



DANCING ARABS

ערבים רוקדים
عرب راقصون

A FILM BY

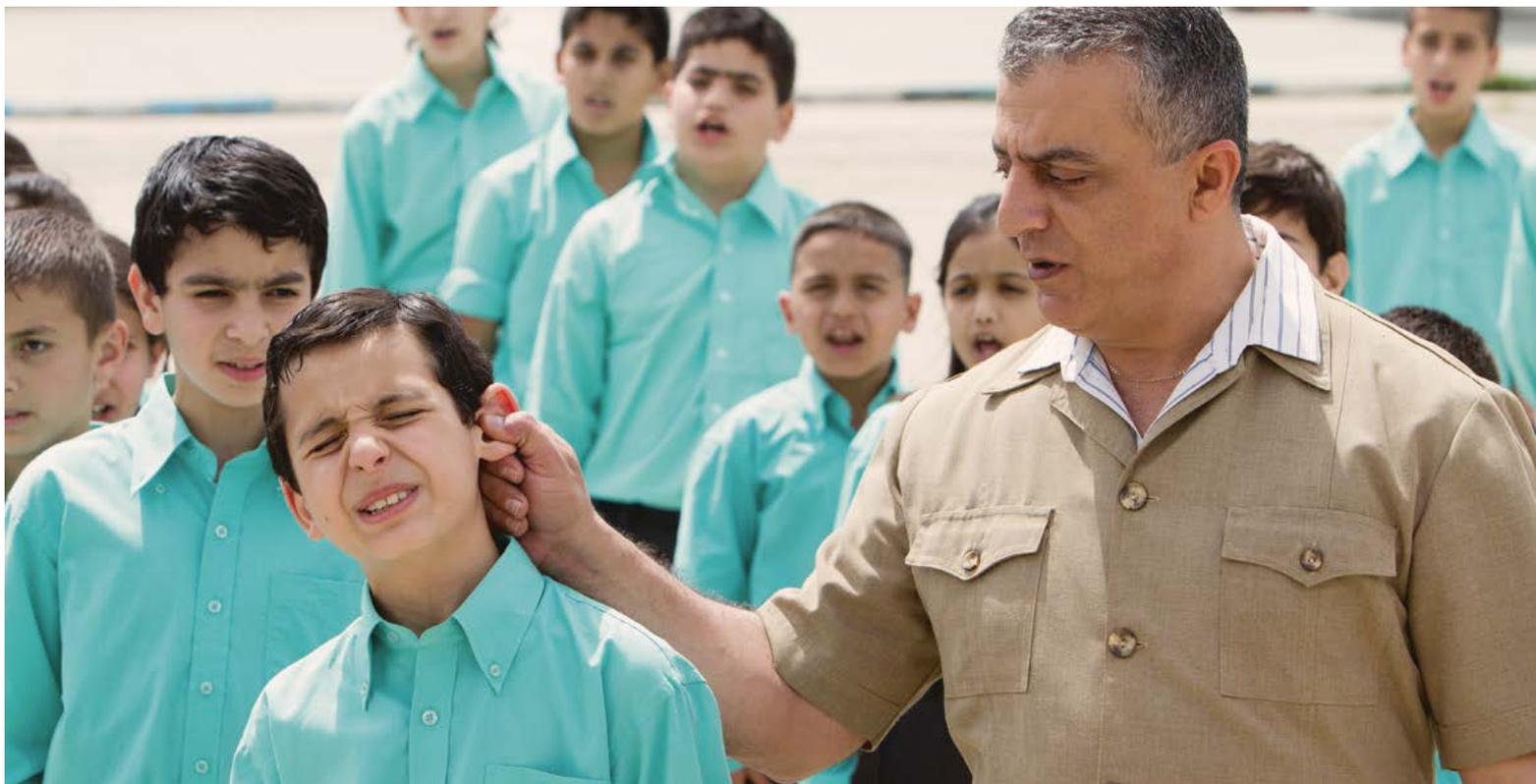
ERAN RIKLIS

WRITTEN BY

SAYED KASHUA



Festival del film Locarno
Piazza Grande



DANCING ARABS

examines with both acumen and empathy the complex texture of relations between Jews and Arabs in Israel, the influence of regional events on the lives of the people there, and the journey of one young man looking for a way to break out of all the boundaries that await him in life. All this is served up with subtle humor and irony, guiding the viewer through the ins and outs of the moving story while at the same time providing a poignant real-life experience.

