שיר תקווה

SONG OF HOPE

NOFEL VEKAM ♦ נופל וקם

JIMBO J

BEIT AVI CHAI

Introduction

Israeli Music and the Ongoing War

Music has long held a special place in Israel's public consciousness, from the songs of the Levites on the steps of the Temple in ancient Jerusalem to the Zionist anthems of the early pioneers who sang and danced together on the Kibbutz and in the Moshav. Since the War of Independence, each successive era has added new tunes to the songbook.

In the aftermath of October 7, music has taken on a significant role in our nation's ongoing response to its trauma. As the current war enters its second year, we still eagerly await the return of our hostages and the end of the fighting on all fronts. We hold space for a wide range of emotions as we process the difficult events of the past year while simultaneously rebuilding our lives, looking toward an uncertain future with both trepidation and hope. A portion of the new songs express sadness, loss, and pain, while others try to motivate the nation toward better days. Old songs have made a comeback too as we nostalgically look back on simpler times. A new playlist is being formed that will be forever associated with this war.

The Role of the Musician

Initially musicians were challenged by how to respond to the atrocities. Could there even be a place for music in a post-October 7 world? In our shock, we found that when we run out of words, we often turn to sounds – to the songs that can move us and to speak in our name in times when we need this most. Singers and bands lifted the national mood by traveling across the country to perform in front of soldiers on army bases and evacuee families in hotels, as well as giving small intimate concerts for the general public. With time, more and more musicians began to give expression to their feelings and wrote songs that have since embedded themselves in Israeli culture and contributed to the healing process that is still ongoing. Without intending to, Israeli musicians found new influence as symbols of something beyond their art or fame.

At Beit Avi Chai, we turned to Israeli musicians during this period of national crisis and created a series of videos each of which features one particular musician who talks about their experience since the war broke out and then performs a song of their choice that resonates with them today. Artists were asked to choose songs that were not originally their own. Each episode includes an acoustic performance and an intimate discussion about the comfort and hope that music can offer. Each video can act as a trigger for engaging with our own feelings and thoughts.

As we enter this period of processing, rebuilding, and recovery, we strive to create meaningful spaces for our students – and ourselves – to explore our new reality. This activity guide aims to accomplish this through thoughtful consideration of the role of music during this time, with the understanding that:

- Music is a way to tell a story
- Music can be a meaningful tool to connect to what is happening in Israel
- Curating a soundtrack can be a mindful way for a community to share experiences, values, and hopes for the future

Activity Guide

This activity guide is built around an interview with popular Israeli musician, Jimbo J, who chose the song Nofel VeKam, "I Fall and Get Up", by the band "Shabak Samech". The aim of the guide is to prompt discussion in which students will:

- Appreciate the power of music as a form of expression
- Consider how music can be meaningful on different levels
- Understand the role of music as part of the healing process in the wake of October 7

Materials:

- Computer with projector or screen
- Journals, notebook, or paper and writing tools
- Printouts or projection of the lyrics in Appendix A
- Printouts of the three quotes in Appendix B
- 2 large sticky notes per student
- App that allows for the creation of a collaborative playlist (optional)

*** Note To Facilitator:**

- Facilitator scripts are suggestions only. Please be mindful to moderate any language or content for the needs of your class.
- Additional themes and activity suggestions can be found at the end of this outline.

The recommended time for this activity is **45-50 minutes.**

ACTIVITY GUIDE

Part I: Opening Activity (2-3 minutes)

Student prompt: Take a few moments to scroll through your playlist or think of your favorite songs. Choose one song that has helped you get through a challenge. Think about why you found this song meaningful.

Part II: Getting to Know Jimbo J (10-15 minutes)

During this period of national crisis, Beit Avi Chai has created a series of videos each of which features one particular musician who talks about their experience since the war broke out and then performs a song of their choice that resonates with them today.

Jimbo J is an Israeli rapper, singer, songwriter, and actor. Students can read more about Jimbo J here, and sample some of his songs here. Jimbo J lives in Kibbutz Or HaNer, which is in the Gaza envelope, just north of the Gaza strip. Kibbutz Or HaNer was evacuated in the days after October 7 along with the other kibbutzim and moshavim in the area. Five months later, most of the Or HaNer community returned home, despite the trauma and the danger.

Student prompt: Before we begin, reflect on how you felt when you first heard about what was happening in Israel on October 7. Today we are going to hear from an Israeli musician, Jimbo J. As you watch the first part of the video, listen to Jimbo J describe what he and his community experienced on October 7. Think about the following questions:

- What was holding him back from returning home?
- Why did he end up returning home for the first time?
- What role does music play in the way Jimbo J is processing and rebuilding his life?

