

SARAH SOMMER
CHAI
Folk Ensemble



FULL CIRCLE

**CLUB REGENT
EVENT CENTRE**

NOVEMBER 9, 2024
COMMEMORATING KRISTALLNACHT

FEATURING PERFORMERS PAST AND PRESENT



Congratulations to The Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble on 60 YEARS of success!

Sadira Garfinkel, Disability Insurance Litigation, Medical Malpractice
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THE NIGHT OF BROKEN GLASS

Eli Atah is dedicated to the memory of the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis in the Holocaust.

This emotionally stirring piece reflects the devastation brought upon our people and the resilience of the nation of Israel.

The words, from Psalm 118, are indicative of the Jewish response to despair - they are a reaffirmation of faith as we rely on God's kindness and compassion. On this anniversary of Kristallnacht, we offer this psalm to you through music and dance, as a bold statement about our survival as a people in the face of the nihilistic intentions of that fateful November night, as well as those of October 7. As all the nation of Israel looks to find joy again, we have embraced the inspiration from ancient words of dedication and rebuilding - *Hafachta Mispadi Lmachol Li*, YOU have turned my mourning into dancing (Psalm 30).

Am Israel Chai!



FULL CIRCLE

A MEANINGFUL CONNECTION

On this night, we will sing and dance in defiance of the destruction that was meant to be everlasting but did not succeed.

We mourn and celebrate together as a community in the face of yet another attempt to destroy the spirit of the Jewish People. This concert recognizes the agony, pride and determination of Jews in the diaspora who stand with Israel on this profoundly significant day of Kristallnacht – a day that is especially meaningful this year in the wake of October 7.



This anniversary concert is the culmination of 60 years of rich history, and the beginning of a new era of Chai. It is also a wonderful example of Jewish pride and life beyond the Holocaust and now, October 7.

We invite everyone to take pride in the tiny example of resilience represented by the long life of Chai (Hebrew for “alive”), a diaspora youth group born in a North End basement that continues, six decades on, to connect Jewish young people to each other, to their Jewish heritage and to Israeli culture. **It matters now more than ever.**



This special number of 60 is represented by the Hebrew letter samech. Its smooth shape, closed on all sides with no end or beginning, is the symbol for support and protection. The circle is also the basis of Israeli dance and symbolizes the flow of art, culture and tradition from one generation to the next. We are honoured to be joined by many of our community's

Holocaust Survivors – our greatest teachers of hope and strength. On the anniversary of the Night of Broken Glass (Kristallnacht), we will **commemorate 60 years of rebuilding, as we come full circle.**

This concert is about six decades of the community supporting one another. It's about being visibly proud of our culture. It's about resilience. It's also about the next 60 years of engaging our young people. **Chai brings alive the power of music and dance** to connect, educate, and celebrate Israeli and Jewish culture with a spirit of inclusion and belonging, and this has never been more critical.

ON OCTOBER 7, 2023



Hamas terrorists launched the deadliest attack on the Jewish people since the Holocaust. More than 1,200 innocent lives were taken and there are still over 100 men, women, and children in captivity.

Today, we remember those whom we have lost and we pray for the safe return of the remaining hostages.





THE GOVERNOR GENERAL • LA GOUVERNEURE GÉNÉRALE

**Message from the Governor General on the 60th Anniversary of the
Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble**

I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to all those attending the 60th anniversary concert of the Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble.

The arts give people powerful ways to express their creativity and share their stories. Living in this vast and diverse nation, I believe the arts also help us understand one another and contribute to building stronger, more vibrant communities.

For 60 years, the Chai Folk Ensemble has enthralled audiences across Canada and around the world with their celebration of Jewish and Israeli culture. Through song, dance and music, the ensemble has built bridges between peoples and generations. It has amplified the beautiful versatility of the performing arts and showcases the strength of our diversity.

Congratulations to everyone involved in contributing to the success of the ensemble!

Mary Simon

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PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE

Message from the Prime Minister of Canada

It is with great pleasure that I send my warmest greetings for the 60th Anniversary of the Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble.

In Canada, where our diversity is our greatest strength, the contributions that Jewish Canadians have made – and continue to make every day – to our beloved country, are indeed invaluable. Jewish Canadians should always be able to safely and proudly live Jewish lives here, and I would like to acknowledge the great work of the Chai Folk Ensemble to promote Jewish culture in Canada.



For 60 years, this organization has promoted, shared, and celebrated, through the performance of music and dance, the rich diversity of Israeli and Jewish culture. Their cultivation of this beautiful performative art form has greatly enriched our diversity, and society, and I would like to thank them for this.

Congratulations to the Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble on its 60th anniversary! I look forward to their continued success in the years ahead.

Please accept my very best wishes.

Ottawa
2024



A Message from the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba

As the King's representative in Manitoba, it is my pleasure to welcome everyone to tonight's performance by the renowned Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble.

For a remarkable 60 years, members of this esteemed group have delighted concertgoers here in Manitoba, across Canada and around the world. Through their collective talent and shared cultural pride, the performers entertain and inspire audiences as they share their proud Israeli heritage and culture through the universal language of music and dance.

Congratulations to everyone associated with the Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble for your efforts in bringing joy and light to the world through your creative gifts and energetic expression. Your work is a valued contribution to our provincial arts community, while also promoting inter-cultural understanding, respect and unity – all of which will benefit our society for generations to come. Bravo!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Anita Neville".

**The Honourable Anita R. Neville, P.C., O.M.
Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba**



**PREMIER
OF MANITOBA**

Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0V8
CANADA

A MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

On behalf of the Government of Manitoba, I want to congratulate the Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble on 60 years of bringing Jewish music and dance to communities in Canada and beyond. I can think of no better way to celebrate the past six decades than by gathering Manitobans together to experience the wonderful performances of Chai.

I also want to acknowledge the anniversary of Kristallnacht, a devastating period in history that we must never forget. In the face of continued antisemitism, Jewish communities across the world continue to come together in resilience, with hope for a better future. The "Full Circle" concert tonight is a wonderful example of this resilience here in Manitoba's Jewish community.

I wish you a meaningful evening of music, dance, celebration and remembrance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wab Kinew'.

**The Honourable Wab Kinew
Premier of Manitoba**



**MINISTER
OF SPORT, CULTURE AND HERITAGE**

A Message from the Minister

As Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism, it is my pleasure to welcome everyone attending Full Circle, a special concert to celebrate 60 years of the Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble, as well as marking the anniversary of Kristallnacht.

As you commemorate these important events in your community and their significance for Jewish and Israeli culture, Manitobans of all backgrounds also celebrate this special 60th anniversary with you and reflect on the importance of remembering Kristallnacht. Your efforts serve to bring diverse communities closer as we continue to uphold the values that make Manitoba great - such as friendship, community, and culture.

This event celebrates the joys of music and dance, as well as a connection to faith, spiritual fortitude, and perseverance through adversity and tragedy. I hope that this gathering will continue to fortify our strong bonds as a community and province, while bringing peace and prosperity to all families.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the volunteers, organizers and sponsors, for your outstanding contributions to this event. Your dedication and passion for this organization are vital to its continued success and that of the community.

Congratulations to Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble for 60 years of dance, music and celebrating Jewish pride and Israeli culture. My best wishes to you all for a wonderful evening.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Glen Simard".

**Honourable Glen Simard
Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism**





Mayor's Message

On behalf of the City of Winnipeg, it is my pleasure to welcome everyone to the Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble concert to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the group.

It is inspiring to see the Chai Folk Ensemble promote Jewish and Israeli culture through performance and education in music, song and dance for the benefit of our youth and community. Winnipeg is an incredibly exciting and dynamic city. From museums and galleries to theaters and festivals, there is always something going on in our city that celebrates the rich heritage and traditions of the many diverse communities that call Winnipeg home.

This year, Winnipeg celebrates 150 years as a city. The Chai Folk Ensemble provides a wonderful opportunity for us to appreciate Jewish culture, one of the many cultures that make Winnipeg such a vibrant and inclusive community.

Music and dance have the ability to unite us, spark creativity, and bring joy to our lives. I would like to thank the Chai Folk Ensemble staff, volunteers and Board of Directors for putting together this event. By supporting and celebrating the arts you are helping to strengthen our community.

My best wishes for a successful concert.

Sincerely,

Scott Gillingham
Mayor
City of Winnipeg



Consulate General of Israel
Toronto and Western Canada

November 9, 2024

Dear Friends,

It is a great pleasure to extend my warmest greetings on behalf of the Consulate of Israel in Toronto and Western Canada to the **Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble** on the occasion of **“Full Circle,”** a commemorative concert that celebrates both the 60th anniversary of Chai, while marking the anniversary of Kristallnacht.

I would like to extend my congratulations to Chai for having entertained communities around the world with music and dance—a universal language that brings people of all cultures and religions together to strengthen their connection to Jewish heritage and Israeli culture.

I also would also like to commend you for inspiring others through the cultural arts as you communicate the spirit of resilience and triumph evinced so heroically by Israelis and Jews across history. As we near the one-year anniversary of October 7, I am heartened by the invincible spirit of Israelis who will no doubt “dance again” and am deeply touched by the determination and support of Diaspora Jewry as they stand alongside Israel at this difficult juncture.

With gratitude to the Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble, on behalf of the Consulate General of Israel in Toronto and Western Canada, I wish you a most successful concert.

Sincerely,

Idit Shamir
Consul General



On behalf of the Board of Directors, Operations team, members, and volunteers of Folklorama, we would like to extend a huge congratulations to the Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble as they celebrate their 60th anniversary!

For 60 years, “Chai” has been stunning audiences here at home and around the world with its flawless choreography, beautiful rhythms, and vibrant costumes. It goes without saying that the success of one of Winnipeg's most-loved cultural institutions is a testament to the commitment, passion, and creativity of those who have led the organization through the years.

Folklorama, having just completed the 53rd edition of its flagship event, would not be the iconic Festival it is without the contributions of performing artists such as Chai Folk Ensemble. We are honoured to have the opportunity to celebrate with you on an astounding 60 years of legacy, culture, and community.

Mazel Tov to all those who have contributed to the success of the Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble over the last six decades. Folklorama looks forward to continuing to enjoy the artistry and passion of Chai for many decades to come!

Kim Ly
President, Board of Directors

Teresa Cotroneo
Executive Director, Folklorama

Folklorama54 ~ August 3rd to 16th, 2025 ~ Folklorama.ca



This evening, we gather to celebrate a remarkable milestone in our community's cultural and artistic journey: 60 years of the Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble.

As North America's oldest and largest Israeli folk dance ensemble, Chai has brought the spirit of Israel to life on countless stages around the world. For six decades, Chai has not only showcased the beauty of Israeli song, dance, and music, but has also kept alive the cultural ties that bind our community together. From its humble beginnings with just eight dancers and no musicians, Chai has grown into a dynamic ensemble beloved internationally, celebrated for its unique blend of tradition and innovation.

Tonight's concert, Full Circle, is a fitting tribute to Chai's incredible legacy. It is a moment to reflect on the past, celebrate in the present, and look forward to the future. As we watch Chai alumni from near and far return to the stage, we are reminded of the deep roots this ensemble has in our community, nurturing generations of performers and instilling a profound sense of pride in Jewish and Israeli culture within them and all who are fortunate to see them perform.

On this day, the anniversary of Kristallnacht, we are solemnly reminded of the attempt to extinguish our Jewish spirit. Together, we stand in defiance of what took place on that dark day and its perpetrators, embracing our culture with pride and resilience—as we always have and always will.

On behalf of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg, we extend the warmest Mazel Tov to the Chai Folk Ensemble on reaching this extraordinary 60th anniversary. We are all richer for the beauty and spirit you have brought to our community for these past six decades.

