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**Gershman Philadelphia Jewish Film Festival Celebrates its 40th Anniversary with First-Ever Virtual FALL FEST**

(PHILADELPHIA) – As part of its landmark 40th anniversary season, the **Gershman Philadelphia Jewish Film Festival (GPJFF)** will present its annual two-week **FALL FEST** as a fully immersive virtual event. From **November 7 - 21**, the festival will showcase over two dozen virtual programs and special events, including 18 world-class feature film premieres, two shorts programs, and an episodic Israeli TV series. Other highlights include an entire day dedicated to new media programming with a **Master Class on Writing for Television with BoJack Horseman Creator Raphael Bob-Waksberg**, a **Jewish Visual Artist Showcase & Panel** on the intersection of art and activism, and a performance and dance workshop by **Ariel Rivka Dance**.

GPJFF highlights homegrown talent with **FROM PHILADELPHIA TO THE FRONT**. The locally-produced documentary was selected from the festival's 40-year archive by GPJFF co-founder Ruth Perlmutter in honor of her late husband Archie Perlmutter, and Philadelphia artist Judy Gelles. Judy, who passed away earlier this year, co-directed the documentary with another Philadelphia-based artist, Marianne Bernstein. Another local production making its debut at the festival is **MY ISRAELI STORY**. The five-minute film was created by students from Israel American Council's Eitanim group as a submission to GPJFF's 2019 *My Israel* Student Short Film Competition.

During its festival run, GPJFF will offer many ways to connect, share stories, dialogue, and learn – the only difference is now festivalgoers will be able to participate in happy hours, filmmaker Q&As, and panels from the comfort of their homes. *Going virtual* means that GPJFF will be more accessible than ever before, especially for people who aren't as mobile, have young children, or navigate demanding schedules. This fall, an internet connection is all one will need to access GPJFF programs through their phone, tablet, laptop, desktop computer, or Smart TV.

**BIG NIGHTS**

On Opening Night, Saturday, November 7, GPJFF presents the Philadelphia Premiere of **GOLDEN VOICES**. This Israeli dramedy directed by Evgeny Ruman (*Igor & the Cranes' Journey*) tells the story of an elderly couple, famed for dubbing the classic films of the 20th century for Soviet audiences, beginning their life anew in Israel upon the collapse of the Soviet Union. *GOLDEN VOICES screens one night only*.

The Centerpiece Film, **HONEYMOOD**, is a romantic comedy directed by Talya Lavie (*Zero Motivation*). Screening on Saturday, November 14, at 8 PM, the film follows a bride and groom on a surreal urban odyssey through the streets of Jerusalem. *HONEYMOOD is available to stream for 48 hours*.

The festival closes with **BREAKING BREAD** on Saturday, November 21, at 8 PM. This moving documentary spotlights an Arabic food festival in Israel. Jewish and Arab chefs pair up to create tasty new interpretations of their ancestors' old-world recipes. This mouth-watering documentary honors the roots of Arabic and Israeli cuisines and their unique cultural heritage. *BREAKING BREAD is available to stream for 24 hours*.

**FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS**

The festival features several films that explore LGBTQ issues, including **TRANSKIDS**, **SUBLET**, **SHIVA BABY**, and **TAHARA**. *All four films are available to stream for 48 hours*.

Two powerful documentaries that explore the Black-Jewish Alliance in America are featured in Fall Fest 2020. **THEY AIN'T READY FOR ME** and **SHARED LEGACIES: THE AFRICAN AMERICAN-JEWISH CIVIL RIGHTS ALLIANCE** are back

by popular demand after having premiered in GPJFF's summer film series, *Shared Stories: The Intersection of Black and Jewish Experiences in America*.

In addition to *BREAKING BREAD*, festivalgoers interested in arts & culture should add two documentaries to their "must-see" lists. **ON BROADWAY** is any Broadway lover's dream -- especially amid a global pandemic that caused theaters worldwide to go dark. Music lovers should not miss **IN YOUR EYES, I SEE MY COUNTRY**, a touching documentary that explores the Judeo-Moroccan musical heritage. The film features music and songs by Neta Elkayam and Amit Hai Cohen.

