

### THE 10TH ANNUAL Toronto Jewish Film Festival

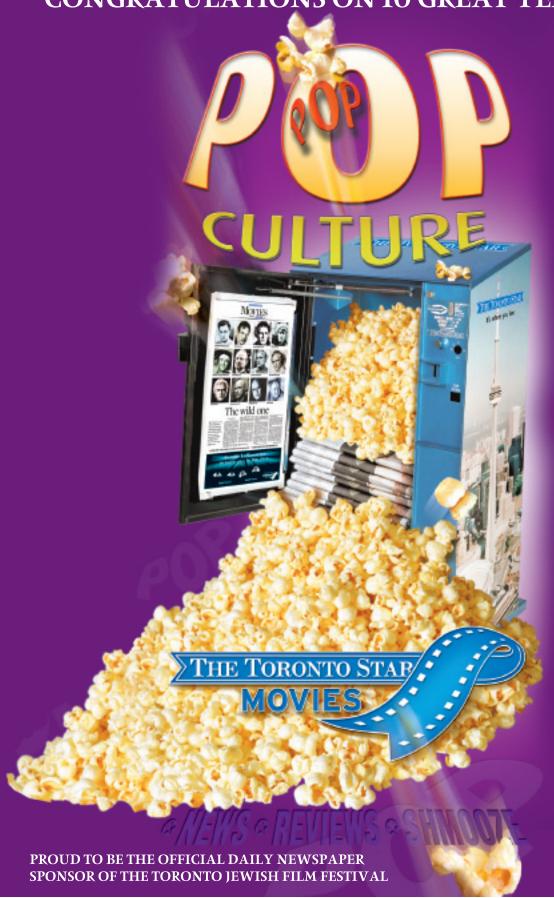
**Bloor Cinema** 

April 20 - April 28, 2002

(416) 324-9121

www.tjff.com

**CONGRATULATIONS ON 10 GREAT YEARS!** 



#### Festival At A Glance TJFF 2001

#### **SATURDAY, APRIL 20**

8:00 pm - Opening Night Festivities
9:15 pm - Schmelvis: Searching for the
King's Jewish Roots, \*76 min. \*\*p. 10

#### **SUNDAY, APRIL 21**

**11:00 am** - Motl der Operator, 88 min. p. 26 **1:00 pm** - Forging Identity/Kivnik, 75 min. p. 18

2:45 pm - The Optimists, 82 min. p. 28

**4:45 pm** - Kinky Friedman/Mortimer Griffin.../Nose Job Jew, 83 min. p. 21 & 22

**7:00 pm** - The Believer, 98 min. p. 13 **9:30 pm** - Florentene III, 137 min. p. 17

#### **MONDAY. APRIL 22**

11:00 am - The Optimists, 82 min. p. 28 1:15 pm - Keep on Walking/A Righteous

Man..., 76 min. p. 21 & 31

**3:00 pm -** Fighter, 88 min. p. 16

5:00 pm - Till Death Do Us Part, 59 min. p. 33
7:00 pm - Late Marriage/Expecting, 125 min. p. 23

9:30 pm - Slums of Beverly Hills/Avenue Amy/ Grrlyshow, 121 min. p. 29

#### **TUESDAY, APRIL 23**

11:00 am - The Bombing/As If Nothing Happened, 106 min. p. 14

**1:15 pm** - Taqasim/Dust, 72 min. p. 31

3:00 pm - Brother Daniel/The Secret, 104 min. p. 15

**5:30 pm** - The Accused, 46 min. p. 12 **7:15 pm** - Mamadrama, 73 min. p. 25

9:30 pm - Leo und Claire/Silent Song, 111 min. p. 24

#### **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24**

11:00 am - Underdogs/Worst Jewish Football Team, 94 min. p. 35

1:00 pm - Leo und Claire, 105 min. p. 24

3:00 pm - "Terrorists" in Retirement/1939,

92 min. p. 32 & 33

5:15 pm - A Bomb in the Basement, 79 min. p. 14

7:15 pm - Mad Adventures of Rabbi Jacob/ La vie, la mort, 104 min. p. 24 & 25

9:30 pm - Keep on Walking, 52 min. p. 21

#### **THURSDAY, APRIL 25**

11:00 am - Autumn Sun (Movies 4 Mommies), 103 min. p. 12

1:00 pm - A Jewish Wedding/Chicks, 80 min. p. 20 3:00 pm - L'Chayim, Comrade Stalin!, 94 min. p. 22

5:30 pm - Ted Allan, 57 min. p. 32

7:15 pm - Clean Sweep/Jailbirds, 109 min. p. 16

9:30 pm - Sobibor, 97 min. p. 30

#### FRIDAY, APRIL 26

11:00 am - A Tickle in the Heart, 84 min. p. 33

1:00 pm - Sobibor, 97 min. p. 30

3:00 pm - My Dear Clara/Tsipa and Volf, 68 min. p. 27

5:00 pm - Blacks and Jews, 85 min. p. 13

#### **SATURDAY, APRIL 27**

#### "SATURDAY AT THE FESTIVAL"

12 noon – 2:00 pm Sacred Symbols (free presentation) p. 8

2:00 pm - 4:00 pm Storytelling (free) p. 8

5:00 pm - 6:00 pm Workshop with Rabbi Elyse Goldstein (free) p. 8

9:15 pm - Time of Favor/Questions, 94 min. p. 34

#### **SUNDAY, APRIL 28**

10:30 am – "A Century of Jewish Movie Posters" (free slide presentation) p. 8

12:00 pm - The Inner Tour, 99 min. p. 19

2:30 pm - Je me souviens/The Street, 55 min. p. 20 4:15 pm - Minyan in Kaifeng/Unheard Voices,

84 min. p. 25 & 26

6:30 pm - Strange Fruit/A Righteous Man,

81 min. p. 30 & 31

8:45 pm - The Grey Zone, 108 min. p. 11

\*Total running time (shorts included)

\*\* See page for film description

All screenings take place at the Bloor Cinema (Bloor & Bathurst) www.tiff.com 416-324-9121

#### **SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

It Kinda Scares Me (Tomer Ve — Hasrutim) Co-presented with Hot Docs Israel, 2001, 58 min. p. 19

Screening: Sunday, May 5, 5:00 pm (Royal Cinema)

For tickets, phone: 416-203-2155



Photo by: Aviva Zukerman Schure

#### By Helen Zukerman, Executive Director

Now we are ten! YAY! I'm often asked how and why this Festival happened. When I attended the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival in 1991, what impressed me most was the size and diversity of the crowd! Why not Toronto? The late Debra Plotkin was the perfect person to be artistic director and co-founder of the inaugural TJFF. Debra and I spent weeks agonizing over a venue and we finally rented the Bloor Cinema. That's the public story. What nobody knows is that we couldn't believe we had just booked a 950 seat venue and we immediately adjourned to the nearest bar to drink! We also constructed a sophisticated plan to keep the balcony closed to avoid embarrassment if the theatre was half empty.

Government approvals for the Festival came in February for a May event. We still didn't have an opener that would attract attention. On a New York visit I viewed "Black to the Promised Land", based on a television news story about black ghetto students who spend time on an Israeli kibbutz. What I saw in the theatre that night was magic, and it was the magic that we wanted to bring to Toronto. The film generated more interest than we imagined. We sold out and even had to add an extra screening!

Everything was great? Not exactly. In our desire to save money, we rented the theatre for 9:00 pm, so that the Bloor was able to hold their regular early show. Through an error, the Bloor ran a film that was not going to end until 8:50 pm. What were we going to do with 900 restless Jews? This was about to be a huge problem until we came up with the obvious—feed and entertain! Therein was born the "cookies in line" tradition. We hired students to conduct interviews in lineups (I don't know if we had film in the camera) and we had musicians playing Klezmer music! We hoped no one would notice how late we were—and they didn't. By the next day, word had gotten out that not only were the films great, but the food was terrific.

Over the years there have been moments of great emotion: David Stein pointing out his "bubble" in the audience as he introduced his film about her; everyone in the cinema singing along to "Yiddish Karaoke"; a standing ovation for the filmmaker of Sugihara; survivors in the audience identifying themselves and speaking about their "experiences" portrayed in films; and especially, some of the letters and comments we receive about emotions never-before shared, and surprisingly few criticisms. Every year on Opening Night, when the lights go down and the first film appears, I get goosebumps.

I cannot thank you enough for the privilege of being part of this event. The dedication of our funders is essential and some of them have been with us from the very beginning. And to you, our audience, and supporters, YOU are the Festival. We wouldn't exist without your (mostly) smiling faces. We know you care about the Festival because you come.

May you continue to come for another 110 years.



Photo by: Aviva Zukerman Schure

#### By Shlomo Schwartzberg, Director of Programming

My first experience with the Toronto Jewish Film Festival was in 1993, when I attended, as a freelance journalist, the repeat screening of the Festival's opening night film, Black to the Promised Land. I knew even then that this Festival was here to stay, but little did I know that nearly a decade later, I would be involved with the TJFF as its Director of Programming.

