

# Tikkun Fellowship 2019



## Polina Pine – Educational Workshops

*Dr. Polina Pine is an Israeli scientist who resides in Glenview IL, she was born in Russia and was actively involved in Jewish community back there. As a child she participated in many Jewish summer and winter camps organized by Sochnut haYehudit. In 1996 she immigrated to Israel. While living in Israel and studying at Technion towards her degree in Chemistry she worked as a counselor in Jewish summer camps in Russia and Canada and volunteered in Russian speaking communities in Israel.*

The goals of the project were to bring all ages of Russian Speaking Jews in Chicago together and increase awareness about modern Jewish life in different countries such as Israel, Russia, and other countries. Jewish life in these countries historically has been very close-knit. We planned to bring professional artists, athletes, and activists from the aforementioned communities. In the framework of this project we held two workshops.

The first event was a "Maccabiah Games Quest," which took place on July 14th at 12:00 pm at Krug Community Center. The event's aim was to connect the Chicago Russian Jewish Community to Jewish and Israeli analog of Olympic games. The activities engaged about 35-40 people. Parents and children had the opportunity to learn about the games organized by the Maccabi World Union, as well as an opportunity to participate in sport quests. This project was designed and led by Alexander Pain, a Russian Jewish community activist and former Director of the Hesed Jewish community for elderly people in Orenburg. Alexander is a professional educator with more than 35 years of experience on various educational platforms.

Event attendees had positive experiences at the Maccabiah Games Quest, saying on Facebook:

“Спасибо, Alexandr Pain спасибо! И спасибо вам за хорошее настроение вчера!”

“Alexandr Pain, здорово! Завидую вашим ученикам!”



The second and final event, “Israeli Art and Design in Judaica Context”, took place on Friday, July 19th, at 6:00 pm at Krug Community Center. The event provided an opportunity for participants to create their

own craft exploring the unique technique of Modern Israeli Embroidery (MIE technique). This event was led by Israeli Designer Kate Pine, B.Ed.D's from WIZO Haifa Academy of Design and Education, the workshop included a survey of Israeli art trends and Israeli Schools of Design. There was also a drawing of several jewelry pieces by Israeli Jewelry Designer Elvira Goldkin Marciano. This event engaged about 30 participants and wrapped up with a traditional Kabbalat Shabbat and snacks.

Participants shared their thoughts after this event on Facebook:

“Polina and Kate!!! Such an amazing evening!! So much love, creativity and beauty!! We enjoy meeting you and everyone there!!! Wishing you great success in the future and more events like this!!”

“Спасибо, Полина и Кейт! Было интересно.”



Reflecting on the events Polina planned, she said:

“It was my first time organizing events for Chicago Jewish community. I found it very challenging but very rewarding but I was lucky to have highly professional guests, who led the planned events. It took up all my summer but it was very important for me to get to know more community members, to learn how amazing they are and to volunteer my time and skills. Their genuine interest in my project and very high motivation to participate was extremely rewarding. In a series of Educational workshops I have met amazing members of Chicago Jewish community that opened up new opportunities for volunteering and new ideas for similar projects that ultimately fall in a category of “Tikkun haOlam”. I plan to give and volunteer in a similar manner if I find additional funding.”



### **Anna Korzhenevich – The Singers of the Jewish Soul Lecture-Concert**

*Anna Korzhenevich (Kazyanskaya) was born and raised in Yaroslavl, Russia, in the family of professional musicians. Already as a little child, she started performing on stage together with her twin-sister and father. After the Jewish Cultural Center opened in Yaroslavl in 1991, Anna and her sister Katia (Kate Elbert) started performing there regularly, singing various songs in Hebrew and Yiddish. Their dad, Yakov Kazyansky, was writing two-voice original arrangements for them. In 1995, Anna and*

*Katia participated in the Jewish song contest Alleluia-95 in Moscow, Russia, and won the second prize. After graduating from the Yaroslavl State Pedagogical University in 2000, Anna started working as an Assistant Director at the JCC in Yaroslavl. In addition, Anna and her sister participated in Klezmer festivals in Russia and Ukraine, as well as participating in various Jewish conferences in Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Sweden, and others. Anna and her sister became very well-known in the Russian Jewish world and were often referred to as “Russian Barry Sisters”. In 2003, Anna, Katia, and Yakov Kazyansky released a CD of Yiddish songs called “Abis! Glick”. It is currently available for purchase on Amazon. In 2005, Anna moved to Chicago and started working for the Jewish National Fund. In 2010, Anna and Katia were invited to participate in the Greater Chicago Jewish Festival. After graduating from University of Illinois at Chicago with MBA in Finance and Accounting, Anna started working for the family educational business Chess Scholars/Afterschool Enrichment Solutions. Anna and her husband sold the business in 2018, and now she is looking forward to get involved in something she always had passion for – Jewish music and education. Anna currently resides in Riverwoods with her husband and two little daughters.*

We organized a lecture-concert about Yiddish poets/songwriters and Yiddish songs some of which were created during the Holocaust. The lecture-concert was called “The Singers of the Jewish Soul”. Tragically, most of the poets and songwriters shared the destiny of the 6 million innocent Jews who perished in the Holocaust. These were incredible people who created wonderful pieces of music under the most horrible circumstances possible. The names included Mordechai Gebirtig, Hirsch Glick, Itzik Manger, and many more. The concert consisted of 15 Yiddish songs most of which were not known to the public that came to the concert. Since many people nowadays don’t understand Yiddish, a mini sketch was prepared before each of the songs that briefly explained a story in each song. The goal was to introduce listeners of all ages to the wonderful world of Yiddish music, to the gems of Jewish music culture, as we believe they are the masterpieces that were undeservedly forgotten. In addition, many of the songs describe the events of the Holocaust, so talking about them means keeping the memory alive to make sure the catastrophe never happens again. The event was held in Russian. The event was held at the Krug Community Circle. The following people were involved in the project:

