JERUSALEM’S GRAND GALA

The always-anticipated Israel Festival kicks off this week, with the 58th edition honing in on multiculturalism and identity.
JUST THE FACTS

Rabbi HeRzl Hefter is the founder and Rosh Beit Midrash of Har’el, the first coed Orthodox smicha program. Rabbi Hefter whilst at Yeshiva University studied under Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveichik זצ”ל, and later received smicha from Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein זצ”ל. Rabbi Hefter taught Yoreh De’ah to the Kollel fellows at the Gruss Kollel of Yeshiva University and served as the head of the Bruria Scholars Program at Midreshet Lindenbaum. He also taught in Moscow and served as Rosh Kollel of the first Torah MiZion Kollel in Cleveland, Ohio. His essays and online shiurim can be accessed at www.har-el.org

IN JERUSALEM MAY 24, 2019

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Where there’s smoke...

Lag Ba’omer is the holiday of bonfires and also of air pollution. It is very pleasant to sit around the campfire, especially as the spring nights are getting warmer, but although we do our best to evade the smoke, it seems that it’s there even when we aren’t aware of it. Ask whoever did your laundry after the last campfire you enjoyed.

Using the website of the Environmental Ministry’s Air Quality Monitoring System, we checked the air quality data for Lag Ba’omer 2018. On ordinary days, the respirable particulates whose diameter is 2.45 to 10 microns veer between 0 to 50 micrograms per cubic meter of air, but on Lag Ba’omer evening, the reading at the Efrata School in Jerusalem’s Baka neighborhood was 324 micrograms per cubic meter, more than a six-fold increase. At the same time, it seems that the smoke, at least last year, vanished as quickly as it arrived, and the extreme value recorded lasted for only a few hours. (We checked three-hour averages). It therefore comes as no surprise that those who suffer from respiratory difficulties are advised to stay indoors on Lag Ba’omer.

Lag Ba’omer is celebrated after about a month that abounds with fires of various kinds. It starts with the burning of chametz (leavened food) on Passover eve, and continues with barbecues during the week of Passover, and Mimouna the day after Passover (186 micrograms of particulate matter were recorded in 2018). The fires continue on Independence Day (111 micrograms per cubic meter) which – in addition to the fireworks – boasts traditional celebratory barbecues.

The amount of smoke could easily be reduced, as could the suffering of those with respiratory problems if people chose, for example, to make smaller fires (which would also be much safer), or to share one fire among several groups of picnickers.

Hope you had a happy Lag Ba’omer!

LAG BAOMER

Translated by Gilah Kahn-Hoffmann.
The writer is a researcher at The Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research.
Permission to speak
Seven members of the city council opposition Hitorerut Party, led by Ofer Berkovitch, have asked the city’s legal adviser to instruct Mayor Moshe Lion to publicly announce that he has not issued an order to impede contacts between them and civil servants and officials. While Lion has never issued such a prohibition publicly, nor is there any written evidence that he has done so, he has also not publicly announced that he supports robust contact.

As a result, Berkovitch and his list members feel they are trapped in an ambiguous situation, hence, their open letter to adv. Eli Malka. They request that he officially endorse their unfettered right to interact freely and openly with officials at Safra Square to fulfil their role to investigate whether things are being done properly and lawfully.

Parking
The municipality is developing a few new options for dealing with the serious lack of parking in the city center. These include: 1) narrowing sidewalks to make room for more parking; 2) allowing parking on large sidewalks that will not be narrowed; 3) legislating that all contractors building in the city must also build parking lots; and 4) converting empty plots for parking along the main streets in the city center.

The proposal to forbid parking in the city center to encourage increased use of the light rail has been rejected, at least for now, by coalition member Yossi Havilio, who holds the public transportation and traffic portfolio in the city. He argues that as long as there are not enough light rail lines, the automobile-driving public cannot be punished.

Invoking biblical curses
Fashkevilim (posted announcements) have appeared in Mea She’arim and Geula calling to organize a pulsa de nura (lashes of fire) kabbalistic ritual to punish haredi MKs who enter the government coalition and make compromises on the conscription law.

Radical haredim strongly oppose enrollment of young haredim into the IDF. Some of the MKs of the haredi lists are former members of the city council and might even be neighbors of those who are posting these announcements.

