrangements, advise how to set up a school choir, offers links to audiovisual materials and to a specific website dedicated to school choirs: “Shiru.”<sup>89</sup> This site includes choral arrangements, interactive audio files of each part and piano accompaniment, information on the poem, poet and composer, analysis of the song, and teaching advice. The function that Rabinowitz suggested that the pedagogical center should assume has been taken over by the inspectorate, and became accessible through a rich and varied website.

## Conclusions

School music instruction changed in the last 80 years, from offering only singing classes to music classes that educate the child as an active and rounded-up musical person, as a listener, a performer, and a creator. The development is remarkable, but it is not a phenomenon characteristic only to Israel. In Germany, during the Weimar republic, it happened through Kestenberg’s reform, changing the term, and accordingly its content from “singing lesson” to “music education.”<sup>90</sup> Nevertheless, the proposed lesson plans offered in the inspectorate website, give the impression that singing, as a skill, is developed mainly in choir rehearsals and less so in the music classes.

80 years ago, children could learn to play instruments in private music schools (conservatories, as they were called) and private music teachers. Now it is still so, but the conservatories are supervised by the general music inspectorate, and many local authorities, together with the local conservatory, offer a program that teaches playing

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<sup>87</sup> Rabinowitz, Letter 18, may 1936, p. 3

<sup>88</sup> Israel Ministry of Education, “[Shirat Makhela VeShirat Rabim](#)”...

<sup>89</sup> BandPad, Israeli Ministry of Education, & Nona Vocal Arts Center, “[Shiru](#),” n.d.

<sup>90</sup> Alexandra Kertz-Welzel, “The Singing Muse?...” , p. 22.



in small groups (and not just in individual lessons, as it is done in the conservatories) within the school day.<sup>91</sup>

In his January 29<sup>th</sup>, 1936 letter, Rabinowitz suggested “concerts for students in the afternoon...with an informative lecture.”<sup>92</sup> This type of afternoon concerts has been, and still is, offered by the main musical performing bodies in Israel,<sup>93</sup> as well as by small ensembles and individual performers. Since 2002, the music inspectorate cooperates with various orchestras (for example, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the Jerusalem Symphonic Orchestra, and Haifa Symphonic Orchestra, among others), offering to hundreds of elementary school children the opportunity of listening to live concerts performed by professional musicians in concert halls, after being taught the various compositions in music classes.<sup>94</sup>

Music classes are elective, the one who decides whether they will happen or not is the school’s headmaster. The lessons are taught by state certified music teachers and supervised by the general music inspectorate. The curriculum is compulsory, but the repertoire and didactics are not. Two external programs—Live concerts’ music listening, and instrumental performance—are offered in many schools, in cooperation with the local authority, local conservatories, professional orchestras and the general music inspectorate. Students who happen to attend a school offering both music classes and the external programs enjoy a supervised holistic music education, partially provided by the state. These are major changes compared to the provided opportunities by the municipality, 80 years ago. In an everchanging society, might future major changes happen in a shorter time, or not?

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<sup>91</sup> Israel Ministry of Education, “[Model Musica Yishuvi](#)” [music model for localities, in Hebrew], 2002.

<sup>92</sup> Rabinowitz, letter of January 29<sup>th</sup>, 1936, p. 2.

<sup>93</sup> Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, “[The IPO for Kids](#),” n.d.; The Israeli Opera, “[Kids](#),” n.d.

<sup>94</sup> Dochy Lichtensztajn, “HaConcert Ha-‘Chay’ BaCurriculum HaBeyt-Sifri: Episoda Cholefet o Erua Chinuchi Ratzif UMitmashech?” [The live concert in the school curricula - a passing episode or a continuous and ongoing educational event?, in Hebrew]. *Tav+: Music, Arts, Society* 6, 2005: 53–60.