

Some Note-able Branding

Atlanta couple adding upscale goods to Israel Philharmonic's repertoire

Thanks to an Atlanta-based design house whose principals are Jewish South African expatriates, music soon won't be the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra's (IPO) only commodity.

Devotees of the Jewish state's world-famous orchestra will be able to purchase items from a line of smartly designed upscale licensed merchandise and memorabilia that is being created to help ensure the economic viability of the IPO and its programs.

Carol and Meyer Janet are the founders and owners of Design Plus, a firm specializing in licensing and marketing programs. They started the business in 1983 when they lived in South Africa.

The Sandy Springs couple say they are excited to be involved in this project, because, said Carol, "it combines our love for Israel and for music."

And as the instability in the Middle East begins to ease, added Meyer: "It's an opportunity to find a way of looking at Israel beyond the conflict."

Carol is starting to work with Israeli artists who will develop artwork, to be attached to what is known in the industry as

"lifestyle" products that will be associated with the IPO.

Ideas on the drawing board include everything from Judaica items such as *sefer* plates or *mezuzot*; gift and specialty items like special edition coins, binoculars, scarves and stationery; foods like chocolates or wines; and musically related products such as instruments or CD sets. Even children's educational toys are being considered.

The intent, according to Meyer, is to "create a product that is desirable in and of itself" that will be sold at IPO concerts, specialty outlets like museum stores or Judaica shops, and galleries.

On average, Carol says the products will sell between \$29 and \$79, although Judaica items will likely be more expensive. A seder plate or *Chanukiah*, for example, could cost between \$100 and \$200. Consumable items like chocolates and wines will probably retail for \$15 to \$30. The merchandise will never be sold at a discount.

"I would like to think that there is something for everyone in each product category," said Carol.

The idea, which the Janets' brainstormed during a gathering at their home while the



PHOTO BY TRIPP LILES

Carol and Meyer Janet are the founders and owners of Design Plus.

IPO was in Atlanta last year, is to improve the financial health of the orchestra by generating revenue and increasing public awareness.

In fact, cause-related marketing is a growing trend. Defined by the Licensing Industry Merchandising Association (LIMA) as a commercial activity in which businesses and charities form a partnership to market an image, product or service for mutual benefit, such activities grew by about 2.6 percent in 2003. Sales from such partnerships yield approximately \$740 million annually, according to LIMA.

In an e-mail, Avi Shoshani, secretary general of the Israel Philharmonic wrote: "We wish to give the IPO more exposure, and this creates another method of highly positioning the orchestra, using this project as a tool to combine the beauty of Israel both visually and musically in the same product."

Yoel Levi, former Atlanta Symphony Orchestra music director and long-time IPO

guest conductor, underscored the need for an additional source of funding for the orchestra.

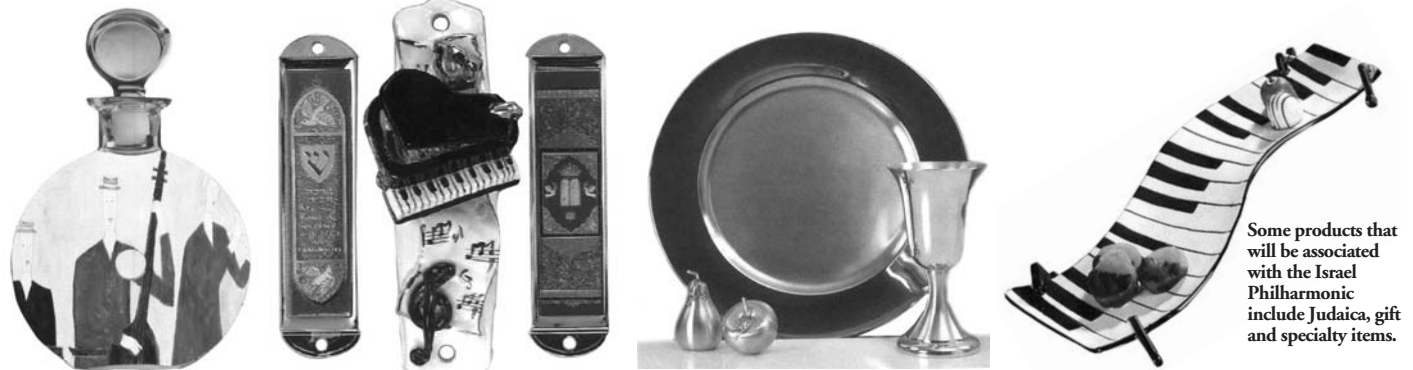
"It's an opportunity truly to establish for [the IPO] a major income that will support them for years," said Levi, a native Israeli himself, who introduced the Janets to the IPO.

"As we know," Levi continued, "government funds are really dwindling all the time for cultural institutions in Israel. It's more important [than ever] to find alternatives. We hope this will be one of the different venues to help them financially and maintain the most important cultural organization that Israel has."

The concept is not an effort to merely slap an IPO logo on merchandise, according to Carol. Rather, high-end products and packaging evoking the orchestra and the IPO experience are at the heart of the project.

"For example," said Carol, "we might develop the most fantastic wine or perfume

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Some products that will be associated with the Israel Philharmonic include Judaica, gift and specialty items.