

The National Center for Jewish Film’s 20th ANNUAL FILM FESTIVAL



May 4–21, 2017
www.jewishfilm.org

AIDA’S SECRETS

NEW ENGLAND PREMIERE

Sunday, May 7, 2:30 pm @ West Newton Cinema

Dir: Alon Schwarz & Shaul Schwarz | Germany/Israel/USA | 2016 | 90m | English & Hebrew w/ English subtitles



Family secrets and high drama unspool in this stirring story of love and betrayal, brotherhood and belonging. Izak was born to Aida inside the Bergen-Belsen DP camp in 1945 and sent for adoption in Israel. Details about Aida’s enigmatic choices, the true identity of Izak’s father, and an unknown brother slowly

emerge in this personal investigative film. Timely questions of identity, resilience, and the plight of refugees are brought to life in this compassionate documentary that also opens a window onto the displaced persons camps, where young people who survived death grabbed hold of life and love. Winner, Best Film DocAviv Film Festival; Best Documentary Atlanta & Miami Jewish Film Festivals. “Powerful.” –*Time Magazine*
CO-PRESENTED BY: Center for German & European Studies at Brandeis University; Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry at Brandeis University
SPONSOR: Goethe-Institut Boston

BEN-GURION, EPILOGUE

NEW ENGLAND PREMIERE

OPENING NIGHT WITH FILMMAKER

Thursday, May 4, 6:30 pm @ Museum of Fine Arts (Remis)

Q&A with Director Yariv Mozer & Ilan Troen, founding director, Schusterman Center for Israel Studies at Brandeis
Welcome by Yehuda Yaakov, Consul General of Israel to New England

Tuesday, May 9, 5:00 pm @ West Newton Cinema

Dir: Yariv Mozer | Israel/France/Germany | 2016 | 70m | English & Hebrew w/ English subs



Don’t miss this remarkable intimate and fascinating visit with David Ben-Gurion, one of modern history’s great leaders. It is 1968, the Founding Father of Israel is 82-years-old and five years out of office. Secluded in his desert home at Sde Boker in the Negev, Ben-Gurion sat for the recently discovered interview that forms the spine of this excellent documentary. Ben-Gurion candidly and introspectively reflects on his life and his life’s work: the Zionist enterprise. “Essential viewing for anyone interested in Israeli history.” –*Hollywood Reporter*
“A work of undeniable historical significance.” –*Screen Daily*
“A satisfying, informative portrait of a well-read man who looks back at his life, good decisions and bad, with wisdom and intelligence.” –*New York Times*
CO-PRESENTED BY: Schusterman Center for Israel Studies at Brandeis University
SPONSORS: American Associates, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev; Consulate General of Israel to New England

THE BLOOM OF YESTERDAY / Die Blumen von gestern

NORTHEAST PREMIERE

Sunday, May 7, 11:00 am @ Coolidge Corner Theatre

Q&A with Poet & Author Esther Dischereit

Dir: Chris Kraus | Germany | 2016 | 123m | German w/ English subtitles



A German Holocaust researcher (Lars Eidinger), grandson of a Nazi war criminal, is struggling with his family history and his career. At the height of his personal crisis, he encounters a passionate, frenetic French Jewish woman (Adèle Haenel) whose grandmother was killed by the Nazis. After a rocky meet-cute, the kookily mismatched pair bond, speak candidly about their family legacies, and stumble toward romance in this risk-taking drama. Winner, Grand Prize Tokyo Int’l Film Festival. Eight nominations for

the German Film Awards, including Best Feature. “Audacious... offbeat romantic comedy that explores the legacy of the Holocaust two generations removed. An entertainingly skewed, iconoclastic dramedy.” –*Variety*

CO-PRESENTED BY: Goethe-Institut Boston New Films From Germany Series

BODY & SOUL: AN AMERICAN BRIDGE

NEW ENGLAND PREMIERE

Friday, May 5, 7:00 pm @ Museum of Fine Arts (Alfond)

