

AMERICAN JEWRY

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Jewish Learning**

MILWAUKEE
JEWISH FEDERATION

AMERICAN JEWRY

- F
Ala **ALAN & NAOMI** (1992)
Brooklyn born 14-year-old Alan is asked by his parents to befriend Naomi, a French girl who was emotionally traumatized by the Holocaust. Based on the award-winning children's book *Alan & Naomi* by Myron Levoy.
1 hr. 35 min. Rated PG. **AGE:** 12 to Adult
- 791.43
Alm **ALMONDS AND RAISINS: A HISTORY OF THE YIDDISH CINEMA** (1983)
Presents the history of Yiddish cinema, told through film excerpts and through interviews with the actors, directors and producers who created the films. The motion picture, *The Jazz Singer*, a 1927 Hollywood Jewish release in English, brought immigrant Jews to the cinema and encouraged the growth of a new genre: The Yiddish Film. Between 1927 and 1940, over 300 Yiddish films were produced in America. This documentary lovingly recalls these films, and through them, the period of the Jewish immigrant in America, struggling between tradition and assimilation. Includes interviews with Herschel Bernardi, Leo Fuchs, Joseph Green, Miriam Kressyn, David Opatoshu, Seymour Reichtzeit, and Zvee Schooler. **Note:** *May be used with the book, Visions, Images and Dreams: Yiddish Film Past and Present, by Eric Goldman.*
B&W. 1 hr. 30 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult
- F
Ame **AN AMERICAN TAIL** (1986)
This popular animated feature film is about a Russian Jewish mouse who immigrates to America in the late nineteenth century. Fievel Mousekewitz, along with his family, flee from the evil cats of Russia for new opportunities in America. Right before landing in New York, Fievel is unexpectedly separated from his family and must try to seek them out. Produced by Steven Spielberg, this one's a real favorite with the younger set.
1 hr. 21 min. **AGE:** 4 to 10
- DVD/VHS
F
Ame **AN AMERICAN TAIL: FIEVEL GOES WEST** (1991)
Steven Spielberg's Jewish immigrant mouse Fievel Mousekewitz travels to the Wild West in this high-spirited animated feature. Fievel and his family have reached America, "where the streets are paved with cheese." But New York's slums and evil cats make their new homeland less than paradise. "Go West Young Mouse!" comes the cry, and so the Mousekewitz family boards the train for the frontier. But on the long journey through the desert, Fievel overhears some cats scheming to make mouseburgers out of the new arrivals. Will Fievel be able to save the mice of Green River?
Rated G. 1 hr. 15 min. **AGE:** 4 to 10
- F
Ame **AMERICANER SHADCHEN (An American Matchmaker)** (1940)
This Yiddish musical looks at second-generation Jews in New York City and their attempts to live between two worlds. Its focus is on Nathan, a young successful Jewish businessman, who has been engaged eight times, but never married. Searching for the perfect wife, Nathan decides to become a shadchen himself.
In Yiddish with subtitles. B&W. 1 hr. 27 min. **AGE:** 14 to Adult
- 296.65
Ame **AMERICA'S SYNAGOGUE: A VIDEO PORTRAIT OF TOURO SYNAGOGUE, NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND** (1998)
Brief documentary that both gives a tour and tells the history of Touro Synagogue, the oldest synagogue in the United States. Dedicated in 1763, this synagogue was established by Sephardic Jews who originated from Spain and Portugal. Rhode Island

offered Jews religious freedom, evident in the famous letter written by George Washington to the Jewish community there in 1790 (and read aloud in the film). The film discusses the architecture and fixtures in the synagogue, and tells how Touro was designated a National Historic Site in 1946. Today, Touro's synagogue remains "a proud symbol of the endurance of the Jews in the face of persecution and of the precious principles of religious freedom that they enjoyed and helped to strengthen here in America."

12 min. **AGE:** 10 to Adult

F **THE ANGEL LEVINE** (1970)

Ang Zero Mostel, Ida Kaminska and Harry Belafonte star in this unusual tale, based on a short story by Bernard Malamud. Mostel plays Morris Mishkin, an elderly Jew who has just lost faith in God, as well as his own will to live. Morris's tailor shop was destroyed in a fire, leaving him in financial difficulty; his daughter intermarried (so he cut her off); his back is failing him, and his wife has been seriously ill for two years. When the film opens, Morris witnesses a theft and sees the African American thief killed before his eyes as he flees the crime. This is the last straw for Morris, who loses faith and blames God for his troubles, claiming that God has cursed him. Then into Morris's kitchen appears Belafonte, who proclaims that his name is Alexander Levine, and that he is an angel sent by God to help Morris. This "angel" remarkably resembles the thief who just died. Levine says that he is on probation in heaven and needs Mishkin to believe in him. Mishkin, the stereotypical Jewish pessimist, longs for a miracle to save his wife's life—but can he believe Levine, who both says he is Jewish and sent by the Divine? A thought-provoking and discussable film, with especially fine performances by Mostel and Kaminska. **Note:** *Groups or classes may wish to first read the short story and compare/contrast.*

Rated PG-13. 1 hr. 46 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult

F **ANNIE HALL** (1977)

Ann Considered by many to be Woody Allen's masterpiece, this modern Academy Award-winning classic pokes fun at an interfaith relationship. Allen plays Alvy Singer, a neurotic, cynical Jewish comedy writer who falls in love with waspish Midwesterner Annie Hall. Through flashbacks, Alvy tells the audience about the relationship, showing them its highlights and its failures. Diane Keaton shines as Annie Hall, the "forbidden fruit" whose cultural background is worlds away from Alvy Singer's Coney Island overbearing Jewish family. Especially memorable is the split screen scene, in which the two families are contrasted – and the lobster scene.

1 hr. 34 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult

917.3 **ANOTHER MITZVAH** (1997)

Ano Television-made documentary that examines what it means to be a Jew in America in the 20th century. Through vintage film footage, family photos and individual experiences, the film explores many different ways American Jews understand and practice their Judaism. A wide variety of Jews are interviewed and share their experiences as American Jews. These include entertainer Alan King; author Erika Jong; and singer, Marilyn Michaels. Current issues are addressed such as the challenges of assimilation and the changing role of women in Judaism. Above all, the film shows the great strength many Jews find in their Judaism today relative to family, Torah, a quest for truth and a shared history. This video was created as a companion piece to the film "A Laugh, A Tear, A Mitzvah" which focused more on the Jewish immigrant experience and how it has influenced American Judaism today.

1 hr. 30 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

F **THE ASSISTANT** (1997)

Ass Based on the novel by Bernard Malamud, the story deals with anti-Semitism, ethics and romance, and takes place during the Depression. Frank is a young man who assists his friend in robbing the grocery store of an elderly Jewish man. Both robbers wore masks.

Horrified by the anti-Semitic outburst of his friend, who beats the old man, Frank looks for a way to repent. He decides to go to work for the grocer and dedicates all his time and energy to the job. While working, he falls in love with the grocer's beautiful daughter—doubly problematic since Frank is not Jewish and since he has never revealed his part in the crime. Stars Armin Mueller-Stahl and Joan Plowright. **Note:** *Includes a few disturbing scenes with violent acts. This film does not include public performance rights and may only be used for home or classroom.*

1 hr. 45 min. **AGE:** Adult

F **AVALON** (1990)

Ava The story of immigrant Sam Krinsky and his extended family in Baltimore, filled with touching moments as we watch the old ways change to new. Written and directed by Barry Levinson.

2 hrs. 6 min. **AGE:** 11 to Adult

DVD

F **AWAKE AND SING!** (1972)

Awa Television broadcast of the classic 1935 Jewish Depression play by Clifford Odets, starring Walter Matthau, Ruth Storey and Leo Fuchs. This tense drama follows the Bergers, a Jewish family living in the Bronx under the financial restraints of the Depression. The family consists of an overbearing and manipulative mother; an ineffectual father who is out of work; an intellectual grandfather who spouts Marx; a grown daughter and son; and Moe Axelrod, a cynical boarder who lost a leg in World War II. The family struggles to survive on \$16.00 a week, and most of its members have grown to accept the conditions and defeat of their lives. The play recreates an atmosphere of an era past—as well as of a family where life's disappointments result in controversy and discontent. "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust," urges the grandfather, quoting from the Bible. By the end of the play, viewers have some hope that at least one character may break from the confines of this family's stifled existence and "act" versus "accept."

1 hr. 40 min. **AGE:** 14 to Adult

DVD

F

BEE SEASON (2005)

Bee

Based on Myla Goldberg's bestseller, this drama looks closely at a modern American Jewish family with a troubled core. Richard Gere stars as Saul Naumann, a religious studies professor who teaches Kabbalah and lives with his beautiful wife, teenage son and young daughter. When his 9-year-old daughter, Eliza, shows an unusual talent for spelling, the whole dynamics of the family shift. Saul feels that Eliza may have a special intuitive gift he has read about in Kabbalistic work, and he devotes all of his attention on her—ignoring his teenage son, Aaron. Aaron rebels by joining a Hare Krishna movement. Meanwhile, Saul's reserved wife, Miriam (Juliette Binoche), begins acting strangely and disappears for long periods. When daughter Eliza reaches the national spelling bee finals, she suspects that the whole balance of her family may rest upon her shoulders. Can the individuals who make up the family unit reach out beyond their own needs to heal one another? **Note:** *This film met with very mixed reviews. Interpretations and appraisals of the film will vary. Viewers may have some difficulty, as much of what happens in the film deals with internal characterization and is symbolic in nature.*

1 hr. 44 min. **AGE:** 14 to Adult

759.13

Ben

BEN SHAHN: PASSION FOR JUSTICE (2001)

Biography of Jewish artist and social activist Ben Shahn, retelling his life story and discussing his artistic work. Through documentary footage of the time period and interviews, the film explores Shahn's past. Viewers learn about his experiences as a Russian Jewish immigrant child, his career as an artist, and his political and social activism. A running theme in Shahn's work is his identification with outsiders and victims. He often combined realism and the abstract in his pictures. Images of many of Shahn's paintings and sketches appear throughout the film, as well as photographs he took to inspire social reform. The film includes rare television and radio interviews with Shahn before his death in 1969, as well as interviews with his widow, his daughter and his biographer, Howard Greenfield.

56 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult

973

Big

THE BIGGEST JEWISH CITY IN THE WORLD (1992)

Documentary style video covers the influx of Jewish immigrants to New York. Contains many interviews and live footage of immigrant life in America, including sweatshops and tenements. The film also touches on how American Jewish life today has been shaped by the immigrant experience.

52 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

F

Bil

BILOXI BLUES (1988)

Biloxi Blues is the second of Neil Simon's trilogy of autobiographical plays which appeared on Broadway and the big screen (the first was *Brighton Beach Memoirs*). Starring Matthew Broderick, this comedy follows the continuing story of a young Jew from Brooklyn named Eugene Jerome, who enlists in the army toward the end of World War II. While in boot camp, Eugene discovers, to his surprise, that many of the same soldiers who are eager to fight the Nazis are also anti-Semitic. In the heat of Biloxi, Mississippi, Eugene encounters the travails of army life, including endless drills and dense bunkmates. His wisecracking remarks grate on his tough drill sergeant. Will the army make him or break him?

Rated PG-13. 1 hr. 45 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult

305.8

Bla

BLACKS AND JEWS (1996)

Documentary which addresses Black-Jewish relations and traces the sources of recent tensions between the two—the 1991 Crown Heights riots; the 1995 Million Man March; the Oakland, California, high school where students laughed while viewing Jews being executed in the film *Schindler's List*. Through numerous interviews the film shows a wide variety of viewpoints, airing divisions and also focusing on common ground. The three

filmmakers, Deborah Kaufman, Bari Scott and Alan Snitow, had originally collaborated on a radio program about Blacks and Jews prior to making this film. The film aims for an honest, non-”politically correct” approach, presenting many unresolved problems between the groups. Includes interviews with leading critics and scholars including Clayborne Carson, Michael Lerner, Salim Muwakkil, Letty Cottin Pogrebin and Cornel West.

1 hr. 25 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult

F **BLAZING SADDLES** (1974)

Bla In his bawdy comedy *Blazing Saddles*, writer/director Mel Brooks tackles the subject of prejudice in the Old West. The character of Bart (Cleavon Little), the black sheriff of the white town of Rock Ridge, may be seen as symbolic of outsiders in society, of whom Jews are, of course, a prime example.

A corrupt governor (Brooks) and a scheming attorney general (Harvey Korman) hire a drifter named Bart to be sheriff. They figure that because he’s black, he won’t protest when they corrupt Rock Ridge. But Bart unexpectedly cleans up the town, forcing Brooks and Korman to continuously devise new strategies to corrupt Bart. Brooks’s humor runs rampant throughout in the form of Gene Wilder’s “Waco Kid” and Madeline Kahn’s “Lili Von Shtupp.”

Rated R. 1 hr. 33 min. **AGE:** 17 to Adult

F **BROKEN GLASS** (1996)

Bro The story of an American Jewish housewife who experiences sudden unexplained paralysis to her legs after reading about the anti-Semitic riots in 1938 Nazi Germany. A Jewish doctor—played by Mandy Patinkin—investigates her condition and learns of her unhappy marriage to a self-hating Jew. The doctor slowly puts the pieces together that connect her paralysis, the events in Germany and her strange marriage. Based on an award-winning play by Arthur Miller and produced for Masterpiece Theatre.

1 hr. 40 min. **AGE:** Adult

F **BUBBE MEISES** (*Bubbe Stories*) (1995)

Bub A grown granddaughter brings alive her two very different immigrant grandmothers through original songs, traditional music and richly woven tales. This Emmy Award-winning one woman show stars Ellen Gould, who acts the parts of both of her grandmothers as she sings and tells their stories—and learns about herself through the process.

