Music at a Time of Crisis
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It was a Sunday morning that I received an email that the ***Israel Philharmonic*** was to play. The host said, if the sirens go off, the musicians will go to the shelter. The audience was empty. They played ***Fanfare for Israel***, followed by the ***Hatikvah***. I was sad and proud.

This is the orchestra that played 140 times before Allied soldiers in WW2. In the Yom Kippur War, the orchestra played from the Golan to the Sinai.

So, what does music mean to me and how can music help with trauma, loss, grief and the stress of uncertain times.

Music is a language of healing. Listening to music reduces physical and emotional pain. It is a spiritual experience and gives us comfort. Music finds a place beyond words, and beyond reason where healing happens. It is a universal language of deep connection. Music creates a safe space, increasing a feeling of calm and honors shared memories with others. It provides entertainment when you are looking for joy. It allows you to express large emotions.

Music triggers the release of dopamine (feel good), serotonin (elevates mood) and decreases cortisol (stress hormone). There is improved sleep, lower blood pressure and heart rate. There is an increase in blood flow to the brain and helps generate our emotions. It reduces pain, brings emotional regulation and inner peace. Music enhances memory retrieval, firing synapses, creating, and energizing brain pathways that were previously dormant. It helps to regulate arousal and attention. Music and meditation help to feel present in the moment.

Music brings people together and inspires them to achieve their goals and dreams. ***The Leningrad Symphony by Shostakovich*** was performed as a testament to the Soviet Citizens who lost their lives in WWII. It was written at a time of the Nazi siege of Leningrad. The music reflected hope for humanity and victory over fascism.

Following a diagnosis of Traumatic Brain Injury, music therapy enhances executive function, brings out brain plasticity, reduces stress and pain, and increases resilience Tt can be a complimentary form of therapy for mental illness. It can help people sleep and can reduce insomnia. It can enhance your cognitive and emotional flexibility. Music facilitates recovery for both physical and mental disorders. It helps to activate the brain with heal and laying down new memories. It is a naturally therapeutic approach that enhances social skills, by experiencing music with others.

Hatikvah - The Hope
In the 1940's, Jews defiantly sang the song as a gesture of hope and spiritual resilience in the face of the Holocaust. The song also reflects community pride and a hope for the future that violence will end, and peace and freedom will prevail. ***Hatikvah*** is the **Israeli National Anthem**. Listening to it, we hope and believe in a better tomorrow.

Naomi Shemer wrote ***Jerusalem of Gold*** describing the Jewish people's 2000 years of longing to return to the Jewish homeland. An additional verse was added after the Yom Kippur war validating Jerusalem united.

Shuli Natan and ***Azi Schwartz*** sang ***Praying for Israel*** – ***Let It Be (Lu Y'hi)*** offering music to heal and giving us strength to pursue justice.

This is an amazing time for Jewish music. We gather as a community in the face of isolation and fear to uplift our courage and spirits. Music's healing power helps us in these difficult times.