JBFC member pre-sale opens Tuesday, Feb. 25, at noon!

Tickets go on sale to the general public on Friday, Feb. 28, at noon.
This year we feature 24 thought-provoking, captivating, and entertaining films—including cinematic narratives and revealing documentaries from Israel, Hungary, France, Ethiopia, the US, and many other countries.

With so much to revel in, we’re continuing the tradition we started last year with not one but two unique programs for opening night. In one theater we’ll present My Polish Honeymoon, Elise Otzenberger’s resonant, contemporary story about a young French couple’s trip in search of family history—and time away from their baby. At the same time, we’ll show Fiddler: A Miracle of Miracles, Max Lewkowicz’s sensational love letter to Fiddler on the Roof, which investigates this quintessentially Jewish musical’s universal appeal. After the screenings, we’ll all come together to toast the series at a celebratory reception. The series closes with The Last Vermeer, Hollywood producer Dan Friedkin’s directorial debut, a dramatic, twisty thriller about postwar art theft and forgery featuring Claes Bang and Guy Pearce.

In between, we’ll feature a great array of films from Israel, including Yaron Zilberman’s Incitement, a deep dive into the life of the man who assassinates Yitzhak Rabin; Aäläm-Wärqe Davidian’s stunning narrative debut, Fig Tree, which draws upon her memories of growing up in war-torn Ethiopia; Nadav Lapid’s critically acclaimed Synonyms, the story of an Israeli man who moves to France to start a new life; and Advocate, the skillful documentary portrait of Jewish attorney Lea Tsemel who has defended Palestinians in Israeli courts, from filmmakers Philippe Bellaiche and Rachel Leah Jones.

Continuing to present extraordinary films from around the world, we are also showing Hungary’s nomination for the Best International Feature Film Oscar, Those Who Remained, which reveals the experience of two Holocaust survivors after the war; a fresh look at Joseph Losey’s stunning 1976 drama Mr. Klein, in which Alain Delon’s Catholic Klein must suddenly prove his Aryan heritage in occupied Paris; and Give Me Liberty, a beautiful, funny portrait of Russian-Jewish immigrants and African Americans in Milwaukee.

—Bruni Burres, festival programmer

For over 25 years, Bruni Burres has worked at the intersection of arts, culture, and human rights as a festival director and curator, media educator, creative producer, and social media strategist. Burres is a senior consultant with the Sundance Institute’s Documentary Program and is the cowriter and associate producer of Beyond My Grandfather Allende, which won Best Documentary at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival. From 1991 to 2008, she was the director of the Human Rights Watch Film Festival.
The Keeper
MARCH 25, 4:00; MARCH 29, 4:30; APRIL 4, 4:05
Based on true events, The Keeper tells the story of a German soldier who, despite British prejudice and protests, secures the position of goalkeeper for the professional soccer team Manchester City. The signing provokes outrage among fans, many of whom are Jewish, but receives unexpected support from Rabbi Alexander Altmann, a Manchester City supporter who fled the Nazis, who writes, “We treat our neighbor as we would want our neighbor to treat ourselves.” Marcus H. Rosenmüller. 2019. 120 m. With subtitles.

The Garden of the Finzi-Continis
MARCH 25, 6:30; APRIL 1, 4:55; APRIL 5, 2:00
We are thrilled to mark the 50th anniversary of this exquisite, beloved Oscar winner for Best Foreign film. Vittorio De Sica’s (Bicycle Thieves) film about the romances and class conflicts of a group of well-off Jews in prewar Italy is a richly atmospheric evocation of a time and place. As anti-Semitism rises, the family sequesters themselves in their idyllic home and garden—and the walls come crumbling down. With magnificent performances from Helmut Berger and Dominique Sanda. Vittorio De Sica. 1970. 94 m. With subtitles.

