

# Itzhak

Sunday, May 12, 2019 @ 1:00 p.m.

**Director: Alison Chernick, 2018 USA**

**Running time: 82 minutes, English**

The subject of this enchanting documentary by director Alison Chernick, in an Israeli-US co-production, is the life of renowned and virtuoso violinist Itzhak Perlman.

The film follows Perlman and his family and friends through his childhood in Israel, his parents emigrating from Poland to Israel and later to the USA, and his life as a young man who struggled to be taken seriously as a music student dealing with a physical disability. Beyond the talented musician, schools saw only a polio survivor.

Alison Chernick's documentary is a fond portrait of the violinist, showing him as a funny, irreverent and self-deprecating man, playing the national anthem for a baseball game, playing scrubbed of ego with other not well known musicians and most importantly, playing for his love of the music and his instrument. The film also shows Itzhak in conversations with masterful musicians, family and friends, and most endearingly with Toby, his devoted wife of 50 years.

Itzhak and Toby's lives are dedicated to their large, loving family in New York City and to their continual support for young musicians. Perlman's magnificent talent and achievements easily make him a cultural icon. One of the wonderful surprises of this

film is how unpretentious and unassuming he is, his delightful sense of humor especially when he is with his long-time friend Alan Alda.

Director Chernick includes wonderful footage of Itzhak Perlman appearing on "The Ed Sullivan" show when he was 13 years old. In addition to paying tribute to the talented man, the film is also dedicated to the arts. There is a touching scene when Itzhak and his wife Toby explain how music moves the soul in ways that separate humans from other species.

The best and more beautiful scenes are when Itzhak plays his violin. The director devotes time to Mr. Perlman's discussions of the violin with luthiers and students. He explains "to coax emotional shadings from a violin, the more you have in your heart, the more you have to give."

Aside from frank views of his crutches and leg braces due to polio and his early rejections because of his handicap, the film glides uncritically along the surface of an exemplary life, the life of one of the brilliant violinist of our times.

***Reviewed by Noemi & Jose Mirkin  
(excerpts from NY Times, Helen T.  
Verongos, and IMDb reviews)***