

Zack Rosen



(1989-2019)

Beloved Son , Friend

Cousin & Nephew



I've never been able to find the right words to describe you, Zack. The first day I met you was a lot like the last day I spent with you. You were late as shit, very caffeinated, exploding with creativity, so kind, so curious, fearlessly (stubbornly) forward with your ideas, brilliantly talented, fascinated and fascinating.

You were a poet, not only with your words. Somehow my all-time favorite lyrics were played on a bass guitar. Since you left us I've learned you were in fact a prolific writer beyond all of the brilliantly poetic lyrics. We have been talking about how to archive your writings. I guess there's enough to fucking archive. What the hell man? How did I only scratch the surface? I always had a feeling that was the case, just didn't know how infinitely deep below that scratchy surface it really went.

You were so brave, suffering more than I will ever understand but you kept showing up. It was obvious how hard it was sometimes but you always showed up. Every gig there were people that looked at you funny, but you were there. Heroically late but nonetheless there and I am forever in debt to you for that.

If the words exist to describe the way music flowed through you, they are in a language foreign to me. Only those lucky enough to see you perform would understand... when the show started, you left the room. Wherever it was that you took off to, some far out realm where music itself must've come from, it had to have been the most tranquil space. My heart was happy for you to go there, when the gears in your perplexing and mysterious brain would slow down enough where you seemed able to enjoy some peace and quiet, no matter how ungodly loud you continued to turn up that little blown out amp.

You were hungry. For life and music and all those sandwiches you managed to fit in your cargo pockets.

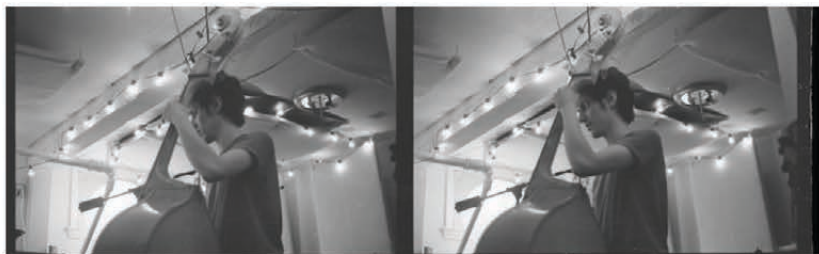
You were a genius. I'm not eulogizing, been saying it for years... just never to you. How the hell could I argue over arrangements if I did? One thing I did tell you, several times, is

that you were my favorite songwriter. I cherish that you knew I meant it, and right now that means everything to me. Something else I told you, only once, was that I loved you. I wish I said it more often. But the one time I snuck it in there means everything else to me right now.

You were my friend, then my roommate. My bassist, then my band leader. You were my brother. My younger brother to be sure... sorry if that annoyed you endlessly but it's the way it had to be to navigate the pure chaos that defined our dynamic. And on that note, I wouldn't have had it any other way. I thought I wanted things to be different, but it will forever put a smile on my face remembering how many degrees from boring it was every moment I was fortunate enough to spend with you.

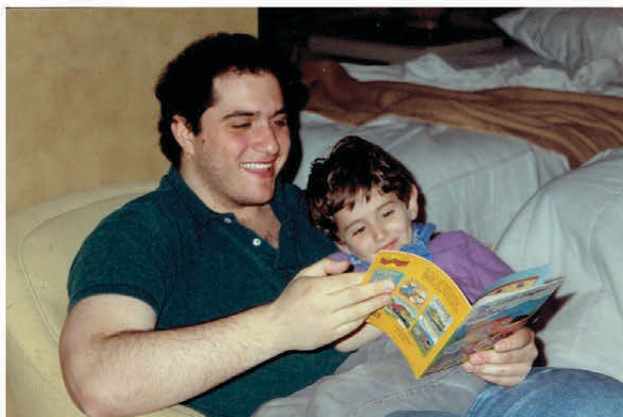
I miss my friend, dude. I miss my partner. I miss my musical soulmate. The thought of performing Tongues or SYZYGY stuff without you is tearing me up. There's a hole in my heart that I am going to try and fill with your music. One of the greatest honors of my life was producing your record. I am so sorry to have to finish it without you, but I promise I will put my whole self into doing so. And rest assured your music will be performed as long as I'm on this planet, and beyond I'm sure. I love you Zack.

Connor Grant



Zack was my nephew and so I knew him from his birth, through infancy, early childhood, middle childhood, late childhood, adolescence and early adulthood. Why have I enumerated the obvious? Perhaps in a futile effort to lengthen his thirty years. Surely, to savor each and every encounter that I can recall: summer weekends at our pool, family celebrations, holidays, especially Passover seders, the rail ride we shared of three stops from Scarsdale to Eastchester when he was enthralled by trains. There is much to cherish about Zack. He was gentle and kind and so very smart. Tragically, he was attacked by a terrible affliction at a time when his life should have begun to bloom. We can never know what might have been. But, we do know what was. Zack.

Frank Bocian



Zack - energetic, smart, compassionate, gifted sullen wild-eyed sweet committed strident dedicated present I remember he said he was gonna quit his band but he was still in the chorus. I knew how talented he was. I worried the night of the Rockaway event and saw the worry in his eyes. His capacity to dream was colossal. I felt heartened in his presence as he believed we could see these changes in our lifetime. He was adventurous, a musician a poet-artist. I tried to make him eat more. I wanted to take care of him. I miss him.

Suzanne Goldenberg

I taught Zack Latin during his Form V year, 2005-2006, which was my 2nd year at Fieldston. At the end of one of the semesters, I said to the class "The exam will be comprised of the following parts." Before I could even finish the sentence or get any further, Zack blurted "composed, not comprised." Huh? In those days, Zack had a few, shall we say, rough edges, so I couldn't tell if he was just trying to be a pain or he was for real. "The whole comprises the parts," he explained, "and the parts compose the whole. So: 'the exam will be composed of several parts' or 'the exam will comprise several parts.'" Look in a dictionary -- it checks out. So many people use these words incorrectly, and I have Zack to thank for having that particular error jump out at me every time I see or hear it--and of course I remember Zack at those moments.

A few years later I ran into Zack on the quad when he was back on campus for homecoming. He made a point of coming over to me to say, "Mr. Hanson, I'm sorry I was such an asshole back in Latin class." I was speechless.

Erik Hanson

This is so sad. I remember Zack well from my third grade class at EC.

Laurie Hornik

My time with Zack was so brief that I wouldn't qualify for this but I wanted to share with you who I saw. When he first walked into the kitchen at the Newport house (my introduction) I was taken with his beautiful face. Almost angelic and on the cusp of manhood but still with the freshness and innocence of youth. I mentioned to him that my daughter was in the philosophy program at college and he immediately blew my mind by recommending a heady treatise/book by someone I had never heard of but wished I had. I passed his recommendation on to Zoë. His obvious love for jazz gave me great joy and when I saw the Miles Davis poster in his room I knew we had been kindred spirits. I like to think he would've liked me just fine and maybe we would have jammed on some chords

Our interaction was brief but he made a lasting impression on me and the deep deep abiding love you and Marcia have for your precious son was evident in so many ways, from the way you guided and tried to protect him to your support for his artistry and brilliant mind. I ache for the loss you have sustained and I think of your family daily. I don't always have flower photos but I'm still mindful of your grief and disbelief and the ping ponging between the two. All I can do is offer love and support and hopefully a bottle of wine sometime soon.

xoxoxo xoxoxo

Elise Morris

This is shocking. Oh my god, it makes me so sad. He is an amazing musician and I took him to Cleveland Tyagaraja aradhana festival in 2010. His Kambodhi raga alapana on fretless bass is still ringing in my ears. Although he was in my group class, I used to teach him one on one since his understanding of Indian music was much greater than others. We definitely have some recordings of the student concert at WMA. Please May his soul Rest In Peace

B. Balasubrahmaniyan

I got a first glimpse of Zack's creative genius one day when he was seven or eight years old. The grownups were having a visit in the living room. Zack emerged from his bedroom and handed over a newsletter he had written. Everything about it floored me: His command of language was remarkable; the subject matter was original and fully developed. It was brilliant.

As Zack grew it became clear he had many gifts. I will leave it to people more qualified than me to testify to his musicianship and his activism. Zack was a mensch, and he cared deeply about others. May his memory be preserved with love, and honored by those whose lives he touched.

Bonnie Grande

One of my greatest memories of Zack was over Passover when Mia, Hannah, and I would "trap" him in a room and he would pretend to escape and he would keep us entertained for such a long time. He had so much patience for us.

Sarah Bocian

I remember a cute little boy with hair as tangled as a tumbleweed. That mop-top seemed to say, "I dare you to comb me!"

As an only child, he was used to hanging out with adults. And he never seemed in the least bit cowed. In fact, it was sometimes the other way around. I remember Zack, as a young adolescent, would sometimes ask a question and his eyes seemed to be sizing up not just my answer, but me.

I don't think this was just because he spent an inordinate amount of time with adults. There was something about Zack that seemed skeptical—as though skepticism was his default position.

But not always. I remember how different he was when I first saw him play bass guitar. He was small, but he was completely comfortable with that large instrument hanging from his skinny shoulders. Somehow it didn't dwarf him. He seemed to expand to meet it halfway. And when he was playing, he seemed content in a way that I rarely saw when he wasn't. No sign of skepticism. He was all in.

