SEATTLE, WA (October 8, 2019)—The Stroum Jewish Community Center is thrilled to announce its 2019/20 Arts + Ideas season lineup. Now in its fifth season, the Arts + Ideas stage at the J continues to bring world-class musicians, films, chefs, authors, live theater and podcast events, and two city-wide festivals to its home on Mercer Island and around the Puget Sound region.

The season kicked off in September with a successful SeaJAM Festival of Jewish Arts + Music, celebrating the SJCC’s 50th anniversary on Mercer Island and 70th in greater Seattle. The three-day festival featured a community challah baking contest judged by local chefs such as Robin Wehl of Hello Robin; an on-stage conversation with Will & Grace star Debra Messing at Benaroya Hall; a 50th anniversary brunch and banter with Sur La Table’s national chef Joel Gamoran; and a sold-out concert with a cappella stars, the Maccabeats.

From klezmer fusion to local stars, this season’s “Global Sound” international music series features a diverse array of musical genres. On October 29, Israel’s pop superstar Rami Kleinstein, often compared to Billy Joel, makes a rare appearance in the US. On December 8, two female recording artists join forces when Elana Jagoda and the local Chava Mirel Trio headline the J’s annual Hanukkah community celebration with a family-friendly concert. Toronto-based world-music band Beyond the Pale fuses contemporary klezmer, Balkan beats, bluegrass, and reggae on February 15. Israeli superstar Noa returns to our stage with longtime collaborator Gil Dor to perform songs from her new album, “Letters to Bach,” produced by Seattle’s own Quincy Jones on March 12.

This year’s “Shpiel” theater and live podcast series and “Jest Fest” comedy lineup spans the gamut from staged readings to full productions. Comedy renegade Sandra Bernhard performs “Quick Sand” on November 2, a thrilling mix of political satire, pop culture commentary, comedy, music, and cabaret with her Sandyland Squad Band. Book-It Repertory Theatre returns with a timely staged reading of Jennifer Maisel’s new play “Eight Nights,” which follows the lives of eight immigrant families living in the same apartment over a span of more than 60 years (December 10). Suzanne Bachner’s spellbinding solo show, “The Good Adoptee,” explores adoption (from the same secretive agency as the triplets in the film THREE IDENTICAL STRANGERS), secrecy, and finding one’s Jewish identity (February 9); while the Seattle Jewish Theater Company brings “Arrivals,” an original Romeo and Juliet immigrant love story, to the stage on April 19. The Israel Story Live Podcast, known as Israel’s “This American Life,” returns for another magical...
evening of live radio, music, and multimedia storytelling on April 30. Finally, Comedian Myq Kaplan, known for his Netflix comedy special "Small, Dork, and Handsome" does standup on June 6.

Several high-profile authors and chefs are also featured in this year’s “Words to the Wise” spoken word and “Fable to Table” cookbook talk series, including hot, new Israeli chef Adeena Sussman. The co-author of Chrissy Tiegen’s “Cravings” cookbooks, brings tales and tastes on November 21 from her first solo cookbook “Sababa”—named one of the “Best 13 Cookbooks of Fall 2019” by The New York Times. On May 3, Boris Fishman presents his colorful Russian immigrant cookbook memoir, “Savage Feast.” Author Taylor Lustig, a contributor to the book “Yes She Can,” shares stories about her time working with many other young, female staffers in the Obama White House on April 23. Founding member of Blood, Sweat & Tears, Steve Katz, shares his new rock ‘n’ roll memoir on May 13, followed by a performance; and Dr. Alan Morinis of the Mussar Institute and author of “Everyday Holiness” speaks about love during trying times through a Jewish lens on June 7.

The film lineup this year includes movies that hit upon topics within the current zeitgeist: SAFE SPACES, a #MeToo seriocomedy starring Justin Long, Fran Drescher, and Richard Schiff; THE UPSTANDERS, a film about the power of peers to end bullying; and ASK DR. RUTH, which explores how Holocaust survivor Ruth Westheimer, became America’s most famous sex therapist.