Watch the video [until 4:23]

After watching the video, students should process the following questions in a journal. Please provide students with the lyrics to Nofel VeKam (Appendix A). After students have reflected on their answers, they may share them with their classmates in a group discussion.

- Why does the chorus of Nofel VeKam resonate with Jimbo J? What does it mean to you?
- Jimbo J makes references to the Holocaust and to the murder of Yitzchak Rabin, two very different but pivotal periods in recent history.
  a. What significance do these events have for Jimbo J in processing October 7?
  b. Do these references resonate with you? In what way?
- How would you describe his journey home?
  a. Have you ever been away from home for an extended period of time, or left something that was meaningful to you (a relationship, a hobby, a passion) behind and then came back to it?
  b. What was that process like for you?

[Allow a few students to share their responses.]

Part III: Text study - Nofel VeKam [Appendix A] (10 minutes)

Jimbo J chose to perform the song Nofel VeKam. The song is originally by "Shabak Samech", Israel's prime hip-hop crew of the 90s. Although released in the year 2000, a few years after the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, this song still reflects a very different time, a time of hope for peace.

Student Prompt: Study the lyrics of the song with a partner. Underline lines that you find meaningful and share them with each other. Highlight messages of resilience that you find in the song.

Part IV: Jimbo J's performance (15-20 minutes)

Student Prompt: Now that you have had the opportunity to study the lyrics of Nofel VeKam, we will watch Jimbo J's performance of the song. Before you watch, think about the style of music you anticipate hearing. What kind of melody do you think will accompany these lyrics?

Watch the rest of the video, and allow for a short discussion based on these questions:

- Does the actual music match what you anticipated to hear?
- How does Jimbo J bring his interests and style into the performance?
- What emotions does Jimbo J's performance evoke in you?
- How did Jimbo J's performance affect your understanding of the song?

Post the three quotes from **Appendix B** on the board, or along the walls of the classroom. Ask students to pick two of the quotes and respond to them. Responses could be written on sticky notes and placed next to the quote, on a padlet, or in any other sharing format. Students are encouraged to read other responses and share what resonates with them.

Part V: Wrap Up (5 minutes)

Student Prompt: During this activity we have had the chance to meet Jimbo J and hear a little about his thoughts and feelings since October 7. We touched upon the fears and hopes that people have been experiencing since the war began, and the resilience of Jimbo J and others as they rebuild their lives, falling and rising up again.

Like Jimbo J, we may find ourselves in a place of transition, where we are holding onto fear and grief over the past year, while starting to look towards a more hopeful future.

- What song do you feel is appropriate to mark this period in time? Think about a song that reflects your mood, thoughts, feelings, and hopes. Add your selection to the class playlist that will be entitled "Songs of Hope".

Nofel Vekam

The road is long and winding
I fall and get up
I will never stop walking
I fall and get up
Crossing a bridge and another bridge
I fall and get up
how long is the road
I stand firm with my head held high.

They say love only comes from a million to one
They say there is no way the sun will ever shine on me
They say I'll fall, they say I'll run away
They say I will stay alone
They say I'm not fit for life
Because I don't have the desire for gold and diamonds
I don't have the right cards
Maybe it's the company that's collapsing
If this is not a suitable place for rainbow seekers
For those who ignore the sign of the times
And where is my star?
Humans I exist
In your eyes I may have no value
But I have a soul, I have a song, I have a way.

The road is long and winding...

נופל וקם

הדרך ארוכה ומפותלת
אני נופל וקם
אף פעם לא אפסיק ללכת
אני נופל וקם
עובר גשר ועוד גשר
אני נופל וקם
כמה ארוכה היא הדרך
אני עומד איתן עם ראש מורם.

אומרים שאהבה באה רק מליון לאחד
אומרים שאין סיכוי שהשמש עוד תזרח עלי
אומרים שאני אפול, הם אומרים שאברח
אומרים שאשאר לבד
אומרים שאני לא מתאים לחיים
כי אין בי את הרצון לזהב ויהלומים
אין לי קלפים נכונים
אולי זו החברה שקורסת
אם זה לא מקום מתאים למחפשים של קשת וענן
למתעלמים מסימן הזמן
והכוכב שלי היכן
בני אדם אני קיים
בעיניכם אולי אין לי ערך
אבל יש לי נשמה יש לי שיר יש לי ת'דרך.

