

The Boston Globe

TODAY

You're invited



By June Wulff

Globe Staff / February 25, 2010

When the Consulate General of Israel to New England invites you to a concert, you take notice. And when the mission is to increase awareness of the cultural connections between Israel and New England, you figure there will be some serious music. And when the program features compositions by pianist and composer **Alla Elana Cohen** (pictured), you *go*. The innovative concert is a collaboration with the Ariel String Quartet, BSO cellist Mickey Katz, clarinetist Moran Katz (no relation), and other Israeli musicians. *8 p.m. \$20, \$15 students and seniors. Goethe-Institut Boston, 170 Beacon St., Boston. 617-535-0217. www.allacohen.tix.com* ■

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Israeli consulate assists artists in upcoming concert

by Kay Bourne

EDGE Contributor

Monday Feb 22, 2010



Alla Elana Cohen

Israeli artists who have found a second home in New England perform with the adventurous pianist/composer **Alla Elana Cohen** at an upcoming concert at the Goethe Institute, thanks to the support of the Israeli Consulate in Boston.

The consulate General of Israel presents Allan Elana Cohen in collaboration with The Ariel String Quartet and BSO cellist Mickey Katz in a concert, Thursday, February

25 at eight pm at the Goethe Institute (170 Beacon St., Boston).

Last February, Cohen played an eminently successful program, *The Music of Alla Cohen*, the first ticketed concert for the Russian émigré who is on the faculty at New England Conservatory of Music and Berklee College of Music. The exploratory compositions canvassed a life of great trauma, greater religious belief, and even greater generosity of spirit (evidenced most dramatically by having her students perform the challenging work sometimes in duet with her). In 1989, Cohen had escaped the anti Semitic, Soviet Communist regime with her mother (and but \$150.00 in their pockets).



Cellist Mickey Katz

More than wars and conflict

Early last year a spokesperson for Cohen contacted the Israeli consulate informing them of her February concert.

They were not able to attend, but **Udi Urman**, the Director of Cultural Affairs, asked if he could meet with the artist to discuss some sort of collaboration. He advised her, he explained to EDGE in a recent phone interview, that she would need to have the participation of Israeli artists for the consulate to take an interest. When Cohen returned with a program that does just that, Urman, who has been involved in more than 300 events in his three years here, took on the event. The Israeli Consulate is giving financial backing to the concert as well as using its outreach ability to promote attendance.

"It is my mission to show to New Englanders that there is more to Israel than wars and conflicts....there is great culture and entertainment," said Urman. Among visiting Israeli artists the consulate has sponsored in recent years are novelist and president of the Association of Civil Rights in Israel Sami Michael; filmmaker Dalit Kimor, whose recent documentary is about eight Muslim widows who started a pickle factory in Galilee; and classical pianist Sholomi Shaban who recently expanded his musical interest to rock and pop and with Eran Tzur made the album "He and He." Many of these artists appear on college campuses.

Urman also seeks to build connections between cultural institutions in Boston such as Boston Lyric Opera and comparable groups in Israel.

The Israeli connection for the Alla Elana Cohen concert is the Ariel String Quartet, founded in Israel, and soloist Mickey Katz, born in Israel and currently holding the Richard C. and Ellen E. Paine chair for the cello in the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

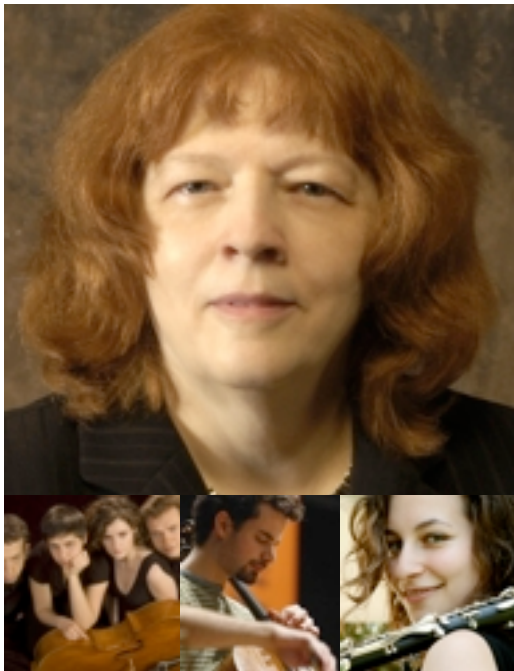
Katz said in an interview with EDGE that he is pleased to be a part of the program because he finds Cohen's music, "fresh and not fitting any mold. Her music comes from her gut. It's personal and deeply emotional. Her music doesn't sound like something else." Katz, who studied at the New England Conservatory of Music drawn there by the opportunity to study with famed cellist (and NEC president emeritus) Laurence Lesser, recalls seeing Cohen in school corridors but never chanced to talk with her.

The February 25 concert, which will also mark the release of two new CDs from Cohen, will feature her original compositions for string quartet as well as solos for piano and for cello.


The Consulate General of Israel presents Allan Elana Cohen in collaboration with The Ariel String Quartet and BSO cellist Mickey Katz in a concert, Thursday, February 25 at 8 pm at the Goethe Institute (170 Beacon St., Boston). For more information visit the [Goethe Institute website](#).

The Music of Alla Cohen with Ariel Quartet, Mickey Katz, Moran Katz

Thursday, Feb 25 8:00pm
at [Goethe-Institut Boston](#), Boston, MA



The Consulate General of Israel to New England will present composer/pianist Alla Elana Cohen in collaboration with the Ariel String Quartet, Boston Symphony Orchestra cellist Mickey Katz, clarinetist Moran Katz and other stellar Israeli musicians in a landmark concert to be held at the Goethe-Institut Boston, [170 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02116] on Thursday, February 25 at 8:00 P. [read more](#)

 [The Music of Alla Cohen with Ariel Quartet, Mickey Katz, Moran Katz - Website](#)
Categories: [Music](#), [Classical](#)



News & Announcements

Tickets are available at <http://allacohen.tix.com>. Alla Elana Cohen is a distinguished composer, pianist, music theorist and teacher.

