

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media contact:

Rachael Brister (she/her)

RCB Communications

Public Relations for the Seattle Jewish Film Festival

C: 206-218-8912

E: rachael@rcbcommunications.net



**FULL LINEUP ANNOUNCED FOR THE 30TH PEARL ANNIVERSARY
OF THE SEATTLE JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL, MARCH 22–APRIL 6**

MIDAS MAN, the electrifying story of Beatles manager Brian Epstein, to kick off the anniversary festival with a '60s dance party and dessert celebration

Local Heroes Spotlight, CARLA THE RESCUER, features a 101-year-old Spokane-based Dutch resistance fighter, with special guests from the film

Award-winning dark comedy BAD SHABBOS brings the festival to a hilarious close, followed by a special Havdalah champagne toast with director Daniel Robbins

SEATTLE, Wash. (February 26, 2025) – The Stroum Jewish Community Center proudly announces the full lineup of films, events, and guests for the **Seattle Jewish Film Festival's 30th Pearl Anniversary** from **March 22–April 6**. Featuring 30 films to mark SJFF's 30 years, this milestone festival includes 12 days of in-person screenings and events at five venues across the greater Seattle area, plus an encore in Walla Walla and two weeks of streaming access through April 13 for virtual films. The program is highlighted by special events featuring food, music, and guests. **Tickets, passes and packages are on sale now at SeattleJFF.org.**

“A pearl symbolizes not only the 30th anniversary but also rare beauty and precious wisdom formed under pressure and often challenging conditions,” says Pamela Lavitt, Director of SJCC Arts + Ideas and Festivals. “The 30-year legacy of the Seattle Jewish Film Festival is a strand of 1,000 cinematic gems, each film carrying cherished stories of transformation from adversity to radiant strength. Over three decades, SJFF has grown into something brilliant and enduring: a source of Jewish community strength, pride, identity, thought leadership, and engagement for everyone.”

As the Pacific Northwest’s **largest and longest-running Jewish event**, SJFF attracts thousands of theater-goers across the Puget Sound area to experience Jewish cinema, history, and culture. Showcasing an inspiring shorts program and 22 feature-length films from 12 countries, the 30th-anniversary program strings together 30 cinematic gems: from lighthearted comedies and award-winning animation to powerful documentaries and gripping Israeli cinema.

“**More than a film festival, SJFF is a community gathering place**—fostering conversation, connection, and understanding across backgrounds,” says Lavitt. “It serves as a vibrant cultural cornerstone in the region, deepening Jewish connections for all.”

OPENING, BRUNCH + CLOSING HIGHLIGHTS

The festival **opens at AMC Pacific Place with MIDAS MAN**, a riveting drama chronicling the rise and fall of **Brian Epstein, the visionary manager behind The Beatles**. After the screening, audiences are invited to dance at a ‘60s-themed **DJ and dessert party** with a cash AMC bar. This film is part of the Music Maven Series.

A festival-favorite event, our Jewish comfort food **Sunday Brunch + Film features WELCOME TO YIDDISHLAND: A PLACE WITH NO BORDERS**, a documentary celebrating the revival of Yiddish culture through music, theater, and literature. Attendees will enjoy homemade Jewish comfort food and live Klezmer music by The KlezKatz! This film is also part of our Music Mavens Series.

The **Closing Night Film, BAD SHABBOS**, which premiered at Tribeca Film Festival, is an **audience-award-winning, one-night-in-New York dark comedy starring Kyra Sedgwick and an incredible ensemble cast about a Shabbat dinner gone hilariously wrong**. The screening is followed by a special champagne toast and filmmaker cheesecake reception with director Daniel Robbins. The festival **wraps up** with the **Mishpokhe Matinee, a sing-along screening of FIDDLER ON THE ROOF with costume prizes, blintzes and borscht noshes, and trivia fun**.

SERIES HIGHLIGHTS

This year’s festival features **carefully curated film series** that explore identity, resilience, and Jewish heritage.

