

Kolenu – The Hagalil Newsletter

Issue 2

Fall Convention 2008

A Letter from the desk of Michelle Rich...



It's late Friday afternoon, the sun is beginning to set. There I am standing on a stone platform in Yemin Moshe overlooking the walls of the Old City, with 40 or more USY Pilgrims talking about their week. They have gathered there to daven Kabbalat Shabbat and Maariv. This is a picture that stands out in my mind of something that I have done many times. But what I hear is the music- the z'mirot that we sing for Shabbat.

When we are together at a USY convention, I can close my eyes during Kabbalat Shabbat and see the walls of the old city. The tunes that we use remind me of the times that I stood at Yemin Moshe and watched the sun set as we davened Kabbalat Shabbat. Many of these tunes were written by Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach z"l. His passion for tefillot came through his songs and zemirot. There is something very moving about his songs, I can hear the magic in his voice.

Last year at Spring Convention, Eliana Light, our past regional president gave me a CD of Neshama Carlebach, the daughter of the late Rabbi. Her voice, like that of her father's is very moving. Listening to her music, I can close my eyes and see Jerusalem. I strongly associate the Carlebachs' music with my time in Jerusalem.

Each summer, hundreds of USYers travel to Israel together on the USY Israel trips. Now is the time to start thinking about how you are spending your summer. Whether it is: Eastern Europe/ Israel Pilgrimage, Israel Pilgrimage/ Poland Seminar, Spain/Israel Pilgrimage, Italy/Israel Pilgrimage, Etgar! Outdoor Adventure or Israel Adventure- have the time of your life on a USY Israel trip. For more information check out the website: www.usy.org/escape.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

****USYERS DELVE INTO THE DEPTHS OF MUSIC AND RUACH****

****AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH HAGALIL'S OWN SINGING SENSATION, MELISSA SPERBER****

Hope to see you in Israel this summer!

Michelle

Michelle Rich

Director of Education and Youth Activities



RUACH!!!



Ruach for me has always been the essence of USY. A convention is not complete if there is no time for people to be singing and enjoying themselves with friends. This love, in my case, was established before I reached USY. On Friday afternoon of my 8th grade Encampment the Regional board members came to teach the 8th graders in Kadima one of the long Ruach songs that would be done that evening. We sat and learned from the impressive leaders of USY and got excited about the prospect of leading Ruach for all the kids in camp. That evening we went over for Ruach as we had done the year before, but this time they called over all the 8th graders to the front of the room. This was a scary moment for us since the front of the room was where the big USYers stood on benches and screamed the words to the songs. We went together as a big group and they handed us the microphone and we began to lead the entire room. We couldn't see over the first row of USYers, but we knew that everyone could hear us.

Having had that experience in a giant Ruach session made me realize how much fun Ruach could be. After that time, Encampment Ruach has always been my favorite, and I have always tried to involve as many people as I could. I hope that my love for Ruach has been passed to at least one other person the way that it was passed to me so that I can know that Ruach will always be the best in Hagalil.

-Raffi Mark
Regional President

As a great musician I must say that music has had a profound impact on my life. I started playing the violin at the age of four, the piano at seven, and this past year I started playing the guitar. Only, kidding I don't play any instruments and I never have. But I do like the violin when used in pop ballads. I am most definitely not a musical person: I can't sing and I can't even keep a tune. But in USY none of that matters. The music in USY doesn't need to sound like an opera or an American idol, you just need soul. Now you probably think I'm crazy for using the word "soul" but that's exactly what I mean. Picture a typical ruach session at any Hagalil convention. USYers are dancing and singing at the top of their lungs as the song is led by one of the Regional board members. Having soul is all about feeling the music and doing what you want. When people sing with soul they show emotion in their voice. In our ruach sessions we sing to show our love for the Shabbat that has just arrived or that is leaving immediately after havdalah. Music is how we connect to God during the ruach sessions and during our normal tfilot. The way one bangs on his or her siddur is a form of music that shows how you are connecting. I bob my head and tap my toes. And as many of you know I enjoy singing, so a Hagalil ruach session where no one is listening to my painfully bad voice is the best. I got soul! So it doesn't matter if you sing professionally or if you are in your school choir, just enjoy living in the moment. When ruach starts this convention have your b'kol echad open, and get ready to belt out the words. Don't forget to move your body a little and start jumping. Hagalil needs everyone to join in ruach that way it can be a night to remember.

-Jonathan Steinberg
Regional Social Action/Tikun Olam VP



Make Sure to Sing Along During Ruach to the USY Theme Song!!!!

