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**9TH ANNUAL JEWISH CINEMA SOUTH FILM FEST
WILL FILL SCREENS IN FOUR CITIES**

**Total of 23 acclaimed films to be shown in
Baton Rouge, LA; Jackson, MS; Mobile, AL; and The Triangle, NC**

JACKSON, MS – The ninth annual Jewish Cinema South: A Network of Jewish Film Festivals will be held in four Southern communities over the coming months: Mobile, Alabama, from Oct. 25-28, 2009; the North Carolina Triangle from Nov. 5-8, 2009; Baton Rouge, Louisiana, from Jan. 20-24, 2010; and Jackson, Mississippi, from Jan.21-24, 2010.

Jewish Cinema South (JCS) is a program of the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life based in Jackson, MS. The Institute, established in 2000, is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to sustaining, preserving and sharing Jewish life throughout a 13-state region of Southern states. The Institute sponsors Jewish Cinema South to strengthen Jewish identity, promote multi-cultural and multi-ethnic dialogue and encourage tolerance and understanding, all while providing entertaining and thought-provoking programming.

Each participating JCS community mounts its own festival. The ISJL gives administrative and logistical support to the local festival committees, gathers potential films and provides a festival coordination plan.

The four festivals will show a total of 23 films representing a sweeping view of the Jewish experience as seen through the lenses of filmmakers and producers from Germany, Hungary, Israel, Spain and the United States. The films also tackle universal themes of heroism, remembrance, growing up, prejudice, tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

Nine of the films are documentaries:

- “Blessed is the Match: The Life and Death of Hannah Senesh” is the first documentary feature on the World War II-era poet and diarist who became a paratrooper, resistance fighter and modern Jewish Joan of Arc.
- “Down Home: Jewish Life in North Carolina” relates how Jews have been integral to the Tar Heel State’s emergence as an industrial New South society with often progressive leadership, while preserving their multicultural identities.
- “Hiding Halina” is the story of a little girl who survived the Holocaust in hiding. The film features personal photos, artwork, re-enactments and Halina Irving’s powerful storytelling.
- “Knowledge Is the Beginning” is the story of the West-Eastern Divan, an orchestra founded by conductor Daniel Barenboim for young Arabs and Jews in Israel. The film illustrates how prejudices are overcome during rehearsals, concerts and celebrations.
- “Praying with Lior” focuses on the special relationship of Lior Liebling, a high-functioning boy with Down syndrome, with prayer and God. Some consider Lior, also known as “the little rebbe,” to be a spiritual genius because of his fervent enthusiasm for prayer.

- “Rabbi Firer: A Reason to Question” looks at Rabbi Elimelech Firer, who has been offering medical advice and intervention on behalf of patients for 30 years. Is he an emissary of good will or a wielder of too much power over physicians?
- “Unsettled” presents Israel’s 2005 withdrawal from the Gaza Strip through the eyes of six young people. Three are settlers determined to stay. Two are soldiers with different feelings about the order to evict Jews from their homes. One is an activist whose sister was killed by a terrorist bombing and sees the withdrawal as the first step toward peace.
- “Waves of Freedom” tells one of the least known, but most dramatic stories of Americans’ support of Israel. Twenty-seven U.S. veterans of World War II are recruited to rescue 2,000 displaced Jews from post-war Europe and break the British blockade of Jewish Palestine. Though captured by British destroyers, the sailors bring their passengers to Palestine.
- “We Must Remember” is the story of 16 American high school students who set out to learn about the Holocaust through a small extracurricular broadcasting project that quickly grows. The students travel to Poland and Germany, where they film inside concentration camp sites and interview high school students.

Nine dramas will be shown:

- “All I’ve Got” is the tale of deceased 72-year-old Tamara, who finds herself on a ship heading to the afterlife. There she meets Uri, her first love, who died at age 22. Tamara is offered a choice: begin her life again with Uri as a 22-year-old, but give up all memories of her subsequent existence, or stay as she is with the memories of her life.
- “The Clown & the Fuhrer” ruminates on the role of entertainment in the face of barbarism. In 1944 Berlin, acclaimed Spanish clown Charlie Rivel and partner Witzi are approached by a Gestapo agent to entertain Adolf Hitler on his birthday
- “The Debt” is a nail-biter about Mossad agents who capture a Mengele-like Nazi physician, intending to return him to Israel for trial. After he escapes, the agents claim they killed him. Thirty years later, he re-emerges. The former agents, acting on their own, set out to find him and finish the job.
- “Gloomy Sunday” focuses on a ménage a trois in pre-World War II Budapest. The film is built around the title song, a ballad which was a hit during the 1930s and popularized by Billie Holiday in 1941.
- “The Little Traitor” is a tale of trust and betrayal based on an Amos Oz novel. Eleven-year-old Israeli Proffy Liebowitz and British Sergeant Dunlop share an improbable friendship in Palestine.
- “Max Minsky and Me” follows a bookish girl who idolizes the prince of Luxembourg. At the news that her school basketball team will compete in Luxembourg, she drops her books for the basketball court. Ten-year old Max Minsky offers a deal: She does his homework, he teaches her to play hoops. Trouble is, she also must prepare for her bat mitzvah.
- “Noodle” is a comic drama about an Israeli flight attendant and her co-workers who make it their mission to reunite a Chinese boy, Noodle, with his mother, who was deported from Israel.
- “Pinchas” tells the story of a Russian immigrant boy to Israel. His mother devotes her spare time to an affair with a married man. The boy, Pinchas, meets an Orthodox Jewish family, which offers him friendship and introduces him to religion.
- “Steel Toes” features Academy-Award nominated David Strathairn as a Jewish lawyer appointed to represent a Neo-Nazi Skinhead on trial for a racially motivated murder. The film takes us into the intense relationship that develops between these men.

Four comedies are scheduled:

- “Beau Jest” is playwright James Sherman’s tale about relationships, romance and intrigue starring Robyn Cohen, Lainie Kazan, Seymour Cassel and Willie Garson (from “Sex in the City”)
- “Hey, Hey, It’s Esther Blueberger” is the tender though humorous story of a Jewish girl who struggles with not fitting in.
- “The Orthodox Way” follows an Orthodox Jewish man on a blind date in Jerusalem with the wrong girl.
- The musical “West Bank Story” views the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the lens of the musical “West Side Story”

Additionally, the film “The Case for Israel: Democracy’s Outpost” provides a point-by-point defense of the Jewish State led by famed attorney Alan Dershowitz, who wrote a book of the same name. He interviews scholars and Israeli prime ministers in developing his case.

For more information about Jewish Cinema South and the four local festivals, contact the Institute of Southern Jewish Life at (601) 362-6357 or visit www.isjl.org.