

Music

MUSICAL MUSINGS
Eitan Freilich

Two new reasons to be Freilich in 5779

Gazing wonderingly around the Neonatal Department in London's University College Hospital isn't something I ever imagined I'd be doing on a Motzoei Shabbos. Yes, it's an anxious experience - but my eyes have been opened to the incredible science, research and 24/7 care devoted to our little twin boys - and that is something to be incredibly happy about. But let me take you back to the beginning of this story to tell you how we arrived here.

The last time I wrote my column was more than a couple of weeks ago. We've been incredibly busy preparing the release of my new album 'Yavo Shalom', which is due on the same publication date as this edition of the *Jewish Tribune*! I've been simultaneously equally absorbed in coming into hospital regularly, sometimes every day, for scans and discussions. You know how a subatomic particle like an electron can be in two locations at the same time? I must be the first specimen of a human who can pull off the same trick. From the start we were fortunate to experience the most wonderful care from our consultant, Mr Ruwan Wimalasundera, and from the amazing team of midwives, who took us under their wing and cared for us throughout our entire dramatic journey.

On the second day of Succos we were rushed into hospital, and at just 28 weeks, my wife Gabriella gave birth, Baruch Hashem, to two adorable tiny boys. The neonatal team are

beyond sensational - with their medical care and attention to detail, as well as their care for us, the parents. Words cannot express our admiration and overwhelming gratitude. Even so, I can't say it's been easy and although I generally like to keep my personal life private, I have to be honest with you. I wear my heart on my sleeve; how I am on stage is how I am in life. It's the same for Gabriella; life isn't always easy or straightforward, but when Hashem gives you a test, or sets you a challenge, I've learnt to embrace it with both hands and move forward. I say "I," but we all know it's a partnership. Gabriella is the inspiration who has given me the strength to do the 'moving forward'; she's the rock who keeps me strong when we visit the children every day.

We plan to be in hospital for the next few months, so I also want to thank the entire Jewish community for their davening, words of support and total chizuk on our behalf throughout this anxious time. Our little babies are currently on life support, but hearing about the group Tehillim in the UK and abroad gives us fresh courage to face each new day.

Meanwhile, we continued celebrating Succos, which included performing at many more simchas - celebrating life and those magical family moments of all those I'm honoured to sing for. We are so lucky to be members of such an exclusive club: the beautiful Jewish nation. It's funny, we entitled my album *Yavo Shalom* because I wanted to express my heartfelt

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PHOTO BLAKE EZRA

admiration for the Jewish people and the pride we can take in our achievements, Gemilas Chasodim (acts of kindness) and the Kiddush Hashem we have the potential to make every day. After Succos came a week full of simchas and events, a joy which never fails to thrill me. The strength of our people in times of sadness and in times of happiness is unique and special, a testament to our wonderful nation-family.

Recently, becoming a father myself reminded me how my own father ztl would encourage our family to travel. He said it's the best form of education

one can get. Only now, as I travel across the world to sing and perform, do I fully appreciate this wisdom. And as I meet Jewish people and communities across the world, young and old, traditional and modern, I see how music transcends our superficial differences and unites our souls. But sadly, aside from these precious moments, we can all too often descend into discord as we let our differences divide us. This new album, *Yavo Shalom*, is a call for unity, and a plea for peace. If we join together in singing a new song to Hashem, peace will come. If we serve Hashem

with joy, peace will come. If the music of unity inspires us to actively seek out unity, peace will come. It's time to beat the drum of unity, and let music march us towards the heavenly peace and harmony yet to come.

The album is now available online and in all stores where Jewish music is sold. If you would like to say Tehillim for Tinokot Bnei Shira Gittel, Eitan and Gabriella Freilich express their gratitude.

To contact Eitan Freilich for bookings or enquiries, please email his team management@efmusic.co.uk.