

Music

MUSICAL MUSINGS
Eitan Freilich

There's no place like home

I'm jotting these notes down while nestling snugly in a car wash. It seemed such a brilliant idea at first - I would get a little quiet time to relax and reflect in peace while the car took a shower. But now I sort of regret that idea as these brushes slowly, mercilessly, loudly scratch away at my poor car. After spending the first days of Pesach in Manchester and performing Chol Hamoed live in Scotland with Aryeh Wagner and his wonderful team, I managed to enjoy the last days of Yom Tov in the comfort and warmth of my own home. There really is no place like home. But all this made me think about the importance of balancing work life with home life. It's not easy but there's nothing more important - especially in my line of work, where I am performing at events at night regularly and travelling several times a month abroad. After all that travelling, you can imagine how wonderful it is to walk through your own front door again.

It also dawned on me that there are some aspects of my job which might seem trivial and irrelevant but actually inspire me to continue, because I truly love what I do. During the day I am working on my album here in London and in the States, but I also try to visit all the Baalei Simcha at whose events I will be singing. I have the privilege (and yes, it's nearly always a privilege) to sit down with these wonderful families to discuss their unique needs, wishes and requests for their special day. As I said, it might seem something quite simple, but for me it makes the job human. Not a 'job' at all, in fact, but a calling - a real vocation. How can I perform at someone's wedding without knowing them? Of course, for one reason or another I have done this a couple times, but, ideally, I would always love to meet a Chosson and Kallah beforehand so that I can deliver the musical experience they've been dreaming of all their life (particularly in the Kallah's case, because she often has a very clear idea of her ideal musical

setting). Oh, but those meetings can be quite fun! Some might even argue that these behind-the-scenes preparations are more exciting than the simcha (although that would be sad really). I am often asked to duet with the father of one of the parents or sing along with one of the siblings. But my favourite, for sure, always has to be the impromptu, spontaneous kumzitz and singalong, as we choose those memorable wedding songs to walk down the aisle to. It's like a private mini-concert - our own special, exclusive performance ahead of the great public show. Well that's another topic in itself - 'A show'. I have quite strong feelings about that but I think I'll try to write about some of the conflicts I grapple with next time. My other favourite part of the job is those meetings with my amazing team. You see, these people I work with day in day out play a huge role in my life. The reason we work so well together on stage is because there is a genuine respect and friendship with each other - from the sound crew to the musicians; we are one happy work family. But the best part is how much I learn from the people I work with.

I always say it's never too late to keep learning, and there's so much to learn from each and every one of them. Truth be told, the Jewish music industry isn't big at all, so it's wonderful how all the musicians and talent within the community are so loyal and supportive to each other. It's something that always makes me feel so lucky to be working in this industry. What other business is there where everyone comes together in a spirit not of competition but collaboration and creativity? Anyway, I would love to continue writing but the jets have switched off, my car is squeaky clean (on the outside at least), fresh and sparkling, and there are about five cars behind hooting for me to move on. Until next time, my friends, *gut zimmer!*

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PHOTO
BLAKE EZRA

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