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JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH IN MAY 2018 WILL CELEBRATE
AMERICAN JEWS AND MUSIC

Newly Revamped JAHM Website Provides Activities and Resources for 2018 Celebration

PHILADELPHIA—**Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM)**, a national commemoration of the contributions that American Jews have made to the fabric of our nation’s history, culture, and society, announces the theme for the May 2018 celebration: **American Jews and Music**. A newly revamped website, www.jahm.us, offers interactive content and educational resources to facilitate the nationwide engagement around this year’s edition. First established by presidential proclamation in 2006 and renewed every year since, JAHM encourages people of all backgrounds to learn about and draw inspiration from the more than 360-year history of Jewish life in this country.

“The stories of American Jews are woven into the rich history of this diverse nation,” says **Ivy Barsky**, CEO and Gwen Goodman Director of the **National Museum of American Jewish History**, the lead sponsor of JAHM. “By celebrating JAHM, we honor the values of inclusion, acceptance, and religious liberty cherished by this country. This year’s focus on *American Jews and Music* invites deeper exploration of one of the many facets of American life impacted by this community.”

JAHM's 2018 theme provides an opportunity to recognize the many American Jews who have helped create the nation's soundtrack, from patriotic anthems and classical compositions to Broadway scores and rock and roll. There are numerous examples of composers, conductors, lyricists, musicians, and singers who have been shaped by American life, society, and culture, and in turn enriched America's musical repertoire. Songwriter **Irving Berlin** (1888-1989) was an Eastern European immigrant who produced timeless hits, including *God Bless America*, while fighting for the United States in World War I. *West Side Story* composer **Leonard Bernstein** (1918-1990)—whose centennial birthday is currently being observed worldwide—used the power of music to respond to the political and social crises of his day. Singer **Fanny Brice** (1891-1951), the child of Jewish immigrants, delighted audiences with her vaudeville acts, inspiring a stage and film portrayal by another widely successful singer—global stage and screen sensation **Barbra Streisand** (b. 1942). Chart-topping hits have been produced by **Bob Dylan** (b. 1941), **Carole King** (b. 1942), **Paul Simon** (b. 1941), **Regina Spektor** (b. 1980), and many more. The musical output of these creative individuals, among countless others, continues to entertain and inspire today.

“This year's theme demonstrates, once again, that American Jews have been active participants in the cultural efflorescence of our nation,” shares **Dr. Gary P. Zola**, Executive Director of The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives and a member of JAHM's Board of Directors. “America's national uniqueness derives from the cultural gifts it has imbibed from its remarkably diverse citizenry, and American Jews have always been enthusiastic participants in this endeavor. Today, perhaps more than ever, we should bear in mind the wisdom of Walt Whitman's powerful observation: America's greatness is due to its being ‘not merely a nation but a teeming nation of nations,’ and Jewish American Heritage Month is an educational opportunity to reinforce this very important lesson.”

Greg Rosenbaum, President of Palisades Associates, Inc. and chair of JAHM's Board of Directors, adds, “It is appropriate that we celebrate Jewish American contributions to music in 2018. We can hardly imagine events, from concerts in the local park to baseball games, without the songs created by Jewish Americans. However, it is not just the famous we celebrate this year, but all of those Jewish Americans who assist in making music part of the fabric of our society, whether it be volunteering to help a local orchestra, singing in a barbershop quartet on the Fourth of July, or generating support for the local high school marching band. That is what makes the story of Jewish contributions to music an American story.”

On the revamped website (www.jahm.us), visitors can find ways to observe JAHM in their own communities. The website delves into the history of American Jewish life through a detailed timeline and map. Teachers, students, and lifelong learners can peruse lesson plans and reading lists. The 2018 theme is highlighted through stories of American Jews in music across genres, and will be further explored in a forthcoming booklet produced by the National Museum of American Jewish History. All are encouraged to submit their JAHM-related events to the calendar, whether it is an exhibition, concert, gallery talk, film screening, lecture, or other program.

For more information and updates in the lead-up to JAHM, visit www.jahm.us.

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About Jewish American Heritage Month

Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM) is a national month of recognition of the more than 360-year history of Jewish contributions to American culture, celebrated in May. JAHM acknowledges the achievements of Jewish Americans in fields ranging from sports and arts and entertainment to medicine, business, science, government and military service. For more information, visit jahm.us and connect on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

About the National Museum of American Jewish History

The National Museum of American Jewish History, located on historic Independence Mall in Philadelphia, brings to life the more than 360-year history of Jews in America. Tracing the stories of how Jewish immigrants became Jewish Americans, the Museum invites visitors of all backgrounds to share their own stories and reflect on how their histories and identities shape and are shaped by the American experience. An open door for all, NMAJH honors the past and contributes to a better future by sharing the power of imagination and ideas, culture and community, leadership and service, in ways that turn inspiration into action. The National Museum of American Jewish History is located at 101 South Independence Mall East at the corner of Fifth and Market Streets in Philadelphia. Connect with the Museum on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Pinterest](#). For more information, visit NMAJH.org or call 215.923.3811.