

SCENE

NASHVILLE

ANNUAL MANUAL 1999

THE ARTS

QUINTESSENTIALLY NASHVILLE

Nashville attracts musicians from all over—and of all kinds. A case in point: the Sunday-morning family services at Congregation Micah, which sometimes take on the aura of a hootenanny—thanks to a precedent set by former cantor Dan “The Music Man” Nichols. Although Hebrew liturgy has, over the millennia, been presented as chants, the guitar-playing Nichols broke with tradition and led the attendees in pop arrangements of sacred text. His repertoire included such soft, beautiful melodies as “Sim Shalom” and such perky, hand-clapping ditties as “Shake Your Lulav.” Recognizing a musical niche, music producer and fellow congregation member Mason Cooper joined with Nichols to form the band Eighteen. The group cut an album of alternative pop-rock tunes sung in English and Hebrew. Eighteen has been amazingly successful. In fact, last year Nichols resigned from his position at the temple to embark on a full-time career touring the country playing concerts for young audiences.

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