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## **THE 9TH ANNUAL Toronto Jewish Film Festival**

The Bloor Cinema

April 26 - May 3, 2001

(416) 324-9121

[www.tjff.com](http://www.tjff.com)



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*The very best in International Cinema*



# **Welcome**

to the 9th Annual Toronto Jewish Film Festival



**By Helen Zukerman, Executive Director**

This has been a tumultuous year for the “Wandering” Jewish Film Festival. With all the theatre closings, it has been a tricky situation. Everywhere I went the last few weeks, some of you would ask, “Where is the Festival going to be held?” And I would answer, “It’s a surprise.” This was funny at first but began to wear a little thin as time wore on and we had to go to press without having a venue. To utter the dreaded “V” word was a dangerous act punishable by loud boos and general tantrum-throwing. Our office became a Jewish sitcom, which unfortunately we did not film or we could have won an award for “tsouris” (if there was such a category at the Oscars). We had the films, the guests, the food, the wine, the cookies and the herring. The only thing we didn’t have was the location. The fates were playing games with us. We wandered and wandered and wandered, and landed here! So welcome to the here (wherever “here” is). Even as I write this, we are still not sure where “here” is.

A very special thanks to those sympathetic people who commiserated with us and hung in until the very end of our wanderings: Allen Karp, Tony Cianciotta, Deborah Prestwich (Cineplex); Paul and Carm Bordonaro (Bloor Cinema); Michael Kennedy (Famous Players); Peter Roberts (Toronto International Film Festival); and Hans Burgschmidt (Media Design Group). My most heartfelt thanks, though, are reserved for Ginger Mittleman, Shlomo Schwartzberg, Ellie Skrow and Sheila Eisler Engel. Their dedication, tenacity, and sense of humour really helped us get through the uncertainty.

The passage of time has inevitable, often difficult consequences. As we embark on year nine of this Festival, we note with sadness three people who have been important to us in the past and are no longer with us – Debra Plotkin, Pearl Banks and Vera Gross. They have left a wonderful legacy for the TJFF, and their spirit remains with us (see tribute page).

As Jews, and “people of the Book,” we are great storytellers, famous for our humour. So we decided to introduce a comedy theme this year, consisting of films, a panel and special guests. We have put together what we think is a program chock-full of laughs, from the belly types to the sophisticated, and we offer it to you as our gift. Many days it was the only thing that kept us laughing, and it is all of you, and your support, that made us want to pull it off.

**We hope you love it as much as we enjoyed doing it.**



**By Shlomo Schwartzberg, Director of Programming**

**Audiences attending this year's Toronto Jewish Film Festival will be viewing a strong lineup of films from Canada, Israel, the United States, Britain, France, Germany and other countries.**

**We have two major world premieres. The Travellers: This Land is Your Land, from Torontonians Robert and Shari Cohen, chronicles the turbulent history of the internationally renowned Canadian folk group. Vancouver filmmaker Nikila Cole's Wanderings: Postcards From the Diaspora, is a fascinating look at Jewish lives in such unlikely countries as The Philippines, South Korea and Jamaica.**

**Coleman Romalis visits us with his revealing portrait of Emma Goldman, who actually lived in Toronto at the end of her life. Our Canadian shorts are very exciting and proof that our country is a fertile one for movie making. We are proud to bring the very gifted Alan Berliner (Nobody's Business) to town with his latest film, The Sweetest Sound ; he's sure to be an audience favourite. Other notable programs include three wonderful, varied films from France (Les Fantomes du Louba, Lisa and Cours Toujours), documentaries about righteous gentiles (Sugihara:Conspiracy of Kindness) and Israeli-Palestinian relations (Sleeping with the Enemy), and much, much more.**

**As we enter our ninth year, we find ourselves in a time that is rich in Jewish film festivals. There are more than sixty such festivals in North America alone, and last year, the first conference of Directors of North American Jewish Film Festivals was held in San Francisco. Truly, we have arrived. Several of my colleagues, from festivals in Tucson, Las Vegas, New York, Florida and Hong Kong are planning to visit the TJFF this year, evidence of our growing reputation. In addition, we're co-presenting two film programs -The Komediant and Psychedelic Zion - with the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival. Hopefully this will be the first of many such endeavours with other local film festivals.**

**Our special focus this year is on comedy, an exciting component of TJFF 2001. Highlights include a special presentation of Neil Simon's Laughter on the 23rd Floor; a documentary on Lenny Bruce; a second edition of the popular Shtick, Schmaltz and Shtereotypes, showcasing classic Jewish comics; and a great panel discussion, featuring Winnipeg-born David Steinberg.**

**[I'm looking forward to seeing you at the festival.](#)**



## We Remember...

**Debra Ruth Plotkin**

December 28, 1954 – November 5, 2000

Co-founder of the Toronto Jewish Film Festival

Artistic Director • 1993 – 1996

It is with great sadness that we learned of Debra's death in California. She fought a long and courageous battle with cancer, with her usual tireless energy and commitment. In 1993, for the first film festival brochure, Debra wrote:

"Come for the day, the evening, or the entire program. Come experience the richness and diversity of the Jewish experience. Come celebrate what will become an annual ritual, the Toronto Jewish Film Festival."

She was right about the Festival and its importance to the Toronto Jewish community. Although her time was so short, she left her mark on this city, as well as on Montreal and Winnipeg where she was consultant to their respective Jewish film festivals. She also made a strong impression in her stint as a producer at the prestigious Canadian Film Centre. We are very grateful for her presence here and will not forget her.

**Pearl Banks**

Pearl Banks brought enthusiasm and commitment to her role with the Festival. For her, this event was a labour of love. Pearl headed and helped create a committee of friends who enriched the stay of visiting filmmakers, directors, actors, and all those who came to exhibit their films. Pearl and her committee organized transportation, meals and special events for the visiting guests. The annual trip to Niagara Falls was a highlight. This role was a perfect fit for Pearl as an extension of her dedication to Jewish culture and heritage and her love of people, combined with her skills in organization. Pearl loved the action, the art and the camaraderie the Festival has to offer.

**Vera Gross**

A gutsy lady who attended the Festival faithfully, and somehow made us all her friends. We arranged rides for her, brought her snacks and gave her hell when we found out that she had taken the streetcar home at night and walked from St. Clair and Spadina to her home on Glenayr Road, because she didn't feel like taking a taxi. Sound familiar? I think all of us have had a relative like that. Vera—wherever you are—we remember you with great fondness.

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## ORDER FORM . . . CENTREFOLD

# Festival At A Glance

## TJFF 2001

### THURSDAY, APRIL 26

- 7:15 pm** - Opening Night Festivities  
**8:00 pm** - The Travellers: This Land Is Your Land,  
 \* 95 min. \*\*p.4

### FRIDAY, APRIL 27

- 1:00 pm** - The Producers, 90 min. p.  
**3:00 pm** - The Bourgeoisie, 92 min. p.  
**5:00 pm** - The Jazzman From The Gulag/Jazz Shorts,  
 74 min. p.

