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The National Center for Jewish Film's
16TH ANNUAL FILM FESTIVAL
APRIL 10 - 21
JEWISHFILM.2013

Tickets & Full Schedule: www.jewishfilm.org or 781-736-8600

National film center's 16th annual spring festival is now under way

By Daniel M. Kimmel

The National Center for Jewish Film's 16th annual spring festival – dubbed “JewishFilm.2013” – has its usual varied lineup that is sure to reward the adventurous. While the opening film “Hannah Arendt” will get a regular run later this spring, many of the films showing will be making their only appearances on local screens. This week and next, we'll be looking at some of the highlights.

“My German Friend” (Museum of Fine Arts, April 11, 3 p.m.; Institute of Contemporary Art, April 18, 8 p.m.) is the sort of film for which the festival was made. The drama follows two Argentine friends from childhood in the 1950s through the next few decades. The catch is that Sulamit (Celeste Cid) is named for an aunt who perished in the Holocaust and Friedrich (Max Riemelt) is the son of an SS officer who fled to South America after the war.

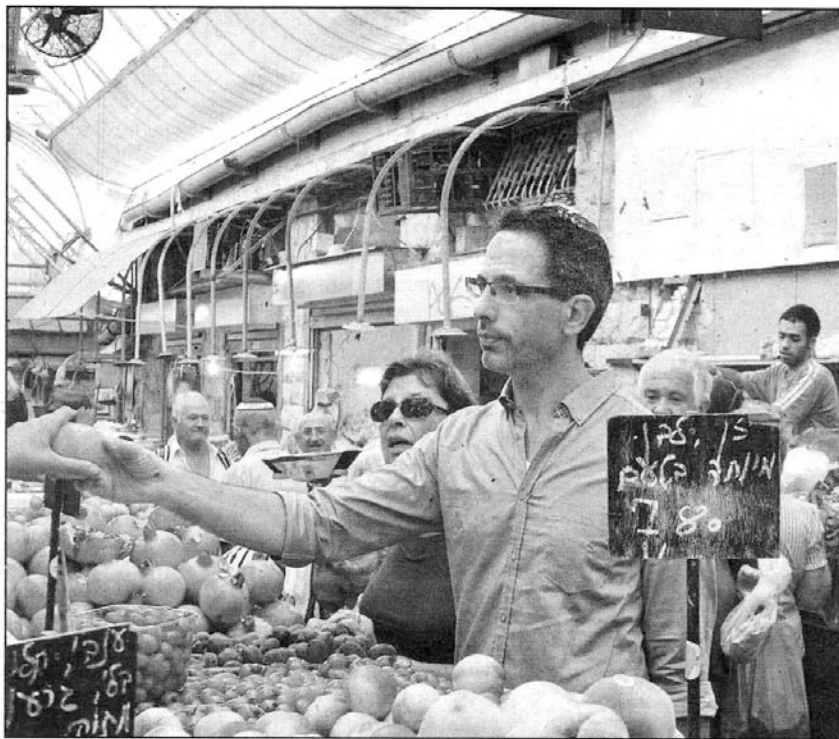
However, their friendship and conflicts encompass much more than that, covering the student unrest in Europe in the late '60s and early '70s, and the repressive dictatorship in Argentina where countless people simply “disappeared.” While living with the

Movie Maven

JewishFilm.2013 runs through April 21. Visit www.jewishfilm.org or call 781-736-8600 for tickets or more information. Day-of-show tickets can be purchased at the respective locations.

legacy of the Shoah is one of the strands here, this is really a movie about members of the second generation in Argentina coping not only with their heritage, but their place in the modern world. As such, it might have been deemed too parochial for wider arthouse release, but it is a lovely movie with two smart performances by the leads. Director Jeanine Meerapfel will be at the Saturday screening.

Don't come hungry to “Jerusalem on a Plate” (West Newton Cinema, April 14, 1 p.m.) This one-hour British documentary follows Israeli restaurateur Yotam Ottolenghi – now based in London – as he returns to Jerusalem for a gastronomic tour. He visits Israeli



In “Jerusalem on a Plate,” restaurateur Yotam Ottolenghi returns to his homeland for a gastronomic tour.

and Arab eateries and a few that blend cuisines, picking up new ideas for dishes to bring back to England. A not-so-subtle message here, is the notion that when the issue is food, rather than politics, Jews and Palestinians more easily find common ground. It would be naïve to assume that peace will come from a falafel or a dessert, but it does offer us a hint of what

life after a comprehensive peace treaty might be like.

One film that doesn't travel well is “The World is Funny” (MFA, April 13, 4:30 p.m.; MFA, April 18, 7 p.m.). The misleading title is compounded by an introduction explaining that the movie is a tribute to the Gashashim, a long-popular Israeli comedy trio, one of whose surviving members appears as himself. The problem is that this is a bleak drama set in Tiberias with overlapping stories involving spousal abuse, cancer, someone coming out of a long coma, a mysterious pregnancy, abandoned children, and a broken marriage. This was a huge hit in Israel

where, perhaps, the seemingly random references to the comedy group resonated.

Instead, to the uninitiated, it plays like a series of tragedies loosely – and not very effectively – tied together by a local writers' workshop, where some of the players are trying to turn these stories into art. They don't really succeed and neither does the film. Its massive appeal in Israel suggests that not everything produced under the unquestioned film renaissance going on there, travels well.

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