- **Israeli Spotlight** showcases *RUNNING ON SAND*, a comedy-drama about a refugee mistaken for a soccer star; *THE STRONGHOLD*, an intense Yom Kippur War drama starring **Michael Aloni** (*Shtisel*); and *TORN*, an in-depth look at the controversy surrounding the “Kidnapped from Israel” poster campaign.
- **Gay Gezunt! LGBTQ+ Spotlight** presents *PINK LADY*, a drama about a woman in an ultra-Orthodox Jewish community whose world begins to crumble when she discovers her husband’s secret affair with his male study partner, and *SABBATH QUEEN*, a decades-spanning documentary about a rabbi-turned-drag queen.
- **Sephardic Spotlight** features *THE BLOND BOY FROM CASBAH*, a nostalgic journey through a filmmaker’s Jewish childhood in Algeria, followed by a Sephardic coffee chat with biscochos cookies.
- **Music Mavens** strikes a chord with films like *THE CITY*, a hip-hop opera blending crime fiction and Israeli rap; **JANIS IAN: BREAKING SILENCE**, a documentary on the **legendary singer-songwriter’s** fight for justice; and *WELCOME TO YIDDISHLAND*, celebrating the revival of Yiddish culture. The series opens with *MIDAS MAN* and closes with the beloved *FIDDLER ON THE ROOF* sing-along.
- **Pearls of Wisdom** presents *ART SPIEGELMAN: DISASTER IS MY MUSE*, an intimate look at the **Pulitzer Prize-winning “Maus” creator**; *DEATH OF ZYGIELBOJM*, a gripping political drama; and *SHARI & LAMB CHOP*, a nostalgic tribute to the **beloved Jewish ventriloquist**.
- **Local Heroes** honors courageous stories, including *CARLA THE RESCUER*, about a **101-year-old Dutch resistance fighter from Spokane**, and *NEVER ALONE*, following a Finnish-Jewish businessman who risked everything for refugees in WWII.

SPECIAL GUESTS + PREMIERES

SJFF’s 30th anniversary lineup includes **five West Coast premieres, five Washington state premieres, and ten Northwest premieres**. Festival screenings include **live Q&As, music, food, and prizes**. Featured guests include **directors Daniel Robbins (BAD SHABBOS), Lisa D’Apolito (SHARI & LAMB CHOP), Nim Shapira (TORN), and Larry Weinstein (BEETHOVEN’S NINE)**, along with the director and subjects of *CARLA THE RESCUER*: director Clement Lye, producer Kristine F. Hoover, and Paul V. Regelbrugge of Holocaust Center for Humanity with film subject Carla Peperzak joining via Zoom from Spokane. More guests are to be announced; check the SJFF website for updates and announcements.

VENUES + VIRTUAL SCREENINGS

Opening Weekend kicks off at **AMC Pacific Place**, with additional screenings at **SIFF Cinema Uptown, Majestic Bay Theatres, and the SJCC**. The **resilience-themed shorts program**, curated by Warren Etheredge, will screen at **Gesa Power House Theater in Walla Walla** and **Hillel at the University of Washington (free for UW students and students of all ages)**. From **March 31 to April 13**, select films will be **available for virtual streaming**.

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS: SJFF ARCHIVE

To memorialize 30 years at its **30th Pearl Anniversary**, on Opening Night SJFF **will launch an online archive** showcasing **three decades of festival history**—including past lineups, posters, programs, trailers, and audience award winners. View the archive at SeattleJFF.org/Archive.

