

# Jay O'Brien

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[www.cantorobrien.com](http://www.cantorobrien.com)

## Areas of Expertise

- Instruments:* Acoustic and electric guitar, piano, ukulele, violin, mandolin, harmonica.
- Vocal Training:* 15 years of private voice study, extensive training in opera and lieder singing, significant training and experience in Jazz and Broadway styles
- Skills:* Songleading, choral conducting, composing and arranging music scores for choirs and instrumentalists, concert and event planning, high level proficiency within Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox liturgies
- Teaching:* Curriculum building, classroom teaching/management, comprehensive bar/bat mitzvah tutorial
- Technology:* Finale music notation software, live sound production and mixing, digital sound recording, video editing, proficient in social media (Facebook, Twitter)

## Experience

### 2012-2016 Stephen Wise Free Synagogue

*Student Cantor*

- **“Shabbat Together” and Young Family Services**  
Lead twice-monthly services for Tots and young families featuring sing-a-long repertoire, hand motion choreography, and age appropriate teachings about Shabbat practice and the Jewish calendar.
- **Bar and Bat Mitzvah Tutor**  
Providing 1 year of weekly tutorial, specializing in students with learning and processing disorders. Instructing students in chanting of Torah and Haftarah in addition to prayers and blessings for Shabbat morning services. Assisting senior Cantor in the digitization of all bar/bat mitzvah materials including a digital archive of audio and visual materials.
- **Shabbat After Dark for 20's and 30's**  
Developing and emceeding a monthly program for young Jewish professionals in the Manhattan community, now achieving regular attendance of over 100 persons per month.
- **Alternative Services**  
Independently planning and leading a 90-minute Shabbat morning service designed for a close group of 10-20 congregants. Service features full piano accompaniment, meditative English readings, Classical Reform melodies, as well as Torah reading/discussion.
- **Pastoral Care and Counseling**  
Conducting services for bereaved families, including numerous in-home Shiva services.
- **Religious School**  
Song-leading with guitar for school-wide assemblies and programs with up to 200+ students, teaching holiday songs to smaller groups of students grades K-7, planning and presenting a multi media curriculum on Jewish American Identity to grades 6-7.
- **“Chofshi B'Manhattan”**  
Creating and presenting High Holy Day services for secular Israelis and Hebrew speakers living in New York City, featuring an innovative musical program using Traditional Jewish melodies, Sephardic folk songs, and Israeli popular songs on themes of remembrance and reflection.
- **Outreach and Public Relations-**  
Developing promotional videos and audio recordings in collaboration with in-house PR office.
- **Service Leading**  
Co-leading main services on Shabbat, festivals, and High Holy Days with senior clergy. Conducting all of the synagogue's young family services during the High Holydays. Substituting for the senior cantor during summer months and vacation weekends.

### 2006-2012 Camp Ben Frankel

*Senior Staff, Jewish Summer Camp*

- Director of Jewish Education (2012); Camp Spiritual Leader (2011), Unit Head (2010); Song Leader (2007-2009); CIT counselor (2006).

**2009-2011 Brith Shalom Kineset Israel (BSKI)***Cantorial Soloist, Conservative Egalitarian Synagogue*

- Chanting of all Shabbat, Festival, and High Holy Day services.
- Coordinating and conducting the synagogue's 20 person volunteer choir for High Holydays and Festivals.
- Creating and conducting the monthly event, "A cappella Shabbat," featuring 10 original choral arrangements for the synagogue's volunteer choir.
- Planning synagogue and community-wide events including solo recitals, fundraising concerts, and inter-congregational programs for various festivals.
- Officiating life cycle events including weddings, bar/bat mitzvahs, funerals, and grave dedications.
- Bar and Bat Mitzvah tutoring in Torah, Haftarah, blessings and prayers.
- Teaching religious school music for grades K-7, song leading for school and community wide programs, teaching introduction to Mishnah for post bar/bat mitzvah students.

**2010-2011 Solomon Schechter Day School of St. Louis***Music Teacher, Elementary and Middle Schools*

- Teaching general music curriculum for students in grades 3-5 and music appreciation curriculum for grades 6-8.
- Conducting student choirs of grades K-8 for school and community-wide programs.
- Leading weekly Kabbalat Shabbat services and dancing for grades K-5.

**2008-2009 Missouri Arts Council***Music Editor for "Mozart and Me"*

- Editing a 30-minute educational theater piece about the life and music of Mozart for inner-city and rural elementary schools in the St. Louis area.
- Project required extensive knowledge and use of Finale music notation software.

**Education****2011-2016 Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion Debbie****Friedman School of Sacred Music***- Masters in Sacred Music, Spring 2015**- Expected ordination as Cantor, Spring 2016*

**Activities:** Performing the role of "Tony" in community production of *West Side Story*, Volunteer in the HUC Soup Kitchen, Volunteer caregiver for an Ethiopian immigrant community in Jerusalem

**Research:** "The Rise of Synagogue Bands: a Historical and Ethnographic Study of Instrumental Ensembles in Contemporary American Synagogues"

**2005-2009 Washington University in St. Louis***- Bachelor of Arts in Music, May 2009*

**Activities:** Music Director of *Staan* Jewish A cappella Ensemble, High Holyday Student Coordinator for Washington University Hillel, Public Relations/Fundraising Chair of Washington University Concert Choir

**Achievements and Awards****Dr. Josef Freudenthal Memorial Prize for Composition 2014-15**

A cash prize awarded annually for excellence in musical composition to students of the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music

**Dean's List, Washington University 2009**

In recognition of academic achievement upon graduation with a bachelors degree

**Washington University Friends of Music Scholar, 2005-2009**

Endowed scholarship for the study of music history, theory, and performance at Washington University in St. Louis

**Saint Louis Ladies Music Club Scholarship recipient, 2007-2009**

Annual scholarship award for young singers and instrumentalists from a longstanding organization of professional female musicians in St. Louis

**Personal Interests**

Composing and recording original music, playing guitar and piano in rock and folk ensembles, running and fitness, writing poetry, attending concerts, watching baseball

**References**

Available upon request