Hava Nashira 2016 faculty

Ellen Allard is a multi-award winning children’s Recording Artist, Composer, Performer and Early Childhood Music Educator, drawing on a rich tradition of musical experiences in presenting her lively and captivating concerts, keynote presentations and workshops for family audiences and educational conferences across the country. Ellen has the uncanny ability to connect with audiences of all ages. She has a unique, charismatic, charming, and heartwarming way of getting people to sing together. Ellen knows exactly how to engage and hold children’s attention, sometimes goofy, sometimes serious, always memorable. With adult audiences, she weaves together moments that are moving and spiritual. And when she shares her music with parents and children together, she helps them experience the amazing power that singing as a family creates.

A former Elementary School Vocal Music teacher and Early Childhood classroom and music teacher, Ellen began her formal piano studies at the age of five, studied flute through elementary and high school, and learned to play acoustic guitar while a student in college. She also dabbles with banjo, ukulele, autoharp, recorder, and spoons! She makes her home in Worcester, Massachusetts. Ellen is a graduate of Boston University, with a Bachelor’s degree in Music Performance and Education. She earned her Master’s degree in Early Childhood Education at Arcadia University.

Merri Lovinger Arian serves on the faculty of the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music at the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion in New York. She teaches both cantorial and rabbinic students, offering courses in Music Education, Conducting, Congregational Singing, Worship, and Contemporary Congregational Repertoire. Merri previously served as Director of Music for Synagogue 2000 (S2K), a leading transdenominational institute developing models for revitalizing synagogue life, and has more recently served as Synagogue 3000’s consultant on liturgical arts at HUC-JIR in New York. In that role, Merri supervises rabbinic and cantorial students in creating worship collaboratively at the College-Institute. She holds an MA in Teaching, a BFA in Music Education, and a Certificate in Music Therapy. Merri edited R’fuah Sh’leimah: Songs of Healing. Her recordings include Nefesh: Songs for the Soul, a CD for S2K, and NFTY in Harmony, an album with an accompanying songbook of original choral arrangements. She has written on “Music, Prayer and Sacred Community,” and on the educational value of youth choirs.

Noah Aronson is an energetic and soulful composer/performer whose unique musical style propels his music into communities across the country and in Israel. While studying Piano and Jazz Composition at Berklee College of Music, Noah simultaneously held the position of Composer-in-Residence at Temple Beth Elohim in Wellesley, Massachusetts; teaching and composing a wide-array of new liturgical works. Noah conducted the Manhattan HaZamir Choir from 2008-2010 and his choral music received an honorable mention in the 2009 GTM Young Composer’s Contest. Noah released his first solo Jewish album in May 2011 and the title song ‘Am I Awake’ was a winner in the NewVoices song competition in July 2011.

Noah’s latest project ‘Left Side of the Page’ sets to music some of the poetic selections from the Mishkan Tefilah Prayer Book. He had the distinct honor of presenting music from this project at the 2013 URJ Biennial as he lead a community of over 5000 people in Shabbat prayer.

Noah’s music is now sung in progressive communities worldwide and has been included as part of the cantorial curriculum at the Hebrew Union College Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music. (www.noaharonson.com)

Cantor Rosalie Boxt currently serves as Cantor of Temple Emanuel in Kensington, Maryland, just north of Washington DC. She was invested Cantor from the School of Sacred Music of the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion in New York in 2001. She is the URJ Worship Advisor and Director of Worship for the 2015 URJ Biennial. A long-time NFTY, Goldman Union Camp, and Kutz Camp Songleader, she co-edited the Shireienu Chordster, published Fall 2000. Originally from St. Louis, Missouri, she attended the University of Pennsylvania as a Jewish Studies Major, Theatre Minor.

Rosalie is a past Vice-President of Member Relations and External Partnerships of the ACC (American Conference of Cantors). Through PresenTense, an incubator for young Jewish social entrepreneurs, and ConnectGens of the DC-JCC, she is launching a non-profit business Kesher Shir; a venture which brings together diverse Jewish musicians to study and collaborate to create meaningful music which will enrich and enliven worship and strengthen communities.
Cantor Ellen Dreskin is the Coordinator of the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music Cantorial Certification Program. She is an innovative leader in today’s reform movement. Her expertise extends from music to synagogue transformation, from experiential education to enlivened liturgy and mysticism. She has worked with Jews of all denominations from Houston to Chicago and Los Angeles to Boston, both as a scholar in residence and in her capacity as past Director of Programs for Synagogue 2000, a national, not-for-profit institute dedicated to revitalizing and re-energizing synagogue life in North America.

Ellen has served as Cantor and Educator for congregations in Cleveland and New York, and has taught for many years on the faculty of URJ Summer Kallot, Hava Nashira, and the URJ Kutz Camp Leadership Academy. She is a native Texan, a graduate of HUC-JIR School of Sacred Music, has a Master’s Degree in Jewish Communal Service from Brandeis University, and is proud to have received her honorary Doctorate of Music from Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion.

Alan Goodis is a National touring Jewish musician playing over 150 events a year. Born and raised in Toronto, Alan is a proud product of URJ Goldman Union Camp Institute. Noted for his dedication to building relationships and community through music, Alan travels throughout North America to serve as an Artist-In-Residence and Performer at Temples, Youth Conventions, and Jewish summer camps. His 2009 self-titled debut recording, launched Alan onto the Jewish music scene with its powerful vocals and bold melodies. Alan is a strong presence in the Reform Jewish movement and works tirelessly to engage and empower Jewish youth and adults through music. Alan has served as Musical Director for NFTY International Convention and on faculty Hava Nashira. In 2011, he developed Nashir: NFTY Teen Songleading Institute in partnership with the URJ to provide meaningful Songleader training to high school students in North America. Alan has been a featured performer and presenter at URJ Biennials and with the Wexner Foundation. This March Alan will release his long anticipated full-length studio album "This Place" along with a songbook and 7-12th grade education curriculum. Alan lives in Chicago, IL with his wife Codi. For more information about Alan visit www.alangoodis.com.

