



**THE FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER  
AND THE JEWISH MUSEUM ANNOUNCE  
SPECIAL EVENTS AT THE 26TH ANNUAL  
NEW YORK JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL,  
JANUARY 11-24, 2017**

**Highlights include tributes to Valeska Gert and Zero Mostel & Gene Wilder, free talks, and more**

**NEW YORK, NY (December 14, 2016)** – The Jewish Museum and the Film Society of Lincoln Center announce the special events lineup for the 26th annual New York Jewish Film Festival (NYJFF), January 11-24, 2017. Among the oldest and most influential Jewish film festivals worldwide, unique in New York City, and one of the longest running partnerships of two major New York cultural institutions, the NYJFF each year presents the finest narrative and documentary films from around the world that explore the diverse Jewish experience.

The 2017 festival features a tribute to comedy legends Zero Mostel and Gene Wilder with a 50th anniversary screening of Mel Brooks's *The Producers*, alongside a poster exhibition honoring their lives and work. The exhibition will be on view in the Furman Gallery of the Walter Reade Theater for the duration of the festival, and there will be a video tribute running continuously in the Elinor Bunin Munroe Film Center Amphitheater showing a compilation of film and television clips from some of Mostel and Wilder's best moments on camera.

NYJFF's special events lineup will also honor forgotten star Valeska Gert, the Weimar-era German-Jewish cabaret dancer and pioneering performance artist. Three works starring Gert—by G. W. Pabst, Carl Junghans, and Alberto Cavalcanti—will be presented, as well as Volker Schlöndorff's intimate documentary portrait of the artist later in life. To accompany the films, Mel Gordon, professor emeritus of theater arts at University of California, will give an illustrated lecture about Gert's fascinating life, including rare clips of her “grotesque” dances.

Two unique free talks complete the roster of special events: a master class on documentary filmmaking by returning NYJFF filmmaker Tomer Heymann (*The Queen Has No Crown*, 2011), who has two films in this year's main slate, *Mr. Gaga* and *Who's Gonna Love Me Now?* (the latter co-directed with his brother, Barak); and a panel about film biopics, featuring filmmakers from this year's festival and moderated by the Jewish Museum's Director of Special Exhibitions and Public Programs, Jens Hoffmann.

See below for the full special events lineup and complete festival schedule. The main slate was announced earlier this week and can be found [here](#).

*This year's New York Jewish Film Festival was selected by Rachel Chanoff, Director, THE OFFICE performing arts + film; Jaron Gandelman, Curatorial Assistant for Media, Jewish Museum and Coordinator, New York Jewish Film Festival; Jens Hoffmann, Director of Special Exhibitions and Public Programs, Jewish Museum and Curator for Special Programs, New York Jewish Film Festival; Dennis Lim, Director of Programming, Film Society of Lincoln Center; Aviva Weintraub, Associate Curator, Jewish Museum and Director, New York Jewish Film Festival; and Tyler Wilson, Programming Coordinator, Film Society of Lincoln Center.*

NYJFF tickets will go on sale to FSLC and Jewish Museum members on Thursday, December 15, and to the public on Thursday, December 22. Tickets may be purchased online or in person at the Film Society's Elinor Bunin Munroe Film Center and Walter Reade Theater box offices, 144 & 165 West 65th Street. For our free event ticket policy and complete festival information, visit [www.NYJFF.org](http://www.NYJFF.org).

**The New York Jewish Film Festival is made possible by the Martin and Doris Payson Fund for Film and Media. Generous support is also provided by Mimi and Barry Alperin, Wendy Fisher and Dennis Goodman, The Liman Foundation, The Jack and Pearl Resnick Foundation, Sara and Axel Schupf, an anonymous gift, and through public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with City Council. Additional support is provided by Israel's Office of Cultural Affairs, the Polish Cultural Institute New York, and the German Consulate General New York.**

## **FILM DESCRIPTIONS & SCHEDULE**

*All films screen digitally at the Walter Reade Theater (165 West 65th St.) unless otherwise noted*

### **Tribute to Zero Mostel and Gene Wilder**

#### **50th Anniversary Screening**

#### **The Producers**

**Mel Brooks, U.S., 1968, 35mm, 90m**

Mel Brooks's directorial debut stars Zero Mostel as down-on-his-luck theatrical producer Max Bialystock, who is forced to romance rich old ladies to finance his efforts, and Gene Wilder as his timid accountant, Leo Bloom. Together, they hit upon a way to make a fortune by producing a sure-fire flop, "Springtime for Hitler." *The Producers* won the 1968

Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay and launched Brooks into a long-standing career as one of America's greatest entertainers.

