



ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

MIAMI

JEWISH *film* FESTIVAL

July 1, 2020 - June 18, 2021



GREATER MIAMI
JEWISH
FEDERATION



Center for the
Advancement of
Jewish Education

A photograph of an outdoor film festival at night. A large audience is seated in folding chairs, facing a stage where a movie is being projected. The projection screen displays a poster for the "Holocaust Jewish Film Festival" dated April 14-20. The scene is illuminated by stage lights, and the background shows trees and other festival structures. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue and purple gradient.

Transforming the way people see the world through film



Contents

4

Who We Are

Welcome Letter
MJFF in 2021
Audience Experience

10

The Festival

Israeli Cinema
Building Bridges
Next Wave
Ibero-American Cinema
Made in Florida
Film Market & Distribution
In Conversation
Live Festival Experience
Media Coverage

24

Year-Round

Community Initiatives
Year-Round Program
Virtual Screening Room
Speaker Series
Screening the Holocaust

33

Artistic Excellence

Recognized as one of the
"50 Best Film Festivals in the
World" by MovieMaker Magazine

35

Growth Analysis

Social Media
Year-Round vs.
Festival Audience

37

Sustainability

Sponsorship
Membership

Building Connections & Embracing Change

This was a momentous year for the Miami Jewish Film Festival, a year in which we built on our guiding principle to transform the way people see the world through film. Just a few short months into 2020, the world was transformed in a dramatically different way by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in the temporary closure of our local cinemas and suspension of our year-round live event programming.

Despite tremendous challenges, the immense success the Miami Jewish Film Festival (MJFF) has achieved this year is astounding. In the following pages, we share our successes from last year, which confirm what we've always believed: that film helps us better understand one another, encourages empathy, and fuels a more engaged and connected world. These timeless values drew record audiences to the Miami Jewish Film Festival in 2020 and, we believe, will endure when the time comes to welcome guests back to our cinemas.

As an organization, the Miami Jewish Film Festival is constantly developing in tandem with the evolution of the traditional cinema experience. Our audiences have an unprecedented amount of choice and their appetite for outstanding cinema, diverse perspectives, and transformative experiences remains. MJFF has embraced the opportunities that have come with new platforms and our shared passion for dynamic storytelling.

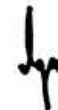
Our Festival continues to be an international platform for audiences, media, and industry to discover great filmmakers, explore new directions in cinema, and immerse themselves in the business of film. The 24th edition of the Miami Jewish Film Festival in 2020 showcased a record-setting 148 film premieres, representation from an incredible 25 countries, and 32% of titles directed, co-directed, or created by women; it also marked our first-ever online component to the festival, which reached a remarkable 55,000 fans across all 50 states and 100 countries.

We also intensified our overall diversity and inclusion efforts and our support for women both in front of and behind the camera. MJFF's inclusion initiative included its "Next Wave" program targeted to 21-35-year-old college students and young professionals, the "Focus on LGBT cinema" program, and the "Building Bridges/Breaking Barriers" program that is dedicated to presenting stories that align the power that exists in the connection between the Black and Jewish communities in a time of rising racism and antisemitism.

This year marked MJFF as not only the largest film festival of its kind, but also for a second year in a row it received the prestigious recognition of being one of the "50 Best Film Festivals in the World" by MovieMaker Magazine, the first time ever that a Jewish festival was honored in the publications twenty-year history. MJFF was also the only Florida film festival listed in this year's edition.

In 2020, the Miami Jewish Film Festival maintained and enhanced its standing as a global leader in creative and cultural discovery, and reinforced its commitment to transforming the way our audiences see the world through film. Our loyal community enables us to continue bringing the power of film to audiences year-round. Our sincere thanks to all of you for the crucial role you play in empowering our Miami Jewish Film Festival to continue its mission.

Our doors will open again, and we look forward to welcoming you back. Until then, stay safe, and take care.



Igor Shteyrenberg
Executive Director



Barbara Black Goldfarb
Board Chair

“Supporting art is
supporting our
community, truth,
and knowledge
exchange.”

