

Music

MUSICAL MUSINGS
Eitan Freilich

From the Big Apple to a taste of honey

Where do I begin? I feel more *chez moi* crammed like a sardine into a plane with a crowd of fellow-passengers than in my quietly respectable suburban home - which isn't as miserable as it sounds, considering that the airline has definitely upped its game when it comes to inflight meals. Don't tell my wife, though - I suspect she wouldn't be too happy to read that I rate their food as superior to hers! Davening in shul over Shavuot in a grand building overlooking Fifth Avenue was indeed a treat - and very different from my regular views of suburban Hendon and Golders Green. After singing for the shul and recording parts of my upcoming album, I returned from New York straight after Shavuot and seem to have plunged into non-stop performing, thanks to the excellent assistance of endless adrenaline and lots of strong black coffee. Communal events are a treat, with lovely people coming together to support a local cause. Camp KEF held their annual fundraising bike ride-as reported in the JT last week- and I was privileged to perform alongside my friend, singer Buchy Gluck, from Manchester, and together with my team under the musical direction of Motti Cohen at the finish line. The sun was beaming, the music flowed and the children and campers of KEF were having the time of their lives. Things don't get much better, right?

Life is always busy - I feel like a bee in a hive, by which I mean making sweet honey, not buzzing around like a nuisance, stinging innocent people! You would think the *Omer* and the upcoming *Three Weeks* are the quiet times, but in fact, we use those times to plan and prepare for the other weeks of the year. That's not a complaint - what do I have to complain about? All I mean is that a lot of work gets done in what seem to be the respite times.

I recently worked again at The Grove—a fabulous location near Watford—with The Function Band, a fantastic group of musicians founded and led by Dan Rosen. It dawned on me how special it is to be introduced to such fine people whom I would never meet otherwise. And how

wonderful also to be able to perform at simchas. It makes no difference - a simcha is a simcha, and the band excel and deliver each and every time, regardless of the event. Equally, the time Shabbos goes out at present allows for some unique and popular *Havdalah kumzitz* events, when people come together to pour their souls out in song. There's nothing quite like the language of song - it transcends age, class and culture, and brings us together in our shared humanity. I love the easy informality, the laid-back nature of these events, a rare chance for us British people to forget our traditional stiff upper lip and wear our hearts on our sleeves. Oh - I nearly forgot. While building up the air miles, I flew to Paris for two days to meet with my designers to discuss the album cover. Obviously, I didn't miss out on practising my GCSE French and visiting the Arc de Triomphe, although unlike the rest of my family, I'm no culture vulture. Not that that's saying much. Anyway, we managed to discuss the photo-shoot, finalise the front cover shot and head out for dinner - all in all, a very productive day indeed. We've started working on the rest of the graphics here in London and hope to have these finished by the end of the month. It's actually quite exciting to see the final stages coming together - this project has taken less than a year - certainly a record in this industry, if you pardon the pun.

To all my readers: Thank you for staying with me over the last few months. I genuinely feel that we've been on this journey together. Over the next few weeks there will be many exciting announcements and developments and I look forward to sharing them with you. During the break I took to write this, I've received six missed calls and countless emails. Looking at my impatient producer, I reckon I'd better get back to work. See you around.

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PHOTO
BLAKE EZRA

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