

The 21st Annual  
**Vancouver Jewish**

חברת סרט יהודית ונקובר

**Film Festival**

# MINI-FEST

MARCH 28-30, 2009

OUR 1ST MINI FEST SHOWCASING 8 FILMS AND 2 SHORTS  
COMEDIES, DRAMAS & DOCUMENTARIES



RIDGE THEATRE | 3131 ARBUTUS STREET

TICKET HOTLINE: 604-307-4945  
BOX OFFICE: JCC AT 950 WEST 41ST AVENUE  
ONLINE TICKETS: [WWW.VJFF.ORG](http://WWW.VJFF.ORG)



North American Premiere

90 min

**Saturday March 28th | 8pm Screening**

**Sunday March 29th | 4:30pm**

## **HIDDEN CHILDREN - L'AFFAIRE FINALY**

Docudrama | Holocaust

*France, 2008, French with English subtitles*

Guest Speaker in Attendance : Mariette Doduck, a hidden child from Brussels Belgium, will field questions after the film

Based on true events, this is the gripping, unrelenting story of two young Jewish brothers left by their parents, prior to their deportation to the death camps, in the care of a devout Catholic woman in Nazi occupied France. After the war, the Finaly boys' surviving relatives tried to regain custody, but their French guardian refused and illicitly baptized them thereby implicating the Catholic Church in the matter. The boys' subsequent ordeal became the stuff of popular outrage and political scandal that shook the country. The film follows their improbable journey through years of political and legal intrigue, with more twists and turns than fiction. A profound exploration of one family's struggle against powerful forces, this film is also a searing exposé of the still difficult relationship between the Catholic Church and Jews. Starring Charlotte de Turckheim (A Love to Hide -2005).

*Sponsored by Armelle and Mannie Druker*



Canadian Premiere

81 min

**Saturday March 28th | 10pm**

Beer & Wine for Sale

## **NYMPHS IN THE MIST**

Narrative | Comedy

*Israel, 2007, Hebrew with English subtitles*

In this new Israeli comedy by Yoram Sachs, life imitates art when Yaniv, in a perpetual sulk ever since his girlfriend Liat left him, settles into a comical routine that alternates between his job at a video store, watching romantic comedies, and constant thoughts of Liat. Yuda, his best friend, tries to break this cycle by persuading Yaniv to make a movie as a way to meet single women. The lack of a script is no obstacle as Yaniv, taking his new role as film-maker seriously, writes the perfect movie... about his break-up with Liat! But how will the plot evolve after Yaniv gets to know Gali, his seductive yoga instructor? Life and art intertwine when Yaniv casts Gali in the title role of his old flame Liat. Now, with a film deal in the works, an evolving script, and increasingly complicated romantic relationships, all Yaniv needs to do is write the perfect ending.

Media Sponsor



## **Precedes Nymphs in the Midst**

18 min

**CHEFTZI ON AIR** *Israel, 2005, Hebrew with English subtitles*

Short | Drama

Chefzi is a religious radio broadcaster who offers romantic advice to her single, religious female callers. One night, she decides to take her own advice, and proposes marriage on live radio to her boyfriend Yonatan. To Chefzi's surprise, her theories don't work in practice and her world begins to collapse. Actors: Maya Greenberg, Yonatan Uziel, Hila Goshen, Iris Pan, Michal Mendelovich.



Vancouver Premiere

73 min

## Sunday Bagels & Movies Presents

Sunday March 29th | 10am

### TWO LADIES - DANS LA VIE

Narrative | Drama

France, 2008 French with English subtitles

Winner Best Actress Mons International Festival of Love Films

This wonderfully humane film explores the complex relationship between two older women immigrants in France, one Jewish and the other Muslim. Their story unfolds with the second Lebanon war as a divisive backdrop. Both women came from Algeria and have struggled to deal with their own circumstances, cultures and contemporary life in France. Halima comes to care for wheelchair-bound Esther. When Esther's son has to leave town temporarily, Esther moves in with Halima and her husband. Their traditional Muslim community is not amused. As the two women's lives become entwined, their superficially stark differences are supplanted by the gradual realization of how much they share. With Halima and Ali preparing to go on pilgrimage to Mecca, their bond, and their common humanity are put to the test.

