



5th Annual Santa Barbara Jewish Film Festival Returns to The New Vic Theatre with Oscar Nominees, Comedies, Dramas, and More

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

The 5th annual Santa Barbara Jewish Film Festival, organized by the Jewish Federation of Greater Santa Barbara, will be held Wednesday, March 11 through Sunday, March 15 at The New Vic Theatre, 33 W. Victoria Street, Santa Barbara.

SBJFF co-chair Dr. Mashey Bernstein recently announced a wide selection of movies from Canada, France, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, Israel, and the United States, including world and West Coast premieres, three international Oscar submissions, and four films that feature women who reveal bravery and strength under dire circumstances. While most of the fare is uplifting and light, the festival does not avoid the controversial and thought-provoking. Special guests are also on the menu.



The festival opens on Wednesday, March 11 at 7:00 pm with

the West Coast premiere of ***When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit***, Oscar winner Caroline Link's adaption of Judith Kerr's semi-autobiographical bestseller of the same title—a story about parting, family cohesion, and optimism. Other films that feature the indomitable power of women are ***An Irrepressible Woman*** (Friday 13, 12:45 pm) inspired by Janot Reichenbach (played by acclaimed French actress, Elsa Zylberstein), and her love for French socialist politician and three-time Prime Minister, Léon Blum (Hippolyte Girardot) who followed him, at great personal risk, to the Nazi prison where he was held. ***Those Who Remained***, Hungary's submission for the Oscars is a lyrical story of the healing power of love in the midst of national conflict, loss, and trauma, revealing the healing process of Holocaust survivors through the eyes of a young girl in post-World War II Hungary.

Not all is sad as several comedies fill out the festival. Saturday, March 14 at 8:00 pm



features **Tel Aviv on Fire** which finds comedy in dire

situations. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict forces an unlikely union between an Israeli border guard with a yearn for Hummus and an inept Palestinian screenwriter. Two familiar faces will be the actors from the hit comedy *Maktubb* (SBJFF 2018) who are back this year with **Forgiveness**, Israel's most popular movie in 2019. During the holy days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur two hapless criminals try to set their lives aright but keep stumbling into one crisis after another. In a slightly different vein is **The Rabbi from Hezbollah** (Friday, March 13, 10:00 am). A farmer from Lebanon ends up helping the Israeli army in a biography with more twists and turns than a Matthew Bourne mystery. Also inspiring is **Aulcie**, about the rise and fall and rise of one of Israel's greatest athletes and basketball players (Thursday, March 12, 10:00 am.)

Two special movies are the documentary **Carl Laemmle** (Friday, March 13, 3:00 pm) and **Golda's Balcony, the Film**, (Sunday 15 at 12:45). *Carl Laemmle* follows the life of the founder of Universal Studios, but more importantly, a man who rescued over 300 members of his family from Nazi Germany. *Golda's Balcony, the Film* features Tovah Feldshuh's stunning Broadway performance as Golda Meir and nearly a hundred other characters from Henry Kissinger to Ben Gurion.

A featured shorts program will run 4:00 pm on Sunday, March 15, including shorts from the US, with a world premiere among the selections, and a profile of a young ultra-orthodox Jew with a real flair for comedy. Producers, directors and family members are invited guests.

The free community program will be on Sunday, March 15 at 10:00 am and features two very entertaining comics exploring the food delights of Montreal in **Chewdaism**. Guaranteed to have you craving a good corned beef on rye!

Other highlights of the Festival in a more serious vein are **Incitement** in which acclaimed writer-director Yaron Zilberman chronicles the disturbing descent of a promising law student Yigal Amir (award-

winning actor Yehuda Nahari Halevi) who was influenced by a particular interpretation of Rabbinic teaching, political points of view and maternal love and transformed into an intransigent ultranationalist obsessed with murdering Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. *Incitement* is a story told with heart-searching honesty and was as Israel's 2020 Oscar submission and winner of 9 Ophir Awards including Best Picture.

The festival concludes on Sunday, March 15 at 6:30 pm with the *HaSeret HaMitzayen* (Excellence in Film) Awards to best short, documentary, and feature film, followed by ***Crescendo***, a fictional film loosely based on the real-life West-Eastern Divan Orchestra—which is scheduled to appear in Santa Barbara just before the Festival—started by conductor Daniel Barenboim and the late Palestinian scholar Edward Said. ***Crescendo***'s story offers a tempered hope for the future.

For a full list of films go to www.sbjewishfilmfestival.org. All-Access Passes, which cover all thirteen programs plus opening night reception and early entrance to the films, is \$118. Individual tickets (\$12) will be available in advance beginning March 11 and at the door.

About the Santa Barbara Jewish Film Festival

The Jewish Federation of Greater Santa Barbara produces the Santa Barbara Jewish Film Festival specifically to celebrate the diversity of Jewish history, culture, and identity while hoping that the films and their stories will resonate beyond these settings and speak to universal experiences and issues that confront our common humanity. For more information, visit www.sbjewishfilmfestival.org



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