



TAHARA

DIRECTED BY OLIVIA PEACE

WRITTEN BY JESS ZEIDMAN

**“A COMING-OF-AGE
STORY UNLIKE
ANY OTHER.”**

—NYLON

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Jewish

The Jewish Museum +

New York



Film at Lincoln Center

Jewish Museum

Film at Lincoln Center

Film Festival

MAIN CREDITS



DIRECTED BY

Olivia Peace

WRITTEN BY

Jess Zeidman

PRODUCED BY

Dasha Gorin

Madison Ginsberg

Mighty Oak

Jess Zeidman

STARRING

Rachel Sennott

Madeline Grey DeFreece

Shlomit Azouly

Daniel Taveras

Bernadette Quigley

RUN TIME

77 minutes





SYNOPSIS

In this acerbic teen comedy, a funeral becomes a battleground between best friends Carrie Lowstein (Madeline Grey DeFreece) and Hannah Rosen (Rachel Sennott). When their former Hebrew school classmate commits suicide, the two girls attend her funeral as well as the “Teen Talk-back” session hosted by their synagogue, designed to be an opportunity for them to understand grief.

Hannah, more interested in impressing her crush Tristan (Daniel Taveras), convinces Carrie to practice kissing with her, unlocking feelings that turn Carrie's world upside down. Emotions heightened, the scene develops into a biting depiction of unrequited crushes, toxic friendships, and wavering faith.

Hannah was here! ♥

BACKGROUND

I started this script when I was 19 and terrified of not being a teenager anymore. I had lived my entire life, it seemed, longing to be a teen and the idea that I could no longer claim that identity forced me to reconsider what my identity was. I knew I was Jewish. I knew I was queer. I knew I wanted to make movies. So I immortalized this feeling in a script and convinced person after person to believe in it.

Once I had convinced a team of people, we did something I really didn't think we could do: convince the staff at my childhood synagogue, Temple Beth El in Rochester, NY to let us make the movie there. And generously they agreed.

We filmed around daily services and religious school classes. We put up sound blankets as the Temple was under construction the entirety of our shoot and the walls were excavated to remove the decades worth of asbestos. We had \$100,000, fifteen days, and three lights: two real and one made out of a sheet pan. And despite this (or maybe because of it), we - an incredible team of determined, young, and endlessly innovative filmmakers - made the movie we wanted to make. We made TAHARA.

-- Jess Zeidman, Writer & Executive Producer

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The first time I read the script for *TAHARA*, I got to the scene where one of the characters pops a zit and just knew that I wanted to take it on. Beyond loving the grooming habits of the characters, the subject matter in the script resonated with me deeply. I'm all too familiar with the various trials and tribulations that pile up while coming of age as a queer Black teenager, and what struck me is I'd never see a film where characters grapple with having to break up with a best friend. What a unique trauma! How is it possible that it's been left out of films for so long? And so, we offer *TAHARA*. First of its name and first of its kind. Welcome to our brave and beloved film. We've been waiting for you. And audiences have been waiting on us.

I've been through a fair share of "Teen Talk-Back" sessions throughout middle school, high school, and college. At each event, I found that teachers and parents were woefully unprepared to intervene in meaningful ways when faced with grieving young people. After all, what is the right thing to say? And in the meantime, teen suicide rates continue to rise higher and higher with each passing year, and queer youth have the highest rate of suicide attempts.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Working on this film has given me space to begin to unpack some of the bizarre and hilarious, and unique traumas that came with navigating high school. I was lucky enough to make it to the other side, but I see that as no small miracle, especially coming from a time and place that lacked knowledge of queer representation both in real life and in media. This is a film overwhelmingly inspired by the real teens I see on Instagram- those who are not influencers. It's development involved taking a hard look at the occasionally toxic ways that young women are taught to be in community with one another. Bending genres and exploring mediums and style is a big part of what queerness means to me. And this is a very queer film. TAHARA excites me for many reasons, but a big reason I love this film is because it aims to acknowledge the important ties between the communities we exist in and the insidious closets that they force people to operate out of. And then, over the course of one chaotic day, it shows us that it's possible to speak your truth and break out.



Peace's film makes you feel all of those anxious feelings you had as a high schooler

AWARDSDAILY

Tahara's pitch-perfect tone examines the loss and betrayal, and the messy rite of passage, of falling for your best friend.

DEADLINE

"...this is a teen drama and feels like teens acted it."

**FILM
THREAT**

So much conversation can be had around this film, which is why it's a must-watch. It's a sharp dark comedy with fantastic lead performances from Madeline Grey DeFreece and Rachel Sennott.

AWARDSWATCH

A snapshot of suburban Jewish life that effortlessly confronts adolescent self-centeredness, the briskly-paced *Tahara* is a coming-of-age story unlike any other.

