



Shearith Israel
**SPANISH &
PORTUGUESE**
Synagogue of Montreal
Est. 1768

חידוש HADASHOT

January 22nd 2022 | 20 Shevat 5782

Wonderful S&P Youth and families Hanukkah Party

By Gali Pinto



Did you miss the 2021 SPY Hanukkah Party? Let me tell you all about it, so this does not happen again :)

As the music played and everyone was having a great time, the Shinshinim joined and took the Party to another level.

Who are the Shinshinim, you ask me? That's a great question.

ShinShinim are participants in 'shnat-sherut,' an Israeli Service Year Program that places Israeli high school graduates in Jewish communities abroad for a year before enrolling for their military service.

This is a volunteer program that encourages interaction and peer-to-peer engagement among young Jews worldwide. It enhances Israel's connections, knowledge, and foundations and its people in the diaspora.

The program provides meaningful local opportunities for Jewish Montrealers of all ages to learn about and experience diverse aspects of Israel and its people through various unique experiences and learnings created and facilitated by Israeli emissaries.

Our synagogue was fortunate to have three ShinShinim at our Party; Liel, Tomer and Assaf. They entertained us with arts & crafts activities, guitar and sang along Hanukkah songs. We hope to host our assigned ShinShinim for the upcoming year.

But wait, the Party just started. On the menu, we had delicious doughnuts with so many assorted toppings. Can you guess from who? That's right, Sfingy! We made marshmallows, sevivon, and chocolate coins. The kids and their grandparents, parents, and siblings

enjoyed Pizza and beverages. The Party continued with an entertaining live show by "The Nochum Show." Nochum retold the story of Hanukkah to the marvelled children. The show followed with a juggling act, card tricks and interactive game.

We conclude the Party with the Rabbi and Hazan lighting the Hanukiah. That night was the most illuminating of all nights. It was the 8th night of Hanukkah. The Rabbi invited the Shinshinim and Gali on stage to kindle the candles together with the children. In unison, we recited the blessings and the traditional songs. It was a night to remember. The dark winter night seemed to be a bit brighter and warmer.

Hope to see you at our next SPY event!

Gali

UNE FÊTE DE HANOUKKA POUR LES JEUNES ET LES FAMILLES DE LA S&P

Avez-vous manqué la fête SPY Hanukkah 2021? Laissez-moi vous raconter tout ça, pour que la prochaine fois, vous ne manquez pas ça :)

Alors que la musique jouait et que tout le monde s'amusait, les Shinshinim se sont joints à la fête et ont fait passer la fête à un autre niveau.

Qui sont les Shinshinim, me demanderez-vous? C'est une excellente question.

Les ShinShinim participent au « shnat-sherut », un programme annuel de service israélien qui place des diplômés du secondaire israéliens dans des

communautés juives à l'étranger pendant un an, avant que ceux-ci ne s'inscrivent à leur service militaire.

Il s'agit d'un programme de volontariat qui encourage l'interaction et l'engagement entre pairs parmi les jeunes juifs du monde entier. Il renforce les connexions, les connaissances et les fondations d'Israël et de son peuple dans la diaspora.

Le programme offre des opportunités locales et significatives aux Montréalais juifs de tous âges afin d'apprendre et de découvrir divers aspects d'Israël et de son peuple à travers diverses expériences et apprentissages uniques créés et facilités par des émissaires israéliens.

Notre synagogue a eu la chance d'avoir trois ShinShinim à notre fête : Liel, Tomer et Assaf. Ils nous ont divertis avec des activités artistiques et artisanales, de la guitare et ils nous ont chanté des chansons de Hanoucca. Nous avons hâte d'accueillir notre propre ShinShinim pour l'année à venir.

