

# CANTOR BENJAMIN TISSER

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## EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

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07/2015 to Current **Cantor**

**North Suburban Synagogue Beth El** – Highland Park, IL

- 975-unit congregation.
- Produced Virtual High Holy Day videos during 2020 Pandemic and was key in implementing remote technologies for the congregation
- Teach adult education classes on variety of topics, including Hazzanut and Jewish music, Hebrew poetry, sacred text, cooking and wine, Israeli culture, and more.
- Re-imagined the congregation's music program, establishing a music committee with a mission statement and appropriate budget.
- Compiled and edited a new Selichot prayerbook for the congregation (2019)
- Produced 5 major concerts, 4 summer jazz events, and several more intimate music events.
- Enhanced the b'nai mitzvah program (15-30 annually), including implementing use of MitzvahTools; oversee all areas of program and staff; teach 30% of students, meet monthly with all others.
- Revamped our High Holy Day professional choir, including new music (including many original and commissioned arrangements); brought teen soloists to the pulpit during HH services for the first time at Beth El.
- Participate regularly in Torah reading (Annual cycle)
- In partnership with Senior Rabbi and lay/staff committee, created monthly Friday night experience with instruments and much more inclusive, participatory feel, significantly increasing attendance
- Lead weekly Shabbat sing for Preschool in the Sanctuary

07/2013 to 06/2015 **Cantor**

**B'nai Torah Congregation** – Boca Raton, FL

- 1,300-unit congregation.
- Led Shabbat services 8 months of the year, often with a capella choir
- Produced and participated in highly successful concerts
- Participated in all-new Selichot with Choir and 15-piece orchestra, drawing near 1,000 attendees
- Re-wrote b'nai mitzvah program handbook; streamlined process for assigning

dates/intake; implemented new hybrid education system; oversaw all aspects of program (60-80 annually)

- Produced several Holocaust Education programs featuring leading international scholars
- Participated in weekday Torah reading rotation

08/2010 to 06/2013 **Cantor**

**Temple Gates of Prayer** – Flushing, NY

- 200-unit congregation
- Student pulpit; davening was primary responsibility

07/2007 to 06/2010 **Cantor**

**Adat Shalom** – Los Angeles, CA

- 400-unit congregation
- Created monthly "Friday Night Live" shabbat experience
- Produced annual Cantors Concert
- Introduced piano accompaniment to Shabbat morning and High Holy Day services

09/2004 to 06/2009 **Judaic Music Specialist**

**Heschel School & Sinai-Akiba Academy** – Los Angeles, CA

- Judaic music specialist for pre-K thru 6th grade

01/1997 to 06/2007 **Organist**

**Valley Beth Shalom Synagogue** – Encino, CA

- Organist for Cantor Herschel Fox and other guest Cantors for services and performances

## SKILLS

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- Instruments: Piano/organ, guitar
- Languages spoken: Hebrew (fluent); French (proficient)
- Composer and arranger (choral and instrumental)
- Video production
- Other interests: Cooking/wine, travel

## EDUCATION

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05/2013

**Master of Sacred Music: Cantorial Investiture**

**The Jewish Theological Seminary Of America** - New York, NY

05/2009

**Bachelor of Arts: Hebrew Literature, Holocaust Studies, Mid East Political Science**

## **American Jewish University - Los Angeles, CA**

### **Cantorial Studies**

- Hazzan Alberto Mizrahi (2010-Present)
- Cantor Herschel Fox (1991-Present)
- Cantor Rafael Frieder (2010-13)
- Hazzan Jacob Mendelson (2010-2013)
- Hazzan Daniel Gildar z"l (2005-2011)
- Cantor Baruch Erbllich (2004)

### **Vocal Study**

- Mark Crayton (2016-present)
- Josephine Mongiardo-Cooper (2011-2016)
- Dr. Joel Ewing (2008-2011)
- Hazzan Daniel Gildar z"l (2005-2008)
- Tova Morcos (2003-2005)

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

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- Scheduled to perform at Neue Synagoge (Dresden, Germany) in 2021 with Semperoper Chorus in government-sponsored concert celebrating 1,700 years of German Jewry
- Director of Cantors Assembly project to record interviews of our retired colleagues, to be shown on television and archived
- Formed Cantors Assembly committee which is now creating a clergy manual for the 21st Century
- Voice featured as Mordechai Anielewicz in the permanent Resistance Gallery exhibit at the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center (since 2019)
- Voice featured in "Prayer" audio exhibit at The Art Institute of Chicago (Sept-Dec 2018)
- Served as visiting Hazzan for Maayane Or Massorti Synagogue (Nice, France - 2018); Neue Synagoge (Dresden, Germany - 2019)
- Performed and lectured at congregations and conventions across North America
- Former Executive Committee member of the Cantors Assembly
- Recipient of 2010 Louis Danto z"l Memorial Award for Excellence of the Presentation of Traditional Hazzanut

## **AFFILIATIONS**

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- Cantors Assembly
- Guild of Temple Musicians
- ASCAP