Location & Nearby Info

[Goethe-Institut Boston](#)
170 Beacon St.
Boston, MA 02116
(617) 262-6050

ARTSBOSTON

The Music of Alla Cohen with Ariel Quartet, Mickey Katz & Moran Katz 

[The Consulate General of New England](#)

February 25, 2010

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The Consulate General of Israel to New England will present composer/pianist Alla Elana Cohen in collaboration with the Ariel String Quartet, Boston Symphony Orchestra cellist Mickey Katz, clarinetist Moran Katz and other stellar Israeli musicians in a landmark concert to be held at the Goethe-Institut Boston, [170 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02116] on Thursday, February

25 at 8:00 P.M. This concert is dedicated to increasing awareness of the cultural connections between Israel and New England through music. The entire program will feature Alla Cohen's compositions featuring top-notch Israeli musicians. Tickets in advance at \$20.00 each are available now at <http://allacohen.tix.com/>. Tickets may also be available at the door for \$20.00 and also at \$15.00 for students and seniors with identification. For more information, call the Israeli Consulate at 617-535-0217.

The concert program will feature Ms. Cohen's compositions for string quintet, for string quartet, for a duo for clarinet and piano, for two mixed quartets - one for flute, oboe, electric guitar and piano and another for trumpet, bassoon, chimes and piano. Other pieces are for duos for violin and cello and for flute and piano, and compositions each for cello solo and piano solo. Alla Elana Cohen will be at the piano in all the compositions that include piano. The concert is also dedicated to the release of Alla Cohen's two new CDs - The Day of Atonement and The Road that Chooses Us. These CDs, scheduled to be released shortly before the February 25 concert, will contain works for chamber orchestra, for large chamber ensembles (sextet and septet), for string quartet, for duos and for solo instruments.

618 TICKET INFO

Tickets: \$20.00; \$15.00 for students and seniors

Info Phone: 617-535-0217

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619 DATES & TIMES

Dates:

February 25, 2010

Times:

8:00 PM

620 VENUE INFO

[Goethe-Institut Boston](#)

170 Beacon Street Boston, MA 02116

'This music is peculiar'

Alla Elana Cohen blends classical, jazz, cantorial sounds

By Jessica Leving Special to the Advocate

February 19, 2010



Alla Elana Cohen: "When I sit to play, I always think: This is my chance to speak with my heavenly father."

In a modest practice room at the New England Conservatory with roan carpeting and eggshell walls, renowned pianist and composer Alla Elana Cohen helps Boston Symphony Orchestra cellist Mickey Katz prepare to play her piece "Querying the Silence."

"This part is like an echo," Cohen says and makes sounds with her tongue to demonstrate. "This music is peculiar," she says of the classical-jazz fusion piece. "It doesn't have any easy analogies."

On Feb. 25, Katz and Cohen, along with the Ariel String Quartet, will perform at the Goethe-Institut Boston. Sponsored by the Consulate General of Israel, the concert aims to promote awareness of the cultural connections between New England and the Jewish state.

"It's always good to have something to do with Israel that does not have to do with explosions," says Katz, an Israel native. "There's a lot of culture and a lot of talent."

Though she herself is not Israeli, Cohen – a refusenik who fled to Boston from the Soviet Union in 1989 –

highlight her two new CDs, "The Day of Atonement" and "The Road that Chooses Us."

As reflected in the CD titles, Cohen's music is rooted in her connection with G-d. "For me, every composition is a prayer," she says. "When I sit to play, I always think: This is my chance to speak with my heavenly father."

Cohen, who composed her first piece before she was 7, says her music is not shaped by the turbulent events of her life. Besides enduring an anti-Semitic regime – which denied her permission to emigrate for a decade – she had to hide the fact that she was gay, as homosexuality was illegal.

"I would never attempt to narrow the contents of my music as for it to solely reflect my life experience," she says. "This would be a mistake."

Cohen, who graduated from the Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory with the highest honors of distinction, teaches at the New England Conservatory of Music and Berklee College of Music. But in talking about her music, she emphasizes the spiritual not the academic.

"I consider composers just humble tools who receive music from G-d," she says. "That is what music should be about – to reflect our connection with G-d, and our hope to be there with Hashem one day."

Some have called her music dark or somber, which Cohen considers a misconception. "In our Jewish musical culture, all that is elevated, lofty and significant is in minor, not in major mode. ... My music is influenced by Jewish cantorial music, and also by Georgian folk music, which I consider very much connected with Jewish cantorial tradition."

Gershon Gerchikov, violinist for the Ariel String Quartet, says he is thrilled at the opportunity to work directly with a composer. "It's something performers don't often get a chance to do," says Gerchikov, whose 12-year-old group was founded in Jerusalem and is now in residence at NEC.

"When you play a piece by a new composer, it's like learning a new language," adds Katz. "You are able to say the words, but you don't really understand what's behind it. With living composers, we have a chance to work with them, and really understand."

Works of Alla Elana Cohen performed by Mickey Katz and the Ariel String Quartet at the Goethe-Institut Boston Feb. 25. Call 617-535-0217 or visit www.gi-boston.org.

boston.com

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Summary

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The Music of Alla Cohen with Ariel Quartet, Mickey Katz, Moran Katz

editor's pick

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at Goethe-Institut Boston, Boston, MA

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[read more](#)

The Music of Alla Cohen with Ariel Quartet, Mickey Katz, Moran Katz - Website

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