



The United Synagogue
of Conservative Judaism

Survey:
Use of Musical Instruments
On
Shabbat / Yom Tov

365 kehillot answered
January, 2013

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The Vision

The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism is a community of kehillot -- sacred communities -- committed to a dynamic Judaism that is learned and passionate, authentic and pluralistic, joyful and accessible, egalitarian or traditional.

Our kehillot create the conditions for a powerful and vibrant Jewish life, empowering Jews in North America to seek the presence of God, to seek meaning and purpose in Torah and mitzvot, to fully engage with Israel, and to be inspired by Judaism to improve the world and the Jewish people.

The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism creates the spiritual, intellectual and managerial network that enables each of our kehillot to fulfill its sacred mission and connects all our kehillot with a common sense of community, shared mission and purpose. Together with other centers of energy identified with Conservative Judaism, we articulate and disseminate our approach to Judaism.

The Mission

To transform and strengthen our kehillot in their effort to:

- **inspire meaningful prayer**
- sustain a culture of lifelong Jewish learning
- nurture religious and spiritual growth
- promote excellence in kehilla leadership

To ensure educational excellence true to the vision of Conservative Judaism for children and adults in our kehillot

To engage the next generation of kehilla leadership.

To encourage and build new kehillot.

Executive Summary

Instruments are used on Shabbat or Yom Tov at half of the 365 affiliated kehillot which answered our survey.

However, “use of instrumental music” is not a technical term. There is a wide range, including instruments being used just for Kol Nidre (before Yom Kippur begins), at specific Kabbalat Shabbat services (during daylight, before Shabbat begins or monthly) as well as meaning the use of instrumental music at any service any time of year.

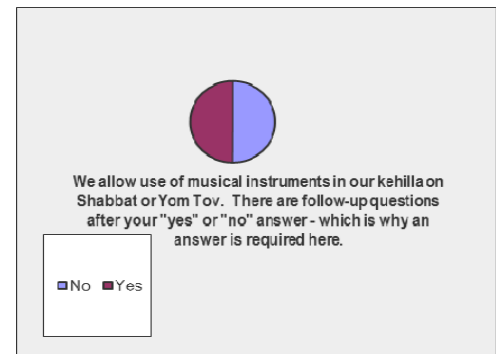
While the use of instrumental music at Conservative kehillot is a significant issue, the core question (which is reflected in the United Synagogue mission) is how to create worship which is *engaging, uplifting* and *spiritual*. Instrumental music might help accomplish that goal. Each kehillah will need to determine how uplifting, spiritual worship is quantified and put into practice; some kehillot will use instrumental music and some will not. Ultimately, worship which touches the soul must be the goal of every kehillah for every worship experience.

The request to take the survey was sent through professional networks to Cantors, Rabbis and Executive Directors. The survey URL was sent via USCJ's presidents' list and ritual list. Finally, we used the USCJ data systems to send an additional request to presidents, rabbis, cantors and executive directors.

The survey was closed one week after opening and the results were reviewed. We reviewed the data to assure one response per kehillah. Answers without synagogue phone numbers were eliminated; multiple answers from a single kehillah were consolidated with all answers and comments preserved in a single answer per kehillah.

Shabbat / Yom Tov Use of Musical Instruments

We allow use of musical instruments in our kehillah on Shabbat or Yom Tov.		Response Percent
No		50.1%
Yes		49.9%
Answered Question		365



	Central	METNY	Mid-A	NE	S_Sea	NPR	PacSW*
No	16%	21%	19%	15%	20%	3%	5%
Yes	16%	12%	18%	15%	18%	5%	15%

Yes, the data looks like the classic jokes about Conservative Judaism - split 50-50 down the center, but the answer is not as simple as "**Yes / No.**" The detail in the answers and comments show a continuing attempt to think about the issue and, in classic Conservative Jewish approach, find a way to move forward with decisions made. With the exception of METNY and Pacific Southwest, the 50/50 split is the norm.

*Mid-A is the Mid-Atlantic District.

S_Sea is the Southwest-Seaboard District

NE is the Northeast District.

NPR is Northern Pacific Region

PasSW is Pacific Southwest Region

We allow use of musical instruments (check all that apply) at:

	Response Percent
any time of year Kabbalat Shabbat (up to mizmor shir l'yom hashabbat)	85.1%
Remainder of Kabbalat Shabbat (mizmor shir l'yom hashabbat to end)	84.0%
Shabbat Arvit (Maariv)	70.3%
Havdalah	68.0%
Still daylight Kabbalat Shabbat (up to mizmor shir l'yom hashabbat)	64.6%
Yom Tov special event - such as Simhat Torah	48.0%
meals of celebration on Shabbat	39.4%
Kol Nidre	37.7%
Shabbat Shaharit	32.6%
High Holiday Arvit (Maariv)	31.4%
Shabbat Musaf	30.3%
High Holiday Musaf	29.1%
Yom Tov Arvit (Maariv)	28.0%
High Holiday Shaharit	26.3%
Shabbat Minha	25.1%
Yom Tov Shaharit	22.9%
Yom Tov Musaf	22.9%
High Holiday Minha	22.3%
Yom Tov Minha	18.3%
Other (please specify)	
Answered Question	175

"Yes" has various meanings.

