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# BETH TZEDEC CONGREGATION 21ST ANNUAL CALGARY FILM FESTIVAL JEWISH FULMENT



**NEIGHBOURS** Switzerland 2021 Director: Mano Khalil Kurdish, Hebrew, Arabic, Turkish with English subtitles

#### Drama

A tender, gently humorous and touching coming-of-age epic, "Neighbours" is told through the innocent eyes of a 6-year-old child. Opening in a present-day Iraqi refugee camp, the film flashes back to a Kurdish village along the Syrian-Turkish border in the early 1980s, where little Sero attends school for the first time. The new school teacher, sent from Damascus, is determined to indoctrinate the children with Ba'ath Party Arab nationalism. Central to the regime's propaganda is the suppression of any feelings of Kurdish cultural identity and incitement against the Zionist arch-enemy: the Jews. The lessons upset and confuse Sero, whose long-time neighbors are an endearing Jewish family who live alongside the other village inhabitants in a peaceful coexistence that transcends religion and ethnic roots. Skillfully mixing gentle humor, satire and pathos, director Mano Khalil depicts a childhood which manages to find light moments between dictatorship and dark drama. Inspired by the director's own personal experiences, his bitter-sweet memories offer a poignant reflection on the universal themes of oppression, freedom and the possibility of peaceful co-existence.

#### Saturday, November 6th starting at 7:00 PM



YERUSALEM: THE INCREDIBLE STORY OF ETHIOPIAN JEWRY Israel 2021 Director: Levi Zini Hebrew with English subtitles 90 minutes



# HIGH MAINTENANCE: THE LIFE AND WORK DANI KARAVAN

Israel/Poland 2021 Director: Barak Heymann Hebrew, English, French, Italian with English subtitles 66 minutes

#### Documentary

Dani Karavan is a world-famous Israeli sculptor who is best known for his impressive monuments in public spaces. He has created nearly 100 environmental installations all across the world and has won some of the most prestigious international art awards. Yet, as he approaches the age of ninety, Karavan is far from satisfied. His monumental structures are rapidly deteriorating. His advanced age is starting to catch up with him. The political climate in his country is driving him mad, and he has little patience for the director of the documentary being made about him. In addition, Karavan becomes embroiled in a serious political and artistic conflict over his latest commission in Poland. A complex and fascinating character, Karavan is amusingly cantankerous, irreverent, opinionated and brash – yet irresistibly charismatic and passionate. With sensitivity and humour, acclaimed Israeli filmmaker Barak Heymann presents us with an insightful and touching portrait of this singular man, as well as a captivating glimpse at many of the landmark installations that are part of Karavan's artistic legacy.

Nominated – Best Documentary, Israeli Academy Awards 2021 Nominated – Best Documentary, Jerusalem Int'l FF 2020 Winner – Best Editing, Jerusalem Int'l FF 2020

Sunday, November 7th starting at 2:00 PM



Israel 2020 Director: Chen Shelach

#### Documentary

The documentary "Yerusalem" unfurls the dramatic story of a long and tumultuous journey as the Jewish Ethiopian community, also known as "Beta-Israel", finally find their way back to Jerusalem, the heart of the Jewish people. This is the story of an isolated Jewish tribe that kept its faith and ancient traditions alive for thousands of years, driven by a powerful religious yearning for "Yerusalem" that was passed down from father to son for countless generations. And this is also an inspiring story of heroic acts and bold rescue missions. From their historic roots in Ethiopia, to the daring and dangerous clandestine operations that brought them to Israel, as well as their subsequent struggles to prove their Jewishness and fight for their legitimate place in Israeli society, the complex saga of Israel's Ethiopian Jewish community is brought to life in this compelling documentary through a mix of archival footage and interviews with first and second generation immigrants, Aliyah activists, Mossad personnel, naval commanders and Israeli air force pilots, decision-makers and many others who worked to bring Ethiopian Jews back to their ancestral homeland.

# English, Polish & Hebrew with English subtitles 70 minutes

#### Documentary

The Muranow neighborhood in Warsaw was once a flourishing epicentre of Jewish life and culture. During World War II the neighborhood was turned into the "Warsaw Ghetto". After the vast majority of its residents were deported to the Treblinka death camp and many thousands more perished in the ghetto itself, it was razed to the ground by the Nazis. When the war ended the neighborhood was rebuilt with the rubble of its own destruction. Today thousands of Polish people live in the green and spacious Muranow neighborhood, yet its dark past keeps haunting it. Some of Muranow's present-day Polish residents claim that Jewish ghosts live in the neighborhood. They say that at night the ghosts shake off the dust and ashes that cover them, and wander the streets they once lived in. Other residents think the "ghosts" are a metaphor for the once-thriving life, culture and memories of the Jewish people buried beneath the ground.