– MJFF supporter



Asia
dir. Ruthy Pribar

MJFF in 2021

What would we do without the cinema — without a silver screen to transport us, to present us with endless possibilities? The question couldn't have been further from our minds this year, at a time — as you'll read in the pages ahead — so full of accomplishments for the Miami Jewish Film Festival, and so full of great film for our audiences. But in 2020-21, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the temporary closure of our local theaters and Festival office, forced us to consider life without the immersive experience of a cinema or the comfort, connection, and community of moviegoing. As Ingmar Bergman said, "No art passes our conscience in the way film does, and goes directly to our feelings." And, during this difficult time, our members and patrons were missing that. Their many heartfelt messages to us expressed how deeply they felt the absence of our theaters in their lives.



Opening Night at the historic North Beach Bandshell featuring the premiere of the Israeli comedy **Honeymoon** on *Yom Ha'atzmaut*



A photograph of a man and a woman sitting side-by-side in an audience, looking towards the left. The woman is wearing glasses and a light-colored shirt, and the man is wearing glasses and a dark t-shirt. The background is blurred, showing other audience members. The image has a warm, orange-toned overlay.

“Everyday the festival has offered a new film experience, a new opportunity to connect with our community, and to discover.”

– MJFF supporter

Festival Members attending a film premiere at the historic North Beach Bandshell

Audience Experience

The Miami Jewish Film Festival had its biggest, buzz-iest year yet, making the experiences of festivalgoers more unique than ever. Each year, thousands of new attendees come away from the Festival with revelatory experiences, whether it's seeing an inspiring film, meeting new friends, or making a deal to distribute a first film. Cinema is an art form with endless possibilities. Our curatorial choices are based on a deep respect for, and profound belief in, the medium, its creators, and its viewers. During the Miami Jewish Film Festival and its year-round program, our commitment to providing transformational experiences for our audiences takes shape through curated film programs and events, where art and conversation meet to change the way people see the world.



Director Barry Avrich attends the Closing Night
Premiere of his film **Howie Mandel: But, Enough
About Me** at the historic North Beach Bandshell



“The city’s true
cultural gem and
a major event in
the cultural
calendar.”

– Culture Crusaders

Adventures of a
Mathematician
dir. Thor Klein



The Festival Program

Rising to the position as the largest publicly attended Jewish film festival in the world, the Miami Jewish Film Festival boasted **101 features** and **47 short films** from **27 countries** and regions in its 2021 edition, welcoming over **150 filmmaker guests**. Audiences were dazzled by under the stars premieres, special drive-in events, and discovered the next generation of director heavyweights, and experienced the vast forms of the filmmaking craft. In response to the pandemic, MJFF also launched its own virtual platform that exclusively hosted its festival program, all of which was offered for the first time ever for **free to the general public**. Following their premieres at MJFF, many films went on to earn international acclaim through high-profile nominations and awards.



A film premiering at the Wynwood Drive-In, a makeshift drive-in built by the Festival



Israeli Cinema Showcase

The 2021 Miami Jewish Film Festival celebrated more than 25 Israeli films, the largest Israeli film program in North America, which featured titans of Israeli cinema, including Eytan Fox (**Sublet**), Nir Bergman (**Here We Are**), box office sensation Talya Lavie (**Honeymoon**), and Emmy-nominee Shira Haas (Netflix's **Unorthodox**), who had two films premiering at this year's Festival: Israel's official Oscar entry **Asia** and the emotional family drama **Broken Mirrors**. There were also laugh-out-loud comedies (**Kiss Me Kosher**), thought-provoking documentaries (**Love It Was Not**), and adventurous dramas (**Last Picture Show in Bucharest**) for audiences to discover.

Pictured top to bottom: **Honeymoon**, →
Kiss Me Kosher, **Asia**, and **Here We Are**



Building Bridges / Breaking Barriers

The inaugural Building Bridges / Breaking Barriers program focused on showcasing films that highlight the diversity and commonality of the human experience, bringing together audiences with different perspectives and ideologies to explore universal themes and values that deepen our understanding of ourselves and society at large. As part of this program, MJFF presented six distinct films that demonstrated the power that exists in the connection between the Black and Jewish communities in a time of rising racism and antisemitism. Most importantly, the program served as a reminder that we must all engage in the Jewish concept of "tikkun olam," or "repairing the world," and do so in the pursuit of social justice.