Now we are celebrating our tenth anniversary with an edgy, very strong lineup of some 60 films, three times as many movies as in our first year. Along with our growth has come a massive increase in the amount of Jewish film, particularly documentaries and shorts, that we look at each year. Coincidentally, 1993 was also the year of Steven Spielberg's epic Schindler's List, and that one film alone had a lot to do with the jump in acceptance, interest and encouragement of Jewish cinema around the world.

That was the good news. The bad news is that the Holocaust is often the only way we refract our Jewish identity through the prism of cinema. That's why we do our best to showcase non-Holocaust subjects, from heroic sports figures (The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg) to messianic Rabbis (The King of Crown Heights) to Jewish sex trade workers (Hell's Angel). Over ten years, we've brought you an incredibly wide panoply of Jewish stories, personalities and topics, including numerous Canadian films, many of which were made by talented Torontonians.

The themes that emerge in any given year are often "accidents" but the intent of providing the best in Jewish cinema and highlighting the diversity of our experiences around the world is fully deliberate. The themes of TJFF 2002 include Jews who have pushed the envelope in the field of music (Kinky Friedman: Proud to be an Asshole From El Paso; Strange Fruit; Keep on Walking) as well as a refreshing look at resistance during the Holocaust (The Grey Zone; The Optimists; Sobibor, October 14, 1943, 4 pm; "Terrorists" in Retirement; Fighter). We are also spotlighting Women Filmmakers this year and reprising some of the biggest "hits" from the past in our Retrospective Series. We're also pleased to have the involvement of students from Ryerson University's Image Arts programme. They've created some wonderfully inventive mini-trailers honouring our tenth anniversary.

But it's more than just the movies that matter. It's the fascinating filmmakers we host and the friends we've made from other Jewish film festivals around the world. Most gratifyingly, it's you, our audience, who rightly feel possessive of the Festival and don't hesitate to praise (and to criticize) our efforts. That personal contact is what makes our Festival unique, even among all the other film festivals unspooling in our movie-mad city. It's also a good part of what's made working at the TJFF such a wonderful experience.

I look forward to the future and more anniversaries to come.





**Minister of Canadian Heritage** 

Greetings to all those taking part in the 10th Annual Toronto Jewish Film Festival.

Artistic and documentary works in film, because of their innately human quality and inherent realism and immediacy, help put us in touch with ourselves and with one another. The Toronto Jewish Film Festival provides an excellent opportunity to gain insight into the diversity that characterizes the Jewish world, as well as our country, through the eyes of filmmakers from around the globe.

As Minister of Canadian Heritage, I would like to congratulate everyone participating on this 10th anniversary of the Toronto Jewish Film Festival. I offer my thanks to all the organizers and volunteers, past and present, who have contributed to the success of this important Festival, which showcases Canadian talent, promotes the Canadian film industry and encourages an appreciation of cultural diversity.

**Enjoy the films! Enjoy the Festival!** 

Shile lyp

**Sheila Copps** 





The Premier of Ontario

**Greetings!** 

2002 Toronto Jewish Film Festival 10th Anniversary

April 20-28 2002

On behalf of the government of Ontario, I am pleased to send greetings to everyone attending the 2002 Toronto Jewish Film Festival.

For the last 10 years, cinema enthusiasts have been enjoying an array of excellent films that reflect the diversity of Jewish life. This year's festival showcases numerous Canadian and international films. Toronto is proud to be home to this festival and to welcome visiting members of the film industry from around the world.

To the festival's organizers, filmmakers, artists and supporters - I commend you for your enthusiasm in preserving and promoting Jewish culture in our community. Your efforts represent your contribution to the social and cultural fabric of our province.

Please accept my best wishes for an enjoyable festival and many more years of success

Mil Sail

**Mike Harris** 





#### A message from Mayor Mel Lastman

It is a pleasure to extend greetings and welcome you to the 10th Anniversary of the Toronto Jewish Film Festival.

The Toronto Film Festival is a non-for-profit organization and has earned the designation as the second largest Jewish film festival in North America, second only to San Francisco. It is the fourth largest of all film festivals in Toronto showcasing over 60 films of excellence from around the world with audiences exceeding 15.000 film-goers per year. Through the presentation of international and Canadian films, documentaries and short films, the festival has become the venue for all communities to view, understand and reflect on the diversity of the Jewish identity and the evolution of Jewish filmmaking.

Events such as this are welcomed and encouraged in our City. The people of Toronto see more films per capita than any other city in North America, making our City the ideal location for this exciting event. This festival adds to the incredible variety of entertainment attractions available in Toronto and contributes to the culture, economic growth, prosperity and vitality of our unique and vibrant City.

On behalf of Toronto Council and the 2.5 million people of our great City, I congratulate the Toronto Jewish Film Festival for evolving into one of Toronto's premiere film events. Please accept my warmest wishes for an enjoyable and memorable festival and continued success.



**Mel Lastman, Mayor** 





#### **Helen Zukerman**

President
Toronto Jewish Film Festival
17 Madison Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M5R 2S2

#### **Dear Helen:**

On the 10th anniversary of the Toronto Jewish Film Festival, the volunteer and professional leadership of the Festival should take great pride on the important contribution you have made to the cultural life of our Jewish community and city.

Once again, the Festival has brought a challenging and enlightening array of cinema. The enrichment of our community through the arts serves to bring us together as well as to help us look at ourselves in new ways.

UJA Federation recognizes the unique role that the Festival plays in our community and hopes for it to continue from strength to strength.

With best wishes.

Sincerely.



Ralph Shedletsky, Chair of the Board

#### **Free Programmes**

#### "SATURDAY AT THE FESTIVAL"

As part of our 10th year Jewbilation, we are opening the Bloor Cinema at noon, Saturday, April 27th. The Festival will not be screening films until after Shabbat (9:15 pm), but we are delighted to present free public education programming.

Just as "you don't have to be filmish" to attend the films, "you don't have to be Jewish" to come to the Open House on Saturday. There will be something for everyone! Check our website: www.tjff.com for up-to-date information.

#### 12:00 - 2:00 pm SACRED SYMBOLS

A dynamic and visually stunning presentation which explores the significance, use and symbolism of ritual items and icons from five of the world's major religions. Presented by ENCOUNTER World Religions Centre. The Centre is dedicated to promoting peace and understanding by bringing people into contact with the world's great traditions.

#### 2:00 - 4:00 pm STORYTELLING

Some of the best storytellers in the country—Eli Rubenstein, Dan Yashinsky and Alec Gelcer—entertain with folktales. Chasidic tales, shtetl lore, children's stories, stories from ancient and modern Israel, and tales from the Talmud are all on the agenda for the afternoon.

#### 5:00 - 6:00 pm

"BUBBE MEINSES, ZAYDE MEINSES AND THE TRUTH: A DISCUSSION ON JEWISH LAW AND TRADITION"

Rabbi Elyse Goldstein, Rabbinic Director of Kolel: The Adult Centre for Liberal Jewish Learning, presents a fascinating workshop.

"Saturday at the Festival" generously sponsored by **THE EDWARD BRONFMAN FAMILY FOUNDATION** 

#### Sunday, April 28, 10:30 am SLIDE PRESENTATION

#### **A CENTURY OF JEWISH MOVIE POSTERS**

Jerry Faivish, an expert on the topic of Jewish posters, presents a special slide presentation on the art of the Jewish movie poster. The presentation highlights Jewish film posters from different eras and countries and looks at how they compare with other art posters. Mr. Faivish, a Torontonian, has spoken about the topic throughout the United States, and his posters have been displayed internationally in museums. In June 2002 they will form an integral part of an exhibition mounted by the Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archives at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Non-ticketed free events are open to all on a first come, first-served basis.

#### SPECIAL EXHIBITS BLOOR CINEMA

#### **POSTERS**

A fascinating representation of Jewish film posters from the collection of Jerry Faivish will be on display throughout Festival week. (See Slide Presentation, Sunday, April 28, 10:30 am)

#### **MIDDLE EAST PEACE QUILT**

A beautiful Middle East Peace Quilt, designed and coordinated by Vancouver artist Sima Elizabeth Shefrin, will also be on display throughout Festival week. Over 500 people from all over North America, as well as England, Germany and Greece—from a variety of backgrounds, including Jewish and Palestinian—have made squares for the quilt. On tour throughout North America since 1999, the Peace Quilt brings together an international community's vision of peace in the Middle East.











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#### ORDER FORM ... CENTREFOLD

All films are subject to classification.
All films are presented in their original language with English subtitles, unless otherwise indicated.

#### **Opening Night Film**

## SCHMELVIS: SEARCHING FOR THE KING'S JEWISH ROOTS

WORLD PREMIERE
CANADA, 2001, video, 76 min.
Writer / Director: Max Wallace



Was "The King" kosher? Investigating the claim that Elvis' great-great grandmother was Jewish leads a diverse group of Montrealers, including an ultra Orthodox Jewish Elvis impersonator, a Rabbi and the filmmakers, on a quest to Memphis to find out what Elvis' fans think of this revelation. (He did wear a Chai around his neck.) But the trip bogs down in squabbling, diminished expectations (the anti-Semitism they expect to find in the Deep South fails to materialize) and a sense that the movie they're

making isn't going anywhere. By the time the group heads off to Israel to plant a tree for Elvis, it all comes to a head. Funny, suspenseful and wickedly witty, Schmelvis wrings a unique spin on celebrity, Judaism and religious perceptions. It's a hoot!

