

A FILM BY ABBEY JACK NEIDIK



A FILM THAT WILL SHATTER ALL YOUR PRECONCEPTIONS.

# SHEKINAH

THE INTIMATE LIFE *of* HASIDIC WOMEN



DLI PRODUCTIONS  
PRESENTS

# SHEKINAH

THE INTIMATE LIFE *of* HASIDIC WOMEN

DIRECTED BY  
ABBIE JACK NEIDIK

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PRODUCED BY  
ABBIE JACK NEIDIK AND IRENE LILIENHEIM ANGELICO

EDITING  
JEREMIAH HAYES

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER  
MUSHKA LIGHTSTONE

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER  
MARGAUX QUIMET

ORIGINAL MUSIC BY  
JOHN A. WILSON



ADVANCE SCREENING  
OCTOBER 24 AND 27 - THÉÂTRE OUTREMONT  
OCTOBER 28 TO NOVEMBER 7 - CINÉMA DU PARC

70 MIN - DOCUMENTARY - 2013 - CANADA - BILINGUAL VERSION



DISTRIBUTION

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For stills, visit [shekinahfilm.com](http://shekinahfilm.com)

For promotional video, visit: [vimeo.com/65188601](https://vimeo.com/65188601)

Follow us online at [www.dliproductions.ca](http://www.dliproductions.ca) and on [f facebook.com/shekinahfilm](https://facebook.com/shekinahfilm)

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SHEKINAH

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THE  
PARTICIPANTS

ABBEY NEIDIK, filmmaker

HANA SELLEM, bride, former student and teacher

CHANA "CHANIE" CARLEBACH, founder and principal Seminary BMC

HANNAH BOUKHOBZA, dorm counselor

CHAYA MUSHKA STERN, seminary student

DR. YAAKOV BRAWER, professor

RABBI MOISHE NEW, Montreal Torah Center

ROSE ADELSON, Sainte-Agathe resident

CAPT. G LAFRENIÈRE, Chief of Police

SHIMONA TZUKERNIK, community organizer

BRENDA COPOLOFF, Sainte-Agathe resident

RIVKIE FELDMAN, seminary student

BRACHA FELDMAN, Montreal resident

RABBI YISROEL BERNATH, Chabad NDG, Chaplain at Concordia University

DEVRA TAYAR, Bracha's friend

STUDENTS OF DES MONTS HIGH SCHOOL



## SYNOPSIS

***Shekinah: The Intimate Life of Hasidic Women*** is a feature documentary that takes us into the rarefied world of young Hasidic women living what some consider an 18th-century way of life in 21st century Québec. The women are Chabad Lubavitch, a sect of Orthodox Hasidim, one of the more conservative branches of Judaism today.

With unprecedented access, *Shekinah* explores the perspectives of these young women from school age through courtship and marriage. Their relationships with men are based on the Kabbalah, the mystical aspect of Judaism. They see God as both masculine and feminine, and marriage as pre-ordained in heaven. The laws of Torah affect almost everything they do, and still their lives are filled with great passion. They explain why “kosher” sex, with all its complex divine commandments, is as intense and blissful as Eastern Tantric practices, and why they see themselves as more liberated than most women today. Their revelations break many long-standing stereotypes and unveil the secrets of this mysterious women’s world.

*Shekinah* also explores the evolving relationships of these young women with the Jewish and French-Québécois communities around them. We see how tolerance develops and misconceptions dissolve, as both sides learn about each other and come to open their hearts and minds.

## DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT

In filming *Shekinah*, I was granted rare access to a community that is unknown, closed, and misunderstood. What I found was the opposite of what I expected. Behind the rigid, drab exterior that the Hasidic people present to the world, there exists a vibrant passionate sensuality that seems more liberating and fulfilling than that of the secular world I come from. Is Hasidism really what it appears to be? Are all the restrictions so repressive, or do they have another purpose?

The film explores the intimate life of Hasidic women. The point-of-view of the film is that there are other ways of seeing and experiencing life. The Hasids believe in the *Kabbalah*, the mystical aspect of Judaism. They believe in a primal essence called God that makes up all of creation. They say that most of the time, we are unaware of our transcendental identity and that in marriage and lovemaking it is possible to become aware of the spiritual.

