Houston Jewish Film Festival
MARCH 18 – MARCH 30, 2023
Underwritten by Mitzi Shure & Jerry Wische
Celebrating 19 Years of the Best Jewish and Israeli Films
erjchouston.org/filmfest

March ’68 | Photo by Miguel Nieto
HOUSTON JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL

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LETTER from the CHAIR

We are excited to welcome movie fans to the J’s 19th Houston Jewish Film Festival! This year’s festival at OUR NEW J will be a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our resilience after several years of considerable challenges to the J and to our community. We look forward to reconnecting and engaging with you in a modern and transformed space that has provided new programming possibilities. Two of our films will be preceded by optional events in the new Cramer-Jacobs Family Culinary Studio, one of which is inspired by the film’s gorgeous setting on a Calabrian farm. We will have karaoke and cocktails in the expansive new Toomim Prefunction Space outside the Kaplan Theatre. We are excited to announce longtime Film Festival supporters Mitzi Shure and Jerry Wische as the new underwriters. This gift will allow the Festival to continue to provide unparalleled, impactful programming, and this year that includes our two short film programs where filmgoers will enjoy some live piano and a comedian.

The festival committee, continuing in the fine tradition of the festival’s founders, Sharon Kagan and Doreen Joffe, has evaluated dozens of films in order to present terrific selections from around the world that explore a wide range of topics. We have a premier lineup of 15 truly outstanding and diverse feature-length films and two short film programs that will entertain, enlighten and challenge you, our audience.

Conversations and interviews with filmmakers and local speakers will accompany many of our programs. I’m particularly excited that we will be presenting The Sign Painter, my selection for Chair’s Choice with Houston-based executive producer, Peter Ragauss in attendance for a post film Q&A. This tragicomic drama tells the story of an aspiring artist caught between resistance and conformity and tasked with repainting street signs every time a new totalitarian regime sweeps into town.

We are very fortunate to be welcoming director Michael Kretzmer to talk with us following our screening of J’Accuse, a powerful documentary that brings together the daughter of a Nazi war criminal and the son of a Holocaust victim from their ancestral town’s painful past.

Our Teen Night will bring high schoolers together with Patrice O’Neill, the director of Repairing the World and co-founder of Not in Our Town, created in the aftermath of the tragedy in Pittsburgh in 2018.

I want to express my gratitude to the incredible J staff, as well as our thoughtful and committed film committee members for their efforts throughout the process of evaluating films and sharing our festival plans enthusiastically with our community at large. We truly appreciate the generous and loyal support of the Margolis Family, our Patron of the Arts, our festival donors, and community partners whose generosity is instrumental in bringing this cultural opportunity to us all. A special thank you to our previous festival chair, Jody Sweed, who remains integrally involved in developing new ideas for the festival.

We are very excited about our 19th season, and look forward to coming together to celebrate and reconnect. We can’t wait to laugh, cry, think, and feel with you!

See you at the movies!

Yvette Pintar
Chair, 19th Houston Jewish Film Festival
Reserved Seating Events

All our events in the Kaplan Theatre at the Evelyn Rubenstein JCC will be reserved seating. Reserve or purchase your tickets early to ensure a seat.
Where Life Begins
Thursday, March 9 | 7:30 PM
Evelyn Rubenstein JCC

Southern Italy is the setting for this beautiful film, where an Orthodox Rabbi brings his family to harvest etrogim (citrons) for Sukkot. Two worlds collide as the Rabbi’s daughter, Esther, looks for a way out of her religious life, and Elio, a non-Jewish farmer, strives to keep his father’s traditions alive. Both of their lives take unexpected detours, as their forbidden relationship develops, and they help one another find freedom.

Patron Sponsors: Edith and Robert Zinn

Join us in the new Cramer-Jacobs Family Culinary Studio for a pre-film event celebrating Citrons. This three-course interactive class will excite the senses and prepare you for life on a Calabrian farm!