Paula Parks, President

Jeff Lieberman, Chief Executive Officer

CHAI^{60TH} Folk Ensemble ANNIVERSARY

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Co-Artistic Directors –
Jesse Popeski & Sarah Sommer
Dance Director – Rachael Buchwald
Artistic Advisor of Dance – Elan Marchinko
Rehearsal Director – Marissa Bosowec
Music Director – Cameron Denby
Vocal Director – Grace Hrabí

PRODUCTION

Red Rover Entertainment
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Miriam Wilson

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Norma Lachance

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PHOTOGRAPHY

Keith Levit
Jordan Nepon

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Sadira Garfinkel & Ahava Halpern

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CHAI.CA





MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS



It all began in 1964 with the vision of one extraordinary woman, and tonight, sixty years later we come together to celebrate the amazing accomplishments of the Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble. Over the years, what started as a small group of eight young dancers, practicing in a Winnipeg basement, has grown to include vocalists and a full orchestra and together, the ensemble has wowed audiences both locally and around the world in hundreds of world class performances. None of this would have been possible without the contributions of the thousands of alumni, volunteers and supporters who have dedicated their time and passion to Chai. To each of you who has contributed to the shaping and success of this amazing performing arts group in our community – thank you!

As Chai alumni we are proud to be co-chairing this year's celebrations. As all Chai alumni know, to spend time in this amazing organization, whether as a dancer, singer, musician, "costume lady", stage manager, lighting or sound tech, board member or volunteer, is a life altering experience. We formed lifelong friendships, learned the value of hard work and dedication and felt the thrill of performing on stage – all while experiencing the joy of sharing and celebrating Jewish and Israeli culture with our audiences through music, song and dance. For us, like so many of those who have had the privilege of being a part of this organization over the past sixty years, Chai is so much more than just a performance group – it is a family, and we are so proud to be able to say we have been a part of it.

Today's date also marks the eighty-sixth anniversary of Kristallnacht – a night that marked the beginning of modern Judaism's darkest period. We cannot think of a better way of honouring those who experienced the horrific events of that night in 1938 than to shine a light on the continued strength and resilience of our community and to show the world that even in the face of such hatred we are capable not only of surviving, but of thriving and continuing to share something so beautiful as song and dance. This is even more poignant given current events, and the darkness that threatens to envelop our community and the world once again. Tonight, we will celebrate and share our joy in community. Tonight, we will be the light in an otherwise dark time.

We want to thank all of the board members, committee members, performers, volunteers and supporters for making this special anniversary celebration a reality. A special thank you to Chai's Administrative Director, Reeva Nepon! As always, she has been the glue that has kept this project together and we cannot thank her enough for her hard work and dedication.

As we move forward from Chai's sixtieth anniversary, we are committed to continuing to see this incredible organization thrive and grow. We hope that all of you will be inspired to join us.

Sadira Garfinkel and Ahava Halpern



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



As the Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble reaches the incredible milestone of 60 years, we have been reflecting on who we are as a group, including the Chai Folk Arts Council.

For almost every single one of our 60 years, we have taken to the stage for an annual concert, where we have had the privilege of entertaining audiences and sharing the joy of Israeli and Jewish music and dance. Since 1970, Chai has also been a star attraction at our community's beloved Israel Pavilion Shalom Square during Folklorama.

As we began preparing this year's material, well over a year ago, we were excited for a joyful anniversary celebration of the magic of Chai past and present. In the wake of October 7, however, it became painfully clear that absolutely everything had changed.

Our amazing artistic directors paused to rethink our repertoire and our approach. We knew this talented group of young adults would now take the stage to do something profound, well beyond what it means to entertain. Tonight, as we sing, dance and make music, Chai is representing Israel and our community in the best way we know how – through the cultural artforms that communicate the stories of our people. We have always known this is what Chai does. At this moment in our history, it matters in a way that we may have taken for granted. Tonight, our ensemble takes the stage with more than 60 Chai alumni who grew up with the vision of what Chai was created for – to share, promote and celebrate the rich diversity of Israeli and Jewish culture through music and dance.

The eight girls who danced in the basement with founder Sarah Sommer (z'l) – some of whom you will see on stage tonight – became the foundation for a youth group that, for 60 years, has drawn together hundreds of young people of all faiths and backgrounds who carry this legacy forward.

Tonight, on the anniversary of Kristallnacht and on the heels of October 7, this vision and the incredible legacy born from it feel stronger than ever before.

As we dance and sing again to the music of our people, we have realized our unique ability as a cultural arts group to showcase our Jewish homeland and our diaspora communities through the lens of our people, with our people, from all our diverse backgrounds. Our movements and melodies represent the experiences of generations, woven into a glorious tapestry that reflects the diversity of Israel and Jewish communities around the world.

We are honoured to have represented Israel and the Jewish community for 60 years. As we have for 60 years, we will end our show with "Hava Netzeh B'machol," our signature finale, which translates to "let us go out and dance". We thank you for joining our Full Circle. We thank you for your unwavering support. Most important, we look forward to building bridges of joy and understanding through music and dance for many more decades to come.

Tracy Kasner

MESSAGE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTORS



An anniversary is a time to reflect. The Chai Folk Ensemble began in 1964 in a basement on Salvia Bay in the North End of Winnipeg. Scenes from that era come to us in blurry, black-and-white newspaper clippings saved in scrapbooks. One article shows the Original-Eight dancers in Ottawa, performing for Queen Elizabeth II, and even in black and white, one can feel the pride, joy, and exuberance that these young Jewish teens experienced in growing up with the newly-established State of Israel.

The next era comes to us on the covers of vinyl records; the warm hue of film photographs depict the ensemble performing in blue-and-white costumes amidst the green foliage of Kildonan Park. 1970 was the first year Chai performed in Folklorama. Upon the festival's inception, celebrating the diverse cultural fabric of Manitoba, multiculturalism has been a central pillar of the ensemble.

The ensuing decades brought a more connected world, and Chai's repertoire reflects these ideas with pieces from the diaspora, spanning from Brazil and Mexico to Kurdistan and Morocco. The stories of women, immigrants, and refugees took centre stage, receiving the spotlight they deserve.

In our lifetime, Chai continues to evolve. From trips to Israel and around the world, to partnerships with the WSO and the Ukrainian dance ensemble Rusalka, the Chai Folk Ensemble reaches people worldwide with videos on social media and a discography of music on streaming services.

All of this history is merely a broad overview - in each photograph and on every album cover is a performer whose life was touched by their time in Chai. We celebrate with those alumni tonight, who will join us onstage in performing some of Chai's highlights of the past 60 years.

But an anniversary isn't only for reflecting on the past - it can also be a time to look ahead to the future. Tonight's concert will feature six new pieces of music and choreography, each building on a different facet of Chai's artistry throughout the decades.

In Hebrew, the number 60 is represented by the letter samech, which is a closed circle. The circle is the basis of Israeli dance; without beginning or end, it symbolises the ongoing flow of art, culture, and tradition from one generation to the next. Just as all points in a circle are connected to one another, our community supports and leans on each other to uphold our values, culture, and traditions. Tonight our performers, past and present, will join together to share the joy and artistry of Jewish and Israeli song and dance. Enjoy the show!

Jesse Popeski & Sarah Sommer



DIRECTOR BIOGRAPHIES



SARAH SOMMER

Co-Artistic Director

Sarah Sommer is an active choral conductor, vocalist and music educator in Winnipeg. She holds a Bachelor of Music (2017), Bachelor of Education (2017) and Post Baccalaureate diploma in vocal performance (2022) from the University of Manitoba, and currently teaches music and drama at Technical-Vocational High School. Along with her role as co-artistic director of Chai, Sarah is also the co-founder and co-artistic director of NUOVOCE Chamber Choir. She has appeared as choir member and soloist with many local ensembles, including Canzona, Dead of Winter (Camerata Nova), the Winnipeg Singers, and the Shaarey Zedek Quartet. Sarah's additional directing credits, past and present, include: the Etz Chayim Synagogue Choir, Kolot Community Voices, WSD and LRSD Divisional choirs, and assisting with the Winnipeg Girls' & Boys' Choirs. Sarah first joined Chai in 2008 as a singer, and later went on to become assistant vocal director (2011-2014) and vocal director (2014-2017), before her appointment to the position of co-artistic director (2022). Sarah is honoured to be able to contribute to Chai's ongoing legacy in its 60th year and looks forward to watching Chai performers past and present share the stage together for this milestone celebration.



JESSE POPESKI

Co-Artistic Director

Jesse Popeski has been a member of the Chai Folk Ensemble since 2015, first as the guitarist and music director, and now as co-artistic director. Jesse has a BA in music from the University of Manitoba and is a freelance guitarist performing in a variety of styles, from jazz in local bars and restaurants to singing old favourites at care homes through the Artists in Healthcare Manitoba program. He is also a music educator, teaching guitar to aspiring musicians of all ages at the Winnipeg Conservatory of Music. For Jesse, the most exciting part of a Chai concert is seeing new pieces come to life onstage with the full ensemble of singers, instrumentalists, and dancers, and the variety and sophistication of the six new commissions for the 60th anniversary is sure to make for a meaningful and memorable performance.



CAMERON DENBY

Music Director

Cameron Denby is a Métis percussionist, teacher, and project director. He holds a Bachelor of Music from the University of Manitoba, and a Professional Studies Diploma from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Since returning to Winnipeg in 2019, Cameron has been creating and directing concerts and projects, including the Fresh Blood Project, an ongoing collaborative initiative between composers and percussionists. Working in a variety of circles, Cameron has performed many local organizations, including the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, the Little Opera Company, and the Winnipeg Police Pipe Band. Outside of performance, Cameron teaches private lessons on drumset, marimba, and percussion.

DIRECTOR BIOGRAPHIES



GRACE HRABI

Vocal Director

Grace Hrabí is a singer-songwriter and teacher with a B.A in Vocal Jazz Performance from the University of Manitoba. A regular fixture on the Winnipeg music scene for over a decade, her performance credits include the Winnipeg Jazz Festival, Winnipeg Folk Festival & the Ottawa Jazz Festival. She has released 3 full length albums and toured across Canada with folk trio Casati. She is also a private music instructor, teaching voice, song writing, ukulele & musical theatre.



RACHAEL BUCHWALD

Dance Director

Rachael Buchwald has spent most of her life dancing! Rachael's formal training began with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School's Recreational Division's Intensive Training Program from 2013-2017, where she completed her Advanced 1 Cecchetti examinations and studied ballet, pointe, and modern. She also danced in the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School's Recreational Division's Dance Ensemble Program from 2012-2017, performing jazz, contemporary, and hip-hop pieces. Rachael has received professional ballet training at the Colorado Ballet Academy's Summer Training Program in 2014, and at the Goh Ballet Academy's Ballet Academic Program from 2015-2016 in Vancouver. Rachael has been a dancer with the Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble since 2017. She has travelled with the group to Cuba, Israel and Ukraine, and holds tour memories very close to her heart. Rachael was appointed Rehearsal Director in 2022 and Dance Director in 2023. In her role as Dance Director, Rachael has enjoyed preserving traditional Chai pieces as well as exploring and setting new choreographic works with the talented Artistic Team. She has cherished her time in the studio with her dancers and is so proud of everyone's hard work this season! Outside of dance, Rachael has a Bachelor of Health Studies from the University of Manitoba, and is a current student of law at Robson Hall. She also holds her WSET level 2 Wine Award, and is thrilled to raise a glass to celebrate 60 years of Chai!