25% of responding kehillot allow instruments at any time on Shabbat. The remainder use instruments, but selectively, such as only on Friday nights (bi-weekly, monthly or scheduled basis only) while Saturday morning remains *a capella*. The difference between Kabbalat Shabbat (84%) and Shabbat morning usage (33%) is striking. 25% noted that use of instruments is restricted to a series or schedule of special services, rather than being the standard service on a weekly basis. As well the comments (in this section and in others sections too) note that many congregations offer a second service without instruments as a parallel when instruments are being used.

Selected comments

Our synagogue uses instruments one Shabbat morning and one Friday evening Maariv service per month. ...

We have a small band that plays at our Shabbat dinner at 6pm, then sometimes after Friday night services. No musical instruments any other time.

At special Kabbalat services that are held in the temple, but, not in the sanctuary.

Pre-Kol Nidre playing of Kol Nidre (before sundown)

... it depends on which service. In the main service, instruments are typically not used during Shabbat hours and not on High Holy Days. However during

Shabbat hours and HHDs instruments are used in children's/family services and alternative location services.

2 Friday nights a month we have designated services which have instrumental music. No music on Saturday morning ever.

We use musical instruments whenever we can.

We use instruments only several times a year Friday night, and as an alternative on First Day RH Musaf

Use of instruments occurs but there is often a concurrent minyan without them

Educational/ Alternative/ kids programming on Shabbat morning or evening

We allow the use of musical instruments on all occasions, but the music must be appropriate to the occasion. ... we will allow music to be played at a Bar/Bat Mitzvah kiddush celebration, but the Rabbi must approve the "playlist".

Musical instruments are NOT allowed on Shabbat or Yom Tov in our "traditional" services where 90% of our members attend but are allowed in our "contemporary" services where 10% of our members attend.

Our only use of musical instruments is a non-electric guitar, limited to the first Friday of each month, when we have a Kol Zimra service. At the same time, we also offer a traditional service with no musical instrumentation.

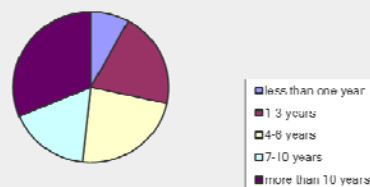
We have a monthly Friday Night Ruach when we utilize instruments. On other erev-Shabbats we use acoustic guitar

We have been allowing use of musical instruments on Shabbat for:

	Response Percent
less than one year	8.0%
1-3 years	20.5%
4-6 years	23.3%
7-10 years	17.0%
more than 10 years	31.3%

Answered Question 176

We have been allowing use of musical instruments on Shabbat for:



	Central	METNY	Mid-A	NE	S_SE	NPR	PacSW
less than one year	1%	4%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%
1-3 years	4%	2%	2%	2%	6%	1%	3%
4-6 years	2%	2%	7%	3%	7%	1%	2%
7-10 years	5%	2%	1%	3%	1%	1%	5%
more than 10 years	5%	2%	7%	5%	5%	2%	6%

Here, too, the group splits 50-50!

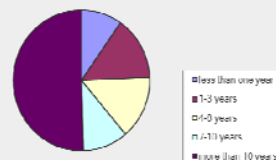
48% report using instruments for 7 years or more - with 31% more than 10 years. That is significant since “everyone knew” Conservative synagogues did not use instruments until recently. Nearly a quarter of respondents show 4-6 years of instruments. The growth seems to be slowing, perhaps indicating that those potentially interested in making the change have already done so. However, comments in the “we do not use” section show there are many kehillot ready to begin discussion of use of instruments, if not to start using them. A few of the congregations noted that they have used instruments since founding.

We have been allowing use of musical instruments on Yom Tov / High Holidays for:

	Response Percent
less than one year	9.7%
1-3 years	14.6%
4-6 years	14.6%
7-10 years	10.7%
more than 10 years	50.5%

Answered Question 103

We have been allowing use of musical instruments on Yom Tov / High Holidays for:



Another surprise! Kehillot have allowed use of musical instruments on Yom Tov / High Holidays for more years than has been allowed on Shabbat. This is likely because of organ (or other) accompaniment to choirs on the High Holidays, rather than the kind of instrumental music which is top-of-mind when we think of musical instruments today. Some 50% of kehillot have allowed music on Yom Tov or the High Holidays for more than 10 years.

However, as in the Shabbat answer, the level of use varies, from just during Kol Nidre (before Yom Kippur actually begins) to instruments at all services. Nonetheless, this (together with the comments) suggests that there was a longer, more widespread use of musical instruments in Conservative congregations than was widely thought.

	Central	METNY	Mid-A	NE	S_SE	NPR	PacSW
less than one year	3%	2%	4%	0%	3%	0%	3%
1-3 years	2%	2%	3%	2%	3%	1%	2%
4-6 years	3%	1%	1%	2%	0%	1%	3%
7-10 years	7%	3%	8%	11%	8%	4%	11%
more than 10 years	15%	9%	17%	17%	16%	8%	19%

We allow use of (check all that apply)	
	Response Percent
Acoustic instruments - string	93.2%
Percussion instruments (hand play - conga drum, tambourine, etc.)	79.0%
Acoustic instruments - wind / brass	73.9%
Piano	70.5%
Electric Keyboard (piano style)	67.0%
Percussion instruments (stick play)	62.5%
Electric instruments - string	56.8%
Organ	33.0%
Other (please specify)	
Answered Question	
176	

The halakhic process impacts the decision about which instruments may be used. The decision making process combines aesthetic issues, congregational traditions and sensitivities – a classic way in which the Conservative movement tackles halakhic questions. Drums were often singled out in the comments as halakhically acceptable for use, even while other instruments are not; note the difference between hand-play and stick-play drums. Differentiations are also made between the use of electric and acoustic instruments. A striking example of the halakhic issues considered is the issue of tikkun klei, repairing an instrument on Shabbat. In specific, stringed instruments are singled out as problematic. Further Shabbat issues, such as carrying, set up and tear down are reported as having significant impact on the way instruments are used. Organs are, well, organs; the impact of their history as a church instrument is reflected here. Note that while acoustic string instruments are permitted in 93% of kehillot, only 33% allow use of an organ.

