

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

MIDLER

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**BETTE MIDLER AND JERRY SEINFELD TO HEADLINE
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY OPENING WEEKEND**

100,000-Square-Foot Building Opens in November on Independence Mall in Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA – The National Museum of American Jewish History will celebrate the opening of its new national destination museum on Independence Mall with a Grand Opening Weekend, Nov. 12-14, headlined by entertainers Bette Midler and Jerry Seinfeld at a Saturday night Gala on Nov. 13.

In addition to the Gala, the three-day celebration will include a symposium on Friday and a Grand Opening Dedication Ceremony on Sunday with participation by prominent elected officials, national communal leaders and distinguished dignitaries.

“This landmark event is a signal achievement for the American Jewish community and all Americans,” said Michael Rosenzweig, the Museum’s president and CEO. “With the help of generous supporters across the entire country, we have brought to life one of the nation’s finest and most important museums, a place for all Americans to explore, offering a highly engaging and thought-provoking look at one ethnic group’s experience with freedom.”

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The Museum's Grand Opening Weekend begins Friday, Nov. 12 with a symposium featuring two panel discussions. The first, from 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., titled "Jewish Encounters with Freedom: Snapshots from the American Past and Present," is co-sponsored by the Jewish Studies Program of the University of Pennsylvania and the Feinstein Center for American Jewish History at Temple University. The second panel, "Crafting American Public Space," from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m., is the Murray Friedman Memorial Roundtable, co-sponsored by the American Jewish Committee.

Festivities continue with a Grand Opening Gala starting Saturday at 6 p.m. with a reception in the Museum followed by a dinner and special performances by Midler and Seinfeld under the stars in a clear-top tent on Independence Mall.

Midler is still going strong after a career of more than 40 years, four Grammys, four Golden Globes, three Emmys, a Tony Award and tons of record-breaking performances. This past January, Midler concluded her critically acclaimed Vegas extravaganza "The Showgirl Must Go On" at the Colosseum at Caesars Palace. Critics raved the show was a "razzle-dazzle spectacular" and "a fresh, sinfully satisfying distillation of her career." The show played more than 200 performances and was seen by over a half-million people in two years.

Seinfeld is an Emmy and Golden Globe Award winner, stand-up comedian, actor and writer best known for the television comedy Seinfeld (1989 – 1998), which he co-created and co-wrote.

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The show ran for nine extraordinarily successful seasons and garnered numerous accolades, including the Emmy for Outstanding Comedy Series in 1993 and a Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series in 1995, 1997 and 1998. “TV Guide’s” poll of the “Greatest Shows of All Time” listed “Seinfeld” as number one. Seinfeld can now be seen performing standup across the country on an ongoing basis.

Saturday evening will also include a Young Friends Gala that will feature cocktails, desserts and dancing for Museum supporters between 21 and 40 years of age inside the Museum.

The Museum's Grand Opening Weekend will culminate Sunday at noon with an opening dedication ceremony that will include prominent elected officials, national communal leaders and dignitaries from across the country. The program will also include the affixing of a mezuzah on the new Museum and an Open House. Timed tickets, subject to building capacity, will be distributed to registrants in advance for the Open House.

After the Grand Opening Weekend, the Museum will open to the public on Friday, Nov. 26, following a series of exclusive previews for Founding Members on Sunday Nov.21 and Monday Nov. 22.

Updated information about the Grand Opening Weekend, including how to purchase tickets and attend events, will be posted on the [Museum's website](#). For more information, contact the Museum at specialevents@nmajh.org.

A complete listing of events follows.

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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Exclusive Museum access for Founding Members ONLY.

Founding Members from across the country who have played an important role in the creation of the Museum are invited for an exclusive visit to the Museum. There will be limited availability; timed tickets will be required.

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Symposium/Panel Discussion #1

Jewish Encounters with Freedom: Snapshots from the American Past and Present

Co-Sponsored by the Jewish Studies Program of the University of Pennsylvania and the Feinstein Center for American Jewish History at Temple University. This panel, moderated by Dr. Deborah Dash Moore, director of the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies and Frederick G.L. Huetwell Professor of History at the University of Michigan, will address how the meaning and rhetoric of freedom have changed for Jews throughout their history in America.

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The panel will feature the Museum's consultant team of historians: Dr. Jonathan D. Sarna, the Joseph H. & Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University and the Museum's chief historian; Dr. Michael Berenbaum, professor of Jewish Studies and director of the Sigi Ziering Institute at American Jewish University; Dr. Pamela S. Nadell, who holds the Patrick Clendenen Chair in Women's and Gender History and is a Professor of history and director of the Jewish Studies Program at American University; and Dr. Beth S. Wenger, associate professor of history and Director of the Jewish Studies Program at the University of Pennsylvania.

1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Symposium #2

Crafting American Public Space

The Murray Friedman Memorial Roundtable, co-sponsored by the American Jewish Committee, will feature five prominent architects who have worked on civic and monumental projects in Philadelphia, and will address how public space is designed in America. Paul Goldberger, the Pulitzer Prize-winning architecture critic for "The New Yorker," will serve as moderator, and will be joined by panelists Henry Cobb of Pei Cobb Freed & Partners (N.Y.), Bernard Cywinski of Bohlin Cywinski Jackson (Philadelphia), Laurie Olin of Olin (Philadelphia), James S. Polshek of Polshek Partnership (N.Y.) (now Ennead Architects LLP) and Billie Tsien of TodWilliams Billie Tsien Architects (N.Y.). James S. Polshek is the architect of the new National Museum of American Jewish History.

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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13

6:00 p.m.

Grand Opening Gala

Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres in the Museum, followed by a formal dinner on Independence Mall to celebrate the creation and opening of the new Museum. The Gala will feature performances by Bette Midler and Jerry Seinfeld.

9:30 p.m. – 1:30 a.m.

Young Friends Gala

Featuring cocktails, desserts and dancing for members of the Museum's Young Friends group.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 14

12 noon

Grand Opening Ceremony

Join prominent elected officials, national communal leaders and dignitaries. The ceremony is free, but advance tickets are required.

1:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Museum Open House

The Museum will welcome the public with complimentary admission throughout the afternoon.

Timed tickets, subject to building capacity, will be distributed to registrants in advance.

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The Grand Opening Weekend will serve as the official opening of the [National Museum of American Jewish History](#)'s new \$150 million, 100,000-square-foot building in the heart of historic Philadelphia. It will be the only museum in the nation dedicated solely to telling the story of Jews in America.

The Museum's new five-story building on Independence Mall was designed by renowned architect James Stewart Polshek, founder of Polshek Partnership Architects (now Ennead Architects).

Encompassing 25,000 square feet of gallery space on three-and-a-half floors, the core exhibition will explore the challenges faced by Jews since their arrival on this continent in 1654, celebrating their experiences in every facet of American life and throughout every phase of the country's history. Featuring more than 1,000 artifacts, as well as films and state-of-the-art technology, the exhibition will showcase how an immigrant population flourished under freedom and will highlight the diverse backgrounds and experiences of Jews over a period of more than 350 years. An additional 5,000 square feet will be used for changing exhibitions.

The new building will also feature an Education Center, the 200-seat Dell Theater, a multipurpose event space with capacity for 600 on the fifth floor overlooking Independence Mall, a café and a Museum store.

The National Museum of American Jewish History (www.nmajh.org) is located at 101 South Independence Mall East, Philadelphia, PA 19106. Telephone is 215-923-3811. Email is info@nmajh.org.

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