**Thursday, January 19, 6:15pm**

### **Related Exhibition**

#### ***The Producers and Beyond***

The late, great Zero Mostel and Gene Wilder—who both started their careers on Broadway and first came together for Mel Brooks's 1968 film *The Producers*—are two of comedy's most enduring legends. Born to Jewish immigrant parents (Mostel to an orthodox family in New York's Lower East Side, and Wilder to Russian immigrants in Milwaukee, Wisconsin), they would go on to star in some of Hollywood's funniest films. In addition to *The Producers*, Mostel achieved acclaim for his role alongside Woody Allen in Martin Ritt's *The Front*, written by Walter Bernstein; and Wilder for his roles in Brooks's *Blazing Saddles* and *Young Frankenstein*, among other collaborations with the director.

#### *Poster Exhibition*

A poster exhibition in the Frieda and Roy Furman Gallery at the Walter Reade Theater pays tribute to the lives and work of these extraordinary artists of stage and screen. Features posters from *The Producers*, *Blazing Saddles* and other favorites.

#### *Clip Reel*

A compilation of film and television clips from some of Mostel and Wilder's best moments on camera. Visit NYJFF.org for details. Running on loop from noon to 9pm daily, except during other programming. Elinor Bunin Munroe Film Center Amphitheater Free and Open to the Public

### **Honoring Valeska Gert**

Born to a German Jewish family, Valeska Gert (1892-1978) was an eccentric dancer, a star of Weimar cabaret, and one of the forgotten pioneers of performance art. Gert appeared in three movies for director G. W. Pabst, including *The Threepenny Opera*, and made others with the experimental filmmakers Carl Junghans and Alberto Cavalcanti. Fleeing Europe but too radical for Hollywood, Gert opened cabarets in New York and Provincetown. Late in life, she was discovered by young German filmmakers Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Volker Schlöndorff—who shortly before her death made the irrepressible octogenarian the subject of an hour-long documentary.

—J. Hoberman, film critic and author

### **Such Is Life (Takový je život)**

**Carl Junghans, Czechoslovakia, 1929, 63m**

#### **Silent with English intertitles**

Carl Junghans's naturalistic portrait of working-class Prague was among the strongest Czech films of the 1920s. The film captures the tragic story of an aging laundress whose drudgery and toil support a licentious and abusive alcoholic husband. A psychological drama with social themes, it draws from Émile Zola's novel *The Kill*, and took a progressive approach to montage, with emphasis on the symbolic power of close-ups. The international cast includes Valeska Gert, typically uninhibited in a featured role as the provocative waitress who takes up with the movie's loutish protagonist. This new digital restoration features an electronic musical score by Czech musician Jan Burian.

**Monday, January 16, 1:30pm**

### **The Threepenny Opera**

**Georg Wilhelm Pabst, Germany, 1931, 35mm, 112m**

**German with English subtitles**

Loosely based on the 1928 Brecht-Weill musical, itself adapted from John Gay's 18th-century *The Beggar's Opera*, G. W. Pabst's version of *The Threepenny Opera* features several members of the original Berlin cast—including Lotte Lenya as Pirate Jenny and Ernst Busch as the Street Singer—as well as Valeska Gert in the role of heroine Polly Peachum's mother. Set in a shadowy, stylized, and dreamlike Victorian London, the story of antihero Mackie "The Knife" Messer and his attempt to woo Polly Peachum as he eludes the authorities is timeless, and the film remains a benchmark of early sound cinema.