Staging history
The Mikro theater is launching its new production next week – a play based of Josephus Flavius’s landmark history The Jewish War, adapted for the stage by theater founder and director Irena Goralik. This is the first theatrical adaptation of the 2,000-year-old classic book, which has been a seminal source for understanding and tracking the history of the Jewish people during the Roman era.

The Mikro theater group is staging a series of original plays at the Jerusalem Theater, mostly written by its own directors and playwrights, to bring Jewish historical and cultural themes to life with modern theatrics.

Opens May 28. Tickets (NIS 70 to NIS 140) and info: (02) 560-5755.

Golden Hill invites you to begin a new chapter in a quality apartment complex on the heights of French Hill

- Luxurious building with a beautiful garden at the entrance.
- Spacious and maintained apartments, each of which comprise a bedroom, sitting room, kitchen, two bathrooms, and two balconies.
- Sheltered housing and nursing services at a high level, providing residents with support and safety.
- A rich variety of activities, cultural events, trips, workshops, and lectures.
- Professional, dedicated and caring staff in a warm family environment.
- Close to a central supermarket, several stores, coffee shops, and excellent public transportation.

For more details and a tour: 02-5891891 Golden-h@zahav.net.il
Israel Festival 2019: From the directors’ desks

**Eyal Sher** (left), the festival’s general director, with artistic director Itzik Jolly (right). (Merav Hadani)

**EYAL SHER**

The Israel Festival has returned to the halls and streets of Jerusalem every year for 58 years, gathering aficionados from across Israel and abroad. The event has changed significantly over the years, as veterans who have followed it for decades will readily attest. Established in a period when few Israelis could afford to travel abroad, it provided an opportunity to bring the heights of classical music, dance and theater to local audiences, and provide a bit of what was happening on Israeli stages to tourists. Classical music was absent at the center of the program, enabling music lovers to hear some of the world’s greatest musicians perform live.

Eyal Sher, the festival’s general director, and Itzik Jolly, its artistic director, spoke with its managing director, with artistic producer, and team of one in management and finance and one only in arts.

From the directors’ desks

**Eyal Sher**

From year to year, what we focus on is to enlarge the core of this festival, which is made of the breakthrough events brought to our public. We dare more, we explore more.

**Jolly**

Every place is the right place for these experiences. That’s exactly what the human spirit is about. That’s a question raised all the time and everywhere. Certainly, wherever the freedoms – of expression or artistic or civil – may be getting narrower, the most important and the right thing to do is to find new blood and put freedom of artistic and cultural expression. That’s the most important thing to do now. Here and everywhere, now and all the time.

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FestiVan will take music, dance and poetry to Jerusalem’s streets

Everyone can connect to music,” said Michael Avshalom, producer of the FestiVan performance at the 2019 Israel Festival and production manager at Jerusalem’s Incubator Theater. “Israel, and especially in Jerusalem, is the place to make connections that you wouldn’t expect, with people from different worldviews, with people from all over the world.”

From June 3 to 12, Avshalom and a team of artists calling themselves “FestiVan” will try to make these connections through a series of pop-up music shows carried out on a mobile stage truck. Acts including hip-hop, spoken word and Mexican and Azerbaijani soul music will show up at different spots around Jerusalem and transform each site into a hub of spontaneous music celebration.

The shows are part of the 58th annual Israel Festival, which runs from May 30 to June 15.

Avshalom said the goal of FestiVan is to “wake up the street” and “connect to the community.”

Because the audience will be different in each location — they will play in Kiryat Yovel, Zion Square, Fushai Square, Kiryat Menahem and the First Station — the details of each performance are not planned. Instead, he said, the artists feel out the audience and take it from there.

“They are rich and dynamic artists who can read a crowd,” Avshalom explained. “What the crowd wants, that is what will appear.”

There are three genres of performances. He described the first one as “protest music.” The second one takes authentic Mexican and Azerbaijani music and infuses it with Middle Eastern sounds. These artists were born or spent time in these countries but are today Israeli, representing the melting pot of Israel and especially Jerusalem.

The third performance leverages traditional Israeli texts and poems and puts them to music. The artists will interpret them on demand.