Synonyms
MARCH 25, 8:45; MARCH 26, 12:00; APRIL 3, 12:00
“Difficult,” “provocative,” “brilliant,” “challenging,” and “uncategorizable”—these are just some of the ways critics have described this whirlwind of a film, which won the Berlin Film Festival’s highest prize last year. After completing his mandatory service in the IDF, Yoav is filled with rage and desperate to erase his past, so he moves to Paris, where he refuses to utter a single word of Hebrew. Based on writer-director Nadav Lapid’s own experiences, Synonyms is a stunning, demanding statement about personal and national identity. Nadav Lapid. 2019. 123 m. With subtitles.

Advocate
MARCH 26, 2:30; MARCH 28, 12:00; APRIL 2, 2:15
For over five decades, Jewish-Israeli attorney Lea Tsemel has defended Palestinians in Israeli courts. To some, Tsemel is a fearless and tireless warrior for justice. To others, she is “the devil’s advocate,” as she insists that an occupier has no right to tell the occupied how they should resist. With multiple film festival nominations and awards, Advocate is a dynamic portrait of a deeply contentious figure. Rachel Leah Jones/Philippe Bellaiche. 2019. 108 m. With subtitles.

From Slavery to Freedom
MARCH 26, 7:30*; MARCH 31, 12:00
No single person symbolizes the “refusenik” era more than Soviet Jew and legendary human rights activist Natan Sharansky, who courageously defied the Soviet system in his fight for freedom. Denied an exit visa to Israel, Sharansky was arrested and sentenced to 13 years of forced labor. After spending years in prison, he ultimately prevailed, paving the way for all of Soviet Jewry. Natan Sharansky will be awarded the 2020 Genesis Prize “for his extraordinary lifelong struggle for political and religious freedoms, emphasizing the relevance of his work in today’s world.” Arkady Kogan. 2019. 84 m. With subtitles.

An Irrepressible Woman
MARCH 26, 4:45; MARCH 30, 2:30; APRIL 6, 5:00
This engaging period piece, set during WWII, centers around France’s first socialist Jewish Prime Minister, Léon Blum. Janot Reichenbach fell in love with the much older, married Blum when she was just 16. She ended up with another man, but when the Nazis occupy France, she gives up her comfortable life to link her fate with that of her true love, Blum. This beautifully acted re-creation of a little-known true story is a stirring tale of love and courage. Laurent Heynemann. 2019. 105 m. With subtitles.

*Q&A AJC Chief Executive Officer David Harris. RECEPTION generously presented by AJC.
 TICKETS: $14 (members), $19 (nonmembers)
 SPONSORED BY AJC
**Fig Tree**
MARCH 27, 2:10; APRIL 2, 12:00; APRIL 4, 12:00

It is the mid-1980s in Ethiopia, and 16-year-old Mina’s country has been fighting a civil war for her entire life. Her family is Jewish and planning to flee to Israel, where her mother awaits their reunion, but joining her mother means Mina must leave behind her Christian boyfriend, Eli. Filmmaker Aäläm-Wärqe Davidian’s approach is unsentimental but very human as it focuses on Mina’s plight, offering us a rare view of the cruel impact of civil war on the lives of ordinary people. Winner, Ophir Award for Best Cinematography. Aäläm-Wärqe Davidian. 2018. 93 m. With subtitles.

**Mr. Klein**
MARCH 27, 6:30; APRIL 3, 7:45; APRIL 5, 4:15

“This has nothing to do with me,” professes unscrupulous Catholic art dealer Robert Klein (superbly played by Alain Delon), as he lives the good life in Nazi-occupied Paris. His apartment is full of valuable tapestries, paintings, and sculptures, most acquired at a steal from desperate Jews as they fled the country. One day, he finds a Jewish newspaper addressed to “Mr. Robert Klein” on his doorstep, and must frantically prove his Aryan heritage to the police while also searching obsessively for the man who shares his name. Joseph Losey. 1976. 123 m. With subtitles.

**SCREENINGS IN HONOR OF MEYER ACKERMAN (1923–2019)**

“My father, Meyer Ackerman, was a visionary film distributor and theater owner whose art cinemas brought hard-to-find films to audiences in and around New York City (including the Fine Arts in Scarsdale) in the decades before home video and the internet. He was the original US distributor of Mr. Klein and premiered the film at his 68th Street Playhouse on Third Avenue in Manhattan in 1976. I remember seeing it there and, even as a teenager, finding it haunting and mysterious.”