Fans of Sephardic culture and those seeking insight into the Jewish diaspora will want to keep their eyes peeled for **FROM CAIRO TO THE CLOUD: THE WORLD OF THE CAIRO GENIZA**. This fascinating documentary uncovers an astonishing collection of ancient manuscripts hidden for centuries in a Cairo synagogue and follows their remarkable odyssey to the modern world.

The festival also highlights new talent with two films featuring **GPJFF Breakout Star Shira Haas** (*Unorthodox*, *Shtisel*). In **ASIA**, a critically acclaimed Israeli drama, Shira plays a young woman coming of age and living with physical disabilities. In **BROKEN MIRRORS**, another Israeli drama, the Emmy-nominated actor plays the rebellious daughter of an IDF commander whose obsession with discipline and order undermines his relationship with his family. A stand-up comedian named one of *Time Out New York's* "Comedians to Watch" in 2019, **GPJFF Rising Star Rachel Sennott** is our favorite discovery in the indie festival scene. Playing the lead in **TAHARA** and **SHIVA BABY**, her raw, disruptive take on Hannah and Danielle will make you want to cry, laugh, and scream in all the best ways.

#### **NEW MEDIA DAY (November 15)**

**10 AM (EST):** Fans of the hit TV series *Shtisel* will be excited to watch its creators' new drama **AUTONOMIES**, a globally relevant, dystopian tale centering on the burning issues of identity, religion, politics, and personal freedom.

**1 PM (EST):** GPJFF's annual free Master Class returns with comedian/writer/producer Raphael Bob-Waksberg, best known for creating the hit Netflix animated show *BoJack Horseman*. This event is co-sponsored by Penn Cinema and Media Studies.

**4 PM (EST):** GPJFF revisits its foray into new media with **ART & ACTIVISM: VIRTUAL JEWISH ARTIST SHOWCASE & PANEL**. In this free event presented on Crowdcast, four Jewish artists will share their work and discuss how their art addresses contemporary social issues like democracy, systemic racism, gender inequality, global warming, immigration, and more.

**7 PM (EST):** Collaborating with composer Stefania de Kennessey to create an original score inspired by the Klezmer music tradition, the virtual premiere of Ariel Rivka Dance's *Unorthodox* will move you in more ways than one. Watch the performance and then take part in an all-ages dance workshop.

#### **TICKETS, PASSES, & SPONSORSHIPS**

There are several ways to participate in this season's festival:

1.) **Check out the lineup on PJFF.org and purchase tickets à la carte.** Tickets are \$15 and several events are free (you must register for free events in advance).

2.) **Purchase a *Piece of Cake All-Access Pass*** and gain access to all films and events offered in week #1 of the festival (November 7 – 12), or **purchase a *Second Slice All-Access Pass*** and gain access to all films and events presented in week #2 of the festival (November 14 – 21). Each pass is priced at \$180.

3.) **Become a Festival Sponsor.** One of the benefits of sponsorship is creating a personal account on GPJFF's NEW Film Festival platform on CineSend. Similar to Netflix and other On-Demand streaming platforms, Sponsors can browse and watch all of GPJFF's FALL FEST offerings on CineSend just by logging into their accounts. Another benefit is watching festival films on their Smart TVs through GPJFF's Roku and Apple TV apps.

To purchase tickets or passes online, visit PJFF.org. To purchase by phone, call 215-545-4400, Monday through Friday, from 9 AM to 5 PM.

#### **ABOUT GPJFF**

Inspired by the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival (SFJFF), Ruth and Archie Perlmutter married their love of Yiddishkeit and cinema and founded the Philadelphia Jewish Film Festival (PJFF) 40 years ago. PJFF was Philadelphia's first film festival and the signature program of the Gershman Y until 2018 when it transitioned into the Gershman Philadelphia Jewish Film Festival (GPJFF) – a year-round, non-profit film institution dedicated to creating connection and community through Jewish cinema and storytelling.

The Gershman Philadelphia Jewish Film Festival uses film as a vehicle for exploring Jewish values, culture, and community. In its 40-year history, the critically acclaimed GPJFF has presented more than 750 international films and events that highlight the diversity and richness of the Jewish experience around the world. The festival brings together audiences with different perspectives and ideologies to explore universal themes and values that deepen our understanding of ourselves and the world at large.