ELAN MARCHINKO

Artistic Advisor of Dance

Elan first joined the Chai Folk Ensemble in 2007. Born and raised on Treaty One, she received her formal training at Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet School, the School of Contemporary Dancers, and at various summer intensives. She was a member of the RWB School's Senior Tap Workshop and the Prairie Dancers Performance Troupe directed by Paula Blair. An artist-scholar, Elan has contributed artistically to companies ParaSoul Dance and Signal Theatre and has taught in the Canadian Studies program at the University of Toronto. Her writing about performance and public memory has been featured in journals such as Performance Matters, Canada's national dance magazine The Dance Current, and the edited collection Remembering Air India. Most recently, Elan received First Prize at the 2021 Flamenco Certamen USA in NYC. She is currently a Vanier Canada Graduate Scholar in Theatre and Performance Studies.

DIRECTOR BIOGRAPHIES



MARISSA BOSOWEC

Rehearsal Director

Marissa Bosowec began dancing with the Shelley Shearer School of Dance at the young age of 3. She has trained in many styles including jazz, ballet, contemporary, lyrical, hip hop and musical theatre. Marissa has competed in various Provincial and National competitions throughout her years of training, and has been able to travel to various dance conventions throughout Canada. She began her teaching career at 18 with Shelley Shearer and has been able to work with many dancers of different ages and abilities since then. Her choreography has won various awards amongst many Winnipeg dance competitions. Marissa has been a dancer with the Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble since 2019 and has performed in the Israel Pavilion at Folklorama as well as at the yearly concerts. She is so happy to join the artistic team as Rehearsal Director and continue dancing with the Chai Folk Ensemble for many future performances.



GERRI STEMLER

Costume Director

After obtaining a Masters in Architecture degree, Gerri was registered in 1986 and worked in several Winnipeg architectural firms and in property management. She was the first woman in Manitoba elected as President of the Manitoba Association of Architects. Gerri became a volunteer for the Chai Folk Ensemble in 2005 working at Folklorama most years since, and at Chai productions, eventually assuming responsibility for the costume department, and has toured with the company to Kelowna, Cuba, Israel and Ukraine. Growing up in West Kildonan, she was attracted to Rainbow Stage and spent several years working summers in costumes and as a theatre apprentice, as well as at RMTC during the winter season as a wardrobe assistant and dresser. Originally wanting to become a costume designer, in retirement, her passion has come full circle in her work with the Chai Folk Ensemble.



GUEST CHOREOGRAPHERS



RACHAEL BUCHWALD

Since 2017, Rachael Buchwald has had the pleasure of learning, teaching, and preserving Chai choreography. Some of her favourite pieces have been those with Moroccan or Yemeni influences, in addition to classics such as Hava Nagila! She is thrilled to contribute her own choreography to Chai's 60th anniversary concert. Inspired by the Hora Hopak tour in 2019, Ukrainian Klezmer pays homage to Rachael's own Ukrainian heritage, and the blending of Ukrainian and Israeli dance styles highlighting the joys of cultural exchange through art. Research prior to the choreographic process allowed Rachael to explore many Jewish stories in Ukraine, and the development of klezmer music. It has been such a privilege and a true joy for Rachael to stage "Ukrainian Klezmer" with her lifelong ballet teacher, mentor, and friend, Kristina Frykas.



RACHEL COOPER

Rachel Cooper is an independent choreographer and teacher. She is a graduate of the Senior Professional Program of the School of Contemporary Dancers, holds a B.A. Honours in Theatre and Drama/Dance and gold medal from the University of Winnipeg, as well as a Bachelor of Education from the University of Winnipeg. Rachel began her professional career in Toronto. She has a strong foundation in many dance disciplines – modern, ballet, jazz, tap, and hip hop- and has had the opportunity to work with a wide range of choreographers in various styles of dance. Her choreography has appeared and been awarded on both local and international stages. Rachel is a full-time teacher at Maples Collegiate, where she operates the school's dance department. Additionally, she is a teacher and choreographer at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School and the Shelley Shearer School of Dance, and is the President of the Manitoba Association of Dance Educators. Rachel continues to attend professional development workshops to further her growth and progress as a dance educator.



GUEST CHOREOGRAPHERS



FARRAH FERNANDO

Born in Baliuag, Philippines, raised in Winnipeg, and currently residing in Toronto, Farrah Fernando has traversed multiple worlds. She holds a B.Sc. in Biosystems Engineering from the University of Manitoba, a BA (Hons) from the School of Contemporary Dancers in aLiliation with the University of Winnipeg, and a certificate in Big Data and Predictive Analytics from Toronto Metropolitan University. She has trained extensively in Contemporary and Modern dance, Ballet, Hip Hop, House, Jazz, Zouk, and Ballroom and Latin dance. Professionally Farrah has danced for Winnipeg's

NAfro Dance Productions and was a member of Toronto's COBA—Collective of Black Artists. Independently, she has interpreted the works of prolific choreographers such as Bakari Linsday, Charmaine Headley, Arsenio Andrade, Ashima Suri, Karissa Fyrar, Liisa Smith, and Paula Blair. She has also presented her own choreographic works in Toronto and Winnipeg. Farrah has been part of the Chai Folk Ensemble as a dancer throughout the years participating in many Folkloramas as well as the California Tour. She choreographed for the ensemble 10 years ago and is tremendously grateful and honoured for the opportunity to work with the Chai Folk Ensemble again for their 60th Anniversary.



KRISTINA FRYKAS

A graduate of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's Teacher Training Program, Kristina Frykas holds her Licentiate teaching designation with the Cecchetti Society of Canada and Cecchetti International Classical Ballet. Kristina is the Owner and Founder of Kazka Dance Collective. Inspired by fairy tales and stories through movement, veteran dance instructor Kristina opened boutique Kazka Dance Collective in 2019 to create a new dance and movement experience for people of all ages. Inspired to provide joy and meaningful connection through movement, Kazka is a new kind of

dance community in Winnipeg. Kristina was a senior member of the artistic staff at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet Recreational School and the Professional School's Teacher Training Program for nearly 20 years. As well as being a ballet teacher, Kristina is certified in both Progressing Ballet Technique and Pilates. An advocate for the Manitoba dance community, Kristina is a former board member of Dance Manitoba and has acted as the Manitoba Representative to the Cecchetti Society of Canada. A partner of the Kazka Dance Collective, Kristina is also the School Director of Sopilka Ukrainian Dance School. Under her direction the school has been awarded top Ukrainian dance school by the Manitoba Ukrainian Dance Festival on three separate occasions. Kristina has received multiple national awards for her choreography and was the recipient of the esteemed 2018-2019 Instructor of the Year Award presented by Ukrainian Dance World. A passionate lifelong learner, Kristina frequently traveled to Ukraine to continue her studies as a director, choreographer, dancer and dance educator. A trusted authority in dance, Kristina has had the honour of adjudicating several dance festivals across Canada throughout her career. It has been an honour working once again with Chai Folk Ensemble, this time to create choreography with past student and dear friend, Rachael Buchwald, Dance Director. Together we feel we have created a unique piece uniting Israeli and Ukrainian dance together. Let dance continue to be what binds us together through joy and expression of movement.



GUEST CHOREOGRAPHERS



ELAN MARCHINKO

Elan began choreographing for Chai in 2009 with the boys feature, Brider Tanse. Since then, she has reimagined existing repertoire and created new works such as Alle Brider, Mishaela, The Space Between Us, and Katonti. In her choreographies, Jewish diasporic styles are punctuated by ballet, contemporary dance, character, tap, jazz, and flamenco. For Elan, dance is a way to make space for memory. The overarching story of The Space Between Us is about the loss of the main character's childhood friend whose memory she dances with in a bittersweet between place. At first, she is overwhelmed by the heaviness of her grief but is eventually enveloped in and comforted by their memories together—the beautiful-terrible consequence of being human, living, and loving. First created in 2017, tonight's version has been rechoreographed to reflect memories generously contributed by the current cast. Also making its debut tonight is Elecha Ekra Ya, the first piece Elan has created in the Moroccan style. It is dedicated to her most beautiful creation, Akiva.



REBECA SHAMAH

Rebeca Shamah was born in Mexico, and now resides in Costa Rica. She studied Spanish dance in Mexico in the National School of Dance Nellie y Gloria campobello (2005-2009) and then she completed her studies in Sevilla Spain (summers of 2010 and 2014) with lots of teachers, some of them: Cristobal Reyes, Juana Maya, Ursula y Tamara Lopez, Cristian Lozano, and Nazareth Reyes. She continued her training in different workshops around the year. In Mexico she was the director and choreographer of the company Anajnu Veatem (2011-2016), having performances in el palacio de Bellas artes, el festival internacional Cervantino, in la Feria Internacional del libro, and in Folklorama with the Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble. She has had the opportunity to work with Chai on two occasions on two different pieces. Now Rebeca has her own dance school, Flamenco Rebeca Shamah in Costa Rica (2019-) where she teaches different levels and ages. She was the main dancer in the tablao flamenco in Costa Rica from 2018- 2021.



60 DANCERS, SINGERS & BAND



MARISSA BOSOWEC
Dancer - Joined 2020

Outside of Chai, Marissa is a physiotherapist working with patients in geriatric rehabilitation. She enjoys spending time with her family, as well as crocheting and

reading. She has really enjoyed learning the history behind all of the new pieces that are included in this year's show. Being a part of Chai's 60th anniversary is special as it is a way to celebrate all the accomplishments of the group over the past 60 years and highlights the importance of sharing and representing the culture. In 60 years from now, Marissa is positive that Chai will have a large ensemble still spreading joy through music and dance! She hopes that audiences from far and wide will continue to come and enjoy Chai's incredible shows for many years to come.



REYMARK CAPACETE
Dancer - Joined 2022

Reymark is a graduate of The School of Contemporary Dancers. At a very young age, he developed his dancing through watching Hip-Hop YouTube videos. Through

high school, he found his love for dance working with Melanie Athayde and Jacqueline Garner, which led him to The School of Contemporary Dancers. Throughout his years of studies within the school, he's worked with wonderful choreographers such as Gaile Petursson-Hiley, Kathleen Hiley, Robyn Thomson-Kacki, Jera Wolfe, Constance Cooke, Odette Heyn, Marc Boivin, Harold Rhéaume, Sasha Ivanochko, Christina Medina, Paula Blair, Maritel Centurion, Jolene Bailie and Casimiro Nhussi. He currently dances with NAfro Dance Productions, Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers and Chai Folk Ensemble. He currently teaches at Little Monsters Dance, where he shares his passion and knowledge to all of his students.



CAMERON DENBY
Band - Joined 2015

Cameron is honoured to work with a group with such a long history, and being part of the 60th anniversary is a real privilege. Outside of Chai, Cameron is a passionate

music educator, teaching lessons on drums, percussion, and mandolin. He is also an active performer around Winnipeg, working with a variety of groups and ensembles.



ALISA FESENKO
Apprentice Dancer - Joined 2023

Alisa is a very outgoing person with tons of energy (when she sleeps a normal amount!). She currently works and attends university with hopes of

pursuing a career in interior design one day. When not at a Chai rehearsal, she enjoys doing Ukrainian dance, painting murals, searching for new music to listen to, and simply spending time with friends. Being a part of Chai's 60th is a special moment. Coming from starting out sitting in the audience and watching Chai perform, to getting to celebrate the last 60 years of great culture and tradition with many amazing people and sharing it with the world, is a full circle moment! In the next 60 years, Alisa hopes to see a new generation of artists who are as passionate as the ones from the last 60 years continuing to preserve and celebrate Israeli/Jewish culture in Chai.



