

## RE'UT BEN-ZE'EV, mezzo soprano

To Whom It May Concern:

Susanne Katchko has informed me that she is seeking sponsorship for study for one year, with the intention of focusing on Yiddish art song and folk song repertoire. I most heartily endorse this endeavor.

I am an Israeli-American mezzo soprano who has performed and recorded operatic and classical repertoire and has been an avid promoter of Jewish Music internationally. I appeared in venues such as Lincoln Center, Spoleto Festival, USA, Jerusalem Music Centre, The Center for Jewish History, the Tel-Aviv Museum of Art, on WQXR radio, Kol Hamusika and on TV internationally. I recorded Yiddish art and folk songs for The Milken Archive of Jewish American Music, on the Naxos Label as well as YIVO and Albany Records among others. (Please see my attached bio, and visit my website: [www.ReutBenZeev.com](http://www.ReutBenZeev.com).) I have a private vocal studio in NYC and I have been invited to teach master-classes at institutions such as Hebrew Union College, Search Engine (Israel) and the YIVO-NYU summer program, where I first had the pleasure of working with Susanne Katchko.

Ms. Katchko's uncommon musical intelligence, talent and passion towards the art of Yiddish songs stood out from the moment she came on the stage. Her voice has natural beauty as well as dramatic qualities. Her commitment to singing as well as to the Yiddish repertoire was immediately apparent. Her attention to details, intellectual curiosity, and command of the Yiddish (and Hebrew) language are impressive. She is also a skilled piano player. Moreover, her generosity with her colleagues was apparent, when she immediately offered her wonderful skills as a pianist when the pianist was not there yet.

Over the past two years, I have been working privately with Ms. Katchko only occasionally, due to her financial struggle. In my work with her, I observed that she has the perfect make up of a wonderful Yiddish singing-actress: she is a fast study, possesses great talent for languages, superb musicianship, commitment, and above all, deep passion for the art. When we have worked more regularly, her improvement was fast and amazing. I strongly believe that with intense, consistent training she will be able to polish her skills and talent to express freely the depth of feeling which the Yiddish Song calls for.

Based on my experience as a teacher as well as a singer, I recommend for Ms. Katchko a course of study of one hour lesson, three times a week for a year, in order to instill healthy and efficient body/breath coordination habits.

Susanne's enthusiasm, commitment, talent, and generosity of spirit are the makeup of an inspiring artist who elicits thrilling excitement from the audience. The art of Yiddish song has long been needing artists of her caliber of talent and unique creativity. I hope you will consider this positively, as I believe the world of Yiddish music will greatly benefit from her talent.

Very truly yours,

  
Re'ut Ben Ze'ev

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## RE'UT BEN-ZE'EV, mezzo-soprano

### Biography

"... a palpable undercurrent of sensuality rippled through Chana's Story.... Re'ut Ben-Ze'ev...offered a bold, committed account...so deeply physical was her performance..."

**-The New York Times**

"...Übermäßige Tonschritte gelangen Re'ut Ben-Ze'ev ebenso sorgfältig wie dramatische Ausbrüche oder leises Flehen. Mit ausdrucksstarker und klarer Stimme entfachte sie ein Feuerwerk..."

**-Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung**

**Re'ut Ben-Ze'ev**, has won critical acclaim for her "impassioned" (*The New York Times*) interpretations and "emotionally and vocally masterful performance" (*New Music Connoisseur*.) She has performed standard operatic and concert repertoire as well as cutting-edge collaborations. She appeared throughout Canada, Europe, Israel, and the United States in venues such as Lincoln Center, Spoleto Festival, USA, Lucille Lortel Theater, The American Academy in Berlin, Jerusalem Music Centre, the Israel Vocal Arts Institute, the Tel-Aviv Museum of Art, on WQXR NY Classical station, and on Radio and TV internationally.

Highlights of recent and upcoming projects include CHANA'S STORY, with Pulitzer Prize winning composer David Del Tredici at the piano at the ASCAP Awards Ceremony in Lincoln Center, appearances with The Israel Chamber Orchestra, the Pittsburgh Chamber Orchestra (Lucas Richman, conductor) the Arcos Chamber Orchestra, as well as recording for Albany Records. Furthermore, she will be performing a staged version of PIERROT LUNAIRE with the LINK Ensemble directed by Julia Pevzner, is to premiere and tour the role of Zarathustra in the video opera ROPE & CHASM by M. Greenbaum, directed by David Gothard, and appear in the Israeli documentary: The Friends from my Class.

Ben Ze'ev collaborates regularly with leading composers such as Pulitzer Prize winning composers Yehudi Wyner and David Del Tredici, and Samuel Adler. She collaborated with artists as former artistic director of Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Fred Sherry, former principle clarinetist of Berlin Philharmonie KarlHeinz Steffens, Alexander Fiterstein, members of the Israel and the Berlin Philharmonic, actor Theodore Bickel and choreographer Yasmeen Godder. In addition, she and Yasmeen Godder's Dance Company were nominated for the Bessie Award on their performance. Ms. Ben-Ze'ev was also a finalist in the Kurt Weill Competition.

Ben-Ze'ev's operatic roles include Donna Elvira in Mozart's DON GIOVANNI (California Music Festival), Barab's A GAME OF CHANCE (Israel Vocal Arts Institute), Paride PARDIE ED ELENA (California Music Festival), Cherubino (the Naples Opera Piccola), and include Octavian (DER ROSENKAVALIER). Other roles include Sesto from LA CLEMENZA DI TITO, Komponist (ARIADNE AUF NAXOS), Adalgisa (NORMA) Anna (DIE SIEBEN TODSÜNDEN), and Charlotte (WERTHER.)

Ms. Ben-Ze'ev recorded multiple CDs for the Naxos Label. She also recorded for Furious Artisans, OtherMinds and YIVO Labels.

As a concert soloist, Ms. Ben-Ze'ev sang a wide range of repertoire as Hayden's ARIANNA A NAXOS, Mozart's C MINOR Mass, Gounod's ST. CECILIA MASS, Mahler's LIEDER EINES FAHRENDEN GESELLEN, and Britten's PHAEDRA, with St. Cecilia Chorus and Orchestra (David Randolph, Conductor), Heidelberg Symphony, Germany, Israel Contemporary Ensemble, ProArte Symphony, CA, Israeli Defense Forces Orchestra among others.

Ms. Ben-Ze'ev was Artist-In-Residence for the Israeli Consulate in Miami and Puerto Rico (1998-1999). She studied theater in Israel at the *Thelma Yelin* Highschool of Arts, where she also toured as the vocal soloist of its Big Band. Re'ut studied at the Mannes College of Music, NYC, under a special agreement with Mignon Dunn. She continues her vocal studies with David Jones and coach/conductor William Hicks and pursues "Method" acting studies with Terese Hayden-a protégé of Lee Strasberg. The *Houston Chronicle* says: "...the intense performance...revealed Nuptial Scene to be an appealing work of art music..." *The Dance Insider* describes: "...A vivid presence with a lusty, rich voice..." And as cited by mezzo soprano Mignon Dunn, "She has an important voice...a naturally beautiful, warm voice and I really prize her."

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