

CENTER FOR JEWISH HISTORY

CJH NEWS

No. 5
Fall/Winter 2000-2001

A New Chapter in Jewish History Begins... *Center Opens to the Public*

Proclaiming, "We have built a home," Bruce Slovin, chair of the Board of Directors, welcomed hundreds of guests to the formal opening of the Center for Jewish History on October 26, 2000. The Opening Gala ushered in an entire year of celebratory events including a reception for all members of the five partner organizations, an Open House for members of the Center's neighboring community, and a reception for New York City's cultural, educational and religious leaders.

"This is another length in our glorious chain," Mr. Slovin continued in his remarks. "We have come together to form a brilliant collage of our ancestors' history as reflected in the Center's extraordinary collection of 100 million documents. And, not only will we preserve this collection, but it will be available to students and scholars from throughout the world."

The many distinguished guests attending the Gala Opening included Commissioner of Cultural Affairs for the City of New York Schuyler G. Chapin, who read a congratulatory message from Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani; New York State Senators Roy M. Goodman and Seymour P. Lachman; Public Advocate Mark Green; and Bradford J. Race, Jr., secretary and chief of staff to Governor George E. Pataki.



Hundreds of members of the Center's five partner organizations enjoyed brunch and, for many, their first look at the Center's new facilities at a special reception, October 29.

Dr. Leon Botstein, president of Bard College, was the keynote speaker at the Opening Gala. Dr. Botstein paid tribute to the vision and tenacity that spearheaded the creation of the Center for Jewish History, and then spoke about the Center's importance to the Jewish—and wider—world.

New Gifts Advance Center Campaign

At the Gala Opening of the Center on October 26, Bruce Slovin, chair of the Board of Directors, announced a \$3 million pledge from Dr. Samuel P. Waksal. Dr. Waksal has made this gift in honor of his parents, Jack and Sabina Waksal.

Dr. Waksal's parents are both survivors of the Holocaust. Jack Waksal fought in the Polish underground; Sabina Waksal was interned in Auschwitz. The Center's 17th Street building has been named the Jack and Sabina Waksal Building in their honor.

In other development news, the Center for Jewish History has received \$1 million from the Kresge Foundation, one of the country's most prestigious independent, private foundations. The Center was awarded a \$1 million challenge grant in September 1999 with the stipulation that the funds would be released upon the successful completion of the Center's capital campaign in December 2000.

The Center was able to complete this fund raising goal in November 2000, shortly after its formal opening to the public.

Exhibitions Place Archival Riches On View

Awalk through the Center for Jewish History now presents a cornucopia of exhibitions, allowing the public to view a remarkable sample of the vast holdings of its partner institutions. In addition to the Yeshiva University Museum, exhibits created by the American Jewish Historical Society, Leo Baeck Institute, American Sephardi Federation and YIVO Institute for Jewish Research can be found throughout the Center.

On the sixth floor, which houses the American Sephardi Federation offices, the Federation is exhibiting *Oracle Women* by Stella Cohen. Her striking portraits of women on display have been inspired by her visits to such communities as Bombay, Istanbul, Marrakech and Safed.

Seeing Ourselves, the inaugural exhibition of the American Jewish Historical Society, draws widely on the Society's holdings of photographs and portraits, documents and artifacts to showcase the American Jewish experience. The faces of famous, near famous and not-so-famous American Jews take center stage, each bearing a story. Some tell of growing up on a farm; others of living in crowded, gray tenements; and still others of coming-of-age in suburbia. *Seeing Ourselves* may be found in the American Jewish Historical Society's exhibition gallery, on the Center's main floor.



Andrew French

Actor Michael Douglas (left) visits the inaugural exhibition of the American Jewish Historical Society with George Blumenthal, a member of the Center's Board of Directors.

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"The grant was a critically important factor in our successful fundraising," noted Dr. Lois S. Cronholm, vice president of the Center, **"and we are extremely gratified that we were able to respond fully to the confidence placed in us with this award."**

"This is a wonderful show of support for the Center and its mission," added Mr. Slovin. **"The Kresge Foundation is highly regarded nation-**

wide for its work with leading institutions that contribute significantly to the fabric of American life, and we are honored to be included in this company."

Many opportunities remain for general and specific giving through participation in the Center's Building and Endowment Funds. Various programs at the Center also are available for sponsorship. All gifts are tax deductible to the

extent permitted by law, and are welcome in cash, securities or property.