Selected comments

- Our current practice is any instruments may be used before or after Shabbat. The bylaws allow for only acoustic instruments at Shabbat celebratory meals.
- No Restrictions
- Percussion used at all services, potentially. Guitar, etc...only at those few services mentioned above that instrumentation is permitted.
- We "allow" everything, but got rid of our organ... not for halakhic reasons, obviously
- Drums for Kabbalat Shabbat (main service), guitar for children's/family service, other instruments (entire ensemble) for alternative location services
- We hand out tambourines and maracas to the kahal
- We only allow the electric keyboard if it is prepared and in place before Shabbat. We do try to enforce that any instrument used on Shabbat is on the premises before Shabbat comes in.
- We have not yet specified which instruments may be used. To date, piano and acoustic string instruments have been used.
- Percussion only in High Holy Day Musaf, 4 years; instruments in children's services 10+ years; instrumental music on Friday Night services past 7years
- Technically, all instruments are permitted but we've mainly used drum and acoustic guitar
- Music played must be appropriate for Shabbat
- The only reason electric instruments haven't been used is that we don't have any and no one asked.
- Sometimes we have an exclusive music night, 2 guitars, trombone, electronic keyboard, vocal, drums. Only about twice a year.
- Musical instruments are NOT allowed on Shabbat or Yom Tov in our "traditional" services where 90% of our members attend but are allowed in our "contemporary" services where 10% of our members attend.
- No instruments are prohibited

To play for us, the musician:	
	Response Percent
Must be Jewish	22.6%
Must be non-Jewish	0.6%
Religion makes no difference	76.8%
Answered Question	
164	

We assumed that religion of the musicians would make a difference, especially since it is an issue for choir / singers. We found that it is either a non-issue or, much more often, kehillot either have not raised or reviewed the issue.

Selected comments

I disagree with the requirement for them to be Jewish: If a string breaks and the player is tempted to change it, at least there is no sin when it gets changed by a non-Jew. This aspect would probably be revisited as well in future ritual discussions.

We only use members of the congregation but a non-Jewish spouse would be welcome

Our organist for the past 50 years is non-Jewish. For Kol Nidre our Cellist is a congregant and our harpist is the Cantors daughter

.... So far, hired musicians have been Jews. ..To my knowledge, we haven't discussed this. ...

... I do not believe that the question was ever raised. I consider the musicians to be in the role of Shaliach Tzibor with the service leader.

When we had a choir, they had to be Jewish, but not instrumentalists.

It's what's played that matters, not the musicians' religion.

.... I see this is as a way for non-Jewish family members to participate in congregational life.

...We do not inquire as to the religion of the performers...

... We keep them "within the tribe" because to invite non-Jewish musicians might lead to questions about our choir, which we do insist contain only Jews.

I would like to try to change this to a non-Jewish musician, but to find a non-Jew who knows a Simhat Torah repertoire.....

Issue has never been raised, therefore no policy exists.

If a non-Jewish spouse wanted to add his/her talent we would not turn them away...

Singers have to be Jewish, though, because they are, in effect, davening.

Started as a band of professional, non-Jewish musicians, transitioned into a homegrown Jewish band of members

All are Jewish, but we haven't debated this question.

When we first started using instruments, we found having musical instruments (check all that apply):	
	Response Percent
increased the number of adults attending the service	83.0%
increased active participation by those attending the service	73.2%
drew in members who don't usually come	65.4%
increased the number of children / teens attending the service	64.1%
upset a small number of members	54.9%
energized core shul-goers	53.6%
energized volunteer musicians	45.1%
drew in new members	35.3%
fostered more passive participation by those attending the service	17.0%
decreased the number of adults attending	1.3%
upset a large number of members	1.3%
caused membership loss	1.3%
decreased the number of children / teens attending	0.7%
Answered Question	
153	

Those who use instruments noted it as overwhelmingly positive change. Double digits noted in increased participation - and nearly no drop outs or upset. As noted in some comments, quality worship, not attendance numbers should be the chief metric of success.

Selected comments

Our Shabbat service USED to include organ accompaniment, but that ended about 10 years ago. The organ broke and the congregation didn't wish to continue with it and so it wasn't repaired at the time. It has since been restored for wedding use.... The organ was not particularly well-loved, but I don't sense that it caused any change in attendance.

Increase, because those who want musical instruments sent invitations to friends and family.

In the beginning ... more people came, and more teens came. ...teens were actively asked to participate in the service. ...this trend slowed down and the service attendance leveled out over the past few years.

The question isn't about numbers - it is a lashem shamayim question - what can we do to help reach beyond ourselves and feel connected to God, the tradition, self in a way that is meaningful for our congregants ----- especially since they don't speak the language of the siddur

Not sure we ever measured impact in this way. We've had music in our worship services for 40 years!

