

# LIVELY DOCUMENTARIES ON THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE

## YIDDISH SOUL

Directed by Turi Finocchiaro and Nathalie Rossetti

This charming film documents the revival and popularity of Yiddish music in today's Europe. It is now considered "world music" and has become the passion of a new generation of artists both Jewish and non-Jewish. The film takes us on a musical tour of performances by artists from all over Europe, highlighting singers Karsten Troyke from Germany and Shura Lipovsky of the Netherlands. One of the features of the film is the subtitling of Yiddish lyrics so that an American audience can fully appreciate the songs.

The performers explain why they became attracted to this music. While some of the artists introduce lyrical innovations, most of them interpret the repertoire as faithfully as possible. The performances and the enthusiastic audiences confirm that although Hitler killed the "shtetl" life but he was not able to silence its music.

53 min. Video or DVD. Sale \$295. Video rental \$85.

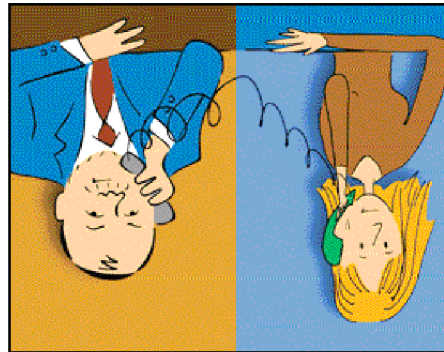
- ◆ CHICAGO EUROPEAN FILM FESTIVAL, 2006
- ◆ JEWISH FILM FESTIVALS, MELBOURNE AND SYDNEY, 2006
- ◆ JEWISH EYE FILM FESTIVAL, ISRAEL, 2006

See also *Concert Yiddish Soul* inside.



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*"Feffer's fine film adds some horseadish to a heated debate,"* Michael Elkin, The Philadelphia Jewish Exponent

A film by Kate Feffer

**MATZO & MISTLETOE**

Filmmaker Kate Feffer was six years old when her father told her she was Jewish. Since she celebrated Christmas and never attended synagogue, this information came as a surprise. In *Matzo & Mistletoe*, Feffer interviews a fascinating cast of characters, and uses archival footage, illustration, and clips from television shows and movies to ponder the paradox of American secular Judaism.

*Matzo & Mistletoe* features interviews with Kate's mother, Judy Feffer; her father, cartoonist/writer Jules Feffer; her childhood friend, Deborah Newitz; broadcast legend Mike Wallace; author of *The Vanishing American Jew*, Alan Dershowitz; essayist Daphne Merkin; journalists Walter Shapiro and Meryl Gordon; Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald, and others.

*Matzo & Mistletoe* is an engaging exploration of personal identity. As a country populated by immigrants and their descendants, it is natural that concerns about assimilation play heavily into our national identity.

Through this exploration of secular Jewish identity, the film further dialogue and generates laughter about these confusing and important aspects of being an American Jew in the 21st century.

58 min. Video or DVD. Sale \$295. Video rental \$85.

◆ JEWISH FILM FESTIVALS PHILADELPHIA, DARTON, AND BOSTON, 2007

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## CONCERT YIDDISH SOUL

Directed by Turi Finocchiaro and Nathalie Rossetti

Lovers of Klezmer and Yiddish music are treated to the performance of the musicians appearing in *Yiddish Soul*: vocalists Chava Alberstein, Myriam Fuks, Shura Lipovsky, Karsten Troyke, the KlezRoym ensemble and a host of talented accompanists.

Playing to a packed house in Brussels in 2005, their mournful and ecstatic tunes continue to evoke a rich tapestry of European Jewish life from the Middle Ages through the Second World War. Dance-happy rabbis, starry-eyed lovers and the longing for distant homelands are but a sampling of themes within the expansive canon.

The jubilation and suffering of the songs attest to the history of the Yiddish language as the mouthpiece for European Jewry on topics as diverse as religion, politics and love. They move us with their celebrations of life in the face of unimaginable hardship.

43 min. DVD. Sale \$295. Rental \$85.

◆ SAN FRANCISCO JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL, 2007



## THE LONGING

### THE FORGOTTEN JEWS OF SOUTH AMERICA

A documentary by Gabriela Böhm

A small group of South Americans are eager to affirm their Jewish faith. Their ancestors — Spanish Jews — were forced to convert during the Inquisition. Even after centuries of living in the New World as Catholics and intermarrying, their families still managed to secretly pass down some Jewish traditions from generation to generation. These practices have convinced them that they were originally Jews and fuel their desire to convert.

