



For Immediate Release...

November 25, 2019

ATLANTA JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL PREVIEWS 2020 FILM LINEUP

Annual Festival Brings Stimulating Roster of Films to Atlanta for 20th Anniversary

ATLANTA: Entering its 20th anniversary, Atlanta Jewish Film Festival (AJFF) reveals a first look at a sampling of films slated for next year's annual festival, **Monday, February 10 through Thursday, February 27, 2020**. The festival attracts nearly 40,000 moviegoers and a diverse, high-caliber collection of international and independent films – covering everything from intimate and introspective profiles, personal narratives, stories that intersect with other communities, unconventional perspectives, and more. The 2020 edition will highlight AJFF's 20 years of storytelling, with more of the compelling film programming that audiences look forward to each year. The full lineup and official schedule will be announced on **Friday, January 10** and tickets will go on sale via AJFF.org beginning **Monday, January 27**.

"We are proud to bring unique cinematic stories to Atlantans each year, and this sneak preview encapsulates many of the themes and genres of AJFF," says AJFF Executive Director Kenny Blank. "This early wave of film selections will delight audiences of any faith or background, while also tackling timely, complex issues and even challenging audiences with provocative topics."

Today's announcement includes six feature films and one Georgia-based short, just a taste of the over 60 narrative and documentary titles that will eventually complete the lineup. A rare look at Israel's only female prime minister is depicted in ***Golda***; a dramatic love story spans the 20th century's most dramatic moments in the North American premiere of ***The Glass Room***; the artistic expression of Jewish and Latino cultures through dance is explored in ***The Mambo***; and the career highs and lows of Israeli basketball legend Aulcie Perry is portrayed in ***Aulcie***. In keeping with AJFF's programming philosophy to spark dialogue and discussion, screenings often include panels and the opportunity to interact with filmmakers, actors, academics and other expert speakers – making AJFF much more than the typical moviegoing experience.

Descriptions for the eight early release films are below:

Aulcie

Documentary • Israel, USA • 72 minutes

A remarkable athlete who captured the spirit of a nation and was triumphant against all odds, ***Aulcie*** is the inspiring story of an Israeli basketball legend and his redemption after a fall from grace. During the summer of 1976, Aulcie Perry was recruited for the fledgling Maccabi Tel Aviv team while playing on the courts of Harlem. With the Israeli team immediately responding to his leadership, Aulcie led Maccabi to victory against the Russians in the European Championship, perhaps the most exciting moment in the history of Israeli sports. To the surprise of many, he later converted to Judaism, adopted the Hebrew name Elisha ben Avraham, became an Israeli citizen, and dated a famous model, Tami Ben Ami. At the height of his fame, stardom went to his head and Aulcie suffered a tremendous downfall, becoming addicted to drugs and arrested for drug smuggling. Now sober and living in Israel, Aulcie opens up about his career highs and lows in Dani Menkin's hotly anticipated sequel to the award-winning documentary ***On the Map*** (2017 AJFF).

Bully. Coward. Victim. The Story of Roy Cohn

Southeast Premiere

Documentary • USA • 94 minutes

A mesmerizing and unflinching look at the closeted, conservative lawyer and influential political fixer, ***Bully. Coward. Victim. The Story of Roy Cohn*** searches for the human being lurking behind the reviled Machiavellian persona. A ruthless and unscrupulous power broker in the rough and tumble world of New York City business and politics, Roy Cohn is best known for being chief counsel to Senator Joseph McCarthy's Communist-hunting hearings and later molding the career of future president Donald J. Trump. A self-hating Jew who adamantly denied his homosexuality, this flamboyant personality and courtroom pit bull is revealed as an icon of a deeply troubled America. Featured interviews include attorney Alan Dershowitz, playwright Tony Kushner, actor Nathan Lane, filmmaker John Waters and gossip columnist Cindy Adams. Directed by the granddaughter of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, who were executed for espionage largely through Cohn's efforts, this interrogatory and anecdotally revealing work is bolstered by recently unearthed archival video and audio material. Screened at the New York Film Festival.

Crescendo

Narrative • Germany • 112 minutes

A world-famous conductor tries to create a youth orchestra of Israeli and Palestinian musicians, only to be drawn into a tempest of seemingly unsolvable problems in *Crescendo*. When a youth orchestra is invited to play at a Middle East peace summit in northern Italy, the German organizers enlist renowned maestro Eduard Spörck (Peter Simonischek) to corral a sufficient number of young musicians, sworn enemies on either side of the Israeli-Palestinian divide. As the selection and audition process begins in Tel Aviv, conflict between the two factions of the orchestra flare up almost immediately. With his young musicians predisposed to mistrust each other on and offstage, it takes all of the conductor's skills to overcome the discord and get his orchestra in harmony, building to a tense and emotional finale. Loosely inspired by Daniel Barenboim's West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, Academy-Award nominated director Dror Zahavi directs this gripping drama about the power of music and reconciliation and features an impressive supporting cast of Israeli and Palestinian non-actors. Winner of the 2019 Audience Prize at the Festival of German Film, Ludwigshafen am Rhein. Screened at the Munich Film Festival.

