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MY HERO **ORI KAM**

♦ My teacher Chaim Taub, the former concertmaster of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, has been a real inspiration to me. I recently sat in his living room and listened to stories of his childhood in what was then Palestine under the British Mandate. He spoke of sneaking into Palestine

Symphony Orchestra concerts to see Arturo Toscanini conduct, and of his teachers, some of that age's greatest musicians who had fled Fascism in Europe. Later on, determined to enrol at the Juilliard School, he travelled to New York on a US military ship carrying troops home after the Second World War. He hadn't registered or auditioned, he just showed up one day and demanded to join Ivan Galamian's class. He was admitted and finished his studies there.

Chaim was a very demanding teacher, but his criticism was always constructive. He taught me the language of music and how to interpret it. Well into his 80s today, he is still at it in full force. I wish him many more musical years to come.♦

Ori Kam is the new violist of the Jerusalem Quartet. The group performs at the Wigmore Hall, London, on 7 May