Thanks to Ismé Bennie, Director of Programming, Bravo, and Ellen Baine, Director of Programming, Citytv, for making this screening possible for the Toronto Jewish Film Festival.

Writer / director / producer Max Wallace, producer Evan M. Beloff and executive producer Ari A.Cohen will be in attendance. Max Wallace and Jonathan Goldstein will also be signing copies of their book, Schmelvis: In Search of Elvis Presley's Jewish Roots, published by ECW PRESS.

Screening: Saturday, April 20, 9:15 pm Festivities, 8:00 pm

Opening Night generously sponsored by



#### **Closing Night Film**

#### THE GREY ZONE

USA, 2001, 35mm, 108 min.

Writer / Director: Tim Blake Nelson

Cast: David Arquette, Steve Buscemi, Harvey Keitel,

Mira Sorvino, Daniel Benzali



One of the most disturbing—and controversial realities of the Holocaust was the presence in the concentration camps of the Sonderkommando units. The Sonderkommandos convinced their fellow Jews that they were going to take showers instead of being gassed. They were then designated as the clean-up crew who shoved bodies into the crematoria and swept up the ashes afterwards. In return for doing the Nazis' dirty work, they were rewarded with special privileges of food, drink and cigarettes. Adapting his play, which is based in part on the diaries of Miklos Nyiszli, a Jewish doctor who conducted gruesome experiments for the infamous Nazi Josef Mengele, actor / director Tim Blake Nelson ("O, Brother, Where Art Thou?, "0") has made a devastating film. It focuses on the 12th Sonderkommando unit, which staged a heroic revolt in Auschwitz in late 1944 and destroyed half of the camp's ovens.

Brutally tough — and admittedly difficult to watch — The Grey Zone rivets the senses. Nelson unflinchingly emphasizes the horrible actuality of the camps, the constantly humming machinery of death and the perpetually billowing smoke from the crematoria. He also probes the difficulty of retaining one's humanity amidst such horror. Superbly acted by all concerned, the exceptionally moving The Grey Zone emerges as one of the finest, most humane and important Holocaust movies ever made. It's unforgettable.

Warning: This film contains scenes of brutal violence.

Screening: Sunday, April 28, 8:45 pm

Closing Night generously sponsored by

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#### THE ACCUSED

CANADIAN PREMIERE
UNITED KINGDOM, 2001, video, 46 min.
English, Arabic with English subtitles
Producer: Aidan Laverty



In September 1982, Christian Lebanese Phalangists massacred more than 800 Palestinians, including women and children, living in the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps, as revenge for killings committed against them. The Phalangists did so, right under the noses of the Israeli Defense forces, which had invaded Lebanon and controlled West Beirut where the murders took place. Ariel Sharon, the current Prime Minister of Israel, was the man in charge of the military, who allowed the Phalangists to enter the refugee camps unimpeded and said he didn't know what they had planned. What exactly did he know and how responsible was he for the resulting bloodbath? (An Israeli commission of inquiry found him "indirectly responsible" for the massacre.) Reported by Fergal Keane from the prestigious British news magazine Panorama, this hard-hitting point of view documentary revisits the scene of the crime to investigate Sharon and his role in the affair. Among those interviewed in The Accused are Palestinian survivors of the killings, Israeli soldiers who warned their superiors that something might happen, and foreign witnesses and diplomats. There's also a startling interview with Phalangist leader Elie Hobeika, who was recently assassinated in Lebanon, after hinting he might testify against Sharon in the attempt in Belgium to charge him with war crimes.

An important film about a blood-soaked crime that haunts us still.

Producer Aidan Laverty will be in attendance

Screening: Tuesday, April 23, 5:30 pm

#### **AUTUMN SUN**

ARGENTINA, 1996, 35 mm, 103 min. Spanish with English subtitles

Director: Eduardo Mignogna

Writers: E. Mignogna, Santiago Carlos Oves Cast: Norma Aleandro, Federico Luppi, Jorge Luz



Norma Aleandro (The Official Story) is exquisite as Clara Goldstein, an independent but lonely Jewish single woman living in Buenos Aires. Anticipating a visit from her judgmental brother from Boston, she advertises for a Jewish boyfriend in the personals. But the man who answers the ad (Federico Luppi) isn't Jewish. Now she has to teach him how to be Jewish, a course of action which leads to unexpected consequences in this warm and charming love story. (Retrospective TJFF 2000). A Movies 4 Mommies programme.

Best actress, San Sebastian, 1996 Goya Award, Best Latin American Film, 1996

Screening: Thursday, April 25, 11:00 am

Weekday Matinees presented by



Official Newspaper Sponsor

#### THE BELIEVER

**TORONTO PREMIERE** 

USA, 2001, 35mm, 98 min.

Writer / Director: Henry Bean

Cast: Ryan Gosling, Summer Phoenix,

Billy Zane, Theresa Russell



Henry Bean's provocative The Believer revolves around a Nazi skinhead named Danny Balint (Ryan Gosling), whose virulent anti-Semitism disguises the fact that he was born a Jew. Filled with frightening anger and hatred towards his people, Balint, nonetheless, cannot shake the Talmudic influences of his youth. When he joins a right-wing fascist organization and becomes their spokesman, even as a reporter from The New York Times begins to uncover his secret, Balint's actions propel him towards a final resolution of the demons that have always haunted him. Philosophical, disturbing and remarkably nuanced in its portrayal of a psychologically tortured soul, and superbly acted by Gosling, The Believer puts a whole new face on the age old problems of anti-Semitism, racism and self-hate. It's a stunning piece of work.

Warning: Brutal violence

Grand Jury Prize, Sundance Film Festival 2001 Main Prize, Best Film, Moscow International Film Festival, 2001

Writer / Director Henry Bean may be in attendance

Screening: Sunday, April 21, 7:00 pm

Programme presented by



#### **BLACKS AND JEWS**

USA, 1996, 16 mm, 85 min.

Directors: Alan Snitow, Deborah Kaufman



Once staunch allies, the Jewish and Black communities in the U.S. are undergoing strains and tensions in their relationships. Filmmakers Alan Snitow and Deborah Kaufman argue that it doesn't have to be this way. Unsettling and thought provoking, Blacks and Jews shines a needed light on an underreported, occasionally shameful reality. Documentary filmmaking at its gritty, provocative best. (Retrospective TJFF 1999)

Lindheim Award, Jewish Video Competition, 1997 Cross Cultural Award, International Black Independent Film and Video Competition, 1997

Screening: Friday, April 26, 5:00 pm

## A BOMB IN THE BASEMENT: ISRAEL'S NUCLEAR OPTION

**CANADIAN PREMIERE** 

ISRAEL, 2001, video, 79 min.

**English, Hebrew, French with English subtitles** 

**Director: Michael Karpin** 



The genesis of the Middle East's worst kept secret, Israel's nuclear capability, is revealed in this new, controversial and riveting documentary from Israel's distinguished Michael Karpin (The Road to Rabin Square, TJFF 1998). A Bomb in the Basement is a story of secret contacts, skullduggery and personal infighting. It dispels the myth of Israeli nuclear confidence even as it lays out the urgency Israeli leaders felt about getting nuclear weaponry to stave off its hostile Arab neighbours. For the first time, Shimon Peres, appointed by Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion to liaise with the people who were instrumental in helping Israel get the Bomb, goes on record about his role in the affair. The legendary Mossad chief Isser Harel, who remembers things differently, challenges his recollections. With seminal archival footage and penetrating voice-over narration, A Bomb in the Basement brings history to startling new life.

Director Michael Karpin will be in attendance.

Screening: Wednesday, April 24, 5:15 pm

#### THE BOMBING

ISRAEL, 1999, video, 59 min.

English, Hebrew, Arabic with English subtitles

**Director: Simone Bitton** 



In September 1997, three Palestinian suicide bombers blew themselves up in downtown Jerusalem. Among the five Israelis who died in the blast were three teenage girls. Simone Bitton's The Bombing follows up on the aftermath of the attack, interviewing not just the families of the three girls but also those of the terrorists. Their feelings, observations and opinions about the tragedy are not what you might imagine them to be. Nor can you be ready for what happens when the family of another young girl, who survived the attack, decides to visit the relatives of one of the bombers. The Bombing is a sensitive, humane look at a horrific event and a hopeful cry for a peace that has yet to be.

with

#### AS IF NOTHING HAPPENED

**CANADIAN PREMIERE** 

ISRAEL, 1999, video, 47 min.

Hebrew with English subtitles

Writer / Director: Ayelet Bargur

Cast: Assi Dayan, Rivka Neuman, Sivan Shavit

Losing a child in a terrorist attack is every Israeli family's worst nightmare. When a suicide bomber kills a group of soldiers and son Zvi doesn't call home, everyone expects the worst. But there might be other reasons he hasn't phoned. As they wait

for news, the dormant fissures in the Bargur family (a thinly fictionalised version of the filmmaker's own life) begin to burst as old emotions and repressed angers bubble to the surface. A suspenseful drama about family dysfunction, loss and continuity, As If Nothing Happened belies its title. There's lots going on here and you'll be on the edge of your seat until the unexpected conclusion.