Later it was harder for me to connect with him. He seemed to be elsewhere. He rarely joined a conversation in progress. But if you asked him about his music, he was eager to tell you about it, show you websites, play songs or videos.

Music was always his native language. It was his safe harbor. And it's what he left behind. I'd like to think that, in some sense, it's where he still hangs out. In the background. Quietly grooving. Playing bass.

David Hechler

A tree has been planted in Zack's name in Custer-Gallatin National Forest in Montana. May his memory be manifest in the cycles of nature.

Dan Ruby and Twyla Ruby

It is always something we look forward to- spending time with the Rosen/Golub family at Beth Am. It was Zack, Paloma, and Ruth as the Hebrew school class. It was Zack singing in the choir and giving a talk during his return from college. Just last week, I decided to look into a chest that I hadn't opened for years. On top were two pictures of my kids drawn by Steve Brodner at Zack's Bar Mitzvah. Hidden treasures from a great celebration. It was the first time I heard Zack play his music. These memories will stay with us.

Monica Roth





In the first few years of elementary school, Zack and I were the shortest kids in the class. So each year, when we would line up for the class photo by height, we would find ourselves at the end of the line together. We always squabbled about which one of us was the shortest, as if being the shortest in the grade was somehow way worse than being the second-shortest. Our debate would get heated – we'd stand back to back and try to see whose head came out on top, and yell at others to come measure us (of course without listening to anything they said). The funny thing is that I have no memory of who came out on top. I only remember the important part: the spirited banter with Zack that became our yearly tradition. On those picture days, I saw Zack as a worthy opponent and, more importantly, a really fun and lovable comrade: us short kids, small but mighty, having fun together at the very end of the line. I love and cherish this memory. To me, it captures more generally my impression of Zack throughout our time together at ECFS - as a person with a fiery spirit, a lively mind, and a kind and playful heart.

Samantha Schnell

I wish to remember Zack Rosen as the gifted young man I knew.

He was smart, sensitive, and passionate about music.

When I mentioned that I loved Miles Davis, he downloaded an album I'd never heard.

He played guitar and sang with his longtime band Syzygy, often on the lower Eastside and Brooklyn. He had lovely voice.

He will be missed.

Sonia Pilcer

The memories all seem clustered around meals: the Friars Club (squalling baby), Jamaica (on the patio), Thanksgivings at Ruth and Jesse's (knee football), barbecuing in Scarsdale (swimming optional), seders (plagues recited in pig Latin, Greek and Classical Latin), dinners at Janet's (fabulous food), Randazzo's (in a deluge). For me, forever, there will be a seat for Zack at the table.

Phyllis Bocian

I worked with Zack in the Wesleyan University Jazz Ensemble for each semester of his four years there, which happened to be my first 4 leading that group. In addition to having a keen intellect, he was an unusually gifted and sensitive bassist, whose willingness and capacity to tackle anything I threw at the students made me look like a better teacher than at that point I actually was. While I knew he was an exceptional young musician almost instantly, only later did I fully appreciate how much of a difference that made to all the musicians in his orbit in providing them with greater freedom to grow, explore, and groove.

Noah Baerman

Zack was a one-of-a-kind human being and I am so profoundly grateful for all of the years we spent playing music together. We played for tips in the subway, we played for mayor Bloomberg at Gracie Mansion. We played at high school assemblies and at CBGBs. He played the first dance at my wedding. The first thing I ever heard him play was a complete transcription of Jaco Pastorius's version of "Donna Lee." I think he was 13. He had better intonation on his fretless electric bass at that age than I have on a fretted guitar right now. I learned so much from Zack, from his unending musical curiosity and vision, from his unwavering dedication to the pursuit of knowledge, from his singular mind. Over a 17-year friendship we played in (at least) three bands together and on more gigs, recording sessions, and open-ended jams than I could possibly count. I shared some of the most meaningful musical moments of my life with him and I will cherish forever. Together with Jason Burger on drums we had a hive mind the likes of which I will be chasing the rest of my life. Whenever I start a new project or put a band together for a session, I always have the thought, "Zack and Jason would be perfect for this," even when it wasn't practical or possible. In any genre and every musical context Zack would play with his own distinct voice - always complementing, grounding, and uplifting the music happening around him. I played a show a few weeks after he passed and the opening act, a wonderful songwriter from Virginia, played duo with her husband, a subtle and inventive drummer. I stood side-stage the whole time thinking about how beautiful Zack would have sounded playing with them on his Godin fretless. That's a thought that will continue to hit me for a long, long time. Zack was unbelievably smart. He was kind and generous and genuine. His bass playing was perfect, his taste and touch and feel were impeccable. He was always two musical steps ahead of everyone around him when we were coming up. He'd be obsessed with a band or a record - from Miles' Bitches Brew to

Grateful Dead bootlegs to The Band - and I wouldn't understand what he was on about. Then about 6 months later I'd be obsessed too, and he'd be moving on to the next great thing that would shape our sense of music. I would not be the musician or human being I am today without the time I spent with Zack. I'd venture to say that every musician he ever played with feels the same way. Zack was wholeheartedly himself. I owe him a deep gratitude for all that I learned at his side, for the pure joy that we had playing music together for so many years. I love you, Zack.

Dan Knobler



Photo courtesy of Yannick Bindert, yannickbindert.com

Zack and I met while playing together in the Wesleyan Jazz Ensemble. Zack was a sensitive and empathetic player, unafraid to learn new things and make himself vulnerable both in and out of the musical setting. After graduating, we ran into each other randomly on the streets of NYC and vowed we would play together again. While that never happened, I'm so grateful for the time that we had together and for the amazing music he gave us.

Joe Newman

As I said before and doubtless will again, Zack was such a wonderful man and one of the truest friends I've been lucky enough to have in my life. When I first moved back to New York after college it was Zack who called me to say "yo, you NEED to come check out the band Dan, Matt, and I are playing in these days!" That night I went to see Flearoy perform at Spike Hill and my life was permanently changed. He's the reason I found the most mind-blowing group of musicians and producers with whom to make my first album. And that album has shaped my entire professional life; it set me on the path to forming a musical career of which I'm very proud, created opportunities and adventures without which I would never have taken step one on a journey to become the person I am now. That all started with Zack.

He and I managed to stay in touch for over half our lives and it still feels like I can text him anytime about whatever new band I've become totally obsessed with, which he'd probably already heard of and could talk about extensively. I already miss him immensely and think of him all the time.

Rachel Ann Weiss

Zack Rosen was a star.

I saw his star power when I attended his bar mitzvah, an event full of indelible memories. That beautiful mane of curly hair, so enormous his yarmulke almost disappeared into it. His speech, which I thought was as good as anything any rabbi could have delivered. And especially his virtuosic performance -- on guitar, bass and drums (in 18/8 time!) -- with the ad hoc band, whose other members included his music teacher and his father. The band was good; Zack was amazing.

I had already had a glimpse of his star quality a few years earlier. When Zack was eight, my wife, Irene, and I arranged for him to be a guest on "Greasy Kid Stuff," the free-form radio station WFMU's version of a children's show. His recording of his original composition "Spelling Test" briefly became a staple of the "Greasy Kid Stuff" playlist. It was pretty great.

When Zack later blossomed as a musician and a songwriter, I was not surprised. And while I can't say that I ever got to know Zack all that well, he and I had some wonderful conversations about music. He was as knowledgeable as he was passionate, and discussing the fine points of Jaco Pastorius or R.E.M. with him was always a treat.

Zack may never have become famous. But anyone who was lucky enough to experience his talent and his love for music up close knew that he was indeed a star.

I wonder if he knew it.

Peter Keepnews

My relationship with Zack, like many of the most beautiful aspects of life, is difficult to put into words. For me it is impossible, but here is my attempt:

I met Zack when I was 16 years old at a Berklee College of Music summer program. I was feeling intimidated and inadequate at a jam session early in the program; a peer attempted to teach me how to play a rhythmic feel in front of a room of people waiting to get in on the next jam.

I was fairly sure that no one in that room would want to play with me again, though I did feel a connection with two kids near me, one playing bass and the other guitar, sitting close together and locking into to one another in a way I gravitated toward.

As I left the room feeling dejected, the two kids were hovering on either side of the frame. They introduced themselves: Dan Knobler and Zack Rosen, soon to become my best friends and greatest teachers. From that day, we reserved an empty room at Berklee in every nook and cranny of our schedules that we could find.

Instead of taking part in the cacophonous energy of large jam sessions, we homed in on our newfound connection. Calling ourselves the Mysterious Groove Factor, we recorded every take at every rehearsal, listened and refined. We put a set list together of original music and performed together in an end of program concert.

Something Dan and I reflect on often is for all of our musical chemistry and promise, we lacked maturity. Zack was so strong where we were not, showing us the way. On many of our songs as Dan and I would push and pull, tinker and explore, Zack was there holding it down with impeccable time and feel, knowing that in order to make music out of the mess we made, he needed to glue it all together.

