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EDITOR'S NOTE: Please contact the Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life at rujff@rci.rutgers.edu, 848-932-4166, or visit BildnerCenter.rutgers.edu

RUTGERS JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL TO RUN OCTOBER 29 – NOVEMBER 9

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. – From a U.S. premiere, to a sneak preview of a new film, the fifteenth annual Rutgers Jewish Film Festival brings Central New Jersey an exciting roster of diverse, award winning, international films, as well as discussions with filmmakers, scholars, and other noteworthy speakers who enrich the film going experience. Held October 29 – November 9, all screenings and special events will take place at the Regal Cinema Commerce Center, 2399 Route 1 South, in North Brunswick. The festival is sponsored by Rutgers' Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life and made possible through a grant from the Karma Foundation.

Through dramas and documentaries, the festival explores a broad range of topics, including: Israeli history and society, Jews in France, and issues of race and identity in America. Several comedies are offered this year, including *Hunting Elephants* a hilarious Israeli bank robbery caper featuring Sir Patrick Stewart, and *Quality Balls: The David Steinberg Story*. The East Coast premiere of *Above and Beyond* opens the festival. The documentary tells the little-known story of a group of World War II pilots who volunteered to fight for Israel during its War of Independence in 1948. The film's producer Nancy Spielberg will make a guest appearance and answer questions after the screening. Opening night also includes a buffet dinner and dessert reception for Patrons of the festival. Sam Klausner and Simon Spiegelman, volunteers with the Israeli air force and infantry in 1948, will participate in a panel discussion at the matinee screening on Nov. 4.

Additional notable offerings include the United States premiere of the French drama *The Art Dealer*, in which the protagonist's chance encounter with a stolen painting leads her on an extraordinary journey into her family's history during World War II. Dr. Brigitte Sion, an expert in the subjects of looted art, restitution, and commemoration, will speak following the film.

Special film screenings for both high school and college students are also in the schedule. The festival partners with Rutgers Littman Families Holocaust Resource Center to present a free matinee screening of *No Place on Earth* for public school students. And one festival film will be shown at Rutgers Cinema on the Livingston Campus to make the festival more accessible to the Rutgers community.

On the final Sunday of the festival, audiences have the rare opportunity to participate in a sneak preview of a new film with the filmmaker before it is released to the public. While details about the film cannot be released before the screening, viewers will enjoy “a delicious journey into the heart of American Jewish nostalgia.”

Closing night features *The Green Prince*, a riveting Israeli documentary about Mosab Hassan Yousef, the oldest son of a founding member of Hamas, who became a spy for Israel. The film’s director, Nadav Schirman, has been invited to the screening.

Ticket sales begin on September 28 and advance purchase is strongly recommended. For festival schedule and ticket information, visit the website BildnerCenter.rutgers.edu, email rujff@rci.rutgers.edu, or call 848-932-4166. Film tickets are priced from \$6 to \$12.

Following is a full list of films and speakers at the festival:

East Coast Premiere

ABOVE AND BEYOND (In English)

In 1948, a group of pilots who were veterans of World War II volunteered to fight for Israel in its War of Independence. As members of Machal, volunteers from abroad, they helped turn the tide of the war that threatened to annihilate Israel at the very moment of its birth, and they laid the groundwork for the Israeli Air Force. The film presents historical footage and new interviews with pilots from the 1948 war to present an extraordinary, little-known episode in Israel’s history.

Screenings: Wednesday, October 29, at 7:30 p.m., with Nancy Spielberg, producer. Tuesday, November 4, at Noon, with Sam Klausner and Simon Spiegelman, volunteers with the Israeli air force and infantry in 1948.

AFTERMATH (Polish with English subtitles)

Brothers Franek and Jozek Kalina upset their fellow Polish villagers when they rescue Jewish headstones used to pave roads during the war. Breaking the long silence pervading the village, the brothers unearth secrets long buried in the village’s past. A tense thriller inspired by historical events, the film confronts this dark period in Poland’s history.