The new film by Eran Riklis, the acclaimed director of ZAYTOUN, THE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER, LEMON TREE and THE SYRIAN BRIDE.

SYNOPSIS

Israel, early 1990s. Eyad, a Palestinian-Israeli boy from the town of Tira, is accepted into a prestigious Jewish boarding school in Jerusalem. He finds himself struggling with issues of language, culture, and identity – trying to survive and to find his way in a place where war constantly rages around him. He develops a bold friendship with Yonatan, a boy with muscular dystrophy, and falls in love with a Jewish girl named Naomi. Eyad realizes that in order to be accepted as an equal, in order to allay people's suspicions, in order to work, to love, and, above all, to belong – he has to make personal sacrifices.





DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT — — — —

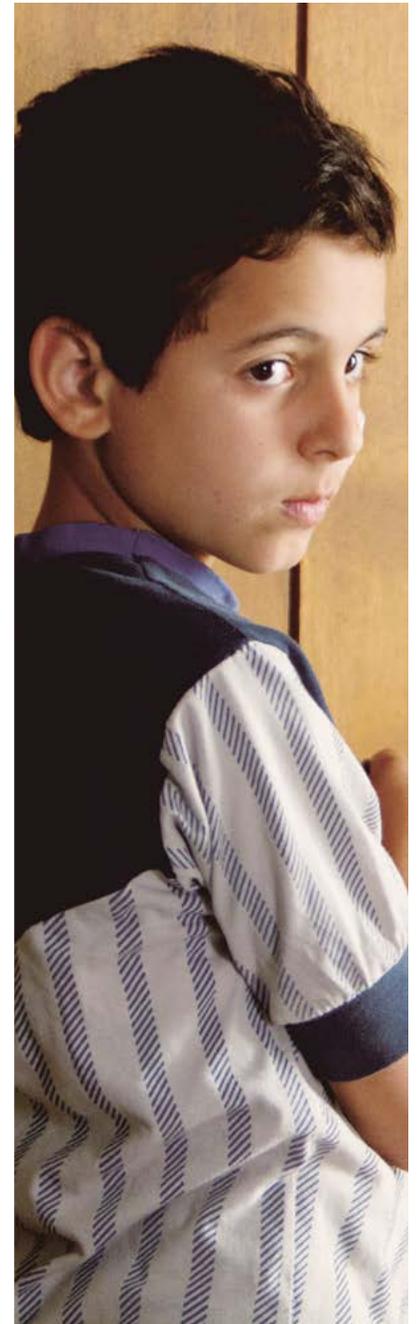
Living in the Middle East is a question of identity. All of us here have a long history behind us, claims to the land, spiritual and religious bonds, fear, terror, moments of grace, hope and hatred which have split people and nations here for far too long. Whether you wake up in Tel Aviv, Damascus, Jerusalem, Cairo or Tira – the town where Eyad, our hero, was born – you have to face who you are, what you believe in and where you want to see yourself tomorrow, questions which are not easy to answer, are not easy to live with.

Eyad is Palestinian, Eyad is Israeli, he is a Muslim, he is a Jew, he was born and raised in a typical Arab town and yet his youth was spent in a lucrative Jewish-Israeli school in Jerusalem – liberated or occupied, depending on who you are and what your identity is. Eyad is constantly on the run – from who he is, from what he is supposed to be, from what is expected of him. A man, a young man on the run, is on a voyage of self exploration which leads us to embark this voyage and explore his and our aspirations, our identity, our daily struggles, our fears and our hopes.

The soul of a dancing Arab, forever juggling who he is and what he really wants to be, connects with my fears, with my soul as an Israeli who is part of this land, part of his people and yet is not sure where and how he wants to be. It connects with the sense of solitude we all have and yet with our strong will to survive whatever the odds while we dance away our life – fulfilling our dreams, fulfilling someone else's dreams, achieving goals, failing, dancing.

This film is a slow dance, perhaps a traditional dance, a dance through life which we all embark on – and find ourselves either alone on the dance floor, or surrounded by our loved ones. And as such a slow dance, it was shot accordingly – pedantic, observant and yet dynamic and full of passion. Shot through the eyes of a boy and yet from the perspective of an adult. Dancing Arabs.

