

Dear Friends,

I am delighted to announce Temple Sinai has two spectacular events in store for you. So mark your calendars.

Please join us for Shabbat and Havdalah services and a concert with one of the world's most gifted Sephardic cantors and ethnomusicologists, Dr. Ramon Tasat, on Saturday, October 20th.

In honor of the 61st Anniversary of our Temple's acquisition of her Moroccan Torah scroll, at 10 a.m., Cantor Dr. Tasat will co-lead the Shabbat service with Rabbi Sokol.

Cantor Dr. Tasat will chant the Torah and Haftarah portions in the traditional Moroccan trope and will deliver a sermon on the illustrious history of the music of the Sephardim.

Special Kiddush refreshments will follow. Please RSVP to rabbiseverine@gmail.com or (314) 628-9196 by October 10th if you plan to attend so that we know how much food to prepare.

At 7:30 p.m., Cantor Dr. Tasat will lead a Havdalah ceremony, which will feature Temple Sinai's Religious School students.

From 7:40 to 8:00 p.m. we will enjoy light refreshments. Please RSVP at rabbiseverine@gmail.com or (314) 628-9196 by October 10th so that we know how much food to prepare.

At 8:00 p.m., Cantor Dr. Tasat will perform a special concert.

Cantor Dr. Ramon Tasat story is breathtaking. He learned Ladino, the language of the Sephardic people, at his grandmother's knee. His style reflects the rich history and drama of this extraordinary culture.

Trained in five different countries, he received a doctorate in voice performance from the University of Texas at Austin. His doctoral dissertation is entitled “The Cantillations and Religious Poems of the Jews of Tangier, Morocco.”

Dr. Tasat has drawn worldwide acclaim from both music critics and audiences, appearing in numerous opera productions such as *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Impressario*, and *La Traviata*. After hearing him sing at the Cantata Ebraica concert Rabbi Samuel Weintraub remarked, “Ramon Tasat is a gem. He sings with passion and true bel canto technique. I was also impressed by the seamless weaving of the operatic and Jewish liturgical traditions.”

Cantor Tasat has toured Europe with world-renowned Dr. Robert Shaw and has participated in international festivals on both sides of the Atlantic. His most notable appearances include the Kennedy Center Concert Hall; the Israeli Embassy; the Jewish Music Festival of Berkeley, California; Saint Cere, France; Siena, Italy; Helsinki, Finland; Barcelona, Spain; and the Piccolo Spoleto Festival.

Dr. Tasat has been the recipient of numerous awards including First Place at the Montpelier Cultural Arts Center’s Recital Competition and a National Endowment of the Arts Grant. Dr. Tasat’s lectures, workshops, and published books on music subjects, in addition to his television and radio appearances, have earned him great respect among his peers.

Hazzan Dr. Ramon Tasat is the Hazzan of Shirat HaNefesh (Song of the Soul). He is also the president of Shalsholet: The Foundation for New Jewish Liturgical Music.

I hope you will also be able to join us for a program on Plants of the Bible with Professor Lytton John Musselman, on Sunday, October 28th, from 2:30-3:15 p.m.

Lytton John Musselman is the Mary Payne Hogan Professor of Botany at Old Dominion University where he also served as chair of the Department of Biological Sciences. His main teaching interest and one of his chief research interests is ethnobotany, broadly defined as the human use of plants past, present, and future.

He has taught courses during the past four decades in the use of local plants at his home institution as well as the State University of New York School of Environmental Biology and Forestry at the Cranberry Lake Biological Station in the Adirondacks, Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies in Michigan, and the University of Virginia Mountain Lake Biological Station.

His ethnobotanical research has centered on two broad geographical regions. The first is the Middle East where he has lived in five countries studying the uses of plants in ancient times resulting in three published volumes: *Jordan in Bloom Flowers of the Holy Land* commissioned by Queen Rania of Jordan and published by the Jordan River Foundation in 2000; *Figs, Dates, Laurel and Myrrh Plants of the Bible and Quran* with a foreword by Garrison Keillor published by Timber Press in 2007; and most recently, *A Dictionary of Bible Plants* published by Cambridge University Press in 2011.

Please let your family, friends and neighbors know about these exciting events and more coming soon to your friendly neighborhood synagogue. The change of seasons always presents vibrant new exciting ways to appreciate Judaism with those you love at Temple Sinai.

Blessings,
Rabbi Severine Sokol