Anna Korzhenevich – vocal, project organizer

Kate Elbert – vocal, scenario, flyer, video editing

Yakov Kazyansky – piano and arrangements

Marta Gavrialov – host, advertising

Roman Polinovskiy – host, sound, rehearsals

Stanislav Kesselman – video and photo

Maya and Ella Korzhenevich, Misha Elbert – sang a Rosh Hashanah song at the end of the concert

There were 150 people present in the audience, and each song was met with a lot of enthusiasm. There were all ages present in the audience, including children, and everybody really enjoyed the program. We spoke with about 20 people after the concert, and everybody was talking about how inspiring the evening was; many people also mentioned that they were not familiar with most of the songs that were presented in the concert. Our goal was to inspire Jewish people to learn more about the Yiddish language, Yiddish songwriters and poets, and Yiddish music, as well as to transfer their knowledge to their children and grandchildren. We believe many people left the concert with the desire to learn more.

We showed the audience the beauty, the sadness, and the deep spirituality of Yiddish songs. We walked the audience through the lives of the Jewish songwriters, showing how the 20th century tragedies of the Jewish people influenced their creative work and how even during the saddest moments of their lives, they tried to stay focused on their work and on passing their heritage to the future generations.

Anna had the following to say after the event:

“It was a great pleasure for me to be on the stage again with my twin-sister and father. Preparing for the concert was so great, as the people involved in the project were so supportive. I enjoyed the preparation period a lot, whether it was brainstorming with my sister regarding the scenario, or rehearsing with my dad, or discussing advertising opportunities with Marta. The entire experience was so inspiring for me, and I realized that this is something I want to pursue in the future – organizing more concerts and volunteering for JUF and other Jewish organizations. When I saw how grateful everyone was after the concert, I felt so much happiness and joy! And I felt very connected with my Jewish heritage, my past, and future. Thank you again for giving us this opportunity! The entire experience was unforgettable!”



### **Ilya Friedberg – Mendelssohn Concert**

*“A student and Teaching Assistant of Menahem Pressler, who survived German Nazi in 1939, escaping to Palestine.” Israeli Pianist of the Bloomington Trio, Ilya Friedberg has been described as an “Artist who puts his listener to a musical magic” by pianist Menahem Pressler. Ilya’s music has taken him to Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, Jerusalem Theater, Small Philharmonic Hall of St. Petersburg, and various venues across United States, South America, Israel, and Europe. Ilya is a passionate chamber musician and is a sought-after collaborator among the members of Los Angeles Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Carol Vaness, Timothy Noble, Mark Kaplan, Alissa Margulis, Alexander Buzlov, and Pacifica Quartet who described him as an “Exceptional chamber musician” In the fall of 2017, his creative force has enabled him to successfully launch the inaugural Variation Project. It is a collaboration between Ilya, J. S. Bach’s Goldberg Variations, and 15 composers. The project excitedly combines Ilya’s two passions as a pianist/composer. His compositions include “Boheme Fantasy for Viola and Piano”, Breaking Silence series, and “6 Studies on Extended Technique for Piano Solo” Being a passionate educator, Ilya finds*

*working with the new generation of pianists fun and inspiring. He has given masterclasses at Buchmann-Mehta School of Music at Tel-Aviv University, Adamant Music School, and at Stellenbosch International Piano Competition where he was invited as a Jury Member. He served as Mr. Pressler's studio and teaching assistant and is an active artist-faculty at Indiana University's Summer String Academy, and Sonad Project Born in Moscow, Ilya stepped into the world of music by watching his mother teach piano. Soon after he started his education at Gnesin School for Gifted Children. After immigrating to Israel, he studied piano with Luisa Yoffi and was influenced by Lazar Bendersky and Vladimir Silva. He continued his education at Oberlin with Sanford Margolis and at Indiana University with Menahem Pressler. His other musical influences are legendary jazz master David Baker, pianist Vladimir Ashkenazy, composers Claude Baker and Douglas Hofstadter. With flutist Roy Amotz, his first cd "Dreams" featuring works of Reinecke and Rachmaninoff is available on Amazon Streaming and iTunes.*

The goal of the program was to make the Russian Jewish community aware of the music and philosophy of the Mendelssohn family. I appeared on two Russian speaking radio stations speaking about the project to an audience of over 1000 people, describing the project in detail. In the final Concert we had over 80 people attend and involved in the project. The project was an illumination for many of the participants. The discovery of F. Mendelssohn's music has opened their ears and minds to something new and beautiful. It is so important for the Jewish community not to forget that Mendelssohn's time, the Jews couldn't even marry unless they proved that they have money. They were never accepted in the community- it was only through music that we found a way to be equal.

One concert attendee had this to say after the event:

"Hi Ilya. Tonight's concert was absolutely incredible. I could not have enjoyed it more. The beauty of the music was exceeded only by the quality of the performance. You were all fantastic."

In his reflection on the event, Ilya said:

"I have to thank the Tikkun Fellowship program, I've learned so much more about Moses Mendelssohn and it was just amazing to perform both trios of F. Mendelssohn in the final concert. I will continue my work on that project, I wish I could take it around the world, this project can be so important for Jewish people worldwide. We would need much more funding for that.