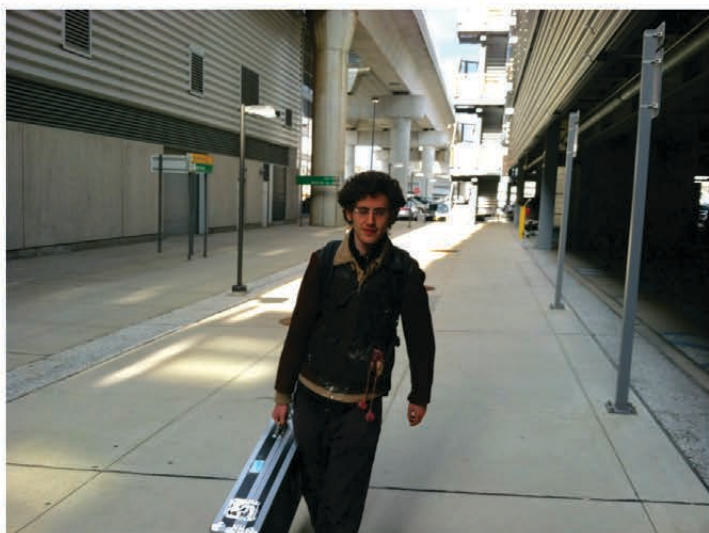
So many of the qualities I most identify with and value in music were exhibited so clearly and beautifully by Zack at such a young age. I would not be the musician I am today without his guidance. I have heard from multiple friends who are well

established professional musicians that Zack was a primary inspiration in their musical development.

I owe a lot more than just musical ideas to Zack. Growing up in Orange County, CA my experience was relatively sanitized. As in music, Zack showed me (and many others) how to live and interact with the world with greater care and understanding. Zack was never dismissive of me, but would always explain his perspective and recommend things for me to read. He was an active participant in the Occupy protests, putting his body on the line and allowing himself to be arrested in solidarity. He was vastly knowledgeable, and fiercely committed to justice and progress.

Something that I'll always cherish about Zack is the way he communicated about the beauty he experienced in his every day life. "Look how beautiful that tree is!" "Look at that bird, I've never seen one like that before" "Isn't this place beautiful?" "This venue is incredible, it sounds amazing". Always vocally expressing gratitude and reminding those around him, intentionally or otherwise, of how fortunate we were. I feel better equipped to appreciate the beauty of every situation, person, and landscape because of Zack and I will always associate that part of myself with him.

Jason Burger





Miriam Frank and I often go to marches in NYC—for women's rights, gay liberation, Black Lives Matter and labor struggles. It is always a thrill to see old friends, neighbors and sometimes your own kid at these protests.

I remember going to a march on May Day to support \$15 an hour and a Union for retail, food and healthcare workers. And suddenly there was Zack, a friend of our daughter's from the neighborhood and from Hebrew School.

We talked about the issue and what he had been up to lately.

As we kept walking and chanting, we reflected on how nice it was to be sharing the movement for justice with the next generation, and specifically the little kid we had known, who was now a young man.

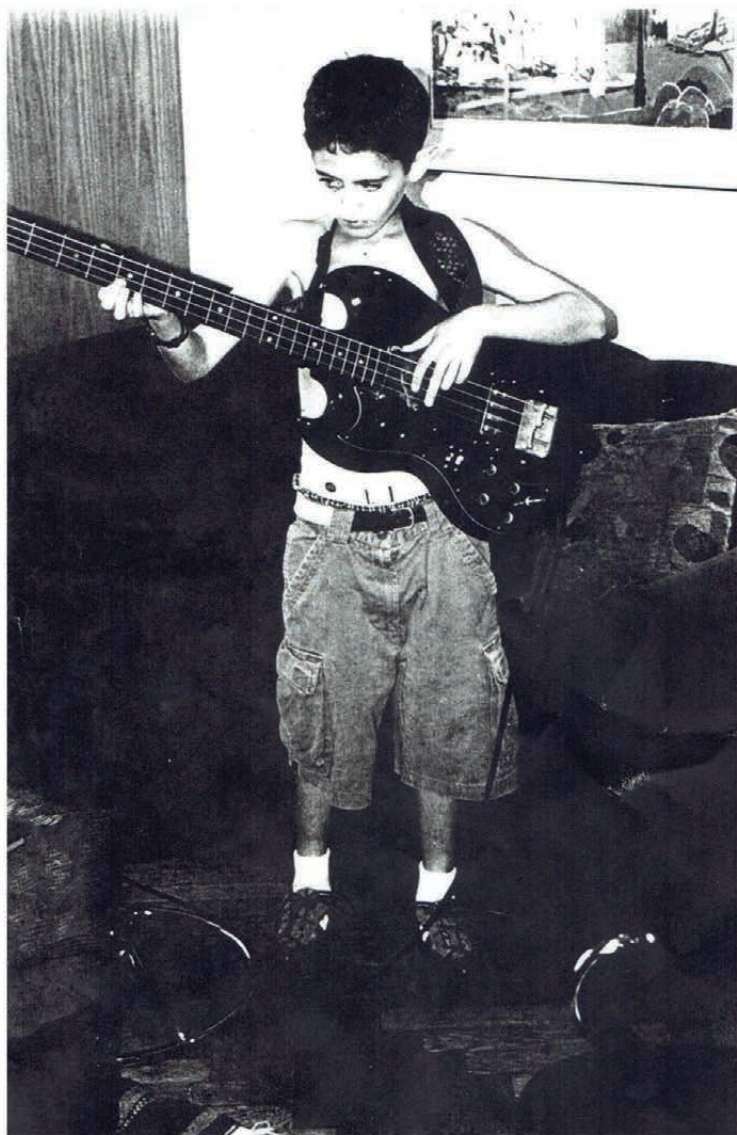
We are so sad that he is gone. We honor his work to repair the world. His truth is marching on.

Desma Holcomb & Miriam Frank

We're Zack's west coast family, no blood relation, but a family formed through the strongest of friendships. When I met Zack he instantly became a part of our gang. He naturally fit in as if we'd all been friends for a very long time. With Zack being decades younger than us, he was beyond his years in many ways. Intellectually he surpassed us. While he was in college, we were all aware of how gifted he was academically, spending late nights writing papers and tirelessly poring over his assignments. He constantly wanted to make it better and held the same standards to his work as a musician. Music wove us together despite our generational gaps. You don't have to be a performing musician to have musical intelligence, and I think Zack really loved seeing music through other people's eyes. We connected with Zack musically without being musicians, and I believe that made him a better musician. It's something we had the privilege to witness and share with Zack on so many different levels. I brought Zack to a reggae festival in a small hippie town of Northern California where we slept in a parking lot and ate raw spinach leaves out of a bag. We saw Bob Dylan and both commented on how much we enjoyed his performance despite most people complaining that his voice was shot. We sat at the kitchen table and swapped current musical interests. He played Elliot Smith for me and we listened to the Big Pink album. I'm grateful I got to be part of Zack's musical journey. My favorite and most memorable moment is when we got to see Zack roll through SF on a big tour bus playing bass for Chadwick Stokes. The 3 of us were so jazzed and proud to see Zack on stage! I know lots of seasoned musicians who struggle to get a local gig, and here was Zack! He was just out of college and already on tour. He made it look so easy. I was starstruck by my friend, and after the show we banded together as usual like family. He never discounted us whether he was riding high or riding low. You don't find many people in life like that, and that alone makes Zack really special. His kindness and humility always made him accessible and curious to get to know you. There was no effort in getting our

friendship off the ground. He loved all of us just the way we are, and there's no greater gift you can receive in life. Thank you Zack!

Marie Chang



Zack was the most remarkable student it was ever my pleasure to spend time with.

I recognized his phenomenal musical memory, imagination and sensitivity in our first encounters. He would come to lessons with five pieces from his piano lesson book memorized on many occasions and would seldom look at a lead sheet more than once or twice. He was constantly creating little musical snippets and new ways of approaching the instruments he was studying. By the time he left for Wesleyan he was doing melodic dictation on 12 tone rows and accurately playing advanced laya kiri (super imposed meter) improvisations in odd time signatures. He had also absorbed and expanded the Jaco Pastorius vocabulary and he played the extremely difficult 5 string fretless bass concerto I composed for him from memory in recital.

We shared an interest in philosophy and would often have spirited discussions after his two hour lessons.

I miss those times and will never stop missing him.

Merrill Clark



Whenever I sit down to write about Zack I am flooded with memories of that sweet adorable boy who was always wise beyond his years. So, it is nearly impossible to distill what he meant to me in a few words.

That said, he and I had special bond that we alone shared. Zack loved my brownies. First he just loved to eat them. Later he liked to help me bake them and, of course, he still loved to eat them. The brownies were so much a part of our relationship that he dubbed me Aunt Brownie.

Now whenever I bake brownies they are Zack's brownies. In our family food is so often a part of our best memories and, Zack, you are part of my best memories. I love you always.

Aunt Brownie / Janet Kleinman

One of my favorite memories of Zack is from the summer of his Bar Mitzvah, June 2002. Zack was always a consummate lover of music, and in his bedroom at the time was a drum set. My young sons were fascinated by this drum set, and I fondly remember Zack patiently and lovingly sharing his drums with his cousins and teaching them to play a simple beat. Even though my boys were 5 years and 1 ½ years, Zack allowed them to beat away on his drums and to encourage them by telling them what a great job they were doing. He inspired in them a love for music that continues to this day.

Staci Hansen

With love I remember Zack.

He was a beautiful light in our midst.

He will be remembered for his sweetness , his joy , his talent , his sensitivity and his bravery.

A hole is left in our hearts where he surely lived.

Thank you Zack

With Love and admiration;

Beverly Myers

When Zack was passionate about something, he was all in. There were early years where trains meant everything to him and then days that were made or ruined by the outcome of a Mets game (something, I confess, I have been guilty of myself from time to time). But it was his love for music that transcended all else, even transcending some of the most debilitating effects of his illness.