1 hr. 5 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

F **THE CAFETERIA** (1984)

Caf Dramatization of an Isaac Bashevis Singer short story that originally aired on *American Playhouse*. The story focuses on the relationship between Aaron, a successful Jewish European born Jewish writer and a young woman—a Polish Holocaust survivor—who meet in a cafeteria in 1960’s New York. The writer, Aaron, was probably modeled after Singer himself. Although Aaron teaches at the university and lectures around the world, he prefers to live above a Kosher butcher shop on the West End in New York and frequents the cafeteria for lunch. The cafeteria is filled with a variety of “old time” Jews who speak Yiddish with him and argue politics and philosophy. Then one day in the cafeteria, Aaron is fascinated by a young female factory worker—an intriguing woman who survived German concentration camps and Russian prison camps. The two become friends and meet infrequently over the years, until Esther tells Aaron a story that sounds unbelievable to him, leading the viewer to question what is real and what is not.

53 min. **AGE:** 14 to Adult

F
Cal **A CALL TO REMEMBER**
Two Holocaust survivors, Paula and David, met after the war, marry and have two children. Paula had lost her first husband and children during the Holocaust. When this film opens in the late 1960s, the two are living together in America with their teenage sons. Then Paula gets a phone call telling her that her son, Alec, survived the war in Eastern Europe and is in New York. This opens many painful wounds, as Paula and David never discussed in detail their Holocaust experiences with their children. The viewer watches anxiously as Paula prepares for the journey to New York to discover whether or not her son actually survived after all these years.
Rated R. 1 hr. 51 min. **AGE:** 17 to Adult

F
Can **THE CANTOR'S SON (Dem Khazn's Zindl) (1937)**
A showcase for the marvelous vocal talent of renowned cantor Moishe Oysher, this musical drama is based on his life. He plays Shloime, a cantor's son, who ran away from his home in Belz when he was a boy, joining a troupe of traveling Jewish actors who take him to America. Fifteen years later he is working as a janitor when a female singer discovers that he has a wonderful voice. She leads him to fame on the stage and falls in love with him. When Shloime learns that his parents wish him to return to Europe for their golden wedding anniversary, he goes home and is reunited with his childhood sweetheart. Shloime must decide his future course—remaining in Europe as a cantor or returning to America.
In Yiddish with subtitles. 1 hr. 30 min. **AGE:** 14 to Adult

808.87
Cat **CATSKILLS ON BROADWAY (1993)**
This entertaining video features four Jewish Catskills comedians performing before a live audience. Their sketches and routines highlight a variety of types of classic Jewish humor. The comedians are Freddie Roman, Mal Z. Lawrence, Dick Capri and Louise Duart. Duart is particularly skilled as an impersonator. **Note:** *About 1 hour and 43 minutes into the video, credits appear onscreen and it looks as though the show is over. Don't turn it off. Credits are followed by the words "Act II" on screen, and there is an additional 13 minutes. The content of some of the humor is not suitable for children.*
2 hrs. 6 min. **AGE:** Adult

DVD
F
Cem **THE CEMETERY CLUB (1993)**
Three Jewish widows who have been lifelong friends (Ellen Burstyn, Olympia Dukakis and Diane Ladd) meet each week and reminisce. They used to go out together as couples, but now the women visit their husbands' graves together and have lunch. It is during one of these cemetery visits that Esther (Burstyn) meets likeable Jewish widower Ben (Danny Aiello). Ben is a retired policeman who now drives a cab. Esther, who had been married for 39 years, is reluctant to enter a romantic relationship, but Ben is persistent. The relationship ignites an indignant reaction from Doris (Dukakis), who believes Esther is betraying the memory of her late husband. Lucille (Ladd), who actively seeks romance, only regrets she didn't meet Ben first. Lanie Kazan adds a delightfully comic touch as a girlfriend who makes a career of getting married to rich men on their deathbeds.
Rated PG-13. 1 hr. 46 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult

F
Che **CHECKING OUT (2005)**
Peter Falk is magnificent as Morris Applebaum, an exuberant, retired Jewish Shakespearean actor (of Broadway and Yiddish films) who is approaching his 90th birthday. Morris has always lived big, and with his own unique style. Blessed with good health, Morris decides that he wishes to die as he has lived, on his own terms. He decides to throw himself a big bash for his birthday, and then to take some pills and end his life. After all, he argues, he's had a great life and why should he end it with pain, suffering or dependence? When Morris's three grown kids learn of his plans (through their personalized invitations), they fly to Manhattan to try to convince their dad not to do it. Morris's grown kids include a twice-divorced psychologist (David Paymer), a never-

married TV sitcom producer (Laura San Giacomo), and a BMW car dealer with his wife and two kids (Judge Reinhold). Three grown Jewish siblings reunited creates a havoc of its own, let alone watching them trying to keep up with the pace of their elusive, rambunctious father. Despite its sometimes lapses into “shtick”, *Checking Out* is a refreshing film that celebrates a life well lived and maintains a positive outlook, remaining upbeat and entertaining throughout. **Note:** *Rated PG-13 for language and some sexual references. Based on a Broadway play by Allen Swift.*

1 hr. 35 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult

F **THE CHOSEN** (1981)

Cho

Film adaptation of Chaim Potok’s novel about the friendship of two Jewish young men in 1944 New York. Danny Saunders is the son of a respected Hasidic rabbi who is raised to accept faith blindly; while Reuven, the son of a secular Zionist scholar, is raised to question all. The ideological differences of their fathers nearly destroy the boys’ friendship, which is redeemed at the end—but the friendship has affected both of their lives and their futures in a major way. Stars Robby Benson and Barry Miller.

1 hr. 47 min. **AGE:** 10 to Adult

- 921
Hes **A CONVERSATION WITH ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL** (1973)
NBC news correspondent Carl Stern interviews the legendary Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel shortly before his death in 1972. Heschel, originally a refugee from Germany, was a professor of Jewish ethics and mysticism at the Jewish Theological Seminary. In this interview, Heschel discusses his involvement in social and political causes, his philosophy of God, his involvement in social justice, and his thoughts on the "hereafter". Heschel marched alongside Martin Luther King, and was an activist against the Vietnamese War.
B&W. 1 hr. **AGE:** 14 to Adult
- F
Cri **CRIMES AND MISDEMEANORS** (1989)
Does God pay attention to our behavior, rewarding good and punishing evil? Woody Allen gives his own take on this question in this dark film, which follows an amoral man. Martin Landau stars as Judah Rosenthal, a well respected physician who is having an affair with a lonely young woman (Anjelica Huston). When she threatens to tell his wife about the affair, Judah hires his ganster brother to have her killed. Will he suffer any consequences through his immoral act? Director Woody Allen interweaves a few humorous storylines to explore why good people sometimes suffer while evil people prosper. **Note:** *This film lends itself well to discussion. Not all audiences will approve of Allen's handling of the ethical issues in this film.*
1 hr. 44 min. **AGE:** 16 to Adult
- F
Cro **CROSSFIRE** (1947)
Starring Robert Young, Robert Ryan and Robert Mitchum, this was the first major American film to deal with anti-Semitism. When a Jew is brutally murdered in his hotel room, it falls upon a detective with a strong moral conscience to solve the mystery. Suspicion points to a troubled young soldier and another soldier who is known to be prejudiced.
B&W. 1 hr. 25 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult
- F
Cro **CROSSING DELANCEY** (1988)
A bright, independent young Jewish woman becomes the subject of her grandmother's matchmaking. She struggles between staying the single, independent woman of the 1980's and being drawn to the Jewish traditional values from her background. Stars Amy Irving, Peter Riegert and Reizl Bozyk.
1 hr. 37 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult
- F
Dan **DANIEL** (1983)
Drama based on the true story of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, Jews who were executed as spies during the McCarthy era. *Daniel* fictionalizes the Rosenbergs' story, intertwining it with the story of their grown children who cannot forget their parents' past. Amanda Plummer and Timothy Hutton star as the grown children of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. The daughter continues in her parents' pattern of social activism, while the grown son strives to learn the details behind his parents' deaths.
2 hrs. 10 min. Rated R. **AGE:** Adult
- 976
Del **DELTA JEWS** (1999)
Documentary which traces the history and culture of Jews living in the southern United States. The film is narrated by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Alfred Uhry (*Driving Miss Daisy*) and includes interviews with an assortment of Jews living in the South. They describe why they like living where they do and some of the challenges they have faced. The film also addresses the relationship of Jews and Blacks in the south and how Southern Jews responded to civil rights issues.

1 hr. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

F **DIRTY DANCING** (1987)

Dir Since the early part of the century, New York's Catskill Mountains have been home to summer resorts catering to a Jewish clientele. *Dirty Dancing* takes place at a fictional resort where conflicts in class and privilege are played out through the romantic relationship between a naïve Jewish girl and a streetwise gentile dance instructor.

Dirty Dancing stars Jennifer Grey as "Baby," an idealistic seventeen-year-old vacationing with her family in the Catskills in the summer of 1963. Late one evening, she walks in on a private dance party and becomes spellbound by the resort's instructor, Johnny (Patrick Swayze). Resenting her at first for her affluence, Johnny slowly learns to appreciate her values, and she, in turn, learns about life and love.

Rated PG-13. 1 hr. 45 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult

F **DRIVING MISS DAISY** (1989)

Dri Academy Award-winning drama based on Alfred Uhry's play set in the 1960's, about an old Jewish woman in the South and her elderly, black chauffeur. Miss Daisy is an extremely independent, opinionated and cantankerous old woman who is distrustful of her chauffeur (expertly played by Morgan Freeman) from the time her son hires him. Her son (Dan Aykroyd) is an extremely wealthy businessman with a social-climbing wife. The viewer watches Miss Daisy's suspicions about the chauffeur turn to trust and friendship as the film follows their relationship through the years. Uhry writes about a community of very wealthy Southern Jews who have assimilated to the point of having lavish Christmas parties. (The older set of Jews pride themselves on being Jewish, not realizing how assimilated they really are. The younger set would prefer to blend in with their neighbors, but the community gives them little reminders that they are not the same.) Stars Jessica Tandy, who won an Oscar for her role as Miss Daisy. **Note:** *The film is primarily about the relationship between Miss Daisy and her chauffeur—not about Jewish issues. It does, however, shed particular light about a certain type of Jew in the South in the 1960's—as does Uhry's play The Last Night of Ballyhoo. Use in conjunction with the documentary Delta Jews, narrated by Uhry, which examines Jewry of the American South.*

1 hr. 40 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult

DVD **DUMMY** (2003)

F Dum Likeable romantic comedy starring Academy Award winner Adrien Brody as a shy and inept Jewish male who dreams of becoming a ventriloquist. Steven is in his late 20's and still lives at home with his dysfunctional family—including an overbearing, food-pushing Jewish mother; a father obsessed with assembling model ships; and an unlucky-in-love sister (a wedding planner) who is also old to be living at home. Steven dropped out of a 2-year community college and just lost a menial job he hated. His social life consists of hanging out with Fangora, a foul-mouthed but "heart of gold" female pal from high school—where both were outcasts. Fangora aspires to be a punk rocker (and ends up learning Klezmer music to fill in at a Jewish wedding). When Steven goes for vocational help, he falls for Lorena, the guidance counselor. Laughter ensues as Steven clumsily tries to pursue his new love interest, as well as a career as a ventriloquist. **Note:** *Although the film has its unpolished edges, it has some hilarious moments—and the performances are real gems. Adrien Brody, in this pre-Oscar performance, absolutely shines as the socially challenged Steven. He is highly believable, likeable, and very, very funny. He also does all of his own ventriloquism. Illeana Douglas and Milla Jovovich give*

strong performances as Steven's sister and friend, Fangora—and Vera Farmiga is lovely as Steven's vocational counselor and love interest.

Rated R due to language. 1 hr. 32 min. **AGE:** 17 to Adult

F **EAST AND WEST (1923)**

Eas This silent comedy is the earliest existing film that features Yiddish theater and film star Molly Picaon. Picon plays Molly Brown, a young American woman who is invited, with her wealthy immigrant father, back to their original town in Poland for a family wedding. The film takes a satirical look at Jewish stereotypes prior to World War II. Molly sees her Eastern European relatives as old fashioned, while they view her behavior as loose and shocking. Real trouble starts when Molly enters into a mock wedding to a Yeshiva student as a prank, and finds that she has really married him. The film was made in Vienna in 1923.

B&W. 1 hr. 25 min. **AGE:** 14 to Adult

973 **ELLIS ISLAND (1996)**

Ell Produced by the Arts & Entertainment Network for the History Channel, this extensive documentary takes a look at Ellis Island and the immigrant experience. It explores how Ellis Island was chosen, how it was built and how it was eventually transformed into a national treasure. The bulk of the film deals with the immigrant experience with numerous interviews as well as archival documentary film clips. Narrated by Mandy Patinkin.

3 hrs. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

F **ENEMIES, A LOVE STORY (1989)**

Ene *Enemies, a Love Story*, based on a novel by Isaac Bashevis Singer, follows the intertwined affairs of Holocaust survivor Herman Broder, a writer haunted by nightmares as he tries to settle into his new life in New York. Married to Yadwiga, the Polish woman who saved him, he has a Jewish mistress, fellow survivor Masha. His life and deceptions become even more frenetic as his first wife, Tamara, arrives in New York, having also survived. Ron Silver, Anjelica Huston and Lena Olin all give outstanding performances in this compelling movie.

2 hrs. 1 min. Rated R. **AGE:** Adult

DVD

940.53 **FIRST PERSON SINGULAR: ELIE WIESEL (2002)**

Fir PBS special which examines the life of Elie Wiesel, noted Holocaust survivor, writer and lecturer, and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. Narrated by William Hurt, this documentary includes numerous interviews with Wiesel about his life as a writer, his experiences during the Holocaust and how he reconstructed his life to become the man he is today. Wiesel discusses his days as a journalist in Paris, the establishment of Israel and his life in America where he continues to write, lecture and teach university students. He also addresses the events of September 11th and the current conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

1 hr. **AGE:** 14 to Adult

F **THE FIRST SEVEN YEARS (1998)**

Fir Wonderful adaptation of Bernard Malamud's National Book Award-winning story. This drama takes place in Manhattan's Lower East Side in 1949 and tells the story of a shoemaker and his wife who have a daughter, Miriam, of marriageable age. They want her to have a better life than theirs, to marry a college boy; but they are unaware that she is in love with her father's assistant, a Holocaust survivor. The film leads to an examination of what is most valuable in life. Stars Carol Kane and Israel Horovitz. Study guide available.