BRADEN GANETSKY
Singer & Band - Joined 2013

Braden has been playing bass since age 10 and singing since age 11, and it wasn't too many years until he joined Chai doing both of these. To this day,

Braden is grateful to have Chai as his main artistic outlet, to keep on singing and playing bass. He is a particular fan of Chai's slower ballads and anything with fun harmonies to keep it exciting. Outside of Chai, Braden also sings with the NUOVOCE Chamber Choir. In his professional life, he currently works as a software engineer, something that he promises is more interesting than it sounds! Otherwise, Braden enjoys playing the piano, and solving Rubik's cubes and other puzzles.



MORLEY GLEW

Dancer - Joined 2022

Throughout Morley Glew's time being a dancer for Chai Folk Ensemble, she has discovered a unique sense of family and friendship amongst her fellow dancers and

musicians. Outside of Chai she works as a waitress and a tutor. In her free time she loves to bake and cook in the kitchen as well as camp and hike in the great outdoors! Since she began learning the choreography for the many pieces in this show, she has grown particularly fond of the "Mountains Will Dance" medley and is beyond excited to share it with the audience!



ZEUS GONZALES

Dancer - Joined 2017

Zeus' full-circle moment with Chai was performing and being part of the Hora Hopak Tour back in 2019. Having to travel to two different countries in one Chai trip allowed Zeus to

see the power of diversity and how embracing it can create lasting connections that can truly last a lifetime. With Chai's 60th Anniversary, Zeus sees continued growth and success for the ensemble. A growing family that welcomes everyone despite of who they are, Zeus believes that Chai's continued success lies in the power of diversity, and artistically expressing it through live music and dance. This anniversary show means a lot to Zeus for he has seen how Chai has welcomed him with open arms and how each member of the ensemble inspired him in many different ways. Aside from being a dancer in Chai, Zeus enjoys volunteering in Let's Talk Science and is wanting to become a licensed educator in the near future.



ZACHARY GORDON

Dancer - Joined 2023

Zachary Gordon has been dancing for the past 14 years. Zak began dancing with Kick It Dance Studio in 2010 and trained competitively 2014-2023. Zak has trained

in Ballet, Hip Hop, Contemporary, Lyrical, Jazz, Tap, and Musical Theatre. In the realm of Musical Theatre, Zak performed in Rainbow Stage's 2018 production of Beauty and the Beast as Chip and Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre's 2019 production of Matilda as Tommy. Zak had the opportunity to attend summer training at Joffrey Ballet School in 2019. Zak has been a dancer with the Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble since 2023. For Zak, being in Chai means community. Attending rehearsal with the Chai dancer team twice a week is the joy of his week and it has become a cliché for him to suggest social events for the group, with little to no justification needed. The 60th show will be Zak's first official Chai show and he is so happy to be included in this important milestone.



AARON GREAVES

Singer - Joined 2022

Outside of performing, Aaron goes to school at Gray Academy, loves to participate in school sports and other extracurricular activities such as Student Council Secretary. On top

of that, Aaron enjoys spending time with friends and attending BB camp every summer. His full circle moment is being a teenager in Chai, just like his mother. In 60 years, Aaron sees Chai continuing to thrive, and share Israel culture and Judaism.



GRACE HRABI
Singer & Band
 - Joined 2017

Outside of Chai, Grace is a professional musician and private music teacher here in Winnipeg. In her free time, she can usually be found in thrift stores

throughout the city searching for undiscovered treasure. Her "Full-Circle" moment in Chai was 2 years ago when she moved from being the Assistant Music Director to the role of Vocal Director, where she is now able to use all of her skills within the ensemble. She is thrilled to be a part of such a milestone event for this beloved arts organization and hopes that the current performers make the alumni proud of everything they paved the way for. "In 60 years I will certainly be gone, but I very much hope Chai is still alive and well."



CAROLINE HUNTER
Dancer - Joined 2024

Caroline is a university student working her way to the education program to become a high school teacher. In the meantime, Caroline is a writing tutor for fellow students at her

university. She also tutors various subjects at a learning centre for kids in kindergarten to grade 12. Caroline's hobbies include being on her university's improv team as well as going on summer canoe trips with her friends. Caroline feels honored to be a part of Chai's 60th anniversary celebration and is excited for what the future holds.



ETHAN KATZ
Dancer - Joined 2023

Ethan has been attending the University of Manitoba for the past two years, working towards a degree in Psychology. As of right now he's taking a year off to do some travelling and

work more. He likes to spend his off-time hiking, gaming, and playing piano. Ethan has been dancing since he was 10 and started dancing competitively from 2015 and continued until 2021. He joined the Chai Folk Ensemble after a couple years of not dancing. It was a group he grew up watching and

always hoped he could be a part of someday. He loves being a part of the team and having a place to continue dancing, but also where he can connect with the Jewish community of his hometown.



SYDNEY KAY
Singer - Joined 2022

Sydney is in her second year at the University of Manitoba studying biological sciences and when she is not studying or rehearsing, you can be sure to find her reading.

In 60 years, she hopes to be living a happy life, traveling the world with friends and family, and owning a library's worth of books. Leading up to the 60th anniversary concert, Sydney has enjoyed seeing all of the photos from years past and is looking forward to seeing alumni this weekend, they are after all a huge reason this group has carried on for so long. Sydney loves performing with this amazing ensemble and is excited to see where the next 60 years takes Chai!



KOHAVIT KLEITMAN
Singer - Joined 2023

Outside of Chai, Kohavit enjoys listening to music, reading, and going for a run when the weather is nice. After immigrating to Canada at ten years old, Kohavit joined a Jewish

choir to make new friends. Her Full Circle moment was joining the Chai Folk Ensemble many years later as an adult, and once again finding community and creating connections through music.



SELENA LAGOS
Dancer - Joined 2022

Selena has loved the new challenge dancing with Chai has given her. She has been dancing since she was three years old and grew up spending most of her time in the studio!

She has developed a passion for dance and teaching over her twenty-six years in the arts. Performing has always been the best and easiest way for

Selena to express her and show her love of dance/ performing as well as have others experience a love of the performing arts. She grew up competitively dancing and doing international ballet exams and competitions. When Selena is not in Chai, she is spending time with her dog Tony and is a teacher. Selena's favourite part of being in Chai is learning from all the incredible choreographers and fellow dancers around her. Learning from people all over the world has been an incredible experience and fostered new growth as a dancer. Being a part of the 60th is such a huge milestone for an ensemble to reach and it's an honour being able to dance on stage with past and present Chai performers and how the love and joy it brings is still running strong. Selena cannot wait for the rest of the season with Chai and all of the pieces they get the chance to learn and perform.



ANNA MALKEVICH
Dancer - Joined 2017

Anna began dancing at a young age of 5. She started her dancing journey with gymnastics in Russia which gave her the competitive and hard-working spirit she carries to this day. As

she traveled around the world with her parents, she learned many dance styles including ballroom dance, hip hop, jazz and a little bit of ballet. As a newcomer, Anna decided to volunteer at the Israel Pavilion and fell in love with Chai while they were on stage performing 'Heyaw'. The energy of the group felt like home and something that she was missing. Anna made it her goal to join Chai and be a part of a community in Winnipeg. Joining the group in 2017, she danced and traveled with Chai to Israel and Ukraine. She has made great friendships and lifelong memories. Anna's all time favourite dance will always be 'Heyaw' followed by a dance they spend many rehearsals hours on, "Elecha Ekra Yah". It has a mix of Moroccan influence and has some familiar moves from her favourite pieces. Outside of Chai, Anna is a certified nail technician, who is working hard to make a name for herself in our city. The passion is to always learn new things and push herself outside her comfort zones and that is what makes her a notable Chai dancer. Anna is very grateful to be a part of the Chai Family and the lifelong friends she makes along the way.



CYRA MOORE-FREEDMAN

Singer - Joined 2023

Cyra is a student at the University of Winnipeg studying Honours Acting. Theatre and performance have been lifelong passions for her, and she

is so grateful to work with the lovely people at Chai to develop further as an artist. Being a part of Chai's 60th anniversary is meaningful to Cyra because she has a deep appreciation for cultural connection, and how exploring that can heal and bring joy. Cyra used to attend Chai performances as a little girl with her Baba & Zaida, Leona and Norman Freedman (may their memory be a blessing), who instilled a love for Jewish culture in her. She would like to thank her wonderful partner Rory, for always giving her all the love & support in the world.



ERIN NESTERENKO
Singer & Band - Joined 2023

Erin is very grateful to be part of a group with such a long and rich history. They have felt very welcomed in Chai since joining, and is eager to continue

to support the group even though they are not performing this year. Outside of Chai, Erin enjoys being creative in other ways — cooking, writing, and making crafts. They enjoy making something out of nothing, like turning dots and lines on paper into beautiful music. In the next 60 years, Erin is looking forward to seeing Chai grow and spread the beauty of Jewish culture as they have been doing for the past 60 years.



MADDI PENNER-ADAMO
Dancer - Joined 2022

Maddi is excited to be a part of Chai Folk Ensemble's 60th Anniversary. Throughout her two years in Chai, she has enjoyed being a part of the community, and

representing Israeli culture through dance. Maddi is looking forward to performing the variety of pieces in the show; from traditional choreography,

to Yemenite, Flamenco, Klezmer, and Moroccan influenced choreography, to more contemporary inspired works. Chai's 60th Anniversary show showcases the energy, cultural influence, and versatility of Israeli dance. Maddi danced at The School of Contemporary Dancers (SCD) in the Junior Professional Program, focusing primarily on Ballet and contemporary. She completed her Royal Academy of Dance Advanced 1 Ballet Examination. Maddi spent one year dancing in the Professional Program at SCD, prior to graduating with a Bachelor of Education and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Winnipeg. In 60 years, Maddi hopes that Chai is still thriving and celebrating cultural arts.



JESSE POPESKI
Band - Joined 2015

Jesse is a freelance guitarist and educator. For him, the 60th anniversary is about sharing the whole story of Chai, from the classic songs that will be performed by alumni

to the six new pieces the current ensemble will perform. Jesse's full circle moment was seeing many Chai alumni performers in the audience at this year's Folklorama who Jesse had shared the stage with in his first years in the ensemble. When he's not playing music, Jesse likes going for walks and playing fetch with his puppy Hank.



HAVIVA POLEVOI
Singer - Joined 2015

Haviva is a vibrant and compassionate soul who's always on the move, whether she's exploring new places, catching up with friends, or diving into her next volunteer

project. With a Bachelor's in Psychology, she's just as comfortable offering a listening ear as she is in her role as a Crisis Counselor. But her heart beats strongest for the traditions that connect her to her roots. Celebrating Chai's 60th anniversary is more than a milestone for Haviva—it's a tribute to the journey that began with her first Folklorama show. Now, she's not just in the audience; she's centre stage, sharing that moment with her sister.

Whether she's performing or making a difference in her community, Haviva's enthusiasm, deep sense of tradition, and big-hearted nature light up everything she touches.



MAYA POLEVOI
Dancer - Joined 2018

Maya's favourite part about Chai is pursuing her passion for dance alongside her friends. Her full-circle moment in Chai is meeting young audience members, just as she grew

up watching Chai perform. Outside of dancing with Chai, Maya is a medical student at the University of Manitoba. Maya enjoys travelling and hopes to visit Greece next. She can also speak three languages fluently!



SAM ROTHMAN
Band - Joined 2023

Sam is super excited to be a part of Chai's 60th anniversary concert and celebration and he sees it as a moment to reflect on past achievements, appreciate the present, and

envision the future impact of this folk ensemble. Sam thinks that Chai will continue to thrive and adapt, sharing messages of culture to others and reaching new generations. Outside of Chai, Sam studies psychology at the University of Manitoba, works as a cook, and plays music with a few different groups around the city. Look out for Sam having fun at the show!



