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Jewish Film Festival returns for 19th year

Films to be viewed at multiple venues across Las Vegas Valley Jan. 9-26

LAS VEGAS – The longest running, most successful film festival in Nevada will continue to present informative and entertaining contemporary global Jewish cinema and special events for the community during the 19th annual Jewish Film Festival Jan. 9-26.

The festival will open with the film “Black Honey, the Life and Poetry of Avraham Sutzkever” showing at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 9 at the Brenden Theatres, Palms Casino Resort, 4321 W. Flamingo Road, and a full program schedule can be viewed below and at www.lvjff.org.

In celebration of this film, a special event, “Resistance and Poetry – Avraham Sutzkever, the Vilna Ghetto and Partisans,” is an open public workshop on the history and poetry of resistance before and during World War II. Moderated by author Joanne Gilbert and poet Bruce Isaacson, the workshop is set for 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 4 at Winchester Dondero Cultural Center, 3130 S. McLeod Drive, in preparation for the screening of “Black Honey.”

Terry Tempest Williams will lead a book reading and discussion at 7 p.m. Friday, Jan. 24 at the Historic Fifth Street School, 401 S. Fourth St. in Downtown Las Vegas. Hosted by Black Mountain Institute and moderated by author Téa Obreht, the event will focus on Williams, an award-winning author, who will share her awareness of the intrinsic value of respecting nature and maintaining ecological balance. Her new book, “Erosian: Essays of Undoing” also will be discussed.

Additional venues for the 2020 festival include the Adelson Education Campus at 9700 Hillpointe Road in Summerlin; the Windmill Library, 7060 W. Windmill Lane; Century 16 Theaters inside South Point Casino, 9777 S. Las Vegas Blvd.; and Maya Cinemas North Las Vegas, 2195 N. Las Vegas Blvd. in North Las Vegas.

All film screenings and events have free admission on a first-come, limited seating basis. Moderators will provide introductions and post-screening discussions with the audience.

The closing film will be the premiere of a new documentary, “Live to Bear Witness,” about Holocaust survivors and students of Southern Nevada at 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 26 at the Adelson Educational Campus.

LVJFF shares insight into Jewish identity, history, and culture, promotes solidarity with Israel and remembrance of the Holocaust. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

Las Vegas Review-Journal is the exclusive media sponsor for the LVJFF.

19TH Annual Las Vegas Jewish Film Festival Program Schedule

“Black Honey, the Life and Poetry of Avraham Sutzkever”

7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 9

Brenden Theatres Palms Casino Resort

Host: Poetry Promise

Moderators: Joanne Gilbert, Author and Bruce Isaacson, Poet

Avraham Sutzkever, considered one of the great Yiddish poets, was a leader of the Paper Brigade underground movement that saved Jewish manuscripts from the Nazis. He survived World War II with the help of a Soviet private rescue plane, testified in the Nuremberg Trials, and immigrated to Israel in 1947 where he passionately advocated to preserve Yiddish culture.

“Ahead of Time, the Extraordinary Journey of Ruth Gruber”

7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 11

Adelson Educational Campus

Host: Hadassah Southern Nevada Chapter

Moderator: Kathryn Hausbeck Korgan, dean of UNLV’s Graduate College

For seven decades, foreign correspondent and photojournalist Ruth Gruber didn’t just report the news, she made it. Born in 1911 to Russian Jewish immigrants, Gruber reported from the Soviet Arctic, escorted Holocaust refugees on a secret war-time mission, and changed the world with dispatches from the Palestine-bound ship Exodus in 1947.

“Joachim Prinz, I Shall Not be Silent”

2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 12

Windmill Library

Host: Anti-Defamation League

Moderators: Claytee White, director of the Oral History Research Center at UNLV and Rabbi Akselrad, Congregation Ner Tamid

Rabbi Joachim Prinz, a refugee from Nazi Germany, came to the United States in 1937 and immediately identified with African-Americans experiencing the same kinds of oppression he had known as a Jew in Hitler's Germany. Prinz became a civil rights activist, working with Martin Luther King, and speaking at the 1963 March on Washington.

“Trembling Before God”

7 p.m., Thursday Jan. 16

Century 16 South Point

Host: LGBTQ Community Center of Nevada

Moderator: Sandi DuBowski, film director

A ground-breaking documentary that shatters assumptions about faith, sexuality and religious fundamentalism, the story is built around stories of gay or lesbian Hasidic and Orthodox Jews. The film portrays a group of people who face a profound dilemma — how to reconcile their passionate love of Judaism with the extreme Biblical prohibitions that forbid homosexuality.

“Aulcie”

7 p.m. Saturday Jan. 18

Adelson Educational Campus

Host: Israeli American Council

Moderator: Dani Menkin, Film Director

Special Guest: Aulcie Perry

Aulcie Perry, a black basketball player from Newark, New Jersey was recruited by Israel and led Maccabi Tel Aviv to an historic win of the European Championship in the summer of 1977. After converting to Judaism, adopting the Hebrew name and becoming an Israeli citizen, Aulcie reveled in fame and began a difficult odyssey paying dearly for his mistakes and reconciling with his past.

“Picture of His Life”

2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 19

Windmill Library

Host: Israeli American Council

Moderated by: Dani Menkin, film director

Amos Nachoum, an Israeli underwater photographer, is fascinated by the most fearsome creatures on Earth. He has taken close-up photos of anacondas, giant leopard seals, great white sharks, orcas and crocodiles. Now, at the age of 65, he is about to face his ultimate challenge: to swim with and photograph a wild polar bear in the water.

“Leona”

7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 23

Maya Cinemas, North Las Vegas

Host: Las Vegas Review-Journal

Moderator: Rabbi Goodman, Temple Beth Sholom

“Leona” is an intimate film about a young Jewish artist from Mexico City who is torn between her family and her passion. She negotiates a labyrinth of social pressure and religious tradition where there are no easy choices to find the right path.

“Wrenched”

7 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 25

Adelson Educational Campus

Host: Desert Space Foundation

Moderated by: Terry Tempest Williams, author

“Wrenched” details the genesis and ultimate downfall of the Earth First radical environmental movement inspired, in part, by the wilderness preservation themes in written works of Edward Abbey and based on his “wilderness is freedom” philosophy.

“A Promise to our Fathers” and “Live to Bear Witness”

2 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 26

Adelson Educational Campus

Host: Governor's Advisory Council on Education Relating to the Holocaust

Moderated by: Gene Greenberg, second-generation survivor, and Joshua Abbey, director of the Jewish Film Festival

Two short documentaries tell the stories about the passing of the first-generation survivors and the efforts to preserve their first-witness testimonies for future generations.

For additional information, visit the website at www.lvjff.org.

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