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ARTS

# REELAbilities Boston examines the lives of people with disabilities

By Nancy Shohet West | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT FEBRUARY 02, 2012



BOSTON JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL

A scene from “Anita,” a REELAbilities film from Argentina that is being screened next Wednesday at the West Newton Cinema.

As communications and marketing manager of the Boston Jewish Film Festival, **Jeff**

**Remz** is accustomed to thinking about what matters to the Jewish community. But the films on people with disabilities that his organization is screening beginning tonight are important, as Remz said, “to the entire film-going public.

“Disabilities don’t know boundaries by way of country, ethnicity, religion, or community.” said Remz. “Yes, we are the *Jewish* Film Festival, but we believe that REELAbilities gives us a chance to expand awareness of disabilities.”

It is a dramatic departure for the BJFF, since only one of the six films included in Boston’s REELAbilities festival has a Jewish theme. Remz has already seen all six films himself, and is hard-pressed to name his favorite.

All of them, he said, “introduced me to a class of people who are striving to succeed and want to express themselves.”

One that particularly caught his attention was “Shooting Beauty,” a documentary made in Watertown by a photographer who works with a woman who has cerebral palsy, and fashioned a camera that people with this disability can use “to show through film how they are seeing life,” as Remz put it. Another favorite is “Warrior Champions,” which tells the story of Iraqi war veterans, now amputees, as they were training and competing to qualify for the 2008 Paralympic Games in Beijing.

“I’m interested in sports anyway, but to see these people who have suffered a tremendous amount while representing their country in battle, and are now taking a great deal of pride in representing the US in a totally different way” is unforgettable, Remz said.

The festival begins with “My Spectacular Theater,” a Chinese film about a young man who finds refuge in a Beijing movie house where all of the patrons are blind, being screened at 6:30 tonight at the Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown.

The screenings continue through next Wednesday at Arlington’s Capitol Theatre, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and the West Newton Cinema. Some films will feature a question-and-answer session.

“People go to films to be entertained, but films can also educate, and that’s what REELAbilities does,” Remz said. “It makes us more aware of people with disabilities, and reminds us of the many ways they are like you or me. Whether the disability under question is Down syndrome or cerebral palsy or amputation or autism, it’s important to see that these people thoroughly live their lives, contribute to their community, and seek to find their own meaning of happiness.”

Tickets are \$10; \$9 for seniors, students, and members of the MFA, Coolidge Corner Theatre, and WGBH; and \$6 for groups of at least 10. People with disabilities will be admitted free.

For more details, including a full schedule, go to [www.bjff.org](http://www.bjff.org).

**POETRY ON CAMPUS:** Poet **Carolyn Forché**, whose award-winning collections include “Blue Hour,” “The Angel of History,” “The Country Between Us,” and “Gathering the Tribes,” will read from her work on Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. at the Sorenson Center for the Arts, Babson College, 231 Forest St., Wellesley.

Admission is free. For more information, call 781-239-4623 or go to [www.babson.edu](http://www.babson.edu).

**MUSIC OF MANY KINDS:** The Greek band Skordalia will play Saturday from 7 to 10 p.m. at Sorento’s Restaurant, 128 Main St., Marlborough. The band’s **Dean Lampros** is one of a very small group of musicians worldwide who performs on the santouri, the Greek version of the hammered dulcimer. For more information, call 508-486-0900.

In its first concert of the new year, the Lexington Symphony presents Haydn’s Symphony No. 43 “Mercury,” and the Nielsen Clarinet Concerto, featuring the ensemble’s principal clarinetist, **William Kirkley**. The concert is on Saturday at 8 p.m. in Cary Hall, 1605 Massachusetts Ave., Lexington. Tickets range from \$20 to \$50, and are available at [www.lexingtonsymphony.org](http://www.lexingtonsymphony.org), by phone at 781-523-9009, or in person at the Crafty Yankee Center, 1838 Mass Ave.

Internationally renowned musician **Jim Scott**; saxophonist, flutist, and singer **Stan Strickland**; singer-songwriter **Fred Small**; **Elke Jahns**, who specializes in Native

American flute melodies; and dancer **Maya Apfelbaum** have combined their talents for a concert supporting the preservation of the Alewife Reservation's Silver Maple Forest. The Belmont Uplands benefit event starts at 7:30 p.m. Saturday at First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, 630 Massachusetts Ave. in Arlington. Tickets are \$18 in advance, \$20 at the door; students \$10; children free. For more information or to purchase tickets, go to [www.belmontcoalition.org](http://www.belmontcoalition.org).

Southern Rail brings high-energy bluegrass music to the Homegrown Coffeehouse at 8 p.m. Saturday at First Parish in Needham, 23 Dedham Ave. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$18, \$15 for students and seniors, and are available at [www.uuneedham.org](http://www.uuneedham.org). For details, call 781-444-7478.

The **Guy Van Duser** and **Billy Novick** Jazz Duo will perform Sunday at 3 p.m. at Goodnow Library, 21 Concord Road in Sudbury. Admission is free and refreshments will be served. For more, call 978-443-1035.

On Sunday at 3 p.m., pianist **Igor Lovchinsky** will perform a concert at the Weston Public Library, 87 School St. Lovchinsky was born in Russia and began to play the piano at age 2. By the age of 4, he was performing recitals for friends and family, as well as composing and improvising music. Lovchinsky is pursuing a doctorate in physics at Harvard University while still performing music. The concert is free, but seating is limited. For more information, call 781- 891-8972 or go to [www.westonlibrary.org](http://www.westonlibrary.org).

**COUNT THE BIRDIES:** The Massachusetts Audubon Society is recruiting volunteers for its annual Focus on Feeders winter bird count Saturday and Sunday.

Birding enthusiasts of all abilities are asked to list the species and numbers seen at specific times at feeders and around yards. Standardized forms to track the information and submit it to Mass Audubon are at [www.massaudubon.org](http://www.massaudubon.org). Names of participants will be entered in a random drawing to win one of several prizes.

**ANIMAL ART:** Artist of the Month at Dover Town Library, 56 Dedham St., is award-winning Cape Ann resident **B.J. Wayne**.

The display features 16 of Wayne's horse and dog paintings, all available for purchase, and runs through Feb. 27.

Call 508-785-8113 or go to [www.dovertownlibrary.org](http://www.dovertownlibrary.org).

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