Eran Riklis





ERAN RIKLIS – DIRECTOR

Eran Riklis is one of Israel's most acclaimed film makers and has been working as director, writer and producer for more than thirty years.

His previous film, **ZAYTOUN** (2012) had its world premiere at the 2012 Toronto International Film Festival and won the Runner Up People's Choice Award. Starring Stephen Dorff, the film is a UK-Israel-France co-production and was produced by Academy Award winner Gareth Ellis-Unwin (The King's Speech). Also shown at the Rio, London, AFI and many other festivals.

PLAYOFF (2011), an Israeli-German-French co-production, shot on location in Germany, based on the life of basketball coach Ralph Klein, starring Danny Huston. In competition at the 2011 Montreal Film Festival it won the Best Actor Award for Danny Huston.

THE MISSION OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER (2010), an Israel-France-Germany-Romania co-production, was shot in Jerusalem and Romania, won 5 Israeli Academy Awards (including Best Picture and Best Director and was Israel's nominee to the American Academy Awards) and the Audience Award in Locarno.

Riklis enjoyed wide international success with **LEMON TREE** (2008), winner of the Audience Award at the Berlin and San Sebastian film festivals and released worldwide.

THE SYRIAN BRIDE (2004) won 16 international awards, including Best Film in Montreal and the Audience Award at the Locarno Film Festival. Supported by the same backers of **LEMON TREE** and likewise co-produced with France and Germany.

PREVIOUS FILMS INCLUDE:

- **CUP FINAL** (1992) presented in Venice and Berlin and numerous other festivals worldwide.
- **ZOHAR** (1993) the biggest Israeli box office success of the 90's. The tragic story of the iconic singer Zohar Argov.
- **TEMPTATION** (2002) based on an Israeli best-seller by Ram Oren.
- **VULCAN JUNCTION** (2000) a nostalgic rock & roll film set in 1973 a few days before the Yom Kippur War.
- **ON A DAY YOU CAN SEE DAMASCUS** (1984) a political thriller shot upon graduating from the National Film School in England.

Riklis produced the films **THREE MOTHERS** (2006), **BURNING MUKI** (2008) and the 26 episode TV series **ROOM SERVICE** (2008-9), also created by Riklis. Riklis created and directed

the TV series **THE TRUCK** (2005, 13 episodes) and numerous major TV series and drama such as **CAUSE OF DEATH: MURDER, ME AND MY FAMILY, LUCKY, LETHAL MONEY** and more. Riklis also directed well over 300 commercials and various promotional films in Israel and the UK.

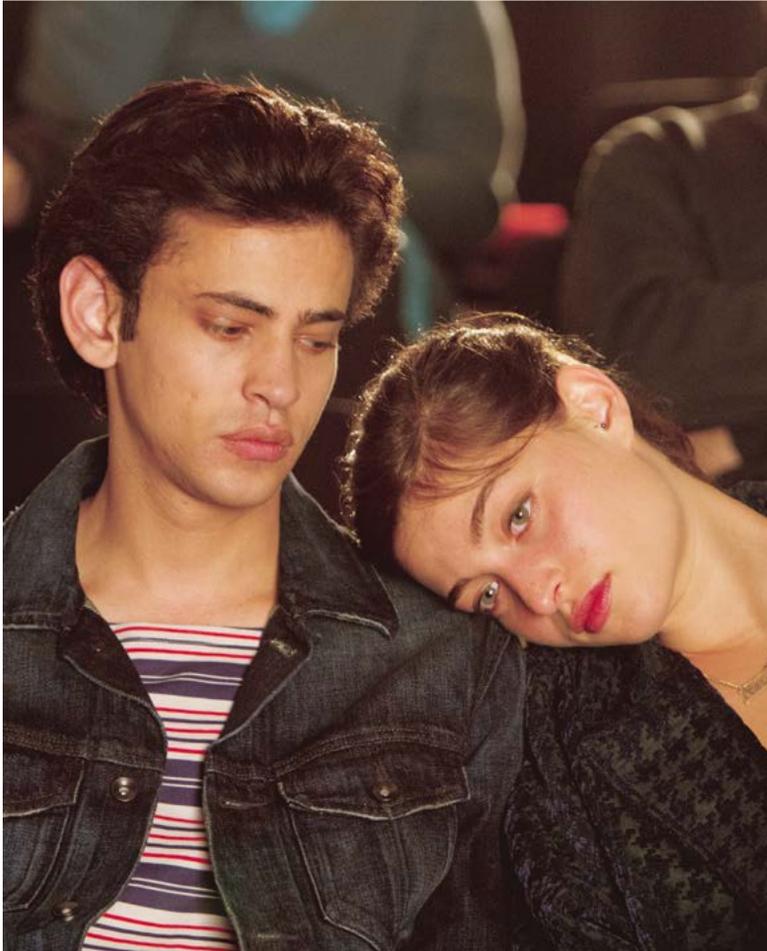
Riklis is a graduate of the National Film School in Beaconsfield, England (1982) and also studied at the film department of the Tel Aviv University (1975-77). Married to Dina Zvi-Riklis (film director) and proud father of Tammy (journalist) and Yonatan (jazz musician).