28 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

DVD

F **FOCUS (2001)**

- Foc Arthur Miller story set in early 1940s Brooklyn which examines themes of anti-Semitism, intolerance and the danger of being a bystander. Lawrence Newman (William H. Macy) is a very average sort of man, a meek ordinary businessman who lives with his mother and leads a quiet life. When the film opens, Macy witnesses the rape of a Puerto Rican woman outside his window but takes no action to help her—not even when a criminal investigator is looking for witnesses. Not long after, he becomes the victim as people mistake him for a Jew. Newman starts to wear a new pair of glasses that make him “look Jewish” and he becomes a target for discrimination among his neighbors and associates (Newman couldn’t see well before—both realistically and metaphorically). First, Newman loses the job he has held for 20 years in a publishing company. While searching for a new job, he meets, falls in love with and marries a woman (Laura Dern) who his neighbors think is Jewish. The two become ostracized and must decide whether to stand up to racism or try to fit in. Also starring David Paymer and Meat Loaf. **Note:** *Based on Arthur Miller’s first novel, this work does not have the polish and power of some of his later pieces. William H. Macy is a fine actor, but it may be difficult for some viewers to believe that he would be mistaken for a Jew in this role. Rated PG-13 for thematic material, violence and some sexual content.*
1 hr. 44 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult
- 070.484 **THE FORWARD: FROM IMMIGRANTS TO AMERICANS** (1989)
For Founded in 1897 by Abraham Cahan, *The Forward* was the most famous of the Yiddish newspapers. It helped the flood of immigrant Jews to America between 1880 and 1925 to acculturate to their new land. *The Forward* contained news, advice to new immigrants, support for the labor unions and for socialist political candidates. It also printed translations of classic literary works in Yiddish, as well as stories by men who later become the fathers of Yiddish literature. The film follows the paper up to 1987, when it became a weekly.
58 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult
- 320.5 **FREE VOICE OF LABOR: THE JEWISH ANARCHISTS** (1980)
Fre Anarchism, a movement that rejected government in all its forms, was the largest radical movement among Jewish immigrants in the 1880’s and 1890’s. In 1977, the Jewish anarchist newspaper *Freie Arbeiter Stimme* was about to close down after 87 years of publication. Filmmakers went to the scene and filmed interviews with some of the remaining elderly anarchists about their experiences in the movement. Through these interviews, they discussed how they became anarchists, their struggle to build trade unions, and their differences with the Communists. An interesting view of an era long gone by.
58 min. **AGE:** Adult
- F **THE FRISCO KID** (1979)
Fri Hilarious comedy about a nonconformist Rabbi in 1850’s Poland who is sent by his yeshiva to a congregation in San Francisco. He is swindled out of all his money on his first day in America and befriends a bank robber. Together they go through life and faith-testing episodes through which each becomes a better man. Stars Gene Wilder and Harrison Ford. **Note:** *Some offensive language.*
2 hrs. **AGE:** 11 to Adult
- 977.5 **FROM WALNUT STREET** (1985)
Fro A history of the Jews in Milwaukee as told by a grandfather to his grandson. Study guide available.
17 min. **AGE:** 9 to Adult
- F **FUNNY GIRL** (1968)
Fun Barbra Streisand won an Oscar for her performance in this musical about the early stage career of Jewish comedienne Fanny Brice. We see Brice’s theatrical beginnings as a

roller-skating chorus girl in a music hall, when no one believed she could ever be a star as she didn't have "classic" good looks. Within a year, Fanny becomes a hit in comic roles for Florenz Ziegfeld in his Follies. She falls madly in love with a handsome non-Jewish gambler, Nick Arnstein, which leads to a tumultuous marriage. Memorable songs include "People" and "Don't Rain on My Parade."

2 hrs. 35 min. Rated G. **AGE:** 10 to Adult

F
God

GOD, MAN AND DEVIL (1949)

Based on a play by Jacob Gordin, this American-made Yiddish drama explores whether or not a good and pious man will be corrupted by money. Satan makes a wager with God that he can tempt Hershele Dubrovner - poor, religious Torah scribe— by handing him a lottery ticket which will win a fortune. Satan then disguises himself and becomes Hershele's business partner, advising Hershele to open a tallis factory and hire the community men to work for a pittance. The disguised Satan also tells Hershele to divorce his barren wife of 22 years and marry the young and beautiful niece that Hershele and his wife had raised. Hershele follows all of the advice he is given - and in the process destroys his family, his friendships, and any spiritual values he once had. He learns that life holds no remedies for the damage he has caused, and the film ends tragically. **Note:** *A heavy, moralistic film which illustrates how money and power can corrupt—bringing greed and discontent rather than the happiness which is sought. In Yiddish with subtitles (which are difficult to read at times)*

.B&W. 1 hr. 40 min. **AGE:** 14 to Adult

- 792
Gol **THE GOLDEN AGE OF SECOND AVENUE** (1968)
An entertaining and loving chronicle of Yiddish theater in America, from its beginnings at the turn of the century to its Golden Age on Second Avenue. Narrated by Herschel Bernardi, this documentary includes excerpts from classic Yiddish films (subtitled in English) plus rare stills and musical vignettes from the American Yiddish Theater, as well as scenes from New York's Lower East Side. The film introduces viewers to the major personalities of 75 years of Yiddish theater, including an unrehearsed meeting with Molly Picon, Jacob Kalich, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Jacob Ben Ami, Berta Gersten, and Cella Adler. Includes performances by Paul Muni, Maurice Schwartz, Menashe Skulnik, Molly Picon, and Boris Thomashefsky.
Color/B&W. 1 hr.10 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult
- 909.04
Her **THE GOLDEN LAND (1654-1932)** (Heritage: Civilization and the Jews, Chapter VII) (1984)
Part of the "Heritage" series which chronicles over 3,000 years of Jewish history, thought, and culture. This chapter looks at the Jewish experience in the New World. Topics covered include "The Colonial Jew," "The German-Jewish Experience" and "The Lower East Side." Study guide available.
1 hr. **AGE:** 12 to Adult
- 917.3
Gol **THE GOLDEN LAND ON THE SILVER SCREEN** (1987)
Provides an opportunity to study the American Jewish experience through discussion of six carefully selected American feature films. This video introduces and provides some follow-up discussion for these films: *Hester Street*, *The Jazz Singer*, *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, *The Way We Were*, *The Heartbreak Kid* and *The Frisco Kid*. Study guide available.
1 hr. **AGE:** 16 to Adult
- F
Gol **THE GOLEM OF L.A.** (1994)
A modern day Golem story set in 1990's urban America. Ed Asner plays the elderly rabbi in the oldest remaining synagogue in Los Angeles. The story involves David, a contemporary young Jewish man studying to be a teacher, and his elderly, religious grandfather. David's grandfather is very upset that his 75-year-old synagogue is about to be demolished to make way for luxury apartments. In desperation, he brings to life a Golem to help save the synagogue—not anticipating the consequences. The story highlights the generation gap and differences between a modern day Jewish teenager, who doesn't see the need for old traditions, and the world of his Traditional grandfather, who doesn't understand his grandson's secularism. **Note:** *Teachers may wish to read students a more traditional Golem story, such as The Golem, by Barbara Rogasky, Let's Steal the Moon, or one of the picture book versions—and then compare this modern day version.*
25 min. **AGE:** 10 to Adult

- 921
Pot **GOOD CONVERSATION! A TALK WITH CHAIM POTOK** (1997)
Intriguing interview with renowned American Jewish writer, Chaim Potok, author of *The Chosen* and *My Name is Asher Lev* at his home near Philadelphia. Potok discusses his career as a writer, his love for painting, and how his traditional background discouraged both. He also speaks about what he thinks it means to be a Jew in America and his own religious identity, including his faith in G-d. Potok says that he feels that human beings create meaning in what may otherwise be an indifferent existence. He hopes that his writing will open up new worlds for readers—worlds which they may not otherwise explore and which may affect them positively. **Note:** *Six minutes into the film there is a brief “commercial” for the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York which lasts about two minutes.*
20 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult
- F
Goo **GOODBYE COLUMBUS** (1969)
Classic Jewish film, based on the social satire by Philip Roth, about a poor Bronx librarian, Neil, who falls in love with Brenda, a spoiled “Jewish princess” in the 1960’s. The film presents a biting portrayal of the snobbishness and materialism of Jewish life in the upper social sphere of the suburbs. Brenda’s “country club” life and values are contrasted to Neil’s modest background, as he aspires to be part of her group—amid the opposition of both sets of parents. Stars Richard Benjamin and Ali McGraw. **Note:** *The film has been widely criticized for its stereotypical portrayal of upper class Jews.*
1 hr. 45 min. **AGE:** 14 to Adult
- 783.2
Gre **GREAT CANTORS IN CINEMA** (1993)
Produced by the National Center for Jewish Film, this documentary uses restored archival footage to look at five specific cantors who appeared on film from 1931 to 1946. These include Josef “Yossele” Rosenblatt, Moshe Koussevitsky, Mordechai Hershman, Moishe Oysher and Louis “Leibele” Waldman. The first third of the twentieth century was the “Golden Age of Chazzanut” in America—a coming together of unbelievable cantorial talent from the capitols of Europe, most of it focused in New York. As sound in film was not available until the late 1920’s, this “Golden Age” is recorded on film mainly during the 1930’s and 1940’s—when cantors often played cantors in the films in which they appeared.
In Yiddish with English narration and subtitles. B&W. 1 hr. **AGE:** 14 to Adult
- 783.2
Gre **GREAT CANTORS OF THE GOLDEN AGE** (1990)
The “Golden Age of Chazzanut” was between 1910 and 1940. In 1931, a film called *The Voice of Israel* was produced. It provided both a visual and audio record of some of the most famous cantors of this period. This video includes selections from that original film, narrated with commentary by Dr. Max Wohlberg, a Jewish Theological Seminary Professor of Liturgy and Chazzanut. Cantors performing include Mordechai Hershman, Adolph Katchko, David Roitman, Yossele Rosenblatt, Joseph Shilsky and the voice of Gershon Sirota. **Note:** *During the first eight minutes, Dr. Wohlberg provides a brief history of the Golden Age of Chazzanut. Then the film clips of the cantors begin, interspersed with Wohlberg’s commentary.*
Color/B&W. 55 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult
- 920
Gre **GREAT JEWISH ACHIEVERS** (2002)
Created to instill Jewish pride, this film highlights some of the great achievements Jews have made in a wide variety of fields. The film is divided into five separate sections (listed below) showcasing a total of 425 Jewish achievers including diverse talents such as Albert Einstein, Sandy Koufax, Bob Dylan, Houdini and Levi Strauss. The sections can be shown independently or in groups, but it is not advised that the entire documentary be shown in one sitting. This lively and upbeat production utilizes two modern teenagers to narrate the documentary and provide brief commentary. **Note:** *Great Jewish Achievers is ideal for classroom use or family education settings and may*

be used to stimulate further research into noteworthy Jews – or as a springboard for discussions on Jewish identity. Study guide available.

56 min. **AGE:** 11 to Adult

Part I: Music, Art and Literature – 13 minutes.

Part II: Stage, Screen and Television – 11 minutes.

Part III: Business, Politics and Law – 9 minutes.

Part IV: Great Jewish Athletes – 10 minutes.

Part V: Inventions, Science and Medicine – 12 minutes.

296.435 **THE HANUKKAH SOLDIER** (1992)

Han Set in southern Tennessee in 1862, this is a short play about racial intolerance and religious prejudice during the Civil War. A Jewish northern soldier is forbidden to light his menorah by a prejudiced sergeant. The company's black cook, a former slave, shows the soldier the importance of standing up for your beliefs.

23 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

296.833 **THE HASIDIM (Lubavitch-Chabad)** (1972)

Has Documentary about the Lubavitch Movement, narrated by Rabbi Chaim Drizin, which provides background to the Chabad Movement, describing their religious philosophy and explaining traditions and customs. Includes footage of a *farbrengen* with the Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson. The film features the celebrations of Purim, Sukkot and Shabbat, including Havdalah. Scenes of a wedding ceremony and a look inside a religious grade school complete this picture of Lubavitch life.

29 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

DVD/VHS

940.53 **HAVEN** (2000)

Hav Made for television mini-series based on the true story of Ruth Gruber, a U.S. government official and journalist who fought for haven for a shipload of Jewish European refugees reaching America in 1944. Natasha Richardson delivers a powerful performance as the 32-year-old Gruber, a woman determined to accompany nearly 1,000 Holocaust survivors on their trip from Europe to America aboard the U.S. military ship "Henry Gibbons." This was the only time during the war that a group of Jewish immigrants was permitted to enter the U.S.—on the agreement that they would return to their native countries after the war. Gruber was allowed to accompany them, as she was a government official fluent in Russian, German and Yiddish. The mini-series chronicles the difficult passage of these refugees, as well as some of their individual tragic stories from the Holocaust. Focus of the film, however, is on the opposition from the U.S. State Department and Congress to aiding European Jews during the Holocaust, and their reluctance to help this group of refugees. The refugees were interned at the Oswego Refugee Camp during the war and would have been sent back to Europe at the war's end had Gruber not fought for them. Eventually, they were given permission to apply for citizenship from President Truman and given true haven in the U.S. **Note:** *Includes a few violent scenes and brief graphic Holocaust documentary footage.*

Approx. 4 hrs. **AGE:** 13 to Adult

DVD

F

Hea

THE HEARTBREAK KID (1972)

Neil Simon comedy about a young Jewish couple, Lenny (Charles Grodin) and Lila (Jeanne Berlin), who meet at a bar, fall in love and get married. When the film opens, they are driving to their honeymoon in Florida. As they travel, Lenny begins to have second thoughts about his bride—he becomes disgusted by the way she chews her food and sings out of key. When Lila develops a terrible sunburn and must stay in the hotel room, Lenny goes to the beach and meets Kelly, the glamorous blonde "wasp" of his dreams. A relationship soon ensues and Lenny must decide with which his future lies. **Note:** *Jeanne Berlin received an Oscar nomination in the role as Lenny's Jewish*

wife. The stereotypes in this movie are obvious—Jewish Lila is somewhat unattractive, whiney, self-conscious and unglamorous; while non-Jewish Kelly is glamorous, cool and self-assured. Some viewers may take offense at the comparisons—others will find it part of the film’s humor.

