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**The 23rd Maine Jewish Film Festival presents 40 evocative, challenging and inspiring films**

Amid increasing concern about hate crimes, a divisive political environment, the threat of climate change, and other societal challenges, the films and programs at the 2020 Maine Jewish Film Festival (MJFF) frame important issues in a global context.

From March 28 - April 5, MJFF will screen 40 dramatic features, documentaries and short films. Now in its 23rd year, the Festival's vision is that great films unite us in increasing communication and understanding. MJFF films offer fresh perspectives on familiar icons and illuminate the lives of hidden heroes. They have the potential to stimulate meaningful discussions on overcoming adversity, dealing with dysfunction in families, and understanding conflicting values.

*"We live in turbulent times. The 2020 Maine Jewish Film Festival seeks to engage and entertain audiences across Maine with films and programs that will widen perspectives about important issues. This year's film slate is particularly expansive -- enlightening documentaries, uplifting dramas, and animation -- there is something for everybody."*

Barbara Merson, Executive Director

Documentaries will illuminate women's empowerment (*#female\_pleasure*), the effect of disability on families, (*Once Upon A Boy*), climate change (*Picture of His Life*) and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (*Advocate*). Others will explore cultural icons like the Volkswagen Beetle (*Ganz: How I Lost My Beetle*) and at the phenomenon of "Fiddler on the Roof" (*Fiddler: Miracle of Miracles*).

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Uplifting comedies and riveting dramas also feature in the 2020 slate. This year's fictional films include a coming of age story set in Vienna during WWII, starring the legendary Bruno Ganz as psychiatrist Sigmund Freud (*The Tobacconist*), the stirring true story of Nazi soldier turned British soccer star Bert Trautmann (*The Keeper*) and an intense thriller from acclaimed director Avi Nesher set in modern Israel (*The Other Story*).

Featured guests will include award-winning investigative journalist Mark Potok who appears in the film, *Alt Right: Age of Rage*; filmmaker Aviva Kempner will discuss her latest film, *The Spy Behind Home Plate*, about baseball great turned spy Moe Berg; and comedian H. Alan Scott, the subject of the documentary *Latter Day Jew*, who was raised as a Mormon, later came out as gay, survived cancer and ultimately converted to Judaism, will also appear.

Screenings for the festival will be held in locations statewide: in Portland at the Nickelodeon Cinemas, Portland Museum of Art, and Jewish Community Alliance; in Brunswick at the Eveningstar Cinema and Bowdoin College; in Lewiston at the Bates College Olin Arts Center; in Rockland at the Strand Theatre; in Waterville at the Railroad Square Cinema; and in Bangor at the Bangor Mall Cinema.

The Maine Jewish Film Festival is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide a forum for the presentation of films to enrich, educate and entertain a diverse community about the global Jewish experience. Since 1998, the Maine Jewish Film Festival has screened over 400 films and brought more than 150 guest artists from across the U.S. and around the world to Maine. Tickets are on sale beginning February 9th at [www.mjff.org](http://www.mjff.org) or by phone at 800-838-3006. A complete festival schedule including film descriptions, featured guest speakers, panelists, and special forums can be found online at: [www.mjff.org](http://www.mjff.org).

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