

JEWISH MUSEUM LONDON

Amy Winehouse: A Family Portrait

3 July – 15 September 2013



*'Being Jewish to me is about being together as a real family...
It's not about lighting candles and saying a brocha.'* Amy Winehouse, 2005

Amy Winehouse: A Family Portrait is an original exhibition about Amy Winehouse, curated by the Jewish Museum with help from her brother Alex and sister-in-law Riva. Opening in July, it is a personal and intimate exhibition about a much-loved sister.

The family have given the Jewish Museum unprecedented access to Amy's belongings, including her guitar, record collection and iconic outfits. Hosted in the heart of Amy's Camden, this exhibition celebrates her passion for music, fashion, London and her family.

Many unseen photographs of Amy's family life will be on display, revealing her strong Jewish roots and heritage as well as her close family relationships. Friday night dinners and Alex's barmitzvah are captured in these images, and vintage photographs of their beloved grandmother Cynthia show what may have been the roots of Amy's distinctive style.

Photographs are an important part of the exhibition and Amy's own battered suitcase crammed with photographs of friends and family will be on display. It is this suitcase that Amy insisted her father come to look through with her a couple of days before her death in 2011 – the last time he saw her.

Amy Winehouse: A Family Portrait will take the visitor beyond the hype to show them a more private side, and what she meant to her brother.

Alex Winehouse says,

“Amy was someone who was incredibly proud of her Jewish-London roots. Whereas other families would go to the seaside on a sunny day, we'd always go down to the East End. That was who we were, and what we were. We weren't religious, but we were traditional. I hope, in this most fitting of places, that the world gets to see this other side not just to Amy, but to our typical Jewish family.”

Abigail Morris, CEO of the Jewish Museum, says,

“Amy Winehouse was an immensely talented, iconic and inspirational singer and she was a Jewish girl from North London. It is fitting that the Jewish Museum in her beloved Camden Town should be the place to tell her story in the year that she would have celebrated her 30th birthday. We are very honoured that Alex and Riva chose the museum.”

The exhibition will follow four themes:

Judaism, family and home

This part of the exhibition will explore Amy's Jewish background and the importance of her family and home. Amy's paternal great-great-grandparents came over to England as immigrants from Belarus in the early 1890s and settled in the East End. Her great-grandfather, Benjamin Winehouse and his wife Fanny ran a barbers shop on Commercial Street.

Amy was particularly close to her grandmother Cynthia. Glamorous, independent and stylish, Cynthia had dated the musician Ronnie Scott in the 1940s, and loved jazz music. Childhood memorabilia will be on show, including a Snoopy book, a character much loved by both Alex and Amy.

Amy and London

Amy was a Londoner through and through, and this was evident in her style, attitude and cultural references. Brought up in Southgate in north London, Amy was also a frequent visitor to the East End, where members of her family had lived. Amy later moved to Camden Town as her music career took off and became strongly associated with the area.

The exhibition will explore her connections with her home town through a variety of objects such as photographs of her in Southgate and Camden and possessions from her Camden Square home, such as a vintage bar.

Music

Amy was a passionate lover of music with eclectic tastes. Her love of music was passed down through the family – members of her mother's family were musicians and her father also sings. Her love of jazz and big band were passed to her from her father, and her brother introduced her to musicians such as Ray Charles. Amy became passionate about performing at a young age and applied to attend Sylvia Young School. She later attended the BRIT school, and went on to perform with the National Jazz Orchestra. All of her influences were evident in the music that Amy wrote and performed – a fusion of jazz, hip-hop and soul. Her later passion for 60s girl groups shaped the sound and feel of her second album *Back to Black*.

Amy's record collection will be on display as well as passes for gigs and festivals. Her uniform from the Sylvia Young School will be displayed alongside her first guitar, which she originally shared with her brother, and a Grammy award will demonstrate the success and critical acclaim that Amy achieved during her musical career.

Style Icon

Throughout her career and up until her death in 2011, Amy was frequently photographed by the press. One of the reasons for this was her distinctive style. Her beehive hair and tattoos became iconic. Her style was the product of a mish mash of cultural references and influences, from 50s rockabilly to 60s girl groups. She also, whether consciously or subconsciously, drew upon the influences of her family, particularly that of her grandparents Cynthia and Alec. Amy later paid tribute to Cynthia with a depiction of her as a tattoo on her arm.

A selection of Amy's clothing, both designer and high street will be on display in the exhibition, including the Luella Bartley dress she wore for her 2008 Glastonbury performance; an Arrogant Cat dress worn in the *Tears Dry On Their Own* video; a dress worn on Amy's debut US TV appearance on the David Letterman Show; and a gingham dress that Amy designed for her collaboration with Fred Perry.

-Ends-

For further PRESS information please contact Rebecca Ward for the Jewish Museum on 020 7613 3306 or rebecca@rebeccaward.co.uk.

Notes to Editors

Opening hours: Sunday - Wednesday: 10am - 5pm, Thursday: 10am – 9pm, Friday: 10am - 2pm
Address: The Jewish Museum, Raymond Burton House, 129-131 Albert Street, London NW1 7NB
How to get here: 3 minutes' walk from Camden Town tube station

For further information and tickets:

www.jewishmuseum.org.uk/Amy
admin@jewishmuseum.org.uk
020 7284 7384

Admission to the Museum, which includes free entry to the exhibition:

Adults £7.50 *

Concessions £6.50 *

Child (5 – 16) £3.50

Family ticket £18 for two adults and up to four children

Under 5s and Friends free

Group bookings – groups of 10 people and over receive 20% discount

* Prices include a voluntary donation for Gift Aid purposes

Late Nights: every Thursday 5pm - 9pm, only £3.50.

Amy Winehouse

The career of Amy Winehouse (1983-2011) spanned eight years and she achieved huge critical acclaim for her albums and live performances. Her worldwide success brought many plaudits including Grammys, BRIT and Ivor Novello awards. In 2011 *Back to Black* was the best-selling album in the United Kingdom in the 21st Century.

Alex Winehouse is the Creative Director of the Amy Winehouse Foundation.

The Amy Winehouse Foundation

The tragic passing of Amy on 23rd July 2011, aged just 27, left not only her family and close friends heart broken, but had a huge impact on people all over the world. Amy and her music have touched the lives of millions across the globe. Amy's family launched the Amy Winehouse Foundation on September 14th 2011, on what would have been Amy's 28th birthday. The Amy Winehouse Foundation has been set up in Amy's memory to prevent the effects of drug and alcohol misuse on young people. They also aim to support, inform and inspire vulnerable and disadvantaged young people to help them reach their full potential

The Jewish Museum reopened in 2010 after a £10 million transformation creating a landmark museum that celebrates Jewish life and cultural diversity. Its new displays and exhibitions tell the story of Jewish history and culture in an innovative and compelling way and engage with people of all backgrounds and faiths to explore Jewish heritage and identity as part of the wider story of Britain. The only museum in London dedicated to a minority community, the Museum's expansion and redevelopment was supported by a £5m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Displayed across four permanent galleries, the huge variety of objects, films, photography, hands-on exhibits and personal stories on display paint a rich and nuanced picture of British Jewish life and history as well as exploring contemporary social issues around immigration and settlement. The new Museum also houses a Changing Exhibitions Gallery, a 100-seat auditorium, an Education Space, and a café and shop.

www.jewishmuseum.org.uk