*Our ruach's always loud. Our t.o.
number's high.*

*So listen everybody and hear our
mighty cry.*

*New Jersey's where we're from and
we're keepin' it real.*

*Wherever there is fun there's always
Hagalil.*

*dododododo do dododododo (whoop)
dododododo always Hagalil!*

LYRICS QUIZ

Which of the following song lyrics does not belong?

- A) "Music make me lose control. Music make me lose control. Let's Go!"
-Missy Elliot
- B) "Nevermind what haters say, ignore them 'til they fade away. Amazing they ungrateful after all the game I gave away."
-T.I.
- C) "I don't know what you heard about me, but you can't get a dollar out of me."
-50 Cent
- D) "I can't get no satisfaction"
-Rolling Stones
- E) "I don't want nobody else. Without you there's no one else."
-Chris Brown

Answer is on page 7

HAGALIL REGIONAL EVENTS CALENDAR

MEMBERSHIP Dance

Place - TOMS RIVER

Date - December 13TH

Pre-convention

Place - ABERDEEN

Date - December 19TH - 20

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

Place - WASHINGTON D.C.

Date - December 21ST - 25TH

SA/TO Dance

Place - CALDWELL

Date - January 10TH

MID WINTER KINNUS

Place - EAST BRUNSWICK

Date - February 6TH - 8TH

PROM

Place - MORRIS PLAINS

Date - March 21ST

SPRING CONVENTION

Place - SOMERSET

Date - April 24TH - 26TH



Shabbat: From Start to Finish

KABALAT SHABBAT

“Yedid Nefesh...”

As the congregation slowly begins the melody, I close my eyes and allow myself to be enveloped in the prayer. At some points I stop singing so I can hear the rest of the community praying together as one. I subconsciously find myself clapping and stomping to the beat as Kabalat Shabbat starts. Once I hear the tune, something clicks in my mind and I know that Shabbat is beginning. I can't help but smile.

The strange part about this anecdote is that I have never been someone who really connects to music. I don't have a favorite band, I don't have an ipod, I hardly listen to music at all. What's more is that this story is not referring to any specific time, group, or place. Wherever I am, with whomever I am, whenever it is, I always react the same way to Kabalat Shabbat.

Why then, do I always respond so strongly to the melodies of Kabalat Shabbat when I never otherwise react to music? Why do I find myself so absorbed in the tunes? I think that it is because of what the music of Kabalat Shabbat means to me. The *nusakh* (tune) of Kabalat Shabbat reflects so many different values. For example, these beautiful tunes reflect the importance and intensity of Shabbat as it enters. They truly are a proper greeting for such a holy day. They reflect tradition as they have been used for hundreds of years since the Kabalists of Tzfat created the service. However, I think that they are most important to me because they reflect community. No matter the circumstances, whenever Kabalat Shabbat opens, I feel as though I am surrounded by an incredible group. This is especially the case when I am praying with USY. So, as we begin Kabalat Shabbat at convention, take a moment, close your eyes, sit back, and allow yourself to be absorbed into the prayer. You won't regret it.

-Josh Cooper, Regional Religious Education VP

HAVDALLAH

As a sixth grader, I wasn't too much into the religious thing. Nonetheless, when my mother decided to attend *Ne'ilah* service (the ending service of Yom Kippur), I somehow felt compelled to tag along. Pumped up with allergy meds, and tired from only having a mid-day snack, one would have thought the near full standing service would have been miserable for me. Yet something hit me that night. The service progressed and it was time for Havdallah. Everyone crowded on the bima and the all the kids were given glow sticks. When the shofar sounded its final note, I realized there might be something to this Jewish thing.

I attribute that moment with keeping me an active Jewish teen. I went on to have a Mincha-Ma'ariv-Havdallah Bar Mitzvah and it became my favorite service. My first Kadima convention was memorable because I realized there was an organization that fostered Jewish growth and had awesome Havdallahs! Through this I became active in USY.

This past *Ne'ilah* I reflected back upon the last 6 years and all the memorable Havdallah services. From the beach of Costa Mesa two summers ago with USY on Wheels BUS C '07, to free-weekend Shabbos at the Fuchsberg Center amphitheater on USY Israel Adventure Pilgrimage '08 this past summer, from my Bar Mitzvah to my brother's earlier this month, Havdallah is special. The spirituality of the passing Sabbath, the sadness created by loosing your Shabbat soul, the anticipation for next Shabbat, or the next convention, the warmth of family and friends and love emanating from the moment; this is what has kept our people going for thousands of years. As Rabbi Paul Friedman says, "May this coming Shabbat be the best of your life, until the following Shabbat, and may they get progressively better until Ha'olam Haba," and if I might add, until every moment is as pure and spiritual as the "yai dai dai's" of Havdallah.