### SATURDAY, APRIL 28

- 9:15 pm** - Simon Magus/The Signature, 116 min. p.  
**Midnight** - Cours Toujours, 92 min. p.

### SUNDAY, APRIL 29

- 10:00 am** - J.B. Salsberg Memorial Lecture, 90 min. p.  
**12 Noon** - Love & Sacrifice/The Angel's Foot Cake,  
 81 min. p.  
**2:30 pm** - Comedy on Wry: What's So Funny  
 About Being Jewish! (Panel), 90 min. p.  
**5:00 pm** - Weintraubs Syncopators/Jazz Shorts,  
 79 min. p.  
**7:00 pm** - Sleeping With The Enemy/Hummus  
 For Two, 82 min. p.  
**9:15 pm** - Fantomes du Louba/Passengers, 122 min. p.

(Sunday childcare available at Bloor JCC: call 416-924-6211)

### MONDAY, APRIL 30

- 1:00 pm** - The Komediant, 82 min. p.  
**3:00 pm** - Emma Goldman/The Internationale,  
 73 min. p.  
**5:00 pm** - Laughter on the 23d Floor, 103 min. p.  
**7:15 pm** - Shtick, Schmaltz & Shtereotypes II,  
 120 min. p.  
**9:45 pm** - Kippur, 118 min. p.

### TUESDAY, MAY 1

- 12:30 pm** - Student Programme, 53 min. p.  
**3:00 pm** - A Trial in Prague, 83 min. p.  
**5:15 pm** - Shorts on the Edge, 86 min. p.  
**7:30 pm** - Vulcan Junction/Cock Fight, 116 min. p.  
**10:00 pm** - Lenny Bruce, 94 min. p.

### WEDNESDAY, MAY 2

- 1:00 pm** - Israeli Shorts, 99 min. p.  
**3:00 pm** - Sugihara, 102 min. p.  
**5:30 pm** - Kapo/Wierzbniak/Echo, 86 min. p.  
**8:00 pm** - The Sweetest Sound, 58 min. p.  
**9:45 pm** - Total Love, 83 min. p

### THURSDAY, MAY 3

- 1:00 pm** - All My Loved Ones, 94 min. p.  
**3:00 pm** - Wanderings/The Last Jewish Town,  
 85 min. p.  
**5:30 pm** - Comedy Shorts, 56.5 min. p.  
**8:00 pm** - Lisa/One Day Crossing, 133 min. p.

\* Total running time (shorts included)

\*\* See page for film description

All screenings take place at the Bloor Cinema  
 (Bloor & Bathurst) [www.tjff.com](http://www.tjff.com) 416-324-9121

## SPECIAL PRESENTATION

### SATURDAY, MAY 5

- 11:30 pm** - Psychedelic Zion, 52 min. p  
 (co - presented with the Hot Docs Canadian  
 International Documentary Festival.  
 Please call 416-203-9027 to order tickets.)

## COMEDY TONIGHT



Be it the irony of Seinfeld, the anarchy of The Marx Brothers or even the slapstick of The Three Stooges, Jewish comedy has always hovered on the edge of a precipice or outside the mainstream. Groucho Marx spoke about not wanting to belong to any club that would have him as a member. Consummate outsiders, Seinfeld and pals made caustic observations about the minutiae of everyday life. And the Stooges, well they just left havoc in their wake.

What all those comics and others such as Lenny Bruce, Jackie Mason, Sid Caesar and Rodney Dangerfield shared is a sense of grievance, of being put upon (in Bruce's case it was an accurate observation) or squashed under the thumb of The Other: the non - Jew, the spouse, society as a whole. They also displayed a willingness to fight back and assert themselves. The Toronto Jewish Film Festival salutes that spirit of rebellion, examines how Jewish comedy has changed over the years and laughs aloud at our foibles and prejudices. There is indeed such a creature as "Jewish Comedy". This year we're opening it up to see what makes it tick.

- Shlomo Schwartzberg



The 9th Annual Toronto Jewish Film Festival **Programme 2001**

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## Opening Night Film

### THE TRAVELLERS: THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND

**WORLD PREMIERE**

**CANADA, 2001, video, 95 min.**

**Director: Robert Cohen**



The Travellers burst onto the music scene in the 1950s and became the first Canadian musical group to achieve international fame. From a (mostly) Jewish/communist background, nurtured at Ontario's Camp Naivelt, they made their mark on the show business world. With his permission, they reworked Woody Guthrie's *This Land is Your Land* with Canadian place names, and brought many hidden folk gems, such as *I'se The B'y* and *Rock Island Line* into popular usage. They also felt the need to downplay

their politics and religion and dealt with the ramifications of McCarthyism, which cost them gigs. A visit to the Soviet Union illuminated The Travellers' differing attitudes towards a country which was actively persecuting Jews. Eventually, tensions between the group's members saw most of the original Travellers, including Simone Johnston Taylor, Sid Dolgay and Jerry Goodis, go their own ways. Only Jerry Gray remained to lead the band, now called The New Travellers and still going strong today. Utilising fascinating archival concert footage and interviews with past and present members of the group, as well as others who knew them well, *The Travellers* is that rare film that brings history vividly to life. A National Film Board of Canada co-production.

Director Robert Cohen and co-producers Shari Cohen and Karen King will be in attendance.

Jerry Gray and The New Travellers will perform live.

**Screening:** Thursday, April 26, 8 p.m.  
**Festivities:** 7:15 p.m.

Canadian programme sponsored by



Treats generously provided by

**ST. URBAIN BAGEL**

## Closing Night Film

### LISA

**CANADIAN PREMIERE**

**FRANCE, 2000, 35mm, 108 min.**

**French with English subtitles**

**Writer/Director: Pierre Grimblat**

**Cast: Jeanne Moreau, Marion Cotillard, Benoît Magimel, Sagamore Stévenin**



A young filmmaker, Sam (Benoît Magimel) sets out to discover what happened to Sylvain Marceau (Sagamore Stévenin), a budding young actor, who disappeared nearly sixty years before, during the German occupation of France. He tracks down Lisa (Jeanne Moreau), who met and fell in love with Sylvain at that time, while she was recuperating from tuberculosis at a sanitarium. As Sam slowly draws closer to uncovering the mystery of Sylvain's fate, his own familial past and its secrets come to light. A gorgeous, luminous tale of star-crossed lovers.

with "One Day Crossing"

### ONE DAY CROSSING

**TORONTO PREMIERE**

**USA, 2000, 16mm, 25 min.**

**Hungarian with English subtitles**

**Director: Joan Stein**

**Writer: Christina Lazaridi**

A Jewish woman (Erika Mozran from Gloomy Sunday, TJFF 2000), who, along with her family, is posing as a Christian in fascist Hungary, is forced to risk all when her husband brings home a Jewish boy for her to hide. A ravishingly shot black and white drama, this remarkable student film is riveting.