Citrons, Citrons, and Citrons!
5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

Limited spots available and pre-registration is required
March ’68
Saturday, March 18 | 8:00 PM
Evelyn Rubenstein JCC

Warsaw, 1968. Hania and Janek, two students uninterested in politics, fall madly in love as the city is engulfed in protests against the authoritarian regime's antisemitic policies and crackdown on civil liberties. But they are soon drawn into the youth uprising with their families on opposite sides of the political conflict. What will happen to their whirlwind romance amid violent social turmoil and police oppression? A dramatic story intertwining romance, history and politics in communist Poland.

Opening Night Festivities begin at 7:15 PM.

Opening Night underwritten by The Margolis Family

A repeat screening will take place Thursday, March 23 at 2:00 PM at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.
The Conductor

Sunday, March 19 | 1:00 PM
Evelyn Rubenstein JCC

Step into the heart of classical music, and the soul of one of its top artists, internationally renowned Marin Alsop — the world’s first female conductor. Born into a musical Jewish family, Alsop never relinquished her childhood dream of becoming a conductor inspired by her hero, Leonard Bernstein. Despite rejections from the classical music establishment, she smashed the glass ceiling serving as music director of orchestras in Baltimore, São Paulo and Vienna. You’ll get a backstage pass to the artistry of her energetic performances in this repeat screening from Book Festival.

Supported by the Lillian Kaiser Lewis Foundation in honor of Dolores Wilkenfeld
Underwritten by The Maurice Amado Foundation

Directed by Bernadette Wegenstein
USA, 2021, 90 minutes

Language
English

Genre
Documentary
An Afternoon of Shorts
Sunday, March 19 | 4:00 PM
Evelyn Rubenstein JCC
Underwritten by Mitzi Shure & Jerry Wische
Featuring film historian, Eric Goldman, providing introductions and context to each short, along with a performance on piano

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Film Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Directed by</th>
<th>USA, Year, Duration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anne</strong></td>
<td>Two actresses, one Black and one white, audition to play Anne Frank, prompting the question: Who is best suited for the role?</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>Desirée Abeyta</td>
<td>USA, 2021, 10 minutes</td>
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<td><strong>Ibach</strong></td>
<td>An Ibach piano that escaped the Holocaust reveals its untold history as it is restored four generations later.</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>Rachel Weinberg</td>
<td>USA, 2022, 8 minutes</td>
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<td><strong>The Violin Upstairs</strong></td>
<td>The Violin Upstairs charts the true history of the filmmaker’s violin, from its birth in 18th-century Austria, to its existence in modern day San Francisco.</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Documentary</td>
<td>Asali Echols</td>
<td>USA, 2019, 3 minutes</td>
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<td><strong>The Tailor</strong></td>
<td>Culture and confusion meet on a Brooklyn Street, in this hilariously charming reconstruction of a Borscht Belt joke.</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>Gordon Grinberg</td>
<td>USA, 2010, 7 minutes</td>
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<td><strong>Minyan Duty</strong></td>
<td>Hoping to say Kaddish after their mother’s death, Leah and Ariel find themselves one person short of making a Minyan.</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>Ivan Kander</td>
<td>USA, 2022, 14 minutes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Eric Goldman is a noted film historian and educator who lectures on Jewish, Yiddish and Israeli cinema. Goldman is adjunct professor of cinema at Yeshiva University and founder of Ergo Media, a distributor of Jewish, Yiddish and Israeli cinema. His most recent book is *The American Jewish Story through Cinema*, and he is currently writing a book on Israeli society through the lens of film.
The Sign Painter

Executive producer, Peter Ragauss, in attendance for Post-Film Q&A

Sunday, March 19 | 7:00 PM

Evelyn Rubenstein JCC

Join us for The Sign Painter, a favorite of our Film Chair, Yvette Pintar.

