

Shabbat Shira 2018 faculty

Merri Lovinger Arian is a full-time member of 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 Programs and then Director of Music for Synagogue 2000 (S2K), a leading trans-denominational institute developing models for revitalizing synagogue life. Merri also served as Synagogue 3000's consultant on liturgical arts at HUC-JIR in New York. Since that time, Merri has supervised 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. Merri has served as faculty coordinator for Shabbat Shira since its inception in 2010, and prior to that served as faculty coordinator for Hava Nashira from 2005 – 2011.



For over ten years, **Noah Aronson** has inspired thousands with his "creativity, musicality and his playful and soulful spirit." -- Cantor Markowitz, Am Shalom, Glencoe, Illinois.

After earning a degree in Jazz Composition and Piano from Berklee College of Music, he held the position of Composer-in-Residence at Temple Beth Elohim in Wellesley, MA where he produced 4 albums of Jewish communal music with his mentor Cantor Jodi Sufirin. As a solo musician, Noah has released three full-length albums and songbooks entitled '*Am I Awake*,' '*Left Side of the Page*,' and his latest '*More Love*' including his 4 member all Israeli-Berklee alumni band. Music from these albums are now sung in progressive communities and summer camps worldwide and has been included as part of the Cantorial curriculum at the Hebrew Union College's Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music in New York City. Renowned for his unique and engaging style of prayer leadership, he had the distinct honor of leading over 5,000 people in Shabbat worship at the 2013 URJ Biennial in San Diego, CA.

Noah serves on the faculty of the annual Hava Nashira and Shabbat Shira workshops in Oconomowoc, WI and the Shirei Chaggiah workshop in London, England. In 2015, Noah partnered with Behrman House, the largest distributor of Jewish educational materials, to create an innovative, music-based curriculum entitled Hebrew in Harmony. His music has also been featured on two compilations from the PJ Library series.

Noah lives in New York City and is currently serving as the Creative Director of Sacred Music NY, a non-profit organization that organizes concerts and events around New York City bringing together spiritual musicians from diverse backgrounds to inspire interfaith dialogue and social change.



There is a reason why Time.com recently listed **Michelle Citrin** in their Top Ten list of Jewish rock stars and the Jerusalem Post calls Michelle “The Jewish IT girl”.

Michelle is an award-winning Brooklyn based singer/songwriter and producer best known as a pioneer of celebrating Jewish culture on YouTube with viral videos including, “20 Things to do with Matzah”, “Rosh Hashanah Girl” and “Hanukkah Lovin”. In total, these videos have received millions of

hits from around the world and has led to the press referring to Michelle as, “A YouTube Sensation”.

Inspired by Rav Kook’s, “What is old make new, what is new make holy,” Michelle sets out to find connection points to our tradition’s wisdom and culture in an easily accessible way. Currently, Michelle is traveling the world with her Artist in Residence program, “Eat. Pray. Sing”- a spiritually uplifting and soul nourishing Shabbat experience that weaves together the three tribal components that have united us for thousands of years - food, prayer, and song.

Michelle delivers insightful lyrics with her soulful voice and brings an angelic quality to worship services while offering a unique opportunity to engage with liturgical texts in a thoughtful and holistic manner. Whether playing in front of a sold-out crowd of thousands on the beach of Tel Aviv at a Birthright Mega Event, or an intimate set at a coffeehouse in Melbourne, Australia, Michelle’s engaging live performances and talent for writing catchy and meaningful songs have garnered rave reviews and numerous accolades including being named one of The Jewish Week’s, “36 Under 36 Next Wave of Jewish Innovators”, Billboard Music’s “Top Songwriters”, VH-1 Song of the Year finalist and recipient of a Great American Songwriting Honor.

Michelle’s music is celebrated in synagogues, camps and is featured in TV, Film, and Radio. Recent performances include the 60 for 60 Israel Celebration at the Kodak Theater in Los Angeles, CA, URJ Biennial, Limmud UK, LA, NYC, PBS Chanukah special, "Lights," as well as the 100th Anniversary of Tel Aviv’s Birthright Mega Event as well as appearing with likes of Gold selling artist, Matisyahu, Michelle Branch, Achinoam Nini, David Broza, Rami Kleinstein, and Idan Raichel.

Cantor Ellen Dreskin (www.ellendreskin.com) is an innovative leader in the liberal Jewish movement. Her expertise extends from music to synagogue transformation, from experiential education to enlivened liturgy and mysticism. She has worked as a scholar-in-residence with Jews of all denominations from Houston to Chicago and Los Angeles to Boston, and has served as Cantor and Educator for congregations in Cleveland and New York. She consults with rabbis and cantors across the country, and has been an online educator for both Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and for the Union for Reform Judaism.

Ellen is a graduate of HUC-JIR, 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 in 2011. She is a synagogue consultant and clergy coach in the areas of liturgical innovation, personal prayer practice, and communal worship skills.



She is married to Rabbi Billy Dreskin, and is extremely proud of their joint projects: Katie, Jonah (z”l), and Aiden.

Rabbi Noam Katz, MAJE, got hooked onto Jewish music during his many wonderful summers at URJ Eisner and Kutz Camps. He is a lifelong Jewish educator, songleader and storyteller, who has brought his unique passion for Jewish text, social justice and world music to hundreds of Jewish and interfaith communities in North America and abroad. Noam has released four CDs of original Jewish music: *Rakia* (2001); *Mirembe, Salaam v'Shalom* (2005); *A Drum In Hand* (2009), and his latest album, *After The Flood: Songs of Resilience and Remembrance*. In 2017, Transcontinental Music Publications released an anthology of Noam's music, including notation for over 70 of his compositions which are widely sung in camps, congregations and communities throughout the world.



Noam serves as the Dean of Jewish Living for The Leo Baeck Day School in Toronto, leading dynamic worship and Jewish experiences for over 750 “scholars in short pants.” He has served on the faculty of Hava Nashira, Shabbat Shira, Shirei Chagigah (UK) and the FJC Cornerstone seminar. He looks for every opportunity to train and inspire the next generation of songleaders and Jewish educators. Noam is a graduate of Brown University and received his Rabbinic ordination from the Los Angeles campus of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) in 2010. Today, he lives in Toronto with his wife Jaime and their three joy of joys: Mikayla, Ezra and Roey. (www.NoamKatz.com)



Julie Silver is one of the most celebrated and beloved performers in the world of contemporary Jewish music today. She tours throughout the world, and has been engaging audiences with her gorgeous compositions and liturgical settings, her lyrical guitar playing, her dynamic stage presence, and her megawatt smile for over 25 years.

Although she resides in Southern California, Julie’s roots are deep in New England. She was raised in Newton, Massachusetts and by the time she was 18, she was leading raucous song sessions throughout the Reform Jewish movement and playing coffeehouses in and around Boston. Eventually, she would become one of the most sought-after song leaders in the country.

Without backing from a major label, Julie has sold more than 100,000 copies of her CDs. Between 1992 and 2000 she released some of the highest selling, successful albums of original Jewish music (*Together, From Strength to Strength, Walk With Me, and Beyond Tomorrow*). These days, Silver is focused on writing, playing, traveling, mentoring up-and-coming singer-songwriters, participating in Social Justice projects and making the Jewish experience more meaningful. www.juliesilver.com/