I do not have data to know if it drew new members.

Hard to say if the musical instruments or the heightened marketing and overall programming brought in members that don't usually attend

Instruments have not dramatically affected Shabbat participation. Many members like the idea of instruments, but it hasn't changed their participation. The best result with instruments is a themed Shabbat and children have practiced the songs during religious school. Then, many families show up.

Our musicians play Israeli folk-dance music after the Shabbat service and people enjoy dancing and noshing.

One member was vocally upset. Membership has not changed and is dwindling

We've been using instruments for a LONG time, since our founding in 1946.... In 2000 we added a "Friday Night Alive!" which has evolved into a high spirited service with a number of instruments. It's once/month and VERY popular.

We still keep many services "traditional"

We have had music since 1895 when the congregation was first incorporated as a CONSERVATIVE synagogue.

When we started using musical instruments in 1971 there was a small core of members who were upset, but that did not last long

Has not made much difference.

The organ has been used in this congregation for over 80 years. In the last 10 years, its use has decreased steadily.

When we began using other instruments for Erev Shabbat and R'galim, they were received positively, but their use has also decreased greatly.

We invited music into our Shabbat worship in stages. It began with Friday evenings. ... I recorded a CD with my guitar player who learned all the nusah that we intersperse with melody. The entire congregation received that CD... we still have a relatively small group on Friday evenings, unless there is a special event. ... All in all, music for Friday nights has not increased or decreased attendance, but I still think it is important. We are a very participatory shul.

No noticeable change in participation or membership.

The response has been divided. Younger people seem to prefer music. Older people do not. It has caused some conflict with families whose children attend Ramah where music is not allowed.

Musical instruments CAN foster more passive participation if the volume is too high and/or if the music is too complex or is unknown for the congregation to sing along....

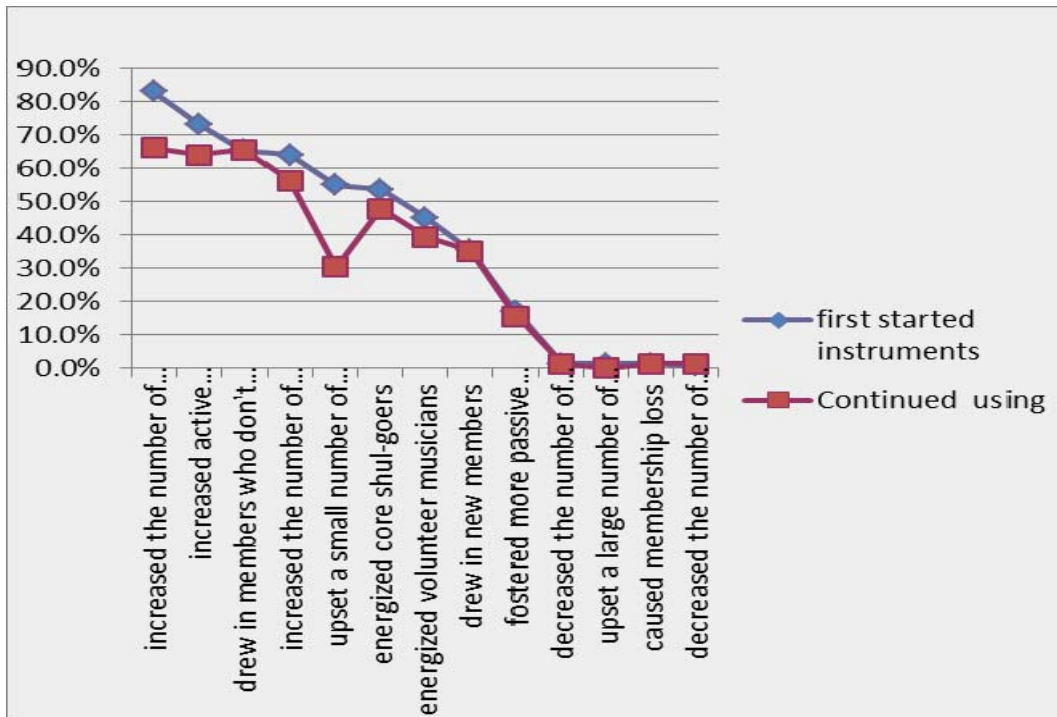
First 1-2 times generated significant increase in Friday night attendance. Since then no significant effect on attendance.

When we do have a musical service, we have a simultaneous traditional service w/o music

If music is used, it has to be used well or it becomes counterproductive. It can be a double edge sword.

Our continued use of instruments, has (check all that apply):		
	Response Percent	
increased the number of adults attending the service	66.2%	
drew in members who don't usually come	65.5%	
increased active participation by those attending the service	64.1%	
increased the number of children / teens attending the service	56.3%	
energized core shul-goers	47.9%	
energized volunteer musicians	39.4%	
drew in new members	35.2%	
upset a small number of members	30.3%	
fostered membership gain	25.4%	
fostered more passive participation by those attending the service	15.5%	
attendance returned to previous numbers after initial bump	14.8%	
decreased the number of adults attending	1.4%	
decreased the number of children / teens attending	1.4%	
caused membership loss	1.4%	
upset a large number of members	0.0%	
Answered Question		142

Comparison: first used / continued use	first started instruments	Continued using
increased the number of adults attending the service	83.0%	66.2%
increased active participation by those attending the service	73.2%	64.1%
drew in members who don't usually come	65.4%	65.5%
increased the number of children / teens attending the service	64.1%	56.3%
upset a small number of members	54.9%	30.3%
energized core shul-goers	53.6%	47.9%
energized volunteer musicians	45.1%	39.4%
drew in new members	35.3%	35.2%
fostered more passive participation by those attending the service	17.0%	15.5%
decreased the number of adults attending	1.3%	1.4%
upset a large number of members	1.3%	0.0%
caused membership loss	1.3%	1.4%
decreased the number of children / teens attending	0.7%	1.4%



On the whole, the initial positive response to musical instruments seems to stay as time passes. More important, the negatives from adopting instrumental music do not seem to grow at all. The biggest difference is in the "upset a small number of members," which would indicate either becoming used to instruments or leaving the kehilla.

