

a week to shepherd in his play at the Jobsite Theater, the resident company at the Straz Center for the Performing Arts.

Horovitz and Jobsite artistic director David Jenkins began a collaboration last year with the staged reading of Horovitz's play *Sins of the Mother*. The two intend to work on projects together annually.

PLAY continued on PAGE 4



Noted American playwright Israel Horovitz, far right, along with the director and cast of "Lebensraum" at a post-play discussion following the opening of the show in Tampa.

eight days in March, along with honoring three people who have helped make the festival successful over the years.

The films, including six award winners, will be shown at venues throughout the area from March 2-9.

Since 2012 when the Film Festival created the Starr Award to honor those who have been key supporters of the festival, one recipient was named each year. This year, the Platinum anniversary of the festival, three people – Cathy Gardner, Susan Heyman and Michael White – have been chosen as honorees.

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Kong, according to Chabad.org.

Philly among 5 Israeli consulates closing

In a budget-cutting move, Israel is closing five of its diplomatic offices around the world. The affected consulates are in Philadelphia, Belarus, El Salvador and Marseilles, France, along with a "roving ambassador" to the Caribbean, *The Jerusalem Post* reported Jan. 6.

Israel's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the saved money will go toward existing consulates and embassies. The Philadelphia consulate was initially scheduled to be shut down two years ago, but was left standing after the local Jewish community and local politicians objected, according to the *Post*.

In addition to its embassy in Washington and the Philadelphia consulate, Israel has consulates in eight other U.S. cities: New York, Boston, Miami, Atlanta, Houston, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Nursing home magnate buys Powerball tickets for 15,000 employees, residents

The Jewish owner of a California chain of nursing homes bought 15,000 Powerball lottery tickets for his employees and residents. The gift by Shlomo Rechnitz, a health care magnate who owns 80 assisted living facilities throughout California, gave the beneficiaries a crack at winning record jackpot of \$1.6 billion, though it is not clear whether any of them actually won anything.

Initial reports that an employee of Rechnitz, a nurse from Pomona, was among the three winners were later refuted by the family and dismissed as a practical joke played on the nurse by her son, the *New York Daily News* reported.

One of the three winning tickets was bought at a 7-Eleven in Chino Hills, CA, not far from the nurse's home.

Rechnitz told the *Daily News* he bought the tickets to boost morale at his facilities.

Over 635 million lottery tickets were purchased for the jackpot, affording 1-in-292.2 million odds of winning.

'To Life' gala to illuminate arts' role in Holocaust memory



"Another Bird Board," at left, an oil on canvas work painted in 2000 by Samuel Bak, above. The painting will be on display as part of a major retrospective exhibit at the Florida Holocaust Museum.

The Florida Holocaust Museum will honor internationally acclaimed artist Samuel Bak with the prestigious 2016 Loebenberg Humanitarian Award at the annual "To Life: To the Arts" event on Thursday, Feb. 18, followed two days later by the museum's opening of a 70-year retrospective of Bak's works.

The annual "To Life" event, a major fundraiser for the downtown St. Petersburg museum, also will feature an original musical work and performance by violinist-composer Ittai Shapira, backed by a choral group. The piece, *The Ethics*, premiered at Carnegie Hall last spring to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Theresienstadt.

The gala will be held at the Mahaffey Theater in St. Petersburg, at 6 p.m. and will include dinner and program.

One of the highlights each year is the

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The first Super Sunday was held in 1980, as the brainchild of Jerry Dick of the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington.



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TO LIFE

• CONTINUED from FRONT PAGE

presentation of the Loebenberg Humanitarian Award. The award was named in 2003 in honor of museum co-founders Walter Loebenberg and his wife Edie (now deceased) to recognize their accomplishment of making the Holocaust museum a reality. Each year, the award recognizes an individual(s) who has made an outstanding contribution to the Florida Holocaust Museum and has furthered the museum's mission to prevent future genocides.

As this year's award winner, the event will celebrate Bak's artistic talent, first recognized during an exhibition in the Vilna Ghetto when he was a boy of 9. He and his mother were the only members of his family to survive the Holocaust, and Bak, 83, has spent his life wrestling with his experience during the Holocaust, creating a legacy of testimony through his art.

As early as 1947 an exhibit of his work was organized for David Ben-Gurion and Bak's art was published in a Hebrew newspaper, *Davar HaShavua*, and the Yiddish *The Jewish Daily Forward* in New York.

After spending time in Poland, then in the American sector of Germany when the war ended, he and his mother immigrated to Israel and later Bak moved to the United States.

Bak will serve as curator for the new exhibition, "SAMUEL BAK – A Retrospective of Seven Decades," which will be on display at the museum from Feb. 20 to July 10.



Violinist Ittai Shapira will perform his original composition, "The Ethics," backed by The Master Chorale of Tampa Bay. The work was composed to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Theresienstadt.

tion contains work he created as a child prodigy in the displaced person's camp all the way to the present. It also contains a gift of seven Bak paintings, valued at \$297,000, which were recently donated to the Florida Holocaust Museum anonymously by a Canadian donor. This is the first time this unique retrospective will be on display together in one place.

"We are thrilled to bring this important retrospective of the internationally renowned artist Samuel Bak to Tampa Bay. His work addresses the most challenging questions about our shared human experience, allowing us to see beyond ordinary reality into a realm where we can acknowledge our broken past yet see the hope of a better future," said the museum's Executive Director Elizabeth Gelman.

In keeping with the theme of the

Ittai Shapira will perform on violin his original composition, accompanied by the Master Chorale of Tampa Bay. It will be only the second time the work, *The Ethics*, will have been performed in concert.

Shapira, in an interview prior to the debut of the piece, said it was inspired by research into the Theresienstadt concentration camp.

While tens of thousands of Jews died from malnutrition and disease, and thousands more were executed there, the camp famously was also a space for art. Prisoners produced poetry, drawings, musical performances and other forms of cultural expression that chronicled their experiences and expressing themselves at this time of extreme suffering.

Shapira said he was particularly moved by listening to *Brundibár*, a children's opera composed in 1938 by Hans Krása, a Czech Jew (killed in Auschwitz in 1944). The children's choir in Theresienstadt performed this opera 55 times.

Shapira said he asked himself the question: "What if it was me?" After talking with one survivor who actually sang in the opera who told of having her first love crush in the camps he said. "These were human beings with human experiences."

He said he composed *The Ethics* for Jews and non-Jews alike "to show that all cultures are connected with a focus on both commonality."

The arts, Shapira said, can be a powerful tool for creating both "identity and empathy."

In his dual role as violinist-composer, Shapira is a rarity in the 21st

musicians who, in writing and performing their own works, have relished both forms of creativity.

Described by the *New York Times* as "an Israeli dynamo with a flourishing solo violin career," Ittai Shapira regularly performs with prestigious artists across the globe. He plays a 1745 Guadagnini violin, handcrafted by Giovanni Battista Guadagnini, regarded as one of the finest craftsman of string instruments in history. *The London Times* proclaims "Ittai Shapira's playing is electrifying."

Proceeds from the gala at the

Mahaffey, 400 First St. S., St. Petersburg, will benefit the museum's educational programming. Sponsorship opportunities are available.

Call Maria Johnston at (727) 820-0100, ext. 274 or email mjohnston@thefhm.org. Individual tickets are \$200 and available for purchase online at TheFHM.org. The museum is at 55 Fifth St. S., St. Petersburg.

Media sponsors and partners of To Life: To the Arts include *Tampa Bay Magazine*, *Creative Loafing* and *Jewish Press*.



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