In memory of
Boris Dubnov,
my father.

CRCA

it² Calit2

UCSanDiego

ucsd Departament of Music

Kamza and Bar Kamza
Stories of Destruction
Debate and Commentary Play

Calit2 Theater
Atkinson Hall
University of California, San Diego
March 5, 2008

The Kamza and Bar Kamza narrative traces its roots to the Talmud, and is a parable about the destruction of Jerusalem. Told in four acts broken into 16 short scenes, it is set to sound, visuals and semantic web technology. But it is primarily not about religion, nor really about the story itself: it's a story to debate, argue and explain, not to present as a single view, and this is why the Talmud was used as a source and metaphor. The performance integrates video clips with pre-taped commentary during transitions between acts, followed by debates where the audience is encouraged to chime in, live or through the Web.
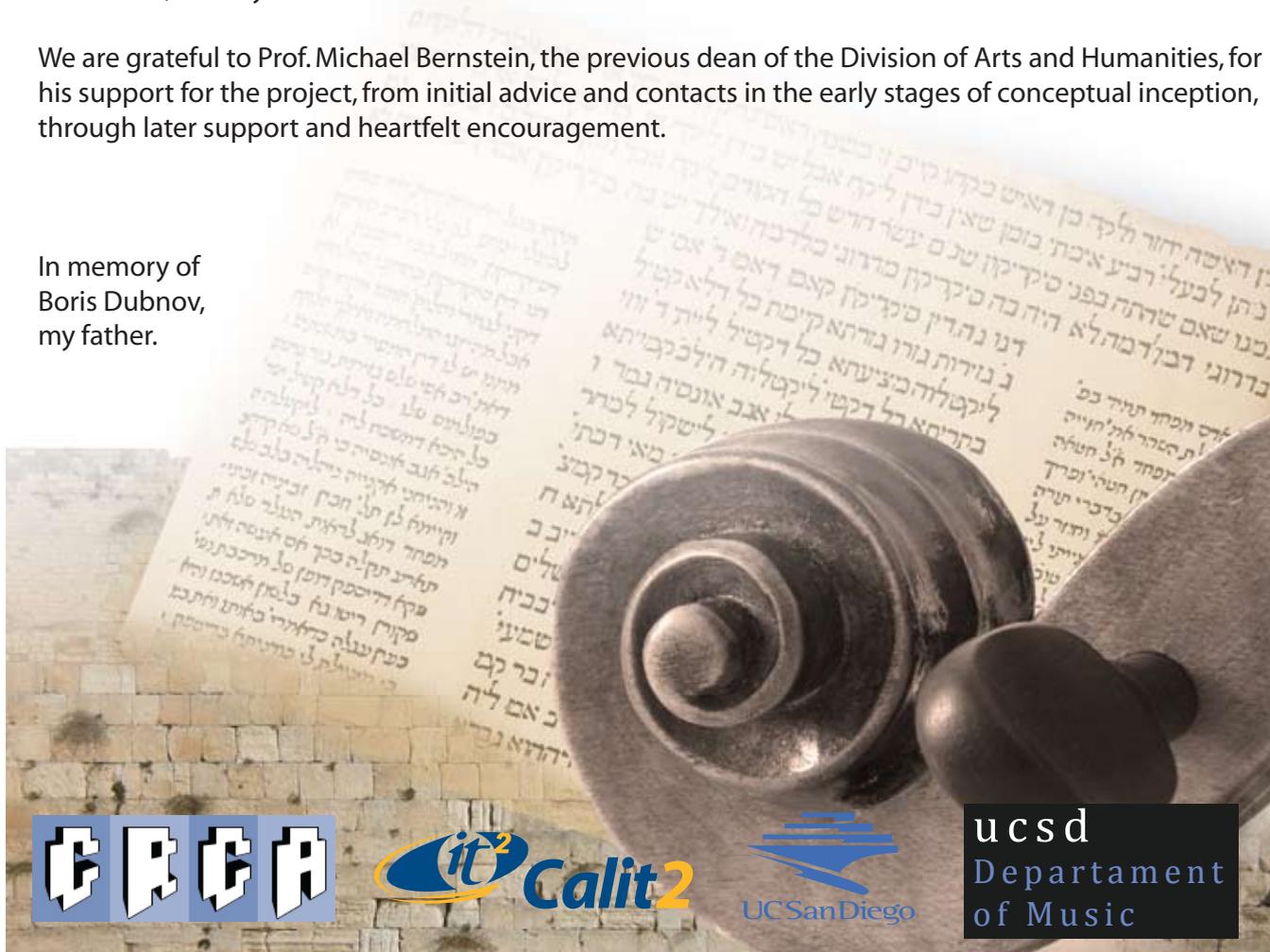
Genesis of the Project

