

UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA

hereby presents the

Humanitarian Award of Merit

to

Haydée Mercedes Sosa

for her musical achievements and her struggle for freedom,
equality, and social justice;
and for her friendship toward the State of Israel and the University of Haifa.

11 Sivan 5761

June 2, 2001



Prof. Yehuda Hayuth

President

Haydée Mercedes Sosa

Born (1935) in San Miguel de Tucumán, Argentina, to a family of modest means. She developed a love for folk art in her youth, and as a young girl loved to sing as well as to teach folk dancing.

Her life as a singer began at the age of 15, when she participated in and won a singing contest.

In the 1950s, she was known throughout Argentina as a folk singer of the *nueva canción* movement, which emphasized both the joy and the sadness of people's everyday life. This stream of song developed in the province of Mendoza, where she went to live.

Along with the appearance of her records with well-known Argentinean and Latin American songs, Mercedes Sosa began making appearances in Europe and the United States in the 1960s, in the process gaining a reputation for her marvelous voice and gifted interpretation, a combination that created an enthralling experience.

Mercedes Sosa is also a singer who possesses deep social commitment and involvement. Her songs deal with the distressful conditions of society and state. She is known for her struggle on behalf of human rights. In the 1970s, the military regime in Argentina forbade the playing of her songs. In 1979, she was forced to go into exile. When the military regime was toppled in 1982, she returned to Argentina and appeared in Buenos Aires to the enthusiastic welcome of her admirers. Since then, Mercedes Sosa has become a symbol for the weak and oppressed, whoever they are, but particularly among students, who view her as a trumpet for their ideas.

Ms. Sosa has performed in Israel a number of times, each appearance greeted with great enthusiasm not only among the South American community but also among the Sabras, who know her songs and relish their execution.

Her struggle against violence, against dictatorships, and on behalf of freedom has gained Mercedes Sosa awards and citations both in her own country and abroad, as well as recognition by the United Nations. Among other honors, she has been crowned Ambassador of Good Will of Latin America and the Caribbean. She has also been the recipient of important prizes for music, including three Gardel awards and the first Latin-Grammy.

The University of Haifa today joins the long list of institutions and organizations that have paid tribute to Mercedes Sosa, and in so doing reflects its respect of the Latin American community as a whole.