↓ Pictured top to bottom: *Dreams of Hope*,
They Ain't Read for Me, *A Crime on the Bayou*, and *Shared Legacies*



Next Wave Initiative Film Program

For a fifth year, MJFF hosted a dedicated program for film lovers as part of its Next Wave initiative, a program targeted to youth **between the ages of 21-35**, which featured more than a dozen film premieres, including **Broken Mirrors** starring Shira Haas, the world premiere of **Tiger Within** starring legendary actor Ed Asner, and the North American Premieres of **The Young Kadyas** and **Displaced**, among others.

A special youth jury who are passionate about sharing their love of film with their peers also selected the winning film in the Next Wave program. More than **8,000 youth** watched films in the program, setting a new audience record.

Pictured top to bottom: American Birthright, The Man of the Monkey, The Young Kadyas, and Tiger Within



Ibero-American Cinema

MJFF is dedicated to celebrating the new exciting works of some of today's most talented, established, as well as up-and-coming filmmakers from Argentina, Spain, Portugal, and Brazil. By bringing these international films to Miami, we're presenting the city and the film industry with a singular platform that bridges cultural understanding and encourages artistic development.

Notable films that premiered in this special focus on Ibero-American cinema include the World Premieres of **1618** and **Perón and the Jews** (Argentina), and the North American Premieres of **Paternal** (Argentina), **The Most Dangerous Man in Europe** (Spain), and **The Seven Boxes** (Spain).

↓ Pictured top to bottom: Josep, *The Second Time Around*, *1618*, and *Perón and the Jews*



Spotlighting Films Made in Florida

MJFF has maintained its commitment to celebrating local voices, stories, and emerging talents. Last year, MJFF world premiered the movie **Saul & Ruby, To Life!** at its opening night main event – the documentary went on to win the inaugural \$18,000 Jury Prize as well as being acquired from the Festival by Samuel Goldwyn Films for US distribution.

This year, MJFF presented four films produced in Florida featuring stories from the city we call home, including **They Call Me Dr. Miami, The One and Only Jewish Miss America**, and the world premiere of **Impossible Possible**, among others.

Pictured top to bottom: **The One** →
And Only Jewish Miss America,
They Call Me Dr. Miami, **Impossible Possible**, and **The Rope Warrior**



15



+




Film Market & US Distribution

The Miami Jewish Film Festival remains a force for market activity for Jewish and Israeli cinema, with **four films acquired for US distribution** out of this year's program already, and several more strong deals continuing to be made. Menemsha Films, North America's most respected distributor of Jewish and Israeli films, picked up three films from the 2021 Miami Jewish Film Festival, including **City of Desire** and **If You See My Mother**, both of which received their US Premieres at the Festival, as well as **Tiger Within** starring Ed Asner, which world premiered at the Festival. Film Movement, an independent US distributor, acquired the documentary **Shtetlers** out of the Festival program. Over the last three years, more than **20 films were acquired for US distribution** out of the Festival.



If You See My Mother
dir. Nathanaël Guedj





“From the very beginning of our working together there was a bond between Menemsha Films and the Miami Jewish Film Festival that emanated from our mutual passion for presenting the best of Jewish and Israeli cinema.”

– Neil Friedman, Founder & President of Menemsha Films

Tiger Within
dir. Rafal Zielinski

In Conversation Virtual Program

The lineup for the 24th Miami Jewish Film Festival went well beyond feature and short films — it also brought a robust program of online special events and conversations available for free to the global public. From filmmakers like Eytan Fox (**Sublet**), Nir Bergman (**Here We Are**), and Anders Refn (**Into the Darkness**), to stars like Lainie Kazan & Renee Taylor (**Tango Shalom**) and Howie Mandel (**Howie Mandel: But, Enough About Me**), and so many more, **6,800 audience members** dived in and explored the Festival's more than **80 fascinating conversations**, Q&A's, and special panels about independent storytelling — and all were free to watch from home.





Live Festival Experience

Despite the hardships COVID-19 had brought upon the festival circuit, MJFF reported a historic level of attendance for its 24th edition.

Part virtual, part drive-in experience and outdoor event, the 2021 Miami Jewish Film Festival boasted the **largest-ever audience** in the festival's two-decade history, marking the event as the **largest Jewish film festival in the world**. Screenings were available nationwide for the first time in the festival's history and all for free to the general public, and audiences responded enthusiastically — nearly **40,000 views** took place in the state of Florida and **15,000 views** took place in **all 50 states** as well as Washington D.C., Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, in addition to more than **100 countries**.



