EXPANDING OUR IMPACT

THE VILNA SHUL
BOSTON'S CENTER FOR JEWISH CULTURE

2025 Annual Report



MISSION, VISION, VALUES

As of February 1, 2025, The Vilna Shul, Boston's Center for Jewish Culture (The Vilna), and the Jewish Arts Collaborative (JArts™) officially joined together to elevate and expand access to Jewish culture and community across Greater Boston. To reflect our shared outcomes, we revised our mission and vision.

OUR **MISSION**

We are a cultural hub centered in a historic synagogue building in downtown Boston. Our mission is to spark excitement and curiosity about Jewish arts and culture and our American immigrant story through vibrant and meaningful experiences.

OUR **VISION**

Our vision is to be a place where arts, culture, tradition and ideas power personal connections, community and the pursuit of a more inclusive society.

OUR **VALUES**

Welcoming and Inviting Guided by the Jewish value of welcoming the stranger, The Vilna is inclusive and open to people of all backgrounds. We believe that we must do and act with kindness and respect for everyone.

History and Tradition Rooted in ancient traditions, Jewish culture continues to evolve. The Vilna brings people together to learn about this ever changing story as it is unfolding.

Meaning and Relevance It is in our nature as humans to seek meaning and purpose in our lives. The Vilna identifies and organizes experiences that are timely and compelling to help people better understand themselves and the world they live in.

Belonging and Connection No matter our stage in life, we need to feel that we are part of something larger. We provide opportunities for shared experiences to help ground you, combat loneliness and lift you up in moments of both joy and sadness.

Creativity and Ideas The arts offer new avenues for discovery and learning. By introducing inspired and out-of-the-box experiences, we cultivate memorable moments that spark reflection and growth.



Annual Voices of Humanity Concert: Boston's annual interfaith concert featured Zamir Chorale, the Boston Community Gospel Choir, and Convivium Musicum, delighting audiences and culminating in a community-wide singalong.

On the cover:
A Yiddish Classic Brought to Life A one-of-a-kind, site specific performance of The Yiddish Sherlock Holmes. Translator and stage actor Mikhl Yashinsky, accompanied by the Abigale Resiman Trio, turned our historic sanctuary into a bustling street of old-world Europe.

2025 STAFF

Dalit Ballen Horn, Executive Director
Laura Mandel, Managing Director of Program Strategy and Impact
Christen Hazel, Senior Director of Development
Elyse Winick, Director of Arts & Culture
Geo Poor, Director of Operations & Finance
Jayde Nichols, Marketing and Communications Manager
Claire Bellucci, Executive Assistant
Phoebe Coplin, Development Coordinator
Stephanie Davis, Program and Operations Manager

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The exterior of our historic synagogue building located on Beacon Hill.



Our connection to CJP x Vilna Community Creative Fellows doesn't end at graduation. We continue to collaborate with and empower alumni like Rachel Linsky, who assembled a dance troupe for a Hanukkah performance at the MFA.

POWERED BY cjp

THE VILNA SHUL
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DEAR FRIENDS OF THE VILNA



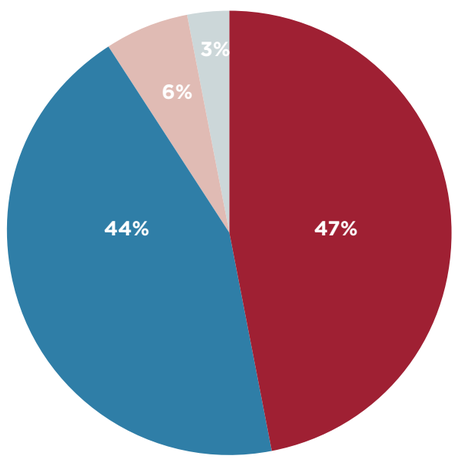
2025 was a year of expansion. On February 1, Jewish Arts Collaborative officially joined The Vilna, bringing two beloved Boston institutions together under one mission: to spark curiosity about Jewish arts, culture, and the American immigrant story.

That growth showed up all year long. We had our first ever live recording of a podcast with Harvard President Alan Garber and Shalom Hartman Institute President Yehuda Kurtzer. Our historic tours doubled in frequency, welcoming more visitors to Beacon Hill's Jewish history than ever before. We opened new exhibits, including *Torah in the Tarot* and *Printed and Stitched in Time*, and carried Jewish culture beyond our own walls, with a musical Hanukkah parade at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. None of this happens without you. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, funders, and partners, we closed FY2025 with $2.37M in operating revenue, a 92% increase over the previous year, the majority of which went directly toward programming and community engagement.

Looking ahead to 2026, we're excited to launch a new partnership with the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, opening with a special exhibit and public program series centered on *The Book of Esther in the Age of Rembrandt*. We're also laying the groundwork for an ambitious effort to restore and revitalize our historic synagogue building, ensuring The Vilna's home continues to serve this community for generations to come. We're grateful to build this next chapter with you.

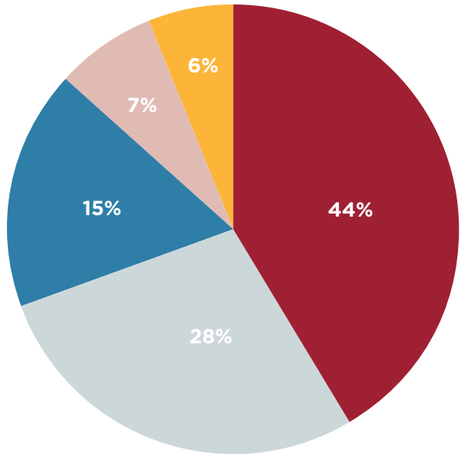
Dalit Horn
Chief Executive Officer

Amy McKeag
Board President



Operating Revenue

Individual Giving	$1,114,000
Grants & Foundation Support	1,040,000
Programs, Tours, & Rentals	146,000
Other	70,000
Total	**$2,370,000**



Operating Expenses

Programming	$1,046,000
Strategy & Impact	667,000
Community Engagement	343,000
Management & Administration	163,000
Fundraising & Marketing	151,000
Total	**$2,370,000**

2025 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



CJP X VILNA COMMUNITY CREATIVE FELLOWS IN ACTION

Musician, actor, and 2024 Community Creative Fellow alum Neta Weiner performed his multilingual Jewish-Arab hip-hop project to open the Only Arab Art Museum in Israel event with Director Said Abu Shakra.



