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**8th NY INTERNATIONAL SEPHARDIC FILM FESTIVAL  
AT THE CENTER FOR JEWISH HISTORY**

**DECEMBER 2-9, 2003**

**MEDIA PREVIEW:**

**November 18, 2003 at 11 AM**

Screenings of *Mother V*,

*The Bicycle* and *Outcry*

New York, NY – **The 8<sup>th</sup> NY International Sephardic Film Festival, *Sephardic Crossings***, will take place at New York's **Center for Jewish History from December 2 – 9, 2003**.

*Sephardic Crossings* will feature seventeen films ranging from fiction and short films to documentaries and semi-autobiographical narratives. Included will be four U.S. and six N.Y. premieres. (See attached for a complete film festival schedule and descriptions.) The Sephardic Film Festival is presented by Sephardic House under the auspices of the American Sephardi Federation in cooperation with Yeshiva University Museum.

This year's festival was curated by Alla Verlotsky, President of Seagull Films in collaboration with Esme Berg, Director of Sephardic House, and Mary Kiplock, Assistant to the Director of Yeshiva University Museum. Ms. Verlotsky has an ongoing collaboration with the Film Society of Lincoln Center and she has been co-curator of the New York Jewish Film Festival.

The story of the Sephardic Jews is unique and has been shaped by the history of many generations in many countries throughout the world. "Focusing on the present and looking towards the future, this year's film selections while depicting the diversity of Sephardic life around the world, deal with many of the world's contemporary political and social concerns," says Ms. Verlotsky. "The Sephardic Film Festival will showcase films about the Jews from Tunisia, Morocco, Iraq, Turkey, Israel and Greece, and rarely seen films about the Jews from Ethiopia by young Ethiopian filmmakers."

Ella Shohat (Professor of Art & Public Policy and Middle Eastern Studies at New York University) writes in the film festival brochure: “Taking an open approach to the word “Sephardic,” the film festival is not limited, however, to the conventional meaning of the word, i.e. the Jews of Spain. Already in Israel, the word “Sephardim” has been used to refer to Jews from across the Arab and Muslim world, and more broadly to the Jews of Asia and Africa. Rather than one kind of Sephardic identity, the festival presents films from a number of countries, focusing on a diverse range of languages and communities.

Highlights of this year’s Sephardic Film Festival are:

- Centerpiece ***Kaddim Wind: Moroccan Chronicle*** (David Bencheitrit / Israel, 2002), a highly controversial political drama that tells the history of Moroccan Jewry in Israel through the memories of six second generation immigrants to Israel.
- ***Forget Baghdad*** (Samir / Germany/Switzerland, 2002), which premieres at the Sephardic Film Festival and will open the following night at the Quad Cinema in NYC.
- A special presentation examining the history of Beta Israel includes ***Operation Solomon***, ***Menelik***, and ***Outcry***. All together these films form an interesting cinematic survey of Ethiopian Jewry, a study which has not been previously undertaken by any Jewish Film Festival.
- The Sephardic Film Festival is very proud to present the U.S premiere of ***La Verité Si Je Mens / Would I Lie to You*** (Thomas Gilou / 1997), one of the biggest hits of recent French cinema.
- With the closing night film, ***Mother V*** (Shahar Rozen / Israel, 2001) the festival celebrates a prominent film and theater actress from Israel, Levana Finkelstein.
- The Sephardic Film Festival is honored to have Arab director Ferid Boughedir here to introduce his film, ***Un Ete A La Goulette / Summer in La Goulette*** (Ferid Boughedir / France, 1997).

For the first time in the history of the NY International Sephardic Film Festival, several of the films will travel around the United States in 2004.

Special thanks are due to Ravit Turjeman, Consulate General of Israel in New York, Silvio Buchris, Aviva Weintraub, Professor Ephraim Isaac, Ella Shohat, Richard Pena, Ambassador Asher Naim, Wesley Hottot, Catherine Dessagnes, The Cultural Services of the French Embassy

in N.Y., and the Israel Multicultural Fund. The Festival is made possible in part with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency, the Consulate General of Turkey in New York, the Assael Foundation, Moroccan International Airlines and other private donors.

### **Ticket Information**

\$9.00 General Public; \$7.00 Sephardic House, American Sephardi Federation and Yeshiva University Museum members, seniors and students; \$30 Festival Subscription good for five films not including Opening Night. Reservations for specific screenings must be made at time of purchase; \$250 Opening Night Gala includes a screening of *Searching for Baghdad* and dinner accompanied by live Iraqi music. Reservations may be made through the American Sephardi Federation. Proceeds will be used to support the Sephardic Film Festival.

Tickets can be purchased in advance through the Center for Jewish History Box Office, 15 West 16<sup>th</sup> Street. Mon-Thur. 12-5pm; Fri. and Sun. 12-3pm; and two hours prior to screenings or by calling 917-606-8200.

### **General Information**

The Center for Jewish History is located at 15 West 16<sup>th</sup> Street (between Fifth and Sixth Avenues), New York City. Gallery exhibition hours are: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Admission for the American Sephardi Federation galleries is free. Admission for Yeshiva University Museum galleries is \$6.00 for adults; \$4.00 for seniors and students. Museum members and children 5 and under are admitted free.

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