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March 22, 2001

Special Night of Music

By [Dr. Rosemary Cohen](#)

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At the end of August 1992, a young man, who had gone out to a bar because he was "bored," struck our car. The drunken driver injured my family and killed Liana, my 18-year-old daughter, as we were returning home from Friday night services. Liana was going to fly out the next day to attend college at Brandeis University.

She studied Torah, played the piano beautifully and painted. She helped her family and friends, even reaching out to those she didn't know well.

After we healed from our physical injuries, we asked ourselves what we could do to continue Liana's unfinished dreams. My family, with the help of the Bureau of Jewish Education, a beneficiary agency of The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, started one project in 1997 that is the dearest to us: the Liana Cohen Music Festival.

The festival, which attracts fourth- to 12th-graders, starts with a competition and ends with a concert. Judges offer young musicians their time and advice to help them perform better.

The annual event -- always on March 25, unless it falls on the night of Shabbat -- is a celebration of Liana's birthday, a sweet and special night that my family has decided to share with talented performers and participants. Every year we're happy to see the number of students grow.

Unlike the Academy Awards, which will take place the same night, you can't tape our concert and its wonderful spirit. Bring your children and grandchildren, and maybe they will be inspired to play an instrument and compete in future festivals.

Liana will be always present in our hearts, and we are happy that all these talented students continue to play. We are happy to share her memory and her dreams with so many people and know that her spirit will continue making a difference for a better future.

Liana Cohen Music Festival, Sun., March 25, 8 p.m. Free. Skirball Cultural Center, 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles.



Dr. RoseMary Cohen is the founder and director of the Liana Cohen Music Festival and author of "Korban: The Sacrifice of Liana."

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