Nominee, Best Live Action Short, Academy Awards, 2001  
Gold Medal, Student Academy Awards, 2000  
Best Woman Student Filmmaker, Director's Guild of America (East), 2000  
Best Film, Polo Ralph Lauren Columbia University Film Festival, 2000

**Screening: Thursday, May 3, 8 p.m.**

Closing Night sponsored by

**man and Carr LLP. Hard Working Law.**

Treats generously provided by



**ALL MY LOVED ONES****CZECH REPUBLIC, 1999, 35mm, 94 min.****Czech with English subtitles****Director: Jiri Hubac****Writer: Matej Minac****Cast: Rupert Graves, Josef Abrham, Libuse Safrankova**

A sweeping and evocative drama about the Silberstein family and what happens when the Nazis take over Czechoslovakia. Inexorably, German racial laws begin to impact on the Silbersteins, particularly affecting Sam, a renowned concert violinist who wants to marry a non-Jew. Only the Kindertransport, the British effort to bring Jewish children to safety in England, holds any hope for the youngest member of the family. A powerful melding of fact and fiction, *All My Loved Ones* will stay with you.

Festival Favourite, Sedona International Film Festival, Czech Republic, 2000

**Screening:** Thursday, May 3, 1 p.m.

**THE BOURGEOISIE****CANADIAN PREMIERE****ISRAEL, 2000, video, 92 min.****Hebrew with English subtitles****Director: Eytan Zur****Writer: Asaf Zippor****Cast: Shai Avivi, Ephrat Ben-Zur, Ilana Berkovitz, Rami Heuberger**

Three episodes of the hit Israeli TV series which punctures the pretensions of the country's yuppified middle class that has it all - the nice apartments, the good jobs, the stable relationships and friendships - but is still not satisfied. Despite being in a good relationship, Israel cheats on his girlfriend - with two women. Nina is single and convinced that there is no Mr. Right for her. Asher, a Sephardic Jew married to an Ashkenazi, is an uptight sort, who is constantly feeling discriminated against. They are just some of the original characters in this multi-layered, fast-moving and very well-acted comedy-drama. If you liked *Florentine*, *The Bourgeoisie* is for you.

**Screening:** Friday, April 27, 3 p.m.



## COMEDY ON WRY: WHAT'S SO FUNNY ABOUT BEING JEWISH! (PANEL)

**"Tragedy is when I cut my finger. Comedy is when you fall down an open manhole and die." - Mel Brooks**

**"Like the Jewish people, Jewish humour is optimistic in the long run, but pessimistic about the present and the immediate future." - The Big Book of Jewish Humor, edited by William Novak and Moshe Waldoks.**



Join David Steinberg (Big Sound), Mark Breslin (founder of Yuk Yuk's comedy clubs), writer/performer Michael Wex, Gail Singer (Wisecracks), Diane Flacks (P.R.) and other auspicious panelists for an illuminating and entertaining discussion on Jewish humour-its roots; its wide ranging impact on comedy in North America; and its characteristics-just what makes Jewish comedy "Jewish." The panel will look at Jewish comedy in cinema, television and other media, and explore how this pervasive aspect of Jewish life and identity resonates universally. Clips from Sid Caesar's **Your Show of Shows** will also be screened. It promises to be a hoot.

**Date:** Sunday, April 29, 2:30 p.m.

## COMEDY SHORTS

**FINBAR LEBOWITZ**



**CANADIAN PREMIERE**

**USA/IRELAND, 1999, 35mm, 25 min.**

**Writer/Director:** Rona Mark



In order to impress Leah (Shana Sturtz), the cute Jewish girl from New York who's helping out in her uncle's Dublin bookstore, Finbar (David McCarton), a working-class Irishman, decides to convert to Judaism in order to win her hand. He soon learns that there's more to being Jewish than prayer shawls, yarmulkes and gefilte fish. A sweet comedy of manners, with an Irish twist.

HBO Producer's Development Award, 1999  
Second Prize, Best Irish Short, Galway Film Festival, Ireland, 1999

with

**ALLERD FISHBEIN'S IN LOVE**



**CANADIAN PREMIERE**

**USA, 2000, 35mm, 21 min.**

**Writer/Director:** Danny Greenfield

Stuck in the Catskills with his boring family, 13-year-old Allerd Fishbein (John Daley, from *Freaks and Geeks*) never expected to fall in love. The only problem is that Marikka (Lucie Pohl) is a Protestant - and a German! A freshly humorous, subtle take on first love.

Graduate Division Award, Hamptons International Film Festival, 2000

**ALLERD FISHBEIN'S IN LOVE** (continued)

New York University Screenwriting Award, 2000  
Best Comedy, Best Producer (Jennifer Smith), Polo Ralph Lauren  
Columbia University Film Festival, 2000

and

**OBSESSED WITH JEWS**

**CANADIAN PREMIERE**

**USA, 1999, video, 8 min.**

**Director: Jeff Krulik**

Did you know that three stars of the original Star Trek series and four actors on Happy Days were Jewish? How about Sidney Franklin, who was a great Jewish bullfighter? Neil Keller knows all that and a lot more. He collects cards and autographs of Jewish entertainers, Jewish athletes and even Jewish gangsters. Obsessed with Jews is his story, a funny, affectionate look at a character and his preoccupation with famous Jews, such as Ed Asner, Dinah Shore, Jan Murray, Billy Joel, Tony Randall, David Lee Roth, James Caan....

Neil Keller will be in attendance

and also with

**GEM**

**NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE**

**AUSTRALIA, 2000, video, 2.5 min.**

**Director: Arie Hirsh**

A classic comedy album playing on the turntable, the joke about the Plotnick diamond, and an enthralled kid hearing it for the first time. What more could you want?

Screening: Thursday, May 3, 5:30 p.m.

**COURS TOUJOURS (DAD ON THE RUN)**

**CANADIAN PREMIERE**

**FRANCE, 1999, 35mm, 92 min.**

**French with English subtitles**

**Director: Dante Desarthe**

**Writers: Dante Desarthe, Fabrice Guez, Agnès Desarthe**

**Cast: Clément Sibony, Rona Hartner, Marie Desgranges**



A lost foreskin, a nervous Jewish father and a Catholic woman dying to meet the Pope are just some of the elements in this uproarious French comedy about tradition, lust and love. When Jonas (Clément Sibony) is told he must bury his newborn son's foreskin by a specific time, according to a North African Sephardic custom, and then manages to misplace the sacred object, the stage is set for a fast-paced farce. Add a Jewish gangster, a lascivious teacher, two oafish bodyguards and, oh, yes, the Pope(!) and the result is a highly original romp that's loads of fun.