Mais attendez, la fête vient de commencer. Au menu, nous avons eu de délicieux beignets avec autant de garnitures assorties. Pouvez-vous deviner de qui? Sfingy, bien sûr ! Nous avons préparé des guimauves, des sevivons et des pièces en chocolat. Les enfants et leurs grands-parents, parents, frères et sœurs ont apprécié la pizza et les boissons. La fête s'est poursuivie avec un spectacle divertissant de "The Nochum Show". Nochum nous a raconté l'histoire de Hanoucca, les enfants étaient émerveillés. Le spectacle s'est poursuivi avec un numéro de jonglage, des tours de cartes et un jeu interactif.

Nous concluons la fête avec le rabbin et le hazan en allumant le Hanukiah. Cette nuit a été la plus illuminée de toutes les nuits. C'était la huitième nuit de Hanoukka. Le rabbin a invité les Shinshinim et Gali sur scène pour allumer les bougies avec les enfants. À l'unisson, nous avons récité les bénédictions et les chants traditionnels. Ce fut une soirée inoubliable. La sombre nuit d'hiver s'est éclairée et s'est réchauffée

Au plaisir de vous voir lors de notre prochain événement S&P Youth and families / jeunesse et famille.

Challah Bake Party

By Gali Pinto

As my 40th Hebrew birthday was approaching, I wanted to celebrate it in a meaningful way with my family and friends. It was also important to celebrate with the community that I love!

I wanted to make an event and invite the entire community, but with covid still around and further restrictions, I had to downsize my expectations and attendance.

My girls and I love to bake, especially challah for Shabbat. This is when the girls and I connect. We exchange stories and experiences while working on our dough. There it is, I thought to myself, a Challah bake at the Spanish would be a great mitzvah, fun, and meaningful.

On 22 Heshvan, my Hebrew birthday, a group of women from our community gathered for an evening of learning, dining, and connecting. At the event, I shared the meaning and importance of this tradition, and the ladies followed me in the blessing of the Hafrashat Challah.

I want to personally thank you for an inspirational and warm evening. I would also like to invite you to celebrate your Hebrew birthday in a meaningful and traditional way.

See you at our next celebration!

Gali



Stay "tuned" Physically and Spiritually!

By Gladys Mooallem



Our dear Reverend Hazan Daniel Benlolo

Here is the link to the video of your session from last Wednesday and the previous sessions www.thespanish.org/wlg-youtube.html

What a great musical session you gave us last Wednesday

on November 10, 2021. You carried us with your music. We felt like we were in a dream. You inspired the participants so much that one of my friends called me and said: "Why do not we have all the sessions musical?" We all thank you so much.

I would like to share with you the comment I received from the McGill University MA student Zack Youcha, referred to us by our speaker Prof.Christopher Silver. He watched your session and was very impressed. He wrote to me:

"Thank you for sending me the YouTube link. I will be sure to look through the previous sessions. Today was a truly incredible experience. I really cannot begin to thank you enough for inviting me, and for all your hard work in putting this series together. I felt like a part of something quite special, so again, thank you."

In this session, we celebrated the final of our series No.25, the installation of Reverend Hazan Benlolo, and Mazal Tov to the grandparents for the new baby boy.

Following my introduction, our Rabbi Maimon Pinto gave us a wonderful Dvar Torah, in compliment to our musical session, Carmen Korin read our Speaker's biography with all the congratulations.

The best part of the session started with our Reverend singing our most popular songs, alternating with his beautiful recorded songs. The highlight was the song by Joshua, recorded in our new Recording studio, followed by the recorded "Hallelujah" sung artistically by our Reverend. It is so special that the more we watch it, the more we like it.

I would like to congratulate you, our dear Reverend, for the great achievement in opening yesterday, your new musical studio. I had the honour to be there at the great celebration.

Thank you again for the unforgettable musical session you gave us.

