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A celebration of Israel's 70th through music, film

by Debra Rubin NJJN Bureau Chief May 29, 2018

For so many of us in the Jewish community, Israel is never far from our minds. Most often, however, we are consumed with aspects of the Jewish state that appear on the evening news, namely Israel's security, political drama, violent clashes with Palestinians, and the fading possibility of creating a lasting peace

But there is so much more to the country.

"We as a people believe and recognize that Israel can be a source of pride and inspiration and education," said Jewish Federation in the Heart of New Jersey CEO Keith Krivitzky. To better familiarize the local Jewish community better familiarize the local Jewish community with those aspects of Israel, the federation, ir partnership with synagogues and community centers, will bring Israel in music, movies, speakers, and programming to the Heart of New Jersey this summer in celebration of Israel's 70th birthday.

"At some point many people in our community may have had a personal connection to the land or people of Israel or may even have questions about what goes on there." Krivitzky said, "so we decided to make an active and positive eff to build bridges and make Israel come alive for people.

sitive effort to make as many entry points as possible

Those entry points span educational, cultural, and even food offerings so extensive that Krivitzky said, "We probably have one of the broadest arrays of Israel at 70 programs in the country."

Programming began in April with a somber Yom HaZikaron ceremony (Memorial Day) and celebratory Yom Ha'Atzmaut (Independence Day) concert. Two upcoming programs a Arts Center in Deal will showcase a leading Israeli singer and many films.

On June 24. Moshe Bonen and HaTaklitim will perform Israeli cover music from the 1960s through the on June 24, Mosne bonen and Ha akilum will perorm lisraeli cover music from the 1940s timol 1990s. The group "transports the audience to simpler times, before Spotly' and WIFI, when mu was played on a hi-fi stereo and the songs told real stories," according to Axelrod's promotiona material.

Axelrod executive director Jess Levy told NJJN that when Bonen performed at the venue previously, he proved to be "inspiring and very charismatic."

"He tells great stories and knows all the top Israeli songs," he said. Levy said that there will be an Israeli food tasting prior to the concert. "We thought it was a great way to celebrate Israel's 70th with Israel's favorite food and songs. What could be better?"

While the Israel/Jewish Film Festival between July 8 and 17 is an annual event, Levy said it is being white the isfaer/Jewish Him Festival between July 8 and 17 is an annual event, Levy said it is be expanded this year to include five additional locations: Axelrod, Congregation B'nai Tikvah in Nor Brunswick, Forum Theater in Metuchen, the Jewish Heritage Museum in Freehold, and the Monro Senior Center.

"We have a number of regional films premiering before they get to the movie theaters," said Levy. Before its award-winning opening night film, "The Wedding Plan," there will be a wine and cheese reception for series ti

"The Wedding Plan," a "wonderful romantic comedy," according to Levy, was directed by Rama Burshtein, an ultra-orthodox woman who moved from New York to Tel Aviv when she was 1. Other upcoming show times include: July 11 at the Forum Theater, July 12 at B'nal Tikvah and at the Jewish Heritage Museum, and July 17 at the Monroe Senior Center.

Other films and locations:

- » "Ben-Gurion Epilogue," an award-winning documentary using six hours of previously unknown interview footage discovered in 1968 of David Ben-Gurion, will be shown on July 9 at Axelrod, July 17 at the Jewish Heritage Museum, and July 18 at the Monroe Senior Center;
- "Israeli Love Story," based on the true story of the love affair between Pnina Gary and Eli Ben-Zvi, son of Rachel Yanait and Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, the second president of Israel, will be shown on July 9 at the Forum Theater, July 16 at Axelrod, and July 18 at the Jewish Heritage Museum;
- "The Testament," about a historian waging a battle against Holocaust deniers who discovers shocking secrets about his own family, will be shown on July 10 at Axelrod and July 15 at the Jewish Heritage Museum;
- "1945," based on the acclaimed short story, "Homecoming," by Gábor T. Szántó, about the fears and remorse in a Hungarian town when word comes that two Jews may be reclaiming property from its deported community, will be shown on July 10 at the Forum Theater, July 12 at Axelrod, and July 15 at Pinai Tikvah;
- "The Cakemaker," about a young German baker who comes to Israel seeking answers after his lover, a married Israeli woman, dies in a car crash, is playing on July 11 at Axelrod, and July 16 at the Jewish Heritage Museum;
- "A Bag Full of Marbles," the story of the Holocaust through the eyes of two young boys struggling to survive in Paris, will be shown on July 11 at the Monroe Senior Center, July 12 at the Forun Theater, and July 15 and 17 at Axelrod:
- "Shelter," about a Mossad agent sent to Germany to protect a Lebanese informant recovering from plastic surgery to assume her new identity, will be screened on July 15 at Axelrod.

Other upcoming events include a live concert performance by famed Israeli performer Dudu Fisher, Outet logoning ever include a met context percontained by named strately perconted bodd in state. best known for his Broadway performance as Jean Valance programs, on July 29 at Jackson Memorial High School; and Jacob Reuven and the Be'er Sheva Conservatory Four Mandolins Quartet will perform Israeli folk songs and Vivaldi on July 31 at the Monroe Senior Center.

Additionally, buses will be leaving from the East Brunswick Jewish Center, Temple Beth Ahm in Aberdeen and other locations for the Celebrate Israel Parade in New York City on June 3. Visit jewishheartnj.org/parade for more information.

n about the Bonen concert and film festival, visit axelrodartscenter.com or call the box office at 732-531-9106, ext. 14

For information about all Israel@70events, visit jewishheartnj.org/israel70.

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