Whenever we would ask Zack about his music, which was pretty much every time Ginny and I saw him, his boyish smile would appear and he would talk with real enthusiasm about what he was working on, what gigs were coming up. That was true even in recent years. The music, the musical side of his life could somehow break through everything else.

Of the many times we spoke with Zack about his music, one in particular stands out. When Flearoy released Wake The Town, I really loved it and I would listen to it every morning for weeks while commuting in to work on the LIRR. Maybe a couple of weeks after I got the CD, we went to dinner with Bob, Marcia and Zack. I told him that Wake the Town was my favorite new music and that I listened to it all the time. A really big smile came across his face – a smile I have seen many other times when talking about his music – and I could tell it meant a lot to him, that it wasn't just music I liked, but my favorite music.

I can still see that smiling face and remember that moment as if it had just happened. That is the memory and image of Zack that will remain with me for the rest of my years. It has already replaced memories of Zack struggling with his illness. When I think of Zack, which will be often, he will always have that boyish smile, those Dylanesque locks of hair, that true passion for music, and always a special place in our hearts.

We love you Zack and always will.

Michael and Ginny Kahn

My memories of Zack go back to Fieldston (of course). I was a Chair of the Sports Committee (with no child involved in sports), one of whose missions was to improve school spirit. Our first focus was on Homecoming.

Someone mentioned that Zack was in a band. A very good band.

I don't recall hearing them but I must have, because when I did I immediately knew that we, the ECFS community needed them to play at halftime that Saturday. They accepted our offer (real money) and play they did! Amazingly!

Zack and the rest of Captain Coconut had chops and I do recall telling Bob I expected to hear them on the radio.

What year was Zack in? Don't know.

What I do know is that the crowd loved them and they played at halftime each year until they graduated. By popular demand.

Zack and his friends. Captain Coconut.

The BAND Elwood, the BAND!

Rick Cohen



I got to know Zack because he came to sing with us in the Beth Am choir a couple of years ago. We often sat together and it was such a pleasure to hear his lovely voice as we worked our way through the music.

But the memories that matter the most to me are of running into Zack on 181st Street outside the train station. There was one evening when I was very lost in thought when I came up the stairs, and not in an especially good mood. I did not hear Zack greet me when I emerged. He came down the street after me until he got my attention, and we had a wonderful chat about music, about what he had been doing, what I had been doing. That exchange was a reminder to me to pay attention! It was very moving to me that he really saw me, and that his desire to have a conversation with me mattered enough to him that he was not willing to just let it go.

He is much missed.

Arlene Shaner



I started coming to Beth Am in 2000. It was in the Post-(Rabbi)-Maggie days and the community did high holiday services at the Cornerstone Church. I would often sit behind you two, with Zack in the middle. I always enjoyed the energy of the three of you, your curly hair, your tall lean forms, with your growing son between you. He grew and grew and you two seemed to bookend him. I could feel your love for him so palpably. I did not know Zack well and I'm very sorry to say I never had an in depth conversation with him. I enjoyed recently when he would play guitar at services, and his singing in the choir. I wish I had spoken with him, and you more. I hope to in the upcoming months at services and at your memorial for him. I look forward to learning more about the boy, the young man and your loving family. My sincere condolences.

Sending you much healing and love,

Elena Deutsch

Zack was a light that burned very bright. From the earliest he had one of the keenest minds and greatest talents I had ever seen in a small child. He was funny, loved to laugh and was a total pleasure to be around. That young man will always be with me and bring me remembered joy.

Steve Brodner

I had Zack as a student in the Beth Am Hebrew School and much more recently sat next to him in the Beth Am choir for several iterations of the High Holy Day services. As a student he was eager, hard-working and inquisitive, a joy to have in the classroom. (And, as he would undoubtedly have wanted noted, the winner of the schoolyear-long “Jewish Jeopardy” contest.) In choir he was quiet and cooperative, and an excellent musician of course.

My favorite memory took place on an evening a few years earlier when Marcia and Bob invited me to dinner while my wife was out of town. The evening was more than pleasant, the conversation was charming, particularly from Zack who was as sports obsessed as I was at his age, about ten. What I remember most vividly was that after dinner he insisted on showing me his impressive collection of baseball cards. He was perky, even effervescent that night, talking me through the album of cards safely tucked into plastic sleeves, with a particular fondness, if memory serves, for the New York Mets. He was a delightful companion for this little odyssey, and I’d like to preserve that image in my mind as if it, too, were tucked into a protective plastic sleeve.

George Robinson

We had always known Zack as an enchanting child, whose use of language and whose musings seemed so far in advance of his age. But it wasn't until Zack's Bar Mitzvah that we got a sense of the young man he was becoming. We sat in awe in the synagogue as he delivered a talk that was the equal of any rabbi's in its erudition and sophistication and intellectual heft. And it wasn't only his speech that awed us, it was also his delivery! Full of gestures—especially a professorial finger that wagged and pointed—as he drove home his well argued points. The whole room was electrified. I think there was a collective shaking of the head as we all marveled at this talk that was so above and beyond the talks we were hearing from the other thirteen year olds on Saturday mornings.

And then Zack's musical performance finished the job of sweeping us off our feet. We sat fascinated not just by the music but also by the way Zack's hair flew into the air with perfect syncopation every time his drumstick came down. Was there ever a more touching sight than that of Zack and his father making music together as we celebrated this rite of passage? And such complex and demanding music at that. As I recall, they played something from John McLaughlin's Mahavishnu Orchestra. Is it possible Zack played the drums and the bass and the guitar that afternoon? Surely a first for an American Bar Mitzvah.

This is the Zack we will hold on to-- deploying words and music with a brilliant technique, charming, adorable and sweet in spite of his utter seriousness. He was a searcher, looking for truth and beauty in everything he did.

Vicky Bijur and Ed Levine



I met Zack in Kindergarten and on one of our first play dates he suggested we write a novel together. I hadn't read any novels at the time, and I'm not sure he had either, but that didn't stop us from starting a story about animal revolutionaries that lead an uprising against an evil Cobra dictator. I have to admit it was my fault we never got past page one. I told Zack I thought it wasn't very good and that we should stop. But he said, "No, it is good, let's keep going!" And that was Zack — a driven, creative visionary way beyond his years, always encouraging and eager to collaborate.

I always felt like Zack was a step ahead of the rest of my Ethical classmates. He brought an adult realm of art and ideas into the world of my childhood. "Have you read Salman Rushdie?" he asked me in second grade. "Not yet," I said. "Oh, you should check him out." And second grade was the year Zack turned me on to The Beatles. And he, Johnny, Saul and I started a spoof cover band called The Cockroaches. Even though we put up posters around the classroom announcing our first show, we never got to perform a Humpback Whale's Garden or An Easy Night's Day because Zack was the only one of us who could play any instruments. I think he could play four.

Later it was Nirvana and Radiohead — I don't think anyone from Ethical can forget when Zack took to the stage at the end of the sixth grade music recital, rocked out Smells Like Teen Spirit, and introduced our class to teen angst before any of us had started puberty. In the first weeks of middle school he introduced us to political action when he stood up on his desk in Ms. Reich's English class and called for a boycott against Fieldston Homecoming. "It's a mindless celebration of conformist culture!" he shouted. "Sit down Zack!" Ms. Reich yelled back.

Zack didn't sit down. He challenged everything. I was often intimidated to be in his company. After college, we would get dinner together, talk about life, books we were reading, music

we were listening to, dreams and goals we had. There was something about being with Zack that demanded your total honesty. You couldn't bullshit in front of him. He would see through it. And when you said something pretentious or something you didn't really believe, you knew he could tell. And I loved that about Zack. He was challenging and demanding, and to me that showed how much respect he had for people, and how much he wanted to connect and communicate with you in an honest way.

It was in that year after college, when I was stuck in a post-grad malaise, that Zack encouraged me to do what I'd wanted to do but was afraid of — leave New York. At one of our dinners he told me about his plans to travel to the ZAD occupation in France, and then onto Greece and Turkey to study the political movements that were emerging around the globe. He reminisced about his time working on farms in Oregon and spoke about the beauty of the Pacific Northwest. A few days later I asked him more about those Oregon farms and he sent me their contact info. "You should totally go!" Ten days later I was on the road to the west where I'd spend a life-changing year in Oregon, Washington, and California.

In the weeks after Zack's death I couldn't stop thinking about him. When I walked around Kensington at night, I could feel his presence and hear his voice in dialogue with my thoughts. He was challenging me — is that really how you feel? Are you sure that's true? I'm still talking to Zack — there's a little piece of his enormously generous and brilliant mind that he's left behind with me, a voice that won't stop probing, that won't accept the given, that is hungry to get closer to the truth.

Ned Myerberg

Lyrics from Zack's Songs

Revolutions, Every One
Stars Went out in Circles
Round the Sun
Constellations Get Undone

"Circles"

Saw a Ham Sandwich on the X Ray
Got a Job Working For the NSA

"Pound"

The kings are in their castles
Keeping the gentry at bay
While the servants stand around at ease
Waiting on what they have to say

The jester is undoing
the mask that we all don
It's unlikely that he'll show the world
the one he's putting on

At your command
No ground to stand
But if you can
Go your own way

The queens are paralyzed now
Being thrown out on the ground
They'll disappear on the horizon line
into such s a selfless sound

And the proletarian poets
Be they deaf or blind or dumb
Are burning with the question
Of where power's coming from

Hegemony
You couldn't see
Could be free like you should be

"Salt Pt. 2"

She's got a face she wears, it's the face of a lover
She's got a face she wears, it's the face of a friend
She could run out of clothes today, wear her heart
on her naked skin
Her eyes meet yours but you'll never meet them

She tried to warn about going to battle
She said those who do come back alone

Don't knock on her door 'cause there's nobody home

"Come Back Alone"

Day For a day
While for a while
And all in time

"All In Time"

The barbarians at the gate
Let us know the hour's getting late

"Circles"

Call it love
Call it magic
Call it whatever you like

"Bicycle"

oh, Zack ...