The Glass Room

North American Premiere

Narrative • Czech Republic, Slovakia • 97 minutes

In this erotic love story spanning the most dramatic events of the 20th century, *The Glass Room* charts the war-torn saga of Czech newlyweds whose iconic modernist family home is a paean to both their greatest hopes and darkest secrets. Wealthy Jewish industrialist Viktor Landauer (Claes Bang) and his gentile wife Liesel (Hanna Alström) are filled with optimism as they build their dream home, a crystalline architectural masterpiece representing the optimism and cultural vibrancy of post-WWI central Europe. As the idealism of the 1930s evaporates under the forces of Nazi barbarism, Viktor searches for comfort in the arms of a young refugee woman, while Liesel's flirtatious friendship with the sensual, mischievous Hana (Carice Van Houten) simmers with passion. Fleeing the Nazi onslaught, the Landauers struggle for survival abroad, while their home slips from Czech to Nazi to Soviet possession and finally as property of the Community Party, until Liesel and Hana are finally drawn back to where their story began. *The Glass Room* is based on the bestselling Simon Mawer novel and filmed on-location at the breathtaking Villa Tugendhat in the eastern province of Moravia. Screening at the UK Jewish Film Festival.

Golda

Documentary • Israel, Germany • 88 minutes

A previously unaired television interview forms the narrative backbone of *Golda*, the story of Israel's first (and only) female Prime Minister, her surprising rise to power, and tragic and lonely demise. During her turbulent years in office, Golda Meir was confronted with significant challenges on both the domestic and international fronts, including the beginning of the settler movement on the West Bank and the Yom Kippur War. Throughout, the no-nonsense politician presented an image of stoicism, stubbornness and hard-edged candor that earned her both devoted friends and bitter enemies. Shortly before her passing, Meir sat down with Israeli television. After the interview ended, the cameras kept rolling, capturing an intimate, cigarette-fueled conversation in which the stateswoman spoke freely about her place in history. This extraordinary off-air interview is combined with testimonies from supporters and opponents, as well as rare archival footage, to create a humane portrait of a groundbreaking historical figure whose legacy remains clouded in controversy. Screened at the Docaviv International Film Festival and San Francisco Jewish Film Festival.

No Pork on the Fork

World Premiere

Short • USA • 23 minutes

A mouthwatering and often humorous behind the scenes look at the Atlanta Kosher BBQ Festival.

The Mambo

Documentary • USA • 90 minutes

Jewish and Latino cultures meet on the dance floor in *The Mambo*, the story of the free-spirited New Yorkers who fell in love with the sultry moves from Cuba called the mambo. In the years following WWII, countless Jewish musicians and dancers fell under the sway of Latin rhythms. For many so-called mamboers, the affinity for this upbeat mix of Latin rhythms and Jewish melodies was more than just pure fun. For Jews, dancing helped banish the horrors of the Holocaust and find joy once again, even at a time when America was racially segregated and anti-Semitism was commonplace. Set to the infectious Afro-Cuban sounds of Tito Puente and Celia Cruz, Peabody Award-winning filmmaker Lex Gillespie traces the mambo's rise from its birth in Cuba to the peak of its popularity in neon-splashed New York, the art deco hotels of Miami Beach, and the Jewish resorts of the Catskills of the 1950s. Spinning their tales with heart, humor and chutzpah, *The Mambo* features interviews with musicians, club owners, disc jockeys, record company moguls and dancers, now in their 80's and 90's, as they reunite to tell this unlikely and little-known musical story.

Additional details will be announced closer to the festival, including selected films for Opening Night, Young Professionals Night presented by ACCESS, and Closing Night. For more information, visit AJFF.org. Stay connected via social media on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/AJFF), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/AJFF),

and [Instagram](#) and use #AJFF2020.

About Atlanta Jewish Film Festival's 20th Anniversary: In 2020, AJFF is celebrating two decades of showcasing international cinema and engaging diverse audiences. The organization has seen incredible growth since the inaugural edition of the festival in 2000. Over the course of the past 19 years, AJFF has welcomed over 385,000 filmgoers to theaters around metro Atlanta and screened nearly 1000 films, totaling up to 1,200 hours of screenings (50 days straight!). Among these films, AJFF has been proud to present 35 world premieres, and international features from over 60 countries, including Algeria, Cambodia, Tunisia, and Ghana. AJFF now offers year-round programming that furthers their impact within Atlanta, the Southeast, and across the marketplace of film festivals worldwide. Follow along at #AJFF2020 to stay in touch as they commemorate this milestone occasion.

About Atlanta Jewish Film Festival: AJFF's mission is to entertain and engage diverse audiences with film through a Jewish lens while simultaneously challenging conventional perspectives on culture and history, life in Israel, and the work of Jewish artists—particularly where these stories intersect with other communities. AJFF features year-round programs, including several tent pole events such as its annual Film Festival, AJFF Selects, AJFF On Campus, Cinebash, and the Icon Award for Contributions to the Cinematic Arts. In addition to its core programs, AJFF continues to work alongside its many partner organizations to support the greater Atlanta community while raising the bar for film festivals worldwide. Founded by the Atlanta Regional Office of American Jewish Committee (AJC) in 2000, since 2014, AJFF has operated as an independent non-profit arts organization that continues an active partnership with its founding agency, American Jewish Committee. **Photos from AJFF events can be pulled [here](#).**

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