

Steven Michael Puzarne to Receive Doctor of Music at HUC-JIR Graduation Ceremony in Los Angeles

Cantor Steven Michael Puzarne, Founder and Executive Director of **Breayah**, Redondo Beach, California, will receive a Doctor of Music, *honoris causa*, from the **Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR)**. The degree will be granted at HUC-JIR's Los Angeles Graduation ceremony on Monday, May 18, 2009. HUC-JIR is the nation's oldest institution of higher Jewish education and the academic, spiritual, and professional leadership development center of Reform Judaism.

Communal leaders, relatives, and friends will gather at the Los Angeles Campus, 3077 University Avenue, for the HUC-JIR Graduation Ceremonies of the 134th academic year.

Rabbi David Ellenson, Ph.D., announced HUC-JIR alumni recipients who will be awarded honorary Doctorates of Divinity, Music, Jewish Religious Education, and Jewish Communal Service, as well as the Founders' Medallion, in recognition of their 25 years of distinguished professional service.

Rabbi Ellenson said, "Cantor Puzarne has enriched Jewish life by his active participation as cantor in the communities he has served. As founder and director of Breayah, a Jewish Creative Arts Organization, has helped clergy and congregations across the county guiding them in the process of musical and spiritual change. As an active member of Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice, he has lent his voice on behalf of blue collar workers and those struggling to overcome economic hardships. And his compassionate devotion to autistic and learning disabled youth has found expression in his creation of a Jewish theater and unique b'nai mitzvoh program, providing one on one learning as well as a support group for parents of these special children."

For more information on the HUC-JIR Graduation, Investiture, and Ordination ceremonies in New York, Los Angeles, and Cincinnati, please visit <http://www.huc.edu/newspubs/pressroom/article.php?pressroomid=271>.

*Founded in 1875, **Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion** is the nation's oldest institution of higher Jewish education and the academic, spiritual, and professional leadership development center of Reform Judaism. HUC-JIR educates men and women for service to American and world Jewry as rabbis, cantors, educators, and communal service professionals, and offers graduate and post-graduate programs to scholars of all faiths. With centers of learning in Cincinnati, Jerusalem, Los Angeles, and New York, HUC-JIR's scholarly resources comprise renowned library and museum collections, the American Jewish Archives, biblical archaeology excavations, research institutes and centers, and academic publications. HUC-JIR invites the community to an array of cultural and educational programs which illuminate Jewish history, identity, and contemporary creativity and which foster interfaith and multiethnic understanding. Visit us at www.huc.edu.*