

## ARTS IN BRIEF

### Get a pet

With cold and rainy weather on the way, Let the Animals Live is hosting an adoption event Saturday at 10 a.m. for cats and dogs who would otherwise spend the winter outside. A number of celebrities will appear at the event, which will take place at the Dror farm at Moshav Talmei Menashe in Ramla. Among those scheduled to attend are the cast of soap opera *Hashir Shelanu* (Our Song), music group The Jews and former MTV Europe hosts Becky Griffin and Eden Harel. The event will also feature food and drink stands and music. • *Nathan Burstein*

### Art for empty pockets

Hanukka may not be for another couple of months, but art lovers in Tel Aviv get an early gift Thursday afternoon when, as part of "Loving Arts," all the city's art museums and galleries will be opened to the public free of charge. In addition, Thursday's event, part of an effort to bring attention to the new year's art exhibitions throughout the city, will also include (for NIS 20) organized tours of the city's sculptures, outdoor performance artists interacting with passersby at the junction of Arlozorov St. and Namir Rd., and advertising billboards featuring works of art. The events are scheduled from 3 p.m. until 10 p.m. For more information, see the Tel Aviv Municipality website at [www.tel-aviv.gov.il](http://www.tel-aviv.gov.il), or call (03) 516-6188. • *Jason Silberman*

### Stand-up women

Performers Tsipi Sheveet, Hanni Nehamias and Irit Anavi will hold a comedy "summit" Friday evening, with each appearing in a comic one-woman act addressing subjects such as husbands, sex, diets and housework. The event is the first time the three women will appear on the same stage, and comes after years of friendship between the threesome. The night of comedy will take place at the Mofat performance venue in Hod Hasharon. • *Nathan Burstein*



## Ever true to the music

As an Irish band from Israel, Evergreen produces a Celtic sound all its own

• By BARRY DAVIS

Evergreen, it seems, never does anything with average effort. The locally-based Celtic music band has just released its new offering, *The Unseen Dance*, after a long, sometimes arduous but ultimately satisfying odyssey. "It took us a year and a half to finish the new album," says percussionist Abe Doron. "That's a long time by Israeli standards but we wanted to do it well."

Doron needn't have worried. The long hours spent in the recording studio, fine tuning and constantly reassessing their work, has born consummate fruit. *The Unseen Dance* is anything but run of the mill, unique from other releases produced by the ever-increasing number of Irish-oriented bands in Israel. There is a fresh sound to it, and one senses the band members' commitment to their work.

For this album, Evergreen allowed themselves a rare luxury – not limiting their studio time. "We tried to disconnect from budget considerations and worked like the big boys abroad," Doron continues. "We just kept on going back into the studio until we had the right energy and the right feeling we were looking for."

The feeling Doron and his colleagues – vocalist and multi-instrumentalist Michal Shahar, violin, viola and mandolin player Gal Shahar, guitarist Moshe Avigdor and violinist, guitarist and lute player Eitan Hoffer – were looking for transcended sonar boundaries. "A lot of soul-searching went on during the recording," notes the percussionist. "We wanted to discover what we wanted to put in there from ourselves. The guys from Evergreen don't just want things to sound good. We always discuss every bit of music to find the best way to present it. That sometimes involves even looking at individual notes in the music."



AN ISRAELI-IRISH sound. Abe Doron: 'We're not trying to be Irish. We love the music, but we're trying to do our own thing.'

The intense and demanding experience of making the music can at times bring volatile emotions to the surface too. "We are very much like a family, like an extended family. We can argue and have differences of opinion, but we stick together and remain focused," says Doron.

One fascinating aspect of Celtic music is its across-the-board appeal. Why, for example, do Israelis latch on to Irish music so happily? Why are leading bands from the Emerald Isle, like Dervish and Lunasa, be so enthusiastically received by audiences across the globe, from Brazil to Spain and eastern Europe?

Doron is, himself, a cross-cultural point in case. Born and raised in Mexico, the 35 year old percussionist spent several years in the States and London before eventually moving

here almost six years ago. For some of that time Doron earned a living as a member of the popular River Dance Celtic music and dance troupe that took the world by storm in the 1990s.

"Irish music really does have universal appeal," Doron muses. "Maybe it's the joy people hear, or the purity of the sound. I don't really know. I'm sure my influences, from Mexico and other places, all come into my music, including all the different kinds of percussion instruments I play – not just the bodhran. Whether I'm playing congas, jimbheh, or spoons I put all my experiences into my playing."