This historical drama follows a young Latvian man against the backdrop of changing dictatorships through World War II. He’s a talented artist, whose profession – Sign Painter – keeps him busy painting and repainting colors and street names as his town is conquered first by a local dictator, then Russia, and finally Nazi Germany. All the while, his forbidden love for the Jewish shopkeeper’s daughter can’t be forgotten, even after marrying someone else. Will he keep following along, or paint something new?
An Evening of Comedies
Monday, March 20 | 7:30 PM
Evelyn Rubenstein JCC
Underwritten by Mitzi Shure & Jerry Wische

Featuring film historian, Eric Goldman, providing introductions and context to each short, along with a stand-up comedian

YidLife Crisis: Anticementish
While revisiting their childhood suburban landscape, Chaimie and Leizer are thrust into lively debate coming from both left and right sides of the cheese bagel.

Directed by Eli Batalion and Jamie Elman
Canada, 2019, 7 minutes
Language: Yiddish with English subtitles
Genre: Comedy

Jerome’s Bouquet
82 year-old Elena Klein, a retired New York florist, can't stop arranging...only now it's not flowers she's arranging, but people's lives.

Directed by Chris Calkins and Bebe Neuwirth
USA, 2013, 17 minutes
Language: English
Genre: Comedy

Gefilte Fish
A story of a young woman torn between her pre-wedding family tradition to kill and prepare gefilte fish and her sympathy for the live fish swimming in her bath.

Directed by Shelly Kling-Yosef
Israel, 2008, 10 minutes
Language: Hebrew with English subtitles
Genre: Comedy

Granny Knows Best
Tinder-obsessed Stephan Nielsen meets with his 92-year-old grandmother and her boyfriend to discuss love, sex and loyalty.

Directed by Stephan Nielsen
UK, 2017, 7 minutes
Language: English
Genre: Comedy

YidLife Crisis: The Double Date
A blind date for Leizer with the perfect woman turns into a battle of nebbish proportions.

Directed by Eli Batalion and Jamie Elman
Canada, 2019, 7 minutes
Language: Yiddish with English subtitles
Genre: Comedy
Repairing the World
Film Director and Not in Our Town Co-founder Patrice O’Neill in attendance for Post Film Q&A
Tuesday, March 21 | 7:30 PM | General Audience Screening
Wednesday, March 22 | 7:30 PM | Teen Night at the Houston Jewish Film Festival
Evelyn Rubenstein JCC

Pittsburghers experienced tremendous grief following the 2018 Tree of Life synagogue shooting that took 11 lives in the close-knit Squirrel Hill community. In the three years that followed, they transformed that trauma into a courageous, community-wide, interfaith effort to combat antisemitism, racism, white supremacy and gun violence. Jewish residents, religious leaders and city officials discuss their determination to forge a united front to oppose all forms of hate threatening their city.

Teen Night at the Houston Jewish Film Festival
Film Director and Not in Our Town Co-founder Patrice O’Neill in attendance for Post Film Q&A
Wednesday, March 22 | 7:30 PM | Exclusively for Teens and their Families
Presented by Kehillah High, J Teens, BBYO, and Helfman Religious School at Congregation Emanu El
Farewell, Mr. Haffmann*

Wednesday, March 22 | 7:00 PM

Holocaust Museum Houston
Albert and Ethel Herztein Theater

French acting legend Daniel Auteuil plays Joseph Haffmann, a Jewish jeweler whose family has fled German-occupied Paris in this gripping historical drama. Having entrusted his store and apartment to his ambitious employee François, Haffmann is thwarted from leaving the city and must turn to François and wife, Blanche, for protection. What will happen in this morally complex thriller when tensions increase as the three face shortages and the stress of detection by Nazi soldiers? Based on Jean-Philippe Daguerre’s Molière Award-winning play.

Directed by Fred Cavayé
France, 2021, 115 minutes

Language
French with English Subtitles

Foreign Language Title
Adieu, Monsieur Haffmann

Genre
Drama

*Festival and Patron Passes are not accepted.
March ’68*
Thursday, March 23 | 2:00 PM
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
Brown Auditorium Theater

Directed by Krzysztof Lang
Poland, 2022, 118 minutes
Language
Polish with English Subtitles
Genre
Drama

*Festival and Patron Passes are not accepted.

