

Open letter to the Choir of Clare College, Cambridge, November 2009:

Dear Director of Music, Timothy Brown and members of the choir,

We understand that you intend to tour Israel with the Choir of Clare College to perform J.S. Bach's 'Christmas Oratorio' between 25th and 30th December this year and we are asking you to reconsider this decision.

Artists and musicians in Palestine, inspired by the example of the campaign which brought an end to apartheid in South Africa, have asked people of conscience around the world not to perform in Israel as an act of solidarity with them. They do not do this lightly, but because over forty years of talking have brought no meaningful results in the implementation of international law and humanitarian law to help Palestinians achieve an independent sovereign state.

December 27 will be the anniversary of the terrible day last year that Israel unleashed a military onslaught on the trapped population of the Gaza Strip. While the rest of the world will be remembering the massacre of 1,400 Palestinian people, your choir will be performing in the capital city of the government which perpetrated acts now regarded as war crimes, according to the latest UN report from Judge Richard Goldstone.

Your invitation to perform in Israel is from the Israel Camerata, a body partially funded by the Israeli government. To accept such an invitation is to ignore the fact that Israel is currently engaged in the longest ever occupation of a people, an occupation declared illegal by the United Nations. You will see nothing of the reality of life under occupation for the Palestinian people of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.

The Gaza tragedy was merely the latest episode in the catastrophe which has befallen the people of Palestine since the destruction of their villages and the creation of hundreds of thousands of refugees at the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948. The town of Karmiel, where you are due to perform on December 30th, is built on land expropriated from the Palestinian villages of Deir al-Asad, Bi'ina and Nahf.

The fact that you have been invited to participate in the traditional Christmas Eve carol service in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem only emphasises the publicity value to the Israeli government of this trip. Many Palestinian Christians are denied the right to attend this service by the Israeli government and army.

To go ahead with this tour could appear indifferent to Palestinian suffering.

Music brings a message of hope but in this instance it will be seen by the Palestinian people as an endorsement of Israeli occupation. We ask you again to reconsider your decision.

Betty Hunter, General Secretary of Palestine Solidarity Campaign

Signed, all in personal capacities:

Basel Abbas, musician; Co-Founder, Ramallah Underground Collective (Ramallah, Palestine)
Nadia Abboushi, co-founder, Edward Said National Conservatory of Music; member of Jerusalem Chorus (Ramallah, Palestine)
Sameh Abboushi, architect; illustrator (Ramallah, Palestine)
Dr Nadia Abu-Zahra, assistant professor, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa (Canada)
Abdelaziz Abdelaziz, former Head, UNAMID Human Rights Office, North Darfur (Sudan)
Paula Abrams-Hourani, Jewish Voice for Peace in the Middle East (Austria)
Mona Abu Rayyan, teacher; communications consultant (Lebanon)
Dr Rima Afifi, associate professor, Department of Health Behaviour and Education, American University of Beirut (Lebanon)
Professor Walid Afifi, department of communication, University of California – Santa Barbara (USA)
Professor Muna al-Khalidi, Faculty of Health Sciences, American University of Beirut (Lebanon)
Ghalia Alul (Dubai)
Dina Andaloussi (Morocco)
Ken Baker, Managing Director, St Jerome Publishing
Dr Mona Baker, Professor of Translation Studies, University of Manchester
Professor Gabi Baramki, President, Palestinian Council for Justice and Peace; founding member of Jerusalem Chorus (Ramallah, Palestine)
Haifa Baramki, Vice-President, National YWCA in Palestine (member of Jerusalem Chorus) (Ramallah, Palestine)
Ellen Barfield (USA)
Nora Bawa (USA)
Evelyn Bazalquette (France)
Judith Berlowitz (USA)
Sir Geoffrey Bindman, lawyer
Martin Brabbins, conductor
Hanna Braun (Israel)
Victoria Brittain, journalist
Tom Brown (USA)
Heather Bursheh, faculty member, Edward Said National Conservatory of Music; Musical Director of the Palestine Youth Orchestra (Ramallah, Palestine)
Poppy Burton-Morgan, actor and director
Ellen Cantarow, musician; writer (USA)
Pat Carmeli (USA)
Susan Carpenter-Jacobs, violinist, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment

Dr Claire Chambers, senior lecturer in postcolonial literature, Leeds Metropolitan University

Dr Miriam Cherkes-Julkowski, former professor, Faculty of Education, University of Connecticut (USA)

Caryl Churchill, playwright

Bill Christison, writer (USA)

Kathleen Christison, political analyst; writer (USA)

Ruth Clark (UK)

Ana Cleja, artist (France/Israel)

Marc Cooper, journalist; author; Contributing Editor, The Nation (USA)

Jeremy Corbyn MP

Mike Cushman, Department of Management, London School of Economics

Dr Nadia Dabbagh, child and adolescent psychiatrist, Tavistock Clinic, London

Adi Dagan (Israel)

William Dalrymple, writer

Maha Damaj, childrens' rights activist (Lebanon)

Terry Davies, composer

Raymond Deane, composer (Ireland)

