

Memories of My “Father”: Cantor Zvee Aroni

By Benjamin Roth-Aroni



Ben's mother (Hedva) &
Cantor Aroni

I first met Cantor Zvee Aroni in 1949 when I was three years old. That moment is vivid in my memory to this day. My Mom, Grandma and I were watching the Mummer's Parade on TV when he walked into our home. I was so full of excitement about the wonders of the parade that I demanded his attention. What I can remember is his kindness, his big smile, and his interest in a young boy.

Cantor Aroni became a welcome part of our family. I think I cried when I heard that he was moving to NYC in 1954. My brother, Herb, four years older than I, went to NY to live with the Cantor. My Mom and I followed in 1955. The Cantor worked at the Forest Hills Jewish Center where my brother and I were among the youngsters that he helped prepare for their Bar/Bat Mitzvahs.

It was a dream come true for me when my Mom married Dad in 1958. When the three of us moved to Jerusalem in 1963, my older brother stayed in the USA. In 1964 my father brought us to Toronto Canada where we lived for the next four years. The Cantor and my mom moved two more times, first to New York and then to Florida. The voice of my father, Cantor Zvee Aroni, was strong and beautiful to the end. He passed away August 7, 1990.

I was not Cantor Aroni's son by bloodline, but I could not have loved or respected him more. Certainly he was my *father* in the deepest and truest sense of the word. To this day I take pride in the fact that we shared a deep and profound interest in and love of music. The family joke was “Are you *sure* that he's not your real Dad?”

Putting together this collection of his music has been a labor of love. It means so much to me to be able to share this wonderful man's gift with the world through this website. I can only hope that wherever he is, Cantor Zvee Aroni is looking down with pride at his son who wants to honor his memory, his voice and his beautiful soul.



From left to right: Cantor
Aroni's parents, Ben (age 17),
Hedva Aroni in Israel