Screening: Tuesday, April 23, 11:00 am

Spotlight on Women Filmmakers generously sponsored by



Weekday Matinees presented by

#### THE TORONTO STAR

Official Newspaper Sponsor

#### **BROTHER DANIEL - THE LAST JEW**

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE ISRAEL, 2001, video, 57 min.

English, Hebrew, German with English subtitles

**Director: Amir Gera** 



Brother Daniel is Oswald Rufeisen, who converted to Christianity during the war but still maintained that he was born and would die a Jew. Terming himself a Catholic Jew and determined to be identified as Jewish, he took his case to Israel's Supreme Court in order to get the proper designation on his identity card. It was a case that rocked the nation and brought forth, once again, the vexing question of what is a Jew? Brother Daniel – The Last Jew, however, goes

beyond Oswald's legal challenge. It also delves into his heroism, when he helped rescue Jews from the Nazis, and his guilt, about denying his Judaism in order to survive the Holocaust. Can one cast stones at such a man? A provocative documentary that, like The Secret, removes the obvious barriers between Jew and gentile in order to reach their common humanity.

Honorable Mention, Haifa International Film Festival, 2001

with

#### **THE SECRET**

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE
ISRAEL, 2001, video, 47 min.
English, Polish with English subtitles
Director: Ronit Krown Kerstner

Thousands of Poles have a secret. They have found out in adulthood that they're really Jewish, given by their parents, when they were babies, to Christians for safekeeping during the Holocaust. Now that they know the truth, they have to decide what this means for them, as Poles and as Jews. In this remarkable film, Ronit Krown Kerstner profiles some of them, including determined young men and women who have formed an organization to learn about Judaism. Most shockingly, she also interviews a middle-aged priest, who found out he was a Jew at age 35, twelve years after he had entered the priesthood. Many of these new found-Jews have also become estranged from their disapproving families after making the decision to practice Jewish customs and rituals. That's not easy to do in a country with few Jews and strong vestiges of anti-Semitism. A sad story of troubled souls who only now are beginning to find themselves and their place in the world.

Director Ronit Krown Kerstner will be in attendance

Screening: Tuesday, April 23, 3:00 pm

Weekday Matinees presented by

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#### **CLEAN SWEEP (MARS TURKY)**

**CANADIAN PREMIERE** 

ISRAEL, 2000, 35mm, 94 min.

**Hebrew with English subtitles** 

**Director: Oded Davidoff** 

Writers: Limor Nachmias, Gal Zaid

Cast: Yael Hader, Alon Aboutboul, Gal Zaid, Dalit Kahan



A salacious, offbeat and very twisted cop drama. Clean Sweep opens with two vicious—and very unique—murders and then segues into an unpredictable thriller with the cops guarding one Shimon Peres (no, not that Shimon Peres!) from the crime lord who wants to prevent his damaging testimony at an upcoming trial. Mix some frank dialogue with explicit violence and a fractured story and you only begin to describe this very original movie, which even offers scenes of the action as viewed through the eyes of a cat. From the new generation of Israeli filmmakers, a glimpse of the future of Israeli cinema. Don't miss it. An Eitan Evans—Evanstone Films Ltd. production.

Warning: This film contains scenes of explicit dialogue and brutal violence.

Best Supporting Actress (Dalit Kahan), Israeli Academy Awards, 2000

with

#### **JAILBIRDS**

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE ISRAEL, 1999, 16mm, 15 min.

Hebrew with English subtitles Writer / Director: Ronit Pollak

Cast: Sharon Elimelech, Avi Va'anuno, Dvor Banduck

Did Shula cheat on her jailbird husband David with Dror? Now out of prison, David is determined to find out the truth but whom does he ask? A zany comedy of ill-manners from the Sam Spiegel Film & Television School, Jerusalem.

Screening: Thursday, April 25, 7:15 pm

#### **FIGHTER**

USA, 2000, 35mm, 88 min.

English, Czech with English subtitles

Director: Amir Bar-Lev



In the summer of 1998, two Czech-American Holocaust survivors, 72-year-old Arnost Lustig and 77-year-old Jan Wiener, took a trip back to the Czeck Republic, Slovenia and Italy, accompanied by a camera crew. The result of the trip became Fighter, a remarkable documentary about two distinct personalities and their friendship, which actually ended during filming. Lustig, a professor, filmmaker and a widely published author, survived Theresienstadt, the infamous ghetto/concentration camp used by the Nazis as a propaganda vehicle. His escape was dramatised in the 1964 Czech film Diamonds of the Night. Wiener, the "Fighter" of the title, also a professor, witnessed his father's and stepmother's

suicides, lost his mother, and then, in an incredibly dramatic escape, fled Italy by hiding under the toilet chute of a speeding locomotive. In England he signed on with the Royal Air Force (RAF) as a fighter pilot and, with other members of the Czech resistance, flew sorties against the Germans. After the war, he was accused by Czech Communists of being a British spy and was sent for five years to a Communist labour camp. It's the two men's differing experiences and views of life, filtered through the camera's unforgiving lens, and exacerbated by the rigours of the long journey back to Europe, that ultimately wedge them apart. A poignant look at how opposing perceptions and memories can affect even a lifelong friendship.

Screening: Monday, April 22 at 3:00 pm

Weekday Matinees presented by

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#### **FLORENTENE III**

CANADIAN PREMIERE
ISRAEL, 1999, video, 137 min.
Hebrew with English subtitles
Writer / Director: Arik Rothstein
Starring: Kareen Ophir, Uri Banai, Avshalom Pollak,
Ayelet Zorer, Sammy Hori, Ami Smolarchiik, Dana Modan,
Nir Friedman, Adi Terer



The TJFF is pleased to present the first four episodes from the third and final season of Florentene, Israel's most popular television serial, chronicling the experiences of a group of gay and

straight twenty-somethings living and loving in Tel Aviv. Coby and Tutti now have a child but tensions have surfaced in their marriage. These problems are exacerbated by the re-entry into Coby's life of his father, the Rabbi. Tomer, who has come out to his family, still has to deal with his father, who has tried to "cure" him of his homosexuality by sending him to a sex surrogate. Shira, back from America, struggles to revive her acting career while trying to resolve her unrequited romantic feelings for Tomer. The rest of the gang, including Hanan, Gali, Tzemer, Iggi and Maor deal with their own problems. Beautifully acted, unerringly accurate in its depiction of Israeli youth, dramatic and funny in equal measure, Florentene III maintains the high standards that have made it such a hit with past TJFF audiences. If you haven't seen it before, you're in for a real treat.

The cast of Florentene: It's not necessary to have seen the earlier seasons of Florentene to enjoy the newest batch of episodes. But here's a primer on the characters. Tutti, the innocent one of the gang, lost her virginity to married Russian immigrant Sasha, before marrying Coby, partly on the rebound. Shira, star of a hit Israeli children's series when Florentene began, walked away from her homegrown success to try to expand her range and profile but isn't having much luck doing so. Tomer is gay and was in love with Shira's boyfriend, a soldier who died in Lebanon. He began a short-lived relationship with the flamboyant Iggi, who challenged him when he tried to stay in the closet. Sad sack Hanan, meanwhile, has taken up with jaded, cynical Gali and, not surprisingly, their relationship is a tempestuous one. Tzemer, a musician, is the group's slacker, who doesn't seem to be going anywhere in life. Maor, Hanan's business partner, used to be with Shira but since they broke up, he's been playing the field while nursing a broken heart.

Screening: Sunday, April 21, 9:30 pm

## FORGING IDENTITY: HISTORY UNDER COVER

CANADIAN PREMIERE FRANCE, 1999, video, 52 min. French with English subtitles

**Director: Jacques Falck** 



The true story of Adolfo (Joseph) Kaminsky, a master forger who survived the Holocaust and saved thousands of Jews by making forged documents for them. After the war, he helped more Jews escape to Palestine, aided the fight to liberate Algeria and then worked with anti-imperialist groups in Latin America. Now in his mid-seventies, after a solitary existence, he tries to re-connect with his old war-time colleagues to make some sense of his lonely life. An evocative, atmospheric documentary about an odd man, Forging Identity raises as many questions as it answers. Did Adolfo live on the wrong side of the law during much of his life? Why won't certain of his wartime pals meet with him? What exactly does Adolfo want to accomplish with his last ditch effort to make a human connection? Forging Identity unearths a small, hidden corner of the past only to find new mysteries within. It's a conundrum within a conundrum and utterly compelling.

with

#### **KIVNIK**

CANADIAN PREMIERE USA, 1997, video, 23 min. Director: Joseph Kramer



The little told story of the rags-to-riches saga of movie mogul, business magnate and philanthropist Del Kivnik, born Mordechai Mendel Kivnik in the Russian town of Krudz. Descended from an eccentric family of would-be inventors and scholars, Del Kivnik struggled against seemingly impossible odds to make it all the way to America, where his name became synonymous with numerous inventions and causes. A comic tale, Kivnik reminds us that truth is really stranger than fiction. Or is it the reverse?

