

HITTING THE RIGHT NOTES

The power of self-expression

Shalom! It wasn't long ago that I was in your shoes, looking at colleges and the Jewish life that they provide. Now I am a sophomore at Ithaca College studying Music, Theatre Arts Management and Strategic Communications and am an active member of many student organizations. I have led the communications team for a conference held at IC, worked with Relay for Life, and served as a President's Host Tour Guide and an intern for Hillel. All of these roles are important to who I am as a person. Specifically, my involvement with Hillel at Ithaca College has been an important part of my growth as a student, a musician and a Jew.

Before attending Ithaca College, I was an active member of my temple community and attended a Jewish sleepaway camp for 10 summers. Judaism has always been a part of who I am. Music came along a little later, but it became just as integral to my life. They are both a part of who I am and I make it a priority to fit both into my weekly schedule. Every Thursday I make sure I leave time to attend Hillel's "Coffee in the Pub" to ensure that I get my cup of coffee and some "me" time.

I had the opportunity to travel to Israel this past January with Hillel through Taglit: Birthright Israel, which left me feeling more connected to the Jewish people. This is just one of the many opportunities Hillel at Ithaca College has given me to explore my Judaism. Each year Hillel hosts more than 100 different events. Some involve Judaism; others involve bonding with friends over a cup of coffee. There are also opportunities to attend weekly Shabbat services, the annual Passover Seder or the Rosh Hashanah banquet. With the wealth of activities offered by Hillel, my friends

and I are able to determine how active we would like to be and which events we choose to participate in. This really makes Judaism fun, allowing you to choose how Jewish you want to be.

As a music student, I have been able to integrate my interest in Judaism into the classroom. In the fall of 2014 in music history class I was able to study a Jewish composer, Salamone Rossi.

Some of his most famous works are some of the most well-known prayers, such as "Adon Olam." It was interesting to learn about how his Jewish identity affected music, which led me to my new research topic for the spring semester of music history: Fromental Halévy and his "Grand Opera La Juive." It has been a captivating topic as I grow as a Jewish student, musician and leader at Ithaca College.

Judaism, music and leadership make up the person that I am, and the Ithaca College campus and Hillel communities allow me to thrive in these areas. Each is an integral part of my life and there are countless opportunities to get involved. You can be a musician, you can be a Jew, and you can be a leader. Most importantly, you get to be you.

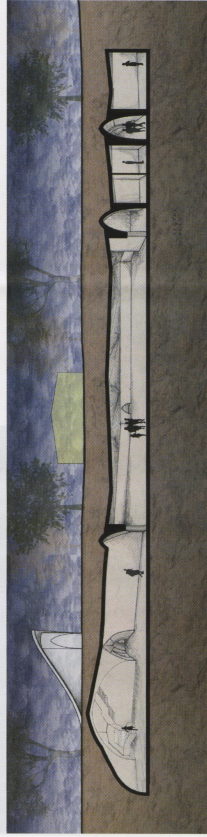
Brandon Schneider is a sophomore music major at Ithaca College.



BY BRANDON SCHNEIDER

SAFE SPACES

Future architect sees need for shelter in southern Israel



As a Jewish woman, Israel has a huge place in my heart. I spent a summer traveling the country when I was 15 and since then I have been in love with it. This past summer, before entering my thesis year of architecture, Israel was all over the news showing bombings and tragedy. I read articles about people in southern Israel not being able to find shelter in time. This greatly affected me and I knew that bomb shelters were needed. As an architecture student I knew I could create a new kind of shelter to keep people safe in times like these, so designing a bomb shelter became my focus for my thesis.

In Kibbutz Nahal Oz, shelter means a lot more than just a place to rest: it is the difference between life or death. This small agricultural community is located half a mile from the Gaza strip, so there are many bombings. Unfortunately, Nahal Oz doesn't have a sufficient bomb shelter for its people, so after significant damage and casualties the community had no option but to flee.

My thesis project is to design a bomb shelter for Nahal Oz. Because of their close proximity to Gaza, Nahal Oz residents have a maximum of one minute to find shelter once the alarms sound. Therefore, the shelter must have multiple entrances throughout the town to allow everyone quick and easy access. These entrances then create an intricate system of tunnels which all lead to the central space. My goal is to create a place that is enjoyable, comfortable, and that can ease the pain of such a scary period of time.

Architecturally, I made sure no room feels like a small concrete box. The ceiling is geometric but not intrusive, and the hallways

are pointed arches, a familiar architectural element from the Middle East. Through familiarity and unique design the shelter becomes a comfortable and enjoyable space.

It was critical to me to find a way to use architecture to simultaneously create both a safe space and a living space where families could come together to ensure the survival of their Jewish community. In many ways, Hillel serves the same function of bringing people together to ensure the survival of the Jewish community. Hillel at Virginia Tech has allowed me to maintain my culture and traditions throughout college and it is a factor in why I am so passionate about Israel and its people.

Stephanie Mahoney is a senior architecture major at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