The Center also welcomes participation in its Planned Giving Program. You may wish to designate the Center as a beneficiary in your will. Or, you may choose from a variety of naming opportunities, endowment funds and planned giving opportunities—including charitable remainder trusts, charitable gift annuities or charitable lead trusts.

You also may name the Center as a beneficiary of a retirement account or a life insurance policy.

And, finally, please remember that if your employer has a matching gift program, you can double, or even triple, your commitment to the Center.

Please contact the Development Office at 212-294-8310 for further information. ■



Andrew French

The Leo Baeck Institute exhibit highlights German-Jewish winners of the Nobel Prize.

From Moses Mendelssohn to Sigmund Freud and Albert Einstein, Franz Kafka and Hannah Arendt, just to name a few, German-speaking Jews were a definitive influence on the shaping of modernity in the 20th century. The inaugural Leo Baeck Institute exhibit, *German Jewish History in Modern Times: 1600-1945*, illuminates various aspects of German-Jewish culture from the 17th to the 20th centuries. This historical journey highlights the Institute's rich holdings of documents, books and artwork. The focus is on the mainstays of Jewish life: the family, the community, arts and letters, religious life and the contributions individual Jews made that defined the modern age. The Leo Baeck Institute gallery is on the Center's mezzanine level.

YIVO at 75: Milestones and Treasures celebrates two events: the 75th anniversary of the founding of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in Vilna and the opening of the Center for Jewish History as its new home. The exhibition chronicles the role that YIVO has played in Jewish scholarship and communal life with material drawn from the holdings of its Archives and Library. Some items were part of YIVO's original Vilna collections; others were obtained after its relocation to New York. *YIVO at 75* can be viewed in the Center's third floor exhibition galleries.

Yeshiva University Museum began the new year on January 31 with a major exhibition of the paintings of Moritz Daniel Oppenheim, a 19th century German painter known as the "Painter of the Rothschilds and the Rothschild of Painters." This exhibition has been organized by the Jüdisches Museum in Frankfurt, Germany.

Drawn from private and public collections in Germany, Switzerland, Israel, France, England, and the United States, the exhibition presents over 90 paintings, 14 works on paper, and a silver and bronze presentation cup designed by Oppenheim. Many of the paintings and drawings were lost during World War II; in 1941, the Nazis confiscated all of the works from Oppenheim's estate. Today they are scattered in collections and museums the world over. Many works in this exhibition have never been shown in the United States. Some have only recently been discovered and will be exhibited at the Yeshiva University Museum for the first time anywhere.

Continuing at the Museum through March, 2001, *Major*

Intersections features treasures from the resources of the five partner institutions at the Center for Jewish History, including manuscripts, documents, historical objects and works of art, many of which have not been displayed previously.

The mezzanine exhibition gallery, a metaphor for the mission of the Center, is devoted to joint exhibitions by the partners, featuring both the commonality and the diversity of the Jewish experience. *The Jewish House of Learning*, the inaugural joint exhibition planned by the partners' curatorial staffs, examines from five perspectives the central importance of education in Jewish life. Another exceptional exhibition, following the staircase to the Center's lower level, is *The Jewish Writer*, a collection of black and white photographs by Jill Kremenz. ■



Andrew French

The Jewish Writer and its creator, photographer Jill Kremenz

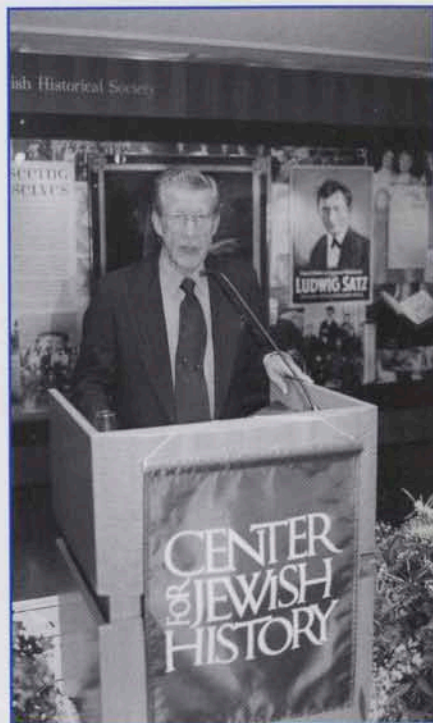
“There is no better time,” Dr. Botstein pointed out, “to create an institution that reminds us we are one people with many different histories. The Center is more than a library, more than a repository; it is a living Center and not a place for nostalgic memories.