Selected comments

We have a long history of liturgical music using instruments. We have not used them in the Shabbat morning service. Our members have mixed, but not intense reactions.

Many of those upset left synagogue.

As stated earlier, we have alternative services with no instrumentation for people who want that. I don't think it affects attendance.

The use of instruments began as (and is still exclusively) part of a monthly "Shabbat in the Round" service, which moved the Friday Night service out of the Chapel and into the ballroom, which is where a post-service dinner is served. ..., but it is hard to know whether that is attributable to the (rather limited) use of instruments or to the general reconfiguration or to both.

... most congregants do not have strong feelings and since we don't use instruments at every service we have a balance that everyone seems to be happy with.

I don't think that instruments themselves have had much of an impact. I think they are more of a symbol of inclusiveness. Particularly since we use guitars, our society has a culture of singing along with a guitar that other instruments don't achieve as well.

It is such a limited practice that it has not had any real effect on our services or membership participation.

The acceptance of instruments has three camps: like them, dislike them, and the majority who don't care one way or the other.

.... Overall, the addition of music to our youth and adult services has been wonderful.... We do not allow bands to play during kiddush lunch for example - only for prayer purposes.

Had not effect on membership or attendance

We usually combine our musical services with other programming so that we have a maximum of people attending any given musical service.

The largest organic gain we see from the music is uptick in enthusiasm at services which helps the service grow by word of mouth.

Gain has outweighed the loss, in terms of numbers of attendees. At the same time, the musical service does not appeal to some core shul-goers. They come on other weekends.

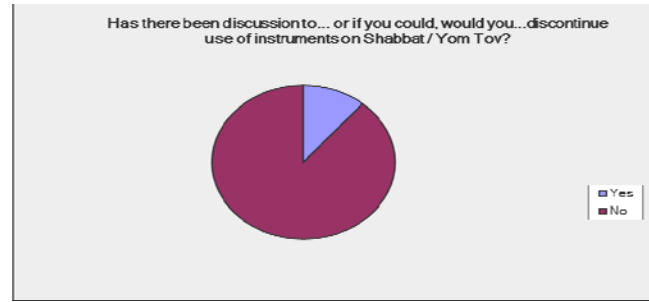
Our Junior Choir sings monthly for KABBALAT SHABBAT services with a corresponding increase in attendance at those services.

Everything effect off in time. Our numbers have never returned to their previous levels, but music is no longer a novelty.

People are used to it by now. We have a musical Shabbat every four to six weeks. It draws many more people than a regular service, where we barely make a minyan.

Has there been discussion to... or if you could, would you...discontinue use of instruments on Shabbat / Yom Tov?

	Response Percent
Yes	11.2%
No	88.8%
Answered Question 178	



A check on “buyer's remorse” indicates that those who now allow instruments are not likely to change back, 88% to 12%. The comments to this question attracted more answers from the 12% (those who have entertained discontinuing instruments), than from the 88% who would retain instruments.

Selected comments

- We are examining more widespread use of music during services during actual Shabbat services -- not just Kabbalat Shabbat & Havdalah, and allowing non-Jewish inspired music during kiddush and luncheons following Shabbat services
- I do not believe instruments increase the spirituality of the service.... I do not believe congregational participation is enhanced with instruments
- We constantly discuss when and how and when not to include instruments.
- Challenge of striking a balance between participation / davening vs. performance / audience
- I don't believe that ruach depends on them... Jewish worship has something special and different, that we lose by using instruments.
- There are places that have instruments, but they are simply a band and the tefilah can turn into performances instead of tefilah. To me, the question is how the instruments impact on the tefilah experience as a whole. ... not everyone likes the instruments- so we try and have "multiple points of entry" (i.e. something for everyone) by having the service twice a month.
- In a shul where people don't know the songs and don't want to dance, it adds an element of energy to the Hakafot
- ... musical instrumentation can enhance the experience of Shabbat for many shul goers and hardly anyone is ever upset by it.
- If used properly (to lift people and engage them rather than entertain) I am fine with using them
- People like it once a month. No move to expand or discontinue. No discussion.
- They energize the people who participate and enhance the service.
- It has been only a positive change. We still of course leave room for many different prayer options.
- On High Holydays, we offer two services, one has a choir and an organ, the other does not - everyone gets what they want.
- The overall response has been too positive to even consider discontinuing!
- Use of instruments has become part of the spirit of our shul.
- They enhance the service, just as singing does, or can.
- I think that exploring new ways of davening is always a good thing. The challenge is finding the people who are willing to put in the time and effort to make a good davening experience. This is a major challenge for all davening, but adding an instrument is not an instant fix. Rather, it complicates things.
- ... I'd rather work with the musical service to make it more meaningful than cut out the instrumentation
- We have two services now, one with guitar and one without. Given that there has been no appreciable bump in attendance, I would return to one service - without an instrument - where we can all pray together.
- It has added little to our service. It has not had the hoped for boost. That said, it works nicely for our less committed people.
- Once every couple years the question arises. It is simply answered stating there is no compelling reason to change.