Pictured top to bottom: under the stars screening at the Miami Beach JCC, Wynwood Drive-In, Closing Night at the historic North Beach Bandshell



55,000


Total audience served
at the Festival

148

Film premieres presented
at the Festival

90

Filmmakers, stars, and special guests
representing 27 countries participated in Q&A's,
panels, and talk-backs at the Festival

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a dark jacket and a light-colored skirt, is smiling and running towards the camera in a clothing store. The store has racks of clothes and bright lighting. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and store fixtures.

“Wow, I just don’t know how to express in words my incredible experience with the Miami Jewish Film Festival, its staff, and the connections I made. I had distributors reach out about my film immediately, and many other festivals solicited my documentary after seeing it got into MJFF! Truly such an incredible experience and I cannot wait to be back! This festival is the real deal!”

– Becky Tahel Bordo, Director of **American Birthright**

American Birthright
dir. Becky Tahel Bordo

The New York Times

Bridging Time, Distance and Distrust, With Music

Neta Elkayam, an Israeli singer, plumbs the rich culture of the Moroccan Jews she descended from, and introduces it to new audiences in both countries.



Major Media Coverage

The Miami Jewish Film Festival in 2021 received more than **420 million worldwide press and advertising impressions**. The Festival has been covered by national outlets such as The New York Times, The Hollywood Reporter, CNN, Variety, The Forward, Jerusalem Post, and The Times of Israel, as well as local outlets including The Miami Herald, El Nuevo Herald, the Miami New Times, The Sun Sentinel, Diario Las Americas, and Miami Art Zine, in addition to broadcast media from NBC6 to CBS and WPLG Local 10.

THE
Hollywood
REPORTER

THE
JERUSALEM
POST

Miami Herald

NBC

The
New York
Times

THE TIMES
OF ISRAEL

VARIETY

A woman and a young boy are shown from the chest up, looking upwards with expressions of awe or concern. They are in a dark, industrial environment with visible pipes and structures in the background. The lighting is dramatic, with a strong blue/purple hue on the left and a warm orange/red glow on the right. The woman has long, wavy brown hair and is wearing a dark coat with a fur collar. The boy has short dark hair and is wearing a dark sweater over a collared shirt.

“The Miami Jewish Film Festival represents the innovative, courageous and nimble spirit essential for reinvigoration, especially during these tumultuous times. Each year it celebrates our resilience, our diversity, and our capacity for creativity and making change.”

– The Sun Sentinel

Community Initiatives

The Miami Jewish Film Festival works with over 25 community partners, including Miami-Dade NAACP, Miami Jewish Abilities Alliance, and Sephardi Voices, to create inclusive environments for connection and self-expression through film. Our impactful programs — including free screenings, talks, and events — ensure everyone in our community has access to the arts. These programs also expand our continued explorations into our varied audiences and unique cultural communities that reflect Miami's diverse artistic landscape.





