



For Immediate Release...

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## ATLANTA JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL PREVIEW 2019 FILM LINEUP

*World's Preeminent Jewish Film Festival and Atlanta's Largest Film Festival Returns with Films as Timely as Ever*

**ATLANTA:** The Atlanta Jewish Film Festival (AJFF) reveals an early look at some of the films to be featured at next year's 19<sup>th</sup> annual festival, **Wednesday, February 6 through Tuesday, February 26, 2019**. With a diverse collection of international and independent films from over 20 countries, attracting nearly 40,000 moviegoers, the festival offers an expansive experience that takes audiences on a journey around the world through film. Audiences can expect a wide range of films on the roster, everything from personal narratives, unconventional perspectives, documentaries, to comedies, dramas and more. The full lineup and official schedule will be announced on **Thursday, January 10** and tickets will go on sale via [AJFF.org](http://AJFF.org) beginning **Monday, January 28**.

"We are proud to bring compelling films to the community each year, and provide a space for audiences to watch these gripping programs and gain new appreciation of the diverse realities of Jewish life around the world," says AJFF Executive Director Kenny Blank. "These early announced films reflect not only the Jewish experience, but the human experience writ large."

Today's announcement includes eight feature films, of over 50 narrative and documentary titles that will eventually complete the lineup. These early selections speak to the festival's diversity in theme, genre and subject matter. The timely topic of hate speech is explored in "**Alt Right: Age of Rage**"; a family finding its way is portrayed in "**Family in Transition**"; dysfunctional family stories featuring familiar faces like James Caan in "**Holy Lands**"; and the history of jazz and its German-American pioneers is highlighted in "**It Must Swing! The Blue Note Story**." Touching dramas take center stage again, too, in narratives like "**Redemption**," the story of a father caught between his music and the love of his child. In keeping with AJFF's programming philosophy, screenings often include discussions and the chance to interact with filmmakers, actors, academics and other expert speakers.

Descriptions for the eight early release films are below:

### "Alt-Right: Age of Rage"

Documentary • USA

The rise and changing face of white nationalism is tracked and examined during in the first year of the Trump presidency, as well as the counter-protests it has inspired, in "Alt-Right: Age of Rage." Donald Trump's improbable victory brought a previously hidden movement out of the fringe, at the center of which is white power leader Richard Spencer. On the other side is Daryl Lamont Jenkins, a black anti-fascist activist who will not rest until American racists are defeated. Culminating with first person accounts of the tragic events in Charlottesville, "Alt-Right: Age of Rage" is a hard-hitting exposé, investigating major players in the battle for America's conscience.

### "Family in Transition"

Documentary • Israel

A family from a traditional Israeli town is forever changed after their father shares his desire to live his life as a woman, after 20 years of marriage, in "Family in Transition." Amit's wife, Galit, chooses to stay with her husband, keeping their family with four children together. This candid portrait reveals, in unflinching detail, the family's struggles against social stigma and other difficulties, as they try to maintain their equilibrium in light of Amit's transitioning. Shot over two years, "Family in Transition" delivers an emotional punch in its sensitive, intimate depiction of a courageous family facing the very personal realities of a hot-button topic. Best Israeli Film winner at the DocAviv Film Festival.

### "Fig Tree"

Narrative • Israel

A Jewish teenager attempts to navigate her emotional final days in war-torn Ethiopia before fleeing to Israel, in the harrowing coming-of-age story, "Fig Tree." Sixteen-year-old Mina lives a surreal existence, surrounded by the natural beauty of her pastoral neighborhood in Addis Ababa, but also surrounded by the suffering of people torn asunder by the Ethiopian Civil War. Hiding nearby in a fig tree, her Christian boyfriend, Eli, does his best to avoid abduction by the military junta, as young men are conscripted into the army against their will. But time is running out for their romance, as Mina's Jewish family plans their escape to Israel where the

children's mother awaits. So begins an inexorable march toward tragedy and separation, as Mina hatches a scheme to save Eli even as events conspire against her. "Fig Tree" is the directorial debut of Ethiopian-Israeli writer-director Aäläm-Wärqe Davidian, and is based on her own experiences growing up in Ethiopia and being airlifted to Israel as part of Operation Solomon. Nominated for five Israeli Academy Awards including Best Film, and winner for Best Cinematography. Best Film nominee at the Haifa International Film Festival, and Eurimages Audentia Award winner at the Toronto International Film Festival.

