



Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission Spring-Summer 2009 Chronicle

Jewish Film Festival arrives in Cumberland County

Three internationally acclaimed films are making their appearance in Cumberland County this May as part of the second annual Israel Film Festival, presented by The Jewish Federation of Cumberland County at the Cumberland County College Fine and Performing Arts Center.

The first, "Live and Become," was screened on May 13. The remaining two are "Noodle," to be presented May 17, and "Turn Left at the End of the World" on May 27. All three are award winners at various film festivals throughout the world and all transcend the limits of race, religion and nationality. They are rich presentations of the human condition in various stages of conflict and crisis.



Posters showcasing "Turn Left at the end of the World" at left and "Noodle," to be shown in May at Cumberland County College.



positive response. "Each film offers a unique, intensely human and very entertaining look at the complex social and cultural aspects of life in Israel," he said. "They are special because they highlight what we have in common as people, the positive emotions we all share, and the need for comfort, love and acceptance no matter what our insecurities, fears or differences are."

"Live and Become" (2005) tells the story of a

mother living in Sudan in a refugee camp who, seeing opportunity for her nine-year-old son, sends him on an airlift to Israel for Ethiopian Jews. The problem is that the boy, Salomon, is not Jewish. But he valiantly attempts to follow his mother's parting wish that he "go, live and become" even though he faces hostility as an African immigrant. The film focuses on the themes of separation, racial intolerance and the struggles involved in cultural assimilation. It won awards from the Berlin International Film Festival, the César Award (France's equivalent to the Oscars) and the Vancouver International Film Festival Audience Award.

"Noodle" (2007) is the poignant tale of a twice-widowed El Al flight attendant, Miri, who suddenly finds herself cast in the role of guardian for the young son of her Chinese housekeeper, who has abandoned him. Communication problems abound with the boy's inability to

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Film Schedule

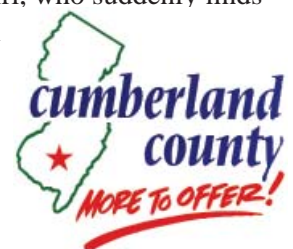
"Noodle"May 17, 2 p.m.

"Turn Left at the End of the World"May 27, 7 p.m.

All performances at Cumberland County College Fine and Performing Arts Center, Vineland. Tickets: \$5 per film; \$8 for two films. Available at the door or by calling the Jewish Federation at 856-696-4445.

various stages of conflict and crisis.

Kirk Wisemayer, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Cumberland County, explained that the festival, which debuted last year in observance of Israel's 60th birthday, was brought back for a second year as a result of an overwhelmingly



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James A. Dunkins
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Celebrated films highlight Jewish Film Festival

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speak a word of Hebrew, but the two eventually bond. The film also explores relationships between sisters, husbands and wives, and friends and strangers.

One reviewer described “Noodle” as “both funny and moving at the same time. The director manages to formulate the elusive compound called comic drama... a sensitive, flowing script...just the right measure of laughter and tears, grinning and watering eyes all through the movie.” Another called it “the Israeli movie of the year.” It was the winner of the Grand Prize of the Jury at the Montreal Film Festival, and several awards by the Israeli Film Academy.

“**Turn Left at the End of the World**” (2005) is set at the close of Israel’s Six-Day War in a remote Israeli desert town where two teenage girls are coming of age. Nicole is a mouthy, flirtatious Moroccan teenager, and Sarah is a thoughtful, intelligent girl from India whose family has just moved in next door. The family’s arrival is met with hostility and disappointment. The Moroccans look down upon the Indians for their darker skin and are put off by their reserve. The Indians view the Moroccans in an equally unflattering way, commenting on their boisterousness. Both communities are oppressed, toiling in a hot and dangerous glass factory. Even this common exploitation does little to bring them together as the Indians regarded themselves as British, the Moroccans as French, and both as superior. All illusions, however, eventually crumble — although the road to liberation and tolerance is a bumpy one.

A reviewer covering “Turn Left” at the Boston Jewish Film Festival in 2005 commented, “There is no shortage of thought-provoking dialogue in the film, and as it is positioned at such a critical moment in history, there are many issues to be addressed and every one of them is handled with charm, humor and sophistication.” It was the winner of the Best Picture award at both the Palm Springs Film Festival and Asian film Festival, India.

A special guest, Rich Goldberg, will introduce the films prior to each showing. Goldberg is an award-winning producer of film, television, and the performance arts in Philadelphia, New York and Los Angeles. He was the founding executive director of the Philadelphia Film Society and producer of the Philadelphia Film Festival. He is working on forming a cultural non-profit to support community and economic development through the media, arts and entertainment, possibly in Cumberland County.

All films contain English subtitles. Tickets are available at the door or by calling the Federation office at 856-696-4445. More information is in the box on page one.

Summer musicals spark local theater scene

Local community theaters will be in a musical frame of mind this summer. **Off Broad Street Players** will present “Thoroughly Modern Millie,” the story of a young Kansas woman who comes to New York in 1922 in search of a new life. The show is scheduled for July 31 through Aug. 2 and Aug. 6 through 9, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m. at Bridge-



ton Senior High School, West Avenue.

Vineland’s **Cumberland Players** will showcase “Nonsense,” the wacky musical about nuns who have to raise funds for funerals of four nuns who were accidentally poisoned by their cook. The show runs at the Vineland Little Theatre, Sherman Avenue, on July 17, 18, 23, 24 and 25 at 8 p.m. and July 19 at 2 p.m.