+

•

○

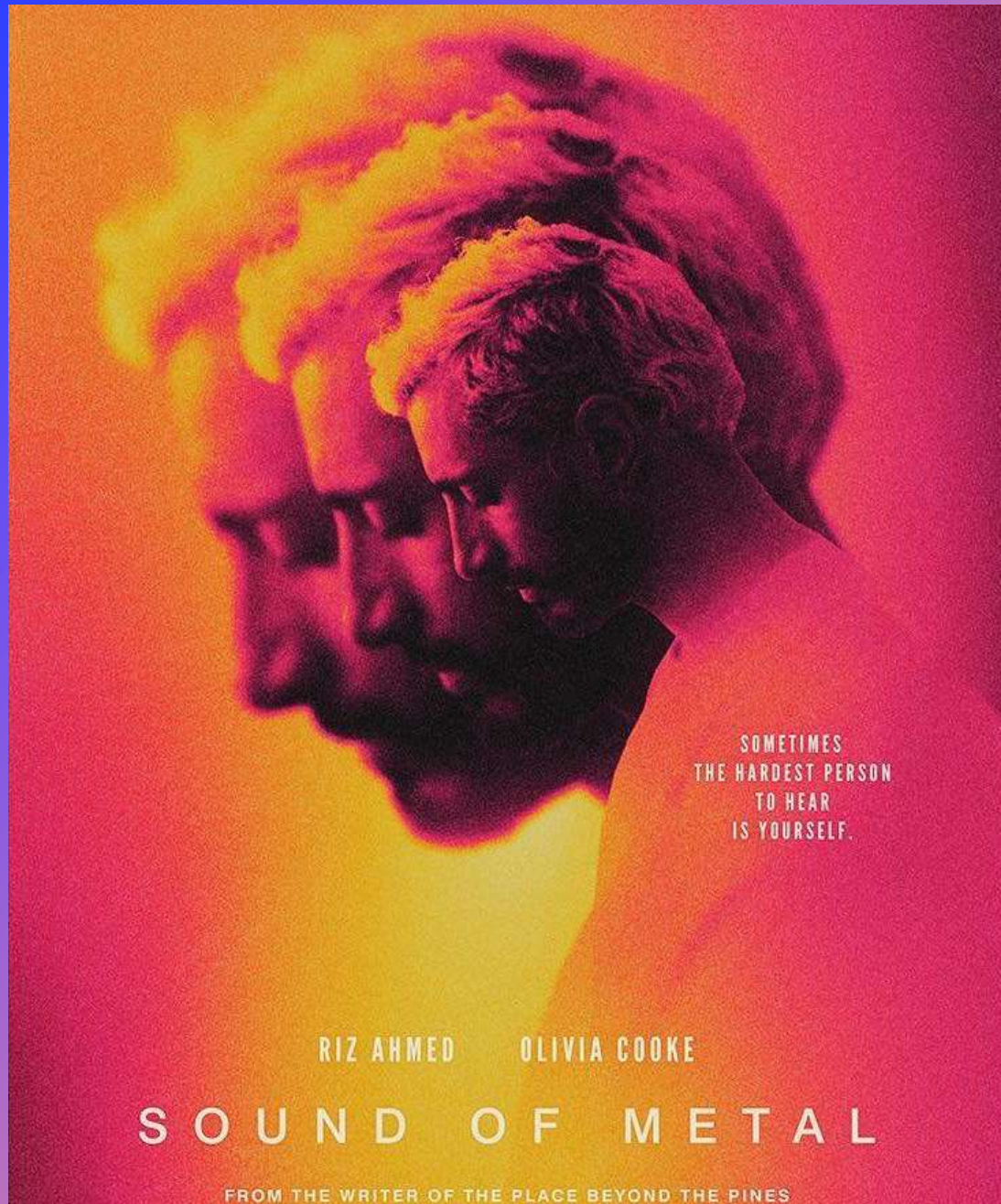
A Call to Spy
dir. Lydia Dean Pilcher

Year-Round Program

In its 24-year history, the Miami Jewish Film Festival has risen to be one of the pre-eminent programming institutions of its kind. Its inspired approach, the quality of its presentation, and the serious consideration it gives all genres and periods of cinema is now internationally renowned. MJFF presents an ambitious selection of films year-round, including acclaimed directors' retrospectives, special sneak previews and advance screenings, spotlights of thematic programs, experimental cinema, exclusive limited runs, and many new and rare archival presentations in partnership with numerous community organizations. In total, this year the Festival hosted **95 film events**, presented **10 free film series**, and served **39,000 audience members**, setting a new attendance record for its year-round program.



Sound of Metal
dir. Darius Marder



Sixth Annual Israeli Film Series

Continuing the annual tradition of spotlighting national cinemas from around the globe, the Miami Jewish Film Festival mounted its popular Israeli Film Series in partnership with the Miami Beach JCC and Michael-Ann Russell JCC.

This aesthetically rich series included **ten riveting films** featuring many of Israel's most acclaimed contemporary actors and filmmakers, including Shira Haas, Eytan Fox, Dani Menkin, Shlomo Bar-Aba, and Yossi Madmoni, among many others. More than **3,600 audience members** across the United States tuned in and viewed the series.

Pictured top to bottom: **The Museum**, → **Love in Suspenders**, **Picture of His Life**, and **The Electrifiers**



Virtual Screening Room

For the first time ever, MJFF launched its own **on-demand virtual platform**, which included a digital library of international Jewish interest and Israeli films available to rent that were all selected and curated completely by the Festival. The online channel housed everything from hotly anticipated releases, award-winners, rare gems, to indie darlings. The program was MJFF's response to the difficult times – the result of our desire to sustain the Festival's outstanding film programming and stay connected with our audience. In total, more than **13,000 audience members viewed the 45 films** presented in MJFF's virtual screening room.