Gladys Peress Mooallem

Women's Learning Group Coordinator (WLG)
Spanish & Portuguese synagogue, Montreal

A Glimmer of Light – A Tribute to Jewish Composers

By Muriel Suissa Benlolo

On Sunday, December 12, **Reverend Hazan Daniel Benlolo** co-hosted a virtual concert with Yolande Amzallag, president of the francophone cultural committee at the Jewish Public Library. The concert was produced in collaboration with the Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue, the Jewish Public Library, the Unified Sephardic Community of Quebec (CSUQ) and the Cummings Centre. The event was sponsored by Clarence Fink Endowment Fund, The Galkin Family Annual Lecture Endowment Fund, and The Michael Lauter Memorial Fund.

RH Benlolo paid homage to great Jewish composers and performers of popular music the likes of Theodore Bikel, Leonard Cohen, Neil Diamond, Bob Dylan, Billy Joel, Carole King, Enrico Macias, Naomi Shemer, Simon and Garfunkel.

Over 250 participants logged in on ZOOM to be transported back through this musical adventure. He invited the community to rediscover some of the Jewish singers and composers who inspired him in his musical career. One of the main goals of this

concert was to allow the participants to escape the gloom of this pandemic and literally find a glimmer of light through music and entertainment.

RH Benlolo was accompanied by 4 talented and accomplished musicians. Yo Aisenstark on the keyboard, Sam Moyal on guitar, Leslie Singerman on drums and Tevet Sela on the saxophone and flute.



The concert was pre-taped on Sunday, November 28 with the help of Yann Simhon, lights and sound engineer from Golan Studio and Justin Morganstein, videographer from Oaktree Agency.

The full recording of the concert is now available at <https://youtu.be/wr2ILRVCYzC>

The S&P Sheba Woman's Health Brunch Event

By Daniel Shahrabani

Sunday, Oct 17, 2021 - Then Spanish and Portuguese hosted an exclusive presentation by the Canadian Friends of Sheba of a panel discussion on Woman's Health Issues that was hosted by leading doctors in this field from the Sheba Medical Center in Israel. The event was shown live virtually, with the doctors speaking from Israel, and with the presentation being projected live to supporters in Toronto and Montreal.

The presentation from Israel included Professor Tzipi Strauss, who is the Director of Neonatology at Sheba, Michal Beeri, Director of the Neuroscience Research Department and finally Dr. Galia Barkai Director of Sheba Beyond at the Pediatric Infectious Disease Unit. Professor Strauss spoke about the latest research in longevity, Professor Beeri spoke about mental acumen, and finally, Professor Barkai discussed the growing trend in telemedicine.

The Spanish and Portuguese is proud to be associated with The Sheba Medical Center in Israel. Since the establishment of the Canadian Friends of Sheba several years ago to raise awareness of the Sheba Medical Center, the Spanish has been instrumental

in partnering with Sheba to host many educational and fundraising events. On Sunday, the Spanish hosted a delicious brunch attended by over 25 people to see the virtual event. In fact, in November 2020, our Reverend Hazan Daniel Benlolo performed in the Sheba Medical Center worldwide Gala that was attended by the Sheba community around the world, including the USA, France, UK, Australia, and South Africa.

The Sheba Medical Center has been ranked in 2020 as one of the top ten best hospitals in the world



and in 2021 of the 350 Smart Hospitals in the world Sheba was ranked number 13. Sheba has established itself as one of the premier research and innovative hospitals in the world.

The goal of Canadian Friends of Sheba in Montreal is threefold, first is to increase awareness of Sheba in Montreal and of course fundraising efforts. The second is to introduce developments at Sheba to the medical community in Quebec, and finally to act as a networking platform for members in the medical community in Montreal and Sheba in Israel.

Displacement Of Jews From Arab Lands

By David Nathaniel



Montreal, November 30th, 2021 - On June 23, 2014, the Knesset adopted a law which designates November 30th as an annual, national day of commemoration for the 850,000 Jewish refugees who were displaced from Arab countries and Iran in the 20th century. The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue and the Community of Babylonian Iraqi Jews of Montreal recently organized a commemoration to mark this date.

