

THE HILLS ARE ALIVE AT THE
**BERKSHIRE
JEWISH FILM
FESTIVAL**

PRESENTED BY KNESSET ISRAEL





BERKSHIRE JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL

2021 marks the **35th anniversary** of the Berkshire Jewish Film Festival. The brainchild of Dr. Zev Raviv, the festival was led by Margie Metzger for 30 years.

For the first 20 years, the films were shown on a 16mm projector at Knesset Israel in either the Sanctuary or the Social Hall. At the very beginning, a crowd of 25 was considered a success. Amy Abramovich helped run the concession where people could buy ice cream and other goodies. Because it was (and still is) a fundraiser for the Knesset Israel Hebrew School, it was important to involve the students, and each year a contest was held to design the program cover.

The tide turned with the screening of the documentary, *The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg*. There was standing room only and it was then that public perception of the film festival changed. And the rest is history!

Over these past 35 years, the BJFF has shown hundreds of films to thousands of people. Last year with the pandemic forcing us to close the theater doors, we were able to continue as a virtual festival showing films online and engaging our audience members with Zoom talkbacks. This year we are celebrating with a full **seven weeks of programming**. Including the five short films being shown on August 9th, we are offering **eighteen films** in total. Our films range from political documentaries and biographies to comedies, heartfelt family stories, and animation.

We couldn't run this festival without our loyal volunteers. While they are listed on page 2, we felt that their hard work deserves much recognition.

Beth Kruvant has joined as Co-Artistic Director. Her love of film brought us an abundance of documentaries and narratives from which to choose. Marcie Kammel, as Associate Artistic Director and Head of the Screening Committee, has become an invaluable member of the BJFF. Joel Curran has been Head of Publicity for well over 25 years and has decided to take retirement after this summer. We will miss him. Amy Abramovich, who has



joined Joel this year, will be assuming the job fully in 2022. Judy Cook is Head of Advertising and works tirelessly securing ads for our much-needed fundraiser. Alexandra Warshaw has joined her again in this effort. Ed Udel and Don Sugarman work on grant applications. Laura Rosenthal is joining our team and will be coordinating various accounting tasks. Margo Golos is back again this summer to continue strengthening our financial resources. Ev Bastow checks our telephone messages and answers the many questions we receive from our viewers. Steve Rosenthal handles the e-newsletter, Zoom talkbacks, and audience evaluations. We appreciate Diana MacFarlane's invaluable assistance with our mailings. Without the dedication and hard work by Myrna Hammerling, so much of the inner workings of the film festival would not be possible.

Stay safe and healthy,
Judy Seaman and Beth Kruvant
Co-Artistic Directors, BJFF

The Berkshire Jewish Film Festival would like to acknowledge the passing of one of our outstanding volunteers, Myrna Hammerling. Her expertise, her wisdom, and her warmth were greatly appreciated. She will be missed. Our thoughts are with her family.

The Film Festival Committee

Our sincere appreciation to all of our committee members who work very hard throughout the year to bring you an exciting and successful festival!

Co-Artistic Directors: **Judy Seaman, Beth Kruvant**

Past Chair: **Ed Udel**

Film Screening Committee Chair: **Marcie Kammel**

Film Screening Committee: **Susan M. Albert, Susan Frisch Lehrer, Amy Herman, Fred Landes, Alan Metzger, Susan Miller, Steve Rosenthal, Herman Rotenberg, Pam Wax, Jan Zimble**

Donor Funds Committee: **Myrna Hammerling, Margo Golos, Laura Rosenthal**

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BJFF Website: **Judy Seaman**

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Welcome.

Thank you for attending the Berkshire Jewish Film Festival, which in turn supports Hebrew School and family programming at Knesset Israel. Knesset Israel is an innovator in the rapidly changing world of American Judaism. We create authentic and meaningful points of connection and spiritual experiences for contemporary Jews and cultivate a community to make a positive difference in the world. Affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, our flourishing congregation is inclusive and supportive and accepts a wide range of beliefs and Jewish practice. People of all ages, religious backgrounds, genders and orientations find a supportive community here.

During this uniquely challenging year, the leaders of Knesset Israel worked tirelessly to continue our holy work of inspiration, connection and accompaniment of each other on life's journey. Informed by Torah and mitzvot, we have discovered new ways to daven, study and give tzedaka. This summer we are especially pleased to be gathering in person in our sanctuary for services, which are also livestreamed. We welcome broad participation in our programming throughout the year. And we appreciate the generous support of every participant in the Berkshire Jewish Film Festival.