CAITLIN SARNA
Dancer - Joined 2022

As a long-time fan, Caitlin is thrilled to be part of the Chai Folk Ensemble's 60th anniversary season! Caitlin first encountered Chai as a teenager while visiting a friend at Folklorama

and was blown away by the energy and talent of the performers. She truly feels honoured for the opportunity to come "Full Circle" and dance with Chai, and hopes to inspire other young dancers

in the future. Caitlin started dancing at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School at the age of 5 and dabbled in ballet, tap, jazz, modern and pointe. After taking a very long break to pursue her academic studies and establish a career as a scientist, she re-discovered her passion for dance as an adult and hasn't looked back. When she's not working, dancing, or desperately Googling how to write a dance biography, Caitlin can be found reading, baking overly ambitious recipes, and going on adventures with friends.



SAMARA SHUR
*Apprentice Dancer -
Joined 2022*

Samara has always loved watching the Chai shows and has been amazed by the performance - from the dancers to the singers to the live music, since she was a

little girl. She is thrilled to be a part of this wonderful group that celebrates Jewish and Israeli culture. This is Samara's third year dancing with the Chai Folk Ensemble as an Apprentice. Samara has been dancing since she was three years old! She began dancing in Toronto, where she was born, and fell in love with ballet. She is a grade 11 student at Gray Academy, and loves spending her summers at BB Camp. Samara is currently a co-chair on the social committee for her high school and is Vice President of her BBYO chapter. As a proud member of Chai, Samara is very excited to be a part of the 60th anniversary celebration and can't wait to perform on stage!



ZAHRA SLUTCHUK
Dancer - Joined 2019

Zahra is a student at The University of Winnipeg where she is currently completing a degree in political science and criminal justice with the hopes of becoming a lawyer in the

future. Zahra just completed her tenth summer at BB Camp and her second summer as a camp counsellor. Zahra has been dancing since the age of three but Chai is like no other dance group she has been a part of. Zahra has always wanted to be in Chai and is still amazed at the feeling of joy and love that overcomes her as she steps on stage with the group. She believes Chai is a family full of like-minded individuals all with the common goal of wanting to bring music and dance to life on stage while fostering an environment of

education, celebration, and nostalgia for audience members. As the daughter of past Chai performers, she takes pride in being a part of the legacy Chai has created. She hopes to share her passion for the group and all that it encompasses with the next generation so that Chai can continue to strive as it has for the past 60 years.



SHEENA STEMLER
Dancer - Rejoined 2022

Sheena is grateful that Chai has been an enduring part of her life for the better part of 20 years. One of the most rewarding parts of dancing in Chai is being able to

return to pieces at different stages in her life and experiencing them anew with different groups of talented dancers. She is sure she will remember the steps to Hava Nagila long after she does her last tcherkessia. She also loves sharing this experience with her mom, a long-time costume volunteer. Thank you to all the staff and volunteers who are the lifeblood of Chai. Here's to another 60 years of community, dance, music, and memories!



NOAH TRACHTENBERG
Singer - Joined 2022

Noah enjoys creating realistic artworks and participating in creative projects. Being part of Chai's 60th anniversary is particularly special and meaningful, especially

given the current issues of antisemitism and intolerance. She believes this milestone will further elevate Chai's reputation and hopes it contributes to combating antisemitism. Looking ahead, Noah envisions herself in a psychology career, still finding joy in her creative hobbies.



TIM VELDHUIS **Band – Joined 2018**

Tim is excited to partake in the 60th anniversary of Chai. Outside of music, Tim comes from a family of beekeepers and spent the summer on the farm. The answer is yes, he has been

stung before, “only the first 10,000 hurt”. Additionally, Tim is excited to be receiving his engineering Iron Ring next week.



SAMANTHA WALDMAN **Dancer – Joined 2020**

Samantha is currently studying Fine Arts at the University of Manitoba. She loves to paint outside of Chai. Being a part of Chai’s 60th anniversary means being a part

of a long legacy that Samantha hopes she can contribute to more down the line. Samantha’s Full-Circle moment came when she got to participate in Folklorama over the summer, as her grandma worked in the pavilion when she was younger. Samantha hopes to still be able to contribute to Chai’s legacy in the next 60 years. She doesn’t know how yet, but she will make it work. Samantha is excited for everyone to see the old pieces reinvented, and the new pieces we have for the show this year!



PETER WEISS **Singer & Band – Joined 2023**

Peter is thrilled to be a part of Chai’s 60th anniversary. Outside of Chai, Peter is also a member of NUOVOCE Chamber Choir led by Chai Alumni

Justin Odwak and Sarah Sommer, and he is a junior accountant at Talbot and Associates. When he’s not singing, Peter can be found running in a field or playing soft music on the guitar.

MUSICAL CREDITS FOR TONIGHT’S SHOW

The Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble performs music from various sources.

The following list credits the original lyricists, composers and performers of the songs in this concert.

Ure'eh Vanim
Music: David Weinkranz
Lyrics: Tehillim 128
As Performed by Yossi Azulay

Elecha Ekra Ya
Music: trad. Moroccan Piyut
Lyrics: Rabbi Shlomoh Zrihen
As Performed by Yossi Azulay

Larov
Music: Eric Whitacre
Lyrics: Hila Plitmann

Milimeter
Music & Lyrics: Achinoam Nini & Gil Dor

Tamid Lakum
Music & Lyrics: Raz Copperman,
Eden Atad, Meital Michaeli
As performed by Ester Rada

Mountains Will Dance
Music: Ravid Kahalani
Lyrics: Tehillim 114
As performed by Yemen Blues

At Va'ani
Music & Lyrics: Ravid Kahalani
As Performed by Yemen Blues

Erev Ba
Music: Arie Levanon
Lyrics: Oded Avishar

Korim Lanu Lalechet
Music: Effi Netzer
Lyrics: Yossi Gamzu

Debka Dalona
Trad. Israeli

Ma Navu
Music: Rabbi Shimon bar Nissim
Lyrics: Trad. Babylonian Jewish melody

Keshoshana Ben HaChochim
Music: Yosef Hadar
Lyrics: Song of Songs 2

Sisu et Yerushalayim
Music: Akiva Nof
Lyrics: Isaiah 60-66

Nanua
Music & Lyrics: Achinoam Nini & Gil Dor

Mayim, Mayim
Music: Emanuel Amiran-Pougatchov
Lyrics: Isaiah 12:3

Mai Nahar
Music & Lyrics: Idan Raichel

Sham Shualim Yesh
Music: Trad. Israeli
Lyrics: Kadish Yehuda Leib Silman

Bif'at HaKfar
Music & Lyrics: Emanuel Zamir

Debka HaChamor
Music & Lyrics: Emanuel Zamir

Ma Yafim HaLeylot Bichna'an
Music: Trad. Israeli
Lyrics: Yitzhak Katznelson

Shir HaNokdim
Music: Yosef Hadar
Lyrics: Moshe Dor

B'Kerem Teyman
Music: Mordechai Zeira & Moshe Vilensky
Lyrics: Natan Alterman
As performed by Miri Mesika

Be'er Basadeh
Music & Lyrics: Emanuel Zamir

This Land
Music & Lyrics: Yael (Deckelbaum) & The Mothers

Adama VeShamayim
Music: Trad. Israeli
Lyrics: Shimon Lev-Tahor (Suisse)

Eli Atah
Music: Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi
Lyrics: Tehillim 118
As performed by Shlomo Gronich & The Sheba Choir

Adon Olam
Music: Uzi Chitman
Lyrics: Trad. Jewish Prayer

Beso de Vida
Music & Lyrics: Mor Karbasi

Dezile a mi Amor
Music & Lyrics: Trad. Sephardic
As performed by Mor Karbasi

A Glezele Vayn
Traditional Klezmer

The Clarinet Song
Traditional Klezmer

Alle Brider
Music: Trad.
Lyrics: Morris Winchevsky

Ukrainian Klezmer
Music: Cayuga Klezmer Revival

Yalda Yechefa
Music: Ester Shamir
Lyrics: Gilad Atzmon
As performed by Yardena Arazi

Shema Yisrael
Traditional Jewish prayer

Yerushalayim Shel Zahav
Music & Lyrics: Naomi Shemer

Hava Nagila
Music: Trad. Chassidic
Lyrics: Avraham Tzvi Edelson

Reiach Tapuach Odem Shani
Music: Nachtshe Heiman
Lyrics: Yoram Taharlev

Shir Sameach
Music: Mordechai Zeira
Lyrics: Yaakov Orland

Hava Netzeh B'Machol
Music: Trad. Israeli
Lyrics: Shalom Bancho & Asaf Halevi

Heveinu Shalom Aleichem
Trad. Israeli



SPECIAL APPEARANCE BY CHAI ALUMNI IN TONIGHT'S CONCERT



SINGERS

Susan Albersheim (Vancouver) - 1972-1975
Bonnie Antel - 1976-1979
Sophie Braunstein (Montreal) - 2019-2022
Casey Chisick (Toronto) - 1989-2002
Tracy Kasner - 1992-2010
Miriam Kohn - 1964-1987
Ruth Laveman - 1981-1985
Arthur Liffmann - 1991-2022
Elena Mallin - 2002-2005
Justin Odwak - 2008-2014
Stephen Reich (Toronto) - 1982-1987; 1990
Andrea Ritter - 1987-1990
Ilana Shapera - 2005-2007; 2015-2018
Shayla Solomon - 1997-2006
Marlaina Sommer - 1981-1983
Rachel Steindel - 1998-2010
David Vamos - 2002-2022

MUSICIANS

Paul Balcain - 1998-2001
Lorne Billinkoff - 1971-1977
Casey Chisick (Toronto) - 1989-2002
Matthew Faiman (Ohio) - 1987-1991
Paul Kelly - 1974-1977
Kelly Leveille - 1998-2001
Marshall Miller - 1983-2001
Kinzey Posen - 1971-1973; 1990-2000
Myron Schultz - 1978-1985
Hillel Sommer - 1978-1994

DANCERS

Tamar Barr - 1980-1992
Charlotte Berkowitz Bell (Vancouver) - 1978-1982
Randi Berman (Montreal) - 1994-1999
Leah Braemer - 1972-1979
Lori Braha (Vancouver) - 1992-1997
Robyn Braha - 1994-2001
Sophie Braunstein (Montreal) - 2019-2023
Jessica Casiro (Vancouver) - 1999-2004
Eli Cohen (Arizona) - 1981-1986
Andrea Dil (Toronto) - 1990-1998
Jana Frydberg (Calgary) - 1993-1995
Sadira Garfinkel - 1998-2004
Dinah Goldenberg (Las Vegas) - 1976-1982; 1987-1992
Nesya Greaves (Montreal) - 2018-2023
Miriam Kohn - 1964-1987
Ivy Kopstein - 1973-1980
Shachar Leven (Toronto) - 1990-1998
Elan Marchinko (Toronto) - 2007-2016
Rick Mayhew - 1981-1982; 1992
Randy Silver Mellon (Toronto) - 1976-1982
Harriet Rosen - 1982-1993
Lainie Rosner - 1996-2001
Jeffrey Schachter (Toronto) - 2003-2011
Alex Serebnitski - 2003-2019
Rena Tabachnick Solomon - 1999-2002
Shachaf Tcherni (Regina) - 1989-2000
Beth Usiskin - 2003-2014
Dawn White - 1972
Francie Winkworth - 1964-1974
Rebecca Winkworth - 1997-1998

CONCERT PROGRAM

 Chai Alumni

 Current Chai Ensemble

 Chai New Work Premiere



Ure'e Vanim L'Vanecha & Elecha Ekra Ya

וראה בנים לבניך & אליך אקרא יה

May you live to see your children's children— peace be on Israel. We welcome you to Chai's 60th anniversary concert with a medley taken from the repertoire of Moroccan Israeli singer, Yossi Azulay, known for his artistry and interpretations of Jewish prayers and texts.