#### Sunday, November 7th starting at 7:00 PM

Monday, November 8th starting at 7:00 PM

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#### **LOVE IT WAS NOT**

Israel/Austria 2020 Director: Maya Sarfaty Hebrew, German & English with English subtitles 83 minutes

#### Documentary

"Love It Was Not" recounts the improbable but true story of a forbidden romance between a prisoner and her captor during the Holocaust. Beautiful and full of life, Helena Citron is taken to Auschwitz as a young woman, and soon finds unlikely solace under the tutelage of Franz Wunsch, a high-ranking SS officer who falls in love with her and her magnetic singing voice. Risking certain execution if caught, their forbidden relationship went on until the camp was liberated. But, thirty years later, when a letter arrives from Wunsch's wife begging Helena to testify on Wunsch's behalf at his war crimes trial in Vienna, she's faced with an impossible decision: will she help the man who brutalised so many lives, but saved hers?

Winner – Best Israeli Film, DocAviv IFF 2020 Nominated – Best Documentary, Israeli Academy Awards 2021

#### Tuesday, November 9th starting at 7:00 PM

Screening of the film LOVE IT WAS NOT is open to the entire community at NO CHARGE as part of our community-wide KRISTALLNACHT COMMEMORATION



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**GOLDEN VOICES** Israel 2019 Director: Evgeny Ruman Russian & Hebrew with English subtitles 88 minutes

#### Comedy/Drama

For decades, Victor and Raya Frenkel were the 'golden voices' of the Soviet film industry, dubbing character voices of all the major international movie stars for audiences behind the Iron Curtain. Their voices became as iconic as the legends on screen. With the collapse of the USSR in 1990, the middle-aged couple are among the hundreds of thousands of their fellow Soviet Jews who decide to immigrate to Israel and begin a new chapter in their lives. But as strangers in a strange land, their dreams of a better life are tempered by reality, as they soon realize that there is no need for Russian-speaking voiceover artists in Israel. Struggling to adapt to their new culture and earn a livelihood, Victor and Raya are forced to use their distinctive talent in unexpected ways, leading them to wildly absurd predicaments. With its mix of levity, pathos and a gently absurdist tone, "Golden Voices" is a charming, bitter-sweet dramedy that poignantly portrays the immigrant experience, and the challenges of mid-life changes and cultural displacement.



#### THE NEW JEW

Israel 2021 Creators: Guri Alfi, Asaf Nawi & Moshe Samuels English & Hebrew with English subtitles 4-part Documentary Series (4 X 45 minutes)

#### **Documentary Series**

An entertaining four-episode TV documentary series that is both enlightening and humorous, "The New Jew" follows popular Israeli comedian and television personality Guri Alfi as he travels across the US on a quest to explore and better understand North American Jewish identity and culture - from the perspective of an Israeli. As he meets with an eclectic array of Jewish American communities and individuals, we are exposed to some of the diverse and creative ways in which North American Jews choose to express and connect with their Jewish identity. With abundant doses of levity provided by Alfi along the way, this engaging mini- series offers an insightful and fascinating portrait of contemporary North American Jewish life and the multiplicity of identities within it , while also touching on the cultural differences and growing rifts in relations between North American Jews and the modern State of Israel.

#### Episodes 1 & 2: Wednesday, November 10th starting at 7:00 PM Episodes 3 & 4: Thursday, November 11th starting at 7:00 PM



Proudly co-sponsored by the JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN ALBERTA Jay Joffe Memorial Program



#### **LABYRINTH OF PEACE** Switzerland 2020 Director: Mike Schaerer Swiss German with English subtitles

Swiss German with English subtitles Mini-series (6 episodes of 50 minutes each)

#### Drama

This gripping mini-series and family saga is set in post-WWII Switzerland. It's 1945 and finally, there is peace in Europe. Switzerland, the small "neutral" country at the heart of Europe, was all but spared by the war. Klara, her fiancé Johann and his brother Egon are looking bright-eyed into the future. While Klara tries to mend the wounds of the war by caring for young, displaced Jewish Holocaust survivors, Johann, who works for her industrialist father, hopes to save and modernize his father-in-law's well-established, yet troubled textile company. Just home from military service, Egon takes his first steps in the Attorney General's office. His mission: to hunt down fugitive Nazi war criminals. But peacetime, although long awaited and promising, also holds unforeseen challenges. All three of them soon discover the facade of Switzerland's

Nominated – 4 Israeli Academy Awards including Best Actress

Saturday, November 13th starting at 7:00 PM

neutrality, and realize that moving forward in pursuit of their hopes and dreams for the future will force them to confront the question of how to deal with the past.