Finally, from March 21-April 5, we celebrate the “Silver Screen” 25th Anniversary of the Seattle Jewish Film Festival. One of the largest and longest-running of its kind in the country, SJFF featuring films from around the world that explore global Jewish and Israeli life, culture, identity, history, and diversity for people of all ages. We’ll celebrate this milestone “silver screen” anniversary in classic Hollywood style, with a full lineup of special events and extraordinary films, including a Special Edition of Silent Movie Mondays with STG at the Paramount Theater, featuring the 1923 silent film ANCIENT LAW and a live score and ensemble featuring Alicia Svigals, a founder of The Klezmatics. Tickets are on sale at STG.org. SJFF’s full lineup will be announced in February.

This is only a sample of the SJCC’s rich and robust 2019/20 Arts + Ideas season. All events are open to the public; everyone is welcome. See below for a full list of programs. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.sjcc.org/arts-ideas.

Interviews and images available upon request.

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2019/20 SJCC Arts + Ideas Season

OCTOBER

Sephardic Sukkot Cooking Class
Sun Oct 13 | 2 pm
Make pumpkin + potato borekas (filled pastries) with the Seattle Sephardic Network—enjoy a full meal in the J’s sukkah.
SAFE SPACES + Filmmaker Q&A (via Skype)
Thu Oct 17 | 7:30 pm
Seriocomedy starring Justin Long, Fran Drescher + Richard Schiff.

Rami Kleinstein and Piano: North American Tour
Tue Oct 29 | 7 pm happy hour | 8 pm show
TEEV + SJCC present a rare performance from one of Israel’s pop superstars, compared to Billy Joel and Elton John.

NOVEMBER
Sandra Bernhard: Quick Sand
Sat Nov 2 | 7 pm VIP | 8 pm show
A thrilling mix of political satire, pop culture commentary, comedy + cabaret with her Sandyland Squad Band.

Movie Madness Marathon: SJFF Encores
Sun Nov 17 | 1 pm, 3:15 pm, 5 pm
Three films, one day. Catch one, two, or three of the best from Seattle Jewish Film Festival 2019: “Heading Home: The Tale of Team Israel” (family-friendly baseball documentary), “The Tobacconist” (a narrative about Sigmund Freud in Vienna), and “Light of Hope” (sweeping story of WWII France maternity ward). “Heading Home” is in English; “The Tobacconist” and “Light of Hope” are subtitled.

Chef Adeena Sussman: “Sababa” Cookbook + Tasting
Thu Nov 21 | 7 pm
Israel’s hot new chef celebrates the region’s diverse flavors + variety. Kosher tasting thanks to Seattle Hadassah and Eastside Torah Center.

DECEMBER
Elana Jagoda + The Chava Mirel Trio Hanukkah Concert + Community Celebration
Sun Dec 8 | 11 am
Recording artists Elana Jagoda + The Chava Mirel Trio burn bright together. Games, latkes + activities for kids of all ages!

“Eight Nights” with Playwright Jennifer Maisel
Tue Dec 10 | 7 pm
The stories of eight immigrant families who inhabit the same apartment from 1949-2016; staged reading performed by Book-It Repertory Theatre + Q&A w/playwright.

Kung Pao Xmas Chinese Food + a Movie: ABE
Wed Dec 25 | 5 pm
Noah Schnapp (“Stranger Things”) cooks to unite his half-Israeli, half-Palestinian family—can food heal this family feud?
JANUARY

MAMBONIKS Movie + Dance Class
Sun Jan 26 | 6 pm class | 7:30 pm film
Celebrate the Jewish love affair with Latin music onscreen + on the dance floor.

THE UPSTANDERS: Film + Panel on Bullying
Wed Jan 29 | 7 pm
The power of peers to end bullying + the brain science behind it.

FEBRUARY

Unexpected “Kraut-Pleaser” Cooking Class
Sun Feb 2 | 2 pm
Firefly Kitchens teaches the art + science of probiotic vegetable fermenting.

ASK DR. RUTH
Thu Feb 6 | 7:30 pm
How did this Holocaust survivor become America’s most famous sex therapist?

“The Good Adoptee”: With Playwright Suzanne Bachner
Sun Feb 9 | 2 pm
Spellbinding solo show about adoption, secrecy, and Jewish identity; Q&A with playwright and adoption experts.

Beyond the Pale: Klezmer-Balkan Fusion
Sat Feb 15 | 7 pm happy hour | 7:30 pm show
Contemporary klezmer, Balkan beats, bluegrass + reggae.