Rated PG. 1 hr. 45 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

F **HESTER STREET** (1975)

Hes Gitl, a religious Jew from Russia, arrives in America to be reunited with her husband in New York in 1896. To her dismay, she learns that he has found another love and has rejected religious traditions. Through determination and perseverance, she adapts to American life and wins the love of a gentle scholar. Stars Carol Kane. *In English, includes some Yiddish with subtitles.*

B&W. 1 hr. 29 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

F **HIS PEOPLE** (1925)

His This silent film portrays an Jewish immigrant family in America whose dreams of prosperity and happiness have been shattered. The Cominsky family have come from Eastern Europe to build a new life in America. The family includes a religious father, a loving and forgiving mother, and two grown sons – one a prizefighter and one a lawyer trying to rise in American society. *His People* follows these characters and shows how they struggle to find their places in this new world.

B&W. 1 hr. 31 min. **AGE:** 14 to Adult

F **HIS WIFE’S LOVER (Zayn Vaybs Lubovnik)** (1931)

His Yiddish musical comedy about a handsome actor who makes a wager with his uncle, betting that there are honest women in the world—when his uncle claims there are none. The actor disguises himself as a crotchety old millionaire and marries a beautiful young woman. Then he tests the woman’s fidelity by changing back to his regular appearance and visiting her with the intent to seduce her. In the process, he falls in love with her himself. Stars Ludwig Satz.

In Yiddish with subtitles. B&W. 1 hr. 17 min. **AGE:** 14 to Adult

F **THE HOLLOW BOY** (1989)

Hol The story of the uneasy friendship of two young men—one Jewish and one the son of German immigrants—in 1936 New York City. Based on a short story by Hortense Calisher. **Note:** *Excellent adaptation, originally aired on PBS, which can be used for discussions on anti-Semitism, pre-Holocaust, friendship and family life philosophies. It should be pointed out to students that the portrayal of the German family in this video is stereotypical—and this can be used as a springboard for discussions about stereotypes.*

1 hr. **AGE:** 11 to Adult

791.43 **HOLLYWOOD: AN EMPIRE OF THEIR OWN** (1997)

Hol This video—originally titled *Jews, Movies, Hollywoodism and the American Dream*—is based on Neal Gabler’s book, *Hollywood: An Empire of Their Own*. The film documents how the leading studios that gave rise to Hollywood were founded and run by Eastern European immigrants. This includes the Warner brothers, Samuel Goldwyn, Universal Studios founder Carl Laemmle, Louis B. Mayer of MGM, William Fox of 20th Century Fox, and Paramount’s Adolf Zukor. This documentary analyzes the Eastern European roots and the personal lives of each of these Hollywood movie moguls. It also documents the rise of American film and shows how these men, who were raised with Jewish backgrounds and values, helped to shape many of the values found in Hollywood films—even though the films rarely depicted Jews or Jewish subjects. A fascinating look at the impact of Jews on American movies. Includes many film clips, home movies and interviews. **Note:** *The perfect introduction to a study of film series on American Jewish film.*

759.7 **HOMAGE TO CHAGALL: THE COLORS OF LOVE** (1977)
Cha A celebration of the life and works of Jewish painter Marc Chagall. Chagall was born in tsarist Russia in 1887, and has depicted scenes of the shtetl and of the Bible in many of his works. This documentary, narrated by James Mason, includes an extensive interview with Chagall in his home in Southern France, in which he speaks of how his Jewish background has impacted his work. Numerous examples of Chagall's paintings are shown throughout the film, as well as his famous stained glass windows.
1 hr. 30 min. **AGE:** Adult

F **HOMICIDE** (1991)
Hom David Mamet film with a Jewish sub-theme. Joe Mantegna plays police hostage negotiator Robert Gold, assigned to investigate the murder of an elderly Jewish shopkeeper. Gold was given the case because he is Jewish – but Gold has submerged his Jewish identity for years. The case forces him to confront his Jewish background as Gold becomes acquainted with the murdered woman's friends and circumstances. Eventually, the pressure to “prove himself” leads Gold down paths of corruption, manipulation, and violence. The film examines the extent to which assimilation can go, and how far one can escape from one's roots. **Note:** *Contains violence and obscene language.*
1 hr. 40 min. **AGE:** Adult

DVD
F **I LOVE YOU, I LOVE YOU NOT** (1996)
I Lo Uneven drama about Daisy (Claire Danes), a shy Jewish teen in a New York prep school, who develops a crush on Ethan (Jude Law), the most popular guy in school. Although Daisy is a quiet bookworm, a poem that she writes attracts Ethan's attention. The two become a pair—much to the disgust of Ethan's friends. Daisy has an extremely close relationship with her grandmother (Jeanne Moreau), a Holocaust survivor. They share secrets and innermost thoughts, and are inseparable—almost like best friends. Frequently, the grandmother tells Daisy bits about her experiences in the Holocaust, shown through flashback scenes. A repeated scene shows how the grandmother's best friend rejected her because she was a Jew.

This theme of anti-Semitism is repeated when Daisy's classmates learn she is a Jew (Daisy is blonde and no one suspected her of being Jewish). First, Daisy finds an anti-Semitic clipping on her locker and eventually, Ethan breaks up with her, telling her that she's different and “too intense.” Daisy is overwrought with grief but by the end, viewers are led to believe that the love and strength shared with her grandmother will carry her through. **Note:** *The film grapples with many important ideas but doesn't seem to quite hold it together. A rating of PG-13 was given probably for some obscene language (Daisy has difficulty saying swear words and the grandmother tries to get her to say them aloud as a means to release her anger). Teachers should preview before using this in a classroom.*
1 hr. 20 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult

940.53 **IMAGINARY WITNESS: HOLLYWOOD AND THE HOLOCAUST** (2004)
Ima Documentary that follows Hollywood's role in depicting the Holocaust on screen through films, as well as on newsreels and television. In the 1930s, any anti-German or anti-Nazism themes were highly discouraged in the American film industry. Hollywood moguls were afraid of being identified as Jews, and the U.S. government wished Hollywood to protect its interests abroad. Film clips and newsreels are shown that illustrate this point, to the extreme that the word “Jew” was rarely mentioned on film in the 1930s and 1940s. This documentary follows the transformation from avoidance to today's growth and openness in films about the Holocaust. Major milestones were the

1978 TV mini-series “Holocaust,” which brought the subject into many U.S. homes, and Steven Spielberg’s multiple Academy Awards winner, “Schindler’s List.” The film also confronts the great dilemma of the ethics of portraying as horrific and ineffable a subject as the Holocaust on film in a dramatic form. As it is impossible to do total justice to the Holocaust on film, do we avoid portraying it for fear of trivialization—or does the sheer exposure of the subject to countless viewers outweigh the dangers of trivialization? Some of the illustrious speakers who comment on this topic as well as on the films include Holocaust historian Michael Berenbaum, producer/director Steven Spielberg, film critic Neil Gabler, and director Sidney Lumet. Narrated by Gene Hackman. **Note:** *Includes some graphic Holocaust content.*

1 hr. 30 min. **AGE:** 14 to Adult

F **THE IMPORTED BRIDEGROOM** (1989)

Imp Asriel Stroon is an immigrant in the late 1800’s who’s made a success in America. He has a prosperous business, a large home and a beautiful daughter, Flora. As Asriel ages, however, he worries about the state of his soul, as he hasn’t led a spiritual or religious life. He devises a plan to safeguard his place in the afterlife by marrying off his daughter to a devout, religious man. Asriel travels to the Old Country to select the most promising and pious yeshiva bocher as a bridegroom for his daughter. Flora, however has her ideas, and plans to marry a doctor and move up in American society. Nothing proceeds as anyone has planned, and the plot develops with surprises in store for all. Based on a story by Abraham Cahan.

1 hr. 33 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

296.833 **IN HER OWN TIME** (1985)

In When Jewish anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff learns she is dying of lung cancer, she searches for meaning and wishes to document the journey. Myerhoff’s academic work had been dedicated to the studies of community life. Now she turns to her Jewish roots and studies the life of an Orthodox community in Los Angeles. Since Myerhoff had been a secular Jew, this encounter is quite a unique experience for her. Her quest for spiritual meaning is recorded in this thought provoking film, which is as much about living as it is about dying.

50 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult

F **IN HER SHOES** (2005)

In H Two opposite sisters share a love-hate relationship in this enjoyable family comedy set in Philadelphia. About the only thing the girls seem to have in common is the same shoe size. Stunning Maggie (Cameron Diaz), an irresponsible “party girl”, can’t hold a job and is used to getting what she wants through manipulation or sex. Brainy Rose (Toni Collette) is a successful lawyer and workaholic with a bad body image. Since the girls’ mom died, Rose has been watching out for Maggie. After a bad quarrel between the sisters (over a guy), Maggie rummages for money in their dad’s house and comes across unopened letters addressed to the sisters. The letters were from their Grandma Ella (their mother’s mother) – a grandma in Florida who they didn’t know existed. No longer able to stay with Rose after the rift, Maggie runs off to Florida. She finds her grandma Ella (Shirley MacLaine) living in a Jewish retirement home in Florida, and plants herself there as a permanent guest.

Meanwhile, sister Rose has become disillusioned with her own life. She quits her job, becoming a professional dog-walker, and unexpectedly finds a boyfriend. Viewers watch as the two girls transform, each becoming a bit like the other. Ella makes Maggie work for her keep, getting her a job working in the retirement, assisted-living complex. Through her work, Maggie befriends an elderly retired professor who helps transform her life (Maggie has dyslexia). Meanwhile, Ella discovers her second granddaughter’s address, and writes for Rose to visit. What could have been a corny and maudlin reunion becomes a touching and meaningful scene, as these three women bond and

begin to understand one another. The performances of all three actresses are superb. **Note:** *Rated PG-13 for language and some sexual references. Although the content is not overtly Jewish, the retirement home is composed almost entirely of familiar Jewish characters, and there is a Jewish wedding scene in the film.*

2 hrs. 10 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult

- 921 **ISAAC IN AMERICA** (1986)
Sin A closer look at the life and work of Nobel Prize winning author Isaac Bashevis Singer. This documentary includes interviews and public appearances of Singer, the most famous Yiddish author in the United States. Unlike the classic writers of Yiddish literature, Singer's writings were often grounded in folklore, including the supernatural. He also wrote of the Jewish immigrant experience, and his works include humor and an obvious warmth for his Jewish heritage. *Isaac in America* examines Singer's life and art, from his early days in Warsaw to his acceptance of the Nobel Prize.
55 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult
- 973 **ISLAND OF HOPE—ISLAND OF TEARS**
Isl The story of Ellis Island and the American immigration experience. Produced for the Ellis Island Immigration Museum. Study guide available. **Note:** *The film is not specifically Jewish, but it presents the experience of the Jews among other immigrants.*
30 min. **AGE:** 10 to Adult
- 808.97 **THE JACK BENNY SHOW** (1958)
Jac Famous Jewish comedian created a character who was the archetypal *ongeblozen* tightwad, which audiences loved him for. *The Jack Benny Show* showcased Benny's impeccable timing and talents into a weekly comedy show. It featured wonderful supporting personalities such as his wife, Mary Livingstone, announcer Don Wilson, singer Dennis Day, and Eddie Anderson as his valet Rochester. Jack Benny's famous stinginess, vanity and lack of violin virtuosity compose a running series of gags highlighted in this program.
B&W. 51 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult
- 808.87 **JACKIE MASON: AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY OFFENDER** (1995)
Jac Film biography of the American Jewish comedian Jackie Mason with clips of many of his funniest routines. The film highlights his childhood, family background and the rocky road he led as a comedian. Numerous interviews with family members, business associates and friends are included, as well as the famous Ed Sullivan Show incident which damaged his career for many years.
52 min. **AGE:** 14 to Adult
- 781.7 **JAN PEERCE: IF I WERE A RICH MAN** (1990)
Jan Violinist Isaac Stern hosts and narrates this film biography of singer Jan Peerce. The film traces Peerce's career from its beginnings on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. It follows his work first as a cantor, then in the opera and finally, on Broadway. It includes many conversations between the famous tenor and his friend, Isaac Stern, as well as film footage of many of his performances. Peerce was best known for his work in opera as well as for his role as Tevye for the Broadway production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. The video includes his historic hit recording of "Bluebird of Happiness."
59 min. **AGE:** 10 to Adult

- F
Jaz **THE JAZZ SINGER** (1927)
In this famous film, the first “talkie”, Al Jolson stars as Jakie Rabinowitz, a young man who has fallen in love with jazz. The problem is that Jakie is the son of a religious cantor who expects him to follow in his footsteps. Jakie sneaks off to sing in jazz clubs. When he is found out, he runs away from home, rejected by his father but determined to make himself a success. Mirroring the difficult choices many immigrants faced, Jakie must decide between honoring his parents or following his dreams. The film includes the famous Jolson “Toot, Toot, Tootsie,” and “Dirty Hands, Dirty Face”.
B&W. 1 hr. 29 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult
- F
Jaz **THE JAZZ SINGER** (1952)
Starring Danny Kaye and Peggy Lee, this was the first remake of the classic *Jazz Singer* starring Al Jolson. The story is about Jerry, a young man who comes from generations of cantors and is expected to take over from his father as cantor of their synagogue. Jerry, however, has just returned from the Korean War and has dreams of making it in show business—along with his singer girlfriend. Includes the songs “I’m Looking Over a Four-Leaf Clover,” Cole Porter’s “Just One of Those Things,” and Rodgers and Hart’s “Lover.” **Note:** *As much a “period piece” of the 1950’s as the original was of the 1920’s.*
1 hr. 47 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult
- F
Jaz **THE JAZZ SINGER** (1980)
The second and least successful remake of the classic Al Jolson film about a cantor’s son who rejects his father’s profession to become a singer of jazz music. Neil Diamond stars as Jess, the cantor’s son who forsakes his community and turns his back on his marriage—sacrificing all for his ambition. He teams up with his new manager, Molly (played by Lucie Arnaz), and heads for the spotlight, aiming to be a rock star. A romance begins between them which is problematic, as Molly is not Jewish. Also stars Laurence Olivier (in one of his weakest roles) as Diamond’s cantor father. Includes the hit song “Coming to America.”
1 hr. 55 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult
- 973
Jew **JEWISH AMERICAN PATRIOTS** (1993)
A tribute to Jewish heroism, this film documents the many contributions made by Jews in American military history. Since 1654, Jewish Americans have fought alongside their fellow compatriots. Included are interviews with Jewish war veterans from World War II, Korea, Vietnam and Operation Desert Storm. This documentary also looks at the acts of famous Jewish American patriots such as Asher Levy, Hayim Salomon, Uriah Phillips Levy and Sgt. Leopold Karpeles. *Jewish American Patriots* highlights the major role that Jews have played in American military history, dispelling the myth that Jews have not served. In fact, Jews often served in numbers disproportionate to their percentages in the overall population. **Note:** *Teachers may wish to preview this film and use selected sections in the classroom, rather than showing the film in entirety.*
1 hour. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

F
Kee **THE KEEPING QUILT (1993)**
Author/illustrator Patricia Polacco reads aloud her children's book, *The Keeping Quilt*. This story shows how the patchwork quilt the author's Russian great-grandmother made was used as a chuppah and passed down through the generations in her family. Polacco also introduces her family and shows the actual quilt on which the story was based. Viewers can note changes in customs and lifestyles throughout the story. Study guide available.

