

Presenter Bios

Alexandria Carmon is a graduate of the University of Central Oklahoma with a double Masters in Vocal Performance and Vocal Pedagogy. With her home base in Oklahoma City, she has established herself as a performer, teacher, and vocal scientist with a passion for educating and helping students grow and reach their musical goals. In 2016 she was cast in her first professional opera, performing the role of Mercedes in Bizet's *Carmen* with the Enid Symphony Orchestra. Recent performance credits include Elisetta (*Il Matrimonio Segreto*) with Red River Lyric Opera, chorus in *La Traviata*, *Tosca*, and the role of Micaëla (*La Tragedie du Carmen*) with Painted Sky Opera, chorus in *The Tenderland*, and the roles of Lady Harriet (*Martha*) and Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*) with UCO Opera. As a teacher she works to instill a firm basis of technique in her voice, piano, and music students. She believes that establishing a foundation of healthy music making is the key to developing a lifelong interest in music in either a casual or professional setting. Alexandria's method varies from student to student and adapts to the way they learn best but it all falls back on the functionality of the vocal mechanism – posture, breathing, resonance, phonation, and anatomy and physiology of the instrument.

Emily Howard Meyer is a weaving, knitter, spinner, potter, composer, pianist, artist, gluten-free baker, Cantorial Soloist and owner of oySongs and Composer Girl Publications. She lives in Rockville, MD where she is constantly busy doing something, either crafts, music or taking care of her two 14-year old boy/girl twins, her husband and her cats.

Hazzan Arlyne Unger earned B.A. and M.S. degrees from the University of Pennsylvania and a B.H.L. in Hebrew Literature and dual M.A. degrees in Jewish Education and in Jewish Music/Cantorial Track from Gratz College. She worked as Hazzan and Educational Director for over 20 years at Beth Tikvah-B'nai Jeshurun in Erdenheim, PA, followed by five years as the part-time Cantor at Reform Congregation Beth Am Shalom in Lakewood, NJ. She is now the proud founding Hazzan at Darchei Noam, an unaffiliated, independent shul of over 200 families in Ambler, PA, where she is blessed with a Rabbi and congregation that encourage creativity within tradition. She has served as adjunct instructor in Nusah at Gratz College, and of Hazzanut at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. She is a past President of the Delaware Valley Jewish Educators Assembly, past secretary of the

National Jewish Educators Assembly and a past Vice-President of the Women Cantors' Network. Currently she serves as Chairperson of the Delaware Valley Cantors Assembly, and has also served on the Executive Council of the National Cantors Assembly. Arlyne was honored by the Jewish Theological Seminary and Jewish Educators Assembly with an honorary doctorate for her accomplishments in the field of Jewish education. She loves sharing her passion for *Nusach* with her WCN *hevre*.

Rabbi Ilana Axel (Rabbinic Seminary International, 2019) serves as the Cantorial Leader of Beth Tikvah Congregation in Hoffman Estates, Illinois, and has been a member of WCN for over 10 years. Ilana is active in interfaith work, developing workshops that highlight interfaith engagement and implicit bias awareness. She is a founding member of the LGBTQ Inclusion Task Force at Beth Tikvah, as well as its Tzedek Social Justice Committee. Ilana has been observing the effects of implicit bias for a very long time, having made *aliyah* in 1981 to kibbutz in Israel (a 2-tiered transition of country and societal adjustment) then returning to the USA in 1997. She lives in the northwest suburbs of Chicago with her spouse Mark and their cat Mishmish, and brought 3 children into the world who work in the fields of financial law, civil rights, and medicine. They are her most treasured advisors.

Cantor Risa Wallach serves at Temple Beth-El in Hillsborough, NJ. She brings a deep commitment to using the power of music to share spiritual meaning and build community. She is passionate about issues of social justice and infuses inclusion and equality into her cantorate. She was ordained at Hebrew College in Newton Centre, Massachusetts. Prior to joining TBE, she has served as cantor at Temple Beth-El of Jersey City, NJ and at Congregation B'nai Shalom in Walnut Creek, California. Risa completed her Masters in Social Work at Smith College School for Social Work, and provided care as a medical social worker for 8 years in San Francisco. Her recording project, *For the People*, a collection of Yiddish songs, liturgical music, and New England folk song was recently released. Risa enjoys spending time in nature, meditating, and watching independent films. She lives with her spouse, Rhetta, in Somerville, NJ.

Professor Cantor Heather Aranyi, M.M., M.Ed. is Ambassador and Advisor for the Buffett Institute for Global Affairs, on faculty at Northwestern University's Farley Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, the Cantor at Congregation Beth Am, and a proud member of

the WCN. Professor Aranyi's classes are consistently reviewed as among the best classes on campus and are full with waiting lists. She was the only person in the United States selected to represent the United States at the WorldExpo2020 in Dubai as both a speaker (entrepreneurship and innovation) and artist (soloist, singer). Professor Aranyi is the co-lead researcher on "Music, Trauma and the Breath", a Northwestern University global research project which was awarded funding through the Buffett Institute for Global Affairs. In her private practice, Professor Aranyi works with corporations and individuals on how to innovate, maximize their potential and fulfill their vision.

Cantor Kathryn Wolfe Sebo has served as the cantor of The Temple-Tifereth Israel (Reform) in Cleveland since 1999. Prior to that, she was the cantor at Congregation Bethaynu (Conservative) from 1985 until 1999. A graduate of The Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, she also studied privately with the renowned hazzan, Dr. Max Wohlberg (zl) of the Jewish Theological Seminary. In addition to her full-time duties serving The Temple's 1,100 families, Kathy also enjoys opportunities to perform throughout Northeast Ohio and around the country. She can be heard on The Temple – Tifereth Israel's recordings *Songs of Shabbat*, *Songs of The High Holy Days* and *Rock My Soul Shabbat*. She has been a member of the WCN since 1986 and feels blessed to be one of our organization's "Past Presidents." Kathy and her husband Rommie are the parents of Zachary and Kayla Sebo, Joshua and Beth Sebo, Becky Sebo and David Sebo... AND, she has been "kvelling" over her newest and best "title" ever... BUBBIE. She and her husband are now the proud grandparents of 15-month-old Archer and his 4-month-old cousin, Warren

Linda Matorin Sweenie began her tenure as Music Director at Temple B'nai Israel in Oklahoma City in 2014, after serving for 10 years as the Music Director at Congregation Beth Torah in Overland Park, Kansas. Along with leading worship and directing the Temple choirs and instrumental ensembles, she also directs the Temple Hebrew School, teaches Torah through Music in the Religious School, tutors b'nai mitzvah students, and teaches Adult Hebrew classes. Linda, her husband Glenn Philips and bass player Randy Deutch form the contemporary Jewish band Shir Balev and have led worship and played concerts throughout the Midwest for the last 20 years. The band also plays secular music under the name One Eye Doxie

and has recorded two CDs of original music: *Glass Half Full* (recorded in 2003) and *In Case I Forget to Tell You* (released in 2014).