



Secret prize for cantors

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An anonymous benefactor has made the dreams come true for four budding cantors.

The short-listed contestants at the Julian Klein Scholarship concert at St John's Wood Synagogue, each sang two melodies from the synagogue liturgy, and audience members, in true X-Factor style, handed in voting slips for their favourite. Ultimately, vox populi was balanced by a panel of cantorial experts and Yossi Schwarz was declared the winner for his presentation, vocal range, lyrical colouring and passionate delivery.

The next day the director of the Tephilharmonic organisation, Hirsh Cashdan, who had presided over the concert, received a call from one of the 500-strong audience at St John's Wood Synagogue. The man, who wishes to remain anonymous, insisted that all four entrants deserved the prize of a year's study at the Tel Aviv Cantorial Institute. The three other contenders, Natan Fagleman, Yaakov Rosten and Moshe Tatz, can now further their craft at the Israeli college.

The concert, co-sponsored by the Jewish Music Institute, included performances from cantors Gedalya Alexander, Avromi Freilich, Moshe Haschel and Jonathan Murgaff with Rabbi Binyomin Bar making his debut cantorial concert appearance.

Mr Cashdan said: "I was delighted at the quality of singing. Truly it exceeded my expectations. We have shown young people there is something to aspire to in the world of chazanut."