We do not use instruments on Shabbat / Yom Tov because (check all that apply)	Response Percent	
halakhic difficulties allowing use	80.8%	
traditionally oriented congregants would be disenfranchised	67.0%	
tradition not to use, even though no halakhic objections	36.8%	
not sure there would be any gain in spirituality of the service	35.7%	
no serious interest in having musical instruments among members	33.0%	
not sure there would be any gain in attendance	33.0%	
members interested but not yet reviewed / studied with ritual committee	19.2%	
staff/clergy interested but not yet studied or reviewed with ritual committee	18.7%	
certain there would be loss in attendance	14.8%	
fear significant loss of membership	14.3%	
certain it would reduce active participation in the service	12.1%	
cannot afford cost of musicians	11.0%	
staff/clergy not interested; ritual committee considering review	9.3%	
want to be different than other kehillot in the area	4.9%	
want to be similar to other kehillot in the area	1.1%	
Answered Question		

Halakhic issues predominate in the decision not to use instruments. For traditionally oriented kehillot, there is the fear that introducing instrumental music will push the membership away. Influence of instrumental use by nearby kehillot is not a factor which impacted the decision on instruments.

Selected comments

Ours is a Traditional Conservative congregation. Women are not counted in the minyan, and do not have an Aliyah... The vast majority of congregants are not accepting to any type of change, and I would not even consider mentioning the use of instruments during a service.

... Adding instruments to prayer ... violates the sacred quiet afforded us on Shabbat and Yom tov.

We are planning a once a month instrumental Kaballat Shabbat during Daylight Savings time when there is daylight ...

... During the summer months the Rabbi permits the use of acoustic as well as electronically-amplified guitar for Kabbalat Shabbat through conclusion of Lechi Dodi. Guitar is stowed for Psalm 92 and everything following.

Some members are interested, but the more traditional members are adamantly against. The rabbi also leans strongly to the traditional side. It's a two-shul town, and the Reform one is known for its use of instruments.

Even if it was halachically permissible not sure that there is any long term gain in participation or deeper connection to tefillah.

We distinguish between "instruments" and drumming, which we do allow under very circumscribed conditions.

... the Rabbi feels that it would not add to the spirituality of what we already have. We do a Carlebach Kabbalat Shabbat with no instrumentation and strong vocal harmonies.

I think it's mostly inertia. Many members of ritual committee tend to be traditionalists.

... we know it would be a very divisive discussion in our very traditional kehillah.

... likely that a way will need to be found to remain respectful of those opposed while encouraging attendance by other constituencies

... Guitar has already been introduced for Shabbat Havdalah, with universally positive congregational response.

Our Ritual committee and rabbi just agreed that this is a direction we should take. Because there are many varied views about use of instruments among members, we plan to begin with a small try out. One Friday night per month, there will be musical instruments.

Not using instruments and relying on the power of a cappella music is yet another way to distinguish Shabbat from the rest of the week. Also, the a cappella sound allows for the congregation to hear themselves sing and encourages them to join in.

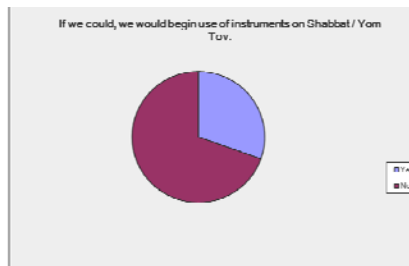
Even though we have a small congregation, we have several active members who be offended by having music on Shabbat or Yom Tov. ... I think we are losing potential members... The reform Synagogue has music and their congregation is growing. The services are fun and interactive. I was always told we "could not" have music for halakhic reasons. I am glad you are looking into this.

It is easier to not change.

We sing a lot during services and a general feeling of "good ruach" prevails

If we could, we would begin use of instruments on Shabbat / Yom Tov.

	Response Percent
Yes	30.4%
No	69.6%
Answered Question 168	



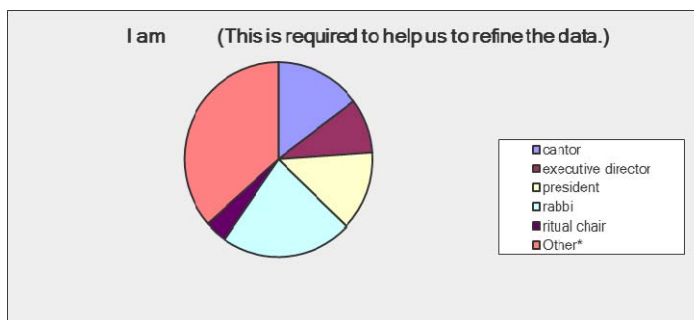
In concept, similar to the “buyer's remorse” question asked above. The question was posed “if we could” to solicit answers if halakhic issues were not a concern.