-JBFC Programming Director Brian Ackerman

**Those Who Remained**
MARCH 27, 9:10; MARCH 30, 5:30; APRIL 5, 12:00; APRIL 6, 2:30

In this lyrical story of love in the midst of unfathomable loss and trauma, Those Who Remained reveals the experience of two Holocaust survivors in post-World War II Hungary. Aldo survived the camps, but lost his family and now lives a solitary life in Budapest. After her parents were sent to the camps, teenage Klara is forced to live with her uncompromising great-aunt. Then Klara and Aldo meet, and a father-daughter friendship blossoms as they slowly find joy in their lives again. But with the Soviet Empire swiftly rising to power in Hungary, their relationship is soon put into question. Those Who Remained is a must-see and one of the most poignant films of the festival. Barnabás Tóth. 2019. 83 m. With subtitles.
**The Rabbi Goes West**
MARCH 28, 3:00; MARCH 31, 4:10*; APRIL 3, 2:45

This fascinating documentary follows charismatic Chabad rabbi Chaim Bruk, who moves from Crown Heights to Montana to spread his brand of Judaism. As Bruk travels across “big sky” landscapes he’s met with everything from disbelief from the liberal Jewish community to neo-Nazi threats. With insight and humor, The Rabbi Goes West explores the question of how people who seem to have nothing in common can engage openly on difficult subjects. Amy Geller/Gerald Peary. 2019. 73 m.

*Q&A via Skype with filmmakers Amy Geller and Gerald Peary.

**Give Me Liberty**
MARCH 28, 5:15; MARCH 31, 6:35; APRIL 2, 8:30

“F***ing Siberia! F***ing Wisconsin!” shouts our shambling hero, a medical transport driver who tries to balance the demands of a dozen hilariously kvetching, elderly Russian funeral guests with those of his special-needs clients. Director Kirill Mikhanovsky creates a beautiful, human portrait of Milwaukee and its residents, a wildly funny representation of both Russian-Jewish immigrant and African American life in this corner of the Midwest. Kirill Mikhanovsky. 2019. 111 m. With subtitles.

**Bully. Coward. Victim. The Story of Roy Cohn**
MARCH 28, 7:45*; MARCH 31, 2:00

Westchester premiere! The infamous, combative Roy Cohn made his mark by prosecuting Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, filmmaker’s Ivy Meeropol’s grandparents (who were ultimately unfairly convicted and then executed two years later). In this unflinching documentary, Meeropol not only dissects Cohn’s insidious work as Senator Joseph R. McCarthy’s top counsel during investigations into Communist activities in the 1950s, but also shows how he became Donald J. Trump’s personal attorney, fixer, and mentor in the 1980s. Ivy Meeropol. 2019. 94 m.

*Q&A director/producer Ivy Meeropol, producers Julie Goldman and Chris Clements, and Michael Meeropol (the son of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg).

**Born in Jerusalem and Still Alive**
MARCH 28, 9:45; MARCH 31, 9:00

This deft blend of romance and black comedy follows Ronen (Yossi Atia, also the film’s writer and director) as he tries to overcome his fear of terror attacks. Ronen begins a “Terror Tour,” taking tourists to sites of famous bombings that took place during the 1990s and 2000s. Asia, an ex-Jerusalemite, takes one of his tours, sparks fly, and their relationship challenges him to begin healing from the trauma that has been mapping his inner life. Winner: Best First Film, Jerusalem Film Festival. Yossi Atia/David Ofek. 2019. 83 m. With subtitles.

**Tickets:** $14 (members), $19 (nonmembers)
The Albanian Code
MARCH 29, 12:00*
Yael Katzir’s beautiful documentary unveils the unknown story of the thousands of Jewish and Christian refugees who were saved in Albania during World War II, which was then a mostly Muslim state. We follow Annie Altaratz-Francis, who returns to Albania and discovers how this entire nation, bound by a powerful moral code, was the only European land where Muslims showed such courage. The film, filled with surprises, shines a light on Albanian culture and carries a message of gratitude to human values. Yael Katzir. 2019. 56 m. With subtitles.

