

Leading Ladies Return in 6 Israeli Films



Dear Mr. Waldman, set in the 1960's, centers on a family rebuilding itself after the Holocaust.

My favorite entry in the festival, *Dear Mr. Waldman*, is a simple but affecting period piece from screenwriter Hanan Peled, who also takes the reins for the first time as director. Set in Tel Aviv in the 1960's, the story is about a struggling family—father Moishe (Rami Heuberger), wife Rivka (a feisty Yavgenia Dudina) and their two sons. This is the second marriage for the boys' parents, who lost their first spouses and families in the Holocaust, and 10-year-old Hilik (Ido Port) feels threatened by the ghosts of those departed. Squabbles between his folks over money and a bigger home trigger recurrent nightmares about the miraculous "return" of Moishe's dead first wife, but Hilik's fears multiply when his father sees a newspaper photo of President Kennedy's aide Jack Waldman. Convinced that this Waldman is really his first-born son, who has somehow escaped the Shoah to settle in America, Moishe tries to make contact. As his obsession grows, his marriage frays, until Hilik decides to take matters into his own hands and forge a letter to his father from Jack. *Dear Mr. Waldman* doesn't have a conventionally happy ending, but

one that rings true—especially as a metaphor for survivors and their families who have found their way back to embrace life.

For more information on these titles, call 847-675-FEST or go online to www.chicagofestivalofisraelicinema.org. And to keep current with the richness of Israeli movies that make it to these shores, support not only the Jewish film festivals in or near your city, but also check out your local cineplexes, Jewish community centers and university film societies for their schedules too. **WJD**

Andrea Gronvall is a Chicago-based film critic and a regular contributor to World Jewish Digest.

© 2007 World Jewish Digest

ARTS & CULTURE

WORLD JEWISH DIGEST • OCTOBER 2007