NYLON

RACHEL SENNOTT

RACHEL SENNOTT is an NYU-trained writer/performer who was recently profiled by Forbes, Nylon and Paper Magazine. Sennott was the lead in two back to back indie features: SHIVA BABY (TIFF, SXSW, Tribeca, LA Outfest), inspired by the critically acclaimed short film, as well as TAHARA (Slamdance, Outfest), directed by Sundance Ignite fellow Olivia Peace. Elizabeth Banks' Brownstone Productions has attached to Rachel's next feature, BOTTOMS, which she co-wrote with Emma Seligman and will also star.

As a stand up, Rachel was named one of the Top Comics to Watch of 2019 by Time Out NY, with her comedy stylings praised as "Gloria Steinem reporting undercover from the Playboy Club." Rachel also co-created the digital series AYO & RACHEL ARE SINGLE for Comedy Central, and stars in Kari Lizer's ABC series, CALL YOUR MOTHER, opposite Kyra Sedgwick.





"Carrie Lowstein" x "Carrie Lowstein" x "Carrie Lowstein" x "Carrie Lowstein" x "Carrie Lowstein" x "Carrie Lowstein" x "Carrie Lowstein" x "Carrie Lowstein" x "Carrie Lowstein" x "Carrie Lowstein"

MADLINE GREY DEFREECE

MADLINE GREY DEFREECE is a NYC based actress and graduate of Pace University's Acting for film and TV program. Recent credits include: TAHARA directed by Olivia Peace, screenplay by Jess



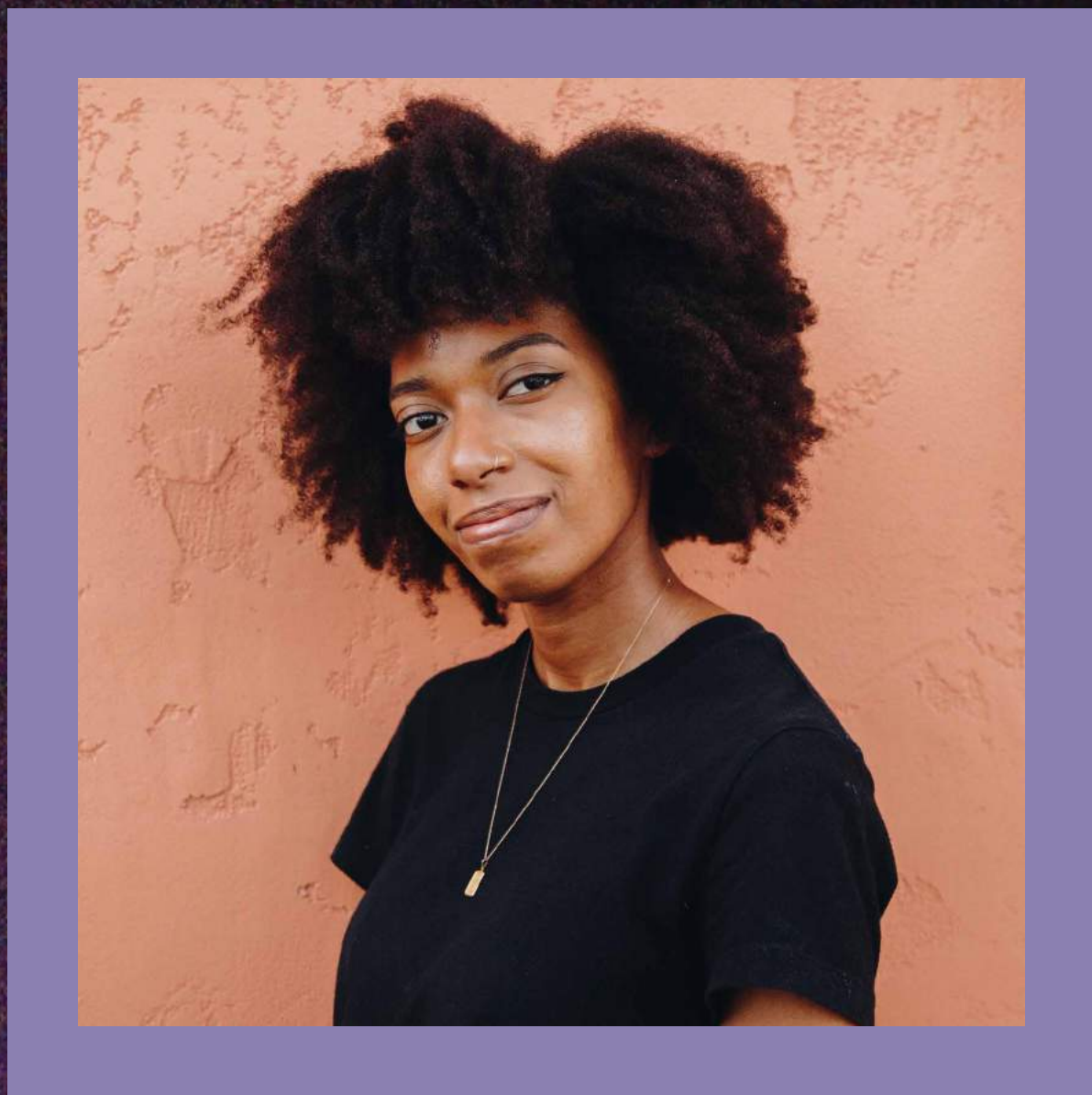
Zeidman, FANCY MAIDS at Ken Davenport's Rave Theater Festival Outstanding Play, Outstanding Performance); Hysterical Women (Best Pilot, Bentonville Film Festival); appearances on THE LAST OG (TBS), SHE'S GOTTA HAVE IT (Netflix), SUCCESSION (HBO), and GOD FRIENDED ME (CBS).