11 min. **AGE:** 4 to 10

DVD
F
Kee

KEEPING UP WITH THE STEINS (2006)

Modern Bar Mitzvah comedy that promotes the importance of family, the dangers of materialism and the true meaning of Bar Mitzvah. The story centers on Benjamin Fiedler, an average Jewish teen in L.A., whose dad, Adam, is a big Hollywood agent. After attending a colleague's son's Bar Mitzvah (where the theme was *The Titanic*, complete with a life-size ship and mermaids), Adam decides to make his son the most extravagant Bar Mitzvah possible. He reserves Dodger Stadium and hires big name stars. His son seems less than thrilled. When Benjamin learns that the estranged grandfather he never met will be invited to his Bar Mitzvah, his goal becomes to bring together his father and grandpa. This is no small feat considering that his grandpa, Irwin, is an elderly hippie who deserted the family when Adam was growing up. Adam despises his dad and wants no contact. When Irwin shows up at the door with his young blond girlfriend, the sparks start to fly—especially since Grandma Rose, Adam's mother, lives with the family. Before long, Irwin bonds with his grandson. When Irwin learns that Benjamin understands nothing about the meaning of Bar Mitzvah, he sets out to find a remedy. **Note:** *Reviews were split on this film. Some find it overdone and unfunny, with too many familiar stereotypes. Others find it charming, family-friendly and likeable. Contains brief nudity (the grandpa from behind) and some mild language. First time director Scott Marshall directs his dad, Gary Marshall, who plays the grandpa.*

Rated PG-13. 1 hr. 39 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult

F
Kin

KING OF THE CORNER (2004)

Peter Riegert (the "pickle man" from *Crossing Delancey*) directed, starred in and co-wrote the screenplay of this film of mid-life angst. Riegert plays Leo Spivak, a middle aged man whose life loses its center and spirals out of control. Leo has worked for years as a marketing executive in a company where he does product development and testing—often for worthless products he is embarrassed to promote. Jake Hoffman (Dustin Hoffman's son) plays his young aggressive protégé at work. Leo struggles with a tiresome job, a stale marriage, a somewhat rebellious teenage daughter and an aging father. Leo's father Sol (Eli Wallach) lives in an assisted living complex in Arizona, and Leo visits him every other weekend. Sol is ready for death. A former traveling salesman who was often on the road, Sol warns Leo to watch out for his young assistant and to make some changes. Leo ignores Sol's warnings. He views his dad primarily as an absentee father who made little of his life. Then, on a focus testing road trip, Leo makes some unexpected choices that bring chaos to his well-ordered existence. The death of his father adds to Leo's confusion. Preparing for the funeral, Leo meets with the makeshift rabbi the funeral home provides. He tells the rabbi that he wasn't close to his dad and that his dad had a rather meaningless life. When the rabbi gives a eulogy reflecting Leo's sentiments, it forces Leo to re-evaluate his own life, as well as the life of his father. Leo must decide whether he will continue to drift along, or whether it's finally time for some transformations. **Note:** *Rated R for explicit language and some sexual situations. This film tries very hard, but it doesn't connect viewers closely enough with the characters to be totally successful.*

1hr. 30 min. **AGE:** 18 to Adult

F **THE LAST ANGRY MAN (1959)**

Las Paul Muni received an Oscar nomination for his role in this film as Sam Abelman, an elderly, idealistic Jewish doctor. Abelman has dedicated his professional career to treating the poor in his clinic in the Brooklyn slums for 45 years. While his colleagues moved into financial success, Abelman worked where he felt he was needed and could do the most good. When Sam's journalist nephew decides to produce a documentary based on his uncle's life, Sam reluctantly agrees—but only so he can voice some of his views on injustices in the medical system. Abelman's latest concern is a black street thug (played by Billy Dee Williams) with a brain tumor. When the demands of the TV production (in which Abelman has no interest) and the needs of his patients collide, Sam's true integrity is revealed. **Note:** *This was one of the first films to highlight a strong and positive Jewish male character.*

B&W. 1 hr. 40 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

917.3 **A LAUGH, A TEAR, A MITZVAH** (1996)

Lau Documentary celebrating Jewish American life and showing how Jewish immigrant communities assimilated and achieved success in the United States. The film presents a potpourri of American Jewish life including segments on the immigration experience, the Yiddish influence, the creation of "The Jewish American," Jewish ceremonies and observances, and the importance of family and a love for Israel. Also includes interviews with Jackie Mason, Bella Abzug, Rabbi Marc Gellman, Fyvush Finkel, Letty Cottin Pogrebin and Theodore Bikel. **Note:** *Recommended for home or group use versus a classroom educational tool. The film is very broad in its focus, providing smatterings of many aspects of the Jewish American experience without focusing in depth on any topic in particular.*

1 hr.* **AGE:** 12 to Adult

* This video is actually 73 minutes long; however, it includes 13 minutes of commercials spaced in two groups.

F **A LETTER TO MOTHER (A Brivele der Mamen)** (1938)

Let One of the last Yiddish films to come out of Poland before the Nazi invasion, this drama shows the disintegration of a Jewish family due to poverty, stress and World War I. Its central character, Dobrish (played by Lucy Gehrman), is a strong Jewish mother who works hard to keep her unemployed husband and three children close—and close to tradition. The film is set both in the Ukraine and in New York—as part of the family has already immigrated to America. Although the film takes place during World War I, its themes of loss and deterioration of the family structure mirror difficulties facing European Jews in 1939. Directed by Joseph Green.

in Yiddish with subtitles. 1 hr. 40 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult

- F
Lib **LIBERTY HEIGHTS** (1999)
Barry Levinson's semi-autobiographical drama focusing on a Jewish middle class family in 1954 Baltimore—his fourth Baltimore film (joins *Diner*, *Tin Men* and *Avalon*). The film focuses on the two sons in the family as they explore the world around them. Academy Award winner Adrian Brody plays Van, the oldest of the boys, and a college student. Van attends a gentile party with his friends and falls for an attractive and aristocratic blonde. The younger brother, Ben, befriends a beautiful and intelligent African-American girl who enters his school during the time of early desegregation. Neither family approves of this alliance—especially hers (her father is a doctor). The film has many humorous moments (although viewers will either find it humorous or distasteful to see a Jewish boy who wants to be Hitler for Halloween). Many issues are tackled, including racism, anti-Semitism, Jewish identity and the mixing of people from different cultures and classes. **Note:** *Some viewers may feel that the portrayals of the older Jews in the film are somewhat stereotyped. The father and his buddies run a burlesque show, which is a cover for a numbers racket. The mother continually warns her kids to be careful of "the other kind." Levinson actually attempted to break Jewish stereotypes with this film. He portrays middle class Jews who are similar to the Jews he grew up with, and who are just beginning to explore beyond the Jewish world.*
Rated R. 2 hrs. 8 min. **AGE:** 17 to Adult
- 796.357 **THE LIFE AND TIMES OF HANK GREENBERG** (1999)
Lif Hank Greenberg was baseball's first Jewish star. This appealing documentary looks at this extraordinary athlete who was able to transcend religious prejudice during the Depression and World War II to become an American hero. Greenberg rose to fame as Hitler invaded Europe, raising the hopes of Jews everywhere. Includes excerpts of interviews with Hank Greenberg, his family members and friends, and others who talk about how he inspired them. The film alternates between clips of the interviews, clips of the time period and scenes from Greenberg's life. Walter Matthau and Alan Dershowitz are among those interviewed, as are Greenberg's baseball contemporaries and Greenberg's brother and son.
Rated PG for mild language. 1 hr. 35 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult
- 296.833 **A LIFE APART: HASIDISM IN AMERICA** (1997)
Lif Well received documentary presenting an in-depth portrait of Hasidic life in America. The film includes an archival clip of the Lubavitcher Rebbe's 1929 visit to New York, and shows how the post-war remnants of Hasidism in Europe came to America and rebuilt their lives and communities. Interviewed here are members of various Hasidic sects in Brooklyn including the Bobovers, the Belzers, the Gerers, the Skvers, the Satmars and the Lubavitchers—as well as their black and Latino neighbors. The filmmakers take us into Hasidic homes, showing portraits of family and communal life. An insightful film, presenting a positive portrait of Hasidism. Narrated by Leonard Nimoy and Sarah Jessica Parker and directed by Oren Rudausky and Menachem Daum.
1 hr. 30 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

- 296 **LIGHT UNTO THE NATIONS (Alef...Bet...Blast-Off! Episode 7) (1998)**
 Ale Part of a children's video series in which puppets and real people illustrate how traditional Jewish values apply to modern life. This episode focuses on two main themes: immigration and sharing with those less fortunate than you. David and Rachel are both dismayed to learn that their mother has volunteered their home to host a famous Soviet dissident writer and champion of free speech. They are unwilling to share their rooms until Mitzvah Mouse takes them back in time to the 1880's to meet Emma Lazarus at Ellis Island and learn about the importance of freedom.
 30 min. **AGE:** 4 to 8
- F **A MAJORITY OF ONE (1961)**
 Maj Rosalind Russell plays Mrs. Jacoby, a Jewish Brooklyn widow who moves to Japan with her daughter and son-in-law (who is sent there on business). She comes to Japan with a strong prejudice against the Japanese, as her son was killed by Japanese in World War II. Mrs. Jacoby's prejudices begin to break down as she falls in love with a Japanese businessman, played by Alec Guinness. A touching comedy based on the Broadway play by Mervyn LeRoy. **Note:** *May not be appropriate for all audiences as the subject matter deals with a Jewish woman becoming romantically involved with a non-Jewish man.*
 2 hrs. 29 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult
- 392.4 **MAKE ME A MATCH (n.d.)**
 Mak Upbeat, lively film about Jewish matchmaking today and the struggles of modern single Jews to meet potential mates. The film includes numerous interviews with Jewish singles, as well as with the matchmakers and services that try to aid them. Three Orthodox matchmakers from New York discuss their techniques and the problems they sometimes encounter, such as when older gentlemen approach them looking specifically for young attractive women. There are scenes of a Jewish Dating Service in Dallas; a San Diego synagogue's Jewish matchmaking group; a Personal Ads Agency; and Internet Dating for Jews. Viewers get an inside look at a Nationwide Jewish Singles convention, as well as hearing small groups of Jewish men and women discussing the difficulties of dating. The film is often "laugh out loud funny" to most viewers who can relate to the awkwardness of being single and looking for a date.
 53 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult
- F **MARJORIE MORNINGSTAR (1957)**
 Mar Drama based on Herman Wouk's novel about a beautiful 18-year-old American Jewish girl in the 1930's who wants a career in the theater. She leaves her family for a season of summer stock theater and falls in love with an assimilated Jewish songwriter/producer at an east coast resort—and learns a great deal about love and life through the relationship. We watch her development from a sheltered, innocent college coed to a woman of the world. Predecessor to the "Jewish Princess" stereotype found in later American films. Stars Gene Kelly and Natalie Wood.
 2 hrs. 5 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

- 392.4 **ME AND MY MATCHMAKER** (1996)
Me Lively documentary about a Jewish matchmaker, made by a non-Jewish, single filmmaker. Irene Nathan decided to enter the matchmaking business after her son had grown, to help single Jews meet each other. At the time the film was made, she had been in the business for sixteen years in Chicago, where she is an active member of the Orthodox Jewish community. The film opens with a potpourri of snippets of some of Irene's clients—they tell her what they're looking for in a future spouse and later give their reactions to the dates Irene has arranged for them. Viewers are also treated to a good dose of the matchmaker's philosophy about relationships between men and women. A close friendship develops between filmmaker Mark Wexler and Irene, as she advises him on his own romances—and warns him to stay away from her Jewish clients unless he plans to convert (advice he doesn't always follow). **Note:** *An enjoyable and enlightening film which can be used to generate discussions about modern relations between Jewish men and women, exploring perceptions they have of each other which often create barriers.*
- 55 min. **AGE:** Adult
- 917.47 **THE MIRACLE OF INTERVALE AVENUE** (1983)
Mir *The Miracle of Intervale Avenue* chronicles an area of the Bronx in New York that used to be a thriving Jewish community. Today, the area is known for its crime. As the area became more dangerous, Jews moved away, until only a handful remained by 1983. This film documents the few that are left, most elderly, who speak of what life was like before and why they have remained. This small group, along with a Jewish police officer, black youth, and Puerto Rican clergy, struggle to keep open the last remaining synagogue in the neighborhood..
- 1 hr. 5 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult
- F **MISS ROSE WHITE** (1991)
Mis Young career woman Rose White and her father learn that Rose's sister, who they haven't seen for 15 years, has survived Auschwitz and will be joining them in America. When the sister, Luisa, arrives, she carries with her the anguish of the Holocaust and a bitterness towards her father for not getting her out of Europe in time. An additional theme deals with American assimilation, as Rose has changed her name from Rayzel Weiss and hides her Judaism from her friends and co-workers. An Emmy Award-winning film starring Maximilian Schell, Amanda Plummer and Kyra Sedgwick. Based on the play "A Shayna Maidel" by Barbara Lebow. **Note:** *Can be used to relate to Holocaust units as well as to the Americanization of Jewish immigrants.*
- 1 hr. 35 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult
- DVD
296.444 **MIXED BLESSINGS: THE CHALLENGES OF RAISING CHILDREN IN A
JEWISH-
CHRISTIAN FAMILY** (2004)
Mix Four Jewish-Christian interfaith couples talk about their own struggles in deciding how to religiously raise their children. A sociologist, a psychologist, a priest and a rabbi add their voices, providing insights and advice. The couples interviewed express some of the difficulties they have faced, admitting that there is no one surefire solution. People have a tendency to change as relationships grow, and many things change after kids are born. Clergy and professionals stress the need for interfaith couples to discuss in detail how they plan to raise children with regards to religion prior to marriage. Good communication skills are critical. The couples interviewed include two couples where the men are Jewish and two where the women are Jewish or part Jewish. Although their solutions to the religious educations of their children vary, both the couples and professionals agree that very few couples can successfully raise their children equally in two religions. **Note:** *This film should prove useful for synagogue programming – as well as for screenings for interfaith couples.*

26 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

917.3
Mol

MOLLY'S PILGRIM (1985)

Winner of the 1986 Academy Award for Best Live Action Short Subject, this is the story of Molly, a 9-year old Russian-Jewish girl who is the object of her classmates taunts. When the children each make dolls for a class display of the first Thanksgiving, Molly brings in a very different looking doll—a Russian-Jewish figure that leads the children to understand Molly and her family's search for religious freedom. Study guide available.