Some of the inspiration for exploring this new form of presentation comes from methods of debate and commentary that are common in traditional religious academic situations, such as Mishna studies in the Jewish tradition, and debates and commentary in Tibetan Buddhism and Buddhist philosophy.

The UCSD division of the California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology (Calit2), Center for Research in Computing and the Arts (CRCA), and UCSD Department of Music are major sponsors of this work. The three-year project is also one of the first programs funded by UCSD Chancellor Marye Anne Fox's Collaboratories initiative, which supports collaborative interdisciplinary research by graduate students drawn from at least three different departments. The grant funds a team of graduate students to work on the project.

Performers

The story is presented by world-renowned musicians, percussionist Steven Schick and vocalist Philip Larson (at left), members of the Department of Music faculty. Shaped as a structured improvisation, the music emerged as a collaborative research with Schick and Larson, looking into aspects of gesture and rhetoric as mediators of meaning. Some of the sound is captured and augmented by sensors, turning everyday objects into electronically augmented instruments.

Project Team

Shlomo Dubnov
Creator and Director

Jose Ignacio Lopez Ramirez-Gaston
Design and Production Manager

Toby Algya
Programming and Theatrical Design

Benjamin Kay
Research and Debate Realization

Jose Ignacio is a graduate student in computer music at UCSD and also a Professor of Religion at Universidad Iberoamericana in Tijuana. He was instrumental in the visual design of the project and development of a non-standard space where the participants can establish a dialogue during presentation of the story.

Toby is an MFA candidate in Sound Design for Theatre. Toby brought to the project his expertise in programming and various aspects of theatrical design, including lighting, and he was in charge of final setup and content integration.

Benjamin is a second-year Ph.D. candidate in Economics. He was involved in research and preparation of interviews, and brought his academic methodology to supervise the undergraduates who participate in the show.

The collaborative effort of the team members made this production possible – with each researcher contributing a unique vision and participation in various aspects of concept development.

Collaboratory

This performance is part of a larger 'collaboratory' that includes various faculty members from diverse departments and divisions at UC San Diego. The purpose of the collaboratory is to create a bridge between art, information technology and various branches of academic research by exploiting story-telling as a vehicle for public engagement and dissemination of ideas. Project collaborators include Joel Sobel and Eli Berman, members of UCSD's Economics faculty, History professor David Goodblatt and Shahrokh Yadegari from the Department of Theatre and Dance. Additional faculty contributing to the project includes the Department of Communication's Morana Alac, who worked with groups of students participating in classes about the *Kamza and Bar Kamza* story and the lessons it holds for us today.

Interviews

Prof. David Goodblatt, History, UCSD
Prof. Dani Attas, Philosophy, Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Prof. Akos Rona-Tas, Sociology, UCSD
Prof. Joel Sobel, Economics, UCSD
Rabbi Graubart, Congregation Bethel, La Jolla
Prof. Zev Bar-Lev, Linguistics and Oriental Languages, San Diego State University
Prof. Eli Berman, Economics, UCSD

Debaters

Patrick Scott-Klingborg
Bri Dugan
Steve Malmo
Kaitlyn Miller
Jon Zellers

Web address to log into the performance web:
http://xrl.us/kamza
(http://kamzabarkamza.com or
http://kamzaandbarkamza.wikidot/com)
Audience participation on the web is possible through Chat and Polls pages on the show's main web site (address above).