

# EURO-MEDITERRANEAN INSTITUTE

## ACTIVITY REPORT

**Program:** Within the Secret of Many Voices: Piyut, Prayer and Music Festival

**Year:** 2021

Please submit your activity report according to the following parameters. The entire report should not exceed two or three pages (as a Word document).

**Name of the Program:**

Within the Secret of Many Voices: Piyut, Prayer and Music Festival

Year of activity: 2021

Name of the report's writer: Yair Harel & Michal Brilliant

Roles of the report's writers: Artistic Director & General Manager

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Give the current state of the program (where the program stands at the date of the activity report; no more than ten lines):

After last year's festival, which was held in a reduced virtual format, this year we made an effort to hold it in a physical space. Audience response was enthusiastic: tickets were sold out and the general feedback, both from the audience and in articles about the festival that appeared in the media, was good. It was important to us to maintain continuity and make the festival an established event, particularly in light of the move to the permanent building of the National library and the process of creating a plan for cultural events for the coming years.

Thanks largely to this year's Festival, we were successful. We plan to expand the event in the coming years, establishing it as one of the main cultural events of the National Library.

The main achievements during the last year of activity (main achievements, number of events, number of participants, etc.):

As stated, audience response was enthusiastic; the tickets were sold out. Approximately one thousand people attended, and general feedback, from both the audience and from articles about the festival that appeared in the media, were good.

We invested effort in establishing the festival's unique language – a combination of contemporary and traditional art in a variety of voices in Israeli society – in greater depth by providing a range of experiences: workshops, master classes, lectures, and performances that were held in various spaces throughout the library.

The opening performance was dedicated to prayers and love songs in Arabic and in Hebrew from all over the Middle East, performed by Jewish and Arab artists – an artistic theme that has a deep connection with EMID's vision.

We held 13 events during the three days of the festival.

Another significant accomplishment was the strengthening of our relationship with the Jerusalem municipality as a major supporter.

The evaluation (methodology, results, comparisons with the preceding year, conclusions for the future...):

This year's festival marks the end of a five-year chapter in which the festival was held in the National Library's old building. In the first year (2017), it was held during the winter in the library building. In the next two years (2018–2019), it was moved to the Hebrew month of Elul (September), and was held in the open and in spaces inside the library.

**In 2019 Emid Joined us as a supporter.**

It was during these years that the festival began to establish itself as a main stage in the field of piyut, prayer, and Jewish music. In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we held a small, virtual version of the festival around Tu bi-Shevat (January 2020) in order to keep the festival in the public's awareness and develop its artistic language. The year 2021 was particularly significant, and we are happy to report that despite the challenging conditions, we succeeded in holding the festival in a physical space. Due to the timing (it was held in December), the festival was held inside the Library as a concluding celebration and a farewell to the old building.

The major parameters of success are feedback from the audience, from the media, and from the partners. Feedback from the artists about the work process and their feelings during the events is also important to us, seeing the festival as a platform for creating unique and meaningful artistic language that could have an impact mainly on Israeli society. By all these parameters, the festival was a great success.

We feel that the festival's artistic language became more solidified this year. This was evident in the way that the artistic concept found expression in rich and varied content and in the language of the graphics and design. Our collaboration with the National Library grew closer, and we conclude this chapter in the knowledge that we laid a good foundation for the next chapter, which is planned to take place in the National Library's new building.

**Provisional guidelines for the advancement of the program in the next year:**

We do not plan to hold the festival next year because the National Library will be engaged in the process of moving to its new home. However, we are planning several events for 2023 – a large performance early in the year (February) and the main festival in approximately September. We wish to spend time in 2022 developing the artistic processes in depth, with an emphasis on international collaborations, in order to establish the festival as one of the world's most important platforms for the renewal of traditional Jewish and interfaith music.

We would be grateful to EMID if the foundation would consider a development grant for 2022. Such a grant would enable us to invest the time required for planning the festival's next chapter and bringing it to the next level to prepare for the events planned for 2023 in the National Library's new home.

Please see the appendix containing links relevant to this report  
The Budget and Photos attached separately

With deep Gratitude,

Yair Harel

Michal Brilliant

**Links:**

Website homepage: <https://besodkolot.nli.org.il/>

Website – about : <https://besodkolot.nli.org.il/about>

Opening event: <https://besodkolot.nli.org.il/#opening-show>

Advertisement in the Jerusalem municipality website: <https://www.jerusalem.muni.il/he/experience/allevnts/besod-kolot-rabim/>

**links to a sample of media items about the festival:**

An article in the libraries blog about the opening performance including a video clip

[https://blog.nli.org.il/sipur-broken\\_heart/](https://blog.nli.org.il/sipur-broken_heart/)

An article in the libraries blog about the main performance of the second night with Shuli Rand

Focusing on the part of the concert based on recordings of his father as found in the Piyut & Tefilla web site

<https://blog.nli.org.il/sipur-shuli-rand-besod/>