



ELECTIVES - HAVA NASHIRA 2025

Electives are hour-long sessions, on a variety of topics, offered 4 times throughout Hava Nashira. There are two elective blocks on Monday, and two on Tuesday. Some are led by faculty, others are led by some of you! Please review and you will sign up through a Wufoo form so we know the size of the room and the amount of materials to prepare.

Elective Sessions #1 - Monday Afternoon - Choose one of 7

Dancing with God in ¾ Time

Facilitated by Cantor Ellen Dreskin

Liturgical compositions written in ¾ time carry their own special energy. Come learn, sing, and experience liturgical settings, new and old, designed to sweep your sacred partners off their feet.

Songleading for Action and Protest

Facilitated by Aly Halpert

In these extraordinary times, song is a tool that fuels collective change when we need it most. And, leading music at a protest can be different than teaching a song at a circle or in a synagogue! Come to this workshop to learn how to choose and lead songs for groups in the streets, and at actions & rallies. We'll have time to practice and ask questions.

Crafting Sacred Words with All Folks in Mind

Facilitated by Shira Kline

As prayer leaders and community holders, we aim to welcome people of all backgrounds through our iyunim—the words and presence we offer. And in an ever-evolving, polarized world, how can we hold the integrity of that welcome? How might we deepen our awareness, recognize implicit bias, and more carefully invite people across diverse paths, identities, and mindsets?

Guitar for Songwriting

Facilitated by Chava Mirel

Guitar is such an important support tool for prayer and music leadership in the Jewish community — and Jewish songwriting presents so many opportunities for exploration and experimentation. This elective will offer alternatives and variations on traditional chords and strumming/picking patterns, expanding our palate of rhythmic and harmonic tools. We will have a chance to apply

these tools to writing our own ideas. Participants of all guitar levels and professional capacities are welcome.

Round Writing

Facilitated by Mayta Cohen

From being one of the greatest back-pocket stalling tools available, to serving as a bridge that can gently guide an un-confident singing community into sudden multi-layered harmony, rounds and canons are one of the brightest and best kept songleading gems!! Discover several innovative and beneficial ways to use this tool in Jewish spaces, and learn how to write your own. One of the best kept secrets? It's not actually all that complicated! Together, we'll learn one accessible way to write a round that does not require you to have prior music theory knowledge, and you'll leave with the tools to go off and compose your own, along with a *chevrutah* (partner) if you'd like!

Teaching and Leading Music within Worship

Facilitated by Cantor Rosalie Will

The purpose of music in worship is to enhance prayer, elevate texts, and open new doorways to sacred moments. How one selects melodies, teaches new settings, and uses repertoire within worship directly affects the way communities experience the sacred. This intensive will speak to the challenges and opportunities inherent in such an endeavor. How can one teach new repertoire within the worship itself, and in a way that enhances rather than interrupts the prayer moment? Through a demo of repertoire, creating meaningful *iyunim* (prayer introduction) to contextualize repertoire and sharing of best principles, we will explore immediately applicable techniques and tools to contextualize the "teach"! Best for those working as *sh'lichei tzibur* (leaders of communal prayer) who would like to enhance their worship leadership.

Finding Your Shtick

Facilitated by Eliana Light and Carla Friend

When we sing with younger kiddos, it's not just about the song, but how we bring it to life, make it interactive, and use it to teach. How we introduce it, utilize props or manipulatives, include movement, and make it meaningful is all part of our unique "shtick." And the best way to develop your own shtick is... to copy other songleaders? Yes! At least to start. Join us to explore the theory and importance of shtick, how it develops, and what to look for. Plus we'll share some shtick for you to copy yourself!

(next elective block choices on next page)

Electives Sessions #2 (Participant Led) - Monday Afternoon - Choose one of 9

Read more about the Participants leading these workshops [here!](#)

Lean on Me: The Choir as an Ally for Congregational Singing

Facilitated by Cantor Zoe Jacobs

Discover the transformative potential of your choir to enrich congregational singing experiences! Whether you're blessed with a dedicated group of vocalists or are nurturing a budding choir, this session will explore how to maximize its impact in your worship services. Delve into strategies for encouraging active participation, while also creating opportunities for meaningful listening experiences. Together, we'll discover diverse approaches to harmony, and imagine how to infuse it throughout our services.

Planning for success: Thinking about the roles of faculty/staff and student leaders in creating a positive Tefilah environment

Facilitated by Rabbi Josh Cahan

We have long-established patterns and assumptions about how we do Tefilah in our camps and schools that hold us back. Creating more positive, meaningful Tefilah spaces begins with intentionality about how different players should contribute to shaping them. This session will look at the roles that the different members of your Tefilah community can play, and how defining and teaching those roles can help you build positive, meaningful, and educationally impactful experiences over the course of a summer or school term.

