

Building bridges for a just and secure peace



Yes We Can!

MIDDLE EAST PEACE

Yesmep.org

*Music, Theater,
Pleas for Peace*

Sunday December 6, 2009

**Sixth & I Historic Synagogue
600 I Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001**

*I hold no religion or creed
 Am neither Eastern nor Western
 Muslim or infidel
 Zoroastrian, Christian, Jew or Gentile
 I come from neither land nor sea
 Am not related to those above or below
 Was not born nearby or far away
 Do not live either in Paradise or on this Earth
 Claim descent not from Adam and Eve
 Or the Angels above
 I transcend body and soul
 My home is beyond place and name
 It is with the Beloved, in a space beyond space
 I embrace all and am part of all*

by Rumi (Translation by Coleman Barks)

Rumi was a thirteenth century Persian Muslim mystic. His poetry invites us to rise above the differences that divide us

~ Masters of Ceremonies ~

David Shipler, a veteran correspondent and scholar, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1987 for his book, *Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land*; he published a revised and updated edition in 2002 and was executive producer, writer and narrator of a two-hour PBS documentary on *Arab and Jew*, which won a 1990 Dupont-Columbia award for broadcast journalism, and of a one-hour film, *Arab and Jew: Return to the Promised Land*, which aired on PBS in August 2002. For more, see <http://www.allamericanspeakers.com/speakers/David-Shipler/5780>

Ari Roth is a playwright, educator, co-founder of the Peace Cafe, and artistic director of Theater J, the resident professional company of the Washington DCJCC, hailed by *The New York Times* as "The Premier Theater for Premieres" and widely recognized as one of the most distinctive, respected and progressive Jewish theaters on the national and international scene. For more, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ari_Roth

Anas ("Andy") Shallal is an Iraqi American activist, artist and businessman. He is the founder and proprietor of Busboys and Poets, a salon and café in Washington DC that features speakers and performers focused on current hot-button issues, including the Middle East. Since its inception, Busboys and Poets has become an incubator for social change. He is also the co-founder of the Peace Café, which has become the largest Arab-Jewish dialogue group in the Washington metropolitan area, with over 900 members. For more, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andy_Shallal

Performer/Speaker Bios ~

Noa Baum was born and raised in Jerusalem, and has performed with the Khan Repertory Theater of Jerusalem. Since 1982, she has been a professional storyteller focusing on the power of narrative to heal across the divides of identity. She performs and teaches internationally; highlights include: the Kennedy Center, the World Bank, the Mayo Clinic, the U.S. Defense Department, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Sweden's Fabula Festival, George Washington University Law School, and Brandeis and Stanford Universities. For more, see www.noabaum.com

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church Choir, an ensemble with a broad repertoire, leads the Sunday worship service at Cedar Lane, a liberal religious community that champions the rights and dignity of all people. **Henry Sgrecci**, a former member of the elite United States Army Band, "Pershing's Own," holds a doctorate in conducting from the Catholic University of America and is Associate Conductor of the Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra. **Thomas W.D. Guthrie**, organist and accompanist, is a distinguished performer and educator. Mr. Guthrie performed as an invited artist at the Organ Historical Society's 50th Anniversary convention. For more, see www.cedarlane.org

Robi Damelin (Parents Circle – Families Forum) immigrated to Israel from South Africa in 1967. Her son, David, was killed by a sniper while on military reserve duty, in March 2002; he was 28. After David's death, she felt a need to do something to prevent other parents from experiencing the pain of losing a child. She closed her successful Public Relations firm to devote all her energy to the Parents Circle – Families Forum and its promotion of dialogue, tolerance and reconciliation. In Robi's words, "If the members of our group can reconcile and forgive, then surely we can be an example to the rest of the world." For more, see www.theparentscircle.com