If you believe that your love one is a reflection of God, it will certainly create a buzz in your life. The ordinary becomes the extra-ordinary. In our materialistic, consumer-driven world, I believe we all need a little more this kind of soul.

Ultimately, *Shekinah* is not so much about Hasidic beliefs, as it is about exploring the possibilities of looking at the world in a different way. Beneath the surface lays the potential for a much richer and more mystical life, if you want to see it.

How realistic is all this. Well, according to the Hasids and the Rolling Stones, “Its just a kiss away.”

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## THE FILMMAKERS

### Abbey Neidik: Producer/Director/Camera/ Writer

**Abbey Neidik** is an established producer, director and cameraman with over seventy films to his credit and numerous international awards including a Genie, two Academy Award nominations, a Silver Hugo, a Gold Apple, Gold Plaques, Gemini and Gémaux nominations, and many international best documentary awards, first prizes, audience awards and special honours.

In 1980 Neidik and his partner Irene Angelico formed DLI Productions. Together they produced and directed **Dark Lullabies**, a film about the effects of the Holocaust on the next generation. The film was included in The Fifty Greatest Documentaries of all Times at the International Salute to the Documentary, and represented the best of the NFB at retrospectives in London and France

Next Neidik directed **Between The Solitudes / Entre Solitudes**, about the Anglos of Quebec; **The Love Prophet and the Children of God**, is an inside look at one of today's most controversial religious cults and was awarded a Gold Plaque in Chicago. **The Cola Conquest**, that looks at Coca-Cola as a metaphor for America and American influence worldwide. Neidik next co-produced and directed **The Journey Home: A Romanian Adoption**, a tender and emotional film about Romanian orphans a decade after the fall of Ceausescu, and co-produced and co-directed **She Got Game: Coming of Age on the WTA Tour**, a unique, behind-the-scenes look at women's tennis.

More recently, Neidik produced **Vendetta Song**, which examines the tradition of honour killings in rural Kurdish tribes in Turkey; directed **Unbreakable Minds**, a poignant film that aims to de-stigmatize and humanize mental illness; co-produced and co-directed (with Angelico) **Inside the Great Magazines**, a three-part special about the inner workings of the magazine industry and the people who create them; and directed **Canadaville, USA**, about the lives of a group of Hurricane Katrina evacuees as they struggle to rebuild and break out of the cycle of poverty.

Currently, he is co-producing and directing **SpaceRace 2** about the privatization of Space and the next great turning point in human history, and **An Ill Wind**, about the effects of industrial wind turbines. Neidik's latest production is **Shekinah: the Intimate Lives of Hasidic Women**, which gives us an unprecedented look into the rarefied world of Hasidic women.

Along with his work in film, Neidik has been involved in the publication of **The Aftermath: A Survivor's Odyssey Through War-Torn Europe**, which he edited with Angelico and Mark Pendergrast. The manuscript, which was the inspiration for **Dark Lullabies**, was endorsed by Nobel Peace Prize Laureates Elie Wiesel and the Dalai Lama.

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## THE FILMMAKERS

### Irene Angelico: Producer

**Irene Angelico** is an acclaimed film director, producer and writer. Her work was included in **The Fifty Greatest Documentaries of all Times** at the international Salute to the Documentary, and selected to represent the best of the NFB's Studio D at retrospectives in London and France. She was the first woman from Quebec selected for Women in the Director's Chair in Banff and is the founding chair of CIBC-Montreal (now DOC Quebec). She is presently chair of **Magnus Opus**, a monthly program presenting the world's best documentaries.

In 1980, Angelico and her husband and partner Abbey Neidik formed DLI Productions. Together they produced and directed **Dark Lullabies** about the effects of the Holocaust on the next generation of Germans and Jews. This highly regarded film continues to be shown worldwide and has garnered many prestigious international prizes and will be featured at the **Stratford Shakespeare Festival** this summer.

Angelico went on to direct and write other international-award-winning films including **The Cola Conquest**, about Coca-Cola as a metaphor for America; **Black Coffee**, about the history and social impact of coffee and **Inside the Great Magazines**, about the first international media.

Angelico also produced and wrote many successful documentaries including **Entre Solitudes; The Love Prophet and the Children of God; She Got Game; Vendetta Song; Canadaville, USA; and Unbreakable Minds**, a poignant film that aims to humanize mental illness.

