



THE KESHET EILON MUSIC CENTER AND STRING MASTERCOURSE BACKGROUND AND PROFILE OF ACTIVITIES

May 2018

The Keshet Eilon Music Center and String Mastercourse, founded in 1990 at Kibbutz Eilon on Israel's northern border, is devoted to training and promoting young violinists from Israel and throughout the world who are intent on attaining the highest musical level. Its faculty consists of internationally renowned violin masters from Israel and the rest of the world. The Keshet Eilon credo is that music, one of the eternal symbols of humanity, can serve as a bridge between religions, peoples and nations. Keshet Eilon, now in its 28th year, has achieved international recognition in the music community as a sought-after training venue.

The music director of Keshet Eilon is **Prof. Itzhak Rashkovsky** of the Royal College of Music of London, and its managing director is **Gilad Sheba**, a member of Kibbutz Eilon and the son of one of its founders. He is assisted by VPO **Nitza Avidan**.

The Keshet Eilon Organization is led by an elected board of directors headed by **Rami Shalmor** and operates through various subcommittees, with all its members serving on a volunteer basis.

The Keshet Eilon Music Center operates the following programs:

- **The Keshet Eilon International String Mastercourse, a three-week program for violin and string students from Israel and the rest of the world**, offering personal instruction by distinguished teachers, masterclasses, innovative workshops, opportunities to perform as soloists in concerts, and a unique archery sports program for string instrumentalists. The Mastercourse is attended each summer by some 50-60 outstanding young violinists, violists and cellists from all parts of the world, many of whom are prizewinners of international competitions. Approximately 1,250 alumni of Keshet Eilon throughout the world continue to keep in touch with the Music Center and help promote it. During the International Mastercourses, all activities, including individual lessons and masterclasses, are open to the public at no charge, except for the concerts held every evening in the Bar-Uryan Concert Hall.

- **Seminars for Israeli Violin and Viola Students and their Teachers**, aimed at stimulating and encouraging violin playing in Israel, held twice annually, led by senior Keshet Eilon faculty. Some 80 young violinists and violists from all parts of the country arrive for three days of intensive study. Each student receives three personal lessons from a senior faculty member, and takes part in enrichment activities including playing in ensembles and attending concerts and masterclasses. Some of the participants come from music institutions in the Arab community, and this interaction fosters personal connections through music. We at Keshet Eilon believe that once the participants return to their homes and families, they become ambassadors of music study to all who surround them.

Significantly, the number of young Israeli violinists who have been accepted in the International Keshet Eilon International Summer Mastercourse has increased significantly ever since the Seminar program was initiated.



In its effort to nurture violin study for excellence, Keshet Eilon supports students in various ways, including loans of instruments for students who cannot afford to purchase them; scholarships to cover part of the seminar tuition; and use of our unique Music Library.

- **Annual Concert series – “The Sounds of Keshet Eilon,”** mounted in Keshet Eilon’s Bar-Uryan Concert Hall, featuring world-class performances for the music-loving public in the Western Galilee and beyond at affordable prices. The series is especially appreciated by residents of the Galilee who are remote from the cultural and music centers of the country. The programs include string recitals, chamber music concerts, choirs, folk music, and more. Income from ticket sales is earmarked for support for Keshet Eilon and maintenance of the concert hall.

- **The Keshet Eilon Music Library,** housing a distinctive collection of violin, piano and chamber music notes, books, tapes, CDs and DVDs, serving Keshet Eilon students and faculty and open to the public in Israel and abroad.

- **The Violin- and Bow-making Atelier,** open to participants in all Keshet Eilon programs, providing instruction, maintenance and repair of instruments.

Keshet Eilon activity in the Arab Community

Our belief in music as a bridge between cultures and nations has prompted Keshet Eilon to reach out to young violinists in the Arab sector as well. Supported by generous donors since 2011, we have assisted the Al-Kendi Conservatory in the village of Jatt, managed by Moussa and Mohammed Khalaf; during the summer of 2015 we laid the foundation for collaboration with the Polyphony Educational Center in Nazareth, which is devoted to breaking down barriers between young Jews and Palestinians through music. We hosted the Polyphony orchestra during our 2015 Mastercourse, and in April 2016 we held our first joint seminar with both bodies, featuring music and social activities. Additional joint seminars were held in October 2016, December 2017 and March 2018.

Benefit concerts mounted by Keshet Eilon committees in Israel and abroad

The concerts feature Keshet Eilon graduates and faculty who appear on a volunteer basis and bring the spirit of our work to performance halls and homes all over the world. 2 Keshet Eilon benefit concerts were held at Carnegie Hall in New York, in 2008 and 2010, featuring performances by members of the Mastercourse faculty, guest artists and alumni, followed by a dinner and auction with proceeds earmarked for maintaining our current programs and the continuous construction of our campus at Eilon. Similar concerts were held in New York’s Harmonie Club in 2011 – 2016. A similar benefit concerts were held at a private residence of an Israeli family in Los Angeles (January 2017, February 2018) and in Miami (February 2018). One more fundraising concert in the US is scheduled in May 2018.



Constructing a new campus

Keshet Eilon reached a point where its physical infrastructure could no longer accommodate the growing number of student applicants and faculty during its various programs. Moreover, it was unable to expand its activities further, or actualize its proven potential.

With the goal of enabling the Keshet Eilon Music Center to operate year-round, the Music Center was allocated an exceptional site of 28 dunams (7 acres) adjoining Kibbutz Eilon and with the assistance of generous donors such as Raya Strauss, a native of the Western Galilee and a steadfast supporter of Keshet Eilon over the years, Patrick Drahi and a legacy by the late

Isacc Ribatzky, of New York, we succeeded in commencing construction, and in two years (2013-2015) Stage 1 of a Campus was completed. It is consisting of 13 dormitory units (housing 52 double bedrooms, hosting close to a 100 students); a cafeteria seating 130; and an acoustic shell for outdoor concerts on a lawn accommodating an audience of 400.

The construction of instruction and practice rooms, Ensemble hall, offices, faculty and staff residences and an auditorium remains a vital necessity and were scheduled to take place in Stages 2 and 3. Architect **Ada Karmi-Melamede** and her staff have already prepared the design for Stage 2, and the earthworks began to prepare the construction of it, with the generous assistance of the KKL Germany.

Future plans

At the initiative of internationally acclaimed Israeli violinist Vadim Gluzman and pianist Angela Yoffe – founders of the North Shore Chamber Music Festival in Chicago, and in collaboration with them, the Keshet Eilon Music Center, together with the classical music magazine "Opus," will mount a new chamber music festival – **Music Makers-Israel** - to be held in Israel during the winter of 2018. The unique goal of this festival is to create a close collaboration between the audience and performers of the highest level, forming a community of "music makers" in Israel. A series of concerts will be held at Keshet Eilon for several days, to be followed by additional concerts in main halls throughout the country. We are working vigorously to raise funds for this unique project.

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*Keshet Eilon is managed by a non-profit organization funded by grants and donations from public bodies, foundations and individuals. Members of the organization, including its committee members, function on a volunteer basis.*