*i look to a book of poetry to begin this writing. Sarah Taurino
says,
"I see you
don't hide
away
You're wonderful.*

*yes, that is the word for you, Zack ... Wonderful.
sometimes terrified by your own light ... being given a daunting
combination of brilliance, goodness, ability to feel ...
ability to feel into the estranged crevices of a dying world,
aching to create new life into being ..*

*the gap between what is (disjointed division), and what could
be (amazing. interbeing. beautiful-innocence-of-creation-in-
service-to-the-collective) was sometimes exciting ... sometimes
tragic ... sometimes too much to bear ...*

*walks in the park (appreciating the simple things of life),
talking of weaving the world back together (with depth and
wise vision, far beyond your years. i remember being
astounded at your young age and the depth of your mind-heart-
sou)*

*old soul - indigo child (with parents who loved you, who
encouraged creative learning, critical thinking, creative being
... you always knew what a blessing that was... you always
knew ...)*

*the schools you went to, the old souls who were your parents-
and-also-your-friends-and-allies (how. rare. that. is.)
of course you are Wonderful*

oh, Zack ... how could one being carry that much brilliance and pain, and not explode?

i saw a clip of young Bob Dylan ... i saw you (why didn't i see that before?)

you deserved a chance to get an old raspy voice. this world deserved a chance to watch you grow, to welcome your wisdom as activist - shaman and know the blessings you were poised to create ... the blessings you Did create .. so many lives you enriched ...

and yet (in the world of linear time) - FUCK! what a tragically short life. could you have had faith in, at least, at least, in the hope of being so young? (and, beautiful)?

and yet (in the journey of a soul with all that unfolds) ... who, really, knows ... why we return when we return, then, again, to return ...

the loved ones i've known who have crossed over the youngest - were some of the most amazing, deep, connected to the-sacred-well-sort-of-beings ... as if called to become ancestors, where their incredible power could pour forth unhindered ... as if they were needed to return at another time, to be certain people, irreplaceable, pivotal, legendary lives ... (which yours was, in the small time you were here ...)

"in love may you return again ... "

who knows (the watchmaker?) by what schedule this wheel turns 'round ...

you are missed, Zack ... you are missed ...

and yet, you Are, and always will be ... Wonderous ...

Ellen Osuna

I met Zack in 2012. I remember being struck by how wise and deep beyond his years he was ... In a rising tide of people becoming activated about the many things wrong in this world to fight against, Zack was a visionary with deep ideas about what to build as well as what to stop, how to weave aspects of movements together who needed each other, how to bring out the best in humanity, even as the pain of what humans were doing to the world weighed on him ... Perhaps he was also weighed down by the gap between what the world was and what he knew it could be, and the inner knowing that he was a being with purpose and wisdom too deep for the mundane world to understand, yet so necessary ... Oh, Zack, I'm sorry I wasn't a better friend to you, I knew you were struggling ... I wish you peace and a lightness of being you had a hard time finding on Earth, even as you exuded light ... You held the pain and hope of the world in your loving heart ... A wounded healer of innocence and goodness ... A gentle soul who felt so much ... I miss you ...

Ellen Osuna

As a student rabbi at Beth Am about 20 years ago, I had the pleasure of teaching Zack in wonderful 3rd and 4th grade classes, along with Ruth and Paloma. We studied history, Torah, Mishnah, and Chanukah songs, and had many a discussion about life, God, and the wisdom of Judaism. Zack was an accomplished student, and participated seriously and thoughtfully in our classroom lessons. His musical ability came in handy while we intensively studied to chant the 10 commandments at our end-of-the-year Shavuot service, which he and the other students did with great success. I remember Zack as a polite, and intense child, and I can only begin to imagine the talented young adult he must have become. May his memory always be a blessing.

Rabbi Tamar Malino

The first time I saw Zack was at a Beth Am service. All the children were gathered at the front of the room and Rabbi Wenig was speaking to them. When she asked them what they thought, a small boy asked a question that was so insightful and deep that I asked myself, "Who is this four year old boy?" I can't remember what he asked or what Rabbi Wenig was teaching, but I never forgot him.

The next memory I have was hearing him play a short piano piece that he had composed at a Chanukkah service. He was seven.

When Zack was twelve I was privileged to be asked to tutor him for his bar mitzvah. He was quiet, sensitive, and altogether serious about studying. He delved into learning Torah trope and practiced it as a musician. Sometimes he would bring out his guitar to play and then transcribe the motifs. He sang phrases that were difficult over and over. He was as fully engaged in the meaning of the text. His portion was Korach and he gave a brilliant sermon about the qualities of a good leader and the difference between Moses' leadership and Korach's. It was a joy to learn with him.

The thing about Zack was that, however old he was, he had no age. It seems terrible to say now that he lived in the world of the mind, but his engagement in thought was shalem/complete/perfect. He loved study and he loved what he studied for its own sake.

My regret is that I knew only a small part of who Zack was.

There is one image I have, though, of another side of Zack. It was at his bar mitzvah service, after his reading of Torah and haftara, after the congregation sang "Siman tov umazal tov" and threw candy. It's an image of Zack springing forward from the bima, exuberant and free, like a child. Beautiful child, I miss you.

Margot Fein

I will always cherish the memory of spending a glorious Saturday afternoon with Zack at the Big Apple Circus! We both smiled a lot that day easily entertained by the acrobatics and comedic timing of the performances.

Henry Watkins

Nick once said to me, "When you're a child, so many of your friendships are opportunistic. You're friends because you live near each other and it's convenient. Or you're friends because your parents are friends. But Zack and I chose each other." And I remembered how happy that had made me, because of all the kids Nick knew, Zack is the one I would have chosen for his best friend. Zack had such an interesting mind that one of my great secret pleasures used to be hiding in the kitchen eavesdropping on their conversations. I'd try to predict what Zack would say – but I never got it right. He'd take every question to the farthest extent, examining it from some angle I hadn't considered. He wasn't interested in obvious answers, and he made us all think bigger. I'd stand there at the sink, listening to these two small philosophers pondering the ways of the world, grateful that Zack was in our lives. Can you wish more for your child than friends who push them to think out of the box and be the best they can be? Perhaps only that they get to see those friends grow up, prosper, turn into the people they were meant to be. The illness that devoured Zack took more than his life; it robbed us all of his enormous promise.

Ruth Reichl



I am thinking of Zack, way back to his childhood. I remember one year when he was quite a young child, he and Bob and Marcia came home from the Medieval Festival at the Cloisters with a tiny lizard in a little plastic box. They were all amused by the fact that the lizard had been described as a dragon, in keeping with the medieval theme. None of us remotely imagined that years later Zack would end up battling the real-life dragon of mental illness.

I miss Zack, and continue to want to talk with him. I bumped into him so many times in the past months. Even Zack's most casual greeting, "Hey, Jane," while friendly, bristled with intensity. We would walk down Cabrini together, headed in the same direction, until he peeled off -- to smoke or to get something from the bodega on Cabrini, south of 181st Street. His sense of humor was still there. We laughed together about small things, including his walking to the edge of Castle Village to smoke: Zack was playing by the rules in his own way, which was to just barely play by the rules. Our short neighborhood encounters were comfortable and meant a lot to me, both at the time and now, as I remember them. I was always glad that we had bumped into each other.

*Years before Zack was born, as I was trying to deal with the mental illness of my brother, I came upon a book called *Families in Pain* by Phyllis Vine. Vine talked about how siblings, parents, and children cope with having a mentally ill family member. Her insights reached me firmly in the center of all my pain and my prejudices. I began to have a different view of his illness, and it helped me to cope with the pain, sorrow, anger, and sense of loss.*

Mental illness often bestows on its victims the cruel gift of brilliantly knowing how to drive people away. I had to forgive my brother for driving us away from him, and that allowed me to keep some connection to him. Bob and Marcia: you and Zack managed to keep your deep family attachment. Even through the fog of his terrible illness, I feel that Zack knew that you and the rest of your family, along with his friends from

our generation and his generation, cared for him and loved him, and that he was able to return that love. Alav hashalom.

Jane Maisel

One of my fondest times with Zack was during a vacation celebration of our grandfather's 80th birthday. Zack was about 8 and I was 27 years old. Although we saw each other frequently, it was not common that we were able to spend an extended time together.

On the first day of the trip, I showed Zack a card game and asked him to bet me about whether I could correctly identify the card that he had secretly selected. The game was a ruse and Zack, smart and confident, became convinced that I would err. He kept upping his wager until he bet \$1,000. Of course, he had been set up - and when he realized that the game was a trick, his eyes widened and his face dropped. "No," he protested, "I don't have to pay! That was a trick!" I told him otherwise, explaining that he had made a wager and had to stay true to his word. But I offered an easy out: Zack could work down his debt with payment in hugs and kisses to those in attendance (as well as 24 hour poolside service, predominantly for me). Zack enthusiastically accepted and we spent a most memorable week enjoying the playful game of watching Zack relieve his "debt": "Zack, please give Aunt Janet a hug, give Rachel a kiss . . . and bring two cold Tings, some potato chips and a towel!"

