

Sha'ar / Jazz and Justice Suite
NJPAC James Moody Jazz Festival – Spring 2021

Featuring Ivan Barenboim (Clarinets), Oren Neiman (Guitar), Doug Drewes (Bass) and David Freeman (Drums) with Special Guest Mark Gross (Saxophone)
Music written and arranged by Oren Neiman and David Freeman

Brief Description:

The Jazz and Justice Suite explores the complexities of relationship and experience that both Jewish American and African American communities have long shared independently and in concert with one another pertaining to identity, faith, philosophy and practice.

In recognition of the historic, nuanced and ever changing nature these relationships embody, The Jazz and Justice Suite serves as a mechanism in which the community may safely reflect on past and present challenges, promise and potential.

The world premier performance of The Jazz and Justice Suite takes place at Congregation Ahavas Sholom - which means "Love of Peace"! Designated as a National & State of NJ Historic site, it is the last remaining/sole surviving synagogue of the great Jewish immigration of the early 20th century. As part of Ahavas Sholom's mission, we continue our strong collaboration with the New Jersey Performing Arts Center around the annual TD James Moody Jazz Festival. As a longtime community partner, we remain steadfast in our commitment to serving the Newark BIPOC community, as both advocate and ally. Our ongoing collaboration is testament to NJPAC's commitment to delivering/bringing provocative, quality Jazz programming to the "grassroots"!

I – HOME

II – HOPE

III – SEARCHING

IV – DETERMINATION

V – SURRENDER

HOME:

Reflection of home is a unifying theme shared amongst communities which at first glance appear seemingly more dissimilar than they do alike. "Home" uses "Amazing Grace" as the framework through which to explore shared experience and the significant role geographic borders and boundaries continue to play in the landscapes of our lives.

HOPE

Written by Shalom Secunda, “Yidele Farlier Nit Dien Hoffnug” is a piece that was commissioned by Thomas Larue in the 1920’s. Raised in Newark, Larue was praised both at home and abroad as “The Black Cantor”. Despite his success, Jews of Color were suspect even amongst American and European Jews alike instigating a migration of Black Jews to Harlem where they built a flourishing community.

“Hope” uses both Klezmer and Jazz sensibilities in an effort to underscore the tension between Black and Jewish relations experienced early in the 20th century.

SEARCHING

This movement reflects the cross pollination between Jewish Immigrant and African American struggle. The source material here speaks of the Polish Ghetto, a sentiment shared by musicians activated by The Civil Rights Movement years later which lead Marlena Shaw, activated by the Civil Rights Movement to record “Where Can I Go?” in the United States. This very same song would later be recorded the likes of Ray Charles and Miriam Makeba.

DETERMINATION

This movement draws from the strength and courage seen as Black American Music in the 1970’s often associated with Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Alice Coltrane and Pharoah Sanders; a musical movement pivotal in the establishment of identity and self-determination.

GRACE musical call for spiritual balance in community brotherhood and sisterhood.