Our Synagogue website at www.knessetisrael.org is an up-to-date source for our schedule, livestream and information about Jewish life in the Berkshires.

L'shalom,
Rabbi David Weiner
rabbiweiner@outlook.com



KNESSET ISRAEL welcomes members and guests from a very wide range of backgrounds and points of view. We are highly participatory and fully egalitarian, including both women and men in leadership roles. Our Kabbalat Shabbat services change in style from week to week, and shabbat morning services include a teaching by Rabbi David Weiner.

SUMMER SERVICE SCHEDULE

Sunday Morning Minyan, 8:45 a.m. - in person and [livestream](#)

Tuesday & Thursday Evening Davening, 7:00 p.m. - Zoom ([click for link](#))

Kabbalat Shabbat, Friday, 5:45 p.m. - in person and [livestream](#)

Shabbat Morning, Saturday, 9:30 a.m. - in person and [livestream](#)

Tisha B'av - Saturday, July 17

8:00 p.m. (minha); 9:15 p.m. (maariv & eicha) - in person and [livestream](#)

Selihot - Saturday, August 28

7:15 p.m. (minha); 8:15 p.m. (maariv & selihot) - in person and [livestream](#)

For further information, please call the Synagogue office at (413) 445-4872 or visit our website at www.knessetisrael.org



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JULY 5, 4 PM



A Crime on the Bayou

A Crime on the Bayou tells the story of a lasting bond formed between an unjustly arrested black man, Gary Duncan, and Richard Sobol, his young Jewish attorney. In 1966, 19-year-old Duncan faced the white supremacist court system in Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana, for daring to touch a white boy's arm. Standing united, the pair took the case all the way to the US Supreme Court to fight for the rights of all Americans to a fair trial.

Documentary, 89 minutes, 2020, English
Directed by Nancy Buirski





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JULY 5, 8 PM



Mr. Jones

High on his recent success as the fearless journalist who just interviewed Hitler, Gareth Jones goes on to become the first person to expose *The New York Times* cover-up of the atrocities of the Holodomor, Stalin's man-made famine that killed millions of Ukrainians between the years 1932-33. (Courtesy RogerEbert.com)

Narrative, 141 minutes, 2019, English
Directed by Agnieszka Holland





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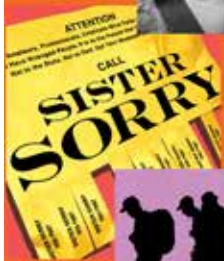
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JULY 12, 4 PM



Schocken: On the Verge of Consensus

Salman Schocken, the King of department stores in Germany before WWII, possessed a unique collection of 60,000 rare books, founded a modern, Jewish publishing house, and later owned the *Haaretz* newspaper which still survives on the edge of consensus.

*Documentary, 75 minutes, 2020, Hebrew, German (English subtitles)
Directed by Noemi Schory*





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JULY 12, 8 PM



Michael Tilson Thomas: Where Now is

Born into a creative Jewish family, Michael Tilson Thomas is the third generation of his family to pursue an artistic career and has spent his life stretching the boundaries of classical music.

In 1970, Tilson Thomas was considered the great young hope of American classical music. Becoming a star overnight when he stepped in mid-concert for the ailing Boston Symphony conductor, the expectations for him were limitless. But free-spirited MTT went his own way.

Oscillating between performance and the personal, *Michael Tilson Thomas: Where Now Is* offers an intimate look at an exceptional artist who continues to blaze his own trail. Courtesy Jewish Film Institute

Documentary, 97 minutes, 2020, English
Directed by Susan Froemke and Kirk Simon



This film has been generously sponsored by the Wolfson Family Foundation, MountainOne, the Spitz-Tuchman Charitable Trust and the John Bergman Charitable Trust



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JULY 19, 4 PM



Soros

Billionaire activist George Soros is one of the most influential and controversial figures of our time. Famous for betting against the Bank of England in 1992 and making a billion dollars in one day, he is maligned by ideologues on both the left and the right for daring to tackle the world's problems and putting his money behind his fight - from free elections and freedom of the press to civil rights for minorities. With unprecedented access to the man and his inner circle, director Jesse Dylan follows Soros across the globe and pulls back the curtain on his personal history, private wealth, and public activism. Soros reveals a complicated genius whose experience as a Jew during the Holocaust gave rise to a lifelong crusade against authoritarianism and hate. Courtesy Sorosfilm.com