Next, a tribute to Chai's extant repertoire, Elecha Ekra Yah (I call to you, O G-d) celebrates the diversity of Israel's Moroccan culture through elements of Flamenco, African, and street dance forms.

Choreography: Elan Marchinko

Music Arrangement: Cameron Denby

Vocal Arrangement: Jesse Popeski

The Space Between Us: Larov / Millimeter (Mostly / Millimetre)

לרוב & מילימטר

Israel is home to some of the most innovative contemporary dance in the world, steeped in classical technique and universal themes. Elan Marchinko, Chai's artistic advisor of dance, has drawn on themes of memory, loss, and distance to create an achingly beautiful tribute to loved ones gone too soon and their everlasting presence in our souls.

Choreography: Elan Marchinko

Music Arrangement: Peter Wiebe; Revised by: Cameron Denby

Vocal Arrangement: Larov – Eric Whitacre

Tamid Lakum (Always Get Back Up)

תמיד לקום

This soulful and uplifting singer's feature by Ethiopian-Israeli singer, Ester Rada, is a message of inspiration in tough times. Rada's family came to Israel from Ethiopia as part of the rescue mission, Operation Moses, in the 1980s, and her family's history, culture, and resilience are evident in her music. "Even when you fall down, hard on the floor, in the end, you will always get back up."

Music Arrangement: Cameron Denby

Vocal Arrangement: Jesse Popeski

The Mountains Will Dance: He-harim Rakdu & At Va'ani

ההרים רקדו & את ואני

This set is infused with flavours of Yemenite and jazz. The celebratory text is often heard during Kabbalat Shabbat and the Passover Seders, which describes the joyous celebration that takes place when the Israelites were freed from slavery in Egypt. The text evokes a sense of awe and wonder at the power of nature, as the mountains are personified and depicted as dancing with joy. The celebration continues with At Va'ani, a song about love.

Choreography: Rebeca Shamah

Music Arrangement: Jesse Popeski

Vocal Arrangement: Jesse Popeski (He-harim Rakdu) & Sarah Sommer (At Va'ani)

Israel Through the Years: (Erev Ba / Korim Lanu Lalechet / Debka Daluna / Ma Navu / Debka Hora Nirkoda / Sisu)

ישראל לאורך השנים

Spanning three decades from the 1960s to the 1990s, alumni performers bring to life a collection of Israeli favourites from Chai's past.

Choreography: Sarah Sommer z"l, Jill Lhotka, Nenad Lhotka, Guillermo Treistman, traditional folk

Erev Ba: Vocal Arrangement: Stephen Reich

Ma Naavu: Vocal Arrangement: Shirley Goltsman

Hora Nirkoda: Original Vocal Arrangement: Shirley Goltsman; Revised arrangement: Casey Chisick

Sisu: Vocal Arrangement: Casey Chisick, adapted by David Vamos

Nanua (Let's move)

ננוע

A song about love and music bringing people together, this Israeli pop song is a Chai favourite, arranged by former vocal and artistic director David Vamos.

Music Arrangements: Ariel Posen

Vocal Arrangement: David Vamos

Mayim: Mayim, Mayim & Mai Nahar (Water, Water & River Waters)

מים, מים & מי נהר

This a cappella vocal medley combines the well-known Israeli folk song with Idan Raichel's contemporary song; the former, one of Israel's most iconic folk songs, is responsible for the mayim step. The two songs overlap like waves of water ebbing, a blend of old and new. Tonight's performance will debut the choreography by Farrah Fernando to represent the music in flowing movement.

Choreography: Farrah Fernando

Vocal Arrangement: Sarah Sommer

Mah Yafim Haleylot (How Beautiful are the Nights)

מה יפים הלילות

In 1989, Tamar Barr made her debut as a Chai choreographer with this enduring suite of Yemenite dance and song. "How Beautiful are the Nights" is one of the most treasured pieces in our repertoire.

Choreography: Tamar Barr

Music Arrangement: Rick Boughton

Vocal Arrangement: Hillel Sommer

B'kerem Teyman (In a Yemenite Vineyard)

בכרם תימן

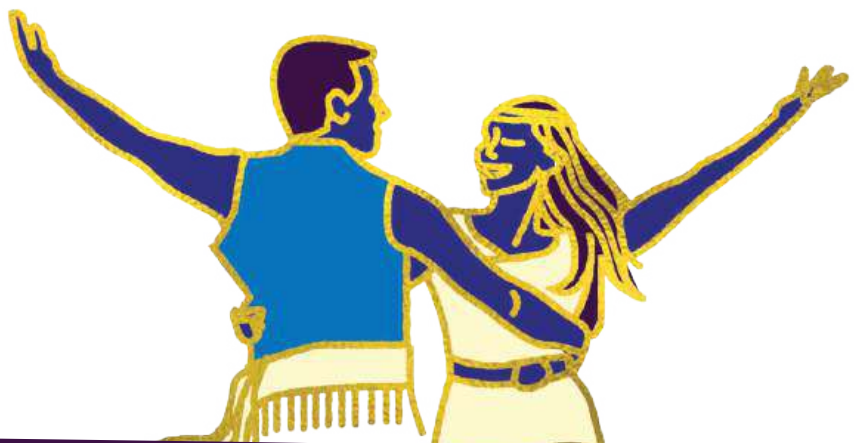
As Chai continues to evolve and grow over the years, so does our music. This piece is a contemporary interpretation of the traditional Yemenite-Israeli folk song, which truly has come full circle. (You may even recognize it from the previous medley).

Choreography: Rebeca Shamah

Music Arrangement: Cameron Denby

Vocal Arrangement: Jesse Popeski

INTERMISSION



This Land: Ha'Aretz Hazot & Adama V'Shamayim (This Land, Land and Sky)

הארץ הזאת

In honour of Vivian Silver, z"l. May her memory be a blessing.



Vivian Silver, a fierce peace activist and founder of the Women Wage Peace movement, was tragically murdered by Hamas terrorists on October 7, 2023. Although born in Winnipeg, Silver resided in Kibbutz Be'eri, close to the Israel/Gaza border, where she dedicated her work to fostering peaceful relations between the two communities since making Aliyah in 1974.

Chai pays tribute to Vivian's vision of peace with This Land, which was originally performed by Yael & the Mothers, of the same Women Wage Peace movement. The song expresses the shared longing and dedication to the holy land that is embedded into the ethos of both Jews and Palestinians alike, with a vision of both communities living peacefully side by side. The text, in both Hebrew and Arabic tells of these aspirations: "I won't turn my back, and my thirst will not be quenched, until my open heart is freed with the spirit, until my soul is firmly planted in the heart of this land".

Next, Adama V'shamayim is a visceral imagining of this future vision coming to fruition with a diverse community living, working, and sharing the land together in peace.

This Land - Choreography: Rachel Cooper

Adamah V'Shamayim - Choreography: Lindsay Nelko (Staged by Rachael Buchwald)

Music Arrangement: Cameron Denby

Vocal Arrangement: Jesse Popeski

Eli Atah - Thou Art My God

אלי אתה

"Eli Atah" is a poignant dedication to the Jewish experience during the Holocaust. The piece begins with the haunting sounds of the shofar, an ancient religious instrument central to Jewish practice, calling our people to prayer, self-reflection, and spirituality in both times of pain and joy. The song itself is a heartfelt prayer, highlighting the unwavering commitment to faith even amidst immense suffering. In conveying the collective memory of our ancestors and honouring their legacy with every step and note, this piece serves as a reminder of our enduring spirit and the eternal bond that unites us as a community. "Eli Atah" embodies the resilience and strength of the Jewish people, emphasising that despite enduring profound hardships, we have risen to create and appreciate the beauty in the world.

Choreography: Rachel Cooper

Staged by: Elan Marchinko & Rachael Buchwald

Music Arrangement: David Vamos, Matthew Leibl

Vocal Arrangement: David Vamos

Adon Olam

אדון עולם

A hymn extolling the unity of G-d.

Choreography: Jill Lhotka

Music Arrangements: Adapted from Micha Blacharovitz

Original Vocal Arrangement: Shirley Goltsman; Revised Arrangement: Stephen Reich

Kiss of Life: Un Beso De Vida / Dezile A Mi Amor (A Kiss of Life, Tell My Beloved)

This pairing of Spanish and Ladino songs by Mor Karbasi honours the heritage of Sephardic Jewry in Israel and the diaspora. The blend of languages and musical flavours, including flamenco and Moroccan, is one example of the result of complex journeys historically travelled by the Sephardim post-15th century.

Choreography: Rebeca Shamah

Music Arrangement: Cameron Denby

Vocal Arrangement: Jesse Popeski

Klezmer Suite: A Glezele Vyn / The Clarinet Song / Alle Breder

This suite is introduced by the orchestra with pieces that demonstrate the musical virtuosity and joy of Klezmer music. In Alle Breder, the singers join and rejoice: "We are all brothers, and we sing happy songs..."

Music Arrangement: Emil Lyinder, Curtis Piller, P.Lussier; Ariel Posen

Vocal Arrangement: David Vamos

Ukrainian Klezmer

אוקראינישע קלעזמער

The musicians of the Chai Folk Ensemble take to the stage in this instrumental feature, a piece by the New York-based Klezmer group Cayuga Klezmer Revival. Though traditional themes abound, this piece has a refreshing approach to the Klezmer genre, with abrupt tempo changes, and a variety of styles and influences in the music. Winnipeg's Ukrainian and Jewish communities have a long history of collaboration and supporting one another, therefore, it is only fitting that this choreography is a joint effort by our own dance director, Rachael Buchwald, and Kristina Frykas, director of the Sopilka Dance School and Kazka Dance Collective.

Choreography: Rachael Buchwald and Kristina Frykas

Music Arrangement: Cameron Denby

Yalda Yecheifa (Barefoot Girl)

ילדה יחפה

This piece celebrates the Israeli tradition of dancing barefoot.

Choreography: Guillermo Treistman

Music Arrangement: Rick Boughton

Vocal Arrangement: Casey Chisick

Shema Yisrael (Hear O Israel)

שמע ישראל

Alumni and current dancers share the stage in this inspirational song.

Choreography: Guillermo Treistman

Music & Vocal Arrangement: Casey Chisick

Yerushalayim Shel Zahav (Jerusalem of Gold)

ירושלים של זהב

This haunting melody, informally considered Israel's "second national anthem", tells of the Jewish people's millennia-old longing to return to the holy City of Gold. The poignant text, written by Naomi Shemer, Israel's "First Lady of Israeli song", evokes the sentiment shared by Jews around the world.

Your name will scorch my lips forever, Like a seraph's kiss, I'm told, If I forget thee, golden city, Jerusalem of gold.

Music Arrangement revised by: Cameron Denby

Vocal Arrangement: Grace Hrabí

Hava Nagila (Let Us Rejoice)

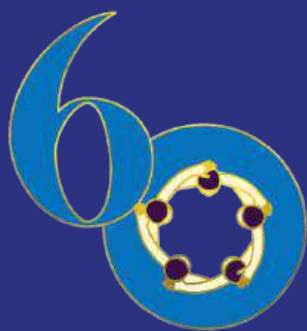
הבה נגילה

"Let us be filled with joy to the brim!" Traditional Israeli melodies come to life in a timeless medley centred around the most well-known of Israeli songs: Hava Nagila (Let Us Rejoice), Reyach Tapuach Odem Shani (Scent of the Crimson Apple), and Shir Sameach (A Happy Song). Chai dancers have danced these traditional-Israeli steps for decades, and Chai is thrilled to feature this fan-favourite from our repertoire as the evening's finale.

