



A LIVING
MEMORIAL
TO THE
HOLOCAUST

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FREEDOM RIDERS AND GOSPEL PERFORMANCE
HONOR DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
at the Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust

NEW YORK, NY – In the spring and summer of 1961, several hundred Americans — blacks and whites, men and women — converged on Jackson, Mississippi to challenge state segregation laws. Over 300 people were arrested and convicted of the charge “breach of the peace.” In the spirit of their actions, a fascinating panel discussion and performance, *Breach of Peace: Portraits of the 1961 Freedom Riders With a Gospel performance by Neshama Carlebach and the Green Pastures Baptist Choir*, will pay tribute to Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement on **Wednesday, January 14 at 7 p.m.** at the **Museum of Jewish Heritage — A Living Memorial to the Holocaust.**

Freedom Riders **Joan Pleune, Hezekiah Watkins, and Lewis Zuchman** will talk about their personal experiences in a discussion led by author **Eric Etheridge**. A musical performance by **Neshama Carlebach** and the **Green Pastures Baptist Choir** will follow. The Museum would like to dedicate this event to singer and Civil Rights activist Odetta, who died earlier this month.

While Freedom Riders were a diverse group from 39 states and 11 countries, it is estimated that half of the white Freedom Riders were Jewish. Freedom Rider Alexander Weiss escaped Austria with his family in 1940. Weiss said, “I talked to my father [about the Freedom Rides] and said, ‘I want to go.’ He was totally against it.... [my father said] It’s not us this time. I said, ‘Hey you know, this is what happened to you. I’m not going to stand by.’” William Leons’ parents were involved in the Resistance in the Netherlands during World War II. He joined the Freedom Rides because he “was in a sense, in a different time, a different country, doing what they would have done... that is the right thing to do, to oppose an oppressive state where wrongs are being done to people.”

“It is a fitting tribute to the legacy of Dr. King that we spend his birthday talking about how ordinary citizens helped bring forth social change,” said Museum deputy director Ivy Barsky. “Dr. King’s teachings are universal. As Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel said, ‘What begins as inequality of some inevitably ends as inequality of all.’”

Tickets are \$12 adults, \$10 seniors/students, \$7 for members and can be purchased online at www.mjhnyc.org or by calling 646-437-4202. Produced in association with Bisno Productions

About the panelists

Photographer and author **Eric Etheridge** grew up in Carthage and Jackson, Mississippi, and is a graduate of Vanderbilt University. He has worked as an editor at a number of magazines, including *Rolling Stone*, *7 Days*, the *New York Observer*, and *Harper’s Magazine*. He is the author of *Breach of Peace: Portraits of the 1961 Mississippi Freedom Riders* (Atlas & Co., 2007). Visit http://atlasandco.com/new-releases/breach_of_peace/ for more information on the book.

(More)

In 1961, **Joan Pleune** was a senior at the University of California, Berkeley, where she was an active member of CORE and the Young People's Socialist League. She is a founding member of the Granny Peace Brigade and has been active in protests against the Iraq War. She has been arrested several times.

During the time of the Freedom Rides, **Hezekiah Watkins** was a ninth grader in Jackson, Mississippi. He was active in the Civil Rights Movement throughout high school. After serving two years in the army he returned to Jackson. He remains active in community affairs.

Lewis Zuchman was a student at the University of Bridgeport during the Freedom Rides. Since then he has worked with street gangs and disadvantaged high school students and received his masters in social work from Columbia University. He is the executive director of SCAN, the Supportive Children's Advocacy Network, which works with at-risk families in East Harlem and the South Bronx.

About the performers

Neshama Carlebach began singing with her father, Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, when she was just a teenager. She is now an internationally recognized performer who has performed in concert halls, theaters, synagogues, and community centers around the world. She has released six CDs to great acclaim, including her most recent, *One and One* which features the **Green Pastures Baptist Choir**. For more information visit www.neshamacarlebach.com.

About the Museum

The Museum's three-floor Core Exhibition educates people of all ages and backgrounds about the rich tapestry of Jewish life over the past century--before, during, and after the Holocaust. Special exhibitions include *Woman of Letters: Irène Némirovsky and Suite Française*, on view through March 22; and *The Shooting of Jews in Ukraine: Holocaust By Bullets*, on view through February 16. The Museum offers visitors a vibrant public program schedule in its Edmond J. Safra Hall. It is also home to Andy Goldsworthy's memorial *Garden of Stones*, as well as James Carpenter's *Reflection Passage*, Gift of The Gruss Lipper Foundation. The Museum receives general operating support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and is a founding member of the *Museums of Lower Manhattan*.

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