**Screening: Saturday, April 28, Midnight**



## EMMA GOLDMAN: THE ANARCHIST GUEST

**CANADIAN PREMIERE**

**CANADA, 2000, video, 42 min.**

**Director: Coleman Romalis**



Toronto filmmaker Coleman Romalis shines a probing spotlight on Emma Goldman, the renowned American feminist and anarchist who was exiled from the U.S. on charges of treason in 1926. Intriguingly, "Red Emma" spent much of the last fourteen years of her life in Toronto, then a sleepy town, which she alternately applauded for giving her sanctuary, and reviled for its provincialism. Friends, historians and journalists reminisce about this remarkable woman, a leader ahead of her time, who, sadly, lost the love of her life, and never achieved the happiness she sought.

Director Coleman Romalis will be in attendance

with

## THE INTERNATIONALE

**USA, 2000, video, 31 min.**

**Director: Peter Miller**

Few know that the famous protest song, The Internationale, began its life during the fall of the radical Paris Commune of 1871, when Frenchman Eugene Pottier wrote it to inspire the working classes. Adopted by anarchists, socialists and communists, and later appropriated by the Soviets as their anthem, The Internationale may be one of the most famous and controversial songs in history. Eventually it became a rallying point for social jus-

tice the world over. Director Peter Miller interviews those who have devoted their lives to its ideals, including a kibbutznik in Tel Aviv, a New York Jew who fought in the Spanish Civil War, and singers Pete Seeger and Billy Bragg. A historical document of a song that became a movement.

Screening: Monday, April 30, 3 p.m.

## LES FANTÔMES DU LOUBA

**CANADIAN PREMIERE**

**FRANCE, 2001, 35mm, 107 min.**

**French with English subtitles**

**Writer/Director: Martine Dugowson**

**Cast: Elsa Zylberstein, Camille Japy, Jean-Philippe Ecoffey, Eric Defosse**



The luminous Elsa Zylberstein shines as Louba, the troubled daughter of Holocaust survivors, whose search for love brings her into contact with an old friend, Jeanie (Camille Japy). Posing as a nanny, Louba infiltrates Jeanie's home in an attempt to make sense of their tangled past. Louba is also haunted by her need to find her father (Jean-Philippe Ecoffey), who abandoned the family when she was a child. A subtle, complex portrait of the first post-Holocaust generation, *Les Fantômes du Louba* is another finely etched film from the talented Martine Dugowson (Mina Tannenbaum, TJFF 1995; *Portraits Chinois*). Elsa Zylberstein, who has appeared in all three of Dugowson's movies, offers another superb performance, creating a persona whose story has rarely been told on screen. *Les Fantômes du Louba* is a unique drama.

**LES FANTÔMES DU LOUBA**

will be showing with

**PASSENGERS**

**CANADA, 2000, 35mm, 15 min.**

**Director:** Francine Zuckerman

**Writers:** Francine Zuckerman, Paul Dreskin

**Cast:** Stephanie Morgenstern, Valerie Buhagiar, David Eisner

Rachel (Stephanie Morgenstern), on her way to her father's funeral, remembers their past trips and fantasizes about telling her father that she is a lesbian. A subtle film about missed opportunities and unexpressed love, from Torontonians Francine Zuckerman (Half the Kingdom).

Co-writer/Director Francine Zuckerman will be in attendance

Screening: Sunday, April 29, 9:15 p.m.

**ISRAELI SHORTS****OPERATION YY**

**CANADIAN PREMIERE**

**ISRAEL, 2000, 16mm, 18 min.**

**Hebrew with English subtitles**

**Writer/Director:** Oded Lotan

Twenty-two-year-old Ron, an editor of wedding videos, spends all his free time cruising the Internet. Lonely and isolated, he reaches out to a man whom he meets through a chatroom. But will he finally make a human connection? From The Sam Spiegel Film & Television School, Jerusalem.

Jury Award for Best Film, Munich International Festival of Film Schools, Germany, 2000  
Special Mention (Wolgin Awards Competition), Jerusalem Film Festival, 2000

with "This Ain't San Francisco"

**THIS AIN'T SAN FRANCISCO**

**CANADIAN PREMIERE**

**ISRAEL, 2000, 16mm, 16 min.**

**Hebrew with English subtitles**

**Writer/Director:** Noa Greenberg

A middle-aged man is attracted to his mother-in-law's Thai caretaker. Will he get involved with her and jeopardise his marriage? From The Sam Spiegel Film & Television School, Jerusalem.

and

**BICYCLE**

**CANADIAN PREMIERE**

**ISRAEL, 2000, 16mm, 15 min.**

**Hebrew with English subtitles**

**Director:** Ronen Menachem

**Writers:** Ronen Menachem, Eitan Biegel

Unable to afford a new bicycle, a father decides, instead, to steal one for his son. What will he do when the boy finds out? From Tel Aviv's Camera Obscura School of Arts.

and

**COHEN'S WIFE**

**CANADIAN PREMIERE**

**ISRAEL, 2000, video, 24 min.**

**Hebrew and Yiddish with English subtitles**

**Writer/Director:** Nava (Nissan) Heifetz

After she is brutally raped, Rivki, as the wife of a Cohen, discovers that she is forbidden to her husband. She is further traumatised when she faces the possibility that he will be ordered to divorce her by the Rabbinical Court. From Jerusalem's Ma'ale School of Communications.

and also with "A Pure Prayer"

**A PURE PRAYER****CANADIAN PREMIERE****ISRAEL, 2000, video, 26 min.****Hebrew with English subtitles****Director: Sara Dora Beck****Writer: Hava Divon**

When his prayer group is short a tenth man for a Yom Kippur minyan, Schwartzman has to decide whether he will include his mentally handicapped son, who embarrasses him, in the services. From Jerusalem's Ma'ale School of Communications.

Ma'ale Best Fictional Film, 2000

Ma'ale Best Jewish Film, 2000

**Screening:** Wednesday, May 2, 1 p.m.**J.B. SALSBERG MEMORIAL LECTURE**

To celebrate A Thousand Years of Yiddish, The Toronto Jewish Film Festival and The Committee for Yiddish, of UJA Federation, are bringing Aaron Lansky, founder and Executive Director of the National Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts, to give the J.B. Salsberg Memorial Lecture. The late Mr. Salsberg was one of the elder statesmen of Canadian politics as well as a leading advocate for the Yiddish language. The Center is dedicated to the preservation of Yiddish books and has over a million Yiddish volumes in its archives. Mr. Lansky will speak on "The Future of Yiddish". Prior to the lecture, you can meet Mr. Lansky at the theatre for a "Bagels with Aaron" breakfast. The lecture is made possible through the generosity of the Salsberg family.

**Date:** Sunday, April 29, 10 a.m. (Lecture)  
Breakfast, 9 a.m.

**THE JAZZMAN FROM THE GULAG****FRANCE/NETHERLANDS, 1999, video, 58 min.****English and Russian with English subtitles****Director: Pierre-Henry Salfati**

A thrilling true-life story of a forgotten talent.