Shabbat Bond - A Musical Ritual for Connection

Facilitated by Yaniv Gatigno

In this hands-on workshop, you'll experience Shabbat Bond - a musical ritual designed to spark emotional connection and spiritual presence around the Shabbat table. Rooted in Jewish tradition and powered by song, story, and intentional sharing, this practice helps families and friends come closer together in meaningful ways.

You'll learn how to facilitate Shabbat Bond in your own community, and receive a toolkit of resources - including a sample playbook, participant booklet, and facilitator prompts. Use them as they are, or adapt them to your own musical voice and communal vibe.

Whether you're gathering with two or twenty, Shabbat Bond helps turn Friday night into a moment of deep human connection. Come ready to sing, share, and bond.

Spirit Jam

Facilitated by Leah Shoshana

Spirit Jam is a container for collective vocal improvisation. Led by Leah Shoshanah, the workshop combines long-form theatrical improvisation techniques with music to build a framework for collaborative non-hierarchical music-making. The workshop builds "group mind" through musical

games and structures, leading up to a free-form vocal improvisation... a “Spirit Jam”. This experience offers an opportunity to forge a deep connection to community and to the Self.

The Bass Line: All about that 1!

Facilitated by Zach Singer

Explore the fundamentals of bass playing, technically and spiritually. Why should every guitar player, singer or cantor know how to play bass? Why can't they? Reclaim the power of the down beat and long notes. Find the elusive second and hidden third note for your band to lean on. Embrace the rumble of the earth so you can inspire comfort and virtuosity in others while releasing your ego. With a few patterns, tips and tricks, you can apply these skills to your new instrument or to enhance your fingerpicking and chords on guitar.

The Kabbalah of Music: Song, Silence & Ecstasy

Facilitated by Jack Leopold

Why do music and song provide us with a profound emotional depth of connection? Beyond the ways that music connects us as a community, we will explore the psychological and mystical approach to understanding how music shifts our state of consciousness and expands our emotional capacity. We will unpack what our mystical tradition (Kabbalah) has to offer and how various Kabbalists (R. Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, R. Aryeh Kaplan, R. Jill Hammer, etc) understand song as a technology for transcendence and altered states of consciousness. Join us as we explore the practices of niggunim, Jewish meditation, and the teachings of the Sefer Yetzirah.

So You Want to Make a Record?

Facilitated by Andy Dennen

In this info-pack hour you'll learn:

- How to find a producer/studio that matches your desired outcome
- How to prepare for studio days
- How to ensure your creative voice can be heard
- How to budget your project, time, dollars
- The criticality of final mixes
- Mastering
- Release and distribution

How to give yourself the best possible chance of being considered for inclusion in Jewish music calls for submissions including - GET YOUR HEBREW RIGHT! 😊

Spiritual Practice In Motion: Jewish Dances Of Universal Peace

Facilitated by Robin Schnitzler and Michael Hopwood

Join us in the circle for the Dances of Universal Peace to celebrate our Jewish tradition as we practice the power of moving prayers. Together, we will nourish our spirits as we raise our voices and dance in community. All are welcome! Come as you are. If you are physically limited, we

welcome you as you are, and we accommodate you as needed. In this practice, there are no performers, no audience, and no experience necessary; as each dance is taught and guided.

The Dances of Universal Peace blend chant, live music, and evocative movement into a living experience of peace, unity, and connection. The aim of the Dances is to bring together people from diverse cultural, religious, and spiritual backgrounds to share peace and transcendence.

What to expect: We will sing prayers, Niggunim, and blessings while holding hands in a circle and dancing with partners. Sometimes we will move together as one, connected in breath and form, as if a living organism. Other times, dances will be celebratory and energetic. In any form, we are invited to see ourselves in each other and awaken our connection in community.

Gam Ki Elech: Turning Our Sorrows Into Song

Facilitated by Rabbi Ilan Glazer

When sadness, tragedy, illness, or death come our way, it often feels like our life is turned upside down, and the hopes and dreams we've carried no longer seem possible. Music has the power to meet these difficult moments, yet too often we are unsure which melodies to share, or find it challenging to sing amidst grief and pain. It's hard to sing amidst tears of sadness...yet the music that emerges from the depths is music that can bring comfort and hope to the people we serve.