Jews had lived in the Arab lands for thousands of years, and many of their communities preceded the advent of Islam. But in the 20th century, with the rise of Arab nationalism and the conflict in Palestine, the new Arab regimes began a campaign of massive violations of the rights of their Jewish citizens. Arab states expropriated the property of their native Jews, and denaturalized, expelled, arrested, tortured, and murdered many of them.

It is our collective responsibility to ensure that in light of recent global protests in support of Palestinians, that we make our voices heard within and outside the Jewish community concerning the imbalance of reporting and lack of accountability and acknowledgment of past injustices towards Jewish citizens of Arab countries and Iran. This commemoration and others that took place around the world was another step in the right direction.

10 Paths to God @ The Spanish

By Sandra Koukou, Moderator

January 1st, 2022 - With abundant thanks to **Rabbi Maimon Pinto**, **Françoise Babulot**, **Viola Tulchinski**, our leaders, amazing panellists and our many viewers, we concluded in October of 2021, an 11-month program in tribute to departed **Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l**.



Arlene Abitan



Alice Becker-Lehrer

*Le 30 septembre, 17 Tishrei 5782, à 19 h 00 de l'est, nos conférencières, **Arlene Madar-Abitan** et son amie, **Alice Becker-Lehrer**, nous ont offert une présentation hors pair concernant **La responsabilité ... l'avenir juif**. Mme Madar souligna son parcours fulgurant œuvrant dans le bénévolat et la philanthropie pour la Fédération CJA, qui l'a nommée cette année pour le Prix Kipnis-Wilson/ Friedland des Fédérations juives de l'Amérique du nord et le Canada, qui l'honorent à la conférence « International Lion of Judah » à Phoenix, Arizona en janvier 2022. Mme Lehrer captait l'audience par ses connaissances bibliques, notamment l'insistance de Moshe Rabbeinu envers Dieu pour pardonner le peuple juif.*

Regarder en ligne: https://youtu.be/AYk8akp_GcQ



André Rotchel

After nightfall on October 25th, 19 Cheshvan 5782 we concluded our yearlong tribute to Rabbi Sacks zt"l with a superbly delivered Dvar Torah by Torah scholar, **André Rotchel**, to mark his **Yahrtzeit**. We listened to **Elmaleh Harahamim** sung by our **Reverend Hazan Daniel Benlolo**. Then, with perfect relevance to the times, Andy treated us to a filmed discussion between the famed Rabbi and **John Anderson**, former Deputy Australian Prime Minister, on the tragic consequences of people-bashing in a virtual environment often run amuck. Driven deep into the week's parashah, incidentally none other than **Chayei Sarah**, we were shown how she and **Abraham** dedicated themselves to the Jewish future. Immediately after burying Sarah, Abraham launched a search for a suitable bride for Isaac, a comparison that highlighted Rabbi Sacks's zt"l faithfulness to that call, through a treasure trove of teachings for posterity...to safeguard the Jewish future.

Watch Online: <https://youtu.be/6LqK3cl3f0s>

Our event was co-sponsored by a number of important institutions including Federation CJA, CSUQ, CIJA, B'nai Brith Canada, Canadian Friends of Tel-Aviv University, Sephardic Voices, Simon Wiesenthal Centre Europe, World Jewish Congress, Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, Kahal Joseph (LA), Babylonian Jewish Center (NY), and the Shaar Hashomayim Synagogue.

The evening was hosted by David Nathaniel and had a wonderful lineup of speakers who addressed the audience virtually and in person. They were extremely dynamic and diverse in their messages. They included Charles Shemie – S&P, Israeli Consul General Paul Hirschson, MP Anthony Housefather, MNA David Birnbaum, Steve Sebag – CJA, Sylvain Abitbol - CSUQ, Eta Yudin - CIJA, Professor Irwin Cotler - RWCHR, Michael Mostyn - B'nai Brith, Yannick Elbaz – WJC, Rabbi Maimon Pinto – S&P, Sass Peress, and Reverend Hazan Daniel Benlolo – S&P. Sephardi Voices prepared an inspiring video featuring an interview with former Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon and there were moving testimonials from Gabrielle Elia and Sami Sourani describing their experiences in Lebanon and Iraq.