Screenings: Thursday, October 30 at 3:30 p.m., speaker TBA. Thursday, November 6, at 7:30 p.m., with Prof. Irena Grudzinska Gross, Dept. of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Princeton University.

United States Premiere

THE ART DEALER (French with English subtitles)

A chance encounter with a stolen painting leads Esther on a journey into her family's history during World War II. In this film, part thriller, part family drama, her quest uncovers family liaisons that are best kept hidden as she treads the risky path to the truth.

Screenings: Sunday, November 2, at 3:45 p.m., with Brigitte Sion, New York University. Saturday, November 8, at 9:30 p.m.

LITTLE WHITE LIE (In English)

Lacey Schwartz grew up in a typical upper-middle-class Jewish household in Woodstock, New York, with loving parents and a strong sense of her Jewish identity. Despite open questioning about how a white girl could have such dark skin, it was only when she went to college that she finally confronted this question. *Little White Lie* follows Lacey's quest to reconcile the hidden pieces of her life and heal her relationships in order to move past the legacy of family secrets that had defined her life and identity.

Screenings: Sunday, November 2, at 4:30 p.m., with Lacey Schwartz, director. Tuesday, November 4, at 4:30 p.m., with Lacey Schwartz, director (via Skype).

24 DAYS (French with English subtitles)

French director Alexandre Arcady (*Five Brothers*) offers a gripping and carefully plotted thriller based on the true story of the kidnapping of Ilan Halimi in a Paris suburb by the "Gang of Barbarians," who demand a huge ransom since they assume that all Jews have money. Based on the book by Ilan's mother, Ruth, the film follows the police as they search for Ilan, and it portrays the family under the immense pressure of possibly losing their son.

Screenings: Thursday, October 30, at 7:30 p.m., speaker TBA. Thursday, November 6, at 3:00 p.m.

BEFORE THE REVOLUTION (Hebrew with English subtitles)

During the 1960s and 1970s, thousands of Israelis lived in Tehran. Protected by large arms and business deals and complex financial ties, they enjoyed a special relationship with the shah of Iran and his entourage, until the outbreak of the Islamic revolution changed everything. The director—whose family had been part of the very same community—includes rare archive footage and interviews with diplomats, Mossad agents, businessmen, and their families to reveal a new perspective on the revolution that changed the world.

Screening: Tuesday, November 4, at 7:30 p.m., with director Dan Shadur.

New Jersey Premiere

GETT: THE TRIAL OF VIVIANE AMSALEM (Hebrew and French with English subtitles)

This riveting drama, set in an Israeli rabbinic court, shows the struggle facing women seeking religious divorce. Having separated from her recalcitrant husband years earlier, Viviane attempts to finalize her divorce but instead is put on trial by the religious court. A powerful performance by the lead actor and codirector, Ronit Elkabetz, highlights this film about the power that the Israeli rabbinic court holds over women who seek to divorce their husbands.

Screening: Sunday, November 2, at 7:00 p.m., speaker TBA.

MAGIC MEN (Greek/English/Hebrew with English subtitles)

A Greek Holocaust survivor and his estranged Hasidic son find themselves together on a road trip through Greece. Returning as an official representative from Israel to the country he once escaped from, Avraham searches for the man who saved him and is confronted by his strained family relationships. Meanwhile, his son, Yehuda, is on a quest for his father's acceptance.

Screenings: Saturday, November 1, at 9:30 p.m. Sunday, November 9, at 4:45 p.m.

HUNTING ELEPHANTS (English and Hebrew with English subtitles)

Sir Patrick Stewart leads an impressive cast of Israeli talent in this bank robbery caper and coming-of-age tale. After his father's untimely death, twelve-year-old Jonathan spends his afternoons in an old-age home with his estranged grandfather and cronies, all former Zionist underground fighters, and a visiting uncle who is a disgraced British lord. Faced with financial woes, the group plots a bank heist, and misadventure ensues.