Selected comments

- Instruments detract from the sanctity and sacredness of individual voices creating melody and harmony. If we could, we would have members of our community singing in harmony (a cappella) ... (we) do some amount of banging on our shtenders to the beat of many congregational melodies.)
- ... My hunch is that after some initial getting-used-to-it, the congregation would be OK with certain instruments on Shabbat and Yom Tov - probably not an organ, though! For some reason this really pushes people's buttons ...
- Undecided - some congregants want to use musical instruments, other do not
- We would first do some studying regarding halakhic issues so as not to offend or disenfranchise members who believe this is wrong.
- We do play instruments once a month in the summer months for Kabbalat Shabbat ... I would like to move to a once a month service with instruments throughout the year
- I need to look at the responsa by Rabbi Dorff.
- I would also want to engage in study and thoughtful discussion about this with congregation (not just ritual committee) before deciding what would fit with our community's needs.
- I do not know of any way it could be seen as halakhically acceptable. I see it as prohibited as a 'shvut' and cannot see any way to change that.
- A very few congregants might dislike it; most leaders would be open to instruments at Friday night services (at least once or twice a month).
- Once we figure out how it best fits with our congregation we are planning to include it, after halakhic review.
- We do use musical instruments for Kabbalat Shabbat in the summer months. While very enjoyable, their use increased attendance dramatically while still a novelty . . . within several months they were no longer a big draw. We have noticed that ... instrumentation has led to fewer congregants opening their siddurim, joining in the singing and davening during the silent parts. Most disturbing of all, we have many congregants who applaud at the end of each piece as if they were at a concert rather than a davening experience.
- Several congregants have asked, but, as a lay-led congregation, we feel that we have to lean over backwards to ensure acceptability in this mainly Orthodox city. We would want to have a formal USCJ acceptance before we would dare to take this step.
- We have also used hand drums (djembe) through the end of Kabbalat Shabbat services, as well as on Simhat Torah.
- Probably not during the services so much as afterward, e.g. at celebration of a simcha.
- If it were my call alone, and I was guaranteed no major negative repercussions
- Who needs them? We do fine with our voices.

I am

	Response Percent
Cantor	14.8%
executive director	9.1%
President	13.2%
Rabbi	22.5%
ritual chair	3.8%
Other*	36.5%
Answered Question 364	

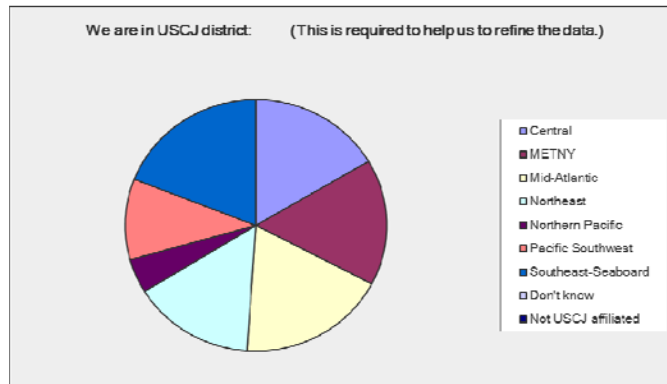


*Other has a large percentage response as the combined responses were placed in that category. Counted in the “other” group were combinations of clergy, staff and lay leadership from the same kehilla. All responses and comments were retained in the combinations. Some kehillot had responses from as many as 5 people.

In the 133 answers for “other”

Rabbi 67; cantor/hazzan 42; executive director 33; president 32; ritual 20

We are in USCJ district:	
	Response Percent
Central	16.5%
METNY	16.2%
Mid-Atlantic	18.4%
Northeast	15.1%
Northern Pacific	4.4%
Pacific Southwest	10.4%
Southeast-Seaboard	19.0%
Answered Question 364	



The responses came from all across the continent which would indicate that use of musical instruments is found throughout the continent.

We solicited additional comments at the end of the survey. Here are some of them.

We are a Conservative traditional synagogue

Neither the rabbi, nor a strong core of very observant congregants, seem interested in making any changes in the status quo. That said, we occasionally have a Kabbalat Shabbat service with instruments before sundown.

We work hard to make our services engaging and participatory. While music is a big part of our Shabbat and Yom tov services, we create the music with our voices, rather than with instruments. When people sing along and harmonize with their voices, we are creating a spiritual and engaging tfilah experience.

It is disheartening to me to see how many communities in the conservative movement are using musical instruments on Shabbat. It feels like the movement is moving farther and farther away from what I think of as traditional heartfelt prayer, and closer to the great feelings that one may experience in a concert-type setting. On the occasions that I have attended services that use musical instruments, I felt completely divorced from prayer, and simply felt myself wondering why I was there.... I wonder if the same people who are drawn to a Shabbat service with instruments would be drawn to a weekday service with instruments at such weekday occasions, and then possibly also be drawn to a Shabbat to see how services have a different, more holy ambiance because of the special unique quality of the human voice - and the paring away from the external noise that we hear the rest of the rest of the week.

I'm very curious what prompted this survey. From the perspective of our Mara d'Atra/Senior Rabbi, all other clergy, lay leadership, and most congregants, there is no halakhic justification for instrumental music on Shabbat/Yom Tov nor any demand for same. ... Is there pressure on this elsewhere?

It would be helpful to get a sense of where these discussions are in the law committee (**many similar to this**)

.... I see no reason to continue to mourn for the Bait Hamikdash when we no longer pray for its physical restoration.

... continues to experiment with ways to remain vibrant and relevant to an evolving Jewish Community.

Some, perhaps many, congregants and I would like to have the option of adding instruments on occasion.

I look forward to the results of this survey... What do congregants actually do in their spiritual lives? No one knows. How can we attract growth if we don't know who we are and where we fit into American Judaism?

