



**WHO WOULD YOU RATHER PERFORM
AT YOUR SON'S BAR MITZVAH, OZZY
OSBOURNE OR MARILYN MANSON?**

The Torah service is over, the rabbi and cantor are relaxing with a glass of Manischewitz, and, on your instructions, your ninety-year-old mother-in-law has turned her hearing aid way up. It's time to party, to celebrate your son's entrance into manhood. All his friends are gathered around the stage, waiting for the band. The curtain rises and a shadow moves across the wall. A figure, long-haired and dressed in black, approaches the mic. You double check, and it's not the rabbi. It's either Ozzy "The Prince of Darkness" Osbourne or Marilyn "Charlie" Manson—your choice in this epic battle of heavy metal heavyweights. But who will it be? And which one does a better rendition of Kool and the Gang's "Celebration"?

Ozzy . . .

He's been known to bite the heads off bats on stage. He's covered in crucifix tattoos. He's barely intelligible. And his first group was Black Sabbath—perhaps not the reference you're looking for at the megamitzvah. His album titles include *Diary of a Madman*, *The Ultimate Sin*, and *No Rest for the Wicked*. Still, Ozzy has an enormous following among teens, and his appearance could make your party the hit of the mitzvah season. Just don't ask him to recite the Kaddish.

Ozzy has sold tens of millions of records, both as a solo artist and with Black Sabbath, the band he fronted until 1979. He never finished high school, though, so he's not exactly a role model for a thirteen-year-old. And there are other wrinkles. As a youngster, Ozzy was in and out of jail around Birmingham, England, incarcerated for various crimes including burglary and theft—he reportedly once broke into a building wearing gloves with the fingers cut off (hey, he never claimed to be a genius). He was arrested soon after. He also punched a police officer.

However, Ozzy is a devoted husband and father and has encouraged his children to pursue careers in music and acting; his wife, Sharon, is also his manager. Still, controversy has swirled around the rocker for decades, beginning with his biting the head off a bat during a concert; Ozzy later was said to quip that he “had to get rabies shots, but the bat had to get Ozzy shots.” It's rumored that he also bit the head off a dove during a meeting with record executives, and he was arrested for urinating on the Alamo. The messages behind Ozzy's music are also somewhat controversial. For example, the singer was sued by the parents of

a teen who killed himself because, they claimed, their son listened to the rocker's song "Suicide Solution" once too often. The case was dismissed. (Consider asking the Prince of Darkness to remove this song from his bar mitzvah repertoire, however.) Another tune, "Bark at the Moon," supposedly led to a stabbing: A Canadian teen testified in court that his friend Jimmy "said that every time he listened to the song he felt strange inside. He said when he heard it on New Year's Eve he went out and stabbed someone."

On the other hand, Ozzy has always been a huge Beatles fan, and sometimes listens to the Fab Four before going on stage. Depending on his mood, it may be worth requesting a cover ("Hey Jude?") to really get the older folks moving on the dance floor.

There's no getting around the fact that Ozzy's music tends to be on the louder side—after all, he's used to playing stadiums. Consider booking a room slightly larger than the downstairs social hall at the synagogue. The music tends to be fast, with lots of screeching guitars and shouting, and a mosh pit is almost certain to develop in front of the stage. Older guests and those with canes and walkers should probably be seated near the back.

Or Marilyn?

He dresses in black, wears white face paint with black eye makeup, and looks like Howard Stern on a really bad day. He's fond of blood, crucifixes, skulls, knives, and gothic typography that looks suspiciously of Germanic origin. And his latest tour is "Against All Gods." But does that include Adonai?

Marilyn Manson (his real name is the more prosaic Brian Warner) certainly doesn't shy away from controversy, and there's no telling what he'll do on stage during the bar mitzvah. Performing in Utah, he once ripped apart the Book of Mormon, outraging Mormons around the world. (Best to keep the Torah scrolls tucked away.) Like Ozzy's, his album names tend to strike an unsettling chord, with titles like *Antichrist Superstar* and *Smells Like Children*. Unlike Ozzy, however, Manson's entire schtick—including his music—has been tagged as phony, a made-up, well-marketed-but-meaningless Goth ghoul image intended only to appeal to disaffected suburban teenagers and take their money. In other words, he could be a major hit!

Warner was a music journalist before he was discovered in Florida by Trent Reznor of Nine Inch Nails (and the similarities between the two are hard to miss). Reznor backed Warner's band, and the young man from Ohio took on the "Marilyn Manson" moniker, a combination of Marilyn Monroe and Charles Manson (though Warner looks like neither). Like Ozzy—some might claim intentionally so—Manson created buzz wherever he appeared, particularly during one concert in July 2001, where he reportedly urinated on a security guard from the stage. He was later charged with criminal sexual misconduct. A few months later, a different security guard alleged that Manson rubbed his genitals on the man's head. Events such as these may suggest hiring a small security detail for the mitzvah. Consider providing them with wide-brimmed hats and rain gear.

While his true religious views are murky, Manson is fortunately involved in some form of worship. In fact, he's an ordained minister: in the 1990s Manson was officially given the title of "reverend" in the Church of Satan by Anton LaVey, the church's



CHOICE BITS

- * After he bit the head off the bat, Ozzy's concerts were boycotted by the Humane Society.
- * An ad for Ozzy's first band read, "Black Sabbath makes Led Zeppelin look like a kindergarten house band."
- * Marilyn Manson was once married to a burlesque dancer, stage name "Dita Von Teese."

founder. Many critics have questioned his musical talent (as well as his sanity), but Manson has some acumen both as a painter and an author. Time permitting, during a break in the show you might consider asking him to sign copies of his bestselling autobiography, *The Long Hard Road Out of Hell*.



Who, then, will take the stage after prayers have been intoned and the *ruggalah* have been eaten? Will it be the Prince of Darkness himself, or Satan's reverend? Whomever you choose, *mazel tov!*