“And the most important thing this Center represents,” Dr. Botstein continued, “is a window to the non-Jewish community as to what we are all about. This Center can help create a new future for America’s Jews.”

On Sunday, October 29, hundreds of members of the Center’s five partner organizations were treated to a festive brunch and tour of the Center. The executive directors of the five partners addressed the gathering, followed by a panel discussion by members of the Center Academic Council. Led by Professor Lawrence Schiffman, chair of the Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University, panelists included Professor Elisheva Carlebach, Queens College, Professor Henry Feingold of Baruch College, and Professor Pamela Nadell of American University in Washington, DC.

During the course of these presentations, Professor Nadell predicted that the late 20th /early 21st century would come to be known as the Renaissance in Jewish studies and that the Center for Jewish History would be regarded as central to this effort.

Festivities continued on November 1 with an Open House for the Center’s community of Greenwich Village/Chelsea/Flatiron District. Greetings were delivered by Jane Crotty, director of Community Relations and Economic Development at Baruch College and a member of the Board of the 23rd



Continued on next page



ABOVE: Bruce Slovin (left), chair of the Board of Directors of the Center for Jewish History and of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, and Dr. Leon Botstein, president of Bard College. Dr. Botstein delivered the keynote address on October 26.

RIGHT: Erica Jesselson (right), chair of the Yeshiva University Museum and a vice chair of the Board of Directors of the Center for Jewish History, with Marlene Brill (left), a member of the Center’s Board of Directors and of the Executive Committee of the American Sephardi Federation.



ABOVE: Schuyler G. Chapin, commissioner of the Department of Cultural Affairs for the City of New York, brought greetings from the Mayor at the Center’s Gala Opening.

NEAR LEFT: After Bruce Slovin, chair of the Board of Directors of the Center for Jewish History, cut the ribbon formally opening the Center to the public, he was applauded by (standing next to Mr. Slovin) Dr. Michael Feldberg, executive director of the American Jewish Historical Society, and (front, right) Sylvia Herskowitz, director of the Yeshiva University Museum.



Street Association; David Gmach, director of the 14th Street Union Square Local Development Corporation and Business Improvement District; Aldon James, president of the National Arts Club; and Kyle Merker, chair of Community Board 5.

Members of the city's cultural, educational and religious leadership were introduced to the Center at a special reception on November 6. A distinguished panel of communal leaders was assembled for this event and included Dr. David Altshuler, president of The Trust for Jewish Philanthropy; Professor Robert Chazan, S. H. and Helen R. Scheuer Professor of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at the Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University and chair of the Center's Academic Council; Father Ned Coughlin, pastor of St. Francis Xavier Parish; Father Daniel J. Gatti, president of Xavier High School, which is located across the street from the Center; Ruth Messinger, president of American Jewish World Service; and Rabbi Marc Schneier, president of the North American Board of Rabbis. ■



RIGHT AND ABOVE: David Gmach, director of the 14th Street Union Square Local Development Corporation and Business Improvement District, welcomed the Center to the neighborhood at the Open House for the Community, November 1, while Dr. Lois S. Cronholm, vice president of the Center, greeted the guests at the members reception.

LEFT: Professor Lawrence Schiffman, chair of the Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University, chaired the panel discussion at the special members reception. Panelists included Professor Elisheva Carlebach of Queens College, Professor Henry Feingold of Baruch College, and Professor Pamela Nadell of American University in Washington, DC.

all photos in this feature by Andrew French

Café and Center Shop Open for Business

Visitors to the Center for Jewish History now can satisfy more than their thirst for knowledge—with stops at the Center Shop and the Date Palm Café. Both facilities, newly opened to the public, have attracted a loyal following in the neighborhood and are proving popular with visiting tour groups, school groups and just about anyone spending time at the Center.

The Date Palm Café, which is oper-

ated by Simply Divine, is open for brunch, lunch and snacks. The kosher menu includes a range of vegetarian and dairy sandwiches, wraps, salads, soups, pasta dishes and baked goods. All food is freshly prepared in Simply Divine's kitchens using seasonal herbs and recipes.

The 38-seat Date Palm Café is decorated with artwork by renowned artist Michele Oko Doner. It is located on the Center's main floor.

