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TO THE
HOLOCAUST

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Yuval Ron Ensemble Revives the Lost Soul of Spain in One-Night Only Preview *at the Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust*

New York, NY— On **Wednesday, February 18 at 7 p.m.**, join the world-renowned **Yuval Ron Ensemble** for a special preview of *The Lost Soul of Spain: Music and Dance of the Sephardic Jews*. Featuring Hebrew and Ladino songs from Morocco, Andalusia, Bosnia, and Israel, this is a one-night-only chance to see the same concert that will be performed for the King of Morocco at the upcoming 2009 International Sacred Music of Fez. The artists will be available at a meet-and-greet reception after the show.

Tickets are \$25 adults, \$20 students/seniors, \$15 members, and are available online at www.mjhnyc.org or by calling the Museum box office at 646.437.4202.

Sephardic music originated in the courts of medieval Spain; since then, it has incorporated influences from North Africa, Greece, Turkey, and South America. The Yuval Ron Ensemble—which includes **Najwa Gibran** (vocals); **Maya Karasso** (dance); **Smadar Levi** (vocals); **Jamie Papish** (percussion); **David Martinelli** (percussion); **Norik Manoukian** (woodwind); **Verginie Alumyan** (kanoun); and **Na'ama Meyer** (harmonium)—will bring their multi-cultural production to the Museum's Edmond J. Safra Hall with music and dance performances that pay tribute to the rich and powerful tradition of Sephardic music. The Museum has been committed to continuing this centuries old legacy by presenting performers of Sephardic music such as Gerard Edery, Anthony Coleman, Shlomo Bar, Habrera Hativeet, Basya Schechter, Jewlia Eisenberg, and Ayelet Rose Gottlieb.

About the Artists

Yuval Ron Ensemble includes Arabic, Israeli, and Jewish musicians as well as Christian-Armenian artists who unite the sacred musical traditions of Judaism, Islamic mystical tradition, and the Armenian Church into an unusual mystical, spiritual, and inspiring musical celebration. The ensemble was featured in the World Festival of Sacred Music in Los Angeles and has performed in numerous events worldwide.

Yuval Ron is a world-music artist, composer, educator, peace activist and record producer who has composed internationally for film, television, dance, and theater. A recipient of multiple grants from National Endowment for the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation, the American Composers Forum, Mid Atlantic Arts and the California Council for the Humanities, Yuval has worked with the Moscow Symphony, the Pittsburgh Symphony, the LAJS Symphony, and the New Hampshire Philharmonic. In 1998 he released his first solo recording *In Between the Heartbeat* on Simulacra Records, followed by *In the Shallows* in 2001. In 2003 he released the album *Under the Olive Tree* with the Yuval Ron Ensemble. His latest CD is *Tree of Life* and was released on Magda Records in 2005. In 2006, Yuval won an Oscar for the musical film *West Bank Story*.

Verginie Alumyan (kanoun) was born and raised in Armenia. She has performed in Armenia and the United States with numerous folklore, Armenian music, and dance ensembles, and has been a member of the Yuval Ron Ensemble since 2000. She can be heard the Yuval Ron Ensemble's *Under the Olive Tree* (2003).

Najwa Gibran (vocals) is considered one of the finest Arabic female singers living today in the west. She is the lead vocalist with Canada's Arabesque Dance Company and The Yuval Ron Ensemble in Los Angeles. Najwa has

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participated in numerous music festivals such as “A Concert for the Peace, Health, and Prosperity” (New York City), “Festival of Lights” (Toronto), “Holiday of Holidays” (Israel), “Bridging the Silence” (Toronto), the “Microfest” (Los Angeles), and several concerts for promoting peace in the Middle East.

Smadar Levi (vocals) is an Israeli-Moroccan singer who performs original and creative renditions of traditional tunes in Hebrew, Arabic, and Ladino. *The Epoch Times International* recently dubbed Smadar “a euphonious and haunting voice” for peace and unity. In 2004, Smadar recorded her self-titled debut album. In addition to her own project, Smadar has lent her vocals to a number of recordings for film and art exhibitions. In February 2006, the internationally renowned non-profit organization Seeds of Peace honored Smadar with an award for “uniting cultures to achieve peace through music.”

Norik Manoukian (woodwind) began his career with the Armenian Federal Dance Ensemble and remained a member of that orchestra for three decades. He has been a member of the Yuval Ron Ensemble since 2000. He is a soloist on four different instruments—duduk, zurna, shvi, and clarinet—and his repertoire extends from traditional Armenian music to ancient sacred melodies of the Middle East to contemporary world music styles. Norik’s haunting duduk playing commanded the soundtrack for the feature film *Dead Man Walking* as well as numerous other scores for film and TV.

David Martinelli (percussion) is a drummer, percussionist, and composer specializing in Near Eastern, improvised, and electronic music. He performs with the Yuval Ron Ensemble, Surrealestate, and Mesto. He can be heard on a number of albums, including Robert Reigle’s *The Marriage of Heaven and Earth* (1999), Surrealestate’s *Contrafactum* (2000), Phil Curtis’ *Slutskyia* (2003), the Yuval Ron Ensemble’s *Under the Olive Tree* (2003), and *Tree of Life* (2005).

Na'ama Meir (harmonium) is a singer, instrumentalist, and educator who weaves music and storytelling in various musical ensembles; among them is the Ladino group, Querida. She worked for the Jewish-Israeli/Palestinian-Israeli children’s theater company, Peace Child. Na’ama was trained as an actress, and has performed in films such as *The Pianist*, *Mrs. Harris*, and *Al Sur de Granada*.

Maya Karasso (dance) is an international choreographer/dancer and member of the Yuval Ron Ensemble. In 2001, after studying and teaching dance around the world, Maya came to Los Angeles where she teaches yoga, bellydance, Indian and Native American dance, Butoh, and improvisational dance. In 2003, she choreographed and danced in the multi-media dance video for Sting’s *Sacred Love* world tour.

Jamie Papish (percussion) has made a name for himself in the Los Angeles world music scene as a passionate percussionist of Middle Eastern styles. In addition to being a part of the Yuval Ron Ensemble, he is a member of Mesto, The Stefani Valadez Ensemble, Extreme Klezmer Makeover, The Nashuva Band, and Suzanne Teng’s Mystic Journey. Jamie has performed at international festivals in Poland, South Korea, Israel, and Mexico.

About the Museum

The Museum’s three-floor Core Exhibition educates people of all ages and backgrounds about the rich tapestry of Jewish life over the past century—before, during, and after the Holocaust. Special exhibitions include *Woman of Letters: Irène Némirovsky and Suite Française* on view through March 22 and *The Shooting of Jews in Ukraine: Holocaust by Bullets* on view through March 15. The Museum offers visitors a vibrant public program schedule in its Edmond J. Safra Hall. It is also home to Andy Goldsworthy’s memorial *Garden of Stones* as well as James Carpenter’s *Reflection Passage*, Gift of the Gruss Lipper Foundation. The Museum receives general operating support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and is a founding member of the *Museums of Lower Manhattan*.

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