Director Joseph Kramer will be in attendance

Screening: Sunday, April 21, 1:00 pm

#### THE INNER TOUR

Co-presented with the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival TORONTO PREMIERE

An ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN production, 2001, video, 99 min. Hebrew, Arabic with English subtitles

**Director: Ra'anan Alexandrowicz** 



Before the current round of Israeli-Palestinian violence, the only way for ordinary Palestinians who didn't work in Israel to visit the country was to take a guided tour. The Inner Tour is a fascinating account of one such "sightseeing" trip undertaken in 2000. Despite their bitterness over what they see as Israeli appropriation of their land, the Palestinians' emotional return to their "homeland" forces them to confront the existence of the other, with guietly startling results. One Palestinian man, unexpectedly, decides to visit the memorial to slain Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. A Palestinian woman, whose husband is in jail for murdering an Israeli soldier, shows an understanding of what the slain man's mother must feel about losing her son. Others on the trip, who come from Palestinian towns, the refugee camps, even from Jordan, have differing reactions to what they observe around them. Their unscripted interactions, with each other and the Israeli who drives the tour bus are gripping, poignant and never predictable. They allow us to look at familiar scenes through another's eyes. In the vein of Promises, Ra'anan Alexandrowicz's film is an evocative plea for peace and understanding between two peoples.

Screening: Sunday, April 28, 12:00 Noon

#### IT KINDA SCARES ME (TOMER VE - HASRUTIM)

Co-presented with the Hot Docs Canadian International
Documentary Film Festival
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE
ISRAEL, 2001, video, 58 min.
Hebrew with English subtitles
Director: Tomer Heymann



Tough but troubled street kids from the projects in Azur, in South Tel Aviv, are brought together to prepare a play based on their personal experiences. Tomer Heymann is their group leader, guiding the production. The boys quickly bond with him, but when he comes out to them as gay, they're forced to deal with their prejudices and how they feel about the man they revere as a role model. Their reactions, and the play itself, will surprise you. A probing look at an unacknowledged aspect of Israeli society.

Best Documentary, Israeli Academy Awards, 2001 Best Documentary Award, Haifa International Film Festival, 2001

Screening: Sunday, May 5, at 5:00 pm (Royal Cinema)

#### **JE ME SOUVIENS (I REMEMBER)**

WORLD PREMIERE
CANADA, 2002, video, 45 min.
French with English subtitles
Director: Eric R. Scott



The dirty and still controversial reality of Quebec anti-Semitism, then and now, is examined in Eric R. Scott's galvanizing documentary. The hateful language of Quebec nationalist icon Lionel Groulx and scholar Esther Délisle's exposé of the man's racism, are among the touchstones of this probing film, which begins in the '30s and moves to the present. French Canada may not be worse than English Canada in its shameful treatment of and attitudes towards the Jews, but as Je me souviens makes abundantly clear, the admission of anti-Semitism in La Belle Province has been slower in coming. A timely and important reminder of Canadian history that many would still like to see buried.

Director Eric R. Scott will be in attendance

with

#### THE STREET

CANADA, 1976, 35mm, 10 min. Director: Carolyn Leaf

A young boy, growing up in Montreal, is forced to confront mortality when faced with the illness of his beloved grandmother. Carolyn Leaf lovingly adapts Mordecai Richler's poignant short story in this classic animated National Film Board production. **Dedicated** 

to the memory of Mordecai Richler (1931 - 2001)

Screening: Sunday, April 28, 2:30 pm

#### A JEWISH WEDDING

United Kingdom, 1997, video, 50 min.

**Director: Stephen Walker** 



She's Jewish, he's not. Their impending nuptials provide a quirky window on one couple's inter-marriage experiences. Steve's conversion to Judaism, complete with circumcision and ritual bath, his parents' puzzlement and Michaela's own family's concerns, add up to a delightful, off-beat and touching comedy, laced with the unique eccentricity and charm that only the British seem able to pull off with aplomb. Part of the BBC's Modern Times series, A Jewish Wedding is the most fun you'll ever have under a wedding canopy. (Retrospective TJFF 1998)

with

#### **CHICKS IN WHITE SATIN**

USA, 1993, 16mm, 30 min. Director: Elaine Holliman.

After an eight year relationship, two women decide to have a traditional Jewish wedding — chupah, wedding dresses and all. We watch them maneuver through their wedding plans and family relationships to the big day. A big hit at Sundance and international film festivals. (Retrospective TJFF 1994) In memory of Debra Plotkin, screening made possible by the filmmaker.

Academy Award Nominee, Best Documentary short, 1994

Screening: Thursday, April 25, 1:00 pm

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#### **KEEP ON WALKING**

**CANADIAN PREMIERE** 

USA, 2000, video, 52 min.

Directors: Tana Ross, Jesper Sorensen, Freke Vuijst,

Vibeke Winding



Meet Joshua Nelson, gospel singer, preacher and African-American Jew. Raised by his Jewish mother, he's managed to integrate his religion and profession as he flies from his home base in Newark, New Jersey to spread his word to other points in the U.S. and beyond. It's a fascinating musical journey, narrated by an equally fascinating man who has to bridge the spiritual gulf between two very diverse American communities. And you haven't lived until you've heard a joyous gospel choir sing Adon Olam.

Joshua Nelson will be in attendance on April 24

Screenings: Monday April 22, 1:15 pm and Wednesday,

April 24, 9:30 pm

Afternoon programme will be screened with the short film A Righteous Man: Nelson Mandela and the Jews of South Africa (see page 31)

LINDA AND WILL HECHTER

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Programme generously sponsored by

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#### KINKY FRIEDMAN: PROUD TO BE AN ASSHOLE FROM EL PASO

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE
NETHERLANDS, 2001, video, 54 min.

**Director: Simone de Vries** 



Kinky Friedman: Proud to be an Asshole from El Paso is as irreverent and outrageous as its title. The inimitable Richard "Kinky" Friedman first appeared in the 1970's with a distinctive repertoire of country-rock tunes that blended the salacious satire of Frank Zappa with the social consciousness of Bob Dylan to create a heady brew that provoked as much as it entertained. Kinky Friedman and the Texas Jewboys were truly one of a kind and their songs, including such trenchant ditties as 'They Don't Make Jews like Jesus Anymore' and 'Ride Em, Jewboy', which dealt with the Holocaust, were to put it mildly, the stuff that engendered protests. With his career flagging in the 80's, Kinky remade himself into a mystery writer. His fifteen (to date) acclaimed novels feature a Manhattan gumshoe named, you guessed it, Kinky Friedman, who investigates murders and other assorted crimes, filtered through a Southern-Jewish prism that lets him stand out from the pack. With testimonies from fellow musicians, Willie Nelson and Lyle Lovett, as well as gushing praise from rabid fan Bill Clinton and comments from Kinky's supportive father, the film paints a rich portrait of a reclusive, (slightly sad) but forthright individual. It's proof positive that Friedman deserves more than the cult status he's been saddled with over the years. It's a real treat.

Kinky Friedman may be in attendance

with

#### **MORTIMER GRIFFIN AND SHALINSKY**

CANADA, 1985, 16mm, 24 min.

**Director: Mort Ransen** 

Writers: Mort Ransen, Gerald Wexler

Shalinsky (Paul Soles) is utterly convinced that his non-Jewish English professor, Mortimer Griffin (Ron Lea) is really a Jew. Griffin denies it, but Shalinsky won't take no for an answer. A wickedly funny adaptation of a Mordecai Richler short story. An Atlantis / National Film Board of Canada co-production.

Dedicated to the memory of Mordecai Richler (1931 - 2001).

also with

#### THE NOSE JOB JEW

CANADIAN PREMIERE USA, 2001, video, 5 min. Director: Micah Smith

Writers: Micah Smith. Tim Novikoff



Tim (Tim Novikoff) doesn't look Jewish and is always mistaken for a gentile. That was a problem for him when he was a kid but it doesn't matter now that he's dating a Jewish woman who prefers to go out with non—Jews. Then he's is invited to her house for dinner. A cutting comedy about reality and perception.

Screening: Sunday, April 21, 4:45 pm

#### L'CHAYIM, COMRADE STALIN!

**NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE** 

USA, 2002, 35mm, 94 min.

English, Russian, Yiddish with English subtitles

**Director: Yale Strom** 



Twenty years before the birth of the modern state of Israel, Stalin decided to establish the Jewish Autonomous Region of Birobidzhan in the Soviet Union's Far East, closer to Korea than to Moscow. His motives for doing so were not laudatory – he wanted to control the country's Jews and diminish what he felt was their malignant influence - but, nonetheless, Jews from all over, including Argentina, the U.S. and England, flocked to this promised socialist "utopia". Stalin eventually launched purges against the Jewish intelligentsia and, in particular, the J.A.R's foreign-born Jews, whom he branded 'capitalist spies', but the Jewish Autonomous Region survives to this day. Accompanied by an affable but obliviously anti-Semitic guide, Director Yale Strom (Carpati, TJFF 1996) set out to find out if it is still a Jewish state and what happened to the Jews who remained there. His search yielded fascinating results in this strange twist on the theme of Yews from Distant Lands'. Narrated by Ron Perlman (Beauty and the Beast).

