

# **New York Sephardic Jewish Film Festival Honors Reymonde Amsellem, Alexandre Arcady, Stella Levi, & John Turturro; Features Enrico Macias Opening Night Performance**

*2-9 June 2024 at the ASF- Center for Jewish History in Chelsea*

New York, NY (29 May 2024): The American Sephardi Federation's 26th [New York Sephardic Film Festival](#) will open on Sunday (2 June) with The Pomegranates Awards Ceremony honoring Algerian-French Director Alexandre Arcady for *Filmmaking*, Rhodes-born 101-year-old Holocaust Survivor Stella Levi for *Sephardic History & Culture*, and award-winning American Actor/Director John Turturro for *Stage & Screen*. Each of the Pomegranates is sculpted with love by Baghdad-born artist Oded Halahmy. Past honorees include: André Aciman, Ghiora Aharoni, Lisa Azuelos, André Azoulay, Neta Elkayam, Albert Memmi, Saïd Ben Saïd, Emma Shah, and Eli Tahari. The NYSJFF is dedicated to Ike, Molly, & Steven Elias.

[Opening Night](#), co-presented with [Mimouna Association](#), will feature a performance by the legendary Constantine-born French-Sephardi star Enrico Macias, who returns to the American stage in-between major concerts, including at L'Olympia.

“Enrico Macias is an international music sensation who plays to sold out audiences from Paris to Casablanca to Dubai. Enrico also holds a special place in the hearts of all Sephardic Jews. His music expresses our sense of bittersweet loss and nostalgia for the countries, whether Algeria or Iraq, from which we were persecuted and expelled, as well as hope and joy at finding refuge and success in exile,” says David Dangoor, the ASF's President.

Moroccan-Israeli star Reymonde Amsellem will receive the Ronit Elkabetz, A”H Pomegranate Award for Acting at a special ceremony on 8 June, ahead of a screening of her hit film, [SEVEN BLESSINGS](#) (2023).

NYSJFF audiences will experience exclusive screenings, including the international premieres of [MAHJONG & MAHASHAS](#) (2023) about Babylonian Jews in Asia and [KING OF SEPHARDIM](#) (2024), the first-ever biographic about the Iraq-born Maran Hakham Ovadia Yosef. The Directors of both films are flying-in for Q&As.

On 3 June the NYSJFF will host the North American Premiere of Alexandre Arcady's feature for StudioCanal, [THE BLOND BOY FROM THE CASBAH](#) (2024). “Above and beyond the colonial war that ripped apart entire populations, I want to talk about what united them,” says Arcady. “The rue du Léopard where I come from, and whose story I tell is a microcosm of old Algeria, with its Kabyle, Mozabite, Moslem, Catholic and Jewish communities. I was part of the Sephardic community, present in Algeria for three thousand years....We all lived together until decolonization destroyed that equilibrium.”

“The NY Sephardic Jewish Film Festival is an opportunity to explore the beauty, depth, diversity, and vitality of the Jewish people, specifically a seriously Jewish yet cosmopolitan tradition that has been a source of strength and success for centuries. We must defy efforts to reduce complex history to simplistic, divisive, and destructive narratives,” says Jason Guberman, the ASF's Executive Director.

Other Festival highlights include “[Songs & Stories](#),” an event co-presented with [Centro Primo Levi New York](#), featuring Stella Levi, whose life has been explored in several films and a *New York Times* bestseller (Michael Frank’s *One Hundred Saturdays*); a 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary screening of SECRET PASSAGE starring John Turturro; and a 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary screening of Turturro’s [FADING GIGOLO](#)—co-starring Woody Allen, Jade Dixon, Vanessa Paradis, Liev Schreiber, Sharon Stone, and Sofia Vergara—followed by a Q&A with Turturro.

“In these troubled times torn by grief, fear, and anger we are holding stronger to the values [of] peace, coexistence, and mutual understanding among all people regardless of background...,” says Na’ama Keha, the Artistic Director of the 26th NYSJFF and a NY-based film Writer/Director of Sephardi and Yemeni descent. “This year more than ever, we wanted to highlight stories... of the millions of Jews who lived in Muslim countries for thousands of years and were an essential part of Arab culture... Many of them still hold a deep love for their homelands. Can love and respect give a better chance to peace? In a world full of segregation and hatred, we want to keep the flame of hope. At this festival everyone is welcome,” says Keha.