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Bagel Sponsor

Sponsored by Marsha and Barry Brovender



Canadian Premiere

90 min

Sunday March 29th | 12:30pm

### SHARON

Documentary | Biography

Israel, 2007 Hebrew w/English subtitles

Best Documentary Berlin International Film Festival, Warsaw  
Jewish Film Festival

Hated by some, respected by others, who is Ariel Sharon? To answer this question, director Dror Moreh accompanied Prime Minister Sharon for several years documenting his private thoughts and feelings. This film provides a view of Sharon few have ever seen. Sharon is revealed as more than a modern Israeli warrior. His humour, thoughts, daily routines, and aspirations are all brought to the screen in this serious and insightful portrait of a man whose impact on the Middle East was as significant as it was dramatic. This unique glimpse into his private world helps explain some of the emotions that led to Sharon's controversial 2003 Disengagement Plan, when 21 Jewish settlements were dismantled despite resistance from many of his closest friends and colleagues.

Community Partner



Sponsored by Morley Greene

## Precedes Sharon

11 min

### THE KIDDUSH MAN USA, 2008, Music Only

Short | Drama

Winner Best Short New York Jewish Student Film Festival and National Board of Review of Motion Pictures

This short yet poignant film is set in a sunny Jerusalem synagogue over several Shabbat mornings. A bored young boy who is in the habit of sneaking out of the service to raid the Kiddush lunch buffet, is confronted by an older congregant who is responsible for setting up the lunch. The man always appears angry. Why? When the boy sneaks out once more, the "Kiddush Man", for once, is not around. Where is he? As the boy goes searching for him, he discovers the reason for the anger and connects with the old man on a different and touching level.



Canadian Premiere

117 min

**Sunday March 29th | 2:30pm**

## REFUSENIK

History, Biography | Documentary

USA, 2008, English

Audience Favorite Palm Beach Jewish Film Festival

Directed by Laura Bialis this is the first retrospective documentary to chronicle the movement to free Soviet Jews, Refusenik shows how a small grassroots effort launched a global human rights campaign that went on to successfully challenge a Cold War superpower. In the process, it earned the respect of many world leaders and oppressed minorities everywhere. Featuring exclusive film footage, including interviews with well-known (and lesser known) refuseniks and those who worked tirelessly on their behalf on both sides of the Iron Curtain, this important film documents a major event in Jewish history. With a million and a half Jews having left the Soviet Union by 1992, the decades of struggle to free Soviet Jewry proved to be among the most successful human rights campaigns in history. This engrossing film shows just how it happened.

Community Partners



Canadian Premiere

98 min

**Sunday March 29th | 6:45pm**

## BEAU JEST

Narrative | Comedy

USA, 2007, English

Set in sunny Chicago, *Beau Jest* tells a hilarious, heart-warming tale of white lies and pretence. Sarah Goldman wants to hide from her traditional parents the fact that she is dating a non-Jewish guy, so hires an actor to pretend he is her Jewish boyfriend. From their first Shabbat dinner at her parents home, through a series of Jewish events – a Bar Mitzvah, a Passover Seder – the deception becomes ever more difficult to sustain, even as Sarah's 'boyfriend' wins over her parents. Then real romance gets in the way. This contemporary comedy will have you rolling in the aisles and wiping tears from your eyes at the same time. Directed by James Sherman and starring well know actress Lainie Kazan.

*Sponsored by Barbara and Benjamin Gelfant*



Vancouver Premiere

91 min

**Sunday March 29th | 9pm** Beer & Wine for Sale

## EMPTY NEST -EL NIDO VACÍO

Narrative | Drama, Comedy

Spanish/Hebrew with English subtitles

Argentina/Spain/France/Italy, 2008

Filmed in beautiful Buenos Aires and partly in Israel, *Empty Nest* provides a glimpse into the changing life of couples when their children grow up and leave the house. With humor and subtlety, the film asks serious questions about how both parents deal with the changes in their lives. What will they do with the extra time? How will they use the extra rooms in the house? Will they travel? Will they return to school? Will they make new friends? Get closer to each other or drift further apart? These questions are explored through the pen of Leonardo, a successful writer portrayed by famed Argentinean actor Oscar Martinez, whose imagination helps him and his wife find some answers in this tender, poignant, and thoroughly enjoyable film.