Screenings: Saturday, November 8, at 7:00 p.m. Sunday, November 9, at 2:00 p.m.

QUALITY BALLS: THE DAVID STEINBERG STORY (English)

Born in Canada, David Steinberg attended yeshiva in Chicago, abandoning his studies to join the legendary improv group Second City. That was the start of a lifelong career as a comedian, appearing regularly on major television shows and directing comedy TV series. The film features archival footage of his performances on *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson*, (where he was a regular) and interviews with Steinberg and other well-known comedians. His directing credits include *Seinfeld*, *Mad About You*, *Golden Girls*, and *Curb Your Enthusiasm*.

Screenings: Saturday, November 1, at 7:45 p.m. Thursday, November 6, at 12:30 p.m.

JOACHIM PRINZ: I SHALL NOT BE SILENT (English)

Expelled from Germany in 1937, Joachim Prinz arrived in the United States, where he witnessed racism against African Americans and realized there was a gap between American ideals and reality. As the rabbi of Temple B'nai Abraham in Newark and later as president of the American Jewish Congress, Prinz became a leading figure in the civil rights movement. He helped organize the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom and, throughout his career, remained a spokesman for social justice.

Screenings: Sunday, November 2, at 1:00 p.m., with panelists Prof. Clement Price, director, Center for Race, Ethnicity and the Modern Experience, Rutgers-Newark, and Rabbi Bennett Miller, Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple. Tuesday, November 4, at 2:30 p.m., with Rachel Nierenberg Pasternak, one of the film's directors, and Deborah Prinz, daughter of Joachim Prinz.

New Jersey Premiere

THE OUTRAGEOUS SOPHIE TUCKER (English)

A documentary focusing on the tumultuous early days of this iconic vaudeville superstar of the 1920s flapper era in the United States. Before Mae West, Marilyn Monroe, Bette Midler, Madonna, and Lady Gaga, Tucker was the first woman to infatuate her audiences with a bold, bawdy, and brassy style. Using all of the more than four hundred recently rediscovered personal scrapbooks of the performer known as “the Last of the Red Hot Mamas,” the film retraces Tucker's sixty-year show business career.

Screenings: Thursday, October 30, at 1:00 p.m. Sunday, November 9, at 2:30 p.m., speaker TBA.

THE STURGEON QUEENS (English)

100-year-old Hattie Russ Gold and her 92-year-old sister, Anne Russ Federman, the two surviving daughters from the famed lox and herring emporium Russ & Daughters on the Lower East Side, have life stories of hard work, humor, romance, and a little tsuris typical of the Jewish immigrant experience. Celebrating the store's centennial this year, the film traces four generations, from the founding patriarch to his great-grandchildren, now in their thirties, who run the store today. Cameo appearances by celebrity customers include Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and actress Maggie Gyllenhaal.

Screening: Sunday, November 2, at 2:30 p.m., with Julie Cohen, director, producer, and writer.

THE GREEN PRINCE (English and Hebrew with English subtitles)

The Green Prince presents such an extraordinary story that one is tempted to think it is fiction. Disillusioned by Hamas's ruthless tactics, Palestinian Mosab Hassan Yousef agrees to spy for Israel. The film follows the complex relationship between Yousef, coping with shame and conflicting personal responsibilities, and his Shin Bet handler, Gonen Ben Yitzhak, now “operating” the oldest son of a founding member of Hamas. Director Nadav Schirman builds superb tension throughout the historical and personal drama and the film's surprisingly emotional journey. The film is based on Yousef's memoir, *Son of Hamas*.

Screening: Sunday, November 9, at 7:00 p.m. Director invited.

SNEAK PREVIEW WITH FILMMAKER

Special opportunity to see a new film before it is released to the public!

“A delicious journey into the heart of American Jewish Nostalgia.”

Screening: Sunday, November 9, at Noon, with film director in person
(Film running time: 91 minutes)