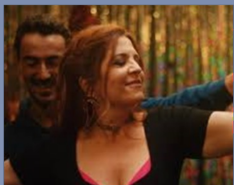




# 2025 - 2026

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## SCHENECTADY JCC JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL



REMARKABLE DISCUSSIONS  
ON FASCINATING FILMS



## OPENING NIGHT

### REMEMBERING GENE WILDER

**Sunday, September 7, 7:00 PM**

**With discussion Leader:**

**Alex Rabinowitz, Mopco & Pop Culture Brain**

| 2023 | 90 min. | USA | English

Get ready to celebrate the unforgettable Gene Wilder in this heartfelt tribute that showcases his incredible talent and legacy as a true comic genius. Born Jerome Silberman to a lively Jewish family in Milwaukee, Gene discovered his knack for comedy by cracking jokes to bring a smile to his mother after she suffered a heart attack. From that moment, he was destined to enchant millions! With unforgettable performances as Leo Bloom and Willy Wonka, along with hilarious classics like *Blazing Saddles* and *Young Frankenstein*, he won hearts everywhere with his quirky charm and electrifying energy. Behind the scenes, Wilder also faced the bittersweet trials of life, including the loss of his beloved wife and a courageous battle with Alzheimer's. What makes this film extra special is that Gene himself narrates from his memoir audiobook, giving us a peek into his versatile world as an actor, writer, and director. Packed with memorable clips, this tribute also features reflections from close friends like Mel Brooks.

**Directed by Ron Frank, & Glenn Kirschbaum**

Best Film and Audience Favorite at the Los Angeles Jewish Film Festival, Best Overall Documentary at the Newport Beach Film Fest, and Audience Choice Award at the Seattle Jewish Film Festival.



## OCTOBER 7 COMMEMORATION

### SOUL OF A NATION

**Sunday, October 5, 7:00 PM**

**Discussion Leader: Laura Weisblatt,  
Co-Founder of AMIDAH of the Capital District**

**This program is cohosted by Mithabrim - A JCC  
Association of North America Program Accelerator  
and the Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and AMIDAH**

| 2025 | 105 min. | USA & Israel | Hebrew (w/subtitles)

*Soul of a Nation* is an inspiring and eye-opening film that delves into Israel's most perilous chapter in recent history, a time of profound internal conflict and external danger. Faced with deep divides, political unrest, and tremendous threats, the nation found itself shaken and on the brink of collapse. But amid this crisis, triggered by the horrific October 7 attack, a profound and inspiring transformation took place.

What seemed like a breaking point ignited an extraordinary movement of solidarity, uniting Israelis in ways never before seen. Through exclusive interviews with key figures, the film takes you inside Israeli society through the perspectives of its most influential voices providing an unfiltered look at the nation, its people, and the monumental challenges that will shape the lives of millions for generations to come. *Soul of a Nation* serves as a timely, universal, and hopeful call to action, reminding us that even in moments of deep division, peace and unity are not beyond reach.

**Directed by Jonathan Jakubowicz**





## DOCUMENTARY

### THE NEW JEW - DAYS OF WAR

**Sunday, October 19, 3:00 PM**

**Discussion Leader: Dee Levy,**

**SUNY Albany Doctoral student, instructor at several local colleges and AMIDAH Leadership**

**This program is cohosted by Mithabrim - A JCC Association of North America Program Accelerator and the Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and AMIDAH**

| 2025 | 125 min. | USA | English & Hebrew (w/subtitles)

Get ready to embark on a captivating journey with "The New Jew: Days of War." Join Israeli comedian Guri Alfi as he delves into the profound impact of October 7th on the identity, security, and standing of Jews in the United States. This film promises to be eye-opening, blending Guri's trademark humor with heartfelt insights that will resonate deeply.

As a sequel to the acclaimed 2021 TV miniseries "The New Jew," which garnered praise in Israel and at U.S. film festivals, this latest installment balances powerful emotions with moments of levity. With each scene, viewers are invited to reflect and find a spark of hope amid challenging times. Don't miss the chance to experience this enlightening ride—it's one that will stay with you long after the credits roll.

**Directed by Asaf Nawi and Moshe Samuels.**



## DOCUMENTARY

### ADVENTURES OF A MATHEMATICIAN

**Saturday, November 8, 7:00 PM**

**Discussion Leaders: Paul Friedman and Christina Tønnesen-Friedman, Union College Mathematics Department**

| 2020 | 102 min. | English and Polish (w/subtitles) |  
Germany - Poland - UK

Get ready for a thrilling ride through one of history's most fascinating stories! "Adventures of a Mathematician" explores the life of the brilliant Stanislaw Ulam, taking you straight to the heart of the nuclear age. This captivating tale offers an intimate look at a man who, despite his incredible achievements, remained humble and reflective.