Currently, Angelico is co-producing **SpaceRace 2** about the next great turning point in human history, and **An Ill Wind**. She is also in development with **Mirror Mirror**, a visual poem about reflections. She is the producer of **Shekinah: the Intimate Lives of Hasidic Women**.

Along with her work in film, Angelico has been involved in the publication of two books. With Abbey Neidik and Mark Pendegast, she edited **The Aftermath: A Survivor's Odyssey Through War-Torn Europe**, the manuscript written by her father, which was the inspiration for **Dark Lullabies**. The Aftermath was endorsed by Nobel Peace Prize Laureates Elie Wiesel and the Dalai Lama. This year, Angelico and Yehudi Lindeman launched **The Third Seder: A Haggadah for Yom HaShoah**. Twenty-five years in the making, The Third Seder includes new rituals they created uniquely for the commemoration of Yom HaShoah.

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# THE FILMMAKERS

## Mushka Lightstone: Executive Producer

**Mushka (Monika) Lightstone** edited and co-produced "FUN" (winner of the Sundance Special Jurors Award). Bothered by the rampant violence and darkness in the film industry, she stepped out for some fresh air near her home in Hollywood, California. Gazing out onto Melrose Avenue, Lightstone faced two clashing cultures: the bars, the party scenes, and the adult entertainment on one hand, and the fervent, Hasidic Jews on the other, individuals who live according to their faith, severely limiting outside, secular influences.

Curious about these neighbors, a slice of American culture totally new to her, Lightstone picked up her camera and began to capture everything that was different to her eyes. It was fascinating to document such strong differences between teenage girls who were exposed to mainstream American culture and those that weren't. Lightstone soon began a spiritual journey into the mystical teachings of Hasidism.

Lightstone also began work on a documentary, Shekinah: the Intimate Lives of Hasidic Women. Through this 5-year project, she focused on the beautiful Hasidic mandate of transforming darkness into light through action. In 2009, she approached D.L.I. Director Abbey Neidik to film a group of Hasidic students at the Seminary BMC in Ste. Agathe, Quebec where a Hasidic wedding would take place in the public square. The wedding brought two divergent cultures together for the first time, the Hasidim with the French-speaking Quebecois. The story is a tribute to her father Bernard Dorfman, who passed on the day of the wedding.

## Margaux Ouimet: Associate Producer

**Margaux Ouimet** has been working in documentary film production for over twenty years. Born in Montreal, she began her career at the National Film Board of Canada where she was a producer and director for ten years. At the NFB, she directed a short fiction, The Sky's The Limit, and co-directed two award winning documentaries about women with disabilities and work, Le Vent dans les voiles and The Impossible Takes A Little Longer. For more than a decade, Margaux Ouimet has been working in the private industry, often in co-production with the NFB. In 1999 and 2000, she initiated and production managed a 13-part series, Pareil pas Pareil which was produced by Pixcom and broadcast for two seasons by Radio-Canada television. In 1999 as well, The Road from Kampuchea, produced by Margaux Ouimet, won Best Political Documentary and the VisionTV Humanitarian Award at Hot Docs International Festival. In 2003, La Cueva Sola, co-written and co-produced by Margaux Ouimet, won Best Canadian Documentary (medium length) at Hot Docs International Festival, and several other awards in European and Latin-American festivals. Recently, Margaux Ouimet has production managed short fictions, written several documentary scripts and directed sections of the multi-media project, Salut Riopelle! (Möbius Award), a Tram Design-NFB production.

## Jeremiah Hayes: Editor

**Jeremiah Hayes** is a Gemini Award winning director, editor, and writer whose filmmaking has been honored by a prestigious Peabody Award. For over 20 years, he has used his keen sense of storytelling to find hidden layers of meaning in over 30 film projects, (including mid, to feature length high end documentaries, as well as over sixteen television series). Twice featured at the Toronto Film Festival, his work is known for having a compassionate eye, and a style that pushes the boundaries of conventional filmmaking. Committed to excellence, and films of social relevance, he has garnered numerous accolades, and awards for his work.

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## GLOSSARY

***Bar Mitzvah/Bat Mitzvah:*** a Jewish coming of age ritual, when a boy or girl become responsible in all areas of Jewish life.