*The Longing*, set in Ecuador, tells the story of a group of “conversos” attempting to regain their birthright. Among those featured are three women who traveled 36 hours roundtrip, by bus, from Colombia and a couple from a small Ecuadorian town. On the Internet, they have found an American rabbi from Kansas City committed to helping “lost Jews” throughout the world reclaim their identities. For two years they have studied online, following the rabbi’s conversion course to Judaism. Now they are meeting the rabbi in Guayaquil, Ecuador. When the rabbi arrives, he finds the local established Jewish community uncooperative. The congregation is suspicious of the group’s claim to their Jewish roots, even locking the Temple doors against these outsiders. Ultimately, the rabbi is able to get several local Jews to reluctantly participate in the conversion.



The converts’ dreams are fulfilled, but they remain isolated from their Catholic neighbors, and are not truly accepted by other Jews.

75 min. Video or DVD. Sale \$295. Video rental \$85.

◆ JEWISH FILM FESTIVALS, 2007: NEW YORK, LOS ANGELES, VANCOUVER AND TORONTO

## KEEP ON WALKING

### JOSHUA NELSON: THE JEWISH GOSPEL SINGER

A film by Tana Ross, Jesper Sorensen, Freke Vuijst, and Vibeke Winding

Filmed in Newark, St. Louis, Stockholm and Jerusalem, this film is a celebration of an exceptional young man, Joshua Nelson. Joshua, an African American who is Jewish, transcends the differences between races and faiths through his music. He is both an up-and-coming gospel singer in the tradition of Mahalia Jackson and a Hebrew teacher.

Joshua began singing at 13. His mother remembers him as an eccentric youth, displaying leadership qualities from an early age. In this film, he participates in jazz sessions, concert performances in this country and abroad and religious observances.

Through his composing, gospel singing and chanting Torah, Joshua is the musical embodiment of cultural harmony. His rich voice, charismatic personality, and singular ideas make this a powerful and inspiring film for all audiences.

53 min. Video or DVD. Sale \$295. Video rental \$85.

◆ PAUL ROBESON AWARD, NEWARK BLACK FILMMAKERS FESTIVAL, 2002

◆ BERLIN JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL, 2002

◆ COPENHAGEN JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL, 2000

## LAST STOP KEW GARDENS

A film by Robert H. Lieberman

“former classmates’ reunion turns into vivid recollection...” *Newsday*

Novelist, filmmaker and Cornell physics professor Robert H. Lieberman, an Americanized child of Holocaust survivors, revisits Kew Gardens, which in the 1940’s and 50’s was an immigrant “village” a few subway stops from the heart of New York City.

Kew Gardens was a unique enclave where German was the first language and Viennese-style bakeries and butchers lined the streets. This compelling film is the story of what happened to the next generation, the children of these refugee residents who had fled from Europe when Hitler rose to power. With the past weighing heavily upon them, these children could not help but feel the pressure to excel in their new country—and they succeeded.

Appearing in this film are Lieberman’s illustrious schoolmates of PS 99: Jerry Springer, comedian Robert Schimmel, Josh Brand (creator of “St. Elsewhere” and “Northern Exposure”), and the Today Show’s music critic, Rona Elliot. We also meet other dynamic “overachievers,” among them an orchestra conductor, an author, a lawyer and a historian. All of them recall a special community where education was prized and no resident was a stranger. Today the population of



this neighborhood has become Asian and Middle Eastern, and Indian markets have replaced the older shops with their Tudor facades. Yet the children of Kew Gardens (now parents and grandparents themselves) remember a place where a generation of exiles kept one cultural foot in Europe and looked to their offspring to become genuine Yankees.

60 min. DVD. Sale \$195. Rental \$85.

## THE DANISH SOLUTION

### THE RESCUE OF THE JEWS IN DENMARK

Narrated by Garrison Keillor

Written, Directed, Produced by Karen Cantor and Camilla Kjærulff, Singing Wolf Documentaries, Inc.

“A well-made documentary, both moving and informative.” Annette Insdorf, author, “Indelible Shadows: Films and the Holocaust”

Sixty years ago the Final Solution was attempted in Denmark. The plan was averted — over 95 percent of the country’s Jewish population survived the war. How and why Jews escaped the Nazis’ blueprint for their extermination is the subject of this compelling documentary film. Through the very human testimony of survivors, the story of the Danish rescue is told with clarity, empathy and humor. Because what happened in Denmark has taken on legendary proportions, the filmmakers have carefully researched the subject, separating the truths from the myths such as that of the Danish King wearing the Yellow Star.

In addition to the survivors’ stories, the filmmakers have interviewed rescuers and scholars. From



members of the resistance to ordinary people who helped when they saw a need — viewers will be introduced to courageous people who took action to save their threatened compatriots. The film points out the reasons why the Danish Jews were not treated as harshly by the Nazis as Jews elsewhere. This story is a fascinating chapter of Holocaust history.

58 min. Video or DVD. Sale \$350. Video rental \$95.

◆ ST. LOUIS JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL, 2006

◆ U.S. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM, WASHINGTON, D.C., 2003

◆ DIRECTORS CHOICE, DETROIT JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL, 2004

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