Choreography: Alberto Zirlinger

Music Arrangement: Casey Chisick, Rick Boughton, adapted by Cameron Denby

Vocal Arrangement: David Vamos



YEARS OF HISTORY

1967

Chai performs for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at the Centennial Folk Arts Council in Ottawa



1969

Chai is renamed the "Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble" after the untimely passing of its founder



1972

Lyle Smordin emcees his first of 16 concerts



1974

Chai releases its first album, "Chai is Hebrew For Life"



1981

Chai performs in Halifax, Nova Scotia



1980

Chai releases its 2nd album, "Songs of Life"

1989

Chai Celebrates its 25th anniversary with a retrospective collage revived by current and alumni Chai performers



1996

Chai performs at Epcot Center at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida



1998

Chai performs in Israel for the first time and celebrates Israel's 50th Anniversary at their annual concert



1964

1974

1984

1994

1968

Chai celebrates Yom Ha'atzmaut in Winnipeg's new Centennial Concert Hall

1970

Chai first appears at Folklorama's Israeli Pavilion: Shalom Square



1973

Chai celebrates Israel's 25th anniversary



1976

Chai performs with the Canadian Shaarey Zedek Tour in Hamilton, St. Catharines, and Montreal

1985

CBC Television airs a one-hour documentary on Chai, "Chai is a Lucky Number"



1995

Chai performs for the first time at Festival Aviv, in Mexico City



1997

Chai releases its 3rd album, "Mah Yafim Haleylot"



1999

Rusalka Ukrainian Dance Ensemble and Chai perform together for the first time



1964

Sarah Sommer forms the "Chai Dancers"

1979

Chai performs to sellout audiences at Place Des Arts and O'Keefe Centre



1980

Chai provides pre-game entertainment at a Winnipeg Blue Bomber home game vs the Toronto Argonauts

1986
Chai releases its third album, "Chai"



2005

Chai embarks on "Take the Chai Road" tour of California, including performances in Thousand Oaks, San Jose and Palm Springs



2000

Finjan performs with Chai at their annual concert



2004

Chai 40th anniversary concert honours Hartley Gale



2009

Chai's 45th anniversary concert honours Alex Sommer



2012

Chai shares the Folklorama stage with special guests "Anajnu Veatem", Mexico City's premier Israeli dance group



2014

0th Anniversary Gala Concert & Chai returned to Israel to represent Canada.

2015

"Meridian" Concert featuring Black Sea Station

2017

Cuba Trip

2017

"Ancient Roads" in honour of Ahava Halpern & Frank Lavitt



2019

Hora Hopak tour & performances in Ukraine & Israel with Rusalka Ukrainian Dance Ensemble



CHAI
folk Ensemble

2024

Celebrating Chai's 60th Anniversary

2004

2014

2024

2001

Chai's first ever permanent home opens on Notre Dame Avenue



2002

The Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra performs with Chai at their annual concert at the Concert Hall



2003

Chai honours Earl and Cheryl Barish at annual concert, "Mosaic"

2010

Chai releases 5th studio recording, "Wanderings"



2016

Kelowna, British Columbia

2011

Chai travels to Mexico City to participate in Festival Aviv Carlos Halpert



2007

Chai welcomes renowned Israeli dance troupe "Hora Jerusalem" for its annual concert



2018

"Woven Threads" concert honouring Larry & Tova Vickar



2022

Released 6th Album "A Great Light" in honour of the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba



2023

"Mountains Will Dance" honouring Barney & Avrom Charach



NOTEWORTHY PERFORMANCES

July 2019	Karmiel International Dance Festival, Israel
July 2019	Truskavets, Ukraine
December 2017	Cuba
February 2016	Kelowna, British Columbia — Kelowna Community Concert Association
July 2014	Karmiel International Dance Festival, Israel
March 2011	Mexico City — Festival Aviv Carlos Halpert
June 2009	Edmonton, Alberta — Jewish National Fund Negev Gala
June 2008	Vancouver, British Columbia — River Rock Casino Theatre
June 2008	Detroit, Michigan — B'nai Brith International — Israel's 60 Birthday
May 2007	Toronto, Ontario — Beit Halochem Gala Fundraising Event
May 2007	Montreal, Quebec — Beit Halochem Gala Fundraising Event
May 2007	Concert with Hora Jerusalem of Israel
May 2006	Victoria, British Columbia — Royal Theatre
May 2006	Vancouver, British Columbia — Louis Brier Jewish Aged Foundation Gala
November 2005	Toronto, Ontario — United Jewish Communities General Assembly
February 2005	Los Angeles, San Jose and Palm Springs — California Performance Tour
June 2004	Ottawa, Ontario — Carnival of Cultures
July 2003	Kenora, Ontario — Canada Day Concert
July 2002	Drummondville, Quebec — Mondial des Cultures International Festival
June 2002	Concert with Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra





August 1999	Pan American Games Opening Ceremony, Winnipeg
November 1998	Chai performers in Israel for the first time
1998 & 1995	Mexico City — Festival Aviv Carlos Halpert
March 1996	Orlando, Florida — Epcot Center, Walt Disney World
1994 & 1996	Performances with Ma'agal CDI of Mexico City
May 1992	Fargo, North Dakota — Hadassah Wizo soth Anniversary Gala
June 1991	Kenora, Ontario — Multicultural Festival
March 1991	Edmonton & Calgary, Alberta
October 1990	Estevan, Saskatchewan
September 1990	London, Ontario
November 1988	Regina & Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
May 1983	Vancouver, British Columbia
May 1981	Halifax, Nova Scotia
June 1979	Montreal & Toronto — Canadian Shaarey Zedek Tour
June 1977	Regina & Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan
November 1976	St. Paul, Minnesota
June 1976	Hamilton, St. Catherines & Montreal — Canadian Shaarey Zedek Tour
July 1974	Ottawa, Ontario — Canadian Multicultural Festival
March 1967	Ottawa, Ontario— Attended by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Proud to have performed at Folklorama's Israel Pavilion since 1970



Proudly Supporting

SARAH SOMMER

CHAI 60th

Folk Ensemble Anniversary

Mazel Tov on 60 years of bringing Israeli and Jewish culture to life through Music and Dance!

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MESSAGE FROM THE SOMMER FAMILY



It seems like yesterday when we celebrated Chai's 50th Anniversary. And here we are at the 60th. It's remarkable that Chai, which began 60 years ago in our basement at 11 Salvia Bay with just eight girls aged 11 to 13, has grown into what it is today. Our early aspirations were simple- to perform at small Jewish organizational events and Folkways, a one-performance event that later evolved into Folklorama. Like Folkways, the evolution of Chai from those modest beginnings is a testament to the power of our mother's vision and dedication, which later transferred to those who followed in her footsteps.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention Chai's greatest cheerleader. That person is none other than our father, Alex Sommer. His undying support of our mother's work went far beyond encouraging her efforts with kind words and a listening ear. On a humorous note, our father paid for the beautiful costumes we wore to perform before HRH, Queen Elizabeth, on a stage on Parliament Hill on July 1, 1967, to celebrate Canada's Centennial. As typical teenagers, we never thought twice about how our costumes suddenly materialized. Only years later, we learned how our costumes came to be.

Most importantly, when our mother passed away, our father worked tirelessly to ensure that Chai would survive without her. His commitment to our mother's legacy honored her memory and paved the way for Chai to become what it is today.

If Sarah Sommer were here today, she would be in awe of Chai's many accomplishments. As the only child of immigrant parents who struggled to make ends meet, having dance lessons was well beyond what they could provide. Yet, within our mother, there was an innate talent and passion, as well as a strong Zionist commitment, that propelled her to use dance as the medium to bring people together. And that she did!

Our world is very different from what it was 60 years ago. Now more than ever, Chai's existence demonstrates that people's similarities are much greater than their differences. Song, music and dance are the common threads that unite people and bring joy. And Chai knows precisely how to do this!

The Sommer Family is deeply grateful to each and every one of you who has supported Chai throughout the years. Without the contributions of the performers, directors, technical and support staff, board members, countless other volunteers and donors, Chai would not be here today to celebrate this milestone. Your dedication and support have been instrumental in Chai's success.

L'Chaim! To Life.

Reena Sommer



60 YEARS OF PERFORMERS

DANCERS, MUSICIANS, & SINGERS

THE ORIGINAL 8

Karen Blum
Shelley Faintuch
Helene Faintuch
Francie Kaplan
Renee Kimmel
Miriam Kohn
Frumie Selchen
Reena Sommer

Ronnie Aaron
Allyson Abrams
Susan Albersheim
Derek Allard
Camila Almosnino
Becky Antel
Bonnie Antel
Joel Antel
Zack Antel
Danielle Appel
Fred Appel
Karen Appel
Jackie Appel Swirsky
Mark Arron
Phyllis Arron
Karen Asher
Ashley Au
Rachel Aziza
Amital Azuelos
Monica Bailey
Paul Balcain
Merav Barr
Tamar Barr
Na'ama Barr Miller
Mindy Barsky
Terry Bebchuk-Katz
Marshall Bedder
Leah Begleiter Rodin
Charlotte Bell
Jordan Bellan
Brendan Berg
Randi Berman
Heather Bernstein
Jason Bernstein
Hilary Bernstein-Meggison
Brenlie Bernstein-Nagy
Alix Billinkoff
Errol Billinkoff
Lorne Billinkoff
Estelle Binder Tzur
Arthur Blankstein z"l
Arielle Block
Barbie Block Dukes
Karen Blum-Behar

Coca Bochonko
Carey Boroditsky
Mark Boroditsky
Brenda Boughton
Rick Boughton
Sasha Boychouk
Briar Boyko
Shelley Braemer Tadman
Lori Braha
Robyn Braha
Sophie Braunstein
Peter Breen
Yael Breitman Brotman
Gary Brenner
Max Brodovsky
Heather Brojges
Kyven Brojges
Linda Bromberg z"l
Linda Bronstone Filbert
Melanie Brooker Coodin
Shane Brown
Alissa Brown Gilchrist
Annette Jo Browne
Andrew Buchel
Jonathan Buchwald
Robyn Buchwald Lieberman
Grace Budoloski
Baillie Burke
Naomi Calnitsky
Alex Campbell
Jessica Casiro Bradbury
Darryl Cass
Dana Charach
Pamela Charach Yan
Joshua Charlat
Casey Chisick
Martin Chisvin
Leah Chisvin Braemer
Deena Chochinov
Harvey Chochinov
Michelle Chochinov
Stuart Chochinov z"l
Cindy Chodirker
Lisa Chodirker
Simon Christie
Daniel Cipilinski
Candy Cohen
Eli Cohen
Nehemiah Cohen z"l
Naomi Cohen Coodin z"l
Elana Cohen Scoler
Jason Cohen
Rozlyn Cohen Troop
Lisa Cohen z"l
Bronwen Collings