**Media Contact: Anna Giorganashvili**

[Info@AmericnaSephardi.org](mailto:Info@AmericnaSephardi.org)

212.294.8350

[www.NYSJFF.com](http://www.NYSJFF.com)

**American Sephardi Federation – Center for Jewish History**

15 West 16<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY., 10011

## Schedule at a Glance

### **Sunday, 2 June @ASF - Center for Jewish History**

**6:00PM:** Red Carpet VIP Meet and Greet with Alexandre Arcady, Stella Levi, Enrico Macias, & John Turturro

*\*Available for [VIP Passholders only](#)*

**7:00PM:** [Opening Night Pomegranate Awards Ceremony](#) featuring a special performance by **Enrico Macias** and light reception

### **Monday, 3 June @ASF - Center for Jewish History**

**3:00PM:** Special Screening of [THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS](#)

*Followed by a Q&A with David Forgacs (NYU)*

**6:00PM:** [WEDDING BLUES](#)

*Followed by a Q&A with Enrico Macias*

**North American Premiere**

**8:00PM:** Red Carpet VIP Meet & Greet with Alexandre Arcady

*\*Available for VIP Passholders only*

**8:30PM:** THE BLOND BOY FROM THE CASBAH

*Followed by a Q&A with Alexandre Arcady*

**North American Premiere**

## **Tuesday, 4 June @ASF - Center for Jewish History**

**6:00PM:** SPINOZA: SIX REASONS FOR THE EXCOMMUNICATION OF THE PHILOSOPHER

*Followed by Q&A with Ian Buruma, author of Spinoza: Freedom's Messiah (Jewish Lives/Yale University Press)*

**8:00PM:** THE SECRET SABBATH

**NY Premiere**

## **Wednesday, 5 June @ASF - Center for Jewish History**

**2:00PM:** Shorts Program:

THE GIRL FROM SALONIKA, NY Premiere

WOMEN OF VIRTUE, NY Premiere

MAHJONG & MAHASHAS, International Premiere

*Followed by Q&A with Director Carolyn Saul*

**Free Event, RSVP Required**

**6:00PM:** MARIAGE MIXTE

*Followed by a Q&A with Alexandre Arcady*

**8:30PM:** LE GRAND PARDON

*Followed by a Q&A with Alexandre Arcady*

## Thursday, 6 June @ASF - Center for Jewish History

**3:30PM:** [NATHAN-ISM](#)

*Followed by a Q&A with Director Elan Golod*

**6:00PM:** [THE HOLY CLOSET](#)

**NY Premiere**

*Followed by a live performance by Chanan Ben Simon*

**8:15PM:** [KING OF THE SEPHARDIM](#)

*Followed by a Q&A with Director Ofer Pinchasov*

**International Premiere**

## Friday, 7 June @ASF - Center for Jewish History

**12:00PM:** [LOOKING FOR CHLOÉ](#)

*Followed by a Q&A with Dr. Philippe Aghion, Gaby's son*

**1:30PM:** [Stella Levi: Songs & Stories](#)

*Conversation with Stella Levi and Natalia Indrimi (Centro Primo Levi New York)*

**8:00PM:** ASF Young Professionals [SOULFUL SHABBAT DINNER](#)

## Saturday, 8 June @ASF - Center for Jewish History

**9:20PM:** Israeli-Sephardi Community Habdalah with Reymonde Amsellem

**9:30PM:** [Pomegranate Award Ceremony, followed by the screening of SEVEN BLESSINGS, and Q&A with Reymonde Amsellem](#)

## Sunday, 9 June @ASF - Center for Jewish History

**12:00PM:** [RADIO PROPAGANDA](#)

*Followed by a Q&A with Director Ofer Pinchasov*

**NY Premiere**

**2:30PM:** [A Tribute to Sami Michael A”H](#)

**Free Event, RSVP Required**

**4:30PM:** 20th Anniversary Screening of [SECRET PASSAGE](#)

**6:00PM:** Red Carpet VIP Meet & Greet with John Turturro

*\*Available for [VIP Passholders only](#)*

**7:00PM:** 10th Anniversary Screening of [FADING GIGOLO](#)

*Followed by a Q&A with John Turturro*

**Closing Night light reception**