

Music of the Heart of the Children from the South

Booaz Pailer for ynet, Yediot Acharonot

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The South Orchestra, the musical home for children and teenagers from the towns of the Eshkol region, is fighting to stay alive. If funding isn't found the orchestra, which united to play a concert for "The Day of Good Deeds" 2010, will stop all activities. On March 16th we invite you to stop your daily routine and join us for a day made up entirely of social contribution – Won't you come?

Sometimes, the vision of diminishing the gap between Israel's center and the periphery, the sound of young musicians and the willingness of partner-volunteers, isn't enough: such is the story of The South Orchestra, which, since 2003, has been acting as the musical home children and teenagers from the towns of the Eshkol region and is currently fighting to stay alive. On "The day of Good Deeds" the orchestra will unite and hold one special concert, yet its future remains unknown.

"To allow each child in the periphery to develop their talent to the fullest extent"

Two people stand behind the orchestra's vision: **Ruchama Tuvi**, director of the Eshkol Region Music Studio and **Dr. Michael Klinghoffer**, an esteemed classical musician, member of the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance and the former music director of MATAN (Arts and Culture Project for Youth). "The vision began many years ago, during my work in Matan, we wanted to help advance the periphery and establish regional orchestras", Klinghoffer recalls. "With the support of the organization, at the end of my term we had seven Regional orchestras and the first one was the South Orchestra"

"The south is different than the center of Israel", continues Tuvi. "A child growing up here doesn't enjoy the musical surroundings offered in Israel's center. He can't reach cultural centers and listen to concerts; he can't receive the advanced tools that will help him further develop his talent. Our goal, through the founding of the orchestra and the use of volunteers, is to allow every child in the periphery to enjoy these conditions and to develop their talent to the fullest extent and in the best way possible" she explains.

In adherence with their egalitarian world view, Tuvi and Klinghoffer enlisted in 2003 young musicians from seven towns amongst them: Lehavim, Ofakim, Sderot, Dimona and Kiryat Gat – and launched The South Orchestra. The orchestra later further expanded its activities and birthed a new generation of professional graduates along with a reserve of violin and cello players that joined the Young Southern String Orchestra that was formed around the same time. Klinghoffer also enlisted his students from the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance to serve as instructors for the young orchestra members.

“Some of the students who began with us, and are now the orchestra’s graduates reached impressive achievements”, says Tuvi. “Without the orchestra they would not have reached these achievements. We bring them to believe that children in the south can play just as well as children in the center of Israel”.

Throughout the past years The South Orchestra has been fighting to stay alive. The number of participants decreased and the institutors are struggling to find funding sources for the yearly on- going operation, which only costs about \$20,000. The current state does not dishearten Tubi and Klinghoffer. “The orchestra will be revived at any cost, even if it means that I’ll have to enlist myself to work on a completely voluntary basis”, Klinghoffer announces. “The first meeting of the newly formed orchestra was held in January, on a day when massive floods descended upon Israel, but despite the whether 40 children participated in the rehearsal”, he tells with a smile.

The Orchestra is Revived

The participants of “The day of Good Deeds” 2010 will enjoy the fruits of that rehearsal and those that came after. As a part of this day the orchestra will play special concerts in Dimona for school children and for the residents of the Tlalim care center, people with mental retardation. Students of the Jerusalem Academy of Music and the children of the Jerusalem conservatory chamber orchestra will join these concerts. “The idea is to create an unmitigated encounter between children of the same age from different parts of the country”, Klinghoffer, who will be conducting the cooperation, says excitingly. “I hope we shall come to realize how much power music has, and understand that playing music is actually giving”, he concludes.