OLIVIA PEACE

Olivia Peace (she / they) is a queer Black interdisciplinary artist from Detroit, Michigan living in Los Angeles. Their artistic style has been referred to lovingly (by Jess Zeidman) as “a hat on a hat... but like in a good way, you know?” They

are heavily informed by hip hop, B-movies, and a family history of bipolar disorder. They believe that style helps to facilitate agency in people and so they set out to create work that’s replete with style.



After garnering critical and institutional praise for their 2017 short film “Pangaea,” Olivia landed a fellowship with the Sundance Institute in the year-long Ignite Fellowship Program. They spent 2019 working on their feature film debut, Tahara while still a full time MFA student

at USC. Tahara premiered in January at the 2020 Slamdance Film Festival to rave reviews, won a Jury Prize at Outfest, and screened at TIFF Next Wave.

producer & writer & executive producer & writer & executive producer & writer & executive producer & writer & executive producer

JESS ZEIDMAN

Jess Zeidman is a writer & comedian living in Brooklyn, NY who is trying her best. Raised in the wild Western part of New York State that is Rochester, NY, Jess went on to Northwestern University where she earned a BA in Radio/Television/Film with a minor in Theatre.

Her first feature TAHARA, which she wrote and co-produced, premiered at Slamdance in 2020 and went on to play at Outfest, Newfest, NYJFF at Lincoln Center, TIFF NextWave and more. She has written for the satirical websites Reductress, McSweeney's, and Above Average as well as the indie food magazine Cherry Bombe. She has also directed music videos and short films for the NYC theater company Colt Coeur alongside acclaimed director Adrienne Campbell Holt.



Balancing carefully on the Millennial/Gen Z cusp, Jess strives to tell funny, dark, inclusive stories that highlight the talents of her friends & collaborators and gets everyone paid.



FULL CAST

Carrie Lowstein

Hannah Rosen

Tristan Leibowitz

Elaina Cohen

Moreh Klein

Melissa

Rachel F

Rachel G

Zack

Natalie

Mrs. Goldstein

Hazzan Berger

Madeline Grey DeFreece

Rachel Sennott

Daniel Taveras

Shlomit Azoulay

Bernadette Quigley

Jenny Lester

Melissa Juliet Lawson

Ellie Anthony

Keith Weiss

Rachel Wender

Lynne Taylor

Martin Leubitz





FULL CREW

<i>Director</i>	Olivia Peace	<i>Script Supervisor</i>	Wesley Swanson III
<i>Writer</i>	Jess Zeidman	<i>Production Designer</i>	Jayne Clark
<i>Producers</i>	Dasha Gorin, Madison Ginsberg, Mighty Oak, and Jess Zeidman	<i>Set Dresser</i>	Genevieve O'Connell
<i>Cinematographer</i>	Tehillah de Castro	<i>Art Assistant</i>	Ethan Connell
<i>Director of Animation</i>	Emily Ann Hoffman	<i>Graphic Designers</i>	Izzy Bulling, Matthew Frost, Jesse Zhou
<i>Additional Animation</i>	Callahan Bracken	<i>Costumer Designer</i>	Avery Ginsberg
<i>VFX Artist</i>	Pimvenus Clark	<i>Costume Assistant</i>	Malloy Moseley
<i>Fabrication Assistant</i>	Dawon Kim	<i>Hair and Makeup Artist</i>	Claire Schoff
<i>Editors</i>	Olivia Peace, Troy Lewis	<i>Hair and Makeup Assistant</i>	Rachael Critchley
<i>Additional Editing</i>	Alex Ivany	<i>Sound Designer</i>	Malika Gumpangkum
<i>Casting Director</i>	Noa Isabella	<i>Sound Mixer</i>	John Wong and Kyle Schmidt
<i>Gaffer</i>	Leo Gallagher	<i>Foley Artist/Additional Sound Design</i>	Justin Enoch
<i>Colorist</i>	Abdullah Ghaza	<i>Foley Assistant</i>	Riona Oshima Ryan
<i>1st ACs</i>	Ashley Mills, Sierra Wilhoit		
<i>2nd AC</i>	Susan Lin		
<i>Best Electirc</i>	Raquel Estrada		
<i>DIT</i>	Troy Lewis		
<i>1st AD</i>	Imre Treviño		



