**31st JEWISH CULTURE FESTIVAL | WATER | press info**

This year, Jewish Culture Festival in Krakow will be held between June 24th and July 3rd, 2022 in Krakow’s Jewish quarter – Kazimierz.

This will be the third edition of the festival, dedicated to elements. 29th edition was dedicated to the earth (2019), anniversary 30th edition in 2020 was dedicated to the fire preceeded by Prolog 30th JCF in 2020. This year the main point of reference for festival events will be water: its ritual and religious functions, symbolics and connotations, as well as very practical aspects, including climate change issues.

Festival Tent will be a very center of the festival already for the third time. It will be a venue for most of the festival events. From morning until late evening our audience will participate in lectures, discussions, live radio broadcasts, will listen to live DJ-sets or concerts – with no entrance fee. Lectures will have two major topics: the first one is water (lectures by Konstanty Gebert, Małgorzata Lebda, Ifor Duncan, rabbi Boaz Pash, Janusz Makuch, among others), and the oether one: anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism (Yosi Klein Halevi, Stanisław Krajewski, prof. Jan Hartman). The second theme is not only a consequence of growing hatred towards Jews and Israel in the world but is also based in a strong belief that the water of life (Hebr.: mayim hayim) has a power of purification and could help repairing the relations between the world and the Jews and Israel.

In the Festival Tent we will also host a series of Workshops for Seniors, interdisciplinary events organized by our volunteers for senior citizens of Krakow, as well as Literary Program (featuring authors like Anna Bikont, prof. Gotz Aly, Igor Jarek, Elżbieta Łapczyńska, Łukasz Barys, Olga Drenda) organized in cooperation with the Krakow Festival Office. Legendary Polish television personality and a great film critic and director – Stanisław Janicki, will present two Yiddish films produced in Poland before and after WWII.

Two series of events we prepared together with our new partner institutions from Italy and Germany. Living Under Water – series of presentations, publications and an exhibition are being prepared with Beit Venezia. A Home for Jewish Culture, whereas series of lectures, debates and workshops under the common title Future of Memory curated by Max Czollek were organized with Coalition for Pluralistic Public Discourse, and will discuss a role of memory and our past in our perception of nowadays and of the future. All above mentioned events will be held in English or simultaneously translated into English.

Following success of Kumzits – last year’s series of artistic interventions in Kazimierz, this year we invite you to a project called Maiseh – series of site-specific projects by international (Polish, Israeli and German) artists that are inspiried by legends and stories about Kazimierz, since the word ‘meiseh’ in Yiddish means: ‘a story’.

Music has become a sign of quality for the Jewish Culture Festival in Krakow. This year the main festival stage in the Tempel synagogue will host: Frank London and his recent project Ghetto Songs, featuring Sveta Kundish, well known in Krakow from last year’s first in Poland Female Cantors’ Concert; Jeremiah Lockwood, known from past appearances as a leader of The Sway Machinery will present Cantors’ Concert with leading cantors: Yaakov Lemmer, Shimi Miller, Yoel Kohn accompanied by Polish Airis String Quartet. On Friday evening, just before Shabbat, you will have a chance to participate in a memorable concert by Bester Quartet and Grażyna Auguścik, Dorota Miśkiewicz and Jorgos Skolias – under the title Get To Tango, featuring music by D. Bajgelman from Łódź. For the final night of the festival, we will invite you to special concert: performed by Liraz – Israeli singer and actress of Persian origin will present her recent album Roya – a tribute to all women, who were made silent because of social or religious restrictions, and cannot present their stories themselves. Israeli group Malox, formed by brothers Assaf and Eyal Talmudi together with Polish singer Maniucha Bikont will perform a series of concerts that will become their new live album. Beside these concerts, Alchemia club will host (after long pandemic break) famous festival’s Night Sessions – a really unpredictable, improvised musical trips in all possible directions.

