

RI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL NEWS

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PHOTOS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

RHODE ISLAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL PRESENTS 5th ANNUAL PROVIDENCE JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL

PROVIDENCE, RI (July 26, 2006) **The Rhode Island International Film Festival** (August 9-14, 2005) will again mount the **Fifth Annual Providence Jewish Film Festival** as a sidebar that highlights the diversity of the Jewish experience. The films for 2006 include work from around the world with an emphasis on cross cultural understanding and the human impact of the Holocaust aftermath

In announcing the programming, George T. Marshall, RIFF Executive Director, stated, "Providing a focus on world cultures has long been a hallmark of the Rhode Island International Film Festival. This year we are delighted to bring this sidebar of new films about Jewish communities around the world to our Festival. Thanks to some amazing submissions, we have been able to find a wonderful array of new films that touch the core of the Jewish Experience. We hope these films will help challenge stereotypes and bring a better understanding of the human dimensions behind the headlines."

The six films in the **Providence Jewish Film Festival** that are being presented include three shorts: **Heavy Metal Drummer**, which takes its bow at RIFF's Opening Night, **Pituco**, and **The Table**; plus three deeply emotional documentaries: **Encounter Point**, **Journey into Justice**, **Secret Courage: The Walter Suskind Story**, and ...**More Than 1000 Words**

All screenings are \$10 and can be purchased on line at www.RIFILMFEST.org or at the door of the theatre.

TUESDAY, August 8, 2006;

Columbus Theatre Arts Center, 270 Broadway, Providence, 7:00 p.m

HEAVY METAL DRUMMER

Toby MacDonald, Luke Morris, Directors

6 min. United Kingdom 2005

Cast • Yassine Jars

A celebration of rock music in the Arab world and a portrait of a music fan on a quest to reconcile his love for metal with a disapproving world.

WEDNESDAY, August 9, 2006;

Columbus Theatre Arts Center, 270 Broadway, Providence, 5:00 p.m.

PITUCO

Alejandro Heiber, Director

6 min. USA 2005

Benjamin, an old man, stands by isolated train tracks that disappear in the horizon. In his hands he holds Pituco, a teddy bear with a yellow Star of David that reads 'Jude' attached to its chest. Holding Pituco brings back painful memories of World War II, his family, and specially his sister Malka. In an attempt to finally come to terms with his past, Benjamin decides to tell his survival story for the first time in 50 years.

JOURNEY TO JUSTICE

Steve Palackdharry, director

106 min. Germany, France, USA, 2006

JOURNEY TO JUSTICE tells the story of Howard Triest, a German Jew who fled Nazi Germany in 1939 when he was 16 years old, returned as an American soldier and then served as an interpreter during the Nuremberg Trial. He came face-to-face with imprisoned Nazi leaders who were co-responsible for the death of six million Jews, including Howard's parents at Auschwitz. At Nuremberg, Howard felt transformed, from victim to victor, and was able to reclaim parts of his German identity. The documentary also tells the story of how Margot, Howard's younger sister, was rescued from a detention camp in southern France just before her parents' deportation. Margot then saved ten other children from the Nazis in her subsequent escape to Switzerland.

Castle Cinema 2, 1049 Chalkstone Avenue, Providence, 5:15 p.m.

SECRET COURAGE: THE WALTER SUSKIND STORY

Tim Morse & Karen Morse, directors

82 min. Netherlands, U S A, 2005

Walter Suskind was a German Jew living in Amsterdam during the Nazi occupation. He was forced to serve as the Jewish head of deportation at the Hollandsche Schouwburg (the Jewish Theater), the main deportation site in Holland.

Using his fluent German, his skills as an actor and businessman, and unfathomable courage and tenacity, he and an intrepid group of resistance workers orchestrated the escape of close to 1000 Dutch children who were marked for transport to the death camps.

In Secret Courage , we hear the stories of five of the saved children in their own words. Eleven of the resistance workers interweave their own stories, painting a picture of an incredible rescue operation fraught with intrigue and danger, but

also carrying the emotional and ethical burden of deciding who could be saved and who could not.

Although Walter took the secret of this mission to his death, these survivors tell his story and reflect on his ability to carry on when others gave up. In an era where the word "hero" is so casually used, *Secret Courage* will bring to audiences the portrait of ordinary man, a salesman by profession, who chose to take a stand in the face of Nazi terrorism. Although vilified by those who never knew his secret, he was – in the end – a true hero.

Unlike more gruesome treatments of this subject, this film brings the moral dilemmas of the Holocaust to the audience in a compelling and personal way; it leaves us to question our own moral code and what each of us might do when faced with such choiceless choices.

THURSDAY, August 10, 2006

Columbus Theatre Arts Center, 270 Broadway, Providence, 4: 45 p.m.