*Q&A Albanian diplomat. RECEPTION generously presented by AJC.

TICKETS: $14 (members), $19 (nonmembers)

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The Mover
MARCH 29, 2:30; APRIL 1, 2:30; APRIL 6, 7:45
The true story of “Latvia’s Schindler,” The Mover offers a gripping account of Zanis Lipke, who risked everything to save local Jews from Nazi persecution and death by secretly moving them from the Riga ghetto to an underground bunker on his property. Lipke is credited with saving about a quarter of the Jews in Latvia—and is honored as one of the “Righteous Among the Nations” for his heroic deeds. Davis Simanis. 2019. 87 m. With subtitles.

Incitement
MARCH 29, 7:05; APRIL 3, 5:00; APRIL 5, 7:00
This riveting thriller chronicles the year leading to the 1995 assassination of Israel’s prime minister Yitzhak Rabin—through the eyes of Yigal Amir, the man who murdered him. Incitement meticulously presents Amir’s world as personal turmoil, political activism, and religious fervor fuel dangerous extremism. Winner of the Ophir Award for Israel’s Best Feature Film of 2019 and Israel’s official selection for the Academy Awards. Yaron Zilberman. 2019. 123 m. With subtitles.

Menachem Begin: Peace and War
MARCH 30, 12:00; APRIL 4, 2:05; APRIL 7, 12:00
This stunning documentary delivers a surprising and unfamiliar portrait of Israel’s sixth prime minister. Facing extraordinary challenges after his 1977 election, Menachem Begin made a handful of fateful decisions that led to both creating peace and launching a war. In addition, he was the first prime minister to appoint Mizrahi Jews (from Arab countries) to important political positions, showing respect and appreciation for their cultures. The film interweaves never-before-seen archival footage with contemporary interviews featuring key figures from Begin’s time as prime minister. Levi Zini. 2020. 87 m. With subtitles.

The State Against Mandela and the Others
MARCH 30, 7:30; APRIL 1, 12:00
As Nelson Mandela and 12 other South African anti-Apartheid activists stood trial in 1963–64, there were no cameras in the courtroom, but audio of the entire affair was recorded. Filmmakers Nicolas Champeaux and Gilles Porte brilliantly use these recordings “to bring emotive, enlightening perspective to a case that may be most famous for putting Mandela in prison for 27 years, but ruptured many other lives besides,” says Variety. Several of the “others” were Jews, who played an important and complex role in South Africa under apartheid. Nicolas Champeaux/Gilles Porte. 2018. 105 m. With subtitles.
The Passengers
APRIL 1, 7:30*
In Ethiopia today, there is a community of over 9,000 practicing Jews who speak Hebrew and keep kosher. Many have relatives in Israel and want to become Israeli citizens, but the government denies them this right. The Passengers follows the extraordinary, hopeful journey of two young men from this community, Demoz and Gezi, as they travel to the United States to rally support for their cause. Ryan S. Porush. 2019. 72 m. With subtitles.

*Q&A Steven Bayme, AJC’s Director of Contemporary Jewish Life and AJC’s Koppelman Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations. RECEPTION generously presented by AJC.

Tickets: $14 (members), $19 (nonmembers)

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Crescendo
APRIL 4, 8:45; APRIL 6, 12:00
World-famous conductor Eduard Sporck agrees to create an Israeli-Palestinian youth orchestra for a very special concert—but how can the musicians put aside their fear of and hatred for the “enemy” for even just three weeks of rehearsals? The first glimmer of hope appears when opponents of the orchestra give the musicians a chance to show how strong they really are. Israeli and Palestinian non-actors play many of the supporting roles in this affecting film about forgiveness, humanity, and reconciliation. Dror Zahavi. 2019. 106 m. With subtitles.