*Sponsored by Birgit Westergaard and Norman Gladstone*



Vancouver Premiere

85 min

**Monday March 30th 7:30pm**

**BLESSED IS THE MATCH: THE LIFE AND DEATH OF HANNAH SENESH**

*Reception to follow film*

Docudrama | History

USA 2008, English

Directed by Roberta Grossman and narrated by three-time Academy Award nominee Joan Allen, *Blessed Is the Match* is a new documentary drama about Hannah Senesh, World War II poet and diarist who became a paratrooper, resistance fighter, and Jewish “Joan of Arc.” Hannah left her native Hungary for a kibbutz, joining other idealistic Jews to help build a Jewish state. Safe in Palestine in 1944 she joined a mission with 31 other Jewish parachutists returning to Europe to rescue Jews in her native Hungary (the only military rescue mission for Jews during the Holocaust). Hannah parachuted behind enemy lines, was captured, tortured and ultimately executed by the Nazis. Yet her mother Catherine survived as a witness to her daughter’s heroism. With unprecedented access to the Senesh family archive, and through interviews with colleagues, eyewitness accounts, and Hannah’s personal diary entries and poetry, *Blessed Is the Match* tells an incredible story of a uniquely talented and complex woman who came of age in a world descending into madness.

Co-Presented with



Sponsors and Co-Sponsors:

JEWISH WAR VETERANS OF CANADA, Vancouver Post #1, Betty Cameron and John Lenaghan, Randa Bloom and Harvey Field, Ellen Gordon, Susan and Ed Kroft, Kowaz-Rogow and Pinkus-Levine families in loving memory of Bob Rogow and Paul Pinkus

**TICKET INFORMATION** Tickets go on sale March 9th

Box Office Hours are Mon - Thurs 10.00 am - 1.00 pm, 5.00 pm - 7.00 pm, Fri 10.00 am - 2.00 pm, Sun 10.00 am - 4.00 pm

Advance tickets are \$10 - Online or at box office until March 22nd.

After the 22nd - Online or at box office tickets will be \$12, members \$10.

4 Packs - \$30 for members, \$36 for non-members until March 22nd.

Closing night film & reception “Blessed is the Match” \$18 members, \$20 non-members

**Major Sponsors**



# SHALOM!

We are pleased and proud to welcome you to the 21st anniversary of the Vancouver Jewish Film Festival. 2009 will be a transition year for VJFF as we continue to grow. One of the significant changes we have made this year is to move the annual festival from Spring to Fall. Based on your feedback, with so many holidays falling in March and April, final exams for many students, spring break and other holidays it was time for this change.

We have also increased the frequency of our successful "Sunday Morning Bagels and a Movie" screenings and are hosting many more events including special screenings and partnering with more Jewish and other organizations. We have introduced a new quarterly Filmmaker Salon and a quarterly newsletter. Our mandate is about Jewish Film and in between festivals we will now operate as the Vancouver Jewish Film Society.

We have seen quite a few welcome additions to our hard working board covering the many areas required to run a festival. Marketing to event planning, sponsorship and donations to community development, volunteer coordination to organizational structure, programming to treasury, our enthusiastic board is hard at work meeting and planning all these film events.

We are excited about our 1st Mini-Fest as part of this significant change. Our smorgasbord of 8 films and 2 shorts including comedies, dramas and documentaries will provide a taste of what to expect in our Main Festival in the Fall, October 24th to November 8th 2009. Mark this date on your calendars!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our many attendees, members, donors, sponsors and supporters who help make this festival one of the most inclusive events in Vancouver's Jewish Community and ensure its longevity as one of the oldest Jewish Film Festivals in North America.

*Ian Merkel, Executive Director  
Vancouver Jewish Film Festival Society, Board of Directors*

## BOARD MEMBERS

President: David Batist, Vice President: Sandy Penn, Treasurer: Nathalia Abramovich, Secretary: Judy Stern, Ian Penn, Richard Wolak, Bridget Sacks, Tim Newman, Lindsay Nahmiache, Eva Szende, Past President: Tova Kornfeld

## PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE

Ian Merkel, Executive Director (Chair), Eva Szende, Arthur Wolak, Emma Myers, Michelle Smolkin, Lance Berelowitz

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*Designed by Kazuko Kusumoto*

*Peter Oberlander, a visionary in public life in Vancouver and Canada, never forgot his Jewish roots. As a Founding member of the Vancouver Jewish Film Festival, he realized the cultural and social importance of exploring and understanding the diversity of Jewish life through film. We dedicate this Mini-festival to his memory.*

**Due to print space we could not list the names of all our members and contributors. They will be listed in our Opening/Closing Night Brochure together with any contributors that did not make our print deadline. There may be additional speakers or guests at some of our screenings and details will be posted on our website**