### **"Holy Lands"**

Narrative • France

James Caan, Rosanna Arquette and Jonathan Rhys Meyers star in "Holy Lands," a family drama about a Jewish-American cardiologist who leaves everything behind to become a pig farmer in Israel. Though Dr. Harry Rosenmerck (Caan) tries to leave his former life behind, it is his wife (Arquette) with a terminally ill diagnosis, who brings his family back to the forefront, alongside his estranged son David (Meyers), a successful gay playwright, and his daughter Annabelle, a professional student. With humor and an all-star cast, writer and director Amanda Sthers presents a universal story of love and acceptance based on her critically acclaimed novel of the same name.

### **"It Must Swing!: The Blue Note Story"**

Documentary • Germany

This is the moving story of two German-Jewish refugees who, united in their passion for music and a profound belief in equality, launched the careers of an impressive roster of African-American jazz stars. In 1939 New York City, two Jewish refugees from Berlin came together to found the most iconic jazz label in music history, Blue Note Records. Miles Davis, John Coltrane and countless others came through their doors to create indelible recordings that thrummed with improvisatory urgency. In an era when black musicians were subject to discrimination and segregation in NYC, Blue Note's founders, having emigrated to escape discrimination, saw kindred spirits and provided an outlet for their virtuosity. Relive this essential moment in music history, peppered throughout with artful animated re-creations.

### **"Redemption"**

Narrative • Israel

A devout father fights to save both the life of his cancer-stricken daughter and his own musical dream in the spiritually rousing and thought-provoking Israeli drama "Redemption." A middle-aged single widower carrying a heavy burden, Menachem earns a meager income as a grocery clerk. Having once fronted a rock-and-roll band until personal tragedy intervened, he now dedicates himself entirely to his faith. As he struggles to finance the formidable medical treatments for his six-year-old daughter, Menachem tries to persuade his former band-mates to reunite in hopes of raising some much needed cash. But is the singing career of his secular past compatible with his new Orthodox way of life? Best Actor and Ecumenical Jury award winner at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, and Audience Award winner at the Jerusalem Film Festival.

### **"Who Will Write Our History"**

Documentary • USA

A secret society of intellectuals carries out an extraordinary form of resistance in the diseased squalor of the Warsaw Ghetto, in "Who Will Write Our History." In November 1940, days after the Nazis sealed 450,000 Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto, a clandestine band of journalists, scholars and community leaders decided to fight back, determined to create a record that would survive the war even if they did not. Led by historian Emanuel Ringelblum (known by the code name Oyneg Shabes), this underground group vowed to defeat Nazi lies and propaganda with pen and paper. After the war, an extraordinary archive of letters, confessionals, last testaments, poems and questionnaires was retrieved from under the rubble, buried in milk cans and metal boxes. New interviews, rarely seen footage, and stunning dramatizations are combined with diary excerpts and narration by actors Adrien Brody and Joan Allen. "Who Will Write Our History" is the latest collaboration between executive producer Nancy Spielberg and writer-director Roberta Grossman.

### **"Working Woman"**

Narrative • Israel

A young married Israeli mother starting her career in the high-end real estate business, faces issues of sexual harassment and financial strain, in "Working Woman." Ambitious and capable thirty-something Orna (Liron Ben-Shlush) takes to her new job with zeal, working in condo sales for a prominent real estate developer, Benny (Menashe Noy). She thrives despite the challenges facing her at home, juggling three children and her husband's struggling restaurant business. When Benny's attentions cross the line, Orna attempts to keep her boss at arm's length while trying to keep the job she loves. In the era of #MeToo, award-winning feminist, activist, writer-director Michal Aviad's nuanced portrayal of gray work-place scenarios is a thought-provoking insight into the world of sexual harassment.

This year's festival will be presented at the new anchor venue Sandy Springs Performing Arts Center and other metro Atlanta

locations, including Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre, Regal Atlantic Station, Regal Perimeter Pointe, UA Tara Cinemas, and Woodruff Arts Center. 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](http://AJFF.org). Stay connected via social media on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#) and use #AJFF2019.

**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 nonprofit 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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