Tickets: $14 (members), $19 (nonmembers)

The Passengers
Picture of His Life
APRIL 2, 5:30; APRIL 3, 5:15; APRIL 7, 5:00
Acclaimed wildlife photographer Amos Nachoum has captured remarkable images of crocodiles, killer whales, anacondas, and great white sharks. But his only encounter with the polar bear, the sole major predator to have eluded him, left him barely escaping with his life. As he nears the end of his career, Nachoum is ready to try again in this breathtaking exploration of the inner life of a fascinating man whose service in an elite Israeli commando unit helped inspire a lifetime of daring expeditions for National Geographic and others. Yonatan Nir/Dani Menkin. 2019. 74 m. With subtitles.

The Last Vermeer
APRIL 7, 7:30
In this captivating thriller about a forgotten true story set just after World War II, a soldier and member of the Dutch resistance investigates stolen art. Looking into the astonishing accusation that the flamboyant Dutch painter Han van Meegeren sold a Vermeer to the Nazis, he becomes increasingly convinced of Han’s innocence and finds himself in the unlikely position of fighting to save the life of a colorful man with a mysterious past. Starring Claes Bang (The Square), Vicky Krieps (Phantom Thread), and Guy Pearce (LA Confidential). Dan Friedkin. 2019. 117 m.

Tickets: $14 (members), $19 (nonmembers)
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Westchester Jewish Film Festival At A Glance

Tuesday, March 24
My Polish Honeymoon: 7:00
reception
Fiddler: A Miracle of Miracles: 7:15
reception

Wednesday, March 25
The Keeper: 4:00
The Garden of the Finzi-Continis: 6:30
Synonyms: 8:45

Thursday, March 26
Synonyms: 12:00
Advocate: 2:30
An Irrepressible Woman: 4:45
From Slavery to Freedom: 7:30
reception
My Polish Honeymoon: 9:30

Friday, March 27
Fiddler: A Miracle of Miracles: 12:00
Fig Tree: 2:10
My Polish Honeymoon: 4:30
Mr. Klein: 6:30
Those Who Remained: 9:10

Saturday, March 28
Advocate: 12:00
The Rabbi Goes West: 3:00
Give Me Liberty: 5:15
Bully. Coward. Victim. The Story of Roy Cohn: 7:45
reception
Born in Jerusalem and Still Alive: 9:45

Sunday, March 29
The Albanian Code: 12:00 (Albanian diplomat)
reception
The Mover: 2:30
The Keeper: 4:30
Incitement: 7:05

Monday, March 30
Menachem Begin: Peace and War: 12:00
An Irrepressible Woman: 2:30
Those Who Remained: 5:30
The State Against Mandela and the Others: 7:30

Tuesday, March 31
From Slavery to Freedom: 12:00
Bully. Coward. Victim. The Story of Roy Cohn: 2:00
The Rabbi Goes West: 4:10
reception
Born in Jerusalem and Still Alive: 9:00

Wednesday, April 1
The State Against Mandela and the Others: 12:00
The Mover: 2:30
The Garden of the Finzi-Continis: 4:55
reception
Give Me Liberty: 6:35
Incitement: 7:00

Thursday, April 2
Fig Tree: 12:00
Advocate: 2:15
Picture of His Life: 5:30
reception
Give Me Liberty: 8:30

Friday, April 3
Synonyms: 12:00
The Rabbi Goes West: 2:45
Incitement: 5:00
Picture of His Life: 5:15
Mr. Klein: 7:45

Saturday, April 4
Fig Tree: 12:00
Menachem Begin: Peace and War: 2:05
The Keeper: 4:05
My Polish Honeymoon: 6:45
Crescendo: 8:45

Sunday, April 5
Those Who Remained: 12:00
The Garden of the Finzi-Continis: 2:00
Mr. Klein: 4:15
Incitement: 7:00

Monday, April 6
Crescendo: 12:00
Those Who Remained: 2:30
An Irrepressible Woman: 5:00
The Mover: 7:45

Tuesday, April 7
Menachem Begin: Peace and War: 12:00
Fiddler: A Miracle of Miracles: 2:15
Picture of His Life: 5:00
The Last Vermeer: 7:30