Students, alumni, faculty create Jewish Music Festival piece
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Theatre and dance students will be among those performing “Dan Plonsey’s Bar Mitzvah” in
the 25
th
 Jewish Music Festival at the Contemporary Jewish Museum of San Francisco. The
show previews at 7 p.m. July 8 with an introduction and post-performance discussion led by
dance pioneer Anna Halprin; the premier performances will be at 1 and 4 p.m. July 11, all at
736 Mission St., San Francisco.
Eric Kupers, assistant professor of theatre and dance, is director and choreographer of the inter-disciplinary piece that interweaves new music, inclusive dance, devised theater, live video and
explorations of contemporary ritual. Mantra Plonsey wrote the piece, and Dan Plonsey created
the music.
Like many American Jews of his generation, composer Dan Plonsey was not raised within a
context of traditional ritual, and his 13th year passed without a bar mitzvah.
When his son began to prepare for his own bar mitzvah, Plonsey was inspired to join his son by
preparing for his own, and to create a musical theater piece about the experience. The resulting
work asks profound questions about the goals, meaning, and expectations of traditional ritual in
a post-modern world.
The piece is part of the Contemporary Jewish Museum’s “Reinventing Ritual” exhibit. It is sup-ported in part by the East Bay Community Foundation