Our tradition is no stranger to the pain of loss. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel said that "there are only three ways to respond to sadness. The first is to cry out. The second is to sit in silence. The third is to turn sorrow into song." This session will include a look at how and when grief shows up in our lives, Torah and melodies for the brokenhearted, and wisdom to help us and those we serve turn our sorrows into song.

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Electives Sessions #3 - Tuesday afternoon - Choose one of 8

That's Amazing! A frame for T'fillah with Kids & Families

Facilitated by Eliana Light

How can we make t'fillah an exercise in spiritual core building, bringing it to life and infusing it with meaning that leaves in the hearts of the participants? Together we'll experience and discuss a frame for the morning service that aims to do exactly that. Geared towards K-5th grade and adaptable for older and younger kids and families, this frame fits with whatever melodies you might already do (but we'll learn a few new ones, too.) Let's laugh, sing, and wonder, together!

The Spirituality of Secular Music

Facilitated by Jacob Spike Kraus

"I really want to spend an hour at Hava Nashira in a big hootenanny singing James Taylor, Paul Simon, Broadway, Disney, Coldplay and more" you think to yourself, "but I came here to do Jewish work and unfortunately none of that is Jewish." WRONG. Judaism's teachings are deeply embedded in all kinds of "non-Jewish" music, and engaging with it plays an important role in bringing our tradition outside the four walls of the sanctuary and into our everyday lives. This sing-a-long program is crafted as modern pages of Talmud, with song lyrics in the center surrounded by quotes from Tanakh, Talmud, the liturgy, and more, that draw Jewish parallels to specific lyrics in every song. These songs have more than just "Jewish vibes" — they offer an opportunity to engage with our ancient texts in an entirely new way. This elective is for anyone seeking to be introduced to inspiring Jewish ideas, anyone looking to dig deeper into how to create meaningful iyunim (reflections) to add depth to our Jewish moments, and anyone who just wants to sing some comfort into their souls right now. Voices are encouraged, and while instruments aren't discouraged, keys and chords won't be provided during the workshop (though can be available after).

Grammar for the Language of our Soul: The Building Blocks of Music Theory

Facilitated by Debra Winter

At the heart of every melody and harmony lies a set of fundamental principles. This elective will guide participants through the essential building blocks of music theory (scales, intervals, chords, and rhythm), uncovering the structure that supports our creative expression and spiritual connection. Whether you are new to theory or seeking a clearer foundation, this session will offer a thoughtful, grounded approach to helping us understand music's inner workings.

Singing Circle Repertoire and Practices

Facilitated by Aly Halpert & Chava Mirel

In this elective we will learn repertoire from a variety of different singing communities, and practices that help deepen connection and prayer. We will also explore ideas and techniques for incorporating new music seamlessly into our tefilot, programs, and other gatherings.

Songwriter's Toolkit: Prompts, Process, and Play

Facilitated by Eric Hunker

Every great song starts with a spark. In this elective, you'll learn how to kindle that spark again and again. Designed for Jewish songwriters at any stage of their creative journey, this session dives into the tools that keep your creative well full: powerful prompts, process-building techniques, and playful exercises that unlock fresh ideas. Together, we'll explore how Jewish text, tradition, and personal story can serve as fuel for inspired songwriting. You'll leave with a toolkit of repeatable practices to keep your creativity flowing long after Hava Nashira ends.

Trouble the Waters

Facilitated by Anthony Russell

In Monday's session, Wade In The Water, Anthony made his case for the consideration of Black music in American Jewish prayer spaces. This session is an opportunity for attendees of Monday's session to unpack, respond, and reflect in an interactive, communal conversation.

Interspiritual Singing: A Path Towards Interreligious Pluralism

Facilitated by Leah Miller

How do we transcend tolerance and truly love the sojourner, as was commanded to us in the book of Exodus? By stepping in their world and allowing them into ours in sacred kinship. In this session, we will be learning music from other spiritual traditions and cultures and engaging in a dialogue about the difference between exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism, and the difference between sharing and appropriating. Join Leah on a journey of collective liberation and interfaith allyship through music and her "theology of sharing."

Sing a Song of Shabbes!

Facilitated by Cantor Ellen Dreskin

Even though we are not together for Shabbat, let's not ignore the repertoire! We'll explore a variety of settings for Kabbalat Shabbat psalms, Lecha Dodi, V'shamru, Yismchu and more that will serve congregants of all ages.

