

Throughout the week's program, *Maestro* brought together a wide range of audiences. Local teachers learned a great deal while present at the sessions in which *Maestro* faculty instructed the trainees. In addition, these local teachers had the benefit of direct and personal attention from faculty members during lessons and master classes, plus individual consultation. Many parents of music students in Ma'alot-Tarshiha's Music Center and the surrounding area came to watch the *Maestro* faculty and trainees, while their children enjoyed the guidance of these premier teachers. Many of the local residents — veteran Israelis of North African heritage along with recent immigrants from the former USSR — and pupils of the Music Center along with their parents, attended the open concert at the Center in which *Maestro* trainees presented their chamber repertoire as "a work in progress." The many listeners were reluctant to leave, and asked to hear more and more.

A special evening event held in Tarshiha was devoted to the Jewish-Arab encounter, with a shared dinner and a concert featuring both cultures. The musical offerings included Western works played by *Maestro* participants and Arabic music played by local residents. Speakers on the program extolled the beauty of music and expressed the hope and need for this international language to form a bridge between peoples, surmounting the difficulties of daily life.

Friday morning was entirely devoted to visiting the local schools. The concerts were accompanied by explanations especially prepared for young audiences under the guidance of *Maestro* faculty member, director Pablo Ariel. Children of Grades 1-3 met with *Maestro* trainees for an up-close acquaintance with musical instruments and to learn how these are related to the musical works they heard. Enthusiasm ran high, and at the program's end, the trainees were invited to return for many repeat visits with the schoolchildren.

The weekend began with a festive dinner for the Sabbath eve, attended by Ma'alot-Tarshiha mayor Mr. Shlomo Buhbut and followed by the first of a series of three concerts: "Mainly Mozart," presented by *Maestro* faculty members. Saturday featured a program of chamber music by the *Maestro* trainees, and concluded with a joint concert offered by faculty and trainees together. As the concert closed with Mendelssohn's Octet, a sense of heightened excitement was shared by those present, on stage and in the audience.

Friends of *Maestro*, our many guests, musicians and music-lovers alike, were witness to the great doings of this event-filled week. Their enthusiastic response and support encourages and stimulates the continuing and further development of *Maestro* activities.

According to the considerable feedback we received at the conclusion of the December program, we at *Maestro* have decided to proceed towards our next significant goal: a full year's academic curriculum at the Master's level, in conjunction with the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, to commence in October 2006.

For those interested: a three-minute DVD presentation is available, describing the activities of the *Maestro* December 2005 program.