Documentary, 86 minutes, 2019, English
Directed by Jesse Dylan



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David Beroldi. A Midsummer Night's Dream, 2017. Photo by Olivia Winslow



JULY 19, 8 PM



Shalom Taiwan

This uplifting dramatic comedy follows the misadventures of Rabbi Aaron as he tries to raise funds to repay a loan from a moneylender who has called in the debt. With the threat of having his community center seized as property, Rabbi Aaron embarks on a last-ditch fundraising effort by traveling to Taiwan to attract donors. What follows is a transformative journey that enriches his life. Beautifully shot on location, *Shalom Taiwan* imbues the values of family, community and optimism. Courtesy Toronto Jewish Film Festival

***Narrative, 85 min, 2019, Spanish (English subtitles)
Directed by Walter Tejblum***



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JULY 26, 4 PM



Magic Men

A jaded Holocaust survivor who has renounced his faith, Avraham (Makram Khoury) resents the piety of his middle-aged son Yehuda (Zohar Strauss), a devout Hassidic rapper. When the aging Avraham decides to return to his native Greece to find the man who offered shelter and taught him magic during WWII, he is compelled to bring Yehuda as his guardian. Arriving in Greece, father and son are forced to confront their prickly relationship with the help of a kindhearted prostitute, Maria (Ariane Labed). So begins a cross-cultural, cross-generational road trip as these richly conceived characters search for absolution and reconciliation.

***Narrative, 100 minutes, 2014, Hebrew (English subtitles)
Directed by Guy Nattiv and Erez Tadmor***



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JULY 26, 8 PM



'Til Kingdom Come

'Til Kingdom Come unravels the global significance of American Christians' dogma concerning Israel's role in the Second Coming. Prominent among the millions of American Evangelicals praying for Israel is Pastor Boyd Bingham IV, one in a line of a dynasty of Kentucky pastors, and the congregants he leads in a small coal-mining town. Firm in his conviction that his calling in life is to raise money for Israel and his congregants' donations are fueled by the belief that Jews are crucial to Jesus's return.

***Documentary, 76 minutes, 2020, English
Directed by Maya Zinshtein***



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AUGUST 2, 4 PM



The Invisible Line – America's Nazi Experiment

Little did history teacher Ron Jones know his unusual class exercise would become a global scandal still reverberating in print, screen and stage adaptations, including a well-known TV movie, *The Wave*. Seeking to explain how Hitler brainwashed the Germans, skeptical high school students were subjected to a Nazi-like code of conduct. The five-day experiment spiraled out of control, attracting hundreds of students to the rising fascist movement. Now, some 50 years later, Jones, his wife, and original pupils reunite to share their troubling memories and reflect on the trauma and regret that haunt them still. Courtesy Atlanta Jewish Film Festival

Documentary, 53 minutes, 2020, English
Directed by Emanuel Rotstein





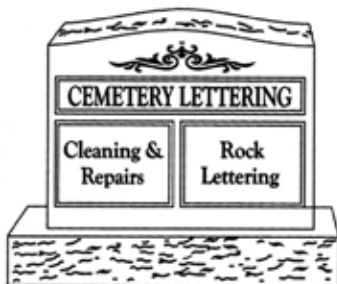
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Tango Shalom

Moshe Yehuda, a Hasidic Rabbi and amateur Hora dancer, played by Jos Laniado, enters a big televised Tango competition to save his Hebrew school from bankruptcy. There is only one problem: due to his orthodox religious beliefs, he is not allowed to touch a woman! At odds with his wife and five kids, the Grand Rabbi of his orthodox sect, and Moshe's entire Hasidic community in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, Moshe is forced to ask a Catholic priest, a Muslim imam, and a Sikh holy man for advice. Together, they hash out a plan to help Moshe dance in the Tango contest without sacrificing his sacred beliefs, setting in motion a fun, passionate dance movie. Heart-pumping and heartwarming, *Tango Shalom* tests the bonds of family and community, and the bounds of tolerance and faith.

Narrative, 115 minutes, 2020, English
Directed by Gabriel Bologna



This film has been generously sponsored by the Wolfson Family Foundation, the Spitz-Tuchman Charitable Trust and the John Bergman Charitable Trust



*(l-r) Frederick M. Keator, 1919; Frederick Keator, 1944;
Raymond Keator, 1944; George Keator, 1960*

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AUGUST 9, 4 PM

5 SHORT FILMS

Cinema Rex

At a famed 1930s Jerusalem cinematheque, a Jewish boy and an Arab girl bond over their love of movies.

