

Professor I. Zaks

The name of Professor Zaks is connected with the musical life of Jewish Częstochowa. He was a pupil of the virtuoso in Jewish music, Abram Ber Birenbaum, and the cantor Abram Fizel. I. Zaks continued studying until he received the title of Professor of Music.

He acted as Professor of Music at the Jewish high school, where he taught how to play [instruments] and organised a wind orchestra, which became the best in town. He was also an expert in discovering young talents in the fields of instrumentalism and singing, whom he organised within the "Lira" Society and for whom he also arranged public performances, which always met with great success.

Zaks was the best interpreter of his teacher's - the Chief Cantor Birenbaum - creations, especially of the "*BaMeh Madlikin*"¹ rhapsody, in which he excelled in his stressing of the "yeshivah songs", which brought his Jewish public great delight.

His concerts featured first-class performances, such as Haydn's "*The Seasons*" and works by Tchaikovsky, Mendelssohn and others. In his last public appearance at the "Luna" hall in Częstochowa, 180 people participated. There were 120 men and women singers in the choir and 60 musicians. Following this concert, Zaks was invited to Łódź, where he directed a good choir, which performed the opera "Carmen" in Yiddish. He attained fame throughout the globe and was invited to take part in a worldwide congress in America.

¹ [TN: "*With what do we light (the Shabbes candles)*"; an excerpt from the Mishna (Shabbat, Ch.2), which is recited at the beginning of the Shabbes prayers on Friday evening.]