Pictured top to bottom: *On Broadway*,
The Keeper, *Standing Up*, *Falling Down*,
and *One Night in Miami*

Inaugural Virtual Speaker Series

New this year, MJFF created a live discussion program that brought some of the most exciting voices in world cinema right into the homes of its fans around the world. More than **5,500 audience members** around the world were able to take a deep dive into a spotlight work of Jewish cinema and come face-to-face with filmmakers, actors, academics, and industry leaders in virtual Q&A discussions. Notable guests included **Jesse Eisenberg**, **Udo Kier**, **Oren Jacoby**, and **Fred Melamed**, among many others.

Pictured top to bottom: panel discussion with talent behind the film **Resistance** featuring **Jesse Eisenberg** & **Bella Ramsey**, and Q&A with actor **Udo Kier** for Academy Award entry **The Painted Bird**



Screening the Holocaust Film Series

For the fifth year, MJFF partnered with the **Holocaust Teacher's Institute**, the **Sue & Leonard Miller Center for Contemporary Judaic Studies at the University of Miami**, and the **Holocaust Memorial Miami Beach** to present the Screening the Holocaust Film Series.

At this time of incredible challenge and change brought on by the global pandemic, the films presented in the series celebrated our resilience, our diversity, and our capacity for creativity and inspiring tolerance and cultural understanding. More than **4,000 audience members** joined in viewing this meaningful and poignant series.

Pictured top to bottom: **Exit: Music**, → **Shores of Light**, and **The Tattooed Torah**





+

•

○

Resistance
dir. Jonathan Jakubowicz



39,000

Total audience served
through MJFF's year-round program

95

Film events presented
during MJFF's year-round program

64

Guest speakers and filmmakers who participated
in Q&A's, panels, and talk-backs
during MJFF's year-round program

“50 Best Film Festivals in the World”

For the second year in a row, the Miami Jewish Film Festival was named one of the **"50 Best Film Festivals in the World"** by MovieMaker Magazine, one of the film industry's most celebrated publications. We are so deeply proud to once again receive this distinct honor, the **first time ever** that a Jewish film festival has not only been recognized by this prestigious magazine, but twice in consecutive years. The Miami Jewish Film Festival is also the **only Florida film festival included in this year's edition**. Since being launched 24 years ago, the Miami Jewish Film Festival has proved its relevance year after year and has been one of the driving forces behind the circulation of Jewish and Israeli films and talents around the world, even in places where Jewish films usually don't have access.



“Film opens
doors to ideas
both intellectual
and visual,
relates
experience, and
energizes
creativity.”

– MJFF supporter



Social Media Growth

MJFF expanded to reach and move more audiences across the world than ever before. Beyond our online programming, which served nearly **100,000 audience members** in total this year from around the globe, the Festival grew its social media reach to record numbers. With more than **3 million views on the web** and over **76,000 views on YouTube** and **270,000 views on Facebook** alone, MJFF drew nearly **750,000 new viewers** this year, due, in part to the rapid expansion of our online programs during the pandemic.