Doron also notes that Celtic bands around the world weave their own cultural baggage into their offerings so that, for example, an Irish band from Spain sounds patently different from a group from Ireland. The same

goes for Evergreen.

"We're not trying to be Irish. We really love the music but we're trying to do our own thing. We live here in Israel, we're very proud of being Jewish and Israeli, so that also comes out in the CD."

Doron cites a professional colleague to prove his point. "We played with Shane Mitchell, the accordionist from Dervish. He said what we do is great and we should just stick to that. I'm not looking to get a diploma from the Irish embassy. I just want to play nice music that I want to share with people. That's all."

Evergreen will perform material from their new album at Tel Aviv's Einav Center on November 10 at 9 p.m., and at Beit Shmuel in Jerusalem on November 17 at 9 p.m.

## Madonna fumes over Kabbala criticism

Press reports that have continuously circulated about Madonna's Kabbala lifestyle have left the pop diva fuming. She defended her interest in Kabbala in a recent interview – claiming "it would be less controversial if I joined the Nazi Party." Most of the press she receives she insists is based on ignorance.

Madonna added in Britain's *Attitude* magazine: "It's not hurting anybody." She is frustrated by the questions regularly lobbed at her: "What do you mean you study the Torah and you're not Jewish? What do you mean you pray to God and wear sexy clothes? We don't understand this. It frightens people," she explains, "so they try to denigrate it or trivialize it so that it makes more sense."

The star also revealed she is disgusted when critics label the religion a "cult". She said: "We're all in a cult. In this [modern day] cult we're not encouraged to ask questions. And if we do ask questions, we aren't going to get a straight answer. The world's in the cult of celebrity. That's the irony of it."

The 47-year-old singer also empathizes with Hollywood star Tom Cruise, who has been criticized for his devotion to Scientology, saying: "If it makes Tom Cruise happy, I don't care if he prays to turtles. And I don't think anybody else should."

Other celebrities have also taken to mocking Madonna's relatively newfound devotion to the religion, now shared by Britney Spears, Demi Moore, Ashton Kutcher, and others. Sharon Osbourne admits she has nightmares about Madonna eating at her house. The TV



(AP)

star claims the sexy singer would be one of her top three "nightmare dinner guests" because of her Kabbalistic beliefs.

She told Britain's *GQ* magazine: "I would like to punch her. She is so full of s\*\*t. She's into Kabbala one minute, she's a Catholic the next. She'll be a Hindu soon, no doubt."

• *Jerusalem Post Staff*

## Cosby preaches to parents

• By PETER PRENGAMAN

Bill Cosby, who created a stir in the black community when he criticized young people for the way they speak, challenged parents in this crime-plagued, largely minority city to set goals for their children.

"Somebody said 'I'm either flippin' burgers or sellin' some drugs,'" said Cosby, echoing a common complaint of young people in poor communities. "But people flippin' burgers never seem to say 'I want to be the manager of the burger place.'"

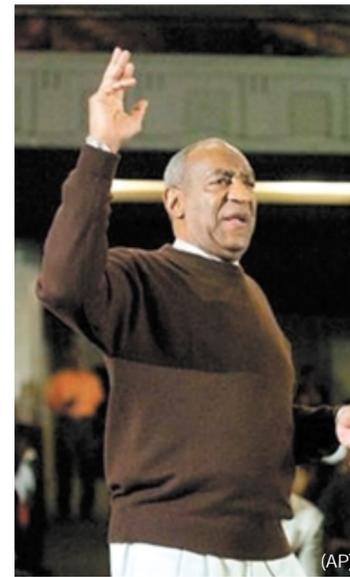
Cosby's visit to Compton High School last month, where he spoke to several gatherings of students, parents and teachers, is part of a 15-city tour he hopes will bring a message of hope and self-improvement to the black community. Last year Cosby, 68, accused young black people of squandering the civil rights accomplishments of the 1950s and '60s. "These people marched and were hit in the face with rocks to get an education and now we've got these knuckleheads walking around," Cosby said of today's youth.

"I can't even talk the way these people talk. 'Why you ain't,' 'Where you is' ... and I blamed the kid until I heard the mother talk," he added in his talk last May. Cosby's message was warmly received by many, including Lamiya Patrick, a 16-year-old Compton High School sophomore, who said the comedian proved anyone could make something of themselves if they tried.