**Sunday, January 15, 1:00pm**

### **Nur zum Spass, nur zum Spiel—Kaleidoskop Valeska Gert**

**Volker Schlöndorff, Germany, 1977, 60m**

**German with English subtitles**

In German filmmaker Volker Schlöndorff's interview with Valeska Gert in her home in Kampen on Sylt the year before she died in 1977, she recounts her eventful life, from her performances as the self-described "Grotesque Dancer" in 1920s Berlin, Moscow, and Paris, to her later years. The documentary features incredible, rare footage from her performances in theater and film, which she came to embrace, incorporating time-lapse and slow-motion into her dance techniques. In 1933, Gert was defamed by the Nazis as "degenerate," forcing her to leave Germany until 1947. She was not rediscovered until the 1960s, by filmmaker Federico Fellini, who gave her a role in *Juliet of the Spirits*.

*Screening with:*

### **Pett and Pott: A Fairy Story of the Suburbs**

**Alberto Cavalcanti, UK, 1934, 35mm, 32m**

The Brazilian-born experimental filmmaker Alberto Cavalcanti cast fellow émigré Valeska Gert as a wildly impertinent house servant in this plug for telephones, the first movie he made for British documentarian John Grierson's General Post Office unit.

**Sunday, January 15, 3:30pm**

### **Related Program**

#### **Valeska Gert: An Illustrated Lecture**

Mel Gordon, professor emeritus of theater arts at the University of California, Berkeley, speaks about self-described "Grotesque Dancer" Valeska Gert, who defied all contemporary classification and was considered one of the most inventive and original entertainers of the Weimar Era. The lecture includes rare illustrations and film clips of her dances as well as scenes from Gert's appearances in German and British cinema. Gordon is the author of sixteen books, including *Voluptuous Panic: The Erotic World of Weimar Berlin* (Townsend, WA: Feral House, 2006).

**Monday, January 16, 4:00pm**

\*Elinor Bunin Munroe Film Center Amphitheater

Free and Open to the Public

### **Master Class with Tomer Heymann**

Tomer Heymann leads a behind-the-scenes master class on documentary filmmaking. Together with his brother, Barak, he has directed a number of films including past NYJFF favorites like *The Queen Has No Crown* (2011). The brothers' current films, *Mr.*

*Gaga* and *Who's Gonna Love Me Now?*, are screening in this festival. See schedule for details.

**Tuesday, January 17, 6:30pm**

\*Elinor Bunin Munroe Film Center Amphitheater

Free and Open to the Public

**Panel: Film Portraits**

This panel discussion examines the role and format of biopics and filmic portraits and the expanded understanding of this genre in today's filmmaking. Panelists include filmmakers from this year's festival lineup and other guests, moderated by Jens Hoffmann, Director of Special Exhibitions and Public Programs at the Jewish Museum. Visit NYJFF.org for details.

**Sunday, January 22, 4:00pm**

\*Elinor Bunin Munroe Film Center Amphitheater

Free and Open to the Public

**Coming in April:**

**Artist Focus: Jennifer West**

As part of NYJFF's off-season "Artist Focus" series, spotlighting artists whose work transcends the domains of visual arts and cinema, the Los Angeles-based artist Jennifer West will present a selection of new films considering the idea of the "remembered" film, including her new feature, *Film Title Poem*, with Jens Hoffmann, Director of Special Exhibitions and Public Programs, the Jewish Museum, and Curator for Special Programs, NYJFF. Past artists in the series have included Mary Reid Kelley, Omer Fast, Keren Cyttar, and Yael Bartana. Visit jewishmuseum.org for details.

**Thursday, April 20, 6:30 pm at the Jewish Museum, 1109 5th Avenue at 92nd Street**

Free with RSVP

**Complete Schedule**

**Wednesday, January 11**

1:00pm Kol Nidre #3 *followed by* Doing Jewish: A Story from Ghana

3:30pm Moon in the 12<sup>th</sup> House

6:30pm Kol Nidre #3 *followed by* Doing Jewish: A Story from Ghana

9:00pm Moon in the 12<sup>th</sup> House Opening Night

**Thursday, January 12**

1:00pm Stars

3:30pm Aida's Secrets

6:00pm Mr. Gaga

8:45pm Aida's Secrets

**Saturday, January 14**

7:00pm The Women's Balcony

9:30pm Who's Gonna Love Me Now?