Join the celebration! View the full program and buy tickets at SeattleJFF.org.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

Event: Seattle Jewish Film Festival: 30th Pearl Anniversary

Dates:

In-Person Events: March 22–April 6

Virtual Screenings: March 31–April 13

Venues:

AMC Pacific Place
600 Pine St Ste 400
Seattle, WA 98101

SIFF Cinema Uptown
511 Queen Anne Ave N
Seattle, WA 98109

Majestic Bay Theatres
2044 NW Market St
Seattle, WA 98107

Gesa Power House Theatre, Walla Walla
111 N 6th Ave
Walla Walla, WA 99362

Hillel at University of Washington
 4745 17th Ave NE
 Seattle, WA 98105

Stroum Jewish Community Center
 3801 East Mercer Way
 Mercer Island, WA 98040

Ticket Pricing:

Passes: \$210-250

Ticket Packages: \$104–120

Single Tickets: \$15–35

Ticket discounts are available for seniors 65+, students, and youth under 13. Teen Tix member discounts the day of the show only.

Film Info and Tickets: SeattleJFF.org

Event Schedule:

AMC Pacific Place		
Saturday, March 22	8 pm	Opening Night Film + Festivities: MIDAS MAN *
Sunday, March 23	9:30 am brunch 10:30 am film	Sunday Brunch + Film: WELCOME TO YIDDISHLAND
Sunday, March 23	1:10 pm	THE BLOND BOY FROM THE CASBAH
Sunday, March 23	4:15 pm	ART SPIEGELMAN*
Sunday, March 23	6:45 pm	PINK LADY
SIFF Cinema Uptown		
Tuesday, March 25	6:20 pm	THE MOST PRECIOUS OF CARGOES*
Tuesday, March 25	8:30 pm	THE CITY
Stroum Jewish Community Center		
Wednesday, March 26	6:20 pm	JANIS IAN
Wednesday, March 26	8:45 pm	THE STRONGHOLD
Thursday, March 27	6 pm	TORN
Thursday, March 27	8:30 pm	A NICE JEWISH BOY*
Friday, March 28	1 pm	SHARI & LAMB CHOP*
Saturday, March 29	6 pm	THE GLORY OF LIFE
Saturday, March 29	8:35 pm	RUNNING ON SAND*
Sunday, March 30	12:10 pm	CARLA THE RESCUER
Sunday, March 30	3:15 pm	BEETHOVEN'S NINE

Sunday, March 30	6:30 pm	SABBATH QUEEN*
Monday, March 31– Sunday, April 13	2 weeks, 48-hour access window once hit pay. All films expire April 13, 11:59 pm	SABBATH QUEEN BEETHOVEN'S NINE BLIND AT HEART THE BLOND BOY FROM THE CASBAH THE CITY DEATH OF ZYGIELBOYM** CARLA THE RESCUER THE GLORY OF LIFE JANIS IAN NEVER ALONE** PINK LADY Shorts Program: "Hashivenu: Return Us" THE STRONGHOLD TORN WELCOME TO YIDDISHLAND
Majestic Bay Theatres		
Wednesday, April 2	7 pm	BLIND AT HEART
Gesa Power House Theater, Walla Walla		
Wednesday, April 2	7 pm	Shorts Program: "Hashivenu: Return Us"
Hillel at UW		
Thursday, April 3	7 pm	Shorts Program: "Hashivenu: Return Us"
Strom Jewish Community Center		
Saturday, April 5	7:30 pm	Closing Night Film + Champagne Toast: BAD SHABBOS*
Sunday, April 6	3 pm	Closing Day Mishpokhe Matinee + Sing-Along: FIDDLER ON THE ROOF

All SJFF films are hybrid except:

*In-person only films

**Virtual-only films

Full Festival Lineup (alphabetical order)

For a list of all programs and special events, visit SeattleJFF.org.

Series: Pearls of Wisdom

[ART SPIEGELMAN: DISASTER IS MY MUSE](#)

Molly Bernstein, Philip Dolin | Documentary | USA 2024 | English | 98m | WA Premiere | PG-13 | [Trailer](#)

[>>](#)

A vividly illustrated film exploring the unwavering wit and insights of cartoonist Art Spiegelman, best known for *Maus*—his groundbreaking, Pulitzer Prize-winning graphic novel about his Holocaust-survivor parents.