Join Ulam, a gifted Jewish-Polish mathematician, as he navigates the whirlwind of the Manhattan Project: a secret mission that changed the world. Fleeing Poland just before the Nazis took over, Ulam not only found refuge in the US but also made his mark among a legendary team of European physicists at Los Alamos. His mathematical genius made him a key player in developing the atomic bomb, but he wrestles with the moral complexities of his work and the memories of his family left behind.

This film unfolds the gripping story of Ulam—a man torn between ambition and conscience. Prepare yourself for an engaging and heartfelt journey, beautifully adapted from his autobiography.

**Directed by Thor Klein**



## ISRAELI COMEDY

### GREENER PASTURES

**Saturday, December 6, 7:00 PM**

**Discussion Leader: Rabbi Beverly Magidson**

| 2021 | 90 min. | Israel | Hebrew (w/subtitles)

Dov, a spirited 79-year-old widower, finds himself reluctantly packed off to a nursing home by his well-meaning family. With his funds dwindling after losing his pension savings and feeling quite justified in pointing the finger at the state, Dov's new abode feels less like a home and more like a cage. All he dreams about is going back to his old house and living out his days there, free as a bird. But then, he makes a surprising discovery: his fellow residents are enjoying a little legal medical cannabis, and that sparks a light bulb moment for Dov. What if he could sell it instead of smoking it? Suddenly, he sees a potential escape route in this unlikely venture. As if this newfound plan isn't complicated enough, throw in some love interests, peculiar cops, and sly gangsters. Greener Pastures is a delightful romp, bursting with humor and heart, reminding us that no matter our age, life can be full of surprises just waiting to be seized!

**Directed by Assaf Abiri, Matan Guggenheim**

*Nominated for 11 Ophir Awards, 2020. Selection: Jerusalem International Film Festival 2020, Toronto Jewish Film Festival 2021, Halifax Jewish Film Festival 2021, Montreal Israeli & Jewish Film Festival 2022, Vancouver Jewish Film*



## TRUE LIFE DRAMA

### SAUL AND RUBY'S HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR BAND

**Saturday, January 24, 7:00 PM**

**Discussion Leaders: David & Amy Posner**

| 2020 | 80 min. | USA |

After World War II, Saul and Ruby, like many Holocaust survivors, made their way to America, where they built families and careers, enjoyed the golden years, and eventually settled in sunny South Florida. You might think this was the final act of their story, but then they had an exciting idea: why not start a klezmer band? They named it the Holocaust Survivor Band, and it was inspired by the lively tunes of their youth in Poland. This band does more than just bring back fond memories—it's a vibrant celebration of life! In this captivating and heartwarming film, we follow Saul and Ruby as they embark on a musical adventure that takes them from playing cozy gigs in retirement homes and small Jewish community venues to dazzling stages across the nation, including the prestigious Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage. Their journey is a truly inspiring tale about chasing your dreams at any age, discovering new purposes in life, experiencing the magic of music, and boldly standing against antisemitism and bigotry. It's a charming story that reminds us all of the joy that comes from living life to the fullest!

**Director: Tod Lending**

**Remarkable Discussions on Fascinating Films**





## DRAMA

### PINK LADY

#### VIRTUAL SCREENING

Thursday - Saturday February 12-15

#### VIRTUAL DISCUSSION

Sunday, February 15, 7:00 PM

**Discussion Leader: "Eshel" a Jewish organization for orthodox LGBTQ+**

| 2024 | 104 min. | Hebrew (w/subtitles) | Israel/Italy

Bati and Lazer are a young ultra-Orthodox couple in bustling Jerusalem, living what seems to be a picture-perfect life filled with three adorable children, a loving partnership, and a cherished spot in their tight-knit community. However, things take a dramatic turn when Lazer finds himself in a precarious situation, facing blackmail over photos revealing an affair with his male study partner. Suddenly, the flawless facade begins to crack! As Bati grapples with the revelations of Lazer's sexuality and his efforts to change for her, she embarks on an eye-opening journey that expands her world. This captivating tale invites her - and us - to reconsider the boundaries of love, faith, and duty. Screenwriter Mindi Ehrlich, drawing from her own experiences within the Haredi community, weaves a story that's both gripping and transformative, exploring themes of identity, desire, and personal freedom. **Director: Nir Bergman**

"Pink Lady" won the Best Director award at the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival in November 2024, & the Best Narrative Feature Film award at the Atlanta Jewish Film Festival in 2025.