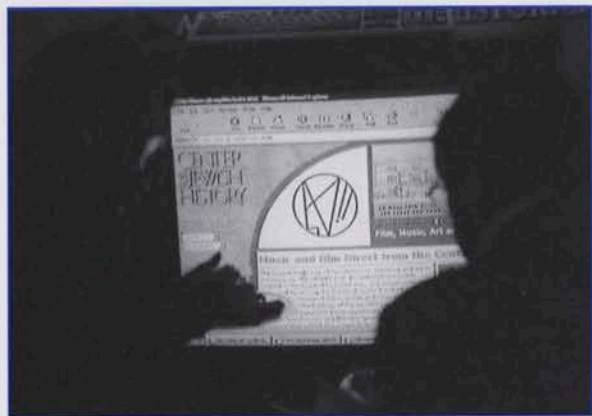
The Center Shop reflects the cultural and educational mission of

the Center for Jewish History with a rich collection of scholarly and popular works on Jewish history, culture and language. The Shop includes a select collection of books, unique historical posters, CD's, jewelry, cards, stationery and an exceptional selection of Judaica.

Many items are sold exclusively in New York City at the Center Shop. The Shop may be entered directly from the Center's 16th Street entrance and from the building lobby. ■

At the Center...

The Center for Jewish History website is up and running, complete with calendar listings, information on current exhibitions, a guide to the Center's facilities and a "virtual tour" in 3-D of the Center's Reading Room. The Center's website can be accessed at kiosks in the Great Hall and is located at www.cjh.org.



Guests at a recent event "log on" to the Center's colorful website. (photo, Andrew French)

The Association of Jewish Librarians/NY Metropolitan Area Chapter convened its fall conference at the Center for Jewish History on November 15. The program included a formal presentation by the Center's librarians, archivists and curators, a tour of galleries and exhibits, and visits to the conservation/preservation lab and other Center facilities.

The inaugural year of music and film at the Center is presenting a variety of Jewish musical expression coupled with a range of films including vintage Hollywood movies, documentaries, experimental films, Yiddish films and Israeli films—a panorama of the Jewish experience. The fall season presented sold-out concerts by the Andy Statman Quartet, John Zorn and Masada, and Zalmen Mlotek and Eleanor Reissa of the Folksbiene Yiddish Theatre. Film at the Center was highlighted by the 5th International Sephardic Film Festival which attracted hundreds of movie buffs to more than a dozen films, as well as the popular "Monday Night Film Series" which featured the silent feature, *Hungry Hearts*, *The Assistant*, based on the novel by Bernard Malamud, *God, Man and Devil*, the last Yiddish language film produced in North America, *The New Klezmerim*, a behind the scenes look at the klezmer revival, and others.

An equally rich series of concerts and films has been scheduled for the spring. "Zmiros: Shabbos Table Songs" will be presented by Lorin Sklamberg, Frank London and Rob Schwimmer, while Flory Jagoda and Tim Sparks will headline "Two Guitars at a Balkan Banquet." Hudson Shad will recreate the pre-World War II sound of the "Comedian Harmonists" and Márta Sebestyén and Muzsikás will bring to life the lost Jewish music of Transylvania. Other concerts



A scene from *Hungry Hearts* (1922), one of the first Hollywood films to portray the Eastern European Jewish immigrant experience. Courtesy of Samuel Goldwyn Pictures. Film preserved and restored by The National Center for Jewish Film.

scheduled will present Sephardic music, contemporary Jewish composers, and the works of Jewish artists who were forced to flee the Nazis and found new homes in the U.S.

The Monday Night Film Series, which will begin the spring season on March 5, 2001, will encompass several noted documentaries and two major motion pictures, *Sunshine* and *Left Luggage*.

The American Jewish Historical Society's Archives of American Jews in the Performing Arts has been greatly expanded by a contribution of materials from Dr. Selwyn Fried of Larchmont, NY. Dr. Fried, a retired physician, is the son of Celia Adler and Lazar Fried and the grandson of Jacob Adler, patriarch of America's most famous Jewish family of the theater. Dr. Fried contributed a wealth of original photographs and portraits of both his parents on the stage, Celia Adler's handwritten notes for her performances, playbills, letters, telegrams and other papers documenting the history of the Yiddish theater in America.

The Society also has received a large collection of photographs from Ellen Adler, daughter of Stella Adler and granddaughter of Jacob. Original photographs (many autographed) portray Jacob Adler, his wife Sarah, and their children Luther, Frances and Stella in costume and publicity shots from the turn of the century through the 1920s. The growing Jacob Adler Family Collection will soon acquire 15 additional boxes of documents, including the teaching notes

of Stella Adler and her correspondence with Harold Clurman and others. ■



Jacob Adler, early 1900s. Autographed to one of his children.