Q&A with UMass Professor Jeffrey Melnick, Interviewee in the film

Sunday, May 7, 5:00 pm @ West Newton Cinema

Dir: Robert Philipson | USA | 2016 | 58m | English

Put on your dancing shoes for this toe-tapping documentary. Music broke the color barrier before the U.S. Army and before baseball. The American Songbook was forged in part by the collaboration of African Americans and Jews—and by their conflicts as well. This film swings as it looks at the relationship between black and Jewish musicians in the Jazz Age. Featuring Benny Goodman, Teddy Wilson, Johnny Green, Libby Holman, Jack Hylton, John Coltrane, and Louis Armstrong. Winner, Best Music Documentary San Francisco Black Film Festival.



Preceded by

A CANTOR ON TRIAL

PREMIERE NEW NCJF DIGITAL RESTORATION

Dir: Sidney Goldin | USA | 1931 | 10m | Yiddish w/ English subtitles

Hilarious short starring LeibeLe Waldman with music by Sholom Secunda.

SPONSORS: American Jewish Historical Society New England Archive, Facing History and Ourselves



THE EXCEPTION

SNEAK PREVIEW — MASSACHUSETTS PREMIERE

Thursday, May 18, 6:30 pm @ Museum of Fine Arts (Remis)

Dir: David Leveaux | UK/USA | 2016 | 107m | English

In this World War II thriller, exiled German monarch Kaiser Wilhelm II (Oscar-winner Christopher Plummer) is living on a secluded estate in the Netherlands. Sent to ferret out Dutch Spies, German soldier Stefan Brandt (Jai Courtney), begins investigating the Kaiser and his wife (Janet McTeer), but finds himself drawn to a mysterious housemaid (Lily James, *Downton Abbey*). When HPED Email Headers RD1.indd Heinrich Himmler (Eddie Marsan) comes for an unexpected visit, secrets are revealed and allegiances tested. Adapting Alan Judd’s popular novel *The Kaiser’s Last Kiss*, David Leveaux (5-time Tony Award nominee) sets his tale of espionage and romance against a sweeping wartime backdrop. Toronto Int’l Film Festival, Tribeca Film Festival. “Christopher Plummer is regal, lion-in-winter fun.” –*Screen Daily*



FANNY’S JOURNEY / Le voyage de Fanny

BOSTON PREMIERE

Thursday, May 11, 6:30 pm @ Museum of Fine Arts (Remis)

Q&A with Prof. Shula Reinharz, Director, Hadassah-Brandeis Institute

Sunday, May 21, 2:30 pm @ Museum of Fine Arts (Alfond)

Dir: Lola Doillon | France/Belgium | 2016 | 94m | French w/ English subtitles

A daring, resourceful 13-year old girl leads a band of orphans through Nazi-occupied Europe in this suspenseful and poignant drama. In 1943, Fanny and her sisters were sent from their home in France to an Italian foster home for Jewish children. When the Nazis arrive in Italy, caretaker Madame Forman (Cesar-winner Cécile de France) thrusts the children’s fate onto young Fanny who fearlessly leads eleven children on a perilous mission to reach the Swiss border. This handsome production is based on a novel by Fanny Ben-Ami. Winner of Best Film Audience Awards at the Atlanta, San Diego and Denver Jewish Film Festivals, and the Michel Award at the Hamburg Film Festival.

CO-PRESENTED BY: Hadassah-Brandeis Institute

SPONSORS: Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry at Brandeis;

Center for German & European Studies at Brandeis; Facing History and Ourselves;

Consulate General of France in Boston



HUMMUS! THE MOVIE

NEW ENGLAND PREMIERE

Friday, May 12, 7:00 pm @ Museum of Fine Arts (Remis)

Tuesday, May 16, 5:00 pm @ Coolidge Corner Theatre

Dir: Oren Rosenfeld | Israel/USA | 2016 | 70m | English, Arabic & Hebrew w/ English subtitles

This deliciously smart and funny film takes us around Israel and Lebanon. From Suheila, a single Muslim woman known for her legendary hummus and her obsessively clean shop, to Jaliil, a Christian Arab hipster in Ramle who runs his father’s hummus joint, to Eliyahu, a born-again Orthodox Jew who runs a hummus restaurant next to a gas station, the film revels in the joys of hummus and the way it can bring people together. But *Hummus! The Movie* doesn’t shy away from chickpea conflict, taking on the “hummus wars” between Lebanon and Israel and the intense competition between hummus joints in Abu Ghosh. It even features a hummus-themed reggae soundtrack. Yum!

