

ARTS

# Waltham temple celebrates Hanukkah traditions of Eastern Europe

By Nancy Shoheit West | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT DECEMBER 15, 2011

When he was a boy growing up in Philadelphia in the 1960s, Hankus Netsky said, Hanukkah celebrations included latkes, dreidel games, and Israeli folk songs. All noble traditions, Netsky said - but all fairly contemporary. Now that he is a musicologist charged with organizing the Hanukkah party for his own temple, Beth Israel in Waltham, he prefers to look to a deeper religious tradition, and fortunately, he has some help in a member of the congregation who survived the Holocaust.

"In a lot of modern Jewish congregations, older folks are looked upon as somewhat irrelevant," Netsky said. "We happen to have a congregation committed to embracing our Jewish cultural roots and older traditions."

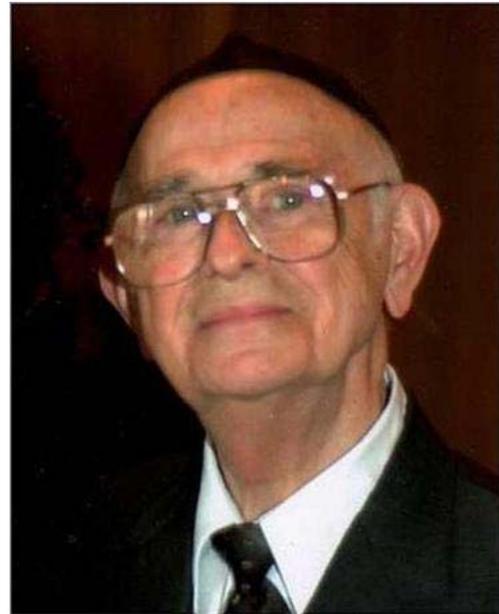
Based on what 86-year-old Czech immigrant Morris Hollender described to him, Netsky designed a music program that effectively re-creates the Eastern European village choir that the elder temple member remembers from his youth.

"We sing in Yiddish. We teach the congregation the dances of the older European style, the ones that precede the better-known Israeli folk dances," Netsky said. "We create an old-fashioned Hanukkah celebration for the whole family."

On Sunday starting at 3 p.m., Netsky, who is founder of the Klezmer Conservatory Band and chairman of the contemporary improvisation department at the New England Conservatory, will lead the second annual "Chanukah Celebration Featuring Hankus Netsky and Friends."

"We'll have a terrific Klezmer band with a talented singer and dance leader," he said. "We'll also light the Hanukkah candles and celebrate the poignancy associated with the holiday. We see this as a chance to celebrate not only the Festival of Lights but Jewish culture overall, and especially the cultural continuity that comes from our Eastern European roots. We want to show how much fun that tradition can be."

Temple Beth Israel is at 25 Harvard St. in Waltham. Tickets are \$25, or \$20 for members, seniors, and students. For more information or to purchase tickets, call the temple office weekday mornings at



**Temple Beth Israel member Morris Hollender recalled the music and dances of his youth for organizers of the Waltham congregation's Hanukkah celebration Sunday at 3 p.m.**

781-894-5146 or go to [www.tbiwaltham.org](http://www.tbiwaltham.org).

**ART SHOWS** ■ The ArtSpace Gallery, at 63 Summer St. in Maynard, is presenting an exhibition of encaustic paintings by four local artists through Jan. 13. The medium is an ancient technique that uses hot wax infused with powdered colors. Gallery hours are Wednesday to Saturday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Admission is free. For more information, call 978-897-9828 or go to [www.artspacemaynard.com](http://www.artspacemaynard.com).

■ Creations by local artists are on display and available for purchase at the Cultural Arts Alliance of Hopkinton's Members Art Exhibition until Dec. 29 at 98 Hayden Rowe St. in Hopkinton. Exhibition hours are weekdays, 10 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m.; and Sundays, 1 to 4 p.m. Admission is free. For more information, call 508-435-9222 or visit [www.caahop.org](http://www.caahop.org).

■ "A Feast of Colour," a collection of richly colored paintings in oil, watercolor, and acrylic by Lynda Davis Jeha that range from abstract to classical in style, is on display through Dec. 29 at the Wellesley Free Library, 530 Washington St. For more information, go to [www.wellesleyfreelibrary.org](http://www.wellesleyfreelibrary.org).

**HOLIDAY MUSIC** ■ The Sisters of Swing band celebrates its new jazz CD, "Swingin' the Holidays with the Sisters," Monday at 7:30 p.m. in the Black Box Theater at the Arsenal Center for the Arts, 321 Arsenal St. in Watertown. Tickets are \$18; \$15 for students and members, plus fees. For more information, call 617-923-8487 or visit [www.arsenalarts.org](http://www.arsenalarts.org).

■ In a Christmas performance suited to the entire family, Cappella Clausura and Creationdance join forces to present "Gloria: A Renaissance Christmas Pageant." The program explores medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque music written by cloistered women to celebrate the birth of Jesus and the life of Mary. Giant puppets and lively processional hymns from 14th-century Florence will also be featured. The audience is invited to sing with the performers and join in the merriment. Performances are Saturday at 3 p.m. at First Parish Church, 349 Boston Post Road in Weston; Saturday at 7 p.m. at Parish of the Messiah, 1900 Commonwealth Ave. in Newton; and Sunday at 5 p.m. at the First Unitarian Society in Newton, 1326 Washington St., West Newton. Tickets are \$15-\$25 and are available at [www.clausura.org](http://www.clausura.org) or at the door.

**LITERARY LIGHTS** ■ On Saturday at 10:30 a.m., HCAM Studios in Hopkinton will host "The People and Places We Come From," a program that will include the stories of Mass-Mouth cofounder and author Norah Dooley; the songs of Ellen Schmidt honoring her mother, Boston writer Norma Farber; and the poetry of Rozi Theohari, who has published more than 18 books of poetry and stories, six of which are in the Library of Congress. An open microphone for story, song, and poetry will follow. The program will be taped before a live audience at 77 Main St., Hopkinton, for airing on local-access cable television. Doors open at 10 a.m., and the program begins at 10:30.

■ Tonight from 5 to 8 p.m., the Concord Museum welcomes three authors and illustrators - Brian Lies, Melissa Stewart, and Rose Lewis - whose books are featured in the museum's ongoing show, "Family Trees: A Celebration of Children's Literature." The 16th annual "Family Trees" is on view through Jan. 1. Admission for tonight's event is \$15 adults, \$10 seniors, \$6 for ages 4 to 18; younger children and museum members are admitted free. The museum is at Lexington Road and Cambridge Turnpike in Concord. For more information, call 978-369-9763 or go to [www.concordmuseum.org](http://www.concordmuseum.org).

*Send ideas for the Arts column to [westarts@globe.com](mailto:westarts@globe.com).*

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