

NEWS RELEASE

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Please contact the Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life at 732-932-2033 or go to jewishstudies.rutgers.edu.

THERE IS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE AT THE RUTGERS NEW JERSEY JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL

New Brunswick, N.J. – From adventure and comedy to romance and suspense, the New Jersey Jewish Film Festival has a film of interest for everyone. The lineup includes an Academy Award-winning short film, *West Bank Story*, the top prize winner from the Tribeca Film Festival, *My Father My Lord*, and other movies that received accolades from international film festivals like the Berlin International Film Festival and the Jerusalem Film Festival. Also, *51 Birch Street*, a movie that examines love and family, was named one of the 10 best films of 2006 by The New York Times, *Ebert & Roeper* and the Chicago Sun-Times.

The eighth annual festival, which runs Nov. 4 through Nov. 11 in North Brunswick, features nine New Jersey premieres, many of which will feature guest appearances by the directors. Tickets are now on sale and advance purchase is strongly recommended. The festival is sponsored by Rutgers' Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life and made possible by the Karma Foundation.

Below is a listing of movies in the festival:

Three Mothers

Three Mothers, an intricate family saga about triplets who fled from Alexandria, Egypt to Israel in 1958, is a tale of powerful love and deadly deceit that is played out in three languages and across three generations. Loosely based on the director's family, the film stars Gila Almagor and Rivka Raz.

Screenings: Sunday, Nov. 4 at 7 p.m. with a special guest appearance by film director Dina Zvi-Riklis. There will be an additional showing Tuesday, Nov. 6 at 1 p.m.

The First Basket

The First Basket, a New Jersey premiere, traces the little-known Jewish history of basketball and its spread to turn-of-the-century New York settlement houses via the YMCA circuit. Full of vivid anecdotes and distinctive characters—including Ossie Shechtman’s first basket for the New York Knickerbockers—the film follows the evolution of basketball from inner-city neighborhoods to Madison Square Garden. While the era of Jewish professional basketball players has passed, the story of these sports pioneers illustrates how the American 20th century was shaped by the experiences of many immigrant groups.

Screening: Sunday, Nov. 4 at 12:45 p.m. with remarks by Ira Berkow, Pulitzer Prize-winning sports columnist for The New York Times.

Just an Ordinary Jew (Ein Ganz Gewoehnlicher Jude)

This fascinating film, a New Jersey premiere, focuses on a moment of reckoning for Emanuel Goldfarb (Ben Becker), a German-Jewish journalist who is invited to speak about being a Jew to a group of German schoolchildren. His letter of refusal turns into an intriguing soliloquy that confronts Germany’s dark past and the complexities of German Jewish identity.

Screenings: Sunday, Nov. 4 at 4 p.m. and Thursday, Nov. 8 at 3 p.m. with remarks by Professor Michael Levine, department of German at Rutgers University

The Rape of Europa

Following the Nazis’ systematic looting and destruction of art on a scale unprecedented in history, this film travels across seven countries and traces the fate of major works of art in museums and private collections. The film weaves in historical footage with contemporary stories of restitution and return of some of the displaced art. The film is based on the National Book Critics Circle Award-winning book by Lynn H. Nicholas. This film is sponsored by David and Sylvia Steiner.

Screenings: Sunday, Nov. 4 at 1 p.m. Remarks will be given by Lynn H. Nicholas, author of the book *The Fate of Europe’s Treasures in the Third Reich and Second World War*. An additional showing is planned for Tuesday, Nov. 6 at 7 p.m. Discussion will be led by Noam Elcott, department of art history at Princeton University.

51 Birch Street

51 Birch Street spans 60 years and three generations, weaving together hundreds of snapshots, home movies, and two decades of verité footage. What begins as an intimate, autobiographical story about director Doug Block's family soon evolves into a broader meditation on the universal themes of love, marriage, fidelity, and the mystery of family.

Screenings: Sunday, Nov. 4 at 3:15 p.m. with a special guest appearance by director Doug Block. An additional screening is scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 8 at 12:30 p.m.

The Year My Parents Went on Vacation

This New Jersey premiere is a dramatic coming of age tale featuring 12-year old Mauro who is caught between political upheavals in Brazil and the excitement that surrounds Brazil's competition in the World Cup in summer 1970. Left at the doorstep of his Jewish grandfather when his parents flee, the boy is thrust into the unfamiliar world of Sao Paolo's Jewish community. The film follows the relationships that develop between Mauro and the community while also portraying life under political dictatorship.

The Year My Parents Went on Vacation was nominated for the Golden Bear in the Berlin International Film Festival 2007.