24 min. **AGE:** 5 to 14

JHVC
F
Mr

MR. SATURDAY NIGHT (1992)

You may recognize something of Milton Berle or Jackie Mason in Catskill comedian Buddy Young, Jr. He's the classic Brooklyn-born Jewish funny man with a dark side who starred briefly in the golden days of television. Comedian Billy Crystal makes his directorial debut playing Buddy, a comic who "rose to the middle." In a series of flashbacks smarting with humor and pathos, Buddy's hysterical career missteps tell the story of a performer obsessed with winning the love of audiences—even while sacrificing the love of his family. Chock-full of rapid-fire one-liners and outrageous *shtick*. **Note:** *Contains obscene language.*

Rated R. 1 hr. 59 min. **AGE:** Adult

F
My

MY FAVORITE YEAR (1982)

During television's early days, Mel Brooks, Woody Allen and Neil Simon, among others, got their start in show business as writers for Sid Caesar's *Your Show of Shows*. They brought a distinct Jewish sensibility to the sketches Caesar performed weekly before a live audience. *My Favorite Year* is a hysterically funny fictional treatment of the show's backstage shenanigans.

New York, 1954. Brash comic King Kaiser has ordered his youngest gagwriter, Benjy Stone, to take care of the guest star, flamboyant matinee idol Alan Swann (Peter O'Toole). If Benjy can keep his hero sober and deliver him in time for the show, he'll hold on to his job. But with an ogre for a boss, a lush for a star and all of Manhattan at their feet, anything can happen – especially in front of a live audience!

Rated PG. 1 hr. 32 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

781.7
New

THE NEW KLEZMORIM: VOICES INSIDE THE REVIVAL OF YIDDISH MUSIC (2000)

Lively documentary about the revival of Yiddish music. The film alternates between interviews and actual performances by contemporary Klezmer groups. Many of the leading figures in Klezmer music today perform in this film, including Chicago Klezmer Ensemble, Adrienne Cooper, Brave Old World, Josh Waletzky, Hankus Netsky, Jeff Warschauer and Deborah Strauss. Viewers hear a wide variety of variations on the original Klezmer sounds, as well as learning why this form of music has reached renewed popularity today.

1 hr. 9 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

F
Nex

NEXT STOP, GREENWICH VILLAGE (1976)

The year is 1953. Larry Lapinsky is packing his suitcase to move out of his parents' Brooklyn home and into his own Greenwich Village apartment. His mother, brilliantly played by Shelley Winters, is hysterical that her son is deserting her. *Next Stop, Greenwich Village*, a bittersweet comedy about post-immigrant Jewish life, portrays Lapinsky's coming-of-age. Struggling to make his way as an actor, Larry collects an assortment of bohemian friends and contends with his long-time girlfriend. But his conflicts with her pale in the face of constant run-ins with his overbearing mother—who appears at his home with gifts of food and underwear. Based on filmmaker Paul Mazursky's own passage from Brooklyn to Greenwich Village (and then to Hollywood),

the film is about much more than geographical transition—it's about the dynamics of leaving home, and trying to leave home behind.

1 hr. 49 min. **AGE:** 17 to Adult

JHVC
F
Nor

NORTHERN EXPOSURE, THE PILOT (1990)

New Yorker Joel Fleischman is a fish out of water. Or rather, a *kvetch* out of water. He's a Jewish doctor recently graduated from Columbia University, where his years in medical school were financed by the state of Alaska. Now Joel must repay his debt by working in tiny Cicely, Alaska, for four years. It's a place where almost no one has heard of a bagel. *Northern Exposure, the Pilot* introduces the eccentric characters and hilarious predicaments that have given this Emmy-winning TV series its huge following. Searching in vain for a way out of his contract, Joel's true nature eventually shows—he's a *mensch* with a medical kit. Now, all he has to do is learn to like moose burgers and caribou hot dogs.

49 min. **AGE:** 10 to Adult

301.451 **NOT IN OUR TOWN: HEROES** (1995)

Not

Billings, Montana, is a town which has seen a number of hate crimes by white supremacist groups—against Native Americans, African Americans and Jews—and which has stood together and responded as a community. Several examples are shown, with focus on the following act of anti-Semitism. When a rock was thrown through a window of the home of a Jewish family displaying a menorah, the residents of Billings reacted. The local newspaper printed a full-page menorah for families of all faiths to hang in their windows to show community solidarity—and nearly 10,000 did (analogous to Danes wearing the yellow star during World War II). The children's book *The Christmas Menorahs* also deals with this incident. Study guide available. **Note:** *Use as a trigger film for fighting prejudice.*

20 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

301.451 **NOT IN THIS TOWN** (1997)

Not

Dramatization of true incidents which occurred in the town of Billings, Montana, in which members of the town fought back against a series of hate crimes. The story originally received television coverage in a documentary called "Not in Our Town," a program which inspired other communities to pool together to combat hate and discrimination. The crimes in Billings were directed against Native Americans, African Americans, and Jews. Tamie Schnitzer, who married a Jew and converted to Judaism, actively spoke out about the need to act against these crimes. As a result, her family became one of the targets when a brick was thrown through her son's window—which displayed a decoration of a Chanukah menorah. Someone in the town remembered how the Danes defied the Nazis by all wearing yellow stars—and the people in Billings decided to try a variation of this. The newspaper printed full sheets of menorahs for the townspeople to display in their windows—showing a united front. This story continues to serve as an inspiration to act against incidences of hate and prejudice in our communities. Stars Adam Arkin and Kathy Baker. **Note:** *Includes some strong language and scenes which may be upsetting to young people.*

2 hrs. Rated PG. **AGE:** 13 to Adult

362.6 **NUMBER OUR DAYS** (1983)

Num

In this Academy Award winning film, anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff, examines a group of elderly Jews in Venice, California. She follows a group of men and women in their eighties and nineties, most who were originally immigrants from Eastern Europe. Myerhoff, herself a Jew, feels a personal connection to these people. Her empathetic work shows how these individuals deal with illness, poverty and old age. She explores their histories and their lives, and shows how they find comradery and solace in their group at the Jewish Community Center.

29 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

362.6
Pop

POP (1998)

Photographer Joel Meyerowitz created this heartwarming portrait of his “Pop”—his 87-year-old father, Hy Meyerowitz, who is suffering from Alzheimer’s disease. Meyerowitz takes his dad and his own grown son on a two-week road trip from Florida to New York City, where Hy was born. Photos and film clips of Hy’s past are intermingled with his reminiscences of special times in his life. Despite his Alzheimer’s, viewers see a vibrant and street-wise man who has lost his memory but has kept his vitality and zest for life. This bittersweet picture of a true survivor—a man who overcame obstacles with his optimism, drive and force of personality—was created by a son who loved him and wanted to show others who his father really was. **Note:** *Some language is unsuitable for young viewers.*

1 hr. **AGE:** Adult

F
Pri

A PRICE ABOVE RUBIES (1998)

Controversial, high-charged drama which takes a harsh look at women’s roles in Hasidic Jewish society. Renee Zellweger plays Sonia, a high spirited young Hasidic woman in Brooklyn who is deeply frustrated by her role as wife and mother and longs for something more from life. When her husband’s brother, Sender, offers her a job in his jewelry business, Sonia jumps at the change to escape the monotony of her life. As her parents were gemologists, Sonia has an extensive knowledge of the diamond industry and does well in business. Sonia’s husband (a flat character) is a Torah scholar who exalts his studies, Torah and devotion to the Rebbe above anything else (including Sonia). His brother, Sender, on the other hand, is unscrupulous, cynical and dishonest. He takes advantage of Sonia’s need and emotional instability and actually rapes her (and maintains a sexual relationship). Later in the film, Sonia discovers a Puerto Rican jewelry maker who makes exquisite and artistic pieces. Her relationship with him causes her to eventually be excommunicated from her society – and from her child. **Note:** *Zellweger gives a passionate and intense performance as Sonia. The filmmaker, Boaz Yakin, gives a biased and two-dimensional portrait of Hasidic society. The men are self-centered and the women are oppressed and not viewed as individuals by the men. Viewers should know that this is far from an objective portrayal of Hasidic Jews—and evaluate it accordingly. A highly discussable film. Contains partial nudity and mature subject matter.*

Rated R. 2 hrs. 56 min. **AGE:** 17 to Adult

DVD
301.431
Pro

PROTOCOLS OF ZION (2004)

This compelling film by filmmaker Marc Levin takes a chilling look at contemporary antisemitism in America post 9/11. After Levin heard a cab driver blame the Twin Towers tragedy of September 11, 2001 on the Jews, he decided to investigate further to see how widespread this belief was. The theory that there is a master plot of the Jews to rule the world stems from a century old forgery from czarist Russia called *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Levin shows how the *Protocols* have been revived in modern America by focusing on specific Protocols and showing, through interviews, how people today still believe in these lies about the Jews. Through his investigation, Levin interviews white supremacists, black nationalists, Arab-Americans, evangelical Christians and Holocaust survivors. There is also a brief section about Mel Gibson’s film *Passion of the Christ*, with commentary from Gibson and responses to his film. Particularly touching was a segment about Daniel Pearl, the American Jewish journalist who was captured and beheaded by a Pakistani militant Islamic group. Although *Protocols of Zion* has a fragmented approach, often skipping from topic to topic, its theme that antisemitism is “alive and kicking” in modern America will disturb and shock many viewers. **Note:** *Strong language and some disturbing content and graphic images.*

Rated R. 1 hr. 35 min. **AGE:** 17 to Adult

- F
Pur **THE PURPLE HEART** (1944)
The Purple Heart is one of the first American films to depict a character who is only incidentally Jewish. Its plot follows a group of eight Americans of diverse backgrounds who were captured by the Japanese and subjected to a brutal trial. The men are told that unless they reveal classified information, they will be executed. One of the men, Lieutenant Greenbaum, is a Jew. The film shows how these men, of diverse backgrounds, stick together through their sense of shared loyalty and patriotism. This film reflects American attitudes towards World War II and depicts both American social inclusiveness and the integration of Jews in American society.
B&W. 1 hr. 38 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult
- F
Rad **RADIO DAYS** (1987)
Woody Allen drama which follows two separate alternating story lines. The first takes a nostalgic look at an obviously Jewish family in Long Island's Rockaway district during World War II. It is related by the son of that family. The second deals with the Manhattan night life of the rich, in which an aspiring cigarette girl yearns for fame. The two stories are connected by the golden age of radio—when families gathered to listen, and radio stars reigned supreme. Stars Woody Allen, Mia Farrow, Julie Kavner and Diane Wiest.
Note: *Not overtly Jewish in content, but very recognizable as depicting an American Jewish family in 1940's New York.*
1 hr. 25 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult
- 917.3
Ret **RETURN TRIPS** (1991)
In the 1960's, there was a remarkable resurgence of Jews returning to their roots and searching for their cultural identities. *Return Trips* looks at both the Americanization of the early Jewish immigrants and the "return" back to Jewish identity that began in the '60's and continues today. The generation of children of immigrants tended to assimilate into American culture, leading future generations to search for their roots. The film documents specific Jewish communities that illustrate this revitalization movement. Interviewed here are leaders of chavurot, Jewish renewal movements and individuals who became ba'al teshuva (were more secular and became Orthodox Jews). The filmmakers also share personal stories of their own quests for a stronger Jewish identity.
1 hr. **AGE:** 12 to Adult
- 973
Roa **THE ROAD TO NEW YORK FROM EASTERN EUROPE: JEWISH IMMIGRATION AT THE TURN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY** (1998)
Suitable for classroom use, this video traces the path of Jews who left Europe from 1880 to 1914 for a new life in the United States. It looks at what life was like in the European shtetls and explains the reasons Jews left for America. Using photos and narration, the film then illustrates what life was like when these Jews arrived at Ellis Island and settled on New York's Lower East Side. **Note:** *Although narration is somewhat stilted at times, this video provides very clear, organized and detailed information to introduce students to the subject of Jewish immigration to the U.S.*
B&W. 17 min. **AGE:** 10 to Adult
- 296.445
Say **"SAYING KADDISH"** (1991)
This drama deals with a Jewish family affirming life in the face of death. Focuses on the relationship of two grown sisters after the death of their mother, as well as the importance of community in a time of personal crisis. Sibling rivalry is an additional theme. One sister remained single and helped care for her ill mother; and she resents the other sister (played by Tova Feldshuh) who moved out of town, married (and is now separated with a child) and has a important career. The out-of-town sister, on the other hand, feels that the mother rejected her and favored her sister—and she is initially unable to mourn. Produced by the Jewish Theological Seminary. **Note:** *Jewish*

mourning customs are also illustrated in this fine film which won an Academy Award for Best Live Action Short Subject.

