

JEWISH JOURNAL

PBIFF offers 'Jewish Experience'

By Shani McManus and Staff Writer
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The 19th Annual Palm Beach International Film Festival, running April 3 to April 10, is poised to kick off with an amazing line-up of national and international films that would rival Cannes.

This year, the PBIFF will also be offering a new Jewish/Israeli-centric program, "The Jewish Experience," presenting the most current cutting-edge films of this genre.

"The Jewish Experience is truly a world-class film festival within a festival," said Randi Emerman, president and CEO of the Palm Beach International Film Festival, and long-time board member of the Atlanta Jewish Film Festival, the second largest of its kind in the world. "These features and documentaries from many countries will enrich, entertain and educate filmgoers about diverse Jewish and Israeli topics.

"There's a huge market for [Jewish-themed films] here," Emerman said.

The films come from many countries including Israel, U.S., Poland, Croatia, Czech Republic, UK, Germany, Italy, Palestine, France, Canada, Russia, Argentina, Uruguay, Philippines, Belgium, South Africa, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Iraq and Denmark. Well known guest celebrities will be attending, along with foreign directors and actors representing the festival films. Several special events are scheduled. Films will be shown at venues throughout [Palm Beach County](#).

Wendy Honig, Arleen Roberts and Lesley Rich comprise the PBIFF Advisory Committee for the Jewish Experience program.

"Jewish films are in high demand in [Palm Beach County](#), with a population of approximately 250,000 Jews," Wendy Honig said. "The Palm Beach International Film Festival has stepped up to the plate to fill the need for putting current 2013 and 2014 Jewish films into their festival. PBIFF has created the Jewish Experience to embrace and meet the needs of its large Jewish population. This showcase of Jewish films will educate, entertain and nurture the theater goers."

Working together with Randa Emerman, Honig, Roberts and Rich were determined to bring in the newest, latest and greatest films for the festival they said.

"I feel blessed to have the World Premiere of "Journey into the Holocaust" (sponsored by Next Generations) in the festival," said Honig, who brings more than 20 years of experience in at Jewish film festivals including an expertise in film selection. "In my opinion, this is one of the finest if not the finest documentaries on the Holocaust. This film is the gold standard of Holocaust education and Paul Bachow's masterpiece is a treasure for the generations to come."

Honig noted she is also thrilled to have three Israeli Academy Award nominees in the category of Best Film: "Hunting Elephants," "Sweets" and "Magic Men."

"These are films that are a must see," Honig said.

Arleen Roberts, who has more than four years experience working with Jewish film festivals and expertise in theater management, said she loves "the film festival atmosphere and the cutting edge element "of the films selected for the Jewish Experience.

"My favorite film is 'Our Big Time,' with its coming of age aspect. It is truly magnificent," she said. "Also important to see is, 'Under the Same Sun,' that brings a vision of hope to the religion."

Lesley Rich, a lawyer and accountant, comes to the Jewish Experience with technical expertise. Rich was involved in the making of an independent film and walked the red carpet at Tribeca in 2007.

"There is a tremendous diversity of Jewish films being showcased — films from many different countries with a wide range of subject matter," he said "My personal favorites are the adrenaline-rushing drama, 'God's Slave' and breezy situational comedy, 'It Happened in Saint Tropez.'"

The Palm Beach International Film Festival has been recognized as one of the Top 25 Independent Film Festivals in the World. Over the years, the PBIFF has hosted a bevy of top celebrities and filmmakers. This year will be no different with the list of star-studded actors, actresses, filmmakers and other celebrities attending to be announced shortly.

For more information on the full list of films being presented, ticket prices and local theaters showing PBIFF films, call 561-362-0003 or visit <http://www.pbifilmfest.org>.