Director Yale Strom will be in attendance

Screening: Thursday, April 25, 3:00 pm

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#### **LATE MARRIAGE**

ISRAEL / FRANCE, 2001, 35mm, 100 min.

Hebrew, Georgian with English subtitles

Writer / Director: Dovar Kosashvili

Cast: Lior Louie Ashkenazi, Ronit Elkabetz, Moni Mosho-

nov, Lili Kosashvili



Handsome, charming and talented, 31-year-old Zaza would seem to have it all. But the fact that he is not married with children is a tragedy. It dwarfs all his accomplishments, according to his traditional Georgian-born parents. Despite them schlepping him to meet all manner of prospective brides, Zaza continues to resist their blandishments. He already has a girlfriend but since she's a 34-year-old Moroccan divorcee with a six-year-old child, she's deemed unsuitable by his family. It's a relationship they intend to stop—by any means necessary. Serious and satirical, Late Marriage is a ribald, cutting and perceptive film that avoids easy targets—Zaza's parents are anything but stereotypes—while pondering the meaning and pitfalls of following ancient traditions. Kosashvili, who cast his own mother as Zaza's mother in the movie, introduces us to a world we know little about; in turn Late Marriage announces a major new Israeli filmmaker on the scene.

**Warning:** This film contains scenes of explicit sex and strong sexuality.

Special Jury Award – Silver Alexander; Best Screenplay, Thessaloniki Film Festival, Greece, 2001 Wolgin Award, Best Feature, Jerusalem International Film Festival, 2001

Best Picture; Best Director:; Best Screenplay; Best Actor (Lior Louie Ashkenazi); Best Actress (Ronit Elkabetz); Best Supporting Actor (Moni Moshonov); Best Supporting Actress (Lilli Kosashvilli): Best Editing, Best Sound, Israeli Academy Awards, 2001

with

#### **EXPECTING**

CANADIAN PREMIERE
ISRAEL, 2001, 16mm, 25 min.
Hebrew with English subtitles
Writer / Director: Sigalit Liphshitz
Cast: Dana Ivgi, Ilanit Dada – Landvi



Carefree Sofia, who is single, fears she is pregnant. Her judgmental, religious sister Gila, who is married, has been trying to have a child for 6 1/2 years. When their pregnancy tests get mixed up, matters come to a head. Another gem from The Sam Spiegel Film & Television School, Jerusalem and director Sigalit Liphshitz (Cockfight, TJFF 2001).

Special Mention, Jerusalem International Film Festival, 2001 Second Prize, Mexico International Festival of Film Schools,

Screening: Monday, April 22, 7:00 pm

#### **LEO UND CLAIRE (LEO AND CLAIRE)**

**TORONTO PREMIERE** 

GERMANY, 2000, 35mm, 105 min.

**German with English subtitles** 

**Director: Joseph Vilsmaier** 

Writers; Reinhard Klooss, Joseph Vilsmaier

Cast: Michael Degen, Franziska Petri, Suzanne von Borsody



The true story of Leo Katzenberger, a prosperous German Jew condemned to death by guillotine in 1934, for his supposed affair with Irene, a Christian woman. Despite being born in Germany and long considered a pillar of the community, Leo, who is happily married to Claire, is immediately suspect when the flirtatious Irene rents an apartment from him and begins a close friendship with the older man, a friendship that may be something more than innocent. The Nazis eventually bring Leo to trial, under the recently enacted Nuremberg Laws, which forbid sexual relations between Jews and gentiles. His case becomes a cause célèbre. Director Joseph Vilsmaier, whose earlier film The Harmonists was also a tale of Jews suddenly stripped of their rights in fascist Germany, delivers another fine drama which compellingly explores the line between love and friendship in a hate-filled time.

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#### SILENT SONG

CANADA, 2000, 16mm, 6 min. Director: Elida Schogt

An archival photograph of a young boy playing an accordion in a concentration camp, just liberated by the Allies, prompts a graceful meditation on memory, survival and hope. Another haunting gem from Torontonian Elida Schogt (Zyklon Portrait, The Walnut Tree).

Screenings: Tuesday, April 23, 9:30 pm and Wednesday, April 24, 1:00 pm
Evening programme will be screened with the short film Silent Song

#### THE MAD ADVENTURES OF RABBI JACOB

FRANCE, 1974, 35mm, 96 min.

French with English subtitles

**Director: Gérard Oury** 

Writers: Danièle Thompson, Josy Eisenberg

Starring: Louis De Funès, Suzy Delair,

Marcel Dalio, Miou-Miou



Sparks fly when a bigoted French businessman is forced to pose as a Chasidic Rabbi. This uproarious comedy stars Louis de Funès, one of France's most loved performers. It's pure slapshtick, with a dash of romance and a soupcon of political humour added for good measure. Classic comedy at its finest. Available in its original form for the first time in many years. From BETA Film GmbH.

with

#### LA VIE, LA MORT ET LE FOOT

CANADIAN PREMIERE
BELGIUM, 2000, 35mm, 8 min.
French with English subtitles
Director: Sam Gabarski

Is there football in heaven? Two soccer nuts are about to find out. A great joke from filmmaker Sam Gabarski (La Dinde, TJFF 1999).

Screening: Wednesday, April 24, 7:15 pm

## MAMADRAMA: THE JEWISH MOTHER IN CINEMA

CANADIAN PREMIERE
USA / AUSTRALIA, 2001, 16mm, 73 min.
English, Yiddish, Hebrew with English subtitles
Director: Monique Schwarz



From the strong matriarch in such classic Yiddish films as A Brivele Der Mamen to the shrewish, overbearing mother in Where's Poppa?, the Jewish mother has undergone various cinematic incarnations throughout the years. Juxtaposing footage and remembrances of her own European-born mother with that of the mothers in classic Hollywood movies, Australian filmmaker Monique Schwarz examines the perplexing phenomenon of the Jewish mother and why she's been portrayed the way she has in the Yiddish cinema of Eastern Europe, in America and in Israel. The answers will surprise you. Among the interviewed experts in this thought provoking, insightful and entertaining documentary are film critics Michael Medved and J. Hoberman, directors Paul Mazursky (Next Stop, Greenwich Village)

and Larry Peerce (Heartland) and film scholars Sharon Rivo and Amy Kronish. A movie that will provoke discussion.

Director Monique Schwarz will be in attendance

Screening: Tuesday, April 23, 7:15 pm

Spotlight on Women Filmmakers generously sponsored by



#### MINYAN IN KAIFENG

CANADIAN PREMIERE
USA, 2001, video, 73 min.
English, Chinese with English subtitles
Directors: Steven Calcote, Jonathan Shulman



What is a Jew? In 1997, twelve young Jews (including the film directors), from the USA, Israel and Australia, all living in China, decided to visit the northern Chinese town of Kaifeng for the Sabbath. Their goal: to find what remained of the ancient Jewish community of Kaifeng, founded by Persian Jews who came to China in the 12th century. Welcomed by the Chinese Emperor, those Jews from distant lands quickly established themselves in the Imperial Court, built a synagogue and over the centuries blended into the accepting and non-prejudiced local community. Eventually the Jews assimilated so completely that they all but disappeared as an identifiable group. There are still, however, some Kaifeng Chinese who identify as Jewish, even though their only religious attribute is that they don't eat pork. This presents a dilemma for the young foreign visitors to Kaifeng, who a year later, are still unable to agreeamongst themselves whether these people can really be considered Jewish. A bittersweet documentary that poses age-old questions about religion, beliefs and perceptions. Minyan in Kaifeng is a heart-warming and thoughtful glimpse into a Jewish world unlike any other. Narrated by Leonard Nimoy.

Co-director Jonathan Shulman will be in attendance

with

#### **UNHEARD VOICES**

CANADIAN PREMIERE
USA, 2001, video, 11 min.
English, Spanish with English subtitles
Director: Beth Toni Kruvant

The unsolved bombings in the early 1990s of the Israeli Embassy and Jewish Community Centre in Buenos Aires left Argentina's Jews fearful and unnerved. Argentina's recent economic problems have driven many of the Jewish middle-class into poverty. Will the country's Jews survive as a viable community?

Screening: Sunday, April 28, 4:15 pm

Programme generously sponsored by **SHIRLEY GRANOVSKY** 

## MOTL DER OPERATOR (MOTL THE OPERATOR)

USA, 1939, 35mm, 88 min. Yiddish with English subtitles

**Director: Joseph Seiden** 

Writer: Chaim Tauber, based on his play

Cast: Chaim Tauber, Malvina Rappel, Yetta Zwerling,

Jacob Zanger



The TJFF and the National Center for Jewish Film are proud to present this newly restored version of a seminal Yiddish classic, with music by acclaimed composer Sholem Secunda and an appearance by famed cantor Laibele Waldman. Focusing on a labour dispute in the garment district of New York City, the film survives as an important historical document highlighting the hardships of the Jewish immigrant experience in America. Motl, a poor labourer, loving husband and new father, leads cloakmakers in a strike for better working conditions. When he is severely injured by strikebreakers, his wife, Esther, and infant son are left destitute, with tragic consequences for all. "A sorrowful and tragic melodrama in the best Yiddish tradition..." The Film Daily

Restored and dedicated to the memory of Jessie-Haberfeld Freedman, Louis Freedman and Morris Haberfeld.

