

Jewish Cinema South premieres in Baton Rouge

Baton Rouge kicks off its first edition of Jewish Cinema South on Jan. 25.

The Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life organized Jewish Cinema South as a way for smaller communities to produce Jewish cultural events. In October and November, Jewish Cinema South was held in Jackson, Montgomery and Mobile.

The festival will begin with a school presentation of "Paper Clips." The award-winning documentary describes a project undertaken by the middle school students in Whitwell, Tenn. in 1998 to learn about diversity. The set out to collect six million paper clips to symbolize the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust.

The drive soon received international publicity, and the goal was exceeded fourfold. Eventually a boxcar, like one used in the Holocaust, was transported to the school from Germany and now houses the paper clips, serving as a memorial.

Along the way, students met Holocaust survivors from around the world, transforming their lives.

The Jan. 25 screenings will be at 8:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. at BREC Theater, Independence Park. Coach David Smith, assistant principal of Whitwell Middle School, will be the guest speaker.

That evening at 7:30, the festival will continue with "Sophie Scholl: The Final Days." It is the true story of Germany's most famous anti-Nazi heroine, describing the last six days of her life. Scholl, 21, was a member of The White Rose.

After Sophie and her brother Hans (Fabian Hinrichs) are caught distributing leaflets critical of Hitler and the German war machine, they're incarcerated, interrogated and brought to trial. Much of the film is taken up by Sophie's questioning at the hands of Nazi officer Robert Mohr (Alexander Held) and is taken from actual transcripts of their conversation. What ensues is a verbal cat-and-mouse game between the older bureaucrat who ardently believes in the system that has elevated him

to a position of power, and the idealistic young dissident willing to sacrifice herself in the cause of peace, freedom and democracy.

The film was nominated for a Best Foreign Language Film Academy Award in 2005.

Kenneth Hoffman, director of education for the National World War II Museum in New Orleans will speak following the film.

A patron's reception will precede the film, at 6:30 p.m.

On Jan. 27, there will be a double feature at 7:30 p.m. "West Bank Story" is a musical comedy about David, an Israeli soldier, and Fatima, a Palestinian fast food cashier — an unlikely couple who fall in love amidst the animosity of their families; dueling falafel stands in the West Bank. Tensions mount when the Koshers King's new pastry machine juts onto Hummus Hut property. The Palestinians ruin the machine and the Israelis respond by building a wall between the two eating establishments. The couple professes their love for each other, triggering a chain of events that destroys both

restaurants and forces all to find common ground in an effort to rebuild, planting a seed of hope.

The second film is "All I've Got," the story of 72-year-old Tamara. After she passes on, she finds herself on a ship, heading across river to the afterlife. There she meets Uri, her first love, who died at age 23, and is offered a momentous choice. She can begin her life again with him, as a 22-year-old, but will have to give up all memories of her subsequent existence. Or she can stay as she is, at age 72, with the memories of her life with her husband and children intact. "All I've Got" is a moving drama about the road not taken and what might have been.

On Jan. 28 at 3 and 7 p.m., there will be another double feature. The screening kicks off with "Strange Fruit," about the classic song identified with Billie Holiday. In fact, it was written by a Jewish schoolteacher from the Bronx, Abel Meeropol.

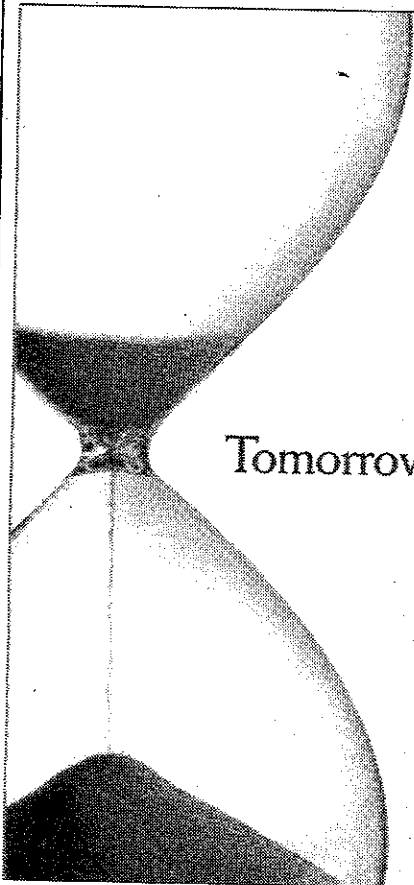
Filmmaker Joel Katz delves into the history and legacy of the song, using it as a vehicle

to explore the intricacies of Black/Jewish relations.

That will be followed by the Academy Award-winning short film from 1945, "The House I Live In." Frank Sinatra encounters a group of young boys beating up on another because he is Jewish. Sinatra straightens them out on American equality with a war tale, then, sings "The House I Live In." This message of wartime pluralism reflected America's growing acceptance of ethnic diversity during World War II.



"The House I Live In"



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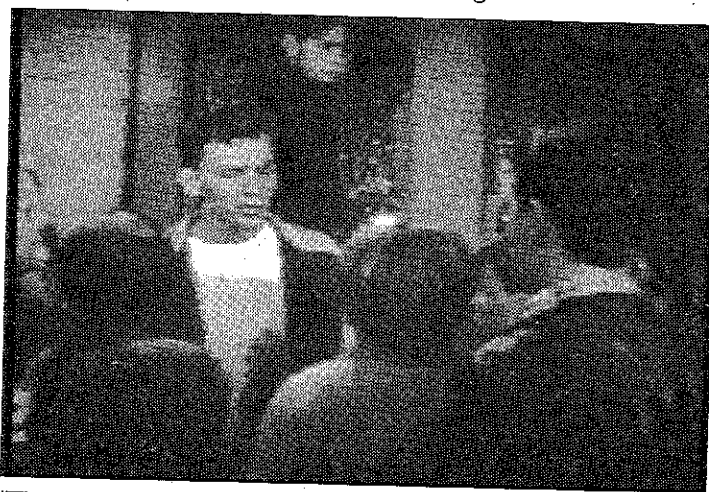
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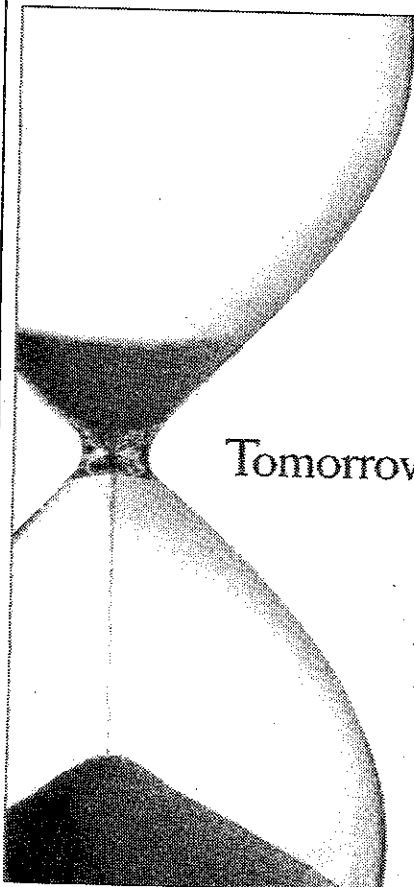
Katz will speak at the screenings.

With the exception of "Paper Clips," the films will be at the Manship Theatre. Reserved seating is \$8.50. Tickets will be available in advance from the theater box office. Patron levels are set from \$100 to \$2,000, and can be arranged through the Jewish Federation of Greater Baton Rouge.

Tickets will be available at the door on a space-available basis, one hour before each screening.



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