-Scott Siegel, Membership RGB and Chapter President

USY Tickles the Ivories Of Each Person Differently

I sit at the piano, and I softly push the metal pedal beneath my foot, not enough to drown the air in the reverberations of all the notes played, but just enough so that echoing shimmers remain, faint overtones of the original sound. I begin to press my fingers upon the white keys, which brings hammers upon strings that are stretched over a cavernous body, and make the sound of this familiar instrument. I begin playing, and revel in the sounds that I have managed to create.

I do not have any music in front of me, and I am forced to rely on quick thinking to keep music going in time as I improvise a piece of my own devising. For me, this is not uncommon. While I profess no great skill at piano, I am able to perform with little preparation, and I enjoy greatly the ability to create something from scratch, to mold new art based merely on any feelings I have at the time of its conception. For me what is greatest about music is the way that it is limitless. 12 notes produce all the music that has been heard, is being heard, or ever will be heard. There are infinite possibilities, and as someone who loves music, I can never help but to always try to seek new sounds, always striving for some new insight through the art form.

I like to think that I treat life the same way that I treat music. Life, like music, is full of unlimited possibilities. Life, like music, has a few basic parts that are universal to everyone, but lead to huge variations of interpretation and reaction. I became your mem/prog because I wanted to reach out to each of you, to explore the possibilities of each of you individually as USYers, to understand the interpretations and reactions unique to you. USY is an organization amazing, like music, for the variety of experiences it can lend to anyone, and I hope that you all join me in seeking to capitalize on that opportunity, and introduce yourself to everyone, always seek to make friends, and take risks on what could be the next great thing in store for you.

-Jon Hecht, Regional Membership/Programming VP

When Music Fails



On July 13th 2008, I did the unthinkable. I broke my iPod. It was an honest mistake, really. It was only the beginning of my second week in Israel on Pilgrimage. My group was staying at a hostel in Eilat, and I was trying to maneuver with the weird outlet adaptor/converter so that I could charge my iPod before I would need to use it to fall asleep that night. The portable electronic slipped from my hands, and in a moment not unlike slow motion instant replay, I saw it evade my reach and plummet toward the hard hostel floor. I watched in terror as the top left corner of my iPod hit the hard hostel floor and bounced back up only the slightest bit before finally landing face up. The white, dead face of the iPod stared back at me, and I accurately assumed the worst.

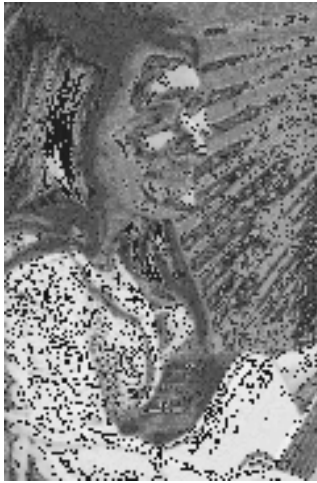
I am one of those people who just can't seem to live without her music. My computer currently holds 2339 songs on iTunes (the equivalent of 5.9 straight days of music), and these songs make up 22 different "playlists" for my many different listening moods and situations. Every moment that I am in my room, there is music coming from the speakers on my computer. Every night, when I fall asleep, music resonates in my ears and shapes my dreams. Every time I need an escape or comfort, music is always there for me. That said, imagine my horror when the realization struck me that my 2000-plus sources of escape were lost to me, and I was 5000-plus miles from home.

What did I do next? Freak out, of course, as that is the only rational response to any pressing issue. I probably spent a good ten minutes panicking to my roommates, Ariel and Stacie, about how I didn't know how I was going to fall asleep that night, about how I didn't know what I would do for the rest of the summer without my music, about how I couldn't POSSIBLY survive. And then Stacie offered me her iPod for the night. A wave of gratitude rushed through me and my problem was temporarily resolved. However, it didn't take long for me to recognize the real moral within my problem's resolution. As thankful as I was to receive the gift of music for at least one more night, I could not attribute the positive spike in my mood merely to the fact that I could fall asleep and dream of melodic tunes once more. I had met this girl less than three weeks before, and she was willing to give up her music for my lack thereof. Music itself is wonderful and, to many of us, a staple in daily life, but it is altogether replaceable. Friendship, however, cannot be bought so easily. As they say, every cloud has a silver lining. As I say, every broken iPod has a life lesson.

-Haley Schulman, Chapter President and Kolenu Assistant Editor

INTERVIEW WITH SINGER MELISSA SPERBER

*****Found NOWHERE else but HERE, in Kolenu!!!*****



When did your career as a musical artist start? What or who inspired you to begin?

