



3801 East Mercer Way
Mercer Island, WA 98040
www.SJCC.org

NEWS RELEASE

November 18, 2014

The Strom JCC, Seattle Jewish Film Festival and Strom Center for Jewish Studies Present Ladino Music Legend Flory Jagoda

World Premiere of "Flory's Flame" and Live Concert from the Sephardic Songbird and Family

MERCER ISLAND, WA, November 18, 2014 – The Seattle Jewish Film Festival (SJFF) – a program of the Strom Jewish Community Center (SJCC) – and the Sephardic Studies Program of the Strom Center for Jewish Studies (SCJS) at the University of Washington, is thrilled to present the legendary musician Flory Jagoda on December 6, 2014, in her first Seattle appearance to date. As an extension of Seattle's 2nd annual [International Ladino Day](#), a film premiere and concert will take place at the SJCC's newly renovated state-of-the-art cinema and cultural arts center, which opened in February 2014 and hosts year-round film screenings, lectures, performing arts, concerts and more.

Born in Sarajevo, Bosnia, Flory's performances feature traditional Sephardic songs with her own Balkan compositions, all sung in the ancient Judeo-Spanish language of *Ladino*, which dates back to 15th century Spain. Growing up, Flory learned songs from her *nona* (grandmother) that have been passed down in her family over the generations. Although most of her relatives perished in the Holocaust, Flory and her parents were able to escape and find refuge in Italy, then the United States. Since then, she has made it her life's mission to keep Ladino tradition and culture alive, earning her the moniker, "Keeper of the Flame."

"We couldn't be happier to welcome such a prolific legend and artist of Sephardic heritage and culture to the SJCC's new Cultural Arts Center," says Pamela Lavitt, Director of Cultural Arts and the Seattle Jewish Film Festival at the SJCC. "As home to the third-largest and most vibrant Sephardic communities in the United States, Seattle offers an ideal environment in which to experience and preserve the legacy of the Sephardic Jewish experience, its heritage, language and culture, and this will certainly be a once-in-a-lifetime performance our community and world music lovers won't want to miss."

The program will kick off with the world premiere of the film "Flory's Flame," a new documentary that interweaves the life story of this 90-year old recipient of a Lifetime Honor by the National Heritage Fellowship and the National Endowment for the Arts, her roots in Bosnia, and culminates in September 2013 with a Celebration Concert at the U.S. Library of Congress. The film's director, Curt Fissel, and producer Ellen Friedland – whose film "Delicious Peace Grows in a Ugandan Coffee Bean" screened at SJFF in 2011 – will attend, and are proud and honored to have played a role in helping Flory preserve the musical traditions of Sephardic culture. For the musical performance, Flory will be joined by family members and students steeped in the rich sounds of Sephardic traditions.

“Flory has played such a vital role in preserving Sephardic/Ladino cultural heritage,” notes Lavitt. “She represents the caliber of marquee performers we want to bring to the J and our region so the greater Seattle community can come together to explore, enjoy and engage in art, and celebrate Jewish life and culture.”

The December 6th event starts at 6:30 p.m., with doors opening 30 minutes prior. Tickets are available for \$25-30 in advance; \$35 at the door and can be purchased through [the SJCC website](#).

About the Stroum Jewish Community Center

The Stroum Jewish Community Center inspires connections to build community and ensure Jewish continuity. Together we create outstanding programs, partnerships and spaces that welcome everyone to learn, grow and celebrate Jewish life and culture. Learn more at <http://www.SJCC.org>.

About the Seattle Jewish Film Festival

In its 20th year, the Seattle Jewish Film Festival is a multi-day event and year-round international cinematic exploration and celebration of Jewish and Israeli life, culture, and history. Founded in 1995 by AJC Seattle, SJFF is now a program of the Stroum Jewish Community Center and a vital part of its Cultural Arts programming. Central to the J’s community-building mission, SJFF brings people together to inspire learning and new perspectives by showcasing the virtuosity and diversity of Jewish cinema. Learn more at: www.seattlejewishfilmfestival.org.

About the Sephardic Studies Program of the Stroum Center for Jewish Studies

SJCS at the University of Washington aims to establish a world-renowned program for the study, teaching, and perpetuation of Sephardic culture and the Ladino language. International Ladino Day celebrations kickoff at UW on December 4th in Kane Hall. Learn more at: <http://jewishstudies.washington.edu/sephardic-studies/>.