



A LIVING  
MEMORIAL  
TO THE  
HOLOCAUST



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

*Edmond J. Safra Plaza*  
36 Battery Place, New York, NY 10280  
(646) 437-4202 [www.mjhnyc.org](http://www.mjhnyc.org)

January 27, 2012

Contacts: Betsy Aldredge / (646) 437-4337 / [baldredge@mjhnyc.org](mailto:baldredge@mjhnyc.org)  
Abby R. Spilka / (646) 437-4333 / [aspilka@mjhnyc.org](mailto:aspilka@mjhnyc.org)

***Jewish Tales From Wales, A Film Series Exploring the Welsh Jewish Experience***  
*at the Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust*

New York, NY—This March, the **Welsh Government** and the **Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust** will co-present ***Jewish Tales From Wales***, a rare look at the Jewish history and culture of Wales through the lens of three modern films. The series of award winning films will begin with welcome remarks by **The Right Honourable Carwyn Jones, AM, First Minister of Wales** on **Sunday, March 11 at 11 a.m.** and a screening of ***Solomon and Gaenor*** (1999) followed by ***Sleep Furiously*** (2010) at **2:30 p.m.** ***Very Annie Mary*** (2001) will be shown on **Wednesday, March 14 at 7 p.m.**

Museum of Jewish Heritage director, Dr. David G. Marwell, said, “We are pleased to partner with the Welsh Government to present this series. The Museum is devoted to exploring Jewish experiences across the globe, and we believe these films will shed light on the unique work of three very different Welsh Jewish directors and their compelling backgrounds. We welcome the First Minister of Wales, and his colleagues for these exciting programs.”

Welsh Jewish director Gideon Koppel dedicated his film, *Sleep Furiously*, to his parents. He praised their small village in Wales as “a wonderfully cosmopolitan and culturally diverse society,” where his parents felt comfortable. He said, “They were both immigrants, refugees from Nazi Germany and both from generations of nomads...so for them to make a home...particularly one with land on which to grow food and belong to a community...had a deep resonance.” Koppel will offer a post-screening discussion of his film.

Likewise, director Sara Sugarman (*Very Annie Mary*), also from a Welsh Jewish family, will be in attendance to discuss her film. She said, “I am an observer of South Wales valley life. I have a huge emotional pull to the people. I think that’s because they are warm and similar to Jewish people.” Her family owned a men’s clothing store in a Welsh valley community. She said the culture “felt very much how I imagine living in the shtetl my forefathers came from.”

Tickets are \$10 adults, \$7 students/seniors, and \$5 members. Tickets for March 11 include both films. Tickets are available online at [www.mjhnyc.org](http://www.mjhnyc.org) or by calling the Museum box office at 646.437.4202.

This film series is co-presented by the Welsh Government and the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, New York City with the support of Bangor University, North Wales, UK.

## About the Films

### Sunday, March 11

**11 A.M. *Solomon and Gaenor*** (1999, 105 min., English with some subtitled Welsh and Yiddish)  
Written and directed by Paul Morrison. A post-screening discussion with Bangor University film historian, Dr. Nathan Abrams will take place.

A Romeo and Juliet story set in South Wales in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, this period drama depicts the ill-fated romance between a young Jewish peddler and a Welsh miner's daughter. This film, which *Entertainment Weekly* called a "tragedy of surprising power, not least because of the exotic historical specificity of its Welsh-Jewish religious and cultural tensions," was nominated for a Best Foreign Picture Oscar. *Solomon and Gaenor* stars Ioan Gruffudd, well known for his lead roles in *Fantastic Four* and the new television show *Ringer* (with Sarah Michelle Geller), and Nia Roberts as Gaenor.

**Paul Morrison** is an accomplished documentary and feature film director. His most recent film is *Little Ashes* starring *Twilight*'s Robert Pattinson as Salvador Dalí. He also directed *Wondrous Oblivion*, and *Degas and Pissarro Fall Out*, among other works.

**Dr. Nathan Abrams** is the author, co-author, and editor of several books including: *Norman Podhoretz and Commentary Magazine: The Rise and Fall of the Neo-Cons*; *The New Jew in Film: exploring Jewishness and Judaism in Contemporary Cinema*; and *Caledonian Jews: A Study of Seven Small Communities in Scotland*.

**2:30 P.M. *Sleep Furiously*** (2010, 94 min.)  
Directed by Gideon Koppel, post screening Q&A with the director

In this lyrical documentary, Koppel explores the Welsh farming community where his parents found refuge from the Nazis. A profound and personal journey, this film, which features a score by the electronic group Aphex Twin, was praised by *Time Out New York* as "maybe the most subtly poetic piece of cine-anthropology to come down the pike in eons."

**Gideon Koppel** is a graduate of The Slade School of Fine Art, University of London. His work as a film maker and artist has been broadcast internationally and exhibited in galleries worldwide, from the MoMA to the Tate Modern in London. Koppel is also an award winning director of commercials and has worked for several fashion design labels most notably Comme des Garçons. He is Professor of Film at The Department of Film, Theatre and Television Studies, Aberystwyth University and Associate Fellow at Green Templeton College, University of Oxford.

*\$10, \$7 students/seniors, \$5 members*  
*Price includes both films*

### Wednesday, March 14, 7 P.M.

***Very Annie Mary*** (2001, 104 min.)  
Written and directed by Sara Sugarman; a post-screening discussion with the director will follow.

Quirky 33-year-old Annie Mary (Rachel Griffiths of *Six Feet Under* and *Brothers & Sisters*) lives under the shadow of her strict baker father (Jonathan Pryce of *Brazil* and *Pirates of the Caribbean*), yearning to break free. In this bittersweet comedy, the protagonist daydreams about buying an empty cottage and prepares to sing in a talent competition with three women dressed as Pavarotti. The *L.A. Times* called the kitchen-sink drama "winningly funny and good-hearted." The film also features Matthew Rhys (well known for his role on *Brothers & Sisters*).

**Sara Sugarman** is the director of five films including *Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen* with Lindsay Lohan, *Mad Cow*, and the forthcoming *Vinyl*. She has also appeared on film as an actress in dozens of television shows and several films, most notably, *Sid and Nancy* and *Escape from Sobibor*.

### **About the Museum of Jewish Heritage**

The Museum's exhibitions educate people of all ages and backgrounds about the rich tapestry of Jewish life over the past century—before, during, and after the Holocaust. Current special exhibitions include *Emma Lazarus: Poet of Exiles*, on view through December 2012 and *Let My People Go!: The Soviet Jewry Movement, 1967-1989*, on view through April 29, 2012. It is also home to the award-winning *Keeping History Center*, an interactive visitor experience, and Andy Goldsworthy's memorial *Garden of Stones*. The Museum offers visitors a vibrant public program schedule in its Edmond J. Safra Hall and receives general operating support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

###