58 min. **AGE:** 10 to Adult

F **SCHOOL TIES** (1992)

Sch Fictional story of teenage anti-Semitism in 1950's Pennsylvania. Jewish teenager David Greene receives a football scholarship to an exclusive prep school and conceals from his classmates that he is a Jew. When his secret is revealed, David becomes the object of ridicule and scorn—and his desire for acceptance is replaced by a new sense of Jewish identity.

1 hr. 50 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult

DVD
976
Sha

SHALOM Y'ALL (2002)

Filmmaker Brian Bain, a third generation Southern Jew from New Orleans, goes on a quest to discover the Jewish South. Traveling in an old Cadillac, Brian visits with Jews in Natchez, Mississippi; Arkansas; Louisiana; Savannah, Georgia; Texas; Jackson, Mississippi and Atlanta, Georgia. Most of the Jews he interviews talk about their pride at being both Southern and Jewish. Some of the smaller Southern communities lament their dwindling Jewish population as younger members move on to larger cities. Bain interviews two famous southern Jews, a poet and historian, Eli Evans and Texan country singer Kinky Friedman. Southern Jews talked about their struggles to balance maintaining their Jewish identities with trying to fit into their local communities. An upbeat film that offers a slice of American Judaism with its own unique flavor. Pair this one with "Delta Jews"—another documentary about Southern Jewry.

59 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

781.7 **SHLOMO CARLBACH: HIS MUSIC – HIS TEACHINGS – HIS LIFE** (1993)

Shl The first portion of this video (1 hr. 24 min.) consists of a taped recording of a live concert featuring Rabbi Shlomo Carlbach—both a celebrated and a controversial personality in the Jewish world. Carlbach sings many of his classic songs, interspersed with inspirational words and stories. Following the concert is a 26 minute interview with Carlbach in which he talks about his past and how he became involved with Jewish youth, helping to light a spark of Judaism in their lives. Rabbi Carlbach stresses the importance for Jews today to be able to ignite young people to the depths and soul of Judaism, giving them a sense of spirituality as well as substance. **Note:** *This video does not have a polished, professional feel but does bring viewers into the mind, heart and soul of this legendary Jew.*

1 hr. 50 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

808.87 **THE SID CAESAR COLLECTION: CLASSIC COMEDY FROM "YOUR SHOW**

OF **SHOWS" AND "CAESAR'S HOUR"** (2000)

Sid Three volumes containing comedy sketches from the classic 1950s programs "Your Show of Shows" and "Caesar's Hour." The sketches were performed live and have been digitally remastered for better quality. Each video includes interviews with some of the writers and stars of the show, including Sid Caesar, Woody Allen, Mel Brooks, Nanette Fabray, Larry Gelbart, Howard Morris, Carl Reiner, Danny Simon, Neil Simon and Mel Tolkin. The videos show actual sketches followed by commentary from the writers and actors about each particular sketch and its humor. Color with black and white segments.

3 videos – 65-75 min. each. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

CREATING THE COMEDY

Includes the sketches: "The Commuters in 'the Fur Coat'," "The Cobbler's Daughter," "Argument to Beethoven's 5th," "Progress Hornsby" and "From Here to Obscurity."

1 hr. 15 min.

INSIDE THE WRITER'S ROOM

Includes the sketches: "The Hickenloopers in the 'Sleep Sketch'," "Boy at First Dance," "The German General," Chita Rivera and Jack Cole in "What is Jazz," and "Aggravation Blvd."

1 hr. 5 min.

THE MAGIC OF LIVE TV

Includes the sketches: "The Commuters in '7 Dwarfs Bet'," "The Professor in 'Board Rooms of Hollywood'," "The Five Dollar Date," "Sid with Benny Goodman," "The Clock," "A Fella Needs a Girl," "The Haircuts," "'So Rare' & 'Flippin'," and "This is Your Story."

1 hr. 15 min.

808.97 SID CAESAR IN YOUR SHOW OF SHOWS (1994)

Sid The comedy show *Your Show of Shows* was broadcast live every Saturday night in the early history of television. Starring Sid Caesar, Imogene Coca, Nanette Fabray, and Carl Reiner (among others) its hilarious sketches kept America laughing. Many of the writers of the original sketches later became big names, including Woody Allen, Neil Simon, Mel Brooks and Larry Gelbart. This video includes some examples of typical scenes and sketches from the original show. **Note:** *Although the sketches are not overtly Jewish in theme, viewers may recognize elements common to Jewish humor inherent in the scenes.*

B&W. 1 hr. **AGE:** 10 to Adult

342.73 SKOKIE (1991)

Sko Powerful dramatization of the true story of how the citizens of Skokie, Illinois—a small town with many Holocaust survivors—responded when a neo-Nazi group announced its plans to march there. Stars Danny Kaye, Carl Reiner and Eli Wallach. Study guide available. **Note:** *Can be used to discuss free speech versus social responsibility, the Holocaust, anti-Semitism and ethical/moral responsibility.*

2 hrs. **AGE:** 13 to Adult

F SNOW IN AUGUST (2001)

Sno Based on Pete Hamill's acclaimed novel about an 11-year-old Irish Catholic boy, Michael Devlin, and his relationship with a rabbi who recently emigrated from Prague in 1947. When the story opens, Michael witnesses the murder of an elderly Jew by Frankie, a local ruffian. Frankie later threatens Michael not to be an informer to the authorities. Later on, Michael meets Rabbi Hirsh (they meet when the rabbi asks Michael to turn on his stove during the Sabbath). A friendship forms due to mutual need—Michael's father died fighting in World War II, and the rabbi lost his wife in the Holocaust. Michael agrees to teach the rabbi English and baseball, while the rabbi teaches Michael Yiddish and the Kabbalah. Eventually, Frankie and his gang begin to terrorize the rabbi, and Michael knows that some action must be taken. **Note:** *The ending will have a varied response from viewers and requires the suspension of disbelief. Includes a few violent scenes.*

Rated PG. 1 hr. 45 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult

DVD

973

Sto

A STORM OF STRANGERS (1969)

Herschel Bernadi narrates this short documentary film that captures the flavor of Jewish immigrant life in the lower East side of New York at the turn of the century. Beginning with a family photo, the narrator (a fictitious character) tells how he came to this country, worked and brought over his family. Numerous still shots illustrate the people, conditions and lifestyle of the times. Included are depictions of the work life, tenements and children of the Jewish immigrants. The Triangle Factory Fire of 1911 is given special mention, with photographs of the devastation it caused.

B&W. 19 min. **AGE:** 11 to Adult

F
Str **A STRANGER AMONG US** (1992)
Brash, young and attractive detective Emily Eden is sent to the Hasidic Diamond District of Brooklyn to investigate a puzzling murder which the police suspect was committed by an “insider.” She goes under cover as a *Baal Teshuvah*—someone who has returned to Orthodox Judaism. To prepare for this assignment, Emily—a very tough and hardened policewoman—moves in with the Rebbe and his family to learn their way of life. What she doesn’t expect is the tremendous attraction she feels towards their way of life and towards the Rebbe’s son. A wonderful performance by Melanie Griffith as Emily. **Note:** *Includes some strong language which gave it a PG-13 rating. Also, some viewers may have difficulty with the brief romantic scene between a non-Jewish woman and the son of the Rebbe.*

1 hr. 49 min. PG-13. **AGE:** 13 to Adult

F
Str **STREET SCENE** (1931)
Street Scene presents the fictional story of a typical Jewish immigrant experience in early twentieth century America. Its central character, Abraham Kaplan, a socialist, lives with his family in a poor section of row houses alongside other immigrants – some who are both anti-Semitic and anti-Socialist. His own son, who has been educated in America, rejects his father’s philosophy and lifestyle. Tension is felt both within the family and within the neighborhood, where neighbors advise Abraham to return to where he came from. Based on a Pulitzer Prize-winning play, *Street Scene* presents a picture of some of the key problems faced by Jewish immigrants including anti-Semitism, poverty and assimilation. throughout the movie, playing themselves out in the best tradition of Rice's work. **Note:** *Due to the age of the film, it is often hard to understand the dialogue. Although the film depicts immigrant life, including Jewish immigrants, its primary focus is not Jewish.*

B&W. 1 hr. 18 min. **AGE:** 14 to Adult

F
Sun **THE SUNSHINE BOYS** (1975)
Walter Matthau and George Burns star in this Neil Simon comedy about two veteran stand-up comedians. Willy Clark (Matthau) and Al Lewis (Burns) were part of a vaudeville team called “The Sunshine Boys” that played together for 43 years. In public, they had audiences roaring—in private, they bickered and fought incessantly. Then, Willy’s nephew (Richard Benjamin) tries to bring them out of retirement to do a TV special together. Both men could use the money but can these two impossibly cantankerous elderly men tolerate each other’s presence long enough to complete the show? Rated PG. **Note:** *Matthau received an Academy Award nomination and Burns received an Oscar for his role.*

1 hr. 51 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

F
Swe **SWEET LORRAINE** (1987)
New York State’s Catskill Mountains used to be known as the Jewish Alps. Dotting the mountains were family hotels like the Lorraine—resorts offering Jewish food, Jewish humor and a smart, lovable Jewish mother running the place.

Sweet Lorraine captures the end of an era. Now run-down, the Lorraine faces its last summer. Molly Garber, the owner’s granddaughter, surprises her grandmother by showing up to work and she falls in love again with the hotel of her childhood. From the escapades of the staff to the jokes of the hotel comedian to romance for granddaughter and grandmother, this funny and touching film explores whether we can hold on to the past—and go home again. Rated PG-13.

1 hr. 31 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult

296.123
Tal **THE TALMUD AND THE SCHOLAR** (1989)
Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, one of the greatest contemporary Talmudic scholars of our time, is the subject of this fascinating documentary. *The Talmud and the Scholar* includes

interviews with Steinsaltz, in which he discusses his thinking and teachings. Steinsaltz also reveals his personal side, as the film follows him to the Biblical Zoo in Jerusalem, and to a wedding. The film also presents history of the Talmud itself, explaining how this Jewish legal system stemmed from the oral tradition until it was written down, beginning in the second century C.E. Rabbi Steinsaltz has been engaged in the process of publishing a multi-volume edition of the Talmud (*The Steinsaltz Talmud*) in English, making the Talmud more accessible to a new generation.

58 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

973
STATES
The

THEY CAME FOR GOOD: A HISTORY OF THE JEWS IN THE UNITED

(2001)

This two-part series looks at 250 years of Jewish immigration to America, from 1654-1880. Utilizing documents, letters and diaries, the videos show where the Jewish immigrants settled and how they adapted to and helped to shape America. A major theme throughout deals with the struggles Jews had in keeping their Jewish identity while assimilating into American society.

2 cassettes 1 hr. ea. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

PRESENT AT THE CREATION 1654-1820

Looks at the first Jewish immigrants to America, 23 Sephardic Jews from Recife, Brazil who came to the settlement of New Amsterdam in 1654. The film examines how these Jews tried desperately to fit into colonial American society but were generally treated like second class citizens. At the time of the American Revolution, most Jews were extremely patriotic and actively supported their new country. Major Jewish figures explored include Asher Levy, Rebecca Gratz and Uriah Levy. Includes photos, dramatizations, maps and interviews.

TAKING ROOT 1820-1880

This segment examines the next two waves of Jewish immigration. The second wave of Jewish immigrants came from Germany and the third wave from Central and Eastern Europe. Approximately 250,000 Jews arrived in the U.S. during this time period and the film shows how most made their livings in small retail businesses, peddling and manufacturing. The film also covers divisions between Jews during the Civil War and examines the development and growth of the Reform and Conservative movements in America.

DVD
F
Thi

THE THING ABOUT MY FOLKS (2005)

Peter Falk gives a stellar performance as Sam Kleinman, a happily married man whose wife leaves him after 47 years. Sam brings the “goodbye letter” over to his son, Ben, played by Paul Reiser, who immediately networks with his 3 sisters. Sam accompanies Ben on a drive upstate to look at a house in the country that Ben is considering purchasing. Neither realizes that this “road trip” will turn out to be a father-son journey of discovery, where past memories erupt and new memories are born. Although this plot may sound contrived, few will go untouched by the film. Falk and Reiser make a marvelous father-son duo, and expertly touch on key sentiments familiar to father-grown child relationships. Falk plays Sam as a crusty but feisty character with unconquerable spirit. He is strong willed, pig-headed and outspoken—but also warm, wise and likeable. Reiser wrote the screenplay with Falk in mind, and the film is an act of love on many counts. Olympia Dukakis delivers a brief but memorable performance towards the end as Muriel Kleinman, the wife/mother in the story. **Note:** *The subject matter of this film is not overtly Jewish, although it is clear that the characters are Jewish. Wonderful for family viewing with teens or older children. This film will especially touch chords with grown children with aging parents and older parents with grown children.*

Rated PG-13 for language. 1 hr. 36 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult

781.7
Tic

A TICKLE IN THE HEART (1996)

Max, Julie and Willie Epstein are three elderly brothers who play Klezmer music together. Produced by a German, Swiss and American filmmaking team, this video tells the story of these Klezmer music legends, musicians of the past who are now on an international comeback tour. It alternates between clips of their performances in various locales and interviews with the brothers, who tell their stories and talk about their music. The men are lively, funny and a bridge between the past and the present.