Although he placed second to jazz great Louis Armstrong in a trumpet competition and Duke Ellington wanted to meet him, Eddie Rosner was not destined for the fame that those men achieved. Instead, this Polish Jew, a classically-trained musician-turned-jazz artist, who was also briefly a member of Weintraubs Syncopators (also at the festival), fled the Nazis and went to the Soviet Union. There, he became one of Stalin's favourite musicians, but just as quickly ran afoul of the dictator and wound up in a Siberian labour camp. His hard-luck story makes *The Jazzman From The Gulag* a haunting and resonant work.

With some rare jazz shorts featuring Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw, from the collection of Murray Glass, (16 min. approx.)

**Screening:** Friday, April 27, 5 p.m.

**KAPO****CANADIAN PREMIERE****ISRAEL, 1999, video, 55 min.****English, Hebrew with English subtitles****Directors: Dan Setton, Tor Ben Mayor****Writer: Dan Setton**

At the time of the 1961 trial of the infamous Nazi Adolf Eichmann, there were forty other trials of people accused of war crimes taking place simultaneously in Israel. Surprisingly, the defendants in those cases were Jews—"Kapos"—who had been installed by the Nazis as the de facto leaders who kept their religious compatriots in line and were often compelled, they claimed, to aid in their murders. A painful, hidden part of the Holocaust is sensitively brought to the fore by Israeli directors Dan Setton and Tor Ben Mayor. Survivors, who bitterly lash out at their persecutors, and the Kapos themselves, who maintain they had no choice in the matter, speak out. They force each of us to consider the question, "what would I have done?"

Co-director Tor Ben Mayor may be in attendance.

with "Wierzbni: Impressions Of A Town That Was"

**WIERZBNIK: IMPRESSIONS OF A TOWN THAT WAS****WORLD PREMIERE****CANADA, 2001, video, 17 min.****English, Polish with English subtitles****Director: David A. Stein**

Filmmaker David Stein (Needles 'N Tread, TJFF 1998) and his musician brother Eric visit Wierzbni, the Polish town where their late grandfather was born and which, after the Holocaust, is now devoid of Jews. A bittersweet slice of the past.

David Stein will be in attendance

and

**ECHO****TORONTO PREMIERE****BELGIUM, 1999, 35 mm, 14 min.****German with English subtitles****Writer/Director: Frédéric Roullier-Gall****Cast: Suzy Falk, Henri Billen**

Memories of the Holocaust intersect poignantly and startlingly with the ramifications of the recent genocide in Rwanda, when a disabled Jewish couple go to Switzerland for medical treatment. The more things change...

Screening: Wednesday, May 2, 5:30 p.m.

## KIPPUR

FRANCE/ISRAEL, 2000, 35mm, 118 min.

Hebrew with English subtitles

Director: Amos Gitai

Writers: Amos Gitai, Marie-José Sanselme

Cast: Liron Levo, Tomer Ruso, Uri Ran Klauzner



Based on Amos Gitai's experiences as a 23-year-old soldier, *Kippur* focuses on two men, Weintraub and Ruso, who, as the film opens, are trying desperately to connect with their army unit. They never do and, instead, end up simply retrieving the grievously wounded from the battlefields for medical treatment. It's a different, unromanticised view of war, as only someone who has lived through it could envision. Bracketed by sensuous scenes of Weintraub and his girlfriend making love, *Kippur* is an unusually powerful and resonant war movie. From the director of the hit film *Kadosh*, it's a grunt's-eye view of the cataclysmic Yom Kippur War which permanently shattered the myth of Israeli military invincibility.

Best Sound, Israeli Academy Awards, 2000

First Prize, Montpellier International Film Festival, France, 2000

Jury Award for Best Film, Munich International Festival of Film Schools, Germany, 2000

Silver Plaque Award, Chicago International Film Festival, 2000

Screening: Monday, April 30, 9:45 p.m.

## THE KOMEDIANT

Co-presented with the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

ISRAEL, 1999, video, 82 min.

English, Hebrew and Yiddish with English subtitles

Director: Arnon Goldfinger

Writer: Oshra Schwartz



A poignant documentary look at an acting dynasty and the price children pay for their parents' ambitions. The late Pesach'ke Burstein was one of the most acclaimed Yiddish theatre actors of his day. But his compulsive drive to succeed, supported by his actress wife Lillian Lux, adversely affected his family. Daughter Susan felt compelled to leave the acting profession entirely and Pesach'ke's equally famous son, Mike Burstyn (star of the Kuni Lemel films), angered his father when he sought fame beyond the Yiddish theatre. The *Komediant* also touches on the often violent clashes between Yiddish speakers and an Israeli state which disdained Yiddish as an unwelcome reminder of the shtetl. Susan Burstein-Roth, Mike Burstyn, Lillian Lux and actor Fyvush Finkel (Boston Public, Picket Fences) are among those interviewed in this fascinating and revealing slice of Jewish history.

Best Editing, docaviv, 2000

Best Documentary, Haifa International Film Festival, 1999

Best Documentary, Israeli Academy Awards, 1999

Screening: Monday, April 30, 1 p.m.





## LAUGHTER ON THE 23RD FLOOR

CANADIAN PREMIERE

USA, 2000, video, 103 min.

Director: Richard Benjamin

Writer: Neil Simon

Cast: Nathan Lane, Mark Linn-Baker, Saul Rubinek, Dan Castellaneta



Neil Simon's tribute to Sid Caesar's classic *Your Show or Shows* and its writers is brought to the screen in a loving, fictionalised re-creation of the early days of television. Nathan Lane is Max Prince, the pill-popping, perpetually-stressed head writer who battles the censorious network brass, his own demons, and his crew of idiosyncratic employees, who drive each other crazy. Neil Simon, who was one of the writers on *Your Show or Shows*, along with Woody Allen, Mel Brooks and Larry Gelbart (TV's *M\*A\*S\*H*), among others, knows whereof he speaks, and *Laughter on the 23rd Floor* is utterly authentic and hysterical. Directed by Richard Benjamin (*My Favorite Year*), *Laughter* boasts a multi-talented cast, including Peri Gilpin (*Frasier*) and Canada's own Victor Garber (*Titanic*) and Saul Rubinek (*The Quarell*). Shot in Toronto, *Laughter* is a barbed valentine to the comedy pioneers of the 1950s. A special presentation in collaboration with Showtime Networks Inc.

Screening: Monday, April 30, 5 p.m.

## LENNY BRUCE: SWEAR TO TELL THE TRUTH

CANADIAN PREMIERE

USA, 1999, video, 94 min.

Director: Robert B. Weide



Stand-up comedian Lenny Bruce's path to stardom was not easy. He was routinely busted for obscenity, while other salacious comics said whatever they wanted. He was a Jew who offended the Jewish establishment by mocking his compatriots, and a heroin addict whose vice was exacerbated by his legal troubles. However, his influence on everyone from Richard Pryor to Robin Williams is acknowledged today. This powerful Emmy Award-winning and Oscar nominated documentary is a powerful, truthful look at an important counter cultural figure, a genius who never sold out, but paid a fatal price in the process. Narrated by Robert De Niro.