Feedback from the event was very positive with Professor Irwin Cotler adding the following, "Just a short note to say that I thought the commemorative evening re: justice for Jews from Arab Lands and Iran was moving in both its content and impact."

Recording of the commemoration can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/yk4GgFjc9Q>

How to Love Through Suffering and Live Beyond Heartache

By Rabbi Maimon Pinto

Our synagogue had the pleasure to welcome Shira Lankin Sheps, the author of **"Layers; Personal Narratives of Struggle, Resilience, and Growth from Jewish Women"** and founder and publisher of The Layers Project Magazine.

Shira shared her personal story of struggle and transformation for the first session. Shira wrestled with chronic illness. Years passed, her life became smaller and smaller, and she became angrier and angrier. "I had so much "life" that I wanted to live, and so much I wanted to do, she sighed."

Opening up to her audience, she said, "I had to accept that I was not in control of my life. I couldn't be the perfect mom, wife, professional, and person that I thought I was supposed to be and that I wanted to be.

Shira told us that the worst part of it was the shame. Shame for something that she couldn't control. "I was afraid that people would judge me and think I was weak. The shame destroyed me more than illness, she said."

In 2015 she decided it was enough, and she decided to tell her story. But more importantly, she said, accept the life I was living and try to live with grace.

Her personal story became a project and then turned into a book titled "Layers." The book features 34 true stories from Jewish women living in Israel who are immigrants or refugees born worldwide. Written in their voices and paired with numerous full-colour images, each chapter is unique in offering a narrative full of raw emotional and universal experiences.

The book features pregnancy loss, mental health, grief, conversion, disability, antisemitism, terrorism, chronic illness, cancer, eating disorders, Holocaust, wartime in Israel, the refugee experience, aliyah, and much more.

The presentation for the S&P was a three-part series that featured four women and their personal stories.

These women teach us how to love through suffering and live beyond heartache.

They teach us to be sensitive to those different from us and open our minds to realities we never knew.

Layers: Personal Narratives of Struggle, Resilience, and Growth from Jewish Women

Session 1: <https://youtu.be/qZRBfEPp0>

Session 2: <https://youtu.be/-ZUQg88WKxc>

Session 3: <https://youtu.be/xnjG9ZZunaM>

PERSONAL STORIES OF
Infertility & Pregnancy Loss

Featuring Laura Ben-David

November 7, 2021
12 pm
Zoom Event

Moderated by Author
Shira Lankin Sheps

& Rebecca Gil-Spiewak

Book available for sale at
Koreqaph.com and Amazon.com

The Layers Project will be returning to the Spanish Portuguese Synagogue to discuss the issues of Infertility and pregnancy loss.

Shira will be back, this time moderating a conversation with Laura Ben-David and Rebecca Gil-Spiewak who are featured in the book.

They will share their stories of loss, grief, and how we can learn to support one another through these painful experiences.

Let's Jam Together At The Studio

By Reverend Hazan Daniel Benlolo

On a chilly November evening, 14 individuals (well masked) gathered for an evening of hors-d'oeuvres, drinks with background music emanating from the Spanish and Portuguese Studio. The gathering was organized in part by Dan Sequera to gather a few friends for dinner and a jam session. Who would have thought that an evening assembling great musicians and their spouses would last for over 6 hours of nonstop music and fun? Claude, one of the talented participants wrote in our guest book:

"This is by far the longest time I spent in a Synagogue, it should be a regular occurrence."

Everyone in attendance took turns singing and recording their favorite songs with Yann, our sound engineer at the controls. Once the songs were cleaned up, each participant received a copy of their masterpieces by email to enjoy further and keep as mementos.

This incredible musical event ended with words of encouragement and support by Marc Kakon who ignited the spark needed to entice the gathering to contribute to this "indispensable project of the heart" which eventually raised up to \$5,000 for the studio.

