

INVITES

all about paper

Fun

Different

Exciting

Weddings, Bar & Bat Mitzvahs,
Birth Announcements,
Graduation, Stationery,
Napkins, Kippot and
Invitations for Every Occasion

Discounts on Album Orders

4101 Roswell Road • Suite 500 • Marietta

770-973-1062

Everything you need
but the dress!

ATLANTA'S BRIDAL SHOE SALON AND ACCESSORY BOUTIQUE

All of the perfect accessories you need to
make your special day a fairy tale!

- Headpieces, Tiaras & Veils
- Jewelry, Gloves, Handbags
- Wedding Keepsakes, Undergarments
- Gifts

Shoes

The largest selection of white and dyeable special
occasion shoes for women and girls. Hundreds of
styles are available.

The Glass
Slipper

6365 Spalding Drive, Suite E • Norcross, GA 30092
770.448.4829 • www.theglassslipper.com



Some couples recite their wedding vows to the
strains of the Atlanta Jewish Male Choir

By FRAN NACHMAN PUTNEY
The Jewish Times

When Karyn Feinberg walked down the aisle on her wedding day last November, the accompanying music was not the Wagner processional march. Rather, Feinberg entered the beautiful old Biltmore Hotel ballroom to the sounds of a choir singing Louis Lewandowski's "Hallelujah."

The 16-member Atlanta Jewish Male Choir, standing unobtrusively in a nearby balcony area, accompanied only by a pianist, harmonized traditional Jewish wedding music and blessings at various parts of the wedding service — such as when the bride circled the groom and before the groom broke the glass.

"It was beautiful," says Feinberg, a 31-year-old North Atlanta residential real estate agent. "Everybody thought it was incredible."

Though most Americans are unfamiliar with a choir's participation during a Jewish wedding ceremony, for Feinberg, whose family is of South African heritage, it was a natural.

Admittedly, it was her mom who originally proposed it. However, "I loved the idea," says Feinberg. "I love anything to do with singing and I love anything to do with South Africa. Besides, it's nice to bring your heritage with you, especially in a wedding."

Wedding coordinator Rene Cobb, who directed the Feinberg wedding, says "We were all married like that in South Africa. There, every synagogue has a choir. You just don't get married

without a choir."

The Atlanta Jewish Male Choir was founded by South African expatriate Meyer Janet, 54, who sang most of his life in choirs in Johannesburg and Cape Town before moving to the states with his family in 1994. Janet, along with his wife Carol, owns a design firm, Design Plus. He formed the choir about three years ago in order to preserve Jewish choral repertoire of all types, which, he says, has all but "disappeared."

The choir gained full momentum when fellow South African Barry Herman, the group's music director, moved to the United States in 2002. At 39, Herman has been singing in choirs since he was 9 years old. He has studied and sung under renowned choir directors such as Gus Levy and Jos Stern of the famed Synham Highlands North Choir in Johannesburg. He's been directing choirs himself for nearly a decade. When he's not behind a music stand, Herman works in the retail lighting industry.

Janet and Herman recruited other South African Atlantans, many of whom were already familiar with the music, to join the choir. But more than half the men are not South Africans and did not know the musical liturgy. All, they say, are men who love choral music and just enjoy singing.

And under Herman's direction, they have worked hard to learn very difficult repertoire. The choir rehearses at least once a week at Congregation B'nai Torah in Sandy Springs, and it has already performed major benefit concerts — the last two at Ahavath Achim. According to Herman, so far the choir has raised more than \$100,000 for charities in Israel.



The Atlanta Jewish Male Choir sang "Hallelujah" as Karyn Watkins walked down the aisle at her wedding to Mark Feinberg.

For more than a year, the choir has also performed a Friday evening Shabbat service at Eden Brook, an assisted living facility in Sandy Springs.

Although the choir began performing at wedding ceremonies about a year and a half ago at the request of fellow South Africans who yearned for some of the familiar customs they grew up with, Janet believes that the beautiful choral music transcends nationalities. He insists it isn't only "a South African thing."

"We are contributing to the life-long memories of these couples," says Janet because the music helps "memorialize" the wedding day.

Feinberg's husband Mark, 30, a commercial real estate developer who hails from Long Island, N.Y., was completely unfamiliar with the choral music, but he says he and his family "thought it was beautiful."

