Soulful concert to benefit Temple Emanu-El

A benefit concert for Temple Emanu-El of Palm Beach, titled Tantz, Samba & Soul, will unite two well-known musical groups, both dedicated to the preservation of great American songs.

Performing will be Klezmer Company Jazz Ensemble, part of the Klezmer Company Orchestra and the professional ensemble in residence at FAU Libraries led by accordion player and music director Aaron Kula, and the Ebony Chorale of the Palm Beaches conducted by Orville Lawton. The tuneful program at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 24 will also feature Hazan David Feuer.

"The concert is about the connection between Jewish music and the Negro spiritual," Lawton said.

The chorale has 36 members from the Palm Beaches and was originally a larger group organized as the African-American Community Chorus for the dedication of the Kravis Center in 1992.

In Palm Beach, they will perform new arrangements of old standard spirituals, including My Soul’s Been Anchored in the Lord and Old Time Religion, both by Moses Hogan, and Daniel, Daniel, Servant of the Lord by Undine Smith Moore.

"Our major focus is the preservation of the Negro spiritual," Lawton said, although the group also performs sacred, secular, classics, pop, jazz and gospel. In 2008, it earned the silver trophy at the International Festival of Chorale Music in Verona, Italy.

In addition to singing a capella, the chorale will perform with the orchestra four songs, including one from George Gershwin's Porgy and Bess.

The group is unique because its singers are not professional by vocation and most of them have been with the group 10-12 years, said Lawton, who recently retired as dean of the music department and director of piano studies at the Dreyfoos School of Arts.

It last performed at Temple Emanu-El for an ecumenical service in the 1980s but have shared the stage with the Klezmer musicians on several occasions since 2004.

The 60-member Klezmer Company Or-