America
Thursday, March 23 | 7:30 PM
6:30 PM | Exclusive Young Adult Happy Hour for Ages 21-45
Evelyn Rubenstein JCC

Eli, an Israeli swimming instructor, returns to Tel Aviv from Chicago after his estranged father dies. A series of events involving an old friend, who has a hiking accident, and his Ethiopian immigrant florist fiancée leads to a psychologically complex story about relationships, childhood emotional baggage, and life and death. Visually striking and poetic with restrained performances that prove unexpectedly buoyant for a narrative about personal tragedy.

Sponsored by June and Leonard Goldberg
Patron Sponsors: Joanne & Bruce Levy

Directed by Ofir Raul Graizer
Israel, 2022, 127 minutes
Language
Hebrew, with English Subtitles
Genre
Drama
Karaoke
Saturday, March 25 | 8:30 PM
Evelyn Rubenstein JCC

Everything goes off-key when a charismatic bachelor moves into a suburban Tel Aviv apartment and begins to host karaoke parties in his penthouse. An older couple’s slow, safe routine is shaken after being drawn in by their new neighbor. Comedy and drama ensue as relationships deepen and the rest of the building gets involved. Will the couple keep singing the same songs or will they change their tune? Winner of four Ophir Awards (Israeli Oscars) including Best Actor (Sasson Gabai), Best Actress (Rita Shukrun) and Best Sound.

Join us at 7:45 PM for karaoke and cocktails!

**Patron Sponsor: Bunny Radoff**

**Directed by Moshe Rosenthal**
Israel, 2022, 100 minutes

**Language**
Hebrew with English Subtitles

**Genre**
Drama, Comedy

Parents, make *Karaoke* a night out! The J is offering Kid’s Nite Out on March 25 for kids grades 1st to 5th for Neon Nerf & Game Night. Drop your kids at the J and enjoy karaoke, cocktails, and the film *Karaoke!*
The Art of Silence*
Sunday, March 26 | 1:00 PM
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
Brown Auditorium Theater

Staerkle Drux's uplifting and resonant documentary about legendary mime Marcel Marceau intertwines World War II footage, insight into Marceau's Jewish background and role in the Resistance, interviews with family members and well-selected excerpts from performances to illustrate the artist's remarkable ability to convey complex and emotionally rich narratives through gestures. Beyond his mastery on the stage, we see Marceau’s commitment to teach and inspire the next generation of artists, including the director’s own father, an accomplished Swiss mime who was born deaf.

Cinema Sabaya*
Sunday, March 26 | 4:00 PM
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
Brown Auditorium Theater

Israel’s entry for Best Foreign Film at the 2023 Academy Awards portrays a fictional group of Arab and Jewish women, municipal workers in Hadera, taking part in a video workshop run by Rona, a young Tel Aviv filmmaker. The participants — all amateur actors — offer masterful performances as they share raw footage of their disparate personal lives, alternatively supporting and criticizing one another as their dreams and travails as mothers, wives and women come to light.

*Festival and Patron Passes are not accepted.
Bad Nazi, Good Nazi

Sunday, March 26 | 7:00 PM

Evelyn Rubenstein JCC

This documentary explores the complicated story of Nazi-turned-rescuer Wilm Hosenfeld, known as the person who saved “The Pianist” (portrayed by Adrien Brody in Roman Polanski’s 2002 Award-winning film). As Hosenfeld rises in the Nazi ranks, he witnesses more atrocities and begins to quietly save about 60 Polish and Jewish people in all. Hosenfeld’s grandchildren delve into his secret diaries while his hometown, a small German village, struggles with a proposal to erect a memorial in his honor.

Join us at the start of the film for a pre-recorded conversation with Director Chanoch Ze’evi.

Patron Sponsor: Diane Kaplan
More Than I Deserve
Monday, March 27 | 7:30 PM
Evelyn Rubenstein JCC

This sweet coming-of-age drama portrays a single mother and her 12-year-old son who recently immigrated to Israel from Ukraine. The son, Pinchas, tries to fit in and starts studying for his bar mitzvah with their religious neighbor, a Chabadnik named Shimon. The mother, Tamara, develops her own fraught relationship with Shimon… Can the triangle survive and will everyone find the love they deserve? This touching portrayal of immigrant life in Israel was awarded Best Screenplay at the Jerusalem Film Festival (2021).