“The festival has been placed as a sort of beacon of freedom of artistic expression,” said festival general director, Eyal Sher. “The things we bring are very innovative, very contemporary.”

He said that by selecting shows that are not mainstream, they tend to “inspire independent thinking, be thought-provoking, challenging artistically and thematically. You immediately sort of frame the festival and all the shows within it as a statement.”

Sher said the festival is not trying to make a statement, but in Israel in recent years there has been what he described as a “narrowing of the borders” of freedom of expression in all areas, including the arts. As such, “when you do things with a free spirit, you become inadvertently rebellious.”

FestiVan, he explained is a chance to bring this festival to the members of the public, to meet them in their space.

“If you put on an event in the middle of Zion Square downtown, you don’t have a choice who the population will be,” he said. “It will be Orthodox, Arabs, Russian, students and businessmen.”

“Imagine you are downtown and a band comes. It stops, parks and opens its stage and the show begins. People just gather around.”

He said he expects at least 20,000 people to be touched by FestiVan throughout the week of its performances. Some 40,000 people participate in some aspect of the Israel Festival.

“What do I mean by a city like Jerusalem is so colorful, so great?” Sher said, “but at the same time, there is always an undercurrent of pressures. There are religious conflicts, political conflicts, cultural conflicts that are tearing us apart all the time. It always feels like something is going to erupt.”

“We believe in the power of art,” he continued. “Art brings joy to the human journey... The shows, in some sense, celebrate diversity, as opposed to looking at this diversity as a minus.”

• MAAYAN HOFFMAN
Ever wanted to be in someone else’s shoes—naturally in a figurative, rather than an actual footwear sense? Daniel González feels it might be a good idea to try putting ourselves in the other’s place, and that there are all sorts of added value benefits to be had from the exercise.

González will be in town next week, along with fellow Spanish Marie Roel, to participate in this year’s Musrara Mix Festival, which takes place for the 19th year at Musrara-The Naggar Multidisciplinary School of Art and Society from May 28–30 (7 p.m. to 11 p.m. daily). Each edition of the growing event, under the aegis of potential curator and Musrara school director Avi Sabag, focuses on a particular theme. This year’s central topic is displacement, which considering the history of the Musrara neighborhood, and one might say the Middle East in general, is particularly pertinent. Musrara came into being in 1889, when well-to-do Arabs, looking for more luxurious spaces out the cramped confines of the Old City, built spacious homes there. There were also a handful of Jewish families living there in the early days. In the 1950s, the neighborhood gained notoriety as the cradle of the sociopolitical Israeli Left and a frequent hangout for backpackers. In the 1980s, Musrara came into its own as an arts center, hosting artists and activists from all walks of life, but in the end it is quite the opposite. We think we are coming here with our project called ‘The To Be Another Experience project, which utilizes state-of-the-art VR technology to transport visitors to the lives of people from different cultures and walks of life, from around the globe (See video).

Sponsored by BeAnotherLab itself will offer Musrara Mix visitors a chance to experience another person’s life, using VR technology (See video).

VR TECHNOLOGY magically transports us to different worlds. (Courtesy)

EIN DISPLACED ways to exploit the magic of human inventiveness to actually enhance shared social experience. The team’s stated modus operandi talks about “locating our work in understanding the relationship between identity and empathy from an embodied perspective.” The latter concept sounds thoroughly intriguing, especially as that collective ethos is channeled through artistic praxis. Add to that the fact that the team members draw on a plethora of ranging educational backdrops and areas of interest - which, inter alia, take in cognitive sciences and psychology, interactive systems and design, arts anthropology, cultural management, philosophy and conflict resolution – and you have yourself one multi-pronged line of attack.

And all of the above is in a good cause. “We want to focus on creating more empathetic behaviors,” González explains. “Then we can talk about things like compassion and forgiveness and empathy.”

Now that is interesting. Some of the more “enlightened” souls among us talk about connecting with our more feminine side, to access some of the aforementioned positive forms of social conduct. And we may, indeed, do our best to imagine what life may be like for some of the downtowners members of society—say, Syrian refugees, people forced to sleep out on our streets, or people with special needs, but how far can we go with that? At the end of the day we live our own lives, with all its ups and downs, beauties and challenges.