Emmy Award, Best Editing, 1999

Screening: Tuesday, May 1, 10 p.m.



## LOVE AND SACRIFICE (LIBE UN LAYDNSHAFT)

USA, 1936, 35mm, 75 min.

Yiddish with English subtitles

Director: George Roland

Writers: A. Armband, M. Kenig

Cast: Rose Greenfield, Lazar Freed, Laibele Waldman



We are pleased to present the newly-restored (by the National Center for Jewish Film) version of producer Josef Seiden's melodramatic classic, based on the novel by Isidore Zolotarefsky. Rose Greenfield is the middle-class Yiddishe mama who, in order to protect her children, goes to prison for killing the man who compromised her. When her daughter falls for the lawyer who is trying to free the mother from jail, the family is brought together again. Shot on a very low budget, and featuring Seiden's usual troupe of actors, Love and Sacrifice (also known as Love and Passion), a big hit in its time, makes a long-overdue return to the screen.

Daniella HarPaz Mechnikov, who did the subtitling on the film's restoration, will be in attendance

with "The Angel's Foot Cake (Der Fus Tort)"

## THE ANGEL'S FOOT (FOUF) CAKE (DER FUS TORT)



WORLD PREMIERE

CANADA, 2001, video, 6 min.

Yiddish and English with English and Yiddish subtitles

Director: Sharon Katz

The Angel's Foot Cake is a comic fable about Drinkeleh Fresserkeh and what happens when he decides to bake a cake in the shape of an angel's foot. Let's just say the angels aren't too happy about that! A Yiddish animated feast for both the eyes and the mind.

Director Sharon Katz will be in attendance

Dedicated to the memory of Jesse Haberfeld-Freedman and Louis Freedman.

Screening: Sunday, April 29, 12:00 noon



## THE PRODUCERS

USA, 1968, 35mm, 90 min.

Writer/Director: Mel Brooks

Cast: Zero Mostel, Gene Wilder, Dick Shawn



In conjunction with its debut as a new Broadway production with Nathan Lane and Matthew Broderick, the TJFF is proud to present a rare theatrical revival of Mel Brooks' classic film comedy. When a hustling producer, Max Bialystock (Zero Mostel), decides to mount an ostensibly money-losing musical in hopes of swindling his investors, he ropes in a hapless accountant (Gene Wilder), who is forced to go along with Max's scheme. The only problem is that *Springtime For Hitler*, despite its bad taste and its neo-Nazi leading man, becomes a big hit. The daring movie that launched Mel Brooks' film career has to be seen to be disbelieved. Don't miss it!

Screening: Friday, April 27, 1 p.m.

## PSYCHEDELIC ZION

Co-presented with the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival

ISRAEL, 2000, video, 52 min.

Hebrew with English subtitles

Director: Isri Halpern



Rave culture became a huge phenomenon among Israeli youth in the 90s. This fast-paced film focuses on three young Israelis who start a trance dance company called Peace and Love Productions just as the authorities decide to close down these counter-cultural activities. Yoni, Revital and Berto fight back, even attempting to book a dance at the Golan Heights and with Palestinians in Jericho, but all of their efforts are stopped by the police. Indomitable, they go to Parliament and the High Court to plead their case and that of Israel's younger generation. Director Halpern's stylish film "shows the confrontation between the system of oppression and the desire for freedom and makes it clear how local trance has become a mass movement..."--Nili Landesman, Ha'Ir

Screening: Saturday, May 5, 11:30 p.m. (Bloor Cinema)

## SHORTS ON THE EDGE

### IN THE BLOOD

#### CANADIAN PREMIERE

USA, 2000, video, 31 min.

Director: Diane Nerwen



American Jews talk about their mixed feelings towards Germans in Diane Nerwen's provocative, complex examination of prejudices, stereotypes, identity and attitudes. Utilising footage from Hollywood movies such as *Schindler's List* and *Fiddler on the Roof*, as well as images of Nazi and modern Germany, this experimental work contrasts scenes from the past with words from the present to delve into the permanently-altered relations between the two peoples. A documentary statement on our own discomforts around German-Jewish issues.

with

### Still (STILLE)

#### TORONTO PREMIERE

CANADA, 2001, video, 26 min.

Director: Wendy Oberlander

Wendy Oberlander, whose *Nothing to be Written Here* (TJFF 1997) chronicled her father's wartime experiences in a Canadian detention camp, now turns the camera on her mother who, in 1998, was invited to return to her home town of Berlin, along with other Berlin-born Jews. Superimposing the personal testimony of her mother's life during the Holocaust over footage of Nazi-era and modern Berlin,

*Still* (Stille) paints an indelible, striking portrait of one woman's turbulent existence. Narrated by Wendy Oberlander, *Still* (Stille) is a documentary that runs deep.

Director Wendy Oberlander will be in attendance

and

### KING OF THE JEWS

USA, 2000, 16mm, 18 min.

Director: Jay Rosenblatt

Acclaimed San Francisco filmmaker Jay Rosenblatt's remembrances of a childhood lived in fear of the very name of Jesus Christ. Images of Christ as he was portrayed in 1950s and 60s movies is juxtaposed with footage of the genocidal horrors that came about because of Christian anti-Semitism. A master of archival and "found" film, Rosenblatt powerfully evokes the myths surrounding Christ and the differing ways in which they affected both Jews and non-Jews. A unique, stirring and provocative short gem.

and also with

### THE WALNUT TREE

CANADA, 2000, 16mm, 11 min.

Director: Elida Schogt

The second film in Torontonion Elida Schogt's trilogy of films on the Holocaust, after the award-winning *Zyklon Portrait* (TJFF 1999), *The Walnut Tree* is an indelible photographic meditation on recollections and loss. As Schogt's mother ruminates about her childhood, the realities of the Holocaust intrude on her memories.

Director Elida Schogt will be in attendance

Screening: Tuesday, May 1, 5:15 p.m.



## **SHTICK, SCHMALTZ AND SHTEREOTYPES II**

USA, various years, video, 120 min approx.

Curator: Murray Glass



Curator Murray Glass returns with another edition of Shtick, Schmaltz and Shtereotypes (TJFF 1999), featuring the best in Jewish humour through the years. Early classics such as Cohen on the Telephone and more recent routines such as Lenny Bruce's animated Thank You, Mask Man, are on the bill along with such popular performers as Sid Caesar, The Marx Brothers, Danny Kaye and Burns and Allen. There's something for every taste in this cornucopia of Jewish comedy. Enjoy!