Over the years, I have thought about that special week often, and in particular about all the hugs I collected from my little cousin. Nineteen years may be a sizable age difference for first cousins, but our bond always endured: in fact, each and every time I saw Zack over the next twenty years he gave me a hug as a greeting and hug as a departure. Never a handshake, never a wave. Just a simple, affectionate hug that each time reminded me of that long absolved debt.

David Bocian

There are so many things that Zack, Rog and I loved. In fact, I can't even think of anything we didn't enjoy together. Well, maybe there's one thing, I just couldn't share Zack's love of the Farolito breakfast burrito. Music has always been the current that pulls Rog, Marie and me through good times and bad. When Zack arrived, he poured music all over us. Imagine coming home from a cheerless office, to the smell of fresh onion pasta and the voices of Zack and Marie spinning tunes in the kitchen. The two kids I always wish I had.

Outside of the kitchen, it was all about getting out of town. We headed down Highway 1 to the tunes of Dylan, the Band and later, Development Eagle. Lots of singing along. Then, a couple hours on the trail or beach combing. I remember one long walk along Montara beach, where we walked back and forth talking about relationships, the effect of cell phone technology on our brains, and what Roger and I planned to do for dinner. Zack told me his college life was great, but it was clear that how he defined the pleasures of college life was drastically different from how I did. He actually studied and went to class. We witnessed the college side when Zack went to work on finishing a term paper at my house, where he sat still for hours on a paper comparing Nabokov's Lolita and Pale Fire in terms of the solipsism of the main characters.

Well, I couldn't begin to explain what it's about, but you get the idea. I'm going to miss traveling with Zack. Wherever we went, whatever we ate, no matter what went wrong, Zack was on board, no hesitation. He connected with our gentle guide, Jorge, in Uxmal, especially when Jorge sang a song for us under a Maya arch to demonstrate the acoustic reverberations of the area. 'Oh Maya' Zack whispered to Marcia. I'll never forget swimming with Zack in a rushing river in Chiapas, or sitting with him on pyramids and platforms and eating panuchos, every day, at a food stall in Merida.

Maybe the best part, the part I'll always hold on to, is the incredible love Zack had for us, how he always considered us first; where did we want to go? What did we want to eat? And

last, but not least, Zack always knew what our ears loved to hear, so he filled my home, my car, my head with music.

Mark Tanaka and Roger Govier

so very, very sad, Zack was a wonderful member of the class of '07, talented, incredibly smart, and funny. I can not believe he is no longer with us. Please express my deepest sympathies to the Rosen family.

John Reyes



Standing next to him in choir with Khorikos, I remember how sweetly Zack's voice would blend in with the rest of the basses. I miss that sound. Here he is singing at a synagogue in Loštice, Czech Republic in 2013. Zack Rosen contained worlds of music and ideas. I remember him as a philosopher-poet, an activist, a daring thinker, a brilliant musician, a caring friend. We miss you and love you, Zack.

Kris Nolte

During days when it was easy to find searchers and revolutionaries, I met a young man who stood out for his intense curiosity, his desire to see into the heart of things and to right the world's wrongs. Zack's passion was almost superhuman, uncontainable. He longed for collective intensity, whether it was turned to interpreting abstruse texts or to taking the streets to demand the people's due. He also knew the solitude of creativity, and dedicated many hours to composing music or writing literature. He wanted to share something of himself, and of our collective adventures and misadventures. He knew the meaning of friendship and how valuable and fragile it was. I remember him as someone who laughed easily and made life light, full of possibility. For me Zack was an example of authenticity.

Micah Murphy

One of many, many quick memories: In 10th grade, Zack and I were in chemistry class together, and we got partnered for a project. We had to mix a few substances together and then document the results of the reaction — simple stuff. We completed the experiment, and conjured up a brown, sludgy, pungent goo. While most of it puddled into the bottom of our beaker, a bit of the sludge bubbled up and stuck to the beaker's rim. It was decidedly gross. We spent a long time discussing how to describe this, searching for the right words. I don't remember what I suggested, but Zack was adamant he had nailed the perfect descriptor: "schmutz." Zack was nothing if not stubborn, so after much back and forth I relented. When we got the assignment back from Mr. Mahase, we had been penalized — "schmutz is not a technical term." Zack was absolutely livid. Now when I hear most Yiddishisms, I can hear Zack saying, "technical to whom?!"

Nick Singer

To be honest, I have too many fond memories of Zack to recount in one piece of writing. He was always there, and always such a unique, vibrant, and selfless presence since we first became early-childhood friends in kindergarten. It's almost impossible for me to believe just how much time has passed, and yet how vital my foundational friendship with him will always be.

If there was one truly specific, special memory I have of Zack, however, it was when we were at Independent Lake Camp together in the summer between eighth grade and our freshman year of high school. I had just begun to become reasonably competent at drums, and Zack was already a musician of tremendous skill and taste on bass guitar. We formed a trio with guitarist Armand Hirsch named 'Weather Retort' and played Pinocchio and Canteloupe Island at the final camp concert. I'll never forget the first feeling of truly improvising music with friends, and finally feeling like I was becoming a real artist. Zack was the reason I started playing music in the first place, and he always remained such a central part of my development and consistent pursuit of the art form.

There have been so many times since Zack's passing that I've reflected on how essential his presence in my life was, and how I know his influence will always continue to guide me in all of the most important ways. Not a day goes by when I don't cherish the memories we had together, and I know he'll always be alive in our hearts, minds, and souls.

Alex Cohen

Dear Zack,
 Thank You for Being and Becoming
 a Powerful Friend
 an Ingenious Muse
 and an Enlightening Artist
 Thank you for your courageous devotion to creating on the
 leading edge
 Thank you for your scintillating sweetness
 Thank you for the abundant and pure generosity of your
 free heart
 Thank you for breathing life-giving light into my life
 And countless others
 I love you so much
 Eternally Inspiring One!
 In Awe,
Tovie Bentley



On my third day at Wesleyan, I auditioned on piano for the Jazz Ensemble. I had arrived on campus excited to join what I had heard was a thriving arts community. I was also intimidated. And I didn't know what to expect from the Ensemble, an intimate jazz combo group with limited spots.

Not only was I fortunate to make it in, but I met the other freshman joining the group and immediately was in awe. Zack quietly played miles ahead of everyone on his instrument. I had met plenty of talented jazz musicians whose ego turned me off to the music and left me feeling unwelcome. But Zack was right there with us. I realized he was there for similar reasons that I was: to find a community that loved exploring music. Taking a few of the same philosophy courses, I also came to know Zack's ability to learn incredibly fast, to draw keen connections, and to ground his work in sincerity.

Throughout our time at Wes, Zack and I played in all 4 years of Jazz Ensemble; a jazz trio (including a costumed Halloween gig at a cafe), a salsa band, a funk band, several senior thesis concerts and more (that was the beauty of the Wesleyan music scene, constantly morphing and expanding). I think back on this time of vast musical blossoming and community growing and remember that Zack was the first person I made music with at Wesleyan. I'm grateful to have studied with him and to have created with him.

Gabe Gordon



I miss you, friend. You were my closest friend for most of the last 13 years; long heady dinners and walks around the city, too-infrequent jams, late nights writing papers. Always responding "Everything!" when we asked each other "What's up?"

I always felt my smartest (and dumbest) around you.

We met before college at the Berklee 5-Week music program in 2006. I was amazed by you from day one for your ridiculous talent - who was this nerdy Jaco? - and how immediately outspoken you were, suggesting which tunes the group should learn to play (all of which featured great bass parts). I stayed amazed by you throughout our friendship for that innate musicality which permeated everything, your constant intellect, and your warm curiosity -- all of which I saw persist in you through your quiet struggles in recent years.

How lucky I was to get an AOL instant message from "zrsushimon" half a year after Berklee that we would be going to college together, sharing a major, already comparing classes. We grew closest the summer halfway through school that we decided to spend on organic farms in Oregon, learning about permaculture and sharing a tent (and a treehouse, at one point). Days spent sheet-mulching, afternoons out getting lost on old logging roads. Our favorite that summer was a new farm called Restoration, where we spent weeks at the border between Oregon and California, planting some of the farm's first fruit trees, diving deep into techniques for sustainable living. We got to do that again back at school two years later, when you enthusiastically joined WILDWes to help me transform the campus landscape. I remember the night you, characteristically outspoken, advocated that the WestCo courtyard be the site of the group's first project. A perfect, thoughtful spot - this much-loved sloping hillside at the center of so many early memories and friendships.

It's blooming wildly, still.

Sam Silver

Zack never walked into a room pretending to be anything other than himself. He was fearlessly original in his thinking and eager to approach new ideas, especially ones slightly outside the norm. I believe he was very much an outsider, a strong individual who saw a world around him that didn't often cater to his spirit or his personality. And yet I never saw Zack alter who he was or what he believed to fit the landscape. He strode, proud and confident, buzzing with thoughts, into rehearsals over the years, ready to chat about this new song or that new album by so-and-so, and 'did you hear it yet?', and 'I think you might really like this', and 'oh and hey I checked out that band you told me about, they're really amazing. Did you know they collaborated with so-and-so? They're playing a show together next month'. Zack was constantly grappling with the output of the artistic communities he was involved in and the ones he knew about from afar. He was engaged. He tried. In rehearsals, sometimes he tried so hard to find the right bass sound that everyone else would have to take a minute while he figured it out. He didn't care—it was important to him to get it right.

