

**Over 150 people attended the March 24, 2001 showing of *Sounds of a Community*, at the Woodstock Jewish Congregation, in Woodstock, NY. Here are a few of the visitor comments, related in a book of greetings and via email:**

"It was especially fun to watch people playing the instruments. Grown people were like kids again, experimenting with something new, playing... and they were as excited and awed as kids when discovering something new. I have a great picture of \_\_\_\_\_ (an Islamic visitor) playing the eharvest. He looks so joyous! I played the book, because there's just something so holy about a book, and then a holy book, well... it was fun and mysterious; I had to wonder what sounds would come from what areas on the page. It was fun to repeat sounds, find them again...."

The installation is "a very interesting synthesis of individual and group experience with prayer and the bridge between religious and artistic impulses. Your audience are both viewers and participants and this kind of interactivity is very evocative."

"What I like about it was that my *davening* [prayer] movements were rewarded by increased ambient sound. Moving with my eyes closed, as I sometimes do when I pray, I found that the personal space that I try to create while swaying back and forth was enhanced by the sounds coming from the speakers. Though part of me recognized the prayers and words, I experienced the sounds more as part of the environment. What I really like is the paradox of how augmenting the sound around me actually helps me to find the solipsistic space that I'm seeking."

"I began to find the movements that produced the sounds. I felt myself cloaked in the voices of my own ancestors, and held by the tradition in which they worshipped. I have never experienced such a thing before."

"(eChant) allowed me to use familiar ritual movements to escape from the large room into a personal sound space. Though the actual physical gestures were more cognitively demanding than the swaying of eShawl, I still thought that it worked very well."

"... [my Jewish partner] found the connections between the ritual objects and the sounds to be very satisfying ..."

"... the observation (of the interactions of other attendees with each other and with the instruments) was an interesting and integral part of the evening ... the music and the movement were only two parts of a larger thing which also included the audience as performers for each other."

"(I) really enjoyed listening to the whole room -- the sounds from your instruments plus the talking of the crowd."

"I thought that the mix of sounds was really effective -- the krinkly percussive sounds of the *lulav* against the *shema* from the floor were a lovely contrast."

"What I actually personally enjoyed the most was kind of standing in the middle of all the different pieces of the installation and absorbing the experience in its entirety. Kind of reminded me of two very different places (perhaps not so different actually), one of Machane Yehuda (the major Jerusalem marketplace) or an open marketplace, with sights, sounds, smells blending to a vibrant whole (well the smells were missing here). The other was ... the Kotel (Western Wall in Jerusalem), in the sense that I could imagine different small groups of people connecting to the religious rituals at different paces, different decibels, different accents, etc. but expressing something as a whole."

"In terms of listening, the back room with the headphones became a kind of listening sanctuary."