CAST



TAWFEEK BARHOM – EYAD

Tawfeek Barhom (born 1990) is an Israeli Arab actor from the village of Ein Rafa near Jerusalem.

He appeared in various TV shows, such as **EUPHORIA**, **SPECIAL OPS** and **GREENHOUSE**. He also took part in American productions such as **ABC'S OF DEATH** and **THE WHITE CITY** which co-directed by Tanner King Barklow (the Oscar-nominated **THE INVISIBLE WAR**) and Gil Kofman.



Yael Abecassis – EDNA

Yael Abecassis is one of the leading actresses in Israel today. She has worked with leading filmmakers in Israel and in the world – Amos Gitai, Rani Blair, Olivier Panchot, Radu Mihaileanu, Véra Belmont, Salvatore Mereu, Stéphane Giusti, Alexander Arcady and Ronit and Shlomi Elkabetz and more. Yael began her acting career in 2001 with **TEL AVIV STORIES** and since then has played in numerous Israel feature films, such as **SHIVA, ALILA, KADOSH, THE HERITAGE** and **HAIM ZE HAIM**. Among her European films: **LIVE AND BECOME, LES ENFANTS DU TERRAIN VAGUE, SURVIVRE AVEC LES LOUPS, SANS MOI, MARIA, BELLA CHAO, A TATTI RISERO**. She has also featured in a number of television series.

Yael is also one of the founders of the organization Ruach Nashit (Women's Spirit) that supports women victims of violence.



Michael Moshonov – YONATAN

Michael Moshonov, 28 years old, is one of the leading actors in the Israeli film and television industry. He started his career at the age of four. Since then he appeared in numerous films such as: **MABUL** for which he won the Israeli Oscar for best supporting actor; **LOST ISLANDS** for which he received the Israeli Oscar for best actor; **LATE WEDDING; TEHILLIM; LEBANON** (2009); **POLICEMAN** (2011) and several television series.

Michael is also part of hip hop group “Cohen and Moshon”.



ALI SULIMAN – SALAH

Ali Suliman is a Palestinian actor who graduated from the Yoram Levinstein Acting School in Tel Aviv. With a career spanning over a decade, Suliman is one of the leading Arab actors in cinema with highly regarded film credits including (2013) Eran Riklis' **LEMON TREE** (2008) and **THE SYRIAN BRIDE** (2004), **PARADISE NOW** (2005) which received a Golden Globe Award and an Academy Award® nomination, **THE LAST FRIDAY** (2012) of which Suliman won Best Actor at the Dubai Film Festival and **CHRONIC OF DISAPPEARANCE** (1996) which won best film at the Cannes Film Festival. Other notable film projects include **THE KINGDOM** (2007), **BODY OF LIES** (2008) alongside Leonardo DiCaprio, Russell Crowe and Mark Strong and more recently **THE ATTACK, CRUEL SUMMER, MARS ON SUNRISE, INHERITANCE** and **Under the Same Sun**. Suliman's television projects include the two critically acclaimed series from Channel 4, **THE PROMISE** and **HOMELAND** alongside Claire Danes and Damian Lewis.