### **PART ONE**

<b>Monroe Silver:</b>	COHEN ON THE TELEPHONE 1923
<b>Eddie Cantor:</b>	MOE THE TAILOR 1929
<b>Jack Benny:</b>	LAUREL & HARDY, MAGICIANS 1929
<b>Benny Rubin:</b>	THE DELICATESSEN KID 1929
<b>Van Beuren:</b>	DOUGH NUTS 1933 (Cartoon)
<b>The Marx Brothers:</b>	THIS IS WAR? (DUCK SOUP) 1933
<b>Danny Kaye:</b>	DIME A DANCE 1937
<b>Willie Howard:</b>	COMES THE REVOLUTION 1941

### **PART TWO**

<b>Max &amp; Dave Fleischer:</b>	BETTY BOOP, M.D. 1932
<b>Abbott &amp; Costello:</b>	WHO'S ON FIRST 1952
<b>Sid Caesar:</b>	THE MOUNTAIN CLIMBER 1955
<b>Lenny Bruce:</b>	THANK YOU, MASK MAN 1968
<b>Henny Youngman:</b>	STANDUP ROUTINE ON TV
<b>Mort Sahl:</b>	AT THE HUNGRY I 1960
<b>Burns &amp; Allen:</b>	FIT TO BE TIED 1930

Curator Murray Glass will be in attendance.

Screening: Monday, April 30, 7:15 p.m.

Sponsored by Shirley Granovsky.

**SIMON MAGUS****TORONTO PREMIERE****United Kingdom, 1999, 35mm, 102 min.****Writer/Director: Ben Hopkins****Cast: Noah Taylor, Rutger Hauer, Embeth Davidtz, Stuart Townsend, Ian Holm**

Finely acted and beautifully photographed, Simon Magus holds up a magic mirror to a time when superstition, bigotry and ignorance held sway. In a decaying shtetl, with barely enough men around to form a minyan, the promise of a railway station holds out hope for prosperity. But who will benefit, the village's Jews or its Gentiles? When a young Jewish man, Mendel (Stuart Townsend), makes a bid for the station, he stirs the wrath of his rival, the anti-Semitic Hase (Sean McGinley), who is even prepared to utilise the infamous blood libel-accusing the Jews of killing Christian children as part of their Passover rituals-in order to prevail. But it is the outcast Simon Magus (Noah Taylor), a disturbed young Jew, who will influence the final outcome.

Writer/Director Ben Hopkins may be in attendance

with

**THE SIGNATURE (LA FIRMA )****CANADIAN PREMIERE****ITALY, 2000, 35mm, 14 min.****Italian with English subtitles****Director: Stefano Landini****Writer: Stefania Cirillo**

A Jewish dentist in Italy (Ivano Marescotti) is perturbed when he spies a familiar mark inside the mouth of one of his patients. He can't quite remember where, but he knows he has seen it before. A chilling Holocaust story.

Screening: Saturday, April 28, 9:15 p.m.

Sponsored by Cranston, Gaskin, O'Reilly and Vernon.

**SLEEPING WITH THE ENEMY:  
AN ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN JOURNEY  
TO JAPAN****NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE****ISRAEL, 2000, video, 52 min.****English, Japanese, Hebrew and Arabic****with English subtitles****Director: Dov Gil-Har**

In recent years, the Japanese government, in an attempt to exert influence on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, has sponsored mixed groups of Israelis and Palestinians on trips to Japan. The plan was for the two sides to get to know and understand each other better while away from the pressure cooker that is the Middle East. Dov Gil-Har (November 29, 1947, TJFF 1999) followed one such group, as they slept in the same room, argued over politics and issues, and interacted with a people who may have known little about Jews or Arabs but were delighted to play host to both groups. Though the program was recently suspended, its very existence offers a tiny beacon of hope to a situation that, of late, leaves little room for optimism. A complex and provocative film.

Director Dov Gil-Har will be in attendance.

with "Hummus For Two

## **SLEEPING WITH THE ENEMY: AN ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN JOURNEY TO JAPAN**

will be showing with

### **HUMMUS FOR TWO**

**ISRAEL, 1997, video, 30 min.**

**Hebrew and Arabic with English subtitles**

**Director: Eyal Halfon**

The usually neutral subject of food turns political as Arabs and Israelis claim the ubiquitous chickpea, or hummus, as their own. The dish serves as the backdrop to arguments over the origins of specific hummus recipes and the differing perceptions of how Jews and Arabs regard the delicacy. Hummus For Two perceptively lays out the undercurrents of distrust between the two sides but also offers hope that they can come together in the culinary appreciation of a popular foodstuff. A charming "confection" from Eyal Halfon (The Italians are Coming, TJFF Opening Night Film, 1997).

**Screening:** Sunday, April 29, 7 p.m.

## **STUDENT PROGRAMME**

### **FINBAR LEBOWITZ**



**CANADIAN PREMIERE**

**USA/IRELAND, 1999, 35mm, 25 min.**

**Writer/Director: Rona Mark**

In order to impress Leah (Shana Sturtz), the cute Jewish girl from New York who's helping in her uncle's Dublin bookstore, Finbar (David McCarton), a working class Irishman, decides to convert to Judaism in order to win her hand. He soon learns that there's more to being Jewish than prayer shawls, yarmulkes and gefilte fish. A sweet comedy of manners, with an Irish twist.

with

### **NOMI'S BAT MITZVAH**

**USA, 2000, 16mm, 13 min.**

**Writer/Director: Jessica Sharzer**

On the day of her bat mitzvah, an embarrassed Nomi (Ronete Levenson) runs away, much to the chagrin of her family. Ah, the awkwardness of adolescence!

Writer/ director Jessica Sharzer will be in attendance

and

### **UNTITLED**

**USA, 1996, video, 15min.**

**Director: Seth Kramer**

By counting out grains of rice, filmmaker Seth Kramer attempts to gain an understanding of the enormous tragedy of the Holocaust. A unique and disturbing film.

**Screening:** Tuesday, May 1, 12:30 p.m.



**SUGIHARA: CONSPIRACY OF KINDNESS****CANADIAN PREMIERE****USA, 2000, video, 102 min.****English, Hebrew and Japanese with English subtitles****Writer/Director: Robert Kirk**

Why did the representative of a country that had little to do with the Jewish people risk the wrath of his government to save so many Jews? The answers in this engrossing documentary will startle and surprise you. In 1942, Chiune Sugihara, the Japanese Consul-General in Kaunas, Lithuania, began issuing passports to Jews trying to flee Hitler. By the time of his recall to Berlin, he had saved the lives of thousands of refugees. Sugihara: Conspiracy of Kindness unveils the life and acts of that rare figure who did what was right simply because he felt he had to. Already the subject of a fictionalised tribute (Visas and Virtue, TJFF 1999), it's a profoundly moving portrait of a genuine hero.