Get virtual tour of our studio here <https://youtu.be/yE81bxxir5>



Dear friends, this studio is yours!

Our dear friend and editor Mike Cohen of the SJN wrote the following in the latest Suburban In Print newspaper

"The S&P recording studio marks a first in Montreal housed at the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in Snowdon. This new initiative will enable the synagogue to offer the community a real "Music Hub." This project was made possible thanks to a generous donation from Marc and Nicole Ezerzer. It will finally give flight to the Spanish and Portuguese Music Heritage and Preservation Project, adventure close to the Ezerzer brothers and to the many choir alumni."

"Having this recording studio in our backyard will give us endless opportunities to promote our synagogue and attract new members and young families," said Reverend Hazan Daniel Benlolo. "In many ways it will continue to enhance our outreach to valued members as well as community members at large by providing them quality liturgical recordings of our services and more. This studio is open to receiving, discovering new talent, to capture live choir performances, energizing lectures, and local guest performers."



The Shira Choir Must Go On!

By Muriel Suissa Benlolo

At the end of October 2021, the choir resumed their in-person rehearsals at the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue. As of March 2020, the in-person rehearsals had to stop, and we took a few weeks to help all the participants set up Zoom on their phones or laptops and provided those without devices second-hand devices donated by members of the community.

Most of the participants were eager to start the in-person rehearsals now that all of them had received their second dose of the COVID vaccine. We still had a handful of participants hesitating and wanting to wait a few more weeks until they got their third dose and until they felt more comfortable. This was short lived!!!!!! With places of worship now closed until further notice, we are looking at resuming Zoom rehearsals as of mid-January.

Many of the choir participants live alone and have limited contact with their family and friends since the start of the pandemic. Many, if not most of the participants, have been looking forward to resuming in-person rehearsals and seeing their fellow choir members after close to a year and a half of staring at a computer screen.



It is our job now as an organization, to keep their spirits up and to motivate them until we can resume our in-person rehearsals.

Daniel, our volunteers, and I want to extend a special thanks to a few individuals and families for their kindness and generosity. A big thank you goes out to Jason Aintabi, Brenda and Samuel Gewurz and Samantha and Justin Vineberg. Thanks to their generosity, we were able to organize a year end party on Tuesday, December 14. The Vineberg family catered the event. Federation CJA gifted each choir member a year end package filled with lots of great items and bars of chocolates. The donations from the Aintabi and Gewurz families will enable us to continue working with this beautiful choir and once the pandemic is over, we are hoping to travel with the choir to perform.

I encourage everyone to watch our choir documentary if you haven't done so already and to follow us on social media! I know you will fall in love with this small choir with a big heart.

Shira Choir Movie: <https://shiramovie.com/>

Join us on Facebook:
<http://fb.me/montrealshirachoir>



Behind The Scenes

By Marc Perez

I've always been fond of the proverb, "do what you love, and you will never work another day in your life." You quickly notice the people in your surrounding who follow this old proverb. I draw on this incredible energy from the clergy, office staff and board members. It is a motivating factor that helps with the promotion and communication of the outstanding programs and events they create with the rest of the world.

The Rabbi's wife, **Gali Pinto** and their kids worked behind the scene to bring the SPY Hannukah party to life, and **Muriel Suissa Benlolo** prepared a lovely, delicious end-of-year lunch with the help of **Yair** and the

wonderful maintenance team, **Santos**, **George** and **Alex**. This second edition of the Hadashot is possible in part because of the articles and pictures they, as well as from other members, submit.

I want to welcome the volunteers to the marketing and communication committee; **Julie Cohen-Bacrie**, **Danielle Azoulay**, **Marion Dana**, **Daniel Schonholzer**, **José Layani**, and **David Dadoun**. As the old cliché goes, "sharing is caring," I look forward to sharing our incredible energy to produce the next exciting print and digital media for our members, family and friends.