LAËTITIA EÏDO – FAHIMA

Laëtitia Eïdo is a French actress of Lebanese descent, whose international career includes roles in the HBO action series **STRIKE BACK**; in France, with the ARTE docu fiction **THE DESTINY OF ROME**, in which she played Cleopatra and the successful comedy series **HERO CORP** where she was an Indian superhero; in Algeria, as the lead of the historical feature **LALLA N'SOUMER** and now Israel, in **DANCING ARABS**.

Laëtitia was first trained in classical acting techniques in Paris theatre schools; then with Peter Brook, Jacques Lecoq and Philippe Genty companies; and in the Meisner technique in New York. Her multicultural ethnic look has enabled her to work in seven languages.



DANIELLE KITZIS – NAOMI

Danielle Kitzis was born in the United States and later immigrated to Israel with her family. In high school, she studied theater. She made her first cinema appearance in Dror Shaul's award winning film **SWEET MUD** (2005). In 2012, Danielle played in the remake of the Reshet television series, **Matter of Time**. In between shooting commercials, clips, auditions and acting, Danielle works as a cook in the heart of Tel Aviv.



RAZI GABAREEN – EYAD AS A YOUNG BOY

Razi Gabareen was born in 2001 to Christian mother and a Muslim father. At a very early age, Razi demonstrated his interest and love to acting and music. His talent on stage and on camera was discovered at a very young age. At the age of seven, Razi began to play the violin and later joined the Orchestra at the Kiryat Bialik Conservatorium. He practiced the violin daily while on his skateboard and his parrot on his shoulder. In addition to the regular school program, Razi also learns at the Center for gifted students.

SAYED KASHUA – SCREENWRITER & NOVELIST



Sayed Kashua was born in 1975 in the Arab town of Tira in the Triangle region of Israel. At the age of 15 Sayed was admitted into The Israel Arts and Science Academy in Jerusalem, one of the few Palestinian students to attend it at the time. Upon graduation he proceeded to study Sociology and Philosophy at the Hebrew University, where he met his wife-to-be. After receiving his degree, he took a job as a reporter for the “Kol Ha’ir” local newspaper. Initially writing magazine articles, Sayed later moved on to television reviews and eventually his own satirical column.

In 2002 he published his first book, **DANCING ARABS**, which became a best-seller, and was translated into several languages. In 2004 his second book, **LET IT BE MORNING**, was published. 2010 saw the publishing of his third and latest book, **SECOND PERSON SINGULAR**, for which he was awarded the 2011 Bernstein prize for an original Hebrew novel.

Kashua created the popular sitcom **ARAB LABOR**, first aired in 2007 on Israel’s Channel 2. The series, a tongue-in-cheek yet piercing look at Arab-Jewish relationships inside Israel, is partially based on Kashua’s weekly columns at “Haaretz” newspaper and his personal story and experiences.

MAIN CAST

Eyad – *Tawfeek Barhom*
Edna – *Yael Abecassis*
Yonatan – *Michael Moshonov*
Salah – *Ali Suliman*
Naomi – *Danielle Kitzis*
Grandmother Aisha – *Marlene Bajali*
Fahima – *Laëtitia Eido*
Eyad (Boy) – *Razi Gabareen*
Principal Jamal – *Norman Issa*

For additional information on DANCING ARABS:
https://playnet.co.il/?dancing_arabs

CREW

Director – *Eran Riklis*
Screenwriter – *Sayed Kashua* (based on his novel)
Producers – *Chilik Michaeli, Michael Eckelt, Antoine de Clermont-Tonnerre, Avraham Pirchi, Tami Leon, Bettina Brokemper*
Associate producers – *Moshe Edery, Leon Edery, Simon Ofenloch*
Director of Photography – *Michael Wiesweg BVK*
Editor – *Richard Marizy*
Original Score – *Yonatan Riklis*
Production Designer – *Yoel Herzberg*
Costume Designer – *Hamada Atallah*
Casting – *Yael Aviv*
Sound Recordist – *Rolf Manzei*
Sound Designer – *Gil Toren*
Sound Mixer – *Herve Buirette*
Line Producer – *Karen Belz*
Line Producer (Germany) – *Christian Vennefrohne*
Produced by – *UCM (Israel), Riva Film (Germany), Heimatfilm (Germany), MACT Productions (France) & Alma Film Productions (France)*
Stills – *Eitan Riklis*

