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Larsen Associates
publicity@larsenassc.com
415-957-1205

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SAN
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JEWISH
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FESTIVAL



**THE JEWISH FILM INSTITUTE
PRESENTERS OF THE
SAN FRANCISCO JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL
WRAPS UP
CINEGOQUE SUMMER DAYS
FOUR DAYS OF WORLD-CLASS CINEMA, VIRTUAL EVENTS, AND
AWARDS**

SAN FRANCISCO, July 22, 2020 - The Jewish Film Institute wrapped up **four amazing days** of **Cinegogue Summer Days**, a cinematic event, which showcased fourteen programs of the best of Jewish film and culture in a reimagined festival experience from July 16 to 19, reaching almost 12,000 households. Running during what would have been the opening weekend of the 40th Anniversary San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, the showcase featured a dynamic selection including drive-in theater presentations, virtual film screenings, interactive conversations, premiere performances, and an awards presentation.

“It was such a treat to gather our local audience and add filmmakers and viewers from across the country and from all over the world to share in the love of cinema, conversation and community.” - Jay Rosenblatt, JFI Program Director

OPENING & CLOSING NIGHTS

Cinegogue Summer Days kicked off with simultaneous screenings at two Bay Area drive-in theaters. Local hero Abby Ginzberg’s new film, **TRUTH TO POWER: BARBARA LEE SPEAKS FOR ME**, was presented at the West Wind Drive-In Theater in Concord, with Ginzberg and Representative Lee in person. The screening lot was full,

with patrons bringing fold out tables to picnic under the stars. The film provided profound insights about what makes Lee unique as both a public servant and as a truth-telling Black woman.

Also presented for Opening Night at both the Concord drive-in and the West Wind Capitol Drive-In in San Jose was **ON BROADWAY**. With their car radio volume cranked up, fans tuned in to the entertaining documentary in which legends of the stage tell the inside story of Broadway. The film describes how Broadway came back from the brink thanks to innovative work, a new attention to inclusion, and a sometimes uneasy balance between art and commerce, leaving patrons optimistic that it will rebound again!

JFI closed Cinegogue Summer Days with a **Closing Night Award Ceremony** and virtual Cocktail Hour. In this online community broadcast, the Jewish Film Institute announced the recipients of the inaugural awardees of the JFI Completion Grants Program, as well as the winners of the **Short Documentary Award** and **Film Movement Award**. JFI presented the grants and awards to the recipients and screened clips from their works. The recipient of SFJFF's **Best Short Documentary Award**, is eligible for consideration in the Documentary Short Subject category of the Academy Awards®. The recipient of the **SFJFF Film Movement Award**, co-presented with the distributor Film Movement, receives the option of a non-exclusive, DVD and streaming distribution deal with Film Movement.

AWARD WINNERS

Film Movement Award Winner

THE SHABBOS GOY by Talia Osteen

“The Shabbos Goy” defined: noun (¹SHäbəs / goi - 1 – a non-Jew who performs certain tasks which religious law prohibits a Jew from doing on the Sabbath; 2 – a human loophole). In this delightful comedic short God literally forbids Chana to turn off her vibrator gone rogue, so she sets out on a quest to find someone who can.

Best Short Documentary Award Winner

CAREGIVER: A LOVE STORY by Jessica Nutik Zitter, MD & Kevin Gordon

When 59-year-old Bambi decides to forgo further treatment for her cancer and die at home, her husband Rick leaves his job to become her primary caregiver—a role for which he has no experience and little support. This powerful and personal short film shines a light on the growing strain placed on family caregivers and dares to envision a new approach.

COMPLETION GRANTS PROGRAM RECIPIENTS

The inaugural 2020 Completion Grants Program recipients include **A CRIME ON THE BAYOU** (U.S.) (Feature documentary) directed by Nancy Buirski, **IRMI** (U.S.) (Feature documentary) directed by Veronica Selver and Susan Fanshel, **THE BINDING OF ITZIK** (U.S.) (Narrative short) directed by Anika Benkov, **THE WILD ONE** (U.S./France) (Feature documentary) directed by Tessa Louise-Salomé, **THOSE WHO HEARD AND**

THOSE WHO SAW (U.S./Canada) (Feature documentary) directed by Nate Lavey, and **'TIL KINGDOM COME** (U.S./Israel) (Feature documentary) directed by Maya Zinshtein. For film descriptions visit jfi.org/for-filmmakers/completion-grants.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Emmy-nominated filmmaker Tiffany Shlain presented **#ZOOMCHALLAHBAKES**, a live online bread baking and conversation featuring Rabbi/Comedian Sydney Mintz from the Bay Area and Prince Challah from Berlin.