Now, with the help of BeAnotherLab, we may be able to get an almost firsthand grasp of what other people’s lives entail. The Spanish-based team members talk about exploring issues such as mutual respect, immigration and cultural disability lines, gender identity and conflict resolution. Visitors to Musrara Mix will be able to avail themselves of virtual reality (VR) equipment to, act wise, climb into someone else’s skin. “We will be coming to Israel with our project called The To Be Another Experience project, which utilizes state-of-the-art VR technology to transport visitors to the lives of people from different cultures and walks of life, from around the globe (See video).”

“We ARE going spend a about week with Hassan, sharing his normal life,” González continues. “We don’t direct people, about what they want to show other people, and say to them about their life. We do not decide what people want to know. It is up to the person to decide.” The upshot of that preliminary work will be a short video that people will be able to watch and respond to by donning VR headsets. “People will spend around seven minutes in Hassan’s shoes. Hopefully, Hassan will be telling us about something of his life, people will have an opportunity to chat with him.”

While González says he and Roel have no preconceptions about setting the Middle East on a new course toward conflict resolution, he hopes at the very least that visitors to Musrara Mix who take the opportunity to get to know another’s technology may open their minds and hearts to the possibility of a different regional narrative. “That would be nice,” González chuckles. “It will be a new kind of dialogue.”

Elsewhere on the festival there will be all manner of artistic offerings. There will be both indoor and outdoor performances, both at the Musrara school site and dotted around various indoor and outdoor locations in the neighborhood.

The musical fare takes in an eclectic array of sounds and textures, such as local indie band Tiny Fingers, which will join forces with Indian music-oriented composer-producer-instrumentalist Shys Ben Tzur, ethnomusic act Yoni Fine and Ben Shylen, and Andalusian-jazz pianist Omar Mor with Ethiopian-born jazz saxophonist and vocalist Abate Berihun.

The exhibition side of the three-day features Chilean-born multidisciplinary artist Francisco Ramirez, who will work together with Italian guest curator Vittoria Scartozzi on a presentation of the acclaimed 2016 video work El Mistico de Camerino (A Man Waking). The show mounting clearly references the cultural-internal shift festival theme, focusing on a shamanic figure in Bolivia who is on a quest to reconcile the wide gaps that exist between the indigenous traditions and the materialism imposed by Western capitalism. A second video installation by Barning, called Crossing an Idea (“Crossing a Page”), will reflect on the challenges of seeing things and the condition of displacement as an ongoing life condition.

Over at the New Gallery, the Whisper exhibition, the result of a collaboration with the Fotogaleria collective photography facility in Vienna, and curated by Susanne Gamauf and Johan Nane Simonsson, follows as a close-up look at subconscious mechanisms, the transfer of emotions and empathy, and perception.

The exhibition title alludes to the emotional tears-ice of the visual display, which “are whipped off from a position of injury and guilt.” The idea is to confront and acknowledge the violence and tragedy in contem- plate the human life condition and be able to articulate emotional repression and be able to come to terms with displacement and of being out of place. Entry to all Musrara Mix events is free. For more information: See video. Baring

THE LIBRARY of Qunesvo project enables us to get a direct sense to the lives of people from different cultures and walks of life, from around the globe (See video).

For their Jerusalem slot, ahead of the festival, González and Roel will spend time with a local artist, creating a virtual reality for Musrara Mix patrons to feel, touch, and possibly identify with. “We are going to be working with Hassan Mar,” says González. “He is a Palestinian Israeli multidisciplinary artist. He has worked with Susanne-Real (Art-Jewish Partners).” The organization, which was founded in 1993, says it aims to “educate and empower Palestinian and Jewish youth to pursue social political change through bi-national partnership.”

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SUNDAY 26

TOURS
Guided Tours at the Israel Museum - Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (free).
Guided Tours at Yad Vashem - Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. (free).

GUIDED EXPERIENCES - Learn the beloved card game – 3 p.m. 37 Pierre Koenig St. NIS 100 Info: jetvenues.com or 058-761-5068.

Monday 27

TOURS
Shuk HaChamuscot Yehuda – See www.imj.org.il for opening hours. NIS 0. Info: 02-623-4618.
Guided Tours at the Israel Museum - Tours in English of different museum sections. – Monday: 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. (free).