15,500
Followers /
Increase of
10,300
Followers
from 2020



4,500
Followers /
Increase of
3,200
Followers
from 2020



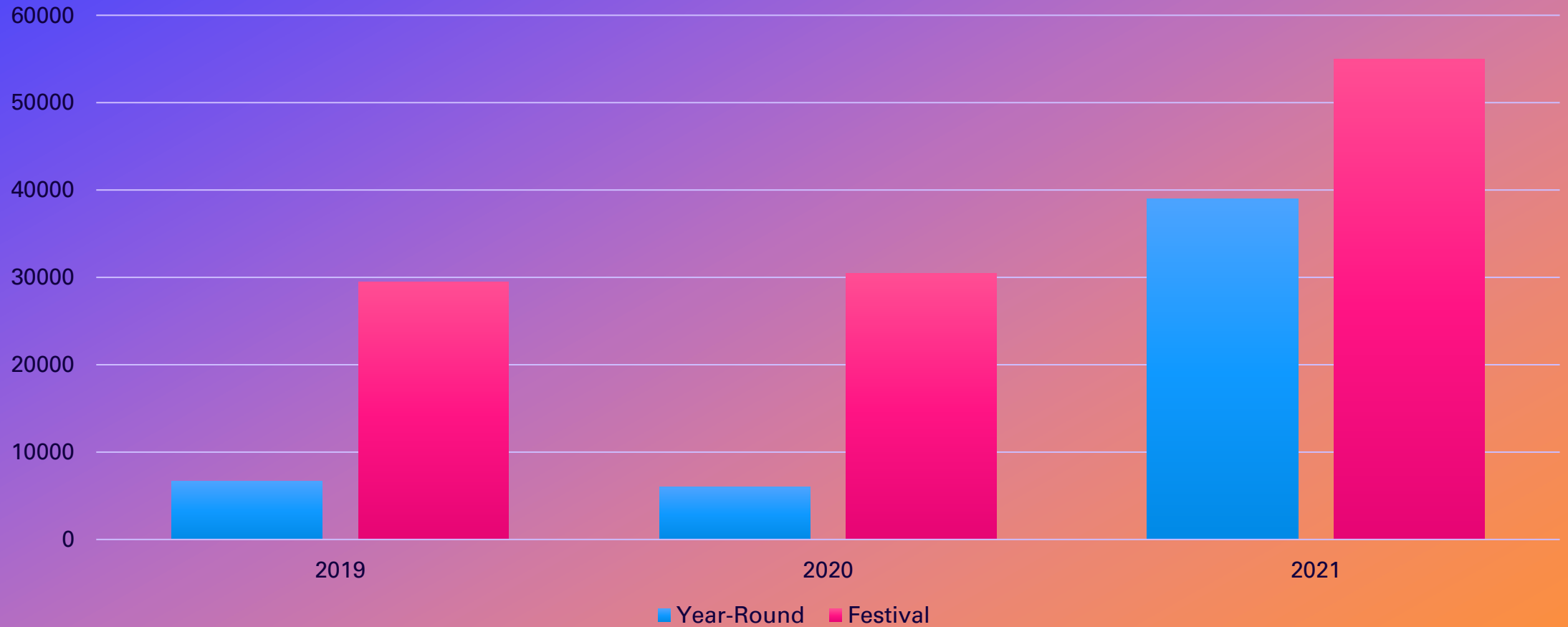
847
Followers /
Increase of
100
Followers
from 2020



645
Subscribers /
Launched in 2021



Annual Audience Growth



PRESENTING SPONSORS



PRODUCING SPONSORS



CRESCENT HEIGHTS



MIAMI BEACH



SUPPORTING SPONSORS



————— **THANK YOU TO OUR FILM SOCIETY SPONSORS** —————

Deborah Kaufman
& Moe Alkobadi
Tammy & Gil Aronson
Linda Schechter & Bob Berrin
Dea & Gary Birnberg
The Scheck & Bonwitt Families
Danny Mizrahi & Robert Bourne
Irma & Norman Braman
Susan & Steven Caller
Moj & Robert Danial
Raquel & Riccardo Di Capua
Susie & Jon Diamond
Michelle & Robert Diener
Evelyn & Sergio Faigenblat
Paula & Mickey Finkle
Julie Franklin
Mikki & Morris Futernick
Ella Gelvan
Barbara & Robert Goldfarb
Barry Gurland

Jodi & Frank Hessel
Marcia & Joel Hochberg
Faye Holand
Judith & Jonathon Hyde
Evelyn & Shmuel Katz
Elaine & Danny Katz
Lizbeth & George Krupp
Linda & Murray Laulicht
Marc Levin
Rhoda & Morris Levitt
Diane & Alan Lieberman
Joan Schaeffer & Roberta Mandel
Alison & Rick Mars
Tamar Roodner & Benjamin Nahum
Maxene & Eugene Posman
Lisa & David Pulver
Efrat Zarren-Zohar
& Avi Rosenberg
Elena & Lee Salomon
Amy & David Scharlin

Drs. Ellen Greenebaum
& Simeon Schwartz
Ronna & Mike Segal
Lily S. & David Serviansky
Jayne Shapiro
Jacqueline Simkin
Sandra Simon
Sharon & Howard Socol
Cindy & Mark Soloway
Linda & Bob Spiegelman
Roz Spodek
Dr. and Mrs. Elliott & Tracey Stein
Jodi & Paul Tartell
Dr. & Mrs. Michael Troner
Judith & Morris Tuchman
Hedy & Daniel Whitebook
Jessie Wolfson
Marsha & Frank Wolland
Kandy Kramer & Richard Yulman
Jania Victoria & Dean Ziff



+

•

○

When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit
dir. Caroline Link