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Produced By: Harold Messinger, Raffael Lomas, Andrew Lustig, Tracie Karasik

Camera Equipment Provided By: Jaci Chanon, Harold Messinger

Filmed At: Brandeis-Bardin Campus of the American Jewish University in Simi Valley, CA

Music Selections:

"Theme from Schindler's List"

Artist: Itzhak Perlman, John Williams, & Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra

Album: Cinema Serenade

Composed By: John Williams

"Watermark"

Artist: Enya

Album: Watermark

Composed By: Enya/Roma Ryan

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I am Jewish

By Andrew Lustig

I am the collective pride and excitement that is felt when we find out that that new actor, that great athlete, his chief of staff... is Jewish

I am the collective guilt and shame that is felt when we find out that that serial killer, that Ponzi schemer, that wife beater... is Jewish

I am the Jewish star tattooed on the chest of the teenager who chooses to rebel against his parents' and grandparents' warnings of a lonely goyim cemetery by embracing that same Judaism and making permanent his Jewish identity

I am all the words in Yiddish I've been called all my life that I still don't understand.

I am going to all three Phish shows this weekend.

I am my melody of Adon Olam. I am my melody of Adon Olam. The words may be the same but I am my melody of Adon Olam.

I am not getting Bar Mitzvahed. I am a Bar Mitzvah.

I am a concept foreign to the rest of the world. I am not Judaism. I am sleep-away camp.

I am your grandmother who's seen Chortkov and Auschwitz, who's seen '49, '67, and '73 and whose tired of trying to make peace with those people who just want to blow up buses and destroy her people.

I am the 19 year old who's seen Budrus, Don't Mess With the Zohan, and Waltz with Bashir and who thinks -- who knows -- peace is possible.

I am the complicated reason you take the cheese off of the burger you eat at the Saturday morning tailgate

I am constantly struggling to understand my Jewish identity outside of religion.

I am the Torah and not the Old Testament

I am a Kephah and not a Skull Cap

I am a Jew and not an Israeli

5,000 years old... not 60

A religion, not a country

I am never asked if I have horns or a pot of gold, if I rule the world or why I killed Jesus. I am asked where my black hat is, if I really get 8 presents on my Christmas, why my sideburns aren't super long, and if I've really never tried bacon.

I am asked what a Gefilte Fish is. I say, "I don't know. I don't like it. Nobody does. But we eat it because its what we do."

I am asked if my dad's a lawyer. I say "no... my mom is... my dad's an accountant."

I am asked if my grandparents were in the Holocaust as if it were a movie. "Yeah, they were. But luckily they were also on Schindler's List."

I am on JDate and not Match.com because, well, it's just easier that way.

I am that feeling of obligation to buy the Dead Sea salt at the mall kiosk because you know the woman's Israeli.

I am an IDF sweatshirt and the Chai around your neck. I am a \$100 Challah cover you will never use and a 5 Shekel piece of red string you will wear until it withers away. I am your Hebrew name. I am your Israeli cousins. I am your Torah portion and your 13 candles. I am your Bat Mitzvah dress and the cute Israeli soldier on your Birthright trip.

I am 18 when I discover that Israel is not actually a garden of Eden of milk and honey where Jews of all backgrounds, ethnicities, and styles of worship come together -- eternally happy and appreciative -- to do a constant Hora in the streets of the promised land.

I am still confident it will be.

I am the way your stomach forgets to be hungry and your lungs forget to breathe when the Rabbi commands the final Tekiah Gadolah and an entire congregation -- a congregation that is not any one synagogue but an entire people -- listens to what on January 1st is a ball dropping in Times Square, but today -- any day in late September or early October for the 5770th time is a Ram's horn being blown into for what seems like 10 minutes, like the 8 days the oil burned, and how David defeated Goliath, and how Moses parted the seas -- it would have been enough, dayenu -- how we won the war, and how your grandparents survived, Nes Gadol Haya Sham -- Shana Tova -- time for bagels and lox. I am Jewish.