MIXED BAG


CAPITAL CALENDAR / JULY 5 – JULY 12

11 a.m.: Highlights. No extra charge.
• 11 am: Archaeology; 12:30 pm: Jewish History in English, of different museum sections.
• 10:15 a.m. At AACI, 37 Pierre Koenig St. NIS 440. The Wednesday class series runs Monday through Thursdays, excluding holidays, 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. 10
• 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. At AACI, 37 Pierre Koenig St. NIS 100

Guided Tours at the Israel Museum - Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (free).

Saturday at Shalem’s First Station – Journey through yesterday, from biblia historica to biblia scripta – Saturdays and Sundays at 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at 37 Pierre Koenig St. Photo! No experience necessary! 37 Pierre Koenig St. Free.

TOURS
Tours for Groups – Located in and around Jerusalem, we offer tours for groups of 12 or more. Info: 02-566-1181 or 054-521-6933. www.miriamsafiratours.com

Women’s Improv – Support group with Ellen B. Sucov, Ph.D...info@kolhaot.com

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TUESDAY 28

TOURS
Comedy for Kobe – With Art Liederbach, Marilyn Boyce and Steve Mittelman – $10.00 at Tao’s Chinese Restaurant 218 Jaffa Rd. (tel: 02) 629 2828. Info: 02-276-8066.

MEMORIAL DAY, DAY THREE
• 1:30 p.m. At AACI, 37 Pierre Koenig St. NIS 440. The Wednesday class series runs Monday through Thursdays, excluding holidays, 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. 10
• 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. At AACI, 37 Pierre Koenig St. NIS 100


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SOLUTION TO LAST WEEK’S CROSSWORD PUZZLE

FIVE LETTERS: ORE (mineral)

THE ANSWERS TO THE CROSSWORD PUZZLE ARE ON PAGE 25.
Kol Oud Tof Trio
Hosts Abatte Barathan

Quartetoukan
When Bialik and Fainuz meet

Wednesday, 29.5, 20:30
An evening that brings together three musical instruments: voice, oud and drums; and three languages: Hebrew, Arabic and Ladino. A magical encounter that connect songs in Ladino with Moroccan melodies, while presenting Hakelima, Moroccan Ladino.

Esti Keinan Oriti vocals | Armand Sabah oud | Chen Fried percussion
guest artist: Abatte Barathan saxophone, vocals

Thursday, 30.5, 20:30
The Quartetoukan juxtaposes East and West and connects Bialik and Fainuz, Lea Goldberg and flamenco and klezmer and Arab folk music. A journey in a musical world that mirrors Israel’s multi-cultural contemporary society.

Miriam Toledano vocals | Idan Toledano flamenco guitar, oud | Dr. Rechel Galay cello
Noa Yax percussion

Concert by graduates of the Center for Eastern Music
Eastern classical music

Wednesday, 19.6, 20:30
Grads of the Center for Eastern Music arrive at a festive performance marking their completion of three years of study. Works of Arabic, Turkish, Persian and Indian cultures, traditional segments and original melodies, will be performed. The Center for Eastern Music has, for the past 22 years, prepared instrumentalists and vocalists in the field of eastern classical music. We are pleased and proud to invite you to their performance.

Gabriel Elbaz vocals | Ariela Ben Haim oud, percussion | Shir Greitzy oud | Zohar Oroomi sar
Daniela Dahan vocals | Sara Widner sar | Golam Hamo thanura | Chahira Touma Persian nal
Ofer Cohen cantor, oud | Miryam Anaham sar | Hadas Naimi percussion, vocals
Neil Ben Yosef, percussion | Gilad Shalom oud

Thursday, 20.6, 20:30
Three masters of the Israeli ethnic music genre—singer and vocalist Amir Shashar, baglama and guitar player Eliyahu Degeni and oud and qanun player and vocalist Elad Gabbai, join together for a unique performance of traditional music, alongside original works in the eternal and beloved Husseini makam.

Amir Shashar miz, clarinet, vocals | Eliyahu Degeni baglama, guitars
Elad Gabbai qanun, vocals

Buy tickets: Bimot 02-6237000 | *6226 | www.bimot.co.il

For more information: www.confederationhouse.org  Follow us on facebook: https://www.facebook.com/confederationhouse