

Music

MUSICAL MUSINGS
Eitan Freilich

Utilising inspiration and charisma

For me, the month has primarily focused on reflection. Reflection is so important and can really help change one's life. Yet all too often we're just in too much of a hurry and life slips by. And then it's too late . . . I'm sitting at Terminal 5 at Heathrow, wondering how in the world I got here. It's the strangest feeling – looking on yourself from the outside, as if you're watching someone else's life go by. It's rather like a film. As I embark on the next trip to America to continue working on my album, my mind drifts back to when a little eight-year-old boy discovered his passion for singing. My mother always encouraged education, whether Kodesh or Chol, and I was quite hard working at school. I certainly did my best to behave. Well, most of the time! All right, sometimes. Interestingly, I always used to tell my mother, when she was concerned that I was spending too much time singing, and not enough time studying, that when I am busiest and doing what I love, my exam results were always better. And that's the truth. As the saying goes, 'if you need something done, ask a busy man' – when time is spare, I find I use it more efficiently. Odd, I know.

At Menorah Foundation School in Edgware I was lucky to have been mentored by Rabbi Chaim Warshawsky ztl, who encouraged me to develop my love of singing and offered me opportunities at school to play piano and sing regularly for the entire school at the weekly Shabbos assemblies. What still fascinates me today is the impact these Rebbees and teachers - including the unforgettable Daniel Sunshine, who is still teaching at the school today - can make. An apparently trivial incident or action, a particular class, can impress itself forever into a child's mind and imagination. It's these life lessons, experiences and ideas, rather than the multiplication tables, which shape a child's mind and worldview, enabling us to make the day-to-day and lifelong, important decisions that add up to the story of our lives. I often reflect how lucky I was in the Rebbees and teachers I encountered at both primary and secondary school. They not only respected and trusted my creativity but also actively encouraged and supported my ambitions. Playing at those school assemblies led me on to fulfil my passion and my dream, performing and writing music each and every day. I'm

filled with wonder and questions - if these communal leaders and ordinary – ordinary! - people can have such a positive impact, we must be careful to ensure that their inspiration and charisma are always utilised for the best. It's funny because I sometimes feel I've never left school. Just recently I received a call from Daniel Sunshine, my former Year 6 teacher, who invited me back to the school to discuss my thoughts, ideas and journeys with the children. Or take Rabbi Muster, a Rebbe from my secondary school, with whom I am still very close. After producing an annual show at Hasmonean, he called to ask if I would come back with my team to put on the 'performance of the year'. We did, and the spectacular show ended up with dancing and a Kumzitz finale with my band and sound team. Truly special – for performers and audience alike. It's an honour for me as I now become in turn the memory that the new generation of children may recall during reflections of their childhood and beyond. They'll hopefully remember the magical atmosphere we created through the medium of Jewish music and Jewish ideas. For me it's a responsibility but a huge honour too.

Talking about parents, not only was I lucky that mine allowed me to move into this profession when I was so young, but they actively encouraged me to do so. Many parents would have impressed on their male offspring the safety and joys of the accountancy profession, perhaps. And now that I am married, it's not just about me. My wife puts up with the late nights when I'm not at home, the countries I fly to at long and short notice but she does enjoy the benefits of increased air miles and joining me for every Shabbos she can! There's always a silver lining, I guess.

They've just called my flight for boarding and I have the daily Daf and lots of work to do on the plane. I'll be here until after Shavuot, so wishing you all a *gut Yom Tov*. Until next time . . .

To contact Eitan Freilich email: management@efmusic.co.uk



PHOTO
BLAKE EZRA

*I now become in turn
the memory that the new
generation of children may
recall during reflections of
their childhood and beyond*