

# FilmTalk

## Jews: Heroes and Stars

Lectures are held at the Wiener Library and begin at 7.00pm. Admission is free. Places must be reserved in advance by emailing or telephoning the Leo Baeck Institute email: [info@leobaeck.co.uk](mailto:info@leobaeck.co.uk) tel: 020 7580 3493

Latecomers may not be admitted.

The Wiener Library, 4 Devonshire Street, London W1W 5BH  
*Underground: Great Portland Street, Regent's Park. Bus: C2, 18, 27, 30, 88, 135*

[www.leobaeck.co.uk](http://www.leobaeck.co.uk)  
[www.wienerlibrary.co.uk](http://www.wienerlibrary.co.uk)

**The Wiener Library**  
Institute of Contemporary History

**LEO BAECK**  
INSTITUTE LONDON

Lecture series organised by  
The Leo Baeck Institute London  
and The Wiener Library

**FilmTalk** 2008/9 focuses on the theme of *Jews: Heroes and Stars*. *FilmTalk* examines mainstream feature films and art house films from the perspective of contemporary Jewish history. What vision of Jewish masculinity is offered by Paul Newman in *Exodus*? What kind of Jewishness is played out by Barbra Streisand in *Funny Girl* and other films that made her a star? And what is so special about a musical set in the borscht-belt, like *Dirty Dancing*? *FilmTalk* stresses film as much as talk. The lectures are 20-25 minutes long and are followed or intercut with substantial excerpts from the film under review.

# Jews: Heroes and Stars

**Ronny Loewy**

German Film Museum Frankfurt

**Flight or Exodus. Holocaust Survivors and Illegal Immigration to Palestine**

**Tuesday, 28 October 2008, 6pm**

In *The Illegals* (Meyer Levin, 1947) filmmakers escort Holocaust survivors on their way through Europe, finally embarking on battered ships hoping to reach Palestine. This semi-documentary was filmed on a real ship of the Jewish underground. Later Otto Preminger tells a similar story in his large-scale production *Exodus* (1961), starring Paul Newman and Eve Marie Saint.

Ronny Loewy, born in Tel Aviv, works for the German Film Institute in Frankfurt/Main. He was curator of the 1987 exhibition *From Babelsberg to Hollywood. Film Emigration out of Nazi Germany* and has written on topics such as *Film in Exile and Holocaust & Film*. He has directed several documentary films. From 1992 to 2005 he was co-publisher of the magazine *Filmexil*. He is project manager of *Cinematography of the Holocaust* in cooperation with the Fritz Bauer Institute.

Please note that this event starts at 6pm. From 6-7pm, *The Illegals* will be shown, followed by a short break. The lecture, with more excerpts from both films, starts at 7.15pm.

**Prof Richard Dyer**

King's College London

**Blacks and Jews, Song and Dance**

**Thursday, 20 November 2008, 7pm**

There is a long history of interactions between Jews and African-Americans in popular culture, sometimes affirming an affinity between them, sometimes more fraught. This talk looks especially at two films, *The Jazz Singer* (1927), which equates black and Jewish music, and *Dirty Dancing* (1987), where black dance seems more of an alternative to respectable Jewish culture.

Richard Dyer teaches Film Studies at King's College London. His books include *Stars, Heavenly Bodies, Now You See it, White, Only Entertainment, The Matter of Images, The Culture of Queers and Pastiche*.

**Dr Martin O'Shaughnessy**

Nottingham Trent University

**Renoir's La Grande Illusion (1937): An Ambiguous Masterpiece**

**Wednesday, 18 March 2009, 7pm**

Widely seen as the greatest anti-war film, Renoir's *La Grande Illusion* was initially seen as bravely anti-racist, not least because it gave a starring role to Jewish actor Marcel Dalio. After the Second World War, it would be accused of latent antisemitism in the way French Officer Rosenthal was portrayed, an accusation that still lingers. Why this ambiguity? And what do we make of the unacknowledged Jewishness of the famous Austrian actor Erich von Stroheim in the role of the Prussian officer von Rauffenstein?

Martin O'Shaughnessy is Reader in Film Studies at Nottingham Trent University. He has written widely on French film and is the author of *Jean Renoir* (Manchester University Press 2000) and *The New Face of Political Cinema* (Berghahn 2007). He has just completed a book on *La Grande Illusion* for I. B. Tauris.

**Dr Michele Aaron**

University of Birmingham

**Well Hello Gorgeous: Barbra Streisand as the Jewish Diva**

**Thursday, 7 May 2009, 7pm**

Streisand has had a phenomenally successful career and is adored by millions. Yet she splits opinion, not only on the subject of her beauty but within fierce criticism of her work that finds her too pushy and egocentric. She is both 'unwimpy' woman and 'unwaspy' star. In this lecture, through *Funny Girl* (1968) especially, we will consider how these two connect, how Streisand's femininity and feminism, and her Jewishness influence her appeal.

Dr Michele Aaron is senior lecturer in Film and American Studies at the University of Birmingham. Author of *Spectatorship: The Power of Looking On* (2007) and editor of two books on contemporary culture (1999 and 2004), she has published widely on queer film and theory, and on Jewishness and gender. She is currently completing a book entitled *Death and the Moving Image*.