CO-PRESENTED BY: Jewish Arts Collaborative

SPONSORS: Schusterman Center for Israel Studies at Brandeis University;

Consulate General of Israel to New England; Department of Near Eastern & Judaic Studies at Brandeis



MOON IN THE 12TH HOUSE

NEW ENGLAND PREMIERE

Sunday, May 7, 7:30 pm @ West Newton Cinema

Saturday, May 20, 7:00 pm @ Museum of Fine Arts (Remis)



Dir: Dorit Hakim | Israel | 2016 | 110m | Hebrew w/ English subtitles
In this engrossing and intriguing drama, two sisters separated in their youth meet again as young women. Having taken divergent paths—Mira works in a hip Tel Aviv nightclub and Lenny remained in their countryside home to care for their father—they grapple with the traumatic circumstances that tore them apart. Will love and vulnerability lead them to a fragile reconciliation? This captivating feature from Dorit Hakim, a

previous Venice Film Festival Silver Lion winner, boasts spectacular performances by Yuval Scharf (*Footnote*, *The Wonders*, NCJF ‘14) and Yaara Pelzig (*The Policeman*, NCJF ‘12). The film opened the New York Jewish Film Festival. “Transcends into a beautiful expression of pure cinema...for its originality, confidence, strong performances, and elegant structure.” –*Film Jury Statement Seattle Int’l Film Festival*.

SPONSOR: Israel Campus Roundtable

PARADISE / Рай

NEW ENGLAND PREMIERE

Wednesday, May 10, 6:30 pm @ Museum of Fine Arts (Alfond)

Q&A with Professor Antony Polonsky, expert in Eastern European Jewish History and Holocaust Studies

Dir: Andrei Konchalovsky | Russia/Germany | 2016 | 130m | Russian, German & French w/ English subtitles

Shortlisted for this year’s Best Foreign Language Film Oscar and the winner of ten international film festival awards, including the Silver Lion for Best Director at the Venice Film Festival, and the Founder’s Award at the Chicago int’l Film Festival. Director and co-screenwriter Andrei Konchalovsky, one of Russian’s most renowned filmmakers, offers a bold, unflinching look on the Holocaust, shot in luminous black and white.

Classically staged, but daring in its technical and narrative choices, the film tells the interwoven stories of several characters, including Olga a Russian woman living in Paris working for the resistance, Jules a French police chief and Nazi collaborator, and Helmut, a young aristocratic SS officer.

CO-PRESENTED BY: Sarnat Center for the Study of Anti-Jewishness at Brandeis University;

Center for German & European Studies at Brandeis University

SPONSORS: Goethe-Institut Boston; Facing History and Ourselves



PAST LIFE

SNEAK PREVIEW — MASSACHUSETTS PREMIERE

Saturday, May 6, 7:00 pm @ Museum of Fine Arts (Remis)

Tuesday, May 9, 7:00 pm @ West Newton Cinema

Dir: Avi Neshet | Israel | 2016 | 110m | Hebrew, English, German & Polish w/ English subs