Phil Collins
Natasha Coogan
Alexandra Cooper
Adeena Cooperband
Josh Cooperband
Anna Corne
Janet Corne
Lisa Corne Klein
Lesley Corne Wolman
Ron Corrin
Art Cramer
Eileen Curtis
Barbara Daien Green
Elaine (Lainey) Danzker
Robyn Dashefsky
Carrie Dashefsky Fingold
Alon Davis
David Davis
Jeff Diamond
Lisa Diamond
Andrea Dil
Candice Dimaggio
Ian Dimerman
Allan Dolovich
Jeffrey Dolovich
Michael Dolovich
Erika Donald
Lisa Doob
Vadim Dreyzin
Francie Dudeck Clahane
David Earn
Dinah Earn Goldenberg
Davina Eisenstat
Avie Erdile
Roni Estein
Leslie Evans MacCorby
Matthew Fainman
Shelley Faintuch
Helene Faintuch Kesten
Tim Feduniw
Linda Feigelman
Lewis Feinstein
Jennifer Feldman
Farrah Fernando
Shaun Filkow z"l
Sharon Fink Delbridge
Deborah Fleishman
Tali Floom
Andrew Francis
Ashley Fredette
David Freedman
Pamela Freedman-Cohen
Susan Freitag Wolch
Alan Friedman
David Friedman

60 YEARS OF PERFORMERS

DANCERS, MUSICIANS, & SINGERS

Gina Frieman Guertin
Jordan Friesen
Jona Frohlich
David Gale
Susan Gale-Worrell
Sadira Garfinkel
Jeff Garrity
Anita Geller Simpson
Tasia Geras
Tom Gerstner
Stefan (Avraham) Gislason
Melinda Glantz z"l
Michelle Glass
Signy Glenndening
Gadi Glogowski
Lisa Gohl Kohlmeier
Eva Golden
Matthew Golden
Noel Golden
Stevi Golden-Plotnik
Judy Goldstein
Harriet Golsoff
Marni Goltsman
Sharla Goltsman Chochinov
Robbi Goltsman-Ferris
Debbie Golub
Mika Gonen Rodin
Precious Gonzales
Gabriela Gonzalez
Bryson Gordon
Jason Gordon
Jeff Gordon
Danny Greaves
David Greaves
Nesya Greaves
Cathy Green
Martin Green
Saara Greene
Shauna Greenfield Levy
Neil Guerin
Sharyn (Shari) Gunn Dirks
Hersh Gutwilik
Lara Haid
Leslie Hajer
Asaf Halperin
Ahava Halpern
Stephanie Halprin
Scott Hamel
Melissa Hart
Akram Hasanov
Michelyn Hasselfield
Rika Hawes
Craig Heber
Eli Herscovitch z"l
Randall Hildebrand

Francine Himelfarb
Dahn Hiuni
Andy Hoffer
Renee Hurtig
Gregory Hyman
Sharon Intrader Minuk
Judi Israel
Marcelo Izraelowicz
Hallie Jamieson
Julia Jansen
Craig Johnson
Dave Johnson
Gary Juravsky(Jury)
Valentyna Kabris
Emily Kalo
Stephanie Kalo
Sandi Kaplan Promislow
Frances Kaplan Winkworth
Sima Kapstan
Ellen Karlinsky
Deborah Kasner
Tracy Kasner
Cara Katz
Don Katz
Ilana Katz
Jerry Katz
Ayli Katz Klein
Robyn Katz-Cohen
Leah (Lori) Keith
Diamond-Gelfenstein
Paul Kelly
Cyril Kesten
Jacob Kettner
Madeleine Kettner
Rotem Keynan
Renee Kimmel Kaplan
Yvhan Kindrachuk
Francine Kirsch
Samantha Kives
Kerry Kluner z"l
Miriam Kohn
Sammy Kohn
Alan Kopstein
Ivy Kopstein
Dammara Hall
Marty Koyle
Annis Kozub
Steve Kremer
Shannon Kristjanson
Maureen Landa McGavin
Ashley Lang
Brittany Lasko
Ruthie Laveman
Sheldon Laveman
David Lawton

Matthew Leibl
Amy Lieberman
Justin Lieberman
Jonathan Lemer
Cara Lerner Kroft
Norm Leslie
Kelly Leveille
Shachy Leven
Stephanie Levene
Michael Levin
Alexander Levine
Allan Levine
Gary Levine
Rebecca Lewis Sprintz
Micah Lexier
Jill Lexier
Paula Lexier Weiss
Paul Lhotka
Peter Lhotka
Arthur Liffmann
Robert Light
Fraser Linklater
Lisa Lipschitz
Gary Livingstone
Norma Lowe-Klein
Sidura Ludwig
Patrick Lussier
Betty MacKenzie
Dana Mahon
Seah Maister
Elena Mallin
Marni Mandel Fadida
David Marantz
Elan Marchinko
Igal Margolin
Judy Margolis
Debbie Maslowsky
Jerry Maslowsky z"l
Kenny Maslowsky
David Maurakis
Rick Mayhew
Chenoa McKelvey
Taylor McMillan
Jack Meller
Elaine Meller Todres
Paul Metcalfe
Adrienne Meyers
Laura Miles
Hayley Miller
Jeffrey Miller
Marshall Miller
Alexie Minuk
Illana Minuk
Brian Mirecki
Rinat Mirkin

60 YEARS OF PERFORMERS

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The Jewish Foundation of Manitoba is the home of the Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble Endowment Fund. Please consider contributions to any of the funds within Chai's account by calling 204-477-7520 or visit www.jewishfoundation.org/make-a-gift.



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The mission of the Chai Folk Arts Council Inc. is to share, promote and celebrate the rich diversity of Israeli and Jewish culture through the performance of music and dance. We are seeking people passionate about performing arts, community development, youth initiatives and general management to join our Board of Directors. Contact us at 204-477-7497.

It takes an ENSEMBLE to bring CHAI to LIFE.

Behind our singers, dancers and musicians is a team of dedicated, **behind-the-scenes** volunteers - our board, costume crew, tech team, photographers and all the Chai moms and dads, past and present, who make sure our performers are healthy, supported and well-fed.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you to all the **AMAZING VOLUNTEERS** who keep Chai thriving!



SARAH SOMMER
CHAI
Folk Ensemble

THANK YOU

6 years of history

Over the years, Chai has grown and evolved, and our logos have transformed along with us. Each design reflects a new chapter in our journey, capturing the spirit, tradition, and energy that define us.

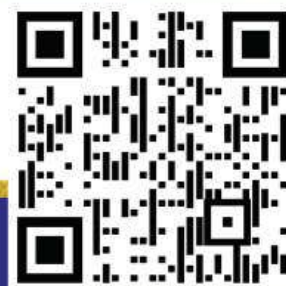


6 years of music

The evolution of Chai's albums started with the pressing of the first vinyl record in 1974, followed by cassettes, compact discs to today's digital format. Chai's 6 albums are now available to the world on every streaming service including Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube, Amazon, etc.



Our music is available on ALL streaming options.



Check out our videos on our Youtube Channel



Congratulations
on your
60th
Anniversary!

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Proud to support the Chai Folk Ensemble

We applaud your efforts to promote and develop Jewish and Israeli culture through music, song and dance.

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We look forward to another glorious evening. When we are in pain, to be able to celebrate 60 years of wonder and joy, and of seeing and hearing the Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble, is of special significance.

Mazel Tov!

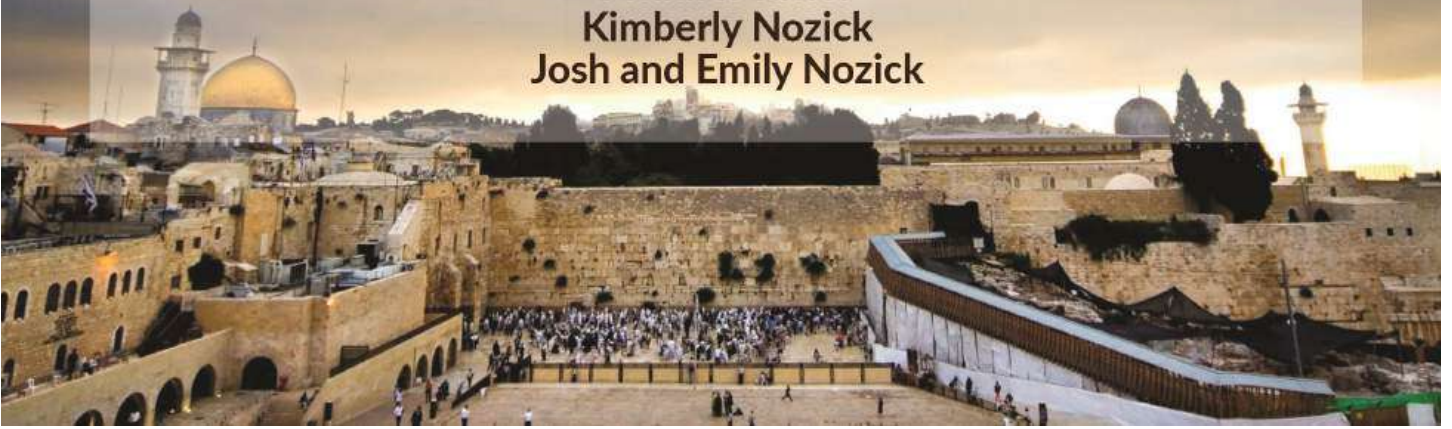
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Folklorama is honoured to congratulate Chai Folk Ensemble on 60 years of celebrating culture through dance, music and song.



We want to thank the Chai team for all their hard work and dedication.

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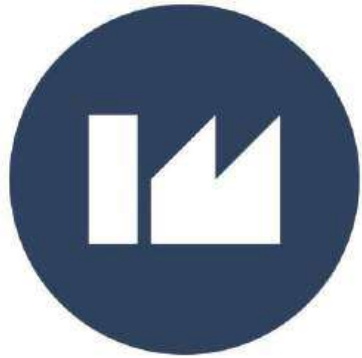
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— OF MANITOBA —

THE FUTURE OF CHAI

The Chai Folk Ensemble organizational endowment fund is an essential cornerstone of its success as a cultural arts group.

By helping grow the Chai Folk Ensemble endowment, you ensure they have an annual flow of income that can be relied on.

Any contribution you make to Chai's endowment fund will also be matched through the Foundation's **FundMatch** initiative.

The Jewish Foundation of Manitoba's mission is to encourage and facilitate the creation and growth of endowment funds to enable our community to realize its full potential.

PLEASE HELP GROW OUR ENDOWMENT

Photo by:
Keith Levit



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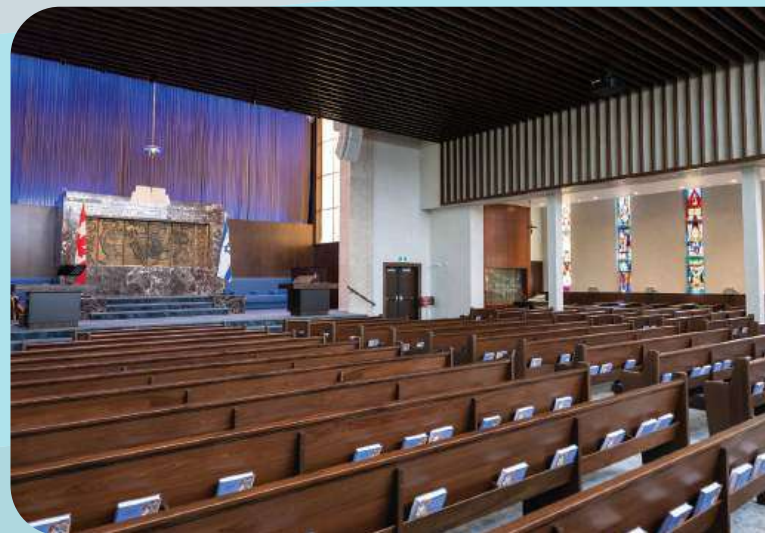


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