Sunday, January 15

1:00pm The Threepenny Opera

3:30pm Nur zum Spass, nur zum Spiel – Kaleidoskop Valeska Gert *followed by* Pett and Pott

6:00pm Past Life

8:45pm The Patriarch's Room

Monday, January 16

1:30pm Such Is Life

3:15pm Past Life

4:00pm Valeska Gert Lecture (in Elinor Bunin Munroe Film Center Amphitheater)

6:00pm Shorts Program

9:00pm Bette Midler: The Divine Miss M

Tuesday, January 17

1:00pm The Patriarch's Room

3:30pm The Women's Balcony

6:00pm William Kentridge: Triumphs and Laments

6:30pm Master Class with Tomer Heymann (in Elinor Bunin Munroe Film Center Amphitheater)

8:45pm Numbers Guy *followed by* Hummus! The Movie

Wednesday, January 18

1:00pm Peshmerga

3:30pm Numbers Guy *followed by* Hummus! The Movie

6:00pm Peshmerga Centerpiece

8:30pm Scarred Hearts

Thursday, January 19

1:00pm Scarred Hearts

4:15pm William Kentridge: Triumphs and Laments

6:15pm The Producers

Saturday, January 21

7:00pm Shalom Rabin

9:30pm Louis-Ferdinand Céline

Sunday, January 22

1:00pm Louis-Ferdinand Céline

3:30pm Shalom Rabin

4:00pm Panel: Film Portraits (in Elinor Bunin Munroe Film Center Amphitheater)

6:00pm Who's Gonna Love Me Now?

8:30pm Angel Wagenstein: Art Is a Weapon *followed by* Stars

Monday, January 23

1:30pm My Travels with Oliver *followed by* Saving Nur

4:00pm Dimona Twist

6:15pm My Travels with Oliver *followed by* Saving Nur

8:30pm Dimona Twist

Tuesday, January 24

1:00pm Marie Curie, The Courage of Knowledge

3:30pm Stefan Zweig, Farewell to Europe

6:30pm Marie Curie, The Courage of Knowledge

9:00pm Stefan Zweig, Farewell to Europe Closing Night

### **THE JEWISH MUSEUM**

Led by Claudia Gould, Helen Goldsmith Menschel Director, and located on Museum Mile at Fifth Avenue and 92nd Street, the Jewish Museum is one of the world's preeminent institutions devoted to exploring art and Jewish culture from ancient to contemporary, offering intellectually engaging and educational exhibitions and programs for people of all ages and backgrounds. The Museum was established in 1904, when Judge Mayer Sulzberger donated 26 ceremonial objects to The Jewish Theological Seminary as the core of a museum collection. Today, the Museum maintains a collection of over 30,000 works of art, artifacts, and broadcast media reflecting global Jewish identity, and presents a diverse schedule of internationally acclaimed temporary exhibitions. For more information, visit [TheJewishMuseum.org](http://TheJewishMuseum.org).

### **FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER**

The Film Society of Lincoln Center is devoted to supporting the art and elevating the craft of cinema. The only branch of the world-renowned arts complex Lincoln Center to shine a light on the everlasting yet evolving importance of the moving image, this nonprofit organization was founded in 1969 to celebrate American and international film. Via year-round programming and discussions; its annual New York Film Festival; and its publications, including *Film Comment*, the U.S.'s premier magazine about films and film culture, the Film Society endeavors to make the discussion and appreciation of cinema accessible to a broader audience, as well as to ensure that it will remain an essential art form for years to come.

**The Film Society receives generous, year-round support from *The New York Times*, *Variety*, Row NYC Hotel, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature. American Airlines is the Official Airline of the Film Society of Lincoln Center. For more information, visit [filmlinc.org](http://filmlinc.org) and follow @filmlinc on Twitter.**

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