In 1977, two Israeli sisters, Stephi (Joy Rieger, *Live and Become*), an aspiring classical composer and singer, and Nana (Nelly Tagar, *Zero Motivation*), a combative liberal journalist, investigate a wartime mystery that’s cast a shadow over their lives. As they unravel secrets from the past, they confront the taboo topic of their father’s experiences



in Poland during World War II. Acclaimed director Avi Neshet (*The Wonders*, *The Matchmaker*, *Turn Left at the End of the World*, all premiered by NCJF), himself the son of Holocaust survivors, based his gripping screenplay on the wartime diaries of Dr. Baruch Milch and the film’s hauntingly beautiful score was composed by Ella Milch-Sheriff, the inspiration for the Stephi character. “A Triumph...Moving, original, quirky and suspenseful.” –*Jerusalem Post* “Neshet’s Best Film Yet. Profoundly moving.” –*Variety*
CO-PRESENTED BY: Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry at Brandeis Univ; Center for German & European Studies at Brandeis

TO BE OR NOT TO BE

75th ANNIVERSARY EVENT SCREENING

35MM PRINT

Tuesday, May 16, 7:00 pm @ Coolidge Corner Theatre

Q&A with Brandeis Prof. Thomas Doherty, Author *Hollywood and Hitler*

Dir: Ernst Lubitsch | USA | 1942 | 100m | English



As nifty as it is hilarious, this screwball masterpiece from Ernst Lubitsch stars Jack Benny and Carole Lombard as husband-and-wife thespians caught up in a dangerous spy plot in Nazi-occupied Warsaw. A Hollywood film of the boldest black humor, it went into production soon after the U.S. entered World War II. Lubitsch brilliantly balances political satire, romance, slapstick, and wartime suspense in a comic high-wire act

that has never been equaled. “One of the most perfectly audacious of screen comedies.” –*Time Out London* “Lubitsch’s finest achievement, certainly one of the most profound, emotionally complex comedies ever made.” –*Chicago Reader*
CO-PRESENTED BY: Brandeis University Alumni Association
SPONSORS: Brandeis National Committee; American Studies Program at Brandeis

THE WEDDING PLAN (aka Through the Wall)

MASSACHUSETTS PREMIERE

MOTHER’S DAY EVENT!

Sunday, May 14, 6:30 pm @ Museum of Fine Arts (Remis)

Dir: Rama Burshtein | Israel | 2016 | 110m | Hebrew w/ English subtitles

Spirited bride-to-be Michal (Noa Kooler) is dumped by her fiancé a month before their wedding. Undeterred, she keeps her wedding date, leaving it to God to provide a suitable groom. With invitations sent, venue booked, and the clock counting down to the big day, Michal goes to increasingly elaborate lengths in her search for her (ultra-Orthodox) Mr. Right. Writer-director Rama Burshtein’s follow up to her groundbreaking film *Fill the Void* (NCJF ‘13), this funny and soulful romantic comedy is one of a kind. With Oz Zehavi, Amos Tanam, Jonathan Rozen and Oded Leopold. Winner, Best Actress & Best Screenplay Israeli Academy Awards and Best Actress Haifa Int’l Film Festival.

SPONSORS: Consulate General of Israel to New England; Israel Campus Roundtable, Boston Jewish Film Festival



THE WONDERFUL KINGDOM OF PAPA ALAEV

NEW ENGLAND PREMIERE

Wednesday, May 17, 7:00 pm @ Museum of Fine Arts (Alfond)

Sunday, May 21, 12:30 pm @ Museum of Fine Arts (Alfond)

Dir: Tal Barda & Noam Pinchas | Israel | 2016 | 74m | Hebrew, Russian, Tajik w/ English subs

Meet Tajikistan’s answer to the Jackson family. For more than 50 years the Alaev family, a multigenerational folk-rock group, has blended Eastern European, Jewish and Roma influences into unforgettable performances. After the fall of the Soviet Union, their benevolent patriarch, Papa Allo, moved his clan to Israel, where he continues to rule

with an iron tambourine. As generations clash, the show must go on, but who will lead the band? Set to a blazing tribal soundtrack, drama and drumbeats sing out from every entertaining exchange in this grand family affair. Enter the Kingdom and feel the beat. A featured film at HotDocs, DocAviv, IDFA, DocNYC.

CO-PRESENTED BY: Jewish Arts Collaborative

SPONSORS: Schusterman Center for Israel Studies at Brandeis Univ; Israel Campus Roundtable