I loved that about Zack. And of course, he was a true artist, one with a vision, one who heard the sound in his head before picking up the instrument most of the time. And so when the bass was in his hands, he was working, working, working the damn machine to get the sound he wanted. It was a labor of love. It was tireless. It could grind you down if you weren't ready to accept it.

And the way he played bass...I just don't know how to describe it. I've always called it 'wordy' but that has the wrong connotation, as if he said too much. Zack never said too much. He said exactly what he felt, and little more—Nevertheless. I consider myself lucky to have been introduced to him, to have gotten to know him, to have gained some of his trust, and to have shared the process of creating art with him. He worked hard. He was visionary. Artistically hungry, and ready

to eat. Ready to dive in. I often was not. But Zack always was.

His bass playing displays this. He was adventurous, colorful, conversational; he listened. He led. I've never heard anyone else like him, and I doubt I ever will. He played melodies on the bass that shouldn't have been there, but once you heard them, they were unstoppable. He fit notes in. He had his own thing going on the ENTIRE TIME. Every single song. And it always, always worked. Zack was a genius and he was incredibly gifted at more than just playing bass. When he started showing people the songs he was writing a few years ago, I remember thinking 'shit....this is really good stuff'. And if you haven't heard his music, I hope that you will. He was truly unique.

Zack was grappling with the large themes in life, I saw this in him, and I think he chose to live in a way that did not imprison himself according to social norms, ideas about what one 'should' or 'shouldn't' do. He was willing to challenge his friends and coworkers on anything, simply because his curious mind was always wrapping itself around new concepts. And I only saw him do so with respect, purely because he was interested in the details of the topic or project at hand. This is a difficult role to play. Zack played it with grace.

Zack was patient. He was giving. He was generous. Incredibly smart. Observant. INSANELY TALENTED. Meditative. Thoughtful. Excited about alternative options to everything. A good listener, a vessel for art, an electrified receiver that was always tuning in to new things. He was sensitive, articulate, and guarded. He kept in touch. He was a good friend. He rarely asked for anything but he gave, gave, gave to everyone around him. I know so many artists who are better for having met or worked with Zack. I know so many people who he gave to.

I love you Zack and I wish you peace on your journey. You will be deeply, deeply missed.

Gabriel Gall

A couple snaps of Zack at Spectrum. I have to dig for more video stuff. I've played more solo shows with him than any other artist, which to me was always a challenge but he was always super encouraging. Zack and I also played a ton of other shows together, whether he was playing his own music, with Tongues Unknown or the one time he played bass in The Ferdy Mayne (my project). We did a lot of covers that night at Bowery Electric, including Cinnamon Girl by Neil Young, In My Hour of Darkness by Gram Parsons and a few others. One of the best bassists I have ever played with. He also came to quite a few of our gigs and we talked a lot. The last time I saw him was May 4th at Trans Pecos in Ridgewood. We spoke for a long time before the set, he watched the show and then left. I missed the Nick Drake cover set he did with Connor due to work stuff. I'm bummed I did. I'm glad to have known him and he will be missed big time.

Shane Firek (from Facebook)

I'm struggling to find the words...I miss Zachary Rosen already. he's been a beautiful part of my life. the last time we hung out was almost two months ago, he slept at my place and we talked about all the same things... new songs, plans for recording, shows, music we've been listening to. at the same time I knew I couldn't possibly help with what he was going through. I hope he's found some peace, but I'm so sad that we won't have more time together. he was generous, honest, passionate, brilliant, expressive, opinionated, incredibly musically talented. so fully committed to his music and the music of his friends. I can't begin to count how many of my shows he came to, always attentive and supportive. I wish I had made it to more of his recently. his new music was strong, challenging, deep. as intricate and lovely as he always played, but with a harshness that could be visceral, maybe reaching for more understanding. our community has lost an amazing artist and friend.

Zubin Hensler (from Facebook)

I got some peace listening to our rough mix of Black Narcissus this morning. It starts out with such a chill, reflective vibe and his prominent and necessary bassline. Then for his solo he is first accompanied by the group, but then goes truly solo before bringing the band back in. I'm not sure exactly how to read this metaphorically but it definitely feels evocative now. When he played alone like that I was also struck by the combination of strength and vulnerability in those moments. After playing with him regularly for those couple years, I felt really safe and positive playing with him. I was glad I got to receive his musical support and hear his ideas during that time.

Galen DeGraf (from Facebook)

I am saddened to find out Zachary Rosen has passed. Years ago he was my partner working for the Undead Jazz Review sponsorship team, and Zack was in fact the first bassist of Topsy Oxcart, an instrumental part of finding that band's sound when we were just forming. I remember him as a sweet soul and an immensely talented musician. Years after he had left the band, Maya Lazaro, Jeremy Bloom and I ran into him randomly in the streets of Istanbul, and I remember him excitedly singing these ornamented melodies with incredible precision and passion in front of the Roma street musicians we had all met.

Is tragic to lose such a young soul, and I only hope he is at peace now.

Connell Thompson (from Facebook)

I am deeply saddened to learn that Zachary Rosen has passed away. Two memories of Zack stand out to me, both involving chance encounters on the subway. A few years ago we ran into each other on the Cortelyou Q platform. He had his headphones on and when he saw me he smiled and held up his phone to show me that he was listening to my band's record. It was one of the only occasions when I stumbled upon someone engaging with my music in the wild and I remember feeling so touched by it. A few years later we ran into each other on the A train heading back up to Washington Heights after a show in Brooklyn. We chatted about music and what we each were listening to at the time and then he played me some voice memos of new songs he was writing and singing. This was the first time I had heard this aspect of his music-making and it was very moving. Watching him perform these songs live was an even more powerful experience. His songs are haunting, his voice in this context had a touch of Marc Bolan (harsher and grittier than the pure, choral tone I knew he was capable of from our time singing together in Khorikos), and he performed with everything he had; his eyes open wide, looking directly at the audience as he played - something I have never been able to do. Zack was an incredibly supportive friend and talented musician and he will be missed dearly by his friends and community. My deepest condolences to his family.

Ian Davis (from Facebook)

Rest in peace you beautiful human Zachary Rosen. You were one of my first bandmates in this city along w Connor Grant and Ben Hoffmann. It was a pleasure to play music with you in Tongues Unknown, you taught me so much and I feel very grateful to have known a kind and truly creative soul like yourself. I've since learnt about your activism and immense poetry catalogue that your friends are archiving, I feel like your humility has left a lot to uncover.

I've been thinking of our time together a lot recently and how special it is to know someone through music. You had this beautiful way of crossing the bar line, it always inspired me to listen more deeply. Your phrasing always felt fresh but so stylistically inside the genre and the history, you towed that line so well and your feel was so incredible to play with, so buoyant but so powerful and gritty.

I hope you've found peace wherever you are now, I'll be listening to your beautiful music you left us and thinking of you with warmth and love. Much love to the Rosen family and the entire Zack community.

Beloved Zack, onwards.

Sarah Galdes (from Facebook)

Zack Rosen. You amazed me every time we talked, and every time we played together. You were brilliant. I felt invited into every place and situation we were in together by your kind-heartedness, your burgeoning love and curiosity. I regret not being there for you more. I would have loved to be there helping you create your own music. I have such deep respect for you, and such gratitude for knowing you. I'll miss you deeply. Thank you for coming to this place, for being alive.

Russell Durham (from Facebook)

We lost Zachary Rosen this weekend--one of the most gifted, sensitive musicians I've ever gotten to play with and learn from. I got to know Zack as a friend and player when Howe roped him into an incredibly dumb and incredibly fun cover band of The Band, The Cover Band, The Band Band, our senior year at Wesleyan. Getting inside this music with these guys was the kind of delight I only ever knew at Wesleyan--pursuing totally pointless projects with deadly seriousness just for the sheer fun of it. Zack was all in. When he joined it felt like we were really channeling those dudes.

Zack refused to pick the bass like Rick Danko did--the most serious I ever saw him was when he said he would like never defile his instrument like that lol--but he just fuckin nailed the tone and the parts note-for-note, getting right in the pocket with Nathaniel on his fretless bass. He'd come in every time just bursting, just so ready to give it everything, but apparently only energized by the effort. Playing with him felt like the real deal, but it was just nothing but love for the music with him, that was it--he didn't get in the way of himself for a second.

The cool thing about this was that Howe pushed Zack not just to play the bass but to sing. It was sort of a new thing for Zack. And I just remember how excited he was, how pumped he'd get when people told him he should sing more.

We played three shows with this group--one of them, outdoors during senior week, was the wildest show I've ever played--and these recordings are from our Zonker Harris show. The recordings are not so good, but it is so nice to revisit that day. Listening to these cracks me up--Zack and Matt and I playing the parts note for note, Nathaniel holding it down, while Howe makes up some random shredding, Zack holding down the vocal parts while my voice totally gives out, it's awesome. Zack's bass on "Don't Do It" is so nice, in particular.

Zack absolutely destroys the "Crazy Chester" verse in "The Weight" - talk about channeling Rick Danko!!!--that's my favorite moment in the whole thing. And his verse comes right after Claire Randall's. It's fucked up that both of these friends

are gone; I feel so lucky to have known and loved them both. They shed so much light on our lives.