הדרך ארוכה ומפותלת...

Before a column of fire behind a cloud of smoke
I left a metal city behind going where
To a place where the sun is not covered by buildings

Beyond the mountains to the green fields
Because there is a sweeter place than this place
where there is as much longer time as we want
There comes a moment when you have to think
spread a wing say hello get up and leave
To a place where I can be myself
After two thousand years of exile I want to be free
Beyond the horizon there are birds singing
I will get there and until then I will sing songs.

How long and winding the road is
I don't stop, can't stop
Leaving behind the fears and sorrows
All is all I must go on
Everything that happens I know has to happen
I am the fire you cannot put out
The music will take me higher and deeper
The long way to go is to live.

The road is long and winding...

Every end is a new beginning
Sadness is a sign that joy will soon come
I am neither in a race nor in a war
Head in the clouds and feet on the ground.

The road is long and winding...

לפני עמוד של אש מאחורי ענן עשן
השארתי עיר מתכת מאחור הולך לאן
למקום שבו השמש לא מכוסה בבניינים

מעבר להרים אל השדות הירוקים
כי יש מקום יותר מתוק מהמקום הזה
שבו יש זמן יותר ארוך כמה שרק נרצה
מגיע רגע זה הרגע בו צריך לחשוב
לפרוס כנף לומר שלום לקום ולעזוב
אל מקום שבו אני אוכל להיות עצמי
אחרי אלפיים שנות גלות רוצה להיות חופשי
מעבר אל האופק שם שרות הציפורים
לשם אני אגיע ועד אז אשיר שירים.

כמה שהדרך ארוכה ומפותלת
אני לא עוצר מלכת לא יכול להפסיק
משאיר מאחורי את הפחדים ואת הצער
הכל הוא הכל אני חייב להמשיך
כל מה שקורה אני יודע שצריך לקרות
אני האש שלא תוכל לכבות
המוזיקה תיקח אותי למעלה ולעומק
הדרך ארוכה ללכת בה זה לחיות.

הדרך ארוכה ומפותלת...

כל סוף הוא התחלה חדשה
העצב הוא סימן שבקרוב תבוא שמחה
אני לא במרוץ ולא במלחמה
הראש בעננים רגליים על האדמה.

הדרך ארוכה ומפותלת...

Appendix B- Quotes

Note to facilitator: The quotes for printing/screening will appear on a separate page.

#1

Context: Jimbo J says that the lines below remind him that even though we are now in challenging times, we can hope for another more innocent time.

Quote: "I am neither in a race nor in a war"

Head in the clouds and feet on the ground.

Questions: What do these lyrics mean to you? When you think of a more innocent time, where does your mind take you? Why?

#2

Context: Jimbo J describes the music that came out in the aftermath of the murder of Yitzchak Rabin.

Quote: "I, on the other hand, also hope the songs won't be just songs of war and mourning, or just songs of victory and hope… I'd like to hope that this tragedy won't dictate that our art must be something very uniform, but that we'll continue to write and sing however and about whatever we want."

Questions: How can music help us heal? Does it need to relate to a tragedy? Does it look to the past? How can music express our individuality?

#3

Context: Jimbo J describes how things have changed because of the fear, chaos, and uncertainty that characterized the beginning of the war.

Quote: "The battery is starting to fill."

Questions: What does this mean for Jimbo J and his music? What fills your battery? How do these activities and expressions give you hope?

Appendix B - Quotes

"I AM NEITHER IN A RACE NOR IN A WAR HEAD IN THE CLOUDS AND FEET ON THE GROUND"

Jimbo J

- What do these lyrics mean to you?
- When you think of a more innocent time, where does your mind take you? Why?

"I, ON THE OTHER HAND, ALSO HOPE THE SONGS WON'T BE JUST SONGS OF WAR AND MOURNING, OR JUST SONGS OF VICTORY AND HOPE... I'D LIKE TO HOPE THAT THIS TRAGEDY WON'T DICTATE THAT OUR ART MUST BE SOMETHING VERY UNIFORM, BUT THAT WE'LL CONTINUE TO WRITE AND SING HOWEVER AND ABOUT WHATEVER WE WANT"

Jimbo J

- How can music help us heal?
- Does it need to relate to a tragedy?
- Does it look to the past?
- How can music express our individuality?

"THE BATTERY IS STARTING TO FILL"

Jimbo J

- What does this mean for Jimbo J and his music?
- What fills your battery?
- How do these activities and expressions give you hope?