Closing Night Film- + Champagne Toast

BAD SHABBOS

Daniel Robbins | Comedy | USA 2024 | English | 84m | NW Premiere | PG | [Trailer >>](#)

Winner of the top audience prize at the Tribeca Film Festival, this darkly hilarious, highly entertaining screwball comedy stars Kyra Sedgwick as the charming but neurotic matriarch whose Shabbat family dinner goes horribly and hilariously wrong. After the show, enjoy an end-of-Shabbat havdalah champagne toast and cheesecake reception with director Daniel Robbins.

BEETHOVEN'S NINE: ODE TO HUMANITY

Larry Weinstein | Documentary | Canada-Germany 2024 | English | 90m | West Coast Premiere | PG | [Trailer >>](#)

Can a work of art remain relevant 200 years after its creation? Delve into the enduring legacy of Beethoven's masterpiece "Ode to Joy" and its unbreakable connection with recent global events: from the war in Ukraine to the October 7 tragedy in Israel.

BLIND AT HEART (*Die Mittagsfrau*)

Barbara Albert | Romantic Drama | Germany-Switzerland 2024 | German w/subtitles | 136m | West Coast Premiere | Rated R | [Trailer >>](#)

Adapted from a bestselling novel, this powerful romantic drama vividly portrays the moral struggles and gripping journey of a young medic hiding her Jewish identity in Weimar-era Berlin.

Sephardic Spotlight

THE BLOND BOY FROM THE CASBAH (*Le Petit blond de la casbah*)

Alexandre Arcady | Drama | France 2023 | French w/subtitles | 126m | NW Premiere | PG | [Trailer >>](#)

Passionate filmmaker Antoine travels to his birthplace with his young son to present his latest release: an account of his bittersweet Jewish childhood in Algeria. Includes Sephardic coffee chat (echar lashon) reception with coffee, tea, and Sephardic biscochos cookies.

Series: Local Heroes

CARLA THE RESCUER

Clement Lye | Documentary | USA 2024 | English | 90m | Seattle Premiere | PG | [Trailer >>](#)

Carla Peperzak, now age 101, was a teenager in the Dutch resistance during WWII and helped dozens of Jews by forging ID cards. Four generations of women in her Spokane family tell her story. Guests include Director Clement Lye, Producer Kristine F. Hoover, and Paul V. Regelbrugge of Holocaust Center for Humanity who appears in the film.

Series: Music Mavens

THE CITY (העיר הזו)

Amit Ulman | Film Noir Hip Hop Opera | Israel 2023 | Hebrew w/subtitles | 80m | WA Premiere | PG-13 | [Trailer >>](#)

Joe, a private detective, takes on the case of a mysterious cabaret singer—a decision that could be his last—in this wildly inventive hip-hop, film noir opera and homage to crime fiction and Israeli rap.

Series: Pearls of Wisdom

DEATH OF ZYGIELBOJM (*Śmierć Zygielbojma*)

Ryszard Brylski | Crime Drama | Poland 2021 | Polish w/subtitles | 96m | NW Premiere | PG | [Trailer >>](#)

Warsaw, May 1943: A journalist investigates the suspicious death of an exiled Polish politician and Jewish leader.

Series: Music Mavens

Closing Day Mishpokkeh Matinee + Sing-Along

[FIDDLER ON THE ROOF](#)

Norman Jewison | Musical | USA 1971 | English, Hebrew, Russian w/subtitles | 181m | G* | [Trailer >>](#)
Join us for the return of SJFF's classic closing film tradition—with costume prizes and noshes, and sing-along to musical favorites such as "Tradition" and "If I Were a Rich Man." All ages welcome – bring the whole *mishpokkeh* (family)! Discount price for kids. Concessions also for sale.

[THE GLORY OF LIFE \(Die Herrlichkeit des Lebens\)](#)

Judith Kaufmann, Georg Maas | Drama | Germany 2024 | German w/subtitles | 98m | NW Premiere | R | [Trailer >>](#)

The exquisite love story of legendary Czech novelist Franz Kafka and Dora Diamant, a Polish Jewish woman, in the last year of his life.