The film was produced with the participation of: Israel Film Fund – The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, The Israel Film Council, The Jerusalem Film & Television Fund at the Jerusalem Development Authority, Israel Lottery Council for Culture & Arts, Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, ZDF-ARTE, Eurimages, CNC, CANAL+, CINE +, NEW LINEO CINEMA

This film was produced with the support of the Israel Fund for Film Production



HEIMATFILM



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JUSTTEMPTATION



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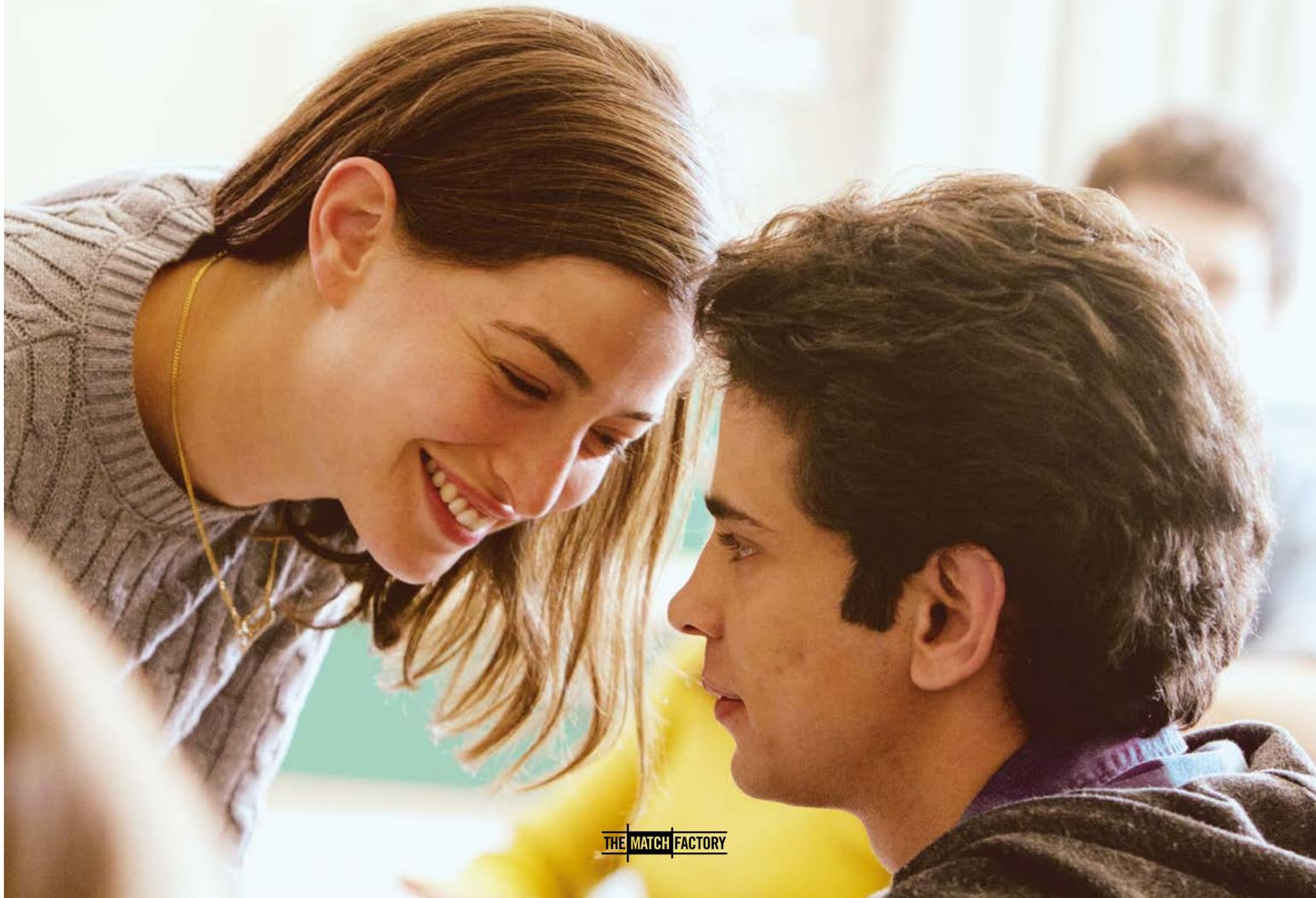
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TECHNICAL DETