

EDITED BY MIKE COHEN

## ARTS &amp; ENTERTAINMENT

## 'Dead' good film is based on rabbi's tale

TIM Burton's latest film is based on a Jewish folk tale.

The *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* director was inspired to make the animated film *Corpse Bride* by a story written in the 16th century by Rabbi Isaac Luria of Safed.

In the original Jewish story, a bridegroom recites his marriage vows for a joke over a skeletal finger sticking out of the ground.

After putting his ring on the bone, the corpse rises from the ground, saying: "My husband!"

In *Corpse Bride*, shy groom, Victor (voiced by Johnny Depp), who is practicing the wedding ceremony, slides his ring on what he assumes is a stick. The corpse who emerges (voiced by Burton's fiancée Helena Bonham Carter) is a beautiful heroine.

The characters are non-Jewish, co-screenwriter John August said, "because Tim gravitates toward universal, fairy-tale qualities in his films."

Burton got the idea for the film when his late executive producer, Joe Ranft, brought him excerpts from the 16th-century legend.

"It seemed right for this particular type of stop-motion animation," Burton said. "It's like casting — you want to marry the medium with the material."

August added: "Tim's characters tend to wear darker colors and some, like the corpse bride, are no longer living, but they have a pluck and a spirit that makes you fall in love with them."



## Chanukah comes early for Jewish rock stars

CHANUCAH is coming early this year — over two months early.

While most people will wait until December 26 to celebrate the festival of light, two musicians are releasing an album of Chanukah songs on October 18.

Adam Gardner, lead singer of Guster, and Zambonis guitarist Dave Schneider have formed the group The LeeVeEs and recorded the album *Hanukkah Rocks*.

"It's funny when you have these amazing songwriters like George Gershwin and Irving Berlin who wrote Christmas songs, and they're Jewish," Gardner said.

"I don't know why the great Jewish composers didn't write any Chanukah songs."

Amazingly, the album was recorded in eight days.

Songs include *Apple Sauce or Sour Cream*, *Goyem Friends*, *Jewish Girls (At the Matzoh Ball)*, *Gelt Melts* and *At The Timeshare*.

"To make a Chanukah record, it's got to be funny," Schneider said.

The album is being released by JDub Records in conjunction with major label Reprise Records. Tracks can be heard at [www.myspace.com/theleevees](http://www.myspace.com/theleevees)

## Taliya in tune to heal world

MUSIC is a wonderful channel for healing, according to record-breaking singer Taliya.

Jerusalem-born Taliya carved her place in history by recording her song *Flower Child* in 15 different languages.

Taliya, who now lives in San Francisco, left Israel 11 years ago. She spent four years in Aberdeen, Scotland before living in Nottingham and Derbyshire. She then moved to America five years ago, settling in her current location. "As a child I was always

## Record-breaker delivers message

involved in music," she said. "The flute, organ and guitar. I also had vocal training and have been writing since I was a teenager.

"My parents were very open-minded and supportive."

Taliya is a big fan of singer-songwriters like Joni Mitchell, Bob Dylan and Kate Bush.

"I like music with a message," she said.

Taliya's first album was called *Fantasy* while her latest release is the double-CD *The 15th Language*.

The first disc features all 15

versions of *Flower Child*. Among the languages are Hebrew, Spanish, Portuguese, Japanese, Chinese, Arabic . . . and, of course, English.

The second disc features Taliya's songs, also in different languages.

"Some languages are easier than others," she laughed. "Arabic was pretty easy as I learnt some in high school. The oriental languages were difficult."

"It's a challenge to translate the song into some languages as the words don't rhyme. I recorded the translations onto cassette and learnt it phonetically."

Taliya, who describes herself as being in her 30s, was overjoyed when she saw reviews of her album online in the Palestinian newspaper *Jerusalem Times* and *Arabic Times*.

"It's important to have a solid message in music," she said. "By breaking the world record for a song sung in the most languages by the same vocalist, I have got the recognition to promote my message."