Series: Music Mavens

[JANIS IAN: BREAKING SILENCE](#)

Varda Bar-Kar | Documentary | USA 2024 | 111m | WA Premiere | PG | [Trailer >>](#)

The epic life journey of illustrious singer-songwriter Janice Ian ("Society's Child," "At Seventeen") from her Jewish childhood on a New Jersey chicken farm through six decades as a disruptive voice for social justice in the music industry.

Opening Night Film + Festivities

Series: Music Mavens

[MIDAS MAN](#)

Joe Stephenson | Narrative Drama | England 2024 | English | 112m | WA Premiere | PG-13 | [Trailer >>](#)

Witness the electric rise and fall of Brian Epstein, the visionary who catapulted The Beatles to meteoric fame and unleashed a cultural revolution. MIDAS MAN stars Jacob Fortune-Lloyd with cameos by Emily Watson, Jay Leno, Eddie Izzard. Stay after the film for a '60s hits DJ, Dancing + Dessert Party after the film. Grab a drink at the AMC bar.

Series: Local Heroes

[THE MOST PRECIOUS OF CARGOES \(La Plus précieuse des marchandises\)](#)

Michel Hazanavicius | Animated Drama | France 2024 | French w/subtitles | 81m | NW Premiere | PG-13 | [Trailer >>](#)

A poor Polish woodcutter's wife defiantly pledges to raise a Jewish child thrown from a passing train in this visually stunning animated gem about love triumphing over hate from the Academy Award-winning director of THE ARTIST.

Series: Local Heroes

[NEVER ALONE \(Ei koskaan yksin\)](#)

Klaus Härö | Drama | Finland 2024 | Finnish w/subtitles | 85m | NW Premiere | PG-13 | [Trailer >>](#)

1942 Helsinki: The powerful, poignant historical drama about a Finnish-Jewish businessman who risks everything to protect Jewish refugees and stand up for humanity.

[A NICE JEWISH BOY](#) (*Le Dernier des juifs*)

Noé Debré | Comedy | France 2024 | French w/subtitles | 90m | NW Premiere | PG-13 | [Trailer>>](#)

In this quirky, light-hearted, coming-of-age comedy, nerdy Bellisha makes up wild stories to placate his beloved mother and hide the truth about rising antisemitism in their working-class Paris suburb.

Gay Gezunt! LGBTQ+ Spotlight

[PINK LADY](#) (אישה ורודה)

Nir Bergman | Drama | Israel-Italy 2024 | Hebrew and Italian w/subtitles | 104m | West Coast Premiere | R | [Trailer>>](#)

In an ultra-Orthodox Jewish community in Jerusalem, Bati has a seemingly perfect life. But her world starts to crumble when she discovers her husband's secret affair with his male study partner.

Israeli Spotlight

[RUNNING ON SAND](#) (לרוץ על החול)

Adar Shafran | Drama/Comedy | Israel 2023 | English, Hebrew, Tigrinya w/subtitles | 98m | Seattle Premiere | PG | [Trailer>>](#)

A young Eritrean refugee facing deportation is mistaken for a professional soccer player brought to save a floundering Israeli team and plays along.

Gay Gezunt! LGBTQ+ Spotlight + Reception

Series: Pearls of Wisdom

[SABBATH QUEEN](#)

Sandi DuBowski | Documentary | USA 2023 | Hebrew, English, Yiddish w/subtitles | 105m | WA Premiere | PG | [Trailer>>](#)

The 21-year epic journey of Rabbi Amichai Lau-Lavie, the dynastic heir of 39 generations of Orthodox rabbis, who is torn between accepting his ancestral destiny or becoming a drag queen rebel. Includes a filmmaker dessert reception.