Producer Diane Estelle Vicari will be in attendance

**Screening:** Wednesday, May 2, 3 p.m.

**THE SWEETEST SOUND****CANADIAN PREMIERE****USA, 2001, 16mm, 58 min.****Director: Alan Berliner**

What's in a name? Obsessed with the thought that there might be more than one person with the same name, Alan Berliner set out to investigate that "dreaded" possibility. Eight hundred letters later, he found twelve namesakes from all over the globe - and promptly invited them all to dinner. A delightful and witty exploration of names, The Sweetest Sound is another inspired documentary from the multi-talented Berliner (Nobody's Business, TJFF 1998; Intimate Stranger, TJFF 1999), who has crafted his most ambitious film yet. It touches on the differences between Ashkenazi and Sephardic naming rituals, the myth that Ellis Island authorities renamed immigrants, and the mystery behind the Berliner family's name. With appearances from Berliner's father Oscar (subject of Nobody's Business), as well as his mother and sister, The Sweetest Sound is a sheer delight.

Director Alan Berliner will be in attendance

**Screening:** Wednesday, May 2, 8 p.m.

Sponsored by The Estate of Pearl Banks.

**TOTAL LOVE (TLV)****ISRAEL, 2000, 35mm, 83 min.****English, Hebrew with English subtitles****Director: Gur Bentwich****Writers: Etgar Keret, Gur Bentwich****Cast: Gur Bentwich, Maor Cohen, Tinkerbell, Zohar Dinar**

The invention of a drug that makes people fall instantly in love leads to a romantic triangle involving three men and a woman named Renana. Now that she's in jail for drug smuggling (in Goa, India, no less), it's up to the trio to rescue her. A wild, eccentric ride, Total Love is a hip trip into the unknown.

Director/Co-writer Gur Bentwich may be in attendance

**Screening:** Wednesday, May 2, 9:45 p.m.

**A TRIAL IN PRAGUE****TORONTO PREMIERE****USA, 2000, 16mm, 83 min.****Writer/Director: Zuzana Justman**

In 1952, during the Cold War, 14 men (11 of them Jewish), including some of the most powerful men in the country, were put on trial in Czechoslovakia on charges of spying for the West. Completely innocent of all charges, they were, nonetheless, forced to confess to crimes against the state and all but three were executed soon after. Ironically, many of them had previously participated in fabricating charges against others, who were convicted in the same kind of "show" trials. A powerful indictment of the Communist party, A Trial in Prague includes interviews with Eduard Goldstucker, the first Czech ambassador to Israel, who testified at the trial, and Lise London, widow of Artur London, who wrote the memoir that revealed the truths of the trial to the world. (It was adapted for the screen by Costa-Gavras as The Confession.) A Trial in Prague is a timely and powerful reminder of a horrific past.

Writer/Director Zuzana Justman will be in attendance

**Screening:** Tuesday, May 1, 3 p.m.

**VULCAN JUNCTION****TORONTO PREMIERE****ISRAEL, 1999, 35mm, 102 min.****Hebrew with English subtitles****Director: Eran Riklis****Writers: Moshe Zander, Amir Ben David****Cast: Oren Shabo, Sammy Ori, Yael Hadar**

It is a week before the outbreak of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. In a suburb of Haifa, members of the rock group Genetic Code prepare to hit the big time--or so they hope. When a Tel Aviv promoter offers Michael (Oren Shabo), the band's singer and lead guitarist, a contract only if he dumps his fellow members, the group's future is in jeopardy. With a pounding soundtrack, including hits from Deep Purple, The Hollies, King Crimson and Jethro Tull, *Vulcan Junction* is a vivid re-creation of a more innocent time in Israel when anything seemed possible. The latest film from director Eran Riklis, whose Israeli hits *Cup Final* and *Zohar* have played at the TJFF. An Israeli American Graffiti, *Vulcan Junction* is an exciting, fast-moving trip.

Audience Award, Montpellier International Film Festival, France, 2000

Best Film Award, Haifa International Film Festival, 1999

Best Music; Best Sound; Best Wardrobe, Israeli Academy Awards, 1999

with "Cock Fight"

**COCK FIGHT****CANADIAN PREMIERE****ISRAEL, 2000, 16mm, 14 min.****Hebrew with English subtitles****Writer/Director: Sigalit Lipshitz**

A Palestinian roadblock marks the new realities of the Middle East, as an Israeli chicken farmer, accompanied by his Rumanian worker, confronts a former Palestinian employee who won't let the farmer continue on his journey. From The Sam Spiegel Film & Television School, Jerusalem.

First Prize, Montpellier International Film Festival, France, 2000

Jury Award for Best Film of the Festival, Munich International Festival of Film Schools, Germany, 2000

Silver Plaque Award, Chicago International Film Festival, 2000

Screening: Tuesday, May 1, 7:30 p.m.

## **WANDERINGS: POSTCARDS FROM THE DIASPORA**

**WORLD PREMIERE**

**CANADA, 2001, video, 48 min.**

**Director: Nikila Cole**



Vancouver filmmaker Nikila Cole, accompanied by her 12-year-old daughter, commemorated the latter's bat mitzvah by heading out in search of signs of Jewish life in the unlikeliest of places. What they found in such countries as South Korea, Jamaica and the Philippines, was both moving and astounding. Another special look at Jews from distant lands.

Director Nikila Cole will be in attendance

with "The Last Jewish Town"

## **THE LAST JEWISH TOWN**

**ISRAEL, 2001, video, 37 min.**

**English, Juarit with English subtitles**

**Director: Gil Lesnik**

The Last Jewish Town is Kresnia Sloboda, Azerbaijan, whose 4,500 inhabitants seem never to have emerged from the 19th century. Claiming to be descended from the lost tribe of Benjamin, with their own language (Juarit), these Jews are absolutely unique. Tammy Shneider, who grew up in Kresnia Sloboda before moving to Israel, returns home and narrates this fascinating depiction of their lives. Based on a rigidly patriarchal structure, with strong superstitions and even holidays of their own, the people of Kresnia Sloboda, who have close relations with their Muslim neighbours, go about their daily lives even as their numbers and institutions decline. A remarkable document of a world where time has seemingly stood still.

Former Torontonians Howard Elias, Director of the Hong Kong Jewish Film Festival, will introduce the films

**Screening: Thursday, May 3, 3 p.m.**

## **WEINTRAUBS SYNCOPATORS: TO THE OTHER END OF THE WORLD**

**CANADIAN PREMIERE**

**GERMANY, 2000, video, 63 min.**

**English voice-over, German with English subtitles**

**Directors: Jorg Sussenbach, Klaus Sander**



One of the most popular groups in Germany in the 20s, the Jewish Weintraubs Syncopators mixed traditional jazz with Victor Borge-like comedy. They would clown around on stage, play two trumpets at the same time, or mix sound effects so a piano's sound would seem to come out of a clarinet. But their fame did not protect them when the Nazis came to power, and soon the Syncopators, which included Eddie Rosner (The Jazzman From The Gulag, also at the festival) were dispersed, first to other parts of Europe, then to Australia. Interviews with some of the surviving members of the group, as well as their spouses and manager, helps Weintraubs Syncopators paint an exuberant portrait of a fun-loving, multi-talented musical ensemble.

With some rare jazz shorts featuring Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw, from the collection of Murray Glass, (16 min. approx.)

**Screening:** Sunday, April 29, 5 p.m.

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