Mazen Faraj (Parents Circle– Families Forum) is a young father living in the Deheishe Refugee Camp near Bethlehem, where he grew up after his parents fled the family's village in 1948. During the first intifada, he and his brothers threw stones at Israeli soldiers and he spent a total of 3 years in Israeli prisons. His older brother, Amjaad, died shortly after being released in 2001 from 5 years in prison. In April 2002, his father Ali, was killed by an IDF bullet near the Church of the Nativity while on his way home with bags of groceries. Mazen says that "revenging my brother's and father's deaths will not ease my pain and will not bring them back. The best I could do as a tribute to my family's dead, to our family and to my people is to work to stop the cycle of violence and blood spilling." For more, see www.theparentscircle.com

~ bios continued on p. 6.

NOA BAUM relives her heartfelt dialogue with a Palestinian woman in an excerpt from her one-woman show, *A Land Twice Promised*, which illuminates the conflicting history and emotions surrounding Jerusalem for both Israelis and Palestinians.

RABBI DAVID SHNEYER sings psalms and Jewish liturgical folk music:

- *Seek Peace and Pursue It* (Psalm 34:14)
- *Lo Yisa El Goi* (Nation Shall Not Lift up Sword against Nation)

PARENTS CIRCLE – FAMILIES FORUM members **ROBI DAMELIN** (Israeli) and **MAZEN FARAJ** (Palestinian) tell their stories of losing loved ones in the violence. Encouraging reconciliation and forgiveness, Robi and Mazen urge strong American leadership to end the conflict.

SHAWKAT SAYYAD, master *oud* player, and **PAM MOORE**
- *Inhabetni Ahibak Aktar* (You Love Me, I Love You More)

WHITE FLAG PROJECT (a joint Palestinian-Israeli band) performs a unique mix of reggae, jazz and rock that fuses influences from the Middle East.

NEXT STEPS Anas ("Andy") Shallal and Ari Roth

CLOSING VIDEO EXCERPT from President Obama's Cairo speech *Sharing the vision of peaceful coexistence, that we are all part of this work.*

RABBI GERRY SEROTTA offers a Spiritual Call to Action

FINALE: SONGS OF PEACE in Arabic, Hebrew and English,
with audience participation!

- Arabic: *Ya Salam! Ya Salam!* (Oh Peace! Oh Peace!)
- Hebrew: *Oseh Shalom* (Make Peace)
- English: *Let There Be Peace On Earth*

~ Refreshments in the Social Hall, downstairs
followed by discussion with the performers in the sanctuary ~

~ bios, continued from p. 3

Imam Yahya Hendi is the Muslim chaplain at Georgetown University, the Imam of the Islamic Society of Frederick, and the Muslim Chaplain at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD. He is also President of Clergy Beyond Borders, a group of interfaith clergy who use their diverse religious traditions in the advancement of world peace. For more, see <http://campusministry.georgetown.edu/traditions/muslim/33836.html>

David Bryan Jackson first performed David Hare's *Via Dolorosa* at Theatre J. in 2000, where it has been revived twice. A Washington, DC-based actor, he has performed at the Shakespeare, Folger, Scena, Studio, Washington Shakespeare Company, Signature, and Woolly Mammoth theatres, and at the Olney Theatre Center, and in several other cities.

The Very Reverend Samuel T. Lloyd III was installed as the ninth dean of Washington National Cathedral on April 23, 2005, charged with leadership of what is widely referred to as "the national house of prayer." Dean Lloyd previously served as rector of the historic Trinity Church, on Copley Square in Boston, Massachusetts, for 12 years. For more, see <http://www.nationalcathedral.org/staff/lloyd.shtml>

Rabbi Bruce Lustig is the senior rabbi at Washington Hebrew Congregation and belongs to numerous Jewish and social service organizations. He is also a pro-active leader of Washington's Interfaith Community and organized the nation's first Abrahamic Summit bringing together Christians, Jews and Muslims for dialogue. For more, see http://www.whctemple.org/our_clergy.htm