THE TABLE

Chris Byrne, Director

8 min. U S A, Ireland, Poland, 2005

September pre German Invasion Poland: a Jewish family sits down around a table for the shabat. We see the table in present time being prep for a sale. Flash back to Poland post German Invasion. Maps of war are placed on the table

ENCOUNTER POINT

Ronit Avni, Julia Bacha, Directors

89 min. USA, 2006

New England Premiere

Abstaining from the usual media headlines of hatred and conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, **Encounter Point** instead focuses on their commonality: loss. As Palestinians battle to end the occupation of an Israeli military state and Israelis demand an end to the suicide bombings, people from both sides seek peaceful resolutions. The Bereaved Families Forum is a group of 250 Palestinians and 250 Israelis who have lost loved ones and are looking for a way to dialogue with each other to prevent the loss of more lives. Robi Damelin, an Israeli mother and activist whose son was killed by a sniper, comments, "You can sign as many peace agreements as you like, but if people don't learn to forgive each other . . . there will never be peace. It has to be between the people." Ali Abu Awwad, a Palestinian member of the Forum whose brother was killed by an Israeli soldier, is also a tireless activist who talks with both Israelis and Palestinians about his choice to resist nonviolently. Although grief is an element of **Encounter Point**, hope is the more prominent emotion expressed as people from both sides put issues of anger and revenge aside in hopes of reconciliation. Politicized by their personal experiences and guided by leaders from other nonviolent movements—Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela—these citizens refuse to adhere to the political rhetoric that surrounds them and instead choose to solve their problems on their own. As Ali puts it, "This is our message to the world."

In Arabic and Hebrew with English subtitles

SUNDAY, August 10, 2006

Cable Car Cinema, South Main Street, Providence, 3:00 p.m.

...MORE THAN 1000 WORDS

Solo Avital, director

77 min. Israel, Japan, USA, 2006

East Coast Premiere

Ziv Koren's photographs have become instantly recognizable icons that have helped shape our perception of the conflict in the Middle East. In '...More Than 1000 Words' director Solo Avital followed Ziv over a two-year period, shooting in the heart of riots, terror attack scenes, secret meetings with wanted militants, all the way to Israel's pullout from Gaza. This movie, however, is not about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict; it is merely set in it. It's a movie about a man's struggle with a history in which he is involved, and the place he finds for himself in it. Like Ziv, it seeks the universal through the most personal; it asks how and why this man gets up in the morning to leave his wife and daughter for a war zone. The movie does not only seek history through the photographer's lens – but also the photographer through the lens of history.

Like its subject, the film looks back to look ahead, treading the thin taut line between subjectivity and objectivity. As the cycle of destruction and creation turns, Ziv's place in it comes into focus. As in Greek tragedy, the hero's place in the cycle illuminates our own.

As a photographer Ziv strives to disappear into the situations he shoots. The film's experiential aesthetic reflects this. Its driving and jolting audiovisual rhythms are those of Ziv's work. Much of the musical accompaniment is mixed from sound recorded on site. As video snaps into still and back we feel what it is to snatch an image from the rush of experience.

RIIFF is the largest Film Festival in New England and one of only 60 festivals worldwide qualified for Oscar nomination by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in the Short Film Category. Celebrating the art of the short film has always been an important part of the Rhode Island International Film Festival and short films have helped it to establish a reputation for being an important Festival in its own niche outside of the standard Hollywood fare. In all, over 270 films being presented at this year's Film Festival. The opening night's program of shorts will emphasize themes of originality and love of the art of film.

The **Rhode Island International Film Festival** (RIIFF) is dedicated to the creation of opportunities for artistic interaction and exchange among independent filmmakers, directors, producers, distributors, backer, and the film-going community. Rhode Island Governor Donald Carcieri, Providence Mayor David M. Cicilline, and US Senator Jack Reed serve as honorary chairs to this year's event.

The **Rhode Island International Film Festival** is supported in part by the City of Providence, the Providence Tourism Council, the Providence Department of Arts, Culture & Tourism, Clear Channel Communications, Sony, Rule Broadcast Systems, WJAR TV 10, the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, Amtrak, Providence Monthly, Motif Magazine, Radio Disney, Feinstein IMAX Providence Place, and contributions from members and community supporters.

The Flickers Arts Collaborative, an organization with 24 years of experience presenting major artistic events as well as independent and foreign films to the public, produces RIIF.

Advance ticket sales for screenings and special events are available through the RIIF website (www.RIFilmFest.org). Student, group, and senior discounts are also available but only in advance. To purchase tickets or obtain more information about any aspect of RIIF, call 401-861-4445; or write RIIF, 268 Broadway, Providence, RI 02903; email info@film-festival.org. or log onto www.RIFilmFest.org.

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