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Electives Sessions #4 - Tuesday Afternoon - Choose one of 8

Charting the Sacred: A Ritual Mapping Adventure

Facilitated by Shira Kline

Our prayers and rituals traverse worlds in time and space and each one holds a treasure map inside. Chart the journey, notice the edges, the caves, the cliffs, the turning points. Let the collective compass guide. For prayer leaders, educators, and curious travelers alike.

Engage Any Age: Encouraging Grownup Participation in Family Programming

Facilitated by Carla Friend

Leading a children's program that engages and inspires kids is one thing, but including the grownups in your approach is another. How do we help adults participate, stay focused, and find a point of connection in these child-focused spaces? We'll explore skills from the Tkiya toolkit, troubleshoot common challenges, and discuss how we might be able to work in partnership with the adults in your programs towards a common goal.

Songleading 101

Facilitated by Cantor Rosalie Will

Whether it's on the bima or at camp, in a preschool or a religious school, the one thing we all need is a stellar set of songleading skills that can enable us to create transformative moments with music. We've all been moved deeply by those who know how to do it masterfully – and we want to move others just as deeply. Rosalie wrote the book, *Songleading: A Work of Art*, to help beginner and intermediate songleaders consider how to set up a room, plan the space and content, how to use body and facial cues, how to “call out” and feed information so a group can experience maximum successful singing. And master songleaders do not need to play guitar, you only need the desire to invite people into group singing! Let's strategize, plan, and experiment with the fundamentals of Songleading in any space.

Masterclass on Songwriting: A Safe Place for Feedback

Facilitated by Elana Arian

As a follow-up to Elana's songwriting intensive, this elective is only open to folks who were in the intensive and are looking for more directed feedback/reflection on specific pieces they are working on. While the intensive will have a broader focus on writing techniques, inspiration, and big-picture musical creativity, this elective will give participants an opportunity to get real-time feedback from Elana and the class on a work in progress.

L'chadeysh: Refreshing Familiar Repertoire

Facilitated by Jacob Spike Kraus

We always want to introduce the hottest new melodies and brand new pieces we fall in love with to our communities. But many of us lead congregations that are “passionately committed” to certain melodies that we feel obligated to include week after week. In this elective, we'll explore artistic and performance-based choices you can make that enliven and transform classic repertoire across a spectrum from “subtle” to “what just happened”. We'll cover topics like tempo and time signatures, chord choices and reharmonization, instrumentation, transpositions, “mashups”, and more. Playing the same melodies week after week for our congregations shouldn't feel like playing the same melodies week after week, for us or our congregations.

Gems of Soulful Singing

Facilitated by Eric Hunker

For countless years (and still to this day) I come to Hava Nashira hoping to find a few songs that might change me. These gems are the melodies and words you leave thinking about. As I travel the world and scour the corners of the internet, I'm constantly searching for as many of these treasures as I can - so that I might gift them to you. Come sing songs that make you feel something. Come discover which treasures you might take with you. All that I ask is that you continue to give them away once you leave.

Get The Room Harmonizing... Without Anybody Needing to Already Know How To Do It

Facilitated by Mayta Cohen

Can you pick out a harmony line by ear? Does it come naturally to you to sing the 3rd above when your favorite song comes on the radio? Well... what if it doesn't? Or what if it does... but it doesn't for everyone in your community? Is there a way to inspire more harmony in ourselves and our communities when it doesn't come so naturally? In this intensive, we'll explore a new approach to harmonization - one that doesn't require an innate sense of music theory, or even learning how to develop one. What if we learned to harmonize, mostly just by listening? In this intensive, we will learn about this method, why it works, practice playing with it together, and discover how using it might benefit us and our communities. Then, we'll zoom out and talk about how we might teach this method to our communities in an accessible and inviting way so that everyone feels welcome to join in the music making!

Anatomy of a Song

Facilitated by Daniel Cainer and Chava Mirel

Which comes first: the words, the music, or the prayer? How much is art and how much is craft? How much is divine inspiration? How do we tell?

We'll deconstruct a couple of songs and look at what makes them work (or not): the process, the shape, the purpose, the intention.

How We're Blessed: What do we like about it? How does it reflect spiritual practice? We'll demonstrate how it can work in different contexts and lend itself to different arrangements without losing its essential power and message. We'll discuss placement of essentially Jewish songs that are not liturgical settings both inside and outside of the temple.

And story-telling... if every picture tells a story then so does every song. From nigunim to actual narrative songs. What do we mean by 'story-telling' in this context? Establishment, exposition, development, sub-plot, structural call back? All of these are there even in the simplest of forms. We can do them without thinking about them. Or we can do them because we think about them.

We'll laugh, we'll cry, we'll learn, we'll share.