B&W. 1 hr. 24 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

974.71
Tri

THE TRIANGLE FACTORY FIRE SCANDAL (1978)

Events depicted in this made-for-TV drama are based on the fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in New York in 1911, in which 146 employees—mainly young immigrant women—were killed. The film focuses on four young immigrant women who work in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory—a sweatshop in the garment district occupying the top three floors of a building. Viewers become familiar with the lives of these young women who work over nine hours a day, six days a week for miniscule pay. When the fire begins, hundreds of women are trapped in a building with blocked exits and inadequate fire escapes. Over fifty individuals hurled themselves out of the window to their deaths flights below. Many of the victims were Jews. It was this tragedy that led to new legislation requiring safety standards in buildings, as well as the formation of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. Stars Stephanie Zimbalist, Tovah Feldshuh and Tom Bosley. **Note:** *Includes dramatized scenes of people trying to flee the flames and individuals jumping from the upper floors to their deaths below. Teachers should preview end for suitability.*

1 hr. 38 min. **AGE:** 13 to Adult

F
Two

TWO SISTERS (1938)

Made in the United States, this Yiddish melodrama is about Betty Glickstein, a Jewish girl who promises her mother—who is on her deathbed—that she will take care of her younger sister, Sally. Betty gives up the best years of her life to ensure her sister’s well-being. She takes care of the household and works in a factory so that Sally can attend school and later train to be a nurse. Betty also uses the money she earns to put her sweetheart, Max, through medical school. Max and Betty get engaged, and he becomes a doctor. When Sally falls in love with Max, Betty’s ability to sacrifice her own interests is put to its final test. Will she relinquish the man she loves to her younger

sister? An outstanding performance by actress Jennie Goldstein—her only performance recorded on screen.

In Yiddish with subtitles. B&W. 1 hr. 22 min. **AGE:** 14 to Adult

F **UNCLE MOSES** (1932)

Unc Classic Yiddish drama starring Maurice Schwartz as a tyrannical sweatshop owner in the 1930's who falls in love with Masha, the 17-year-old daughter of a worker he has fired. Although Uncle Moses is much older, he pursues Masha. Masha must choose between marrying a man she doesn't love and pleasing her parents, who wish to raise the family's position in America. The film deals with some major issues for Jewish immigrants of the time period, including the clash between traditional Jewish values and the temptation of secular life in American. Labor issues for immigrants also are a main theme here, as viewers see the struggles of the underprivileged sweatshop workers, the exploitation of the tenement lords and the idealism of the often-Marxist labor union organizers. The film rises above being a two-dimensional drama by creating multi-faceted characters. Uncle Moses is a prime example of this. Although he exploits his workers, he also paid for them to leave Eastern Europe, come to America and he gave them jobs. He takes advantage of them but he also considers them his family. Yiddish film star Maurice Schwartz shines in this film, which was an adaptation of a 1918 Sholom Asch novel and played for years on the Yiddish theatre.

In Yiddish with subtitles. 1 hr. 27 min. **AGE:** 14 to Adult

F **UNSTRUNG HEROES** (1995)

Uns Unusual and touching drama about a young boy, Steven Lidz, with a most unusual family. Steven's father (John Turturro) is a scientist and an inventor who has two extremely eccentric (and possibly crazy) uncles played by Michael Richards and Maury Chaykin. When Steven learns that his mother (Andie MacDowell) is dying from cancer, he chooses to live with these two unconventional uncles. Although the uncles may seem crazy to many, they are warm, loving and creative (one uncle is paranoid and thinks Nazis are spying on him all the time). The uncles' apartment is stacked to the ceiling with old newspapers and their closet is filled with balls. Immediately, Steven's uncles set about trying to improve his self-image. They begin to call him "Franz" instead of Steven to give him a name of more distinction (like the composer, Franz Liszt). They teach him to be a proud individual, not to be afraid to speak his mind. The uncles also teach Steven a respect for his Jewish background—something of which his atheistic father disapproves. When disaster strikes—in more than one way—this very odd family illustrates what really being a family is all about. Directed by Diane Keaton.

Rated PG. 1 hr. 33 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

DVD F **A WALK ON THE MOON** (1999)

Wal Set in 1969, this is the story of a Jewish family who spend a rather eventful summer in the Catskills. It focuses on the two main female characters: Pearl (Diane Lane), an attractive young mother, and her adolescent daughter. In the course of the film, Pearl—bored and frustrated with the tedium of her life—enters into a passionate affair with the "blouse man" (Viggo Mortensen) who sells clothes from a wagon to the women at the resort. Meanwhile, her daughter (Anna Paquin) experiences first love against the backdrop of Woodstock. Tovah Feldshuh delivers an outstanding performance as Pearl's all-seeing, comprehensive mother-in-law, and Liev Schreiber shines as Pearl's husband. Co-produced by Dustin Hoffman and Tony Goldwyn, this film effectively captures a time and place long gone as well as internal struggles common to many families. **Note:** *Includes partial nudity and sexual situations.*

Rated R. 1 hr. 47 min. **AGE:** 17 to Adult

F **WATCH THE STARS COME OUT** (Reading Rainbow) (1985)

Wat "Reading Rainbow" is a PBS children's video series which introduces quality picture books. This episode opens with a visit to Ellis Island and a brief look at American

immigration. Then the children's book *Watch the Stars Come Out* by Riki Levinson is read with close-ups of the book's illustrations. The story deals with how a little girl and her brother journeyed alone on a big boat to join their parents and older sister in America. LeVar Burton takes viewers on a visit to the Statue of Liberty for a closer look, and modern day child immigrants are interviewed. A visit is also made to a city festival where people celebrate their different cultures.

30 min. **AGE:** 5 to 8

F **THE WAY WE WERE** (1973)

Way Love story in which Barbra Streisand plays Katie, a forceful Jewish working-class Communist student who falls in love with Hubble, a handsome, blond upper class WASP (played by Robert Redford). Her passion for her causes draws them together—their differences wedge them apart. Follows their lives from the late 1930's to the early 1950's.

Rated PG. 1 hr. 58 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

976.4 **WEST OF HESTER STREET** (1983)

Mon Award-winning film which chronicles Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe to the American Midwest in the early 1900's—called the "Galveston Movement" after the port in Galveston, Texas. Jewish leaders in America had devised the Galveston Movement to relieve problems caused by the rapid growth of the Jewish immigrant population on the East Coast. The film interweaves events of this westward Jewish movement with the story of a young Jewish peddler who is forced to adjust to a new way of life far from a thriving Yiddish culture. Using actors, period costumes, an original score and archival footage, this docudrama recounts a little-known chapter in American Jewish history. Study guide available.

Color/B&W. 58 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

296.3 **WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE** (2000)

Whe Inspired by the best-selling book by Rabbi Harold S. Kushner, this film interviews people who have gone through terrible tragedies and explores ways they have coped with them. Rabbi Kushner himself is a man who lost his son, Adam in 1977 after Adam's 14th birthday, from progeria—a rapid aging disease. Viewers will hear from a 25-year-old woman diagnosed with liver cancer; an infertile mother who adopted twin boys and lost one after 10 months; a couple who lost their 20-year-old daughter; and a therapist who works with an African-American girl with cerebral palsy and mild retardation. Those interviewed agreed that most people in dire circumstances basically just want to be listened to and cared for. They are not as interested in explanations or rationalizations of why they are sick. The film embraces the idea that God is good; and that although we do not live in a perfect world, God gives us that strength and grace to keep faith and continue in life intact. Kushner emphasizes the importance of support groups. He says it's good to try to turn our pain into something positive by being able to help others who suffer. This film may comfort those who have experienced the loss of someone they loved, those with serious diseases, and people who have experienced the loss of divorce.

41 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

DVD **WHEN DO WE EAT?** (2005)

F
Whe Modern comedy about the Stuckmans, a dysfunctional Jewish family who gather together for what Dad claims will be "the world's fastest Seder." A less motley group would be difficult to find, as this family encompasses just about every Jewish stereotype. First, there's the father, Ira, a manufacturer of Christmas ornaments (including "Fat Santas"). Ira has a volatile temper and blows up at just about everyone in the family. Then there's a wide range of grown kids including Jennifer, Ira's lesbian daughter from his first marriage; Ethan, a son who's recently turned Hasidic; Nikki, who considers

herself a “sex therapist” although she’s more of a glorified prostitute; Zeke, the son who’s a drug addict; and Lionel, an idiot savant son. Add to this group Grace, Jennifer’s African-American lesbian partner; Rafi, a macho Israeli who builds the Stuckmans a tent for Seder; and Artur, a Holocaust survivor grandpa (Jack Klugman), and the Seder scene is complete. Not to mention Peggy Stuckman (Lesley Ann Warren), the Mom, who tries to hold the family together. This includes turning the house Kosher for her ba’al tshuva son, as well as commissioning a tent and roasting lamb on a spit, so the Stuckmans can have a Seder “good enough for Moses.” The Seder is off to a rocky start when Zeke slips his Dad the hallucinogenic drug Ecstasy instead of the antacid Ira requests. After that, the Seder spins in many quirky directions, until the Stuckmans finally come to realize what a family Seder is supposed to really be about. **Note:** *Includes mature subject matter, although there is no nudity. This “over the top” comedy will please some and offend others. An interesting DVD “extra” tells how the color scheme of the film was modeled after artist Arthur Szyk’s famous Haggadah.*

Rated R. 1 hr. 33 min. **AGE:** 17 to Adult

917.3 **WITH LIBERTY FOR ALL** (1989)

Wit The story of Jewish immigration to the U.S., the sweatshops, the night school classes, the pushcart and more—all told with warmth and beauty. Produced by Hadassah.

Color/B&W. 18 min. **AGE:** 10 to Adult

791.43 **THE YIDDISH CINEMA** (1991)

Yid Produced by the National Center for Jewish Film, this documentary traces the history of Yiddish film. It begins by providing a brief history of the Yiddish language, as well as Yiddish literature and theater. The documentary uses film clips, photographs and interviews to present the ascent and then the decline, after World War II, of Yiddish film in both Eastern Europe and the United States. Includes clips of some of the most popular Yiddish films. Narrated by playwright David Mamet. **Note:** *This video serves well as an introduction to a Yiddish Film Series, as does the video Yiddish: The Mame-Loshn.*

Film clips in Yiddish with subtitles. Color/B&W. 1 hr. **AGE:** 14 to Adult

492.49 **YIDDISH: THE MAME-LOSHN (Yiddish: The Mother Tongue)** (1979)

Yid Well-produced, made-for-television documentary by filmmaker Pierre Sauvage (*Weapons of the Spirit*) about the Yiddish language and its importance to American Jews today. Includes interviews with comedian David Steinberg, actor Herschel Bernardi, writer Leo Rosten (*The Joys of Yiddish*), *Daily Forward* editor Simon Weber, and Yiddish scholars. Film clips highlight performances by Molly Picon, Maurice Schwartz and Isaac Bashevis Singer. A fascinating and well-researched look at a language that has survived for generations.

58 min. **AGE:** 12 to Adult

956.94 **YOUNG AMERICAN JEWS SPEAK OUT ON ISRAEL** (2002)

You Produced by Auerbach CAJE, this trigger film is a “montage of American Jewish teens and young adults discussing their views on Israel during difficult times - the rising of the 2nd Intifada and the increase of terrorism and homicide bombing in Israel. In the video, numerous young Jews respond to questions involving issues such as their identification with Israel, the role of the media in the Mideast, and how they feel about Israel’s role in the current Israel-Palestinian conflict. Students talk a little about Israel’s history and whether or not they feel a two-state solution would work. Last, they share their personal responses towards Israel and discuss what they feel their roles as American Jews should be. This video was created to encourage students to learn more, discuss the issues, speak up and take action in support of Israel. **Note:** *Teachers may wish to first ask their own students to think about some of these questions – then show the film – and then lead a discussion based on the varied responses they have heard.*

18 min. **AGE:** 13 to 20

AMERICAN JEWRY – IMMIGRATION

ALMONDS AND RAISINS: A HISTORY OF THE YIDDISH CINEMA
AMERICAN TAIL, AN
AMERICAN TAIL: FIEVEL GOES WEST, AN
AMERICANER SHADCHEN (AN AMERICAN MATCHMAKER)
AMERICA'S SYNAGOGUE: A VIDEO PORTRAIT OF TOURO SYNAGOGUE,
NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND
AVALON
BIGGEST JEWISH CITY IN THE WORLD, THE
BUBBE MEISES
CANTOR'S SON, THE (DEM KHAZN'S ZINDL)
DELTA JEWS
EAST AND WEST
ELLIS ISLAND
FORWARD: FROM IMMIGRANTS TO AMERICANS, THE
FREE VOICE OF LABOR: THE JEWISH ANARCHISTS
FRISCO KID, THE
FROM WALNUT STREET
GOD, MAN AND DEVIL
GOLDEN AGE OF SECOND AVENUE, THE
GOLDEN LAND (1654-1932), THE (Heritage: Civilization and the Jews, Chapter
VII)
GREAT CANTORS IN CINEMA
GREAT CANTORS OF THE GOLDEN AGE
HAVEN
HESTER STREET
HIS PEOPLE
HIS WIFE'S LOVER
HOLLOW BOY, THE
HOLLYWOOD: AN EMPIRE OF THEIR OWN
IMPORTED BRIDEGROOM, THE
ISLAND OF HOPE—ISLAND OF TEARS
JAZZ SINGER, THE (1927)
JEWISH AMERICAN PATRIOTS
KEEPING QUILT, THE
LAUGH, A TEAR, A MITZVAH, A
LETTER TO MOTHER, A (A BRIVELE DER MAMEN)
LIGHT UNTO THE NATIONS (Alef...Bet...Blast-Off! Episode 7)
MOLLY'S PILGRIM
RETURN TRIPS
ROAD TO NEW YORK FROM EASTERN EUROPE, THE
STORM OF STRANGERS, A
STREET SCENE
THEY CAME FOR GOOD: A HISTORY OF THE JEWS IN THE UNITED
STATES
TWO SISTERS
TRIANGLE FACTORY FIRE SCANDAL, THE
UNCLE MOSES
WATCH THE STARS COME OUT
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**WITH LIBERTY FOR ALL
YIDDISH CINEMA, THE
YIDDISH: THE MAME-LOSHN (YIDDISH: THE MOTHER TONGUE)**