

For Immediate Release



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2017 Pioneer Valley Jewish Film Festival Announces Lineup

*Israeli Sports Legend Tal Brody to Appear at Opening Night Screening of **On the Map**;
12th Annual Festival to Screen Oscar-Nominated Documentary Short **Joe's Violin***

SPRINGFIELD, MA (January 17, 2017) – The Pioneer Valley Jewish Film Festival, presented by the Springfield Jewish Community Center, announces its 12th festival season.

The PVJFF runs March 18 through April 4, with 22 films from 9 countries screening in 16 venues across Hampden, Hampshire and Franklin counties. This year's lineup continues the Festival's tradition of diverse, innovative and socially relevant programming, and reinforces its standing as the largest Jewish cultural event in Western Massachusetts.

"We are thrilled to present an outstanding roster that celebrates the diversity of Jewish identity and culture around the world," said Carlin Preisick Trietsch, PVJFF Co-Director. "We look forward to bringing the community together and delivering the best festival experience possible for our audience."

The PVJFF opens at the Basketball of Fame with **On the Map**, the inspiring, against-all-odds story of how a Tel Aviv basketball team won the 1977 European Championship and captured a nation's heart. Basketball legend and Israel Goodwill Ambassador Tal Brody will be in attendance for the Nancy Spielberg-produced film.

Other Israeli film highlights include the premiere of Israel's box office sensation, **The Women's Balcony**, a critically praised dramatic comedy about a close-knit Sephardic congregation in Jerusalem. **Sabena Hijacking - My Version** is a riveting docudrama that chronicles the 1972 hijacking of a Belgian plane heading for Tel Aviv. Tova Ascher's **A.K.A. Nadia** is an award-winning drama that asks: can a person reinvent herself without dealing with consequences from the past?

In addition to standout Israeli films, this year's line-up represents the very best of global Jewish cinema. Noteworthy selections include **Cloudy Sunday**, a wartime romance set against the backdrop of Thessaloniki, Greece; the Dutch romantic comedy **Moos**, about a young woman who gets the jolt she needs to examine her life and chase her dreams; and the French documentary **The Man Who Saved the Louvre**, about a squadron of curators that hid more than 4,000 artworks on the eve of World War II.

A short film showcase features several acclaimed short films, ranging from 10 to 25 minutes in length. Nominated for the 2017 Oscar for Documentary Short Subject, **Joe's Violin** tells the story of a 91-year-old Holocaust survivor who donates his violin of 70 years to a local instrument drive, changing the life of a 12-year-old girl from the Bronx and, unexpectedly, his own.

In a continued effort to strengthen its spotlight on documentary filmmaking, the PVJFF is screening 10 exceptional documentaries. Among this year's selections are Ken Burns' **Defying the Nazis: The Sharps' War**, which chronicles the heroic efforts of a Boston-area couple who saved European Jews during World War II; **The Freedom to Marry**, the epic story of marriage equality in America through the eyes of the movement's architects; **Disturbing the Peace**, an absorbing account of former enemy combatants who embark on a transformational journey from soldiers to non-violent peace activists; and **Norman Lear: Just Another Version of You**, a fascinating look at the groundbreaking work of one of the most successful television producers of all time.

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“As a festival, we understand the power of a story well told,” said Deb Krivoy, PVJFF Co-Director. This year’s documentary films showcase important, complex stories that explore a range of social, cultural, and political issues.”

The Pioneer Valley Jewish Film Festival closes at the Yiddish Book Center with ***Finding Babel***, an award-winning documentary that follows Andrei Malaev-Babel as he retraces the steps of his grandfather, famed Russian author Isaac Babel. The film’s director, David Novack, will be in attendance for a post-screening Q&A.

More than 15 guest speakers – including filmmakers, local scholars, and community leaders – will introduce the films, participate in post-screening discussions, and interact with festival audiences. In addition, PVJFF will co-sponsor free screenings in partnership with the Massachusetts Multicultural Film Festival at UMass Amherst, the German Film Series at Amherst College, and Glenmeadow Retirement.

Ticket prices are \$10 for general admission, \$8 for students and seniors (65+). Reserved seating is available at select screenings for \$15. Tickets can be purchased online, by phone, or in person at the Springfield JCC. Seating for all screenings is limited and advance ticket purchase is recommended. Tickets will be sold at the door subject to availability.

For ticket information, schedules, trailers, and venue directions, visit www.pvjff.org or call 413.739.4715.

The Pioneer Valley Jewish Film Festival is an independent, nonprofit film festival, presented by the Springfield Jewish Community Center. Generous support is also provided by the Jewish Endowment Foundation of Western Massachusetts, Totsy Foundation, Health New England, Massachusetts Cultural Council, Israel Bonds, Israel Consulate General to New England, and Lathrop Communities.