

KLEZNORTH 2017 FILM PROGRAMME

FRIDAY 8pm

A YIDDISH WORLD REMEMBERED – THE VANISHED WORLD OF JEWISH EASTERN EUROPE (100 minutes)

Dir. Andrew Goldberg US 2002

'A Yiddish World Remembered' is an Emmy Award-winning documentary that uses archival photographs, film footage and interviews with survivors of the Jewish communities of Europe, which were destroyed by the Holocaust.

The film provides insights into the rich cultural heritage that existed up to the war in the Pale of Settlement, where Jews were confined by the Russian Government, including modern day Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Slovakia and Hungary.

One review described the film as 'a beautiful yet balanced view of the Eastern European Jewish world, imbued with the spiritual and religious treasures of that civilization and bound together by the polyglot language Yiddish'.

This documentary will help give viewers some context to the music, dance, song, language, stories and food experienced over the weekend at Kleznorth.

SATURDAY 5.30pm

EATELA: A LIFE IN KLEZMER (38 minutes)

Dir. Debora Kodish/Barry Dornfeld US 2011

This documentary is a loving portrait of Elaine Hoffman Watts (her Yiddish name is "Eatela"), and the documentary profiles a feisty and determined woman who has broken barriers as a musician, a working mother, and in her persistent devotion to her family's klezmer music.

Drawing on performance footage, family movies, photographs and interviews, 'Eatela' shows how the klezmer tradition has been sustained over four generations in a single family, with a good dose of humour and joy. Family stories place the music: how a klezmer tradition came to Philadelphia with "grandpop" Joseph Hoffman, who arrived there (by accident) at the turn of the century. Stories introduce his children (all musicians) and in particular Jacob Hoffman (Jake), an exceptional classical musician who toured with Leopold Stokowski and actively performed the family's klezmer music for community events.

At the time, "professional" musicians looked down on klezmerim, devaluing both ethnic traditions and the skill it took to play this repertoire. But Jake was a well-known klezmer, and he taught his talented daughter Elaine, who also mastered both klezmer and classical repertoires. (she was the first woman to graduate from the Curtis Institute of Music in percussion.) She, too, made her living as a musician, but rarely played klezmer publicly: Philadelphia's Jewish

bandleaders just wouldn't hire a woman. That didn't stop Elaine: she continued playing and taught her children and grandchildren the family's unique klezmer repertoire.

YIDLIFE CRISIS (approximately 20 minutes plus discussion afterwards)

Eli Batalion/Jamie Elman Yiddish with English subtitles

YidLife Crisis is a Yiddish comedy web series and evolving Jewish cultural brand created and performed by two friends Eli Batalion and Jamie Elman, wanting to pay homage to the yiddishkayt (Jewishness) in their upbringing in Canada and put a questioning Jewish comedic lens on the life in which they were raised.

They define YidLife Crisis as the identity crisis one has reconciling old world inheritance with new world lifestyle. They describe it as a love letter about modern Jewish identity, set in Yiddish, that makes Jewish identity inclusive to all through the ice-breaking power of comedy.

With time and a growing global following, YidLife Crisis has moved from simply a fictional web series to incorporate all sorts of digital content, from their Global Shtetl docu-video series all about Jewish life in all the corners of the world, through to their writings, blog posts and social media-ready graphics.

YidLife is meant to impact through the scale of the internet to engage a digital generation in the discussion of Jewish identity through storytelling and content with style and authenticity, not advertising or persuasion, with an open-mind and a collaborative spirit.

Their videos deal with many aspects of Jewish culture, including food, circumcision, sex, more food, observance, festivals, even more food and dating.

WARNING – some scenes depict consumption of large amounts of high fat content food, smoking of recreational substances and include portrayal of values which some viewers may find offensive. This is not for the faint-hearted but I hope you find it funny and informative.

SATURDAY 9.15pm

WHOSE IS THIS SONG? (70 minutes)

Dir. Adela Peeva Belgium/Bulgaria 2003

Bulgarian, Turkish, Greek, Albanian, Bosnian, Macedonian, Serbian with English subtitles.

In her search for the true origins of a haunting melody, the filmmaker travels to many of the countries where the tune is known ('Uskudara Gideriken-When Going to Uskudar' in Turkey and 'Terk in Amerika' in the Klezmer tradition). The trip is filled with humour, suspense, tragedy and surprise as each country's citizens passionately claim the song to be their own and can furnish elaborate histories for its origins.

The tune emerges again and again in different forms: as a love song, a religious hymn, a revolutionary anthem and even a military march. In some later interviews in Bulgarian media, Adela Peeva said that Iranian and Lebanese colleagues who saw the film confirmed that this song also exists in their countries. There is speculation that it may have been originally a Jewish song carried all over the area by the Jewish migrations - "because it sounds most impressive when performed on a certain type of Jewish flute".

The powerful emotions and stubborn nationalism raised by one song seem at times comical and, at other times, eerily telling. In a region besieged by ethnic hatred and war, what begins as a light-hearted investigation ends as a sociological and historical exploration of the deep misunderstandings between the people of the Balkans.