OUR FIRST LIVE PODCAST RECORDING

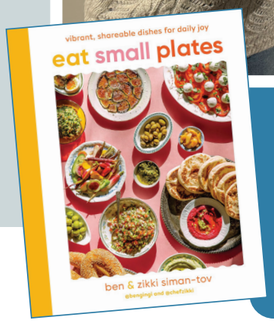
Yehuda Kurtzer, President of the Shalom Hartman Institute, and Alan Garber, President of Harvard University, gathered at The Vilna for a live recording of the Identity/Crisis Podcast, a first for The Vilna.



COOKING DEMONSTRATION BRINGS JEWISH BAKERY FAVORITE

Food stylist Rachel Michael led participants in making their own black and white cookies.





BOOK LAUNCH PARTY

Chefs Ben Siman-Tov and Zikki Siman-Tov celebrated the launch of their cookbook, *Eat Small Plates*, with a cooking demonstration and conversation at The Vilna.



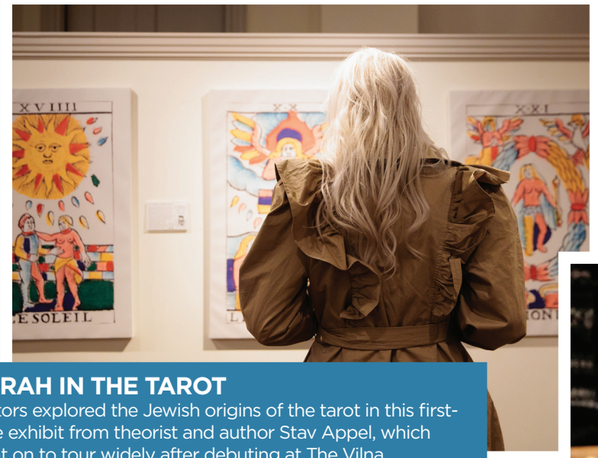
FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

Musician and 2024 Community Creative Fellow AJ Rubin performed for a packed crowd of families and young children at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

2025 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

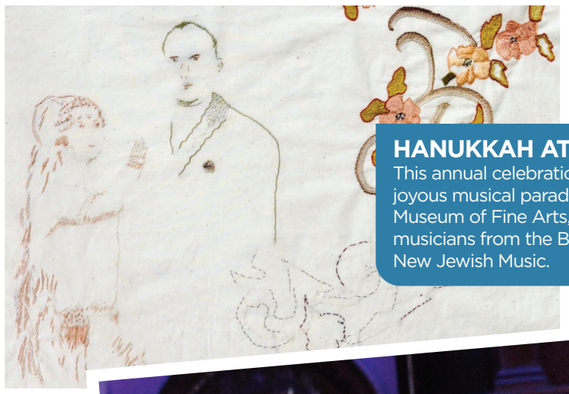


PRINTED AND STITCHED IN TIME: STORIES OF UNDAUNTED WOMEN
Made possible by our expanded exhibit offerings in 2025, Sandra Mayo's exhibit tells the story of two Holocaust survivors who immigrated to Argentina, only to face further loss in the country's "Dirty War."



TORAH IN THE TAROT
Visitors explored the Jewish origins of the tarot in this first-time exhibit from theorist and author Stav Appel, which went on to tour widely after debuting at The Vilna.





HANUKKAH AT THE MFA
This annual celebration featured a joyous musical parade through the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, led by musicians from the Boston Festival of New Jewish Music.





HANUKKAH A CAPPELLA
Berkalit performed for a sold-out crowd at the annual Hanukkah A Cappella Concert.



THE DYBBUK RETURNS
Back by popular demand, *The Dybbuk* returned to The Vilna for an encore performance.



WALKING TOURS EXPLORE HISTORIC JEWISH BOSTON
Tours of historic Jewish Beacon Hill begin at The Vilna. Due to their popularity, the number of tours doubled in 2025, now taking place twice per month.

2025 PHILANTHROPIC GIVING

The Vilna is grateful for the generosity of all individuals, corporations, and foundations.

Donors listed made gifts to The Vilna between January 1, 2025 and December 31, 2025. Every effort has been made to list names properly. If you have any questions, please contact the Development Team.

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- The Moth
- Trident Booksellers
- WBUR Radio
- Yiddish Book Center



LIVE PERFORMANCE: NIGHTINGALE OF IRAN

Thursday, October 8, 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

The Vilna is proud to launch a new partnership with the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in 2026, opening with a collaboration around *The Book of Esther in the Age of Rembrandt*. Nightingale of Iran illuminates the Persian Jewish roots of the Esther story through performance and conversation with sisters Galeet Dardashti, a musician and scholar of Middle Eastern Jewish culture, and Danielle Dardashti, an Emmy-winning documentarian.



BEYOND BUBBIE'S KITCHEN: BOSTON'S FAVORITE JEWISH FOOD FESTIVAL

Sunday, November 22, 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Bubbie's Kitchen is back with a new home at The Vilna! This can't-miss tasting festival draws hundreds of guests for modern takes on traditional Jewish favorites from the city's top chefs and restaurants.

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