Friday Matinee @ the J (\$10 for age 65+)

Series: Pearls of Wisdom

[SHARI & LAMB CHOP](#)

Lisa D'Apolito | Documentary | USA 2024 | 92m | English | G | [Trailer>>](#)

Hailing from a Jewish Bronx family, groundbreaking artist Shari Lewis and her beloved sock puppet companion, Lamb Chop, were adored showbiz stars of childhood entertainment for over 50 years. Discounted \$10 tickets for seniors age 65+. Coffee, tea, and noshes served. After the film, join Leslie Rubenstein of Endless Opportunities for an extended schmooze + more noshes.

Israeli Spotlight

[THE STRONGHOLD](#) (המזח)

Lior Chefetz | Drama | Israel 2024 | Hebrew w/subtitles | 113m | NW Premiere | R* | [Trailer>>](#)

Sinai, 1973: Michael Aloni ("Shtisel") stars in this heart-pounding portrayal of a remote Israeli army outpost on the Suez Canal under fire during the Yom Kippur War, inspired by films like SAVING PRIVATE RYAN.

[TORN](#)

Nim Shapira | Documentary | USA 2024 | English and Hebrew w/subtitles | 80m | West Coast Premiere | PG-13 | [Trailer>>](#)

The controversy surrounding the “Kidnapped from Israel” grassroots poster campaign sparks clashes in the streets of New York City, far from the actual conflict.

Sunday Brunch + Film

Series: Music Mavens

WELCOME TO YIDDISHLAND: A PLACE WITH NO BORDERS

Ros Horin | Documentary | Australia 2024 | English, Yiddish w/subtitles | 95m | NW Premiere | G | [Trailer>>](#)

Welcome to the rousing story of the revival of the Yiddish language by contemporary artists from around the world who are reigniting this dying mother tongue in music, theater, opera, and literature. Enjoy a delicious spread of homemade Jewish comfort food including egg frittata, local Rachel’s Bagels with fixings and shmear, fruit, and dessert to enjoy in the theater while listening to The KlezKatz! Before the film. Special event brunch + film and film-only tickets available.

Shorts Program

HASHIVENU: RETURN US

Curated by Warren Etheredge, SJFF Shorts Program Curator and Co-Founder/Co-Artistic Director of Walla Walla Movie Crush

When people speak of grit, they usually mean the power of perseverance. With these seven films, we explore a divine form of resilience, hashivenu—reaffirming of faith in times of grief or crisis. In this shorts program, parents cope with curious or anxious kids; a famous writer humorously copes with a botched bris; a drag queen conjures consoling memories of a Paris queer bar; a prodigal daughter considers returning home; a blind man questions the value of returned sight; and a surprise pair of movie extras find home far away from it. All are connected by the need to push on, fueled by an unanticipated renewal of belief.

###

About the Seattle Jewish Film Festival

The Seattle Jewish Film Festival (SJFF) is one of the largest and longest-running film festivals in the Pacific Northwest and one of the largest Jewish film festivals in the country. A cornerstone program of the Stroum Jewish Community Center (SJCC), SJFF brings people together from across Washington—and virtually around the globe—to celebrate and showcase the vibrancy and diversity of global Jewish life through cinema to build connections, illuminate perspectives, increase understanding, and offer experiences that amplify profound Jewish experiences for everyone. Tickets and more information at SeattleJFF.org. Follow the Seattle Jewish Film Festival on Facebook [@SeattleJFF](#) and Instagram [@sjcc.arts](#).

About SJCC

Founded in 1949, the Stroum Jewish Community Center (SJCC) strives to be the Puget Sound’s most open and welcoming community-centered Jewish organization, offering experiences that amplify profound Jewish connections for every generation. Located on Mercer Island, the J offers a variety of programs and activities for everyone from newborns to seniors. The J is home to an Early Childhood School, summer camp and year-round kids programs, the largest Fitness Center on Mercer Island, an indoor pool, arts

and community events, and more. More information at sjcc.org and follow SJCC on Facebook [@SJCCSeattle](https://www.facebook.com/SJCCSeattle) and Instagram [@stroumjcc](https://www.instagram.com/stroumjcc).