Dr James Dickens, professor of Arabic, University of Salford

Jenny Diski, writer

Rev. Marian Dowsett (UK)

Joan W. Drake, Partners for Peace (USA)

Laurence Dreyfus, Oxford University

Souraya Dyer (UK)

Thomas Eisner, London Philharmonic Orchestra

Nancy Elan, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment

Jean Entine (USA)

Aziza Fahim, translator

Naama Farjoun (Israel)

Pnina Feiler (Israel)

Sheila Finan, teacher (Israel)

Deborah Fink, soprano

Sylvia Finzi Artist (Germany)

Catherine Ford, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment

Gaby Forrell (UK)

Danny Friedman, barrister

Charles Fullbrook, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment

Orietta Geha (USA)

Dr Raif S. Geha, James L Gamble Professor of Pediatrics, Harvard Medical School

Hollie Ghandour (Lebanon)

Dr Rita Giacaman, Professor of Public Health, Birzeit University; member of Jerusalem Chorus (Bir Zeit, Palestine)

Professor Rachel Giora, Department of Linguistics, Tel Aviv University (Israel)

Alan Goater (UK)

Tony Greenstein (UK)
Peter Grimsditch, Editorial Director, Oxford Business Group (Istanbul)
Dr Nadim A. Haddad (USA)
Dr. David Halpin, Dove and Dolphin Charity
Dr Peter Hallward, Professor of Modern European Philosophy, Middlesex University
Mohamad Hammad (USA)
Dr Sari Hanafi, associate professor, Department of Social and Behavioural Sciences,
American University of Beirut (Lebanon)
Tal Haran (Israel)
John Harte, Co-Founder, Choir of London; General Manager, Aurora Orchestra
Prof. Manuel Hassassian, formerly of Bethlehem University
Samira Araj Hassassian, former faculty member, Bethlehem University
Janice Hayden (USA)
Iris Hefets (Israel)
Rev. Garth Hewitt, Canon of St George's Cathedral, Jerusalem
Jamil Hilal, writer (Ramallah, Palestine)
Omar Hindi Owner, Kassia Environmental Consultancy (Dubai)
Louis Hirsch, American Jews for a Just Peace (USA)
Alice Howick, violin teacher, Al-Kamandjati Association (Ramallah, Palestine)
Professor Richard Hudson FBA, Emeritus Professor, University College London
Paul Hughes-Smith, former producer, music and arts, BBC TV
George Humphreys, singer; ex-St John's choral scholar
Leila Ingrams, author
Dr Ellen Isaacs (USA)
Abeer Jabaji (Jordan)
Randa Jabaji, artist (Jordan)
Dr Haifa Jabara, research associate in pediatrics, Harvard Medical School (USA)
Dr Samer Jabbour, senior lecturer, Faculty of Health Sciences, American University of
Beirut (Lebanon)
Annemarie Jacir, filmmaker (Bethlehem, Palestine)
Rita Janssen, art advisor (former member of Jerusalem Chorus) (Egypt and Belgium)
Dr Brian Johnston, Professor Emeritus, School of Drama, Carnegie Mellon University
(USA)
Sami Joseph (UK)
Dr Ghada Karmi, honorary research fellow, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies,
University of Exeter (UK)
Professor Adah Kay, Cass CCE, City University London; former member of Jerusalem
Chorus
John Keane, artist
Reem Kelani, singer
Aliya Khalidi, actor; director (Lebanon)
Dr Muhammed Ali Khalidi, associate professor, Department of Philosophy and Cognitive
Science Program, York University (Canada)

Dr Gabriel Alexander Khoury, research fellow, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Imperial College London; Professor of Engineering, Padua University (Italy)

Dr David Klein, professor of mathematics, California State University, Northridge (USA)

Alwyn Knight, Christian Peacemaker Teams (UK)

Roberta Koffman (USA)

Hussam Kubtan (USA)

Dr Andrew Kurban (USA)

Mary Clare Leader (Lebanon)

Dr Dennis Leech, Professor of Economics, University of Warwick (UK)

Yael Lerer, Publisher (Israel)

Dr Les Levidow, Senior Research Fellow, Faculty of Mathematics, Open University (UK)

Micki Longum (Norway)

Catherine Mackintosh, violinist, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment

Nada Majdalani, member of Jerusalem Chorus (Ramallah, Palestine)

Kika Markham, actor

Roy Mowatt, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment

Miriam Margolyes, actor

Jen Marlowe Author; filmmaker (USA)

Randall Martin, Director of Professional Development, USAID (former member of Jerusalem Chorus) (Iraq)

Dr Anat Matar, Department of Philosophy, Tel Aviv University (Israel)

Shirley M. Meckley (USA)

Dr Paul S. Meers, Director of Choral Music, American University of Beirut (Lebanon)

Ellie Merton, Adhoc Humanitarians Orchestra

Clemens Messerschmid, Water Resources Management Advisor (member of Jerusalem Chorus) (Ramallah, Palestine)

Susie Meszaros, violinist, Chilingirian String Quartet

Sonya Meyerson-Knox (USA)