In the **JFI FILMMAKER IN RESIDENCE SHOWCASE**, this year's filmmakers Nora Mariana, Theo Rigby, Eva Ilona Brzeski, Yoav Potash, and Charene Zalis presented clips and trailers of their works-in-progress and shared insight into their creative process in a conversation moderated by JFI programmer Joshua Moore. Since 2012 the JFI Filmmaker Residency has provided creative, marketing and production support for independent filmmakers.

Bay Area filmmaker Veronica Selver and Susan Fanshel presented the World Premiere of their exquisite film **IRMI**, a deeply personal film made by a daughter who is inspired by her mother's story and her spirit, exploring the way in which unexpected events and chance encounters can both shape a life and reveal its true nature.

The **Next Wave Spotlight** was the West Coast Premiere of **SHIVA BABY**, followed by a lively online Q&A with director Emma Seligman and lead actress Rachel Sennott. This snarky comedy delivered laughs and tackled every young adult's eternal conundrum: family and tradition or exploration and personal growth?

The West Coast Premiere of **THEY AIN'T READY FOR ME**, the story of Tamar Manasseh, an African American rabbinical student who is leading the fight against senseless killings on the south side of Chicago. The screening was followed by a powerful Q&A with Manasseh and Ilana Kaufman, the director of the Jews of Color Field Building Initiative.

A major highlight was the West Coast Premiere of **MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS: WHERE NOW IS**, followed by a lively and illuminating online live conversation with Michael Tilson Thomas and former JFI Executive Director Peter L. Stein. Oscillating between performance and the personal, the film offered an intimate look at an exceptional artist who continues to blaze his own trail.

The **Centerpiece Film** was a very special presentation of **BROKEN BARRIERS, (KHAVAH)** with "live" score by Sascha Jacobsen. This newly restored film is the first American screen adaptation of the work of legendary Yiddish writer Sholem Aleichem (Tevye, the Milkman). JFI presented the film with a commissioned score by renowned musician Sascha Jacobsen, which was broadcast "live" alongside the film.

UNRULY WOMEN: JEWISH FEMALE CHARACTERS ON TV featured a delightful and insightful conversation with Emily Nussbaum (*New Yorker* staff writer and Pulitzer Prize-winner) and Caroline Libresco, former Senior Programmer Sundance Film Festival, on the new wave of female Jewish characters in television. Nussbaum shared her insights on *Transparent*, *Crazy-Ex Girlfriend*, *Broad City*, and more.

Longtime friend of JFI (and last year's awardee of the JFI Freedom of Expression Award) Judith Helfand presented the US Premiere of her new film **LOVE & STUFF**, followed by a Q&A. Throughout an open-hearted exploration of what it means to be a daughter and a mother, **LOVE & STUFF** tackles a number of themes with great vulnerability: our material and emotional attachment to people, places, and stuff, and how life is a constant process of letting go, while learning love anew.

LOOKING AHEAD

Stay tuned for more Jewish Film Institute's year-round programming, including future editions of the Cinegogue Sessions, JFI's popular thematically curated online programs. The next two editions will be "Orthodox in the Modern World" and "Poland, Then and Now." JFI will also present a special live online screening of former Filmmaker in Residence Steven Pressman's **HOLY SILENCE** which tells the dramatic story of the Vatican's actions – and inactions – during World War II. The screening will be in partnership with the US Holocaust Museum, followed by a panel conversation with Pressman and special guests.

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About the Jewish Film Institute

The Jewish Film Institute (JFI) is the premier curatorial voice for Jewish film and media and a leading arts and culture organization in the Bay Area. Presenter of the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, JFI catalyzes and inspires communities in San Francisco and around the world to expand their understanding of Jewish life and culture through film, media, and dialogue. Year round, the Jewish Film Institute promotes awareness and appreciation of the diversity of the Jewish people through multiple mediums – including original online programming that reaches a global audience of over 2 million views. All of these services, along with artists' support and educational initiatives, give audiences around the world even greater access to Jewish culture and the visionaries who shape it.

About the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival

The San Francisco Jewish Film Festival (SFJFF), presented by the Jewish Film Institute, is the largest and longest-running festival of its kind and a leader in the curation and presentation of new film and media exploring the complexities of Jewish life around the world. Presenting more than 65 films and 135 individual screenings, performances and events in five Bay Area cities (San Francisco, Palo Alto, San Rafael, Oakland, Albany), SFJFF attracts more than 40,000 filmgoers and industry professionals to its 18-day program.