Directed by Pini Tavger
Israel, Germany, 2021, 82 minutes

Language
English and Russian with English Subtitles

Foreign Language Title
Yoter Mema Shemagia Li

Genre
Drama
J’Accuse
Director Michael Kretzmer in attendance for Post Film Q&A
Tuesday, March 28 | 7:30 PM
Evelyn Rubenstein JCC

This chilling Holocaust documentary — for adult audiences only — reveals the barbaric genocide of 220,000 people, or 95% of Lithuania’s Jews. Jonas Noreika was a Nazi collaborator personally responsible for slaughtering 8,000 men, women and children, but is still revered as a Lithuanian “National Hero.” Interviews with Noreika’s own granddaughter, Silvia Foti, and a Jewish grandson whose family was murdered by Noreika, follow their parallel quests to expose the truth and bring some measure of justice to the victims.

Michael Kretzmer’s visit is underwritten by the Doreen Joffe and Sharon Kagan Founders Fund. Patron Sponsors: Doreen & Basil Joffe and Sharon & Arnold Kagan
Barren
Wednesday, March 29 | 7:30 PM
Evelyn Rubenstein JCC

This sensitive film — for adult audiences only — portrays a young ultra-Orthodox couple struggling to conceive their first child. The family seeks spiritual help by turning to religious customs and an itinerant “Rabbi” whose shofar-blowing is said to cure infertility. He sets a family crisis into motion, testing their faith in God and their relationships. Will the family be able to forgive each other for what happens next? Beautifully filmed in Tzfat with haunting performances including Yoav Rotman from “Shtisel.”

Patron Sponsors: Lynn & Armand Shapiro and Helen Wils & Leonard Goldstein
Supported by the Rosita and Albert Gaon Sephardic Heritage Program Endowment Fund.

Directed by Mordechai Vardi
Israel, 2022, 108 minutes

Language
Hebrew with English subtitles

Foreign Language Title
Akara

Genre
Drama

Photo by Uri Ackerman
Love & Mazel Tov
Thursday, March 30 | 7:30 PM
Evelyn Rubenstein JCC

Anne, whose gentile grandparents profiteered in WWII, runs a Berlin bookstore specializing in Judaica and volunteers in a Jewish retirement home. Daniel, a newly single doctor, pretends to be Jewish at a party to impress philosemitic Anna, leading to an intricate and unmanageable web of white lies. What will happen as their romance develops and his hoax is revealed in this witty German rom-com?

Closing Night reception follows film

Patron Sponsors: Suzan & Jeremy Samuels and Ellen & Daniel Trachtenberg

Join us in the Cramer-Jacobs Family Culinary Studio for a pre-film sip and savor event. What better way to gear up for this comedy of errors than with some light bites and a glass of wine!

Love & Mazel Tov – Sip and Savor
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Limited spots available and pre-registration is required.
# Calendar of Events

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<td>SNEAK PREVIEW NIGHT</td>
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<td>Where Life Begins</td>
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## March 9

- **1:00 PM**
  - The Art of Silence
  - The Conductor
  - $12 | $15

## March 20

- **2:00 PM**
  - March '68
  - $8 | $10

## March 21

- **7:00 PM**
  - Farewell, Mr. Haffman
  - Repairing the World
  - $8 | $10
  - FREE

## March 22

- **2:00 PM**
  - America
  - $12 | $15

## March 23

- **7:30 PM**
  - More than I Deserve
  - J'Accuse
  - $12 | $15

## March 26

- **1:00 PM**
  - The Art of Silence
  - $8 | $10

## March 27

- **7:30 PM**
  - More than I Deserve
  - $12 | $15

## March 28

- **7:30 PM**
  - J’Accuse
  - $12 | $15

## March 29

- **7:30 PM**
  - Barren
  - $12 | $15

## March 30

- **7:30 PM**
  - Love & Mazel Tov
  - $12 | $15
## Calendar of Events

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<td><strong>MARCH</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>OPENING NIGHT</td>
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</table>
8:00 PM  
March ’68  
$15 | $19 |
| **24** | 25 |
| 8:30 PM  
Karaoke  
$15 | $19 |
| **31** |  |