***Beshayrt:*** soul mate, ones intended.

***Chabad-Lubavitch:*** A Hasidic movement in Orthodox Judaism, founded in 18th-century Russia, which emphasizes intellectually enriching the mind with Jewish mystical concepts.

***Daven:*** to pray to God.

***Ha-Shem:*** "The Name," used as a substitution out of respect to God's name.

***Hasidim (Hassidim/Chasidim):*** "people of kindness," a branch of Orthodox Judaism that promotes Jewish mysticism and love for God and other people.

***Kabbalah (kabbala, cabbala):*** Jewish mysticism. An esoteric method of interpreting Scriptures to penetrate sacred mysteries and find fulfillment.

***Mazel:*** luck, destiny.

***Mazel Tov:*** congratulations, good luck.

***Mashiach (mashiah, moshiah):*** The Messiah, a great charismatic leader, who will lead people into a time of peace and love on Earth.

***Mikvah:*** ritual bath.

***Mitzvah:*** commandment, good deed.

***Rebbe:*** a spiritual teacher/leader.

***Rebbitsen:*** the Rabbi's wife.

***Shabbat (Shabbos):*** a Day of rest, from sundown Friday until three stars are in the sky on Saturday night.

***Shalom:*** peace, used to say both hello and goodbye.

***Shekinah (Shekhinah, Shechinah):*** the feminine attribute of the divine, as well as the divine force in creation.

***Shomer negiah:*** a person who has no physical contact with the opposite sex, other than their spouse and immediate family

***Shlukah:*** a woman emissary.

***Tznius:*** modesty in dress, language and behavior.

***Torah:*** the Five Books of Moses, the foundation narrative of the Jewish people

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## C R E D I T S

DIRECTED BY ABBEY JACK NEIDIK

PRODUCED BY ABBEY JACK NEIDIK / IRENE LILIENHEIM ANGELICO

EDITED BY JEREMIAH HAYES

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER MUSHKA LIGHTSTONE

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER MARGAUX OUMET

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BASED ON AN IDEA BY MUSHKA LIGHTSTONE

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NARRATION WRITERS ABBEY JACK NEIDIK / JEREMIAH HAYES

NARRATOR ABBEY JACK NEIDIK

ORIGINAL MUSIC JOHN A. WILSON

MUSICIANS ADAM O'CALLAHAN SOPRANO SAXOPHONE / STEPHEN OLIVERA ADDITIONAL GUITAR

CHRISTINA JULIEN VOICE / JOHN WILSON MULTI-INSTRUMENTS

MUSIC RECORDING ENGINEER MINGO L'INDIEN

MUSIC SUPERVISOR JEREMIAH HAYES

WITH THE FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION OF



The Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit

WITH THE COLLABORATION OF



TÉLÉVISION

PRINCIPAL DIRECTOR, TELEVISION NEWS JEAN PELLETIER





## C R E D I T S

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ONLINE EDITOR/COLORIST PATRICK J. CLUNE  
POST-PRODUCTION SOUND STUDIO HARMONIE  
MIX ÉRIC TESSIER  
SOUND EDITOR ÉRIC TESSIER / RONNY CABAL  
NARRATION RECORDING CHARLES THÉORET  
PRODUCTION ACCOUNTANTS GEORGE HIGHFIELD / GERRY VININSKY

SPECIAL THANKS TO  
CHANA CARLEBACH  
RABBI MOISHE NEW  
RABBI YISROEL BERNATH  
ALL THE STUDENTS AT THE BMC SEMINARY  
THE TOWN OF SAINTE-AGATHE-DES-MONTS  
BRIGITTE LOCICERO  
SYBIL DORFMAN, MORDECHAI LIGHTSTONE AND SEFIRA ROSS  
TOBEN NEIDIK, MICHAEL LILIENHEIM AND SALLY TESSLER  
GEORGES AMAR AND MICHEL SCHEFFER

WITH APPRECIATION AND THANKS TO  
ALL OUR PARTICIPANTS.

DEDICATED TO  
MOSHE CHIAM CARLEBACH  
BERNARD ABRAHAM DORFMAN

AND  
TO MY GRANDMOTHER  
JENNIE RISHIKOF (BAUBY)

P R O D U C E D   B Y



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# REVIEWS

## DAILIES

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- **Wednesday, October 30 – The Times of Israel** – *New documentary opens a hermetically closed world*, article by Renee Ghert-Zand  
[READ](#)
- **Tuesday, October 29 – The Jewish Tribune** – *Film provides unprecedented access to world of young Chassidic women*, article by Mike Cohen  
[READ](#)
- **Friday, October 25 – The Gazette** – *An eye-opening portrait of a misunderstood community*, article by Bill Brownstein  
[READ](#)
- **Thursday, October 24 – The Globe and Mail** – *With Shekinah, filmmaker Abbey Neidik hopes to overcome Hasidic stereotypes*, article by Mathew Hays  
[READ](#)
- **Thursday, October 24 – La Presse** – *Sous les draps, avec les orthodoxes*, article by Jean-Christophe Laurence  
[READ](#)
- **Thursday, October 24 – CTVM** – *Au Théâtre Outremont “Shekinah, the intimate life of Hasidic women”*
- **Saturday, October 19 – La Presse** – *Une rare incursion chez les hassidim*, chronicle by Marc Cassivi  
[READ](#)

## TELEVISION

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- **Wednesday, October 23 – Radio-Canada TV** – Interviews by Maxence Bilodeau for the Téléjournal (18:00 and 21:00)  
[WATCH](#)

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THE INTIMATE LIFE *of* HASIDIC WOMEN

## RADIO

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- **Friday, October 25 – CBC Day Break** – Interview by Jeanette Kelly with Abbey Neidik  
[LISTEN TO](#)
- **Thursday, October 24 – Radio-Canada** – Chronicle as part of *Medium large* with Catherine Perrin. A discussion about the film with Lise Ravary and Marianne Prairie.  
[LISTEN TO](#)
- **Wednesday, October 23 – CIBL FM** – Critic by Andréanne Chevalier, as part of *Escouade M* (18:00)  
[LISTEN TO](#)
- **Wednesday, October 23 – Radio Shalom** – Critic by Stanley Asher
- **Thursday, October 17 – CIBL FM** – Chronicle by Denise Kolta – as part of *Catherine et Laurent* (around 17:15)  
[LISTEN TO](#)

## WEEKLIES

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- **Monday, October 21 – The Canadian Jewish News** – *Film presents Chassidic women's attitude to intimacy*, article by Janice Arnold  
[READ](#)
- **Friday, October 11 – The Suburban** – *New film Shekinah provides unprecedented access to world of young Chassidic women*, article by Mike Cohen  
[READ](#)

## MONTHLIES

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- **Monday, October 28 – Cult Montreal** – *Shekinah explores the lives of Hasidic women*, article by Kayla Marie Hillier  
[READ](#)
- **Monday, October 28 – EMSB Newsletter** – *Students impacted by film*  
[READ](#)

SHEKINAH  
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## INTERNET

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- **Thursday, October 31 – jForum.fr** – *Shekinah: la féminité, pur reflet de la Présence de Dieu*, adaptation by Marc Brzustowski  
[READ](#)
- **Thursday, October 24 – Radio-Canada.ca** – *Regard sur la vie intime des femmes hassidiques*, as part of *Medium large*  
[READ](#)
- **Thursday, October 24 – Yahoo.com** – *Coup d'œil sur la vie hassidique*  
[READ](#)
- **Thursday, October 24 – RCI Radio Canada International** – Interviews by Margaux Ouimet with Anne-Marie Yvon  
[READ](#)
- **Wednesday, October 23 – Radio-Canada.ca** – *Shekinah: un documentaire sur la vie intime des femmes hassidiques*  
[READ](#)
- **Monday, October 21 – bill613.com** – *Film about Chassidic girls and women premieres this thursday*, article by Zvi Hershovich  
[READ](#)
- **Wednesday, October 16 – topbuzzweb.com** – *Shekinah – La vie intime des femmes hassidiques*, article by Myriam Huard  
[READ](#)
- **Wednesday, October 16 – PatWhite.com** – *Shekinah, the intimate life of Hasidic women*, article by Myriam Huard  
[READ](#)
- **Monday, October 7 – abitoftthetop.com** – *A new Documentary explores the lives of Hasidic women*, article by Gabe  
[READ](#)

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