"It was a nice touch," he says. "It was definitely something that's a memorable part of the wedding."

The choir sang at its first wedding in August 2003 for Michelle Meyers, the daughter of South African native Yvonne Hill.

"It was very moving and touching for us," Hill says, to hear the traditional tunes that she herself had heard when she had walked down the aisle as a young bride in South Africa.

In this case, even the groom, Gavin Meyers, and his family, were also from South Africa. In fact, his parents had flown in for the wedding, which, said Hill, made it even more special to have the choir standing near the chuppah facing the guests singing the songs and blessings.

More recently, the choir

sang at the October nuptials of Lindy Miller, a 26-year-old consultant with Deloitte and Touche, and Jonathan Crane, 32, a doctoral candidate in Jewish ethics at the University of Toronto. Miller and her family are of South African extraction — the family has been in the United States for some 28 years now — but Crane and his family are from Seattle.

Bringing the choir in as part of their wedding day was, says Miller, a way to share her family's South African heritage with her husband's family.

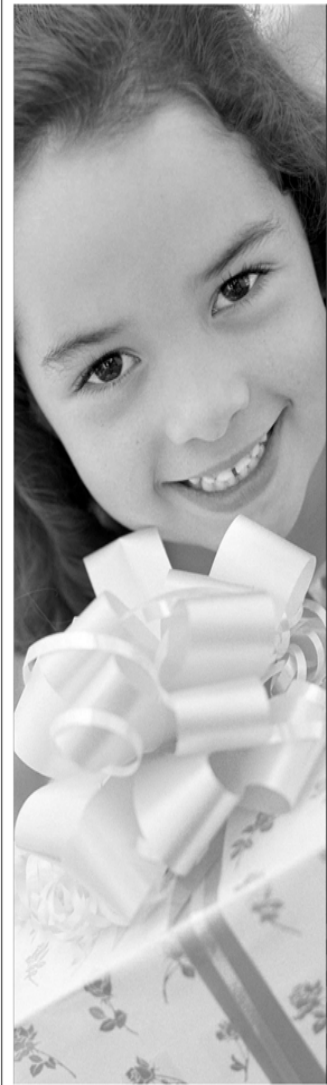
Though the couple now lives in Toronto, their ceremony was held outdoors in a sunken garden at the Atlanta home of Miller's aunt and uncle, Barbara and Peter Cohen. The choir stood above the wedding party and guests and sang with no instrumental accompaniment.

Everyone was "washed over by their sound," says Miller. "The choir gave a beautiful, energetic atmosphere to the ceremony. People were really in awe of it."

Miller's favorite part was when, at the end of the ceremony, Herman came under the chuppah with the bride and groom to sing the *sheva brachot*, or seven blessings. "It was very powerful," she says.

For his part, Herman, who says he sang at thousands of weddings over the years in South Africa, finds the experience "uplifting."

"I can say I've always enjoyed singing at weddings. Everyone is happy and has a smile on their face," says Herman. "We live with lots of things bringing us down in the world — this is something that's so positive." □



YOU HANDLE WHERE YOUR GUESTS WILL SIT. WE'LL HANDLE WHERE THEY SLEEP. Courtyard by Marriott® knows that planning a special event can be stressful. But pleasing your guests shouldn't have to be. Courtyard provides your guests with all the amenities they need to get a great night's sleep at a price that's sure to put a smile on their face. And Courtyard serves as the perfect base of operations. Courtyard. Our rooms were made for you.™ IT'S THE MARRIOTT WAY.™

Atlanta Courtyard Hotels:
Airport: North/Virginia Ave.
Airport: South/Sullivan Road
Alpharetta
Cumberland Center
Executive Park/Emory
Glenridge/Perimeter
Gwinnett Mall
Marietta/Delk Road
Marietta/Windy Hill
Midtown/Georgia Tech
Norcross/I-85
Norcross/Peachtree Corners
Northlake
Perimeter Center
Roswell

From \$59/night

To reserve your rooms,
call Megan Jordan 678.427.0929.
Visit us at
atlantacourtyard.com.

1-800-MARRIOTT
or visit Marriott.com.
Rates are per room, per night, based on availability.