You can also hear Zack singing lead in Up on "Cripple Creek," "Long Black Veil," "halfway through "Look Out Cleveland", the "back with my wife in Tennessee" verse in "Night They Drove Old Dixie Down," and "Don't Do It."
Matt Thompson (from Facebook)

Rest in Peace and Power Zachary Rosen. I was privileged to be a band mate of his in Tongues Unknown with Connor Grant and Sarah Galdes. I will cherish all of the time we spent together and his amazing bass playing and the harmonies that we sang together and his music (or others') which he would introduce to me. He was a very musically gifted person and in addition to playing the \$#!+ out of the bass he was also a talented songwriter. I wish I had seen him perform more with his project Syzygy, but it's been great to have these videos of him to remember his music forever. Even if you didn't know Zack I encourage you to check out some of it. I hope the transition to whatever is on the other side of life brings you peace.

Ben Hoffman (from Facebook)



The world lost a treasure this week. Zack Rosen was a singularly brilliant musician and an exceedingly kind friend who challenged me to become better simply by his example. We met when I was a freshman in college, toured the country together, built a home and a studio together in Brooklyn, and collaborated on countless recordings where I was continually blown away by the maturity of Zack's musicianship and his generosity of spirit.

Life is incredibly fragile, and I feel sad and helpless when thinking about Zack's final years in which I struggled to know how to help him as he faced challenges that most of us were never fully aware of. Mental illness is not a personal shortcoming. It's a medical condition like any other and until we publicly declare this and actually internalize it, we'll continue to lose some of humanity's most valuable gifts.

If you're reading this and have been or are in the process of considering taking your own life, I want to tell you beyond the shadow of a doubt that there are people in your life who love you and care about you. Your life is precious. Please don't throw it away. We need you.

If you know someone who struggles with mental illness - don't wait to tell them how much they mean to you until it is too late.

Zack - I love you. Thank you for sharing some of your time and your music with me. I will treasure it forever.

John Seale (from Facebook)

I was Zack's Resident Advisor at Buddhist House at Wesleyan, a fellow music major, and while we weren't so close outside of the house, I spent a great deal of time talking with Zack in the two years we lived together.

I was a great admirer of Zack's brilliant mind. He was an incredibly gifted musician, the kind of guy who would pick up a pattern in an Indian percussion class after one try while the rest of us were still struggling to get the basic gist of it. Same story with difficult theoretical texts – he had immediate,

astounding, comprehension. But I was most always amazed with how he looked for and saw connections between different disciplines – music, philosophy, meditation, literature. He could synthesize ideas in surprising and unexpected ways. He was also genuinely hilarious and brought humor and joy to heady and complex conversations.

Zack and I often talked about difficulty. We'd sit in the meditation hall late at night, or in the living room, and we'd talk about the mind, how it could be beautiful and amazing and also really painful to be a human. Zack knew I had struggled with anxiety, and I imagine this made us comfortable being vulnerable with each other. Zack had a quality in these conversations that was very powerful and very beautiful, which was that he thoroughly investigated and considered every phenomenon, everything he or I experienced, no matter how small, strange, dark, light, funny, odd, or confusing. He wanted to understand why we suffer and how it all worked, and he approached this question with incredible courage, honesty, and openness to the universe. This genuine, fearless curiosity was something Zack taught me a lot about. I graduated a year before him, and while I'd occasionally see him at concerts in New York and enjoy talking, I'm sorry to say that we pretty much lost touch after college.

Zack touched my life in a very positive way (and the lives of so many other students at Wesleyan - I know that so many people admired him immensely), and I am very glad I got to spend the time with him that I did.

Asa Horvitz

The way I remember him is with a wave.

In the park, at the show, at the protest, approaching me, with his warm, big smile, hurried Walk, Fast chatter.

I am so grateful I can hear still now his beautiful tone of Voice in my mind.

*It is still impossible to fathom this departure.
I miss my friend.
I miss his particular Concoction of gem-Jewel-Mind.*

*Zack was an explorer of Consciousness. a Poet who Dealt in words, but also in reality.
A beautiful musician. a Fire-focus Poet. a Scholar, a Writer, a Philosopher, a Thinker.
a Fearless Activist.
his Spirit prone to ask why things are this Way... or... how do we Know they are fixed. or what can be Altered.
He held The strong Belief that one might effect change. that one could ACT. as well as speak.
And while he was Headstrong, it is eternally important to remember that often his concerns were for others.
He believed in a better world for all of us.*

*He could hold contradictory ideas. he was Open to various Possibilities, or hearing you on them.
even when his ideas were strong, he respected the transfer of ideas. he upheld correspondence.
he was Bursting with references and quotes and Ideas from writers & Movements & musicians.
They poured out of His mouth, onto his Page, into our conversations.
our late night Talks of philosophy, poets, the "temporary autonomous zone" of the artist, activism, action, anonymity...
the multiplicities of Possibility.*

*He was my poetic-reality confidante.
Tho now I understand how much I did not know, on a certain level,
we understood each other instantly, effortlessly and deeply.
How Deeply I wish I could receive one more of his messages:*

"did you hear the protest shut down the Brooklyn Bridge?"

*"Wondering about Ginsberg's idea of Revolution"
"do you Want to get together to play soon?"
or me asking him after a protest:
"Where are you Are you home Safe?"
on & on.*

*One night in 2012, a Mysterious text-tip from him to "be here
at this time & bring your camera & all I can say is
something important is going to happen."
sure enough, the next morning, history was made: a powerful
action of Occupy Wall Street supporting Immigrant Workers
striking at their abusive Bakery.*

*This was a person who tried to re-occupy Wall street seven
years after it had been born-- and followed thru on this belief
somewhat Solo, hoping others would join.*

*This was a person who organized against a pipeline in the
Rockaways, understanding the connections between Capital &
Climate which many Of us are somehow slow to Act on.
Zack was a leader in difficult times. he was often
misunderstood.*

*he suffered quietly, in ways we Knew and did not know. and
Throughout, he maintained a very bright and a very warm
love.*

*there will be Many more words to write. there will be books of
his writing. Albums of his Music. there will be Stories of him
told. his humor and bright Light will be recalled.*

*we Will All grow wiser by understanding how he dealt with his
struggle gracefully, prolifically, strongly for so long.*

He visits in dreams now.

Now he is a guide of sorts. He will continue.

*I deeply hope we will all Carry his grace and his Vision.
onwards.*

I love you zack, always, always.

No Land / Lauren

Fugue

In memoriam

ZACK ROSEN

30 March 1989–18 May 2019

and in honor of his parents

BOB ROSEN and MARCIA GOLUB

ARTHUR MAISEL

The musical score is written for piano in 2/4 time. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first staff includes dynamic markings: *p* (piano), *pp* (pianissimo), *p* (piano), *mp* (mezzo-piano), and *sim.* (sforzando). Above the *mp* marking is the instruction *(non cresc.)*. The score is composed of six systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, accidentals, and slurs. There are several instances of the letter 'X' in parentheses, likely indicating specific performance techniques or corrections. The piece concludes with a final cadence in the bass staff.

First system of musical notation, measures 1-4. The music is in 3/4 time. The right hand features a continuous eighth-note pattern, while the left hand has a more sparse accompaniment. A tempo marking $\text{1/2} \text{♩}$ is present below the first measure.

Second system of musical notation, measures 5-8. The right hand continues with eighth-note patterns, and the left hand provides harmonic support. A tempo marking 2/4 is located below the fifth measure.

Third system of musical notation, measures 9-12. This system includes performance instructions: *ralen.* (rallentando) above the first measure, *quasi-cadenza (a tempo)* above the second measure, and *(non marc.)* (non marcato) below the fifth measure. A right-hand marking *r.h.* is above the eighth measure, and a tempo marking $\text{1/2} \text{♩}$ is below the twelfth measure.

Fourth system of musical notation, measures 13-16. This system contains dynamic markings: *mp* (mezzo-piano) at the start, *ppp* (pianissimo) in the second measure, and *mf* (mezzo-forte) in the fourth and sixth measures. A tempo marking 2/4 is below the thirteenth measure.

Fifth system of musical notation, measures 17-20. The system concludes with a final cadence. A tempo marking 2/4 is below the seventeenth measure.

Footprints

*We leave bright moments
Like footprints on the sea shore
We cry for romance
And circumstances lost
Or visions we have lived for
Fading like yesterday's rhyme
On the sands of time*

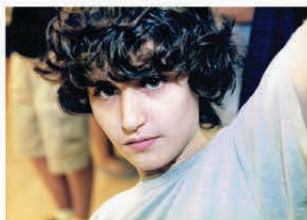
*We save warm mem'ries
Like footprints on a snow drift
Tracing them one sees
The icy breezes blow swift
As the feathered mounds shift
In the end all is erased
On the frozen waste*

*We live brief lifetimes
Like footprints on forever
Fueled by the fires of desires
That we may never
Satisfy nor savor
We play a dream pantomime
Falling into time*

*We dance our tango sublime
Silhouettes in time*

*Fading like yesterday's rhyme
On the sands of time*

Merrill Clark (lyrics)
Wayne Shorter (composer)



Booklet Photographs by: No Land | Suzanne Goldenberg | Dan Knobler | Jon Seale
Yannick Bindert | Chuck Burr | Zack's loving family, friends & colleagues



"I Feel you close though many worlds away."

ZACK ROSEN,

BRILLIANT ARTIST
ETERNAL