### Venues Legend

**Evelyn Rubenstein JCC Houston**  
Kaplan Theatre  
5601 South Braeswood, Houston, TX 77096  
713-729-3200 | erjcchouston.org/filmfest

**The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston**  
Brown Auditorium Theater  
1001 Bissonnet, Houston, TX 77005  
713-639-7515 | mfah.org/films

**Holocaust Museum Houston**  
Lester and Sue Smith Campus  
Albert and Ethel Herzstein Theater  
5401 Caroline Street, Houston, TX 77004  
713-942-8000 | hmh.org

### Purchase Tickets & Subscriptions

**ONLINE**: erjcchouston.org/filmfest  |  By Phone: 713-551-7215

**IN-PERSON**: Visit the Information Desk or Box Office 30 minutes prior to the start of a program.

Advance ticket purchase recommended.

**PURCHASE A FILM FESTIVAL SUBSCRIPTION**

Full Festival Subscriptions give access to all films at the J* or attend three events with our Pick 3 Subscription.

- **Full Festival Subscription**  
  - $91 Member  
  - $114 Public

- **Pick 3 Subscription**  
  - $32 Member  
  - $40 Public

- **Best of the Fest**  
  - $36 Member  
  - $45 Public

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*Festival and Patron Passes provide entry for films only at the J. Separate ticket purchase required for all other venues. Ticket reservations required for each event. There will not be a pass for automatic entrance.
THANKS & RECOGNITION

2022–2023 Film Committee

Yvette Pintar
Chair

Doreen Joffe and Sharon Kagan
Founding Chairs

Marian Luntz
Curator, Film
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Tamara Savage
Managing Director
Holocaust Museum Houston

Debbie Boniuk
Nada Chandler
Guy Cohen
Joyce Cramer
Michael Durham
Aliza Geretz
Todd Green

Leah Gross
Cathy Jankovic
Gayle Kamen-Weinstein
Diane Kaplan
Elena Levy
Miriam Pacht
Lisa Sheinbaum

Ronna Selber
Shelley Sorkin
Matt Stein
Robin Stein
Jody Sweed
Helen Wils

THANKS & RECOGNITION

Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center of Houston

Jeremy Samuels
President

Joel Dinkin
CEO

Morgan Steinberg
Chief Program Officer

Amy Rahmani
Arts & Culture Director

Matt Basen
Arts & Culture Program Coordinator

Barbara Lindenberg
Film Festival Coordinator

Marissa Cardona
Arts & Ideas Member Services Coordinator
Sponsors & Community Partners

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Underwritten by Mitzi Shure & Jerry Wische

Evelyn Rubenstein JCC
Patrons of the Arts

The Maurice Amado
Foundation

Lillian Kaiser Lewis
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Congregation Beth Yeshurun
Congregation Brith Shalom
Congregation Emanu El

Congregation Emanu El Sisterhood
Congregation Or Ami
Friends of the IDF
Hebrew Speakers Organization
Holocaust Museum Houston
Houston Chapter of Hadassah
Houston Congregation for
Reform Judaism

Jewish Feminist Reading Group
Kehillah High
NCJW Greater Houston Section
Program in Jewish Studies
at Rice University
Shaarey Tzedek Synagogue
United Orthodox Synagogues
Young Adult Division of Jewish
Federation of Greater Houston

Receive 5% off at Laykie’s Gourmet Café at the J when you present your film ticket.

Hours during Festival:
Sunday – Thursday: 8:00 AM – 7:30 PM
Houston Jewish Film Festival
MARCH 18 – MARCH 30, 2023
Underwritten by Mitzi Shure & Jerry Wische
Celebrating 19 Years of the Best Jewish and Israeli Films
erjcchouston.org/filmfest