## DRAMATIC COMEDY

### THIS IS MY MOTHER

Sunday, March 22, 7:00 PM

Discussion Leader: TBA

| 2024 | 105 min. | French (w/subtitles) | France

Pierre, a 33-year-old florist with a flourishing business and a promising romance, is living his best life. But who knew his world would be flipped upside down when his mother, Judith, suddenly pops back into the picture after years apart? Fresh out of a residential treatment program for bipolar disorder and ready to spice things up, Judith arrives with a whirlwind of excitement and unpredictability! As Pierre tries to navigate his mother back to her clinic in hopes of restoring his calm routine, their journey takes a wild detour. Along the way, they uncover a treasure trove of shared memories, clash over their differing views on life, and surprisingly find their bond deepening through it all. This unexpected reunion forces Pierre to see his mother—and their relationship—in a whole new light. With a little help from his new love, Pierre opens his heart and mind to reintegrating Judith into his life. Packed with stellar performances, witty dialogue, and a genuine exploration of mental health within the family, *"This Is My Mother"* is a heartfelt celebration of the messy, beautiful love between a mother and her child. Get ready for a ride that's enlightening and extremely entertaining!

**Director: Julien Carpentier**



## FESTIVAL FINALE

### 999: THE FORGOTTEN GIRLS

Sunday, April 26, 7:00 PM

DISCUSSION LEADER: PROFESSOR STEPHEN BERK

| 2024 | 105 min. | French (w/subtitles) | France

Discover the haunting tale of "999: The Forgotten Girls of the Holocaust," a poignant exploration of 999 young, unmarried Jewish women who were initially believed to be heading for work in a government shoe factory, only to face the grim reality of Auschwitz. Who were these brave souls? What set them apart? How did a select few manage to endure the harrowing years within the death camps? At 94, survivor Edith Grosman - #1970 - along with others, comes forward to share the hidden truths of this overlooked chapter in women's history, marking the First Official Jewish Transport to Auschwitz. Heather Dune Macadam, the visionary director and acclaimed author of the international bestseller, "999-The Young Women of the First Official Jewish Transport to Auschwitz," has painstakingly sifted through family and government archives to unveil groundbreaking research that brings this untold narrative to light. From a distinctively female viewpoint, this compelling story of resilience and sisterhood raises an unsettling question: why were young women the first targets?

"999: The Forgotten Girls" has received the Audience Award for Best Documentary Film at the Miami Jewish Film Festival

## A Special Thank You to the Jewish Film Festival Committee:

Erica & Len Berger  
Ellen Blake  
Alex Hallenstein  
Art Clayman  
Elaine Klein  
Gail Sternstein

CEO: David Posner

Campus Director: Andy Katz

Jewish Cultural &  
Adult Programming Director:  
Judy Ben-Ami



Picture from the 2024-2025  
Schenectady Jewish Film Festival



# SCHENECTADY JCC JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL

## FILM SERIES ORDER FORM

**PLEASE NOTE: FILMS ARE SCREENED ON DIFFERENT DAYS AND TIMES  
MOST FILMS ARE INTENDED FOR AN ADULT AUDIENCE**

### **Purchase a Film Festival Pass to save time and money!**

By purchasing the pass you will also help the JCC to be able to continue bringing great film to our community.

Reimbursements for missed films will not be provided.

**The film price includes refreshments.**

**Festival pass (9 Films): \$95 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 JCC Member discount \_\_\_\_\_ per person**

If paying with debit or credit card the cost is: \$97.85 \_\_\_\_\_ \$51.50 \_\_\_\_\_ per person

**Total amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card VISA \_\_\_\_\_ MasterCard \_\_\_\_\_ American Express \_\_\_\_\_ Discover \_\_\_\_\_

Account Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Credit Card \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to *Schenectady JCC* and return it with this form

Please click here or the code to pay [directly online](#)



**Individual films: \$13, \$7 JCC Member discount with cash or check to be paid at the door**

For more information, please call Judy Ben-Ami at (518) 377-8803  
or email [judyb@schenectadyjcc.org](mailto:judyb@schenectadyjcc.org)

PLEASE NOTE: SOMETIMES THERE ARE CHANGES THAT ARE NOT IN OUR CONTROL. PLEASE REGISTER TO GET JCC NOTIFICATIONS, VISIT THE WEBSITE OR CALL THE JCC PRIOR TO FILMS TO BE NOTIFIED OF ANY MODIFICATIONS.



# SCHENECTADY JCC JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL

This program was made possible through the generous support of the JCC Friends of the Arts, the Epstein Jewish Cultural Fund, Meyer and Mary Kurland/Gebell Fund, Jonas and Edith Flemiberg Jewish Cultural Fund, the Jewish World, and by a grant from the Schenectady County Legislature through its County Initiative Program.

**Refreshments for the films are donated by 518Kosher.**



Donate to the 2025-2026  
JCC Friends of the Arts



Robert and Dorothy Ludwig

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