Rabbi Noam Katz is one of the most exciting voices in contemporary Jewish music. He has shared his high-flying energy and soulful melodies with Jewish and interfaith audiences throughout North America, Africa and Israel. A longtime songleader at URJ Eisner and Kutz Camps, Noam has performed at the URJ Biennial, CAJE, BBYO International, Limmud - England, NFTY Convention, and countless summer camps and congregations.

In 2003, Noam embarked on the most exciting journey of his life, spending three months with the Abayudaya Jews of Uganda. He has since shared their powerful story and music with audiences young and old, incorporating the message of Jewish unity and tikkun olam wherever he goes. In any setting, Noam is committed to creating strong Jewish and interfaith community through the power of music.

Cantor Jeff Klepper created Hava Nashira in 1989 along with Debbie Friedman z'l and others. As a composer of more than 200 songs, including the widely-known prayer melodies Shalom Rav and Oseh Shalom, Cantor Jeff Klepper is one of the most renowned musicians in contemporary American Judaism. Drawing on an eclectic blend of folk, rock, jazz, Chassidic and Middle-Eastern sounds, combined with original lyrics that are witty and insightful, Jeff has created a new and unique Jewish musical style. He is currently serving as Cantor at Temple Sinai in Sharon, Massachusetts. His services -- particularly the monthly Shabbat b’simcha -- are celebrations of the Jewish spirit. As cantor, Jeff leads services, teaches music in the congregation’s religious school and shares his love of Jewish music with the entire congregation.

Raised in New York City, Jeff began to play the guitar at age eight. Several years later he received instruction from the legendary synagogue composer Abraham Wolfe Binder. He made his first recording of Jewish songs at 17 and has been composing ever since. In 1974, Jeff and Dan Freelander, a fellow college student, formed the singing duo Kol B'Seder. Jeff received his cantorial degree from HUC-JIR and has served as cantor in Israel and in Illinois.
Shira Kline, “ShirLaLa” is an internationally recognized, award-winning performer, educator and artist. Named as one of the “New re-engineers of Jewish Life,” she works in communities worldwide to enliven rituals, holiday celebration and love for Jewish life and prayer with children and adults alike. Shira has toured extensively throughout the United States as well as stages in Canada, England, Italy, Australia and New Zealand to bring programs that blend teaching, story and song. She also publishes “Blog Sameach,” a teacher and parent resource center and her popular ShirLaLa Jewish Kiddie Rock CDs are played in over 25,000 homes, classrooms and communities. She is on the faculty of the HUC-JIR Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music and the URJ’s Hava Nashira Music Institute. Shira is a founding creator of Lab/Shul and Storahtelling: An everybody-friendly, artist-driven experimental community for sacred Jewish gatherings. www.ShirLaLa.com

Dan Nichols has become one of the most beloved and influential Jewish contemporary musicians in North America. He performs over 200 events per year across North America to audiences from 20 to 5,000 people. He is a product of Jewish summer camp, having grown up at the URJ Goldman Union Camp Institute in Zionsville, IN. Dan has the unique ability to connect with Jewish youth in a meaningful and inspirational way. Through his energy, his enthusiasm and his music, Dan electrifies and enriches each Jewish community that he visits. Lay leaders and Jewish professionals around the country point to Dan’s music as an important and long-lasting influence in their lives.

Dan’s Jewish music has also become a vital part of the Reform Jewish world, with Jewish youth and clergy alike incorporating it into their study, worship, and communal celebrations. Songs like The Na Na Song, B’tzelem Elohim, Kehillah Kedoshah, Hoshia, and Sweet As Honey, are among the most popular songs in liberal Judaism today.

Be sure to look for Road To Eden, a full length documentary film directed by Doug Passon being released Fall 2013. Road to Eden documents the journey of Dan Nichols and his band E18hteen during his 2011 Southern Sukkot tour, crisscrossing 10 cities in the deep south in an RV. Along the way, Dan found unique Sukkot stories to tell — some uplifting, others heart-breaking. Through soul-stirring song and story, this film shines a light on the Jewish tradition’s most profound teachings about the fragility of existence, our connection to the Earth, and our dream of a world perfected. Sukkot is not just another Jewish holiday. It’s our roadmap to the Promised Land.

SPECIAL GUEST FACULTY in 2016! Rabbi Esteban Gottfried is the rabbi, co-Founder and Director of Beit Tefilah Israeli, Tel Aviv, a position he has held since BTI’s inception. Esteban was ordained as a rabbi at Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem, and he is currently a fellow at the New Israeli Rabbinical Program at Hartman Institute and Hamidrasha in Oranim. He was also one of the founders and board members of the Network of Emerging Jewish Communities (Reshet), a Fellow at Rikma leadership program, and a graduate of the “Gvanim” program for the advancement of pluralistic Jewish leadership. Esteban studied at Tel Aviv University, “Beit Zvi”, “Nissan Nativ Drama Studio” theater schools and at the Royal Court Theater in London. After completing his studies, he had an active career as playwright, stage director, screenwriter and actor for 20 years, and has been awarded prizes and awards including 2 “Israeli Oscars” (Ofir) as a writer and as an actor. He is married to Ruthie and is the father of Maya and Toby.