Taliya is currently touring America but hopes to bring her show to Europe.

"Music and art are wonderful channels from which artists can heal and make people ponder about subjects. Music connects the heart and mind; it's a wonderful medium."

"I hear more and more incidents of Israelis and Palestinians co-operating artistically and culturally."

"It's wonderful that politicians play on one level and artists are playing on a different level."



## on the WEB

BY NATALIE BARNES

FOR Jewish news 'straight from the ghetto', visit [www.jewschool.com](http://www.jewschool.com) — a Jewish blog from New York with a 'Hip Heeb' attitude.

This website for Jewish hipsters bills itself as "100% Kosher" and provides an irreverent look at politics and pop culture from a Jewish perspective. Hosting the most popular progressive Jewish weblog, at more than 45,000 readers per month, Jew School is a witty chronicle of all things semitic.

This slick, sometimes sick, and often funny website is intelligent and provocative, and features blogs on everything from music to racial profiling.

Countercultural and politically progressive, if you've got something to say, say it on Jew School.

## Spectre of Iraq makes the Holocaust as relevant today

A DVD box set showing harrowing Holocaust footage is just as relevant today, according to the man responsible for their release.

Ian Sadler of Eureka Video said: "It's a mental puzzle. The Holocaust was 60 years ago, but what has changed? Nothing."

"Different people in different places are still being persecuted. Mass graves are still being found in places like Bosnia and Iraq."

*The Holocaust — Persecution in Europe 1933-1945* can be bought as six separate DVDs or a boxset.

Each DVD focuses on a different aspect of the Nazis' systematic murder of the Jews.

*The Yellow Star*, an Oscar-nominated film, tells the story of the evolution of persecution. The film was made by a Holocaust camp survivor.

The subjects of the other five DVDs are: *The Liberation of Auschwitz*; *The Liberation of Majdanek*; *Theresienstadt Camp — Deception and Reality*; *Concentration Camps — Ravensbruck and Buchenwald*;



and *Concentration Camps — Dachau and Sachsenhausen*.

"I had worked with these films with a different company," Ian said. "So when the rights became available, Eureka pursued them through our agent."

Eureka was established in 1997 by Ron Benson. His father had spent some time in Dachau and writes about his experiences in a booklet accompanying the box set.

Eureka has also released *Holy*

*Mountain* featuring Hitler's propagandist Leni Riefenstahl and *Life for Life (Leben fur Leben)* about a young man who escapes from Auschwitz.

Ian said: "There will be an audience for the Holocaust collection. The BBC released their own collection earlier this year which was done in a slightly different way."

"The Holocaust is on the national curriculum, so the subject is not limited to one section of the population."

"It will appeal to students and people who want to know more about the Holocaust. It can also be used as an educational tool."

Ian describes the DVD on the liberation of Majdanek as the most harrowing as it features the hanging of the camp's commandants.

"As we are an independent company we are not chasing half a million units," Ian said. "Obviously we want things to sell, but we aren't under pressure to sell them in the thousands. We have an independent approach. We have no other agenda."

## Joey is first winner

RAMONES lead singer Joey Ramone, who died of cancer in 2001, was given a lifetime achievement award at the first Jewish Music Awards.

Both surviving members of the Ramones were in attendance at the American Museum of Jewish Heritage, along with Joey's mother and brother.

As a tribute to Joey, who was born Jeffrey Hyman, Divahn played a version of *Sheena is a Punk Rocker*, with viola and cello solos. British nu-klezmer band Oi Va Voi were named best danceable act, while French-Israeli Keren Ann won best singer/songwriter. Religious rapper Matisyahu was awarded the prize for best new approach, while Golem were winners of best Jewish punk.

Best new klezmer band were Rashanim and best hip hop Edan. The Heritage award was given to Debbie Friedman while John Zorn's Masada were the best blend of jazz and heritage. Divahn were named best Middle East band.