Shawkat Sayyad, a vocalist, violin player and master of the *oud* (a traditional string instrument) has performed traditional Arabic music for over 50 years. His musical mastery ranges from popular Lebanese and Palestinian *debke* to Egyptian *beledi* to complex, classical melodies. Born in Jerusalem, he has performed around the world, including the Middle East, North America, Europe, and South America. For more, see www.shawkatsayyad.com

Rabbi Gerry Serotta, the spiritual leader of Shirat haNefesh congregation in Chevy Chase, MD, has been a national leader for social justice for decades, and is currently co-chair of Rabbis for Human Rights – North America. He also served as the Senior Rabbinic Scholar-in-Residence at the Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism, and has worked with interfaith organizations devoted to the intersection of spirituality and social justice, including the Faith and Politics Institute, the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, and Clergy Beyond Borders. For more, see www.shirathanefesh.org

Rabbi David Shneyer is the spiritual leader of the Kehila Chadasha and Am Kolel communities in the Washington, D.C. area, the past president of Ohalah, the trans-denomination rabbinic association for Jewish renewal, and a member of the Washington Board of Rabbis. He is active in Rabbis for Human Rights and Jews United for Justice. A singer-guitarist, he also leads the Fabrangen Fiddlers. For more, see <http://www.e-kehila.com/drupal/aboutus?q=rebdavid>

Cantor Ramon Tasat, a native of Argentina, received a doctorate in voice performance from the University of Texas and has performed worldwide; his U.S. venues include the Kennedy Center, the Israeli Embassy, and the Jewish Music Festival in Berkeley, CA. In addition to television and radio appearances, he has received numerous awards and recorded many CDs. He serves as the cantor at Shirat HaNefesh ("Song of the Soul") and is the president of Shalsholet: The Foundation for New Jewish Liturgical Music. For more, see www.ramontasat.com

White Flag Project The members of this joint Israeli-Palestinian band include **Mark Smulian** (Israeli); **Gani Tamir** (Israeli); **Aaron Shneyer** (American living in Israel); **Zeher Abdul Jawad** (Palestinian from Gaza living in New York); and **Shadi Alhaj** (Palestinian from Gaza living in Switzerland). This versatile group of young performers has overcome major obstacles – distance, checkpoints, even resentment from their own communities – in order to play for the cause of peace. For more, see www.whiteflagmusic.com

*~ DONATIONS FROM THESE GROUPS
HELPED MAKE THIS EVENT POSSIBLE ~*

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Washington Interfaith Alliance for Middle East Peace
Foundry United Methodist Church, Peace with Justice
Lutheran Church, Middle East Working Group Metro Synod
Love Thy Neighbor

Mission Statement

Yes We Can: Middle East Peace (YesMEP) is a partnership of diverse religious and secular Americans in the Washington, DC metropolitan area who have come together to support President Obama's initiative for a just and secure peace between Israelis and Palestinians based on a two-state solution. We believe that the establishment of a Palestinian state next to Israel, and a mutually satisfactory agreement regarding Jerusalem, a cornerstone of any peace agreement, will not only advance the interests of the United States, but will also provide security for Israelis, dignity and prosperity for Palestinians and a lasting peace for both nations.

Answering President Obama's call, we strive to inspire mutual understanding and respect for both Israelis and Palestinians by fostering inclusiveness and inviting collaboration with other community organizations, as well as tapping the creative talents of young adults. We are working to create a safe space for honest dialogue, personal narratives, cultural and artistic expression, collaborative education, and celebrating our common roots and values. In keeping with our shared principles of justice and preserving the dignity of all human beings, we are dedicated to working for a world where all can live with the assurance of mutual security, freedom and respect.

Next Steps

Potential YesMEP events will focus on the status of Jerusalem, borders and settlements, security after a peace settlement, and Palestinian refugees.

To join YesMEP: www.bethechange@yesmep.org

For more information: yesmep@hotmail.org