Cosby, who grew up in a poor Philadelphia neighborhood, left high school in the 10th grade but went on to earn a doctorate in education and to succeed in movies, television and nightclubs.

"We can relate in Compton because there are a lot of broken homes. ... It doesn't mean you can't succeed," said Patrick. Some, though, resented the visit.

"There's no reason for him to come here and jump on black men who have been held down for years," said Daima White, a 77-year-old retired nurse and mother of five. (AP)



(AP)

## JEWISH DISCS

• By BEN JACOBSON

**Alisa Fineman**  
*Closing the Distance*  
Poems, Prayers and Love Songs  
(Hummingbird Records)

To what extent should Jews be making Judaism accessible to non-Jews? The question is a prickly one, and there is, of course, no one answer. Historically, community leaders have been wary of the motivations of gentiles interested in converting, and many of our rituals are traditionally for members of the tribe only. Yet the vast majority of Jewish teaching is accessible to anyone

with a library card or internet access, and we have no policies of secrecy like those of the Druse or the Scientologists. Californian Cantor Alisa Fineman sees great value in packaging Judaism for the world via her new disc, *Closing the Distance*. According to Fineman, her main goal in creating the album was "to share the wealth of our heritage and spiritual wisdom with everyone, the way the Tibetan Buddhists and Native Americans have shared theirs with us." The result is a brew of exotic instruments and Jewish concepts coming together to make a spiritual



adult-ethno-folk concept album.

*Distance's* opening track presents some of the morning liturgy (including the prayer following evacuation) in an acoustic flamenco setting that features edgy percussion and bass. On "Hinei Ma Tov," Fineman juxtaposes a Sufi melody with a revised verse from the Psalms, extolling the mingling of

nations (instead of the original "brethren"). Closing the *Distance* might not single-handedly heal the world, but it does mix a salad of ethnic influences that makes for easy swallowing.

**Zlata Razzolina**  
*For All the Things We Loved*  
(self-published)

Russian Israeli immigrant Zlata Razzolina is a promising young talent whose compositions defy genres and borders. Using the poetry of Ithak Katzenelson as a springboard, Razzolina's orchestral "Song of the Murdered Jewish People" is considered one of the most moving

artistic memorials to the Holocaust. Avishai Ya'ar of the Omerut La'am Institute has written that he considers Razzolina's works to be "of great value to the cultural scene of Israel and for Jewish music in general."

Razzolina's new release, *For All the Things We Loved*, is a compilation of live performances spanning her career. Comprised of love songs set to the texts of Russian poets, the recording delves into wispy emotional balladry in a decidedly Eastern European / post-Soviet manner. Whispery vocals, synthesizer chords, sampled piano sounds and electronic bells set the tone for the collection in the



Alexander Blok-penned opening title track, and these motifs are revisited in "Not Long Ago."

Uppy, theatrical whimsy dominates "I Didn't Call on You," while "Meet Me in the Evening" explores the interaction between the verses' staccato wordplay and the refrain's sweeping melody.

## THEATER REVIEW

**Plaza Suite**  
By Neil Simon  
Cameri Theater  
October 30, 2005

Neil Simon, considered one of the world's most prolific playwright since Shakespeare, has made yet another Broadway hit with "Plaza Suite." It is a 3 part play, set against opulent suite 719 of the old Plaza Hotel, in which three diverse couples act out a moment of deep crisis in their respective lives. Part one, "The Visitors from Mamaroneck," shows Sam and Karen, a middle-aged couple celebrating their wedding anniversary in the same suite in which they spent their honeymoon. Karen's sentimental arrangements soon sour when a distracted Sam is reluctant to join in. Part Two, "The Visitor from Hollywood," tells Jesse's story. A successful producer with three failed marriages behind him, he tries to rejuvenate himself by contacting Betty, his high-school sweetheart whom he is set on seducing. In Part Three, "The Visitors From Forest Hills," Millie and Marvin, the frustrated parents of Mimsey, a bride who has locked herself in the lavatory, fight about how to get her downstairs to face the waiting guests.

The Scottish Leslie Lawton's direction is tight, tense, and plays up witty dialogue and physical comedy with fluency. Adrian Vaux provides an evocative reproduction of the now defunct but once celebrated Plaza Hotel in New York. It is splendid performance by the principal actors that must make this production a Tel Aviv hit too. Anat Waxman and Shlomo Bar Abba transform deftly from part to part. • *Naomi Doudai*