Screening: Sunday, April 21, 11:00 am

#### **MY DEAR CLARA**

CANADA, 2001, video, 48 min.

**Director: Garry Beitel** 



When Montrealer Clara Greenspan, director Garry Beitel's aunt, died recently, he discovered a cache of letters written to her husband Chaim Blum, whom she had married in Berlin. The letters revealed that there was much more to Clara than he had thought. Hers was a classic love story, about a couple who could not be united because Canada's stringent, sexist and anti-Semitic immigration laws did not allow a woman to sponsor a husband (though the reverse could happen). The authorities also did not want Jewish refugees to come to Canada. The stubborn Clara, however, persisted in her efforts to save her husband even as she worked for the Communist party of Canada and tried to get on with her life. Utilising terrific archival footage and the descriptive letters of Chaim and Clara, read by actors, Garry Beitel (Bonjour Shalom) paints an indelible portrait of a determined woman, a turbulent time and a whole generation of young Jewish activists. Rarely has history been so immediate and gripping.

Director Garry Beitel will be in attendance

with

#### TSIPA AND VOLF

CANADIAN PREMIERE

USA, 2001, video, 20 min.

English, Russian with English subtitles

**Director: Daniel Gamburg** 

A video portrait of the loving marriage of Tsipa and Volf, who survived the Holocaust, lost their families and then found each other in middle age. But the celebration of their 35th anniversary and Volf's 85th birthday is tainted by the shadow of Alzheimer's, which changes their lives yet again. A sweet, and memorable tribute to true love, filmed by the couple's grandson.

Screening: Friday, April 26, 3:00 pm

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## THE OPTIMISTS: THE STORY OF THE RESCUE OF THE BULGARIAN JEWS FROM THE HOLOCAUST

**CANADIAN PREMIERE** 

USA, 2000, video, 82 min.

English, Hebrew and Bulgarian with English subtitles Director : Jacky Comforty





Why and how did the small country of Bulgaria manage to save all of its 50,000 Jews, while the Nazis were exterminating Jews in other countries throughout Europe? This startling documentary shines a warm light on the little known, remarkable story of a decent country and populace, who despite an official alliance with Nazi Germany, did the right thing when few others cared to do so. From the church to the political establishment to the farming class, they stood up to hatred and bigotry and did all they could to rescue their Jewish neighbours.

Even Bulgaria's King Boris, despite allowing 15,000 Jews from Thrace and Macedonia to be sent to the concentration camps, managed to consistently delay implementing the Nazis' orders for the deportation of Bulgaria's Jews. Filmmakers Jacky and Lisa Comforty, whose families were among the Jews who were saved, conducted interviews in Israel, Bulgaria and the U.S. They utilised telling archival footage to get at the answers in this heartfelt paean to genuine heroism. Like last year's TJFF film Sugihara: Conspiracy of Kindness, but on a larger scale, The Optimists offers a beacon of hope in a largely hopeless time.

Co - winner, Peace Prize, Berlin International Film Festival, 2001 Winner, First Prize, Jerusalem International Film Festival, 2000

Director Jacky Comforty will be in attendance

Screenings: Sunday, April 21, 2:45 pm and Monday, April 22, 11:00 am

Programme generously sponsored by THE GERALD SCHWARTZ

AND HEATHER REISMAN FOUNDATION

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#### **SLUMS OF BEVERLY HILLS**

USA, 1998, 35mm, 91 min.

Writer / Director: Tamara Jenkins

Cast: Natasha Lyonne, Alan Arkin, Marisa Tomei,

Lisa Kudrow, Carl Reiner



Tamara Jenkins' semi-autobiographical drama is a different look at Jewish life. One step ahead of the law and the landlord, Murray Abramowitz, a shady and increasingly desperate salesman (Alan Arkin), carts his resisting children through Beverly Hills. His itinerant lifestyle is particularly tough on his daughter, Vivian, who is just coming of age, and rebels against her strict father by escaping into drugs and illicit sex. With a flamboyant, startling performance by Marisa Tomei (In the Bedroom) as Vivian's sensual, drug-dependent cousin, Rita, and strong supporting work by Lisa Kudrow (Friends) and Carl Reiner (Ocean's Eleven), Slums of Beverly Hills shatters stereotypes, Jewish perceptions and their relationship to the American dream. It's a unique, original road movie, deserving of a wide audience.

with

#### **AVENUE AMY - THE SISTER EFFECT**

CANADIAN PREMIERE
USA, 2000, video, 12 min.

**Director: Joan Raspo** 

From the animated Avenue Amy series, with sexologist / columnist Amy Sohn, the amusing story of what happens when Amy meets a MOT (member of the tribe) only to find out he has very specific hang-ups about Jewish girls.

also with

#### **GRRLYSHOW**

CANADIAN PREMIERE
USA, 2000, video, 18 min.
Director: Kara Herold



Welcome to the world of zines: self-published, cheaply made but potent satirical magazines, launched by young feminists, aimed at young women, and challenging traditional society and media. The creators of these zines, many of whom are Jewish, have an agenda but don't take themselves too seriously. How can they, when their publications go by such titles as Bitch, Plotz and Bamboo Girl? Grrlyshow is a fun, entertaining and educational romp.

Screening: Monday, April 22, 9:30 pm

Spotlight on Women Filmmakers generously sponsored by



#### **SOBIBOR, OCTOBER 14, 1943, 4 PM**

**CANADIAN PREMIERE** 

Co-presented with Cinematheque Ontario FRANCE, 2001, 35mm, 97 min.

French, Hebrew with English subtitles

**Director: Claude Lanzmann** 



On October 14, 1943, Jewish prisoners of the Sobibor concentration camp, led by a Soviet Red Army officer named Alexander Petchersky, killed twelve German guards before 365 inmates escaped into the forest. As a result of that unexpected act, Sobibor, where 250,000 Jews had already been put to death, was shut down. Director Claude Lanzmann interviewed Yehuda Lerner, one of the leaders of the Sobibor rebellion in 1979, but chose not to use the footage in Shoah, his epic documentary about the Holocaust. As with A Visitor from the Living (TJFF 2000), he fashioned a separate—and remarkable film on the subject. Asking questions in French, permitting the then 52-year-old Lerner to respond in Hebrew before a translator renders the answers in French, allows the heroic story of the Sobibor revolt to unfold leisurely. Lerner's answers are juxtaposed against bustling scenes of the modern cities (Minsk, Lublin), where he made his trek to the Sobibor camp, as well as the places where he escaped eight times from the Germans, who, inexplicably; did not execute him when he was recaptured. Unusual as his story may be, it is Lerner's strangely impassive manner, betrayed only by a twitch at the corner of his face that rivets the viewer. Like The Grey Zone, "Terrorists" in Retirement and The Optimists, other films about

resistance at this year's TJFF, Sobibor, October 14, 1943, 4 pm unveils the face of genuine heroism.

Screenings: Thursday, April 25, 9:30 pm and Friday, April 26, 1:00 pm

Weekday Matinees presented by

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#### **STRANGE FRUIT**

CANADIAN PREMIERE
USA, 2001, video, 57 min.
Director: Joel Katz
Narrated by Dorothy Thigpen



arles Peterson, courtes

Not many people know that "Strange Fruit", the controversial song about the shameful lynching of blacks in the United States, made famous by the late Billie Holiday, was, in fact, written by a Jewish schoolteacher from the Bronx named Abel Meeropol. That's one of the many fascinating facts revealed in Joel Katz's illuminating look at one of the most controversial, disquieting and impactful songs ever to emerge from popular culture. But Strange Fruit is more than just the story of a tune. Black-Jewish relations, McCarthyism—and a surprising connection to Ethel and Julius Rosenberg—plus the whole backdrop of protest movements and committed artists are also part of this historic tale. It's a fitting tribute to a song, a man and an era.

with

#### A RIGHTEOUS MAN: NELSON MANDELA AND THE JEWS OF SOUTH AFRICA

CANADIAN PREMIERE SOUTH AFRICA, 2000, video, 24 min.

**Director: Ingrid Gavshon** 

From his beginnings as a lawyer and activist through to the present day, Nelson Mandela has always had a warm relationship with the South African Jewish community. He was taken on by a Jewish law firm, at a time when no other whites had the courage to employ blacks in professional positions. His leading political supporter, Helen Suzman, was Jewish, as were many of his compatriots in the African National Congress, the organization that led the fight against apartheid. Upon his release from prison, after 27 years, Mandela retained his ties with Suzman and his other Jewish friends. In 2000, he was invited to preside over the opening of the Jewish museum in Johannesburg. A touching tribute to a hero from a

Director Ingrid Gavshon will be in attendance

community that has always respected him.

