

The Non-Stop Jewish Cultural Scene

Interested in Jewish cultural events? The DC area hosts many festivals and cultural events throughout the year. The Edlavitch DCJCC has combined their film and music festival into [JxJ](#), a multidisciplinary arts project. This festival brings films and music with a variety of Jewish themes from around the world to the DC area. It offers a glimpse of the Jewish world and its history in a low-cost, low-barrier format. JxJ also brings Jewish musicians and groups from around the world. With performances at the DCJCC and around the community, the festival hosts pop, Broadway, jazz, klezmer, folk and children's music. The yearly Northern Virginia International Jewish Film Festival has screened films from the US, Israel, England, The Czech Republic, Poland, and Germany.

February is Jewish Disabilities Awareness Month, part of which is "[Reelabilites](#)" film festival, sponsored by the JCCs of Greater Washington and Northern Virginia, Sunflower Bakery Washington Society for Jewish Deaf, and many others. The festival presents award-winning films, accompanied by discussions and other engaging programs which bring together the community to explore, discuss and celebrate the diversity of our shared human experience. "Reelabilites" films will be screened at several venues throughout the Greater Washington DC area.

Another festival showcasing local talent and talent from afar is the [Israeli Dance Festival DC](#), which takes place in the spring. Dance troupes with performers who range from middle-school-age to middle age, take the stage and bring Jewish and Israeli culture – old and new – to life.

The [Capital Fringe Festival](#), held every July, may seem an unlikely place to find Jewish arts, but each year, among the self-selected presenting artists, are invariably a cadre of Jewishly themed works. In 2012 the festival brought the innovative "The Dybbuk Between Two Worlds" puppet show and in 2013 featured "Fallbeil," a drama that tells the story of two young women — one confronting Nazi Germany, the other faced with the ongoing Middle East conflict, and Jerusalem-born and-raised storyteller Noa Baum with her inspiring "Impossible to Translate But I'll Try — True-Life Israeli Stories." Be sure to check the festival website for a schedule of productions.

November is Jewish Book Month and the JCCs of [Greater Washington](#) and [Northern Virginia](#) host simultaneous book festivals at the beginning of the month. A little earlier, in October, the Washington DC JCC hosts the Hyman S. & Freda Bernstein Jewish Literary Festival. These festivals bring in some of the most sought after authors to present their latest work.

Can't wait for a festival to bring you the latest in Jewish arts? The DC area has plenty of year-round venues to choose from. The critically acclaimed [Theater J](#) stages productions from the best and most innovative playwrights. Hailed by The New York Times as "The Premier Theater for Premieres," and nominated for over fifty Helen Hayes Awards, Theater J proves, season after season, that Jewish culture has a "distinctive urban voice and social vision

[Sixth & I Historic Synagogue](#) offers a unique mix of religious, spiritual, educational and entertaining programming. Their "multi-denominational and non-membership approach" attracts young professionals (as well as families and baby boomers) to "timely, resonant, provocative, and affordable programs with authors, musicians, politicians, comedians, filmmakers, journalists, actors, chefs, and other thought leaders."

For music lovers, the [Washington Performing Arts Society](#) brings classical performers to some of the largest venues in the area, like the Kennedy Center and Strathmore. Many of these performers were raised and trained in Israel, like Itzhak Perlman, Inon Barnatan, Amit Peled and Shai Wosner. [Pro Musica Hebraica](#) is "an organization dedicated to bringing neglected Jewish music to the concert hall." Their previous performances have highlighted Modern European Music, Interwar music, a Yiddish winter journey, Baroque Jewish music, Russian Jewish music, and more. For a more intimate setting, the Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington hosts the "Artists of Excellence" series and several concerts each year. These concerts bring renowned artists and rising stars to an affordable and accessible venue.

All the festivals, venues, and organizations mentioned above give the DC area its rich and varied Jewish cultural flavor. However, you never know who will pop up in the most unexpected of places. Matisyahu at the 930 club... Amir Gwirtzman at the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage... Benny Sharoni at Blues Alley... Israeli films at the East Street Cinema. Check with Jconnect regularly to find upcoming cultural events in the DC area. Better yet – sign up to receive our weekly emails and you'll never miss a thing.