

# Cantorial Corner with Gail Rose 9



## Why Do We Sing During the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Last week a friend of mine asked me to play a few songs for her husband's birthday. After I had a list of his favorite songs, I secured the music and practiced them for this outdoor celebration. When I arrived, a group of people were gathered, I mean were socially distanced, on this South Bexley front lawn. With guitar in hand, I led the group in a roaring version of "This Land is Your Land" and "Happy Birthday" and then performed "My Favorite Things" in a COVID-19 parody style. People were so happy to celebrate Michael in song. They also were glad to have a reason to exercise their lungs and interact with other human beings.

Our congregant, active TBS Men's Club member, trumpet player in our famous Temple Beth Shalom Klezmer Band, accountant and nice guy, Larry Remer, has made several outdoor appearances with his NaCHO (Nationwide Children's Hospital Orchestra) Street Band. This fantastic volunteer group of musicians have switched their venues to outdoor spaces only during this pandemic. Some of these gigs have included: the Ronald McDonald House, retirement homes, outside of Children's Hospital and Larry's front yard. All gigs are live-streamed and videoed in order to bring the joy of music to a wider community. Larry is performing a mitzvah every time he participates in a concert. He experiences great satisfaction and fulfillment while watching the hospital workers, patients, kids, neighbors, nursing home residents etc. come outside or look through their windows as they clap, dance, sing and genuinely enjoy these powerful vibrations.

Facebook has shown us countless parades of cars blasting music, honking horns, and/or singing songs to celebrate a birthday or just to make someone's day special. We have heard arias drifting from balconies in Italy and driveways and cul-de-sacs becoming amphitheatres for socially distanced renditions of Queen, Bon Jovi etc.

Disney hosted a sing-along and You Tube has aired some wonderful programming such as "Seder Night Live" and "Take Me to the World: A Sondheim 90th Birthday Celebration" which featured professional singers. I am sure you can add to this list.

Temple Beth Shalom offers at least 5 Facebook Musical Livestreams weekly. These weekly offerings are: Erev Shabbat Service, Congregational Healing Service, Havdalah with the Bar-Lev family, Welcoming Shabbat with Marc Rossio and Rabbi Bar-Lev's children's song sessions, In addition to these weekly episodes, we have featured performances by our own talented musicians: Nick Ciranni, Angela Dunlap, Arkadiy Gips, Emily Hartman, and Hannah Rossio. I also have participated! Our two musical affinity groups, The Sharyonim Choir and Purim Spiel Performers have shared friendship and song using zoom.

Why do we sing during COVID-19 pandemic? Music creates a sense of belonging and participation. It is medicine for our alienation in society in general and it is needed even more so now as we participate in social distancing and isolation. Music can help us sooth anxiety, share common emotions and connect us to our innermost thoughts, feelings and spirit. It is a vehicle for creativity and humor plus it is fantastic exercise for our lungs.

Music also helps us to express gratitude to other people, our country and to God. This tried and true art form is once again being used today in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to keep spirits up and communities pulling together.

So, for these reasons (plus it is just fun), we sing in a pandemic.

Stay healthy and keep singing!