About two years ago I started to teach myself how to play guitar. I became addicted to playing, which sort of blew up into something greater than I ever could've imagined. Last November I was given the amazing opportunity to record my first demo with the producer of the new musical "A Tale of Two Cities." Working with him was a blast, and once the project was done I started performing my music all over New Jersey. What truly inspired me to begin was the deep connection I have with the lyrics I come up with, and the effect they have on so many people. It's the best feeling to know that a complete stranger is touched by the lyrics that come from my very own heart.

What do you love most about playing music? Why do you continue to play?

Honestly, what I love most about playing music is reaching out to other people. This is the exact reason why I continue to play. The way that I write a song is by sitting in a corner with my guitar, playing random chords and singing whatever's on my mind. It's completely real. I've gotten such an immense reaction from people all over the world saying that my music has inspired them to do great things, and that is really all that I strive for. My music is my relaxation, my life, my world, my story. The fact that I'm able to inspire other people through it is really rewarding.

Out of the songs you have written, what song and lyrics are your personal favorites?

"If you live to your own theme song, and you wrote all the words, what can go wrong? You will stay strong. If you dance your way through it all, to the beating of your heart, everything will go the way you want." The first song I ever wrote, "The Way You Want," is everything that I stand for, and to be completely honest, I didn't think the first song I ever wrote would have such an impact on so many people around me. It's so personal and sums up everything I believe in. It's my favorite by far.



Where could one sample some of your music? Do you have a website?

You can hear three of my favorite songs and read my story on www.myspace.com/melissasperber. You don't need a myspace to get on; it's like a normal website! Also, I'll have a bunch of my demos with me on Sunday of convention for you to buy. Half the proceeds go to T.O! :)

If you could have dinner with any three musicians/musical artists, who would you choose?

Hmm...that's a tough one. I'd have to say Alicia Keys, John Mayer, and Matt Duke. I really look up to Alicia, she's such a strong woman, I absolutely love John's music, and Matt Duke is my new favorite up and coming artist. You should all check him out; he's great!



How About Some *Nauseatingly Sappy* Quotes about Music!!

- 1) "Music is love in search of a word." Sidney Lanier
- 2) "Music is moonlight in the gloomy night of life." Jean Paul Richter
- 3) "Music is well said to be the speech of angels." Thomas Carlyle
- 4) "Music is the medicine of the breaking heart." Leigh Hunt



And Why Not Throw In Some ☞☞☞☞☞ er ("Funny" in Wingdings!) Quotes about Music!!

- 1) "Opera is when a guy gets stabbed in the back and instead of bleeding, sings." ~Ed Gardner
- 2) "MTV is to music as KFC is to chicken!" ~Lewis Black
- 3) "There's people making babies to my music. That's nice." ~Barry White
- 4) "I don't like country music, but I don't mean to denigrate those who do. And for the people who like country music, denigrate means to 'put down.'" ~Bob Newhart



Suprisingly Complicated Answer to Lyrics Quiz!!

Most of you probably thought that "D" was the correct answer. After all, the Rolling Stone's don't exactly fall under the category of recent popular music. However, you are incorrect!

"C," the insightful quote by 50 Cent, is the one that doesn't belong. Why, you ask? Well, obviously, because it is the only one that is actually grammatically correct!

* First, in "A," Missy Elliot conjugates the verb "make" incorrectly. It should say "makes."

* Then in "B," T.I. says, "Amazing they ungrateful.." Um, where is the verb in that phrase? Yeah... I don't see it!

* Now in "D," The Rolling Stones use a double negative. Apparently they didn't have great grammar in the 60's either!

* And For "E," another double negative!! So he's technically saying that he does, in fact, want somebody else. Thanks, Chris Brown!

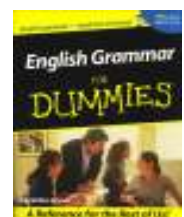
Now by NO MEANS am I advocating 50 Cent's apparent non-charitable ways, but I DO have to admit that it's quite impressive that he raps with such correct grammar! Even in a song like "P.I.M.P." where he's disrespecting women, it's nice to see those grammar rules he learned in grade school that these other artists seemingly have forgotten.