MARCH

Heavenly Hamantashen Holiday Cooking Class
Sun March 1 | 2 pm
From raspberry to chocolate, add your favorite fillings to this three-cornered Purim treat.

Noa in Concert: “Letters to Bach”
Thu March 12 | 6:30 pm happy hour/VIP party | 7 pm show
The soaring vocal artistry of Israel’s leading international singer and longtime collaborator Gil Dor return with a new album produced by Quincy Jones. Sponsored by Paul and Yaffa Maritz.

25th Anniversary: Seattle Jewish Film Festival
March 21-29 | April 4-5 | AMC, SIFF Uptown, SJCC + Regal Issaquah
Celebrate SJFF’s silver screen anniversary Hollywood-style.

25th SJFF Centerpiece Silent Film + Live Score
Mon March 23 | 7 pm
Paramount Theatre STG + SJFF present “Silent Movie Mondays: Special Edition” with THE ANCIENT LAW + a live ensemble with Alicia Svígals (Klezmatic founder).
APRIL
“Simple Fruit” Cookbook + Desserts Class
Wed April 1 | 7 pm
Pastry chef Laurie Pfalzer’s new cookbook captures fruit at its peak season.

Seattle Jewish Theater Company: “Arrivals”
Sun April 19 | 2 pm
An original Romeo and Juliet immigrant love story set in 1900s Seattle.

“Yes She Can”: Author Taylor Lustig
Thu April 23 | 7:30 pm
Stories of hope + change from female staffers in the Obama White House

Mark Nizer 4D: A New Dimension of Family Entertainment
Sun April 26 | 3 pm
Outrageous all-ages comedy antics and expertly crafted juggling feats—the only live 3D show in the world!

Israel Story Live Multimedia Podcast: “B-Side”
Thu April 30 | 7 pm
Israel’s “This American Life” returns for another magical evening of live radio, music, and multimedia storytelling for Israel Week. Co-presented with Hillel UW and the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle.

MAY
Boris Fishman’s “Savage Feast” Cookbook Memoir
Sun May 3 | 4 pm
Recipe-filled memoir of food, family, and growing up Jewish in the Soviet Union.

Blood, Sweat & Tears: Steve Katz’s Rock ‘n’ Roll Years
Wed May 13 | 7 pm
Founding member’s memoir—a dizzying, delicious ‘60s tour in stories + song.

Shavuot Cheesecake-Making Class
Sun May 31 | 2 pm
Decadent + delicious classic and flavored cheesecakes for the holiday, taught by Rachel Almaleh.

JUNE
Comedian Myq Kaplan
Sat June 6 | 7 pm happy hour | 8 pm show
Smart, observational humor and wordplay from TV + Netflix special stand-up.

“All Love, No Lonely” Lecture: Dr. Alan Morinis
Sun, June 7 | 11 am
“Soul in Love,” a talk about love through a Jewish lens by Mussar Institute founder and author of “Everyday Holiness”
AUGUST

After Dark Outdoors: YOU DON’T MESS WITH THE ZOHAN
Sat Aug 8 | 8:30 pm
Summer cinema and beer garden in our Kesher Community Garden.

All programs subject to change and new programs may be added. Check website for details and pricing: SJCC.org/arts-ideas.

All programs take place at the Stroum Jewish Community Center (SJCC), 3801 E. Mercer Way, Mercer Island, WA 98040, unless otherwise specified.

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About 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. This year, SJCC celebrates our 50th anniversary on Mercer Island and 70th year serving Greater Seattle. Learn more at www.SJCC.org

About SJCC Arts + Ideas: The 2019/2020 SJCC Arts + Ideas season kicks off mid-September with the 2nd annual SeaJAM Festival (Seattle Jewish Arts + Music) and continues year-round with over 30 shows in five series: “Global Sound” international concerts; “Words to the Wise” talks; “Fable to Table” culinary programs and chef talks; “Jest Fest” comedians, “Shpiel” theater and live podcasts; and “On the Big Screen” film screening. Some of these events are featured on our “SJCC On Demand” streaming content page. In spring 2020, we present the 11-day, 25th annual Seattle Jewish Film Festival. Tickets and info: www.SJCC.org/arts-ideas