Used in a thoughtful way musical instruments enhance our services and our congregants enjoy the experience.

...While I would love to see more music and musical instrumentation in services, I'm wondering whether it will really increase attendance. Will those who demand the ritual change really attend more often?

The addition of musical instruments... has not changed the over-all davening culture in our congregation to the extent that we had hoped.

We are a small congregation where most people dive in and sing. Rhythm instruments--drums, tambourine--might be an asset. Playing actual notes might inhibit participation ... Formal accompaniment can lead to less flexibility.

...I believe that the instruments should be used to enhance the service experience - helping us to learn the melodies of prayers or increasing spirituality. The question has not been seriously proposed or discussed.

Either we change or die.

Our members would like, maybe not all the time but sometimes but the rabbi is firmly opposed. Choice is desired and choice is not offered.

The impact of music varies during a year for different age groups. We continue to experiment and solicit feedback. The issue for us revolves around how we present the music and how members can participate with the music. Our members strongly agree music is helpful, Shabbat and holidays.

It's really not so much the use of musical instruments, but the quality in which they are played, the quality of the voices, the flow and beauty of the service itself, and how much worshippers enjoy and are inspired by the experience.

As a very large congregation we are able to provide a number of options for people. It works for us.

Musical instruments have an overall positive effect on our congregants who come to shul on Friday night.

A previous rabbi allowed musical instruments for Friday night services, but attendance did not increase, and there was not a lot of interest in continuing them when he left.

Our shul is not made of "daveners." Without instruments, they would simply sit there and watch a traditional service. Instrumental music brings ruach to the congregants, and provides a spiritual environment that traditionally comes from hearing the sounds of people davening to themselves.

I believe the idea of instrumental music is a red herring to the bigger issue of boring, non-engaging and meaningless services. It is not about the length of the service and it is not about the musical instruments. Conservative Judaism (must) figure out a way to make every moment in the service engaging, spiritual and meaningful. ... instruments are not going to solve the problem. We need a discussion about a better siddur and a more engaging service.

I grew up strongly opposed to instruments at services, but I felt strongly that it might attract newcomers to Friday night services, and that we simply didn't have enough people attending for me to worry about chasing them away. Clearly, we didn't have any drop-off, and I am sure that if we took a survey of our members, only a small minority would oppose the guitar music. It has become an expected part of the service.

Why is USCJ doing this survey? Couldn't this be better handled by the RA or CA? USCJ resources would be more useful in helping us raise money, creating new models of synagogue leadership, keeping our youth programs viable.

Thanks for doing the survey, and we'll be interested in the results!

So far, instrumental music is used in only a few services each year mostly on Friday nights. We always offer an alternative traditional service as well. We are looking to expand the use of instrumental music slowly over the next few years.

As someone who is personally uncomfortable with music during Shabbat, it is pleasantly surprising how positively it has impacted our congregation. Even I am now OK attending services with music, because I know it's in the best interest of our congregation. We didn't roll this out as a big-bang change with lots of debate. It was gradually introduced by our clergy in settings where it was deemed appropriate and was positively received.

The idea of leaving it up to each synagogue dilutes the value of USCJ. Changes to shabbat like musical instruments creates a reform version of conservative Judaism that destroys the values we cherish, and will diminish USCJ. There are other ways to include halachically acceptable music that create the spirit and inclusion of congregants without playing games with tradition.

Music is a show and after time it is not a novelty anymore and attendance drops. Once you have seen the show, no reason to attend anymore. People should attend to daven with kavanah.

Musical instruments are part of the spiritual prayer experience, not for entertainment. Our Rabbi teaches us about music in the psalms and liturgy and the historical use of instruments.

I believe it is important to note that synagogues that do not use musical instruments in their Shabbat /Yom Tov services, may still use musical instruments at synagogue events and still have a strong musical program.

Music that touches the congregation and helps them make a spiritual connection is greatly enhanced by instruments.

We have discussed musical instruments on multiple occasions and have thought about one Friday evening a month. We are a progressive shul with a progressive rabbi, and recognize there are no "technical" halachic boundaries but are concerned about human behavior crossing the line

I grew up with music instruments in Argentina where music instruments is the rule. In my experience it detracted from the spirituality of the service. IN most cases it became a "performance"

I feel that a letter needs to be sent to the presidents of the Synagogues informing the leadership that USCJ has no particular stand on this issue.

Instrumental music makes it easier for many people to sing along - the service becomes more accessible. I'm not sure that it makes it more prayerful. But the people who come for our musical services aren't in synagogue to 'pray' in the sense of reaching out to God in thanksgiving or distress. They're looking to connect with other Jews, celebrate shabbat, sing together and experience community. Instrumentation helps them (and us) get there.

Sometimes instrumental music has enhanced the quality of services. It depends on the quality of the musician.

USCJ should take a stand on the use of musical instruments during Shabbat / Yom Tov. Similar to gay marriage, USCJ should look at the changing environment and render an opinion.

We are (where) there are a preponderance of traditional congregations but there are some with more liberal styles close-by where those who want musical instruments could go. The service with spirited congregational singing still draws the largest Shabbat and Yom Tov attendance in the area.

It just wouldn't be well-received here. It is not in our DNA. More musicality, yes.....no instruments or musicians, however.

I think that the CJLS should take a clear position on this issue, so that we don't have USCJ synagogues that are all over the map on this issue.