Animation, 8 minutes, 2020, Hebrew (English subtitles)
Directed by Mayan Engelman, Eliran Peled



Mum's Hairpins

Yasha, a young Jewish boy, seizes a last chance to escape a Ukrainian shtetl under siege from Nazi invaders in this somber, poetic, and haunting tale of survival and loss.

Narrative, 20 minutes, 2019, Russian (English subtitles)
Directed by Tatiana Fedorovskaya



Eddy's World

The entertaining story of Eddy Goldfarb, a 98-year-old working toy inventor, best known for the iconic Yakity Yak Teeth and nearly 800 classic toys.

Documentary, 28 minutes, English
Directed by Lyn Goldfarb





AUGUST 9, 4 PM

Empty Spaces

Nati, an officer in the IDF is heading south with three soldiers in order to perform a very complicated mission.

Narrative, 27 minutes, 2021, Hebrew (subtitles)

Directed by Ben Ziv



A Father's Kaddish

Sitting at his potter's wheel to heal emotionally and honor his son's memory, a grieving New England father shares his contemplative, meditative ritual of creating exquisite works of art born of love, tragedy and time. Courtesy Atlanta Jewish Film Festival

Short documentary, 31 minutes, English

Directed by Jen Kaplan





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AUGUST 9, 8 PM



200 Meters

A Palestinian father embarks on a perilous journey to reach his hospitalized son in this tense yet tender family drama about the human toll of oppression. Due to economics, construction worker Mustafa (a complex, compassionate Ali Suliman) and his wife live separated by the West Bank wall. After his son has an accident, Mustafa is denied access at an Israeli checkpoint due to a bureaucratic technicality, forcing him to hire a driver to smuggle him to the other side. Thrown in with a motley crew of strangers, desperate Mustafa must surmount myriad hurdles and indignities to be at his child's bedside. Courtesy Atlanta JFF.

Narrative, 96 minutes, 2021, Hebrew (English subtitles)
Directed by Ameen Nayfeh



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AUGUST 16, 4 PM



Comrade Dov

For years, Heymann has been following Dov Khenin, a leading legislator, creating a film that examines the open wounds of contemporary Israeli society: from the forced removal of the residents of Givat Amal to turbulent meetings of the Knesset's Finance Committee, and down to the violent events at Umm al-Hiran. Courtesy Heymann Brothers Films.

*Documentary, 75 minutes, 2019, Hebrew (English subtitles)
Directed by Barak Heymann*



*Edwin J. Helitzer,
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AUGUST 16, 8 PM



Winter Journey

Starring Bruno Ganz in his last film and based on conversations American radio host Martin Goldsmith had with his father about his experiences during WWII. After the Nuremberg Laws were enacted in 1935, Martin Goldsmith's parents, both musicians, were only allowed to perform as members of the Jewish Cultural Federation (Kulturbund), a remarkable arts organization fully controlled by the Reich Chamber of Culture. Hailed as "a masterpiece," "a miracle," "exhilarating," and "sublime" by critics in Europe, and "haunting" and "phenomenal" by *The Hollywood Insider*, *Winter Journey* is both a highly personal meditation on fate and a fascinating exploration of a little-known aspect of the Nazi era of German history.

Narrative Non-fiction, 90 minutes, 2020, English, German (English subtitles)

Directed by Anders Østergaard



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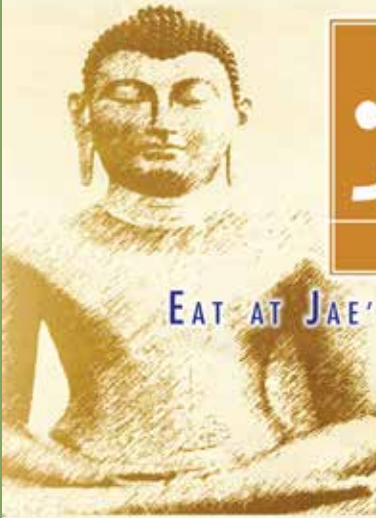
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Two side-by-side photographs of a white house with red shutters. The left photo shows the house in spring with vibrant pink and purple flowers in the foreground. The right photo shows the same house in winter, covered in snow with bare trees in the background.

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