YOUR AWESOME 08/09 KOLENU STAFF

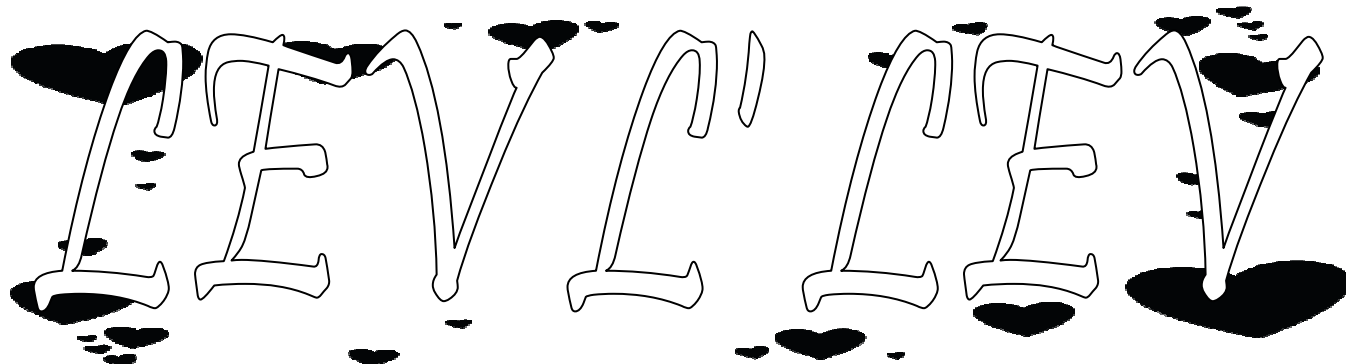
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IF YOU WANT TO WRITE AN ARTICLE FOR KOLENU, E-MAIL US! THE DEADLINE FOR THE MID WINTER KINNUS KOLENU IS JANUARY 23RD!



An Eternal Hope

by Jonathan Berman

*I pick up the horn, press down on the keys.
Mouth into the piece, sound blowing through the breeze.
At first, it comes soft, slowly growing louder.
What of this tune? What of its power?*

*People have devoted their lives to the message of this song?
This national anthem people hold onto so strong,
But what real hope can this song bring us today?
D-E-F-G-A-A.*

My Turn

by Emily Horowitz

*Turn the volume up
Pounding through my blood*

*Heart and soul
He's my thought*

He's my soul

The song is not yet finished

*The rhythm beats along and the drum keeps in
time with my heart*

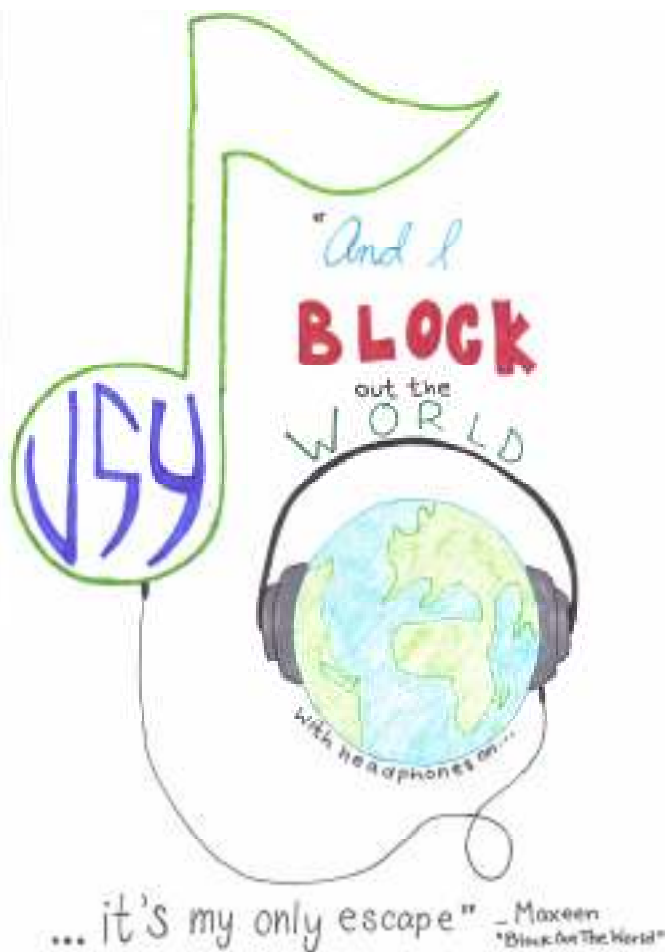


Illustration by Halli James

SO YOU SAY YOU WANNA PUBLISH YOUR WORK FOR LEV L' LEV?? YOU CAN SUBMIT ANYTHING YOU WANT FROM POETRY TO CARTOONS TO PHOTOGRAGHS TO JOKES! Send all submissions to Jon Berman at Jberman09@yahoo.com or Haley Schulman at haley_schulman@yahoo.com.