Classics at Noon – series of classical music concerts held at noon on Sunday – will be presented twice at the 31st JCF. First concert will be performed by Ukrainian String Quartet in the Tempel Synagogue, the second one – by Jeremiah Lockwood and cantor Joel Kohn will present art of hazzanut in the Festival Tent. Speaking about Ukrainian elements in JCF’s program, we will also organize a special tour of Kazimierz in Ukrainian for the refugees’ families living now in Krakow; there will be also a workshop of Jewish songs from Ukraine by Ukrainian artist Sveta Kundish, as well as workshop of painting in the mezen technique – very popular in Ukraine.

Alltogether there will be more than 80 events in the main program of the festival. Many of them (concerts, lectures) will be streamed live on our special streaming platform 31.jewishfestival.pl and available there also after the end of the festival. Main program of the festival, organzied by the Jewish Culture Festival Society will be accompanied by a program prepared by our partners, including JCC Krakow and Galicia Jewish Museum.

All events in the Festival Tent will be free of charge. Tickets to the concerts are available at 31.jewishfestival.pl Tickets to the accompanying events will be available only at the organizers of the events. Additional information and materials may be found by clicking on the links below (coming soon)

**Golden Ages: Brooklyn cantorial revival today**

**Press Release**

In today’s Brooklyn, there is a remarkable music revival bubbling with life, hidden away from view of most music fans. It is located in communities in Williamsburg and Borough Park, and its key players are young Chassidic singers. In the ultra-Orthodox community, older forms of Jewish music have largely been displaced by pop-music that sounds a lot like what you would hear on the mainstream radio, but with lyrics in Yiddish or prayer book Hebrew, tailored to pious religious themes. A small but vibrant group of young singers have taken up the style of pre-World War Two cantorial music as their art form of choice, performing tracks recorded almost a century ago as their key repertoire. While some of these singers grew up in families with elder cantors they could learn from, other artists discovered the music directly from old records. In what might look to outsiders like an environment that discourages self-expression, these artists delve into the past to find their own expressive style. Produced by scholar and musician Jeremiah Lockwood and recorded by engineer Gabe Roth at Brooklyn’s home of soul, Daptone Studios, *Golden Ages* is a celebration of new sounds culled from the hidden sonic world of “golden age” cantorial music.

The artists documented on this album, including luminaries like Yanky Lemmer, Yoel Kohn and Shimmy Miller, create new music shimmering with vitality and muscular virtuosity, but one with deep roots in the world of old Jewish sacred records. At the dawn of the 20th century, Jewish listeners were entranced by a new style of recorded cantorial music that was inspired by the synagogue but tailored to the dramatic format of new recording technology. Star cantors like Zawel Kwartin, Gershon Sirota and Yossele Rosenblatt offered Jewish listeners a musical representation of their spiritual lives committed to wax. The deeply emotive and wildly dramatic sound of cantorial records was a pop music phenomenon that was supported by impassioned fans, who bought records, went to cantorial concerts and immersed themselves in the sounds of prayer leading in the synagogue in a culture of sacred listening that has disappeared from Jewish life. On *Golden Ages*, cantorial revivalists brilliantly evoke deep listening practices that once permeated Jewish religious life, inviting listeners on a journey into the archive of sacred sound.

The recording star cantors of the 1920s imagined themselves as defenders of the folkloric Jewish past, endangered by the transformations of modernity. At the same time, cantorial music itself is deeply modern, twisting and transforming elements of old Jewish sound into art and personal expression. Cantorial revivalists of the 2020s walk in the footsteps of the old masters, transforming sounds of the past with new energy to address new needs for expressive power and soulful truth telling. Their music is a revolutionary new step in Jewish music, commandeering the skill and sound of an old sacred art form and harnessing it to the energy of Brooklyn today.

**MAŁOPOLSKA REGION IS A PARTNER OF THE 31st JEWISH CULTURE FESTIVAL**



 

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