Mary Miller (USA)

Dorinda Moreno (USA)

Professor Martha Mundy, reader in anthropology, London School of Economics (UK)

Dr Nancy Murray (USA)

Nisrine R. Naaman, Finance Director, Collective for Research and Training on Development-Action (Lebanon)

Dr Karma Nabulsi, lecturer in International Relations, University of Oxford (UK)

Dorothy Naor (Israel)

Tania Nasir, singer; writer (Bir Zeit, Palestine)

Ofer Neiman (Israel)

Diana Neslen, Jews for Justice for Palestinians (UK)

Dr Marcy Newman, associate professor of English, Amman Ahliyya University (Jordan)

Mary Neznak (USA)

Dr David Nir, physicist (Israel)

Chi-chi Nwanoku MBE, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment

Jean Pauline (USA)

Maxine Peake, actor
Dr Samuel Peterson, retired Professor of Islamic Studies, American University in Cairo (Egypt)
Mattia Petrilli, flautist, Orchestra Mozart (Italy)
Dr Susan Petrilli, Professor of Philosophy and Theory of Languages, Bari University (Italy)
Alison Pickford (UK)
Karen Platt, Jewish Voice for Peace (USA)
Pat Price-Tomes (UK)
Samar Qutob, writer; translator (Ramallah, Palestine)
Corin Redgrave, actor
Deb Reich (Israel)
Esther Riley (USA)
Anne Roberts, parishioner, St George's Cathedral, Jerusalem
Dr Chris Roberts, reader in Medical Statistics, University of Manchester (UK)
Katherine D. Roberts (USA)
Dr William R. Roff, professor emeritus of History, Columbia University, New York (USA); Honorary Professorial Fellow, Islamic & Middle Eastern Studies, University of Edinburgh (UK)
Michele Roirand (France)
Dr Hilary Rose, Emeritus Professor, Bradford University (UK)
Dr Steven Rose, Emeritus Professor of Biology, Open University (UK)
Yehoshua Rosin, Gush Shalom – Israeli Peace Bloc (Israel)
Leon Rosselson, singer /songwriter
Dr Alice Rothchild, writer (USA)
Tim Rothermel, former Head, United Nations Development Program of Assistance to the Palestinian People; CEO, Carter Center (Ramallah, Palestine)
Marion Rutter (UK)
Elie Saikaly (USA)
Heidi Saikaly (USA)
Dr Noah Salameh, Director, Centre for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation (Bethlehem, Palestine)
Najwa Sandouka Yaghi (Ramallah, Palestine)
Marlena Santoyo (USA)
Dominic Saunders, pianist
Daniel Scarlett (USA)
Helena Scarlett (USA)
Jan Schlapp, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment
Evalyn Segal (USA)
Dr Munsup Seoh, professor of Statistics, Wright State University (USA)
Azadeh Shahshahani, attorney, National Lawyers Guild (USA)
Cindy Shamban (USA)
Jamal Shamma, pediatrician (Bethlehem, Palestine)
Fiona Shaw, actor

Laila Shawa, artist
Liz Sim (UK)
Barbara Smith (UK)
Melinda Smith, Arab-Jewish Peace Alliance of New Mexico (USA)
Dr Kobi Snitz, Department of Mathematics, Ben-Gurion University (Israel)
Jonatan Stanczak (Israel)
Ahdaf Soueif, writer
Michael Stevens, Co-Founder, Choir of London
Sarah Streatfeild, London Philharmonic Orchestra
Thomas Suarez, violinist, New York Symphonic Ensemble (USA)
Jeremy Summerly, Sterndale Bennett Lecturer in Music, Royal Academy of Music (UK)
Professor Salim Tamari, Director, Institute of Jerusalem Studies (Jerusalem, Palestine)
Sana Tannoury (Lebanon)
Marwan Tarazi ,Director of Center for Continuing Education, Birzeit University (Bir Zeit, Palestine)
Rima Tarazi Musician; President, Administrative Board, General Union of Palestinian Women (Ramallah, Palestine)
Tirtza Tauber (Israel)
Elizabeth Taylor (Egypt)
Ruth Tenne, Jews for Justice for Palestinians (UK)
Alan Thomas (UK)
Dr Bill Thomson, Emeritus Faculty, University of Michigan–Dearborn (USA)
Baroness Jenny Tonge
Ruth Tracy Interfaith Peace Builders (USA)
Dr Peter Tregear, research fellow (Music) University of Melbourne (Australia)
Roger Vignoles, pianist
Miriam Walton (UK)
Henrietta Wayne, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment
Dr Dahlia Wasfi, liberatethis.com (USA)
Dr Shelagh Weir (UK)
Elana Wesley Human Rights activist; member of Israel Kibbutz Choir (Israel)
Samuel West, actor /director
Sheila Whittaker, former director, London Film Festival
Greg Wilkinson (UK)
Martin Wilkinson (UK)
Dr Hilary Wise, Director of Publications, PSC
Robin Yassin-Kassab, writer
Ellyn Yeager (USA)
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