Stella Adler, c. 1918, in costume in Chicago.

Sharing Our Commitment

The Center for Jewish History thanks the following donors for their most generous participation in this exciting endeavor to preserve the Jewish past and ensure the Jewish future. This roster includes major benefactions received through the end of the 1999-2000 fiscal year.

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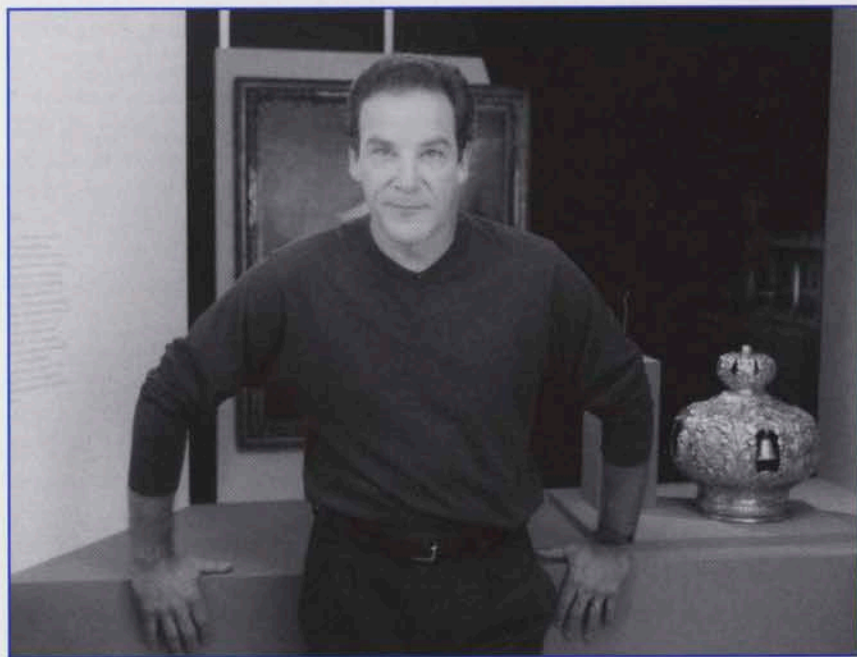


The Benefactors Wall at the Center for Jewish History. (photo, Andrew French)

Center in the Spotlight

Since its opening this past fall, the Center for Jewish History has become a magnet for attention by the media. From Miami to Minneapolis/St. Paul, journalists have shown a keen interest in covering the Center, its five partners and its programs. Articles about the Center—the formal opening to the public, the film and music series and other programming—have appeared in such diverse publications as *The New York Times*, *Hadassah Magazine*, *Asbury* (NJ) *Park Press*, *Newsday*, *Flatiron Magazine*, *Chelsea-Clinton News*, *Village Voice*, *Time Out New York*, *Jewish Tribune* (Long Island), *The Jewish Week*, *The Forward*, *American Jewish World* (Minneapolis/St. Paul), *The Jewish Press* (New York), *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *Daily News*, *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, *Jewish Community News* (New Jersey), *The Canadian Jewish News*, *Miami Herald*, *Jewish News of Greater Phoenix*, *The Westsider*, *West Side Spirit* and *The Jewish Chronicle* (Pittsburgh).

Additionally, both “Metroview” on CUNY-TV (Channel 75) and “Point of View” on Channel 25, which serves Long Island, New York, have devoted half-hour broadcasts to the Center. WNET filmed stage and screen star Mandy Patinkin hosting “MetroArts/Thirteen” from within the Yeshiva University Museum. Fans of “Bloomberg on the Weekend” on Bloomberg Radio also reported that the Center was featured in a fall edition of the show. ■



Actor Mandy Patinkin hosted the popular cultural program, “MetroArts/Thirteen,” from the set of the Yeshiva University Museum. (photo courtesy of Yeshiva University Museum)

Please Note: The public facilities at the Center for Jewish History, including the auditorium, the Great Hall and classrooms, are available for rent by organizations and individuals. The Center recently hosted major events by Hadassah, UJC, the Geshar Foundation, *The Jewish Week*, and American Friends of Yad VaShem, among others. For further information, please contact Lynne Winters, program coordinator, at 212-294-8307.

The Center for Jewish History News
Published by the Center for Jewish History

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