Episodes 1 & 2: Sunday, November 14th starting at 7:00 PM Episodes 3 & 4: Monday, November 15th starting at 7:00 PM Episodes 5 & 6: Tuesday, November 16th starting at 7:00 PM







#### **A COMMON GOAL** Israel 2020

Director: Shuki Guzik Hebrew with English subtitles 52 minutes

#### Documentary

Almost half the players on the Israeli national soccer team are Muslim, including the captain. While many fans are supportive of the team's diversity and are hopeful that its new roster will lead to victory during an important European tournament, for others, the Muslim players' presence on the team is a source of discord and controversy often stoked by prejudice and the media. Their loyalty to the team and the country is continually called into question by some, while at the same time, they are criticized in the Arab world as traitors. Focusing on three of these Muslim players, the film offers insight into the identity struggles that they face, as they speak openly about the discrimination and difficulties they've encountered along the way, as well as their close, positive, and cooperative friendships with Jewish teammates. These talented players, who at the end of the day, just want to play soccer, reluctantly find themselves as representatives of a larger narrative. With Israeli Arab citizens constituting more than twenty percent of the country's total population, their story is a microcosm of Israel, reflecting not only the tensions and divisions that exist in Israeli society, but also the potential for building bridges of cultural co-existence.

#### Wednesday, November 17th starting at 7:00 PM







PLAN "A' Germany/Israel 2021 Director: Doron & Yoav Paz English 109 minutes

#### Drama/Thriller

Germany, 1945. Max, a Holocaust survivor, has lost all his family in the camps. Full of rage and with nothing left to live for other than revenge, he becomes involved with a rogue group of Jewish soldiers - members of the British Army's soon-to-be disbanded Jewish Brigade - who, under the guise of British military activity, track down and assassinate former Nazi officers, while also facilitating the illegal immigration of Holocaust survivors to Mandatory Palestine. This activity brings Max into contact with a radical group of Jewish resistance fighters - young men and women who, after surviving the Holocaust, dream of retaliation on an epic scale for the Jewish people -"An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth". Headed by the charismatic Abba Kovner, they devise a monstrous scheme that will be an ultimate act of revenge for the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis. Their dangerous and bold secret operation was called - "Plan A". Based on the true story of the "Nakam" (the "Avengers") and their shocking Plan A, this gripping drama/thriller raises profound questions about justice, morality and the primal human urge for revenge.

Thursday, November 18th, starting at 7:00pm



WHAT IF? **EHUD BARAK ON WAR AND PEACE** Israel 2021 Director: Ran Tal Hebrew with English subtitles 85 minutes

Israel/USA 2020 **Director: Eytan Fox** English & Hebrew with English subtitles 89 minutes

#### Drama

In this warmly affecting and life-affirming drama, Michael, a middle-aged gay American writer, has come to Tel Aviv for five days to prepare for his latest New York Times travel story. When he sublets an apartment from Tomer, a young Israeli film student who offers to show him around, he finds himself drawn into the vibrant life of the city and the youthful energy that surrounds him. Despite their contrasting life philosophies and the generational gap between the reserved Michael and the freespirited Tomer, the two men form an undeniable connection that will transform both of their lives in unexpected ways.

Content Advisory: sexuality

Saturday, November 20th starting at 7:00 PM

#### Documentary

Can a leader succeed in influencing the world? Or is he a human being like anyone else, only a grain of sand tossed to the waves of history with no ability to affect it? Tolstoy pondered this question in "War and Peace". Ehud Barak is one of the most controversial figures in Israeli politics. A former Prime Minister, a highly-decorated commander on the battlefield, and one of the leading figures in modern Israeli history, he is admired and venerated by many Israelis, but loathed by many others for the tremendous military and diplomatic risks he took. In this remarkable film, 78-year-old Barak looks back on his own life and on the history of the State of Israel lucidly and honestly, and addresses one of the most fundamental and fascinating questions that can be asked about leadership - Does a leader really mold reality as he wishes, or is he only a product thereof? Could he have done things differently at all, or is reality so complex and inflexible that nothing he might have done would have altered its course? Award-winning Israeli filmmaker Ran Tal's newest film offers a deep cinematic reflection on history and decision-making, while trying to figure it all out - "What if?"

Sunday, November 21st starting at 7:00 PM

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