Screenings: Thursday, Nov. 8 at 6:30 p.m. A post-film talk will be given by Professor César Braga-Pinto, department of Spanish and Portuguese at Rutgers University. An additional screening is set for Sunday, Nov. 11 at 12:45 p.m. where remarks will be given by Professor Marcy Schwartz, department of Spanish and Portuguese at Rutgers University.

My Father My Lord (Hofshat Kayitz)

My Father My Lord, a New Jersey premiere, presents an intimate portrait of an ultra-orthodox family and the tension between strict adherence to religious beliefs and the welfare of the family. This powerful film evokes the story of the binding of Isaac (the Akedah). It explores the tenacity of faith in the face of tragedy. *My Father My Lord* won the top prize in the Tribeca Film Festival 2007.

Screenings: Saturday, Nov. 10 at 7:15 p.m. and Sunday, Nov. 11 at 2:45 p.m. Professor Allan Nadler, director of Jewish Studies at Drew University, will speak at both screenings.

Roots: Families for Sale (Bednye Rodstvenniki)

Roots: Families for Sale is premiering in New Jersey during the festival. This movie is a black comedy about Jews who seek their long lost family members from a poor Ukrainian town. A con-

artist convinces the townsfolk to pass themselves off as the relatives and as the scheme unravels hilarity ensues. Lungin's film is a parody on the recent trend of Jewish tourism to Europe in search of roots. The movie won Best Film in the Sochi International Film Festival 2005.

Screening: Saturday, Nov. 10 at 9:30 p.m.

Out of Faith

This New Jersey premiere is a documentary that follows three generations of a family torn apart by conflicts over interfaith marriage. The family's matriarch, Leah Welbel, and her husband Eliezer, are survivors of Auschwitz who consider their grandchildren's marriage to non-Jews a form of victory for Hitler. Tensions within the family grow leading to an unexpected ending.

Screenings: Tuesday, Nov. 6 at 3:30 p.m. with special guest appearance by the director L. Mark DeAngelis and Sunday, Nov. 11 at 12:15 p.m. with a discussion by Dr. Kerry M. Olitzky, executive director of the Jewish Outreach Institute.

Encounter Point

This documentary follows the grassroots efforts of both Israelis and Palestinians who have lost family members to violence, yet risk their lives and public standing to promote a nonviolent resolution to the conflict. These activists struggle to overcome military and societal obstacles and advocate dialogue to work toward peace. *Encounter Point* makes its New Jersey premiere at the festival.

Screening: Sunday, Nov. 11 at 3:30 p.m. with a special guest appearance by Julia Bacha, co-director, writer and editor of the movie.

West Bank Story (***)Followed by *Matchmaker*(***)

West Bank Story, which won a 2006 Academy Award for Best Live Short Action Film, is a short musical comedy that tells the story of David, an Israeli soldier, and Fatima, a Palestinian fast food cashier - an unlikely couple who fall in love amidst the animosity of their families' falafel stands in the West Bank.

Matchmaker: In Search of a Kosher Man

A light-hearted documentary about the trials and tribulations of finding a Jewish match in Switzerland. Filmmaker Gabrielle Antosiewicz gets to know her most promising suitors by inviting them over to bake challah. While the dough is rising, viewers meet three families who provide insights into Judaism and romance, from Orthodox matchmakers to Internet dating. *Matchmaker* is premiering in New Jersey.

Screening: Thursday, Nov. 8 at 9 p.m. with remarks by Esther D. Kustanowitz, writer, editor, and columnist on dating and relationships. An additional screening is scheduled for Sunday, Nov. 11 at 5 p.m.

Beaufort

Beaufort won the Silver Bear and Best Director awards in the 2007 Berlin International Film Festival. The movie is based on the story of Liraz Liberti, the 22-year old commander of the Beaufort outpost, and his troops during the final weeks before Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000. *Beaufort* relays the experience of these young soldiers who must find a way to carry out their mission until the very last moments on that mountaintop. Ultimately, the film raises questions about the meaning of war in society. *Beaufort* makes its New Jersey premiere at the festival.

Screening: Sunday, Nov. 11 at 7 p.m. with a special guest appearance by director Joseph Cedar.

All screenings will be held at the Regal Cinema Commerce Center, 2399 Route 1 South, North Brunswick. Film tickets are priced at \$10; events that include dinner are \$27. Discounts are available for students and seniors. Ticket information is available from jewishstudies.rutgers.edu or by calling the Bildner Center, 732-932-4166. Tickets are also available from Trio Gifts, 246 Raritan Ave., Highland Park.

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