



focus on Community

The mission of the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia is to mobilize financial and volunteer resources to address the community's most critical priorities in Philadelphia, Israel and overseas.



AMY PURDY

Jewish Federation Feature

Rami Kleinstein, Israel's pop-rock megastar, will perform on Penn's Landing on Sunday, May 17. His concert sets the stage for the spirit of Yom Ha'atzmaut — Israel Independence Day — a holiday that affords American Jews the chance to strengthen their ties with the land and people of Israel.

"The fusion of Israelis and American Jews coming to my performances ... brings a message of the beauty of Israel and its culture," says Kleinstein, who expresses pride that his concert will be the centerpiece of Federation's Israel 61–Tel Aviv 100 celebration.

A number of free programs and activities are planned from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. The entire community is invited to join in the celebration of Israel's sixty-first year of independence and the centennial anniversary of the founding of Tel Aviv, Philadelphia's sister city.

"Kleinstein's concert celebrates the richness and warmth of Israeli society, and reflects how Israelis celebrate," explains Marlene Green, who together with Phyllis Finkelstein co-chairs the event. Kleinstein, an internationally acclaimed singer, songwriter and pianist, has multi-generational appeal. His songs and albums have won bronze and gold awards.

The May 17 celebration kicks off the 2009 summer season of the PECO Multi-cultural Series at Penn's Landing. The outdoor bash, which organizers expect to draw thousands of participants, also marks the 100th anniversary of Tel Aviv — the center of Israel's commercial, financial and cultural life.

Festival participants will also enjoy an Israeli craft marketplace and Middle Eastern delicacies served up by food vendors. Group bus transportation to Penn's Landing is available through some local synagogues.

FREE DRAWING OF VACATION PACKAGE

"Federation is thrilled to hold a free drawing for a deluxe vacation package to Israel during the event," notes Finkelstein. The package includes two round-trip EL AL Israel Airlines tickets to Israel and four nights at the five-star Inbal Jerusalem Hotel, with double-room accommodations. Corporate sponsors EL



Israel at 61 and Tel Aviv at 100: Celebrating Their Ties to Philadelphia

AL Israel Airlines and the Inbal Jerusalem Hotel are donating this package. Generous event sponsors also include Blank Rome LLP; ShopRite; and Zarwin, Baum, DeVito, Kaplan, Schaer and Toddy, P.C.

EL AL's support of the event highlights the company's appreciation of the 60-year partnership with the Philadelphia area, according to EL AL spokesperson Sheryl Stein. EL AL's sponsorship includes a financial contribution in addition to the airline tickets.

She notes that in addition to four nights at the Inbal, Jerusalem's luxury hotel, the drawing will give "lucky Philadelphia-area passengers a firsthand taste of warm Israeli hospitality aboard the national airline."

LOCAL CELEBRATIONS STRENGTHEN ISRAEL

"This celebration provides a window for the wider community to take a peek at what Israel has to offer," notes Daniel Kutner, Israel Consul General for the Greater Philadelphia area.

Showcasing Israel's music and culture is especially important now, he says, "after the last few months, when Israel has been shown in the framework of conflict and war."

Israel is central to American Jewish identity, according to Kutner, and he feels the Kleinstein concert is a "wise choice — a great celebration of new, cool Israeli music and culture."

The greater Philadelphia area has close ties to Israel. Since 1997 Federation



RAMI KLEINSTEIN

has participated in the Partnership 2000 Program. The program promotes development in the Netivot/Sedot Negev region and builds relationships between the Philadelphia and Israeli communities.

Ties between Israel and the region are further enhanced and strengthened through Tel Aviv's designation as one of the city of Philadelphia's sister cities. The Sister Cities program links Philadelphia to 10 cities and promotes economic ties, strengthens cultural understanding and provides humanitarian assistance.

Tel Aviv's relationship to Philadelphia spans 43 years and had "quite a beginning," explains Nancy J. Gilboy, president & CEO of the International Visitors Council of Philadelphia, which administers the program. During the 1967 Six-Day War, Philadelphia Mayor James Tate and his wife were visiting Israel, so "the mayor of Tel Aviv greeted them in an improvised bomb shelter and praised them as an example of America's moral support of Israel," she says.

Over the years, Philadelphia has hosted government and business delegations, arts and education groups, and sports teams from Tel Aviv.

"My office is fortunate to work with the Israeli Consulate and Federation when Israeli delegations visit," notes Gilboy.

CELEBRATION OF TEL AVIV 100

In October, a Federation group that included co-chairs Green and Finkelstein met with Tel Aviv's mayor Ron Huldai.

"Pride in his city's past and his great hopes for the future, coupled with Philadelphia's relationship with Tel Aviv, inspired us to include the centennial of Tel Aviv at Federation's annual Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration," says Finkelstein.

"It is our joy to mark each anniversary of Israel's miraculous Independence and survival," notes Finkelstein. "It's important for the public to come and discover that, despite the challenges Israel faces, it is a vibrant, exciting and creative country worthy of our interest and support."

She echoes the lyrics of Rami Kleinstein's song, "Od Lo Tamu Kol Pla'ayich" ("Your Never-Ending Wonders"): "Our tiny country/Our beautiful country/... Your wonders are not yet finished/neither, your songs." ♦

To hear clips of Rami Kleinstein's performances, see: www.Jewishphilly.org. For more details, directions or to arrange subsidized bus transportation for a synagogue or group, call Beth Razin at: 215-832-0536 (e-mail: brazin@jfgp.org).