Screening: Sunday, April 28, 6:30 pm

#### **TAQASIM**

CANADIAN PREMIERE
ISRAEL, 2000, video, 43 min.
Hebrew, Arabic with English subtitles
Director: Duki Dror



Even after 47 years in Israel, violinist Felix Mizrahi retains a strong attachment to his roots in Egypt. He's also haunted by the memory of his older brother,

Farag Ibrahim Mizrahi, who played with some of Egypt's greatest talents but died tragically at age 25. When Felix decides to return to Cairo to search for lost recordings of his brother's work, he also revisits the sites of his childhood memories and of Egypt's once thriving and vibrant Jewish community. Interacting with the Egyptians he meets, who harbour him no ill will, makes for fascinating cinema verité and demonstrates that political differences aside, music has no borders.

with

#### **DUST**

CANADIAN PREMIERE
UKRAINE, 2001, 35mm, 29 min.
Russian with English subtitles
Director: Michale Boganim



An impressionistic account of present day Jewish life in Odessa, formerly part of the Soviet Union and now part of Ukraine, voiced by a few of the surviving members of the port city's Jewish community. The spotlight shines on a trio of women who wouldn't be out of place in a Tennessee Williams production. Their observations and reminiscences, play out against the backdrop of deserted, barren streets, which are evidence of the decline and near disappearance of a once vibrant community. From the National Film & Television School, London.

Screening: Tuesday, April 23, 1:15 pm

Weekday Matinees presented by



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## TED ALLAN: MINSTREL BOY OF THE 20th CENTURY

CANADA, 2002, video, 57 min.

**Directors: Merrily Weisbord, Tanya Ballantyne Tree** 



One of Canada's most distinctive talents, the late Ted Allan was a renowned playwright (The Secret of the World), screenwriter (Lies My Father Told Me; Bethune: The Making of a Hero) and author (Don't You Know Anybody Else?) He was also a real character. Raised like Mordecai Richler, in Montreal's scrappy St. Urbain Street neighbourhood, the idealistic Allan went, as a young man, to Spain to fight the fascists, and later to England where he was one of the pioneering writers of the early days of British television. Back in Canada, his career was adversely affected by the Communist blacklist. In his later years, he achieved success at home and in the U.S. Footage of Allan's staged readings, his comments on his lengthy career and life, and interviews with friends and family, including his adoring children, actress Gena Rowlands (Love Streams) and director Ted Kotcheff (The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz) add up to a unique portrait of a unique individual, whose like we shall not see again. This is the longer Director's cut of the film.

Co- director Merrily Weisbord, who was a close friend of Ted Allan's, will be in attendance

Screening: Thursday, April 25, 5:30 pm

Spotlight on Women Filmmakers generously sponsored by



#### "TERRORISTS" IN RETIREMENT

**CANADIAN PREMIERE** 

FRANCE, 1983, 16mm, 83 min. French with English subtitles Director: Mosco Boucault



In February 1944, the Nazis executed 24 Resistance fighters who had been captured three months earlier in France. Named the Manouchian group, after its Armenian leader, the poet Missik Manouchian, the men (mostly Jewish emigrants from eastern Europe), were condemned as 'Jewish, foreign-born communists and terrorists" on posters plastered all over Paris by the Nazis. While they used the immigrant and religious status of the executed fighters for propaganda value, "Terrorists" in Retirement suggests that who they were may also have contributed to their abandonment and possible betrayal—by the French Resistance and French Communist party. Thirty-eight years later, the surviving members of the greater Immigrant unit, which waged constant and highly effective guerrilla warfare against the Nazis, met in Paris to reminiscence and to talk to filmmaker Mosco Boucault (Un Criime à Abidian). He profiles seven of them in great detail. He dramatizes the personal stories of these so-called "terrorists", who never targeted civilians, with great vividness and drama. Banned in France because of its charges against the Resistance and Communist Party, "Terrorists" in Retirement has finally been brought to light, shedding a needed spotlight on a shameful moment in history.

with

#### 1939

CANADA, 2001, video, 9 min. Directors: Mark Adam, Allen Kaeja

As flames lick at the outside of their synagogue, defiant Jews celebrate their religion and their resistance to Nazi tyranny. From the Kaeja d'Dance troupe (Witnessed, TJFF 1999; Sarah, TJFF 2000). A Bravo!FACT (Foundation to Assist Canadian Talent) production.

Screening: Wednesday, April 24, 3:00 pm

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#### A TICKLE IN THE HEART

GERMANY/USA, 1996, 35mm, 84 min.

**Director: Stephan Schwietert** 

Writers: Stephan Schwietert, Thomas Kufus



The revival of Klezmer music by such young bands as The Flying Bulgars and Brave Old World has tended to eclipse the oldtimers who spent their careers performing this European Jewish folk music. Max, Willie and Julie Epstein, three elderly New York brothers, were once the top klezmorim around. Now retired to Forida, they've been given a second lease on their musical life and have taken their act on the road, filmed by young German director Schwietert. Genuine characters and terrific raconteurs, the Epstein's play, sing and perform, nowhere more touchingly than in Berlin. Rousing entertainment, A Tickle in the Heart will do just that. Enjoy! (Retrospective TJFF 1997)

Screening: Friday, April 26, 11:00 am

Weekday Matinees presented by

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#### TILL DEATH DO US PART

**CANADIAN PREMIERE** 

ISRAEL, 1998, video, 59 min.

**English, Hebrew with English subtitles** 

**Director: Nili Tal** 



In 1991, a 19-year-old Kibbutznik, Einav Rogel, was brutally murdered by her possessive, jealous boyfriend, Gilad Sheman. He was sentenced to life imprisonment but a new Israeli law, which mandated that sentences be reduced if the accused was found not to be of sound mind at the time of the crime, meant that Gilad had a chance to eventually go free. Veteran director Nili Tal follows the two families, bound together by the horrendous crime, as they sit in court, listen to the lawyers' and psychologists' endless arguments about the case, and try to make sense of how everything went wrong. Not so much a case of a miscarriage of justice, Till Death Do Us Part, instead, unearths the hidden reality of domestic violence and powerfully asks how and why Einav was allowed to die.

Director Nili Tal will be in attendance

Screening: Monday, April 22, 5:00 pm

Spotlight on Women Filmmakers generously sponsored by



#### TIME OF FAVOR (HAHESDER)

ISRAEL, 2001, 35mm, 94 min. Hebrew with English subtitles

Writer / Director: Joseph Cedar

Cast: Aki Avni, Tinkerbell, Edan Alterman, Assi Dayan



Ripped from today's headlines, the award-winning Time of Favor postulates the unthinkable: a plot by religious Jews to destroy the fabled Al-Aqsa Mosque, an occurrence which would unleash war on the region. But it's also the story of a love triangle between Menachem (Aki Avni) soldier and settler, Pini (Edan Alterman) an extraordinary Talmudic scholar and Michal (Tinkerbell) the rebellious daughter of a Rabbi, whom both men love. Director Joseph Cedar is himself an Orthodox Jew, which accounts for the shaded portrait of the religious settlers, but he does not ignore the perils of fanaticism, which can lurk at the core of strong religious belief. That danger is best exemplified in the film by Assi Dayan's deft portrayal of Rabbi Metzler, Michal's charismatic father. Thought provoking, the slickly made, fast moving and gripping Time of Favor is one of the more original Israeli films of recent years.

Best Picture; Best Screenplay; Best Actor (Aki Avni); Best Actress (Tinkerbell); Best Editing; Best Cinematography, Israeli Academy Awards, 2000

with

#### **OUESTIONS**

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE ISRAEL, 2001, 16mm, 17 min. Hebrew with English subtitles Director: Shani Tills

A religious soldier confronts his attraction to a non-religious woman. Will he choose between his beliefs or his heart? From Hadassah College's Film and Television School.

Screening: Saturday, April 27, 9:15 pm

Programme generously sponsored by



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#### **UNDERDOGS**

ISRAEL, 1996, video, 85 min.

Hebrew with English subtitles

Directors: Doron Tsabari, Rino Tzror



A probing documentary look at religious divisions, societal expectations and Israel's obsessive sports culture, Underdogs is the fairy tale story of the Beit Shean soccer team, which has made it to Israel's National Soccer League, a big deal for this poor, soccer-mad Orthodox Sephardic town. The chance to compete against the rich Ashkenazi teams from Tel Aviv, Haifa and Netanya is a tremendous ego boost for Beit Shean. After a great start, Beit Shean is faltering, and if they keep losing games, they face getting bumped down to the minor leagues. As the losses mount, the tension increases and an incisive portrait of Israeli society emerges. A thrilling - and humorous - true life saga, Underdogs will have you on the edge of your seat. It's much more than a soccer movie. (Retrospective TJFF 1997)

Best Documentary Film, Israeli Cinema Academy

with

#### THE WORST JEWISH FOOTBALL TEAM IN THE WORLD

United Kingdom, 1999, 16 mm, 9 min.

**Director: Gary Ogin** 



The Worst Jewish Football Team refers to a North Manchester soccer troupe comprised of 11-year-old Orthodox boys. They're so bad that their sponsor, a local optometrist, thinks they need to have their eyes checked. But the boys don't care. They love playing the game and for them that's what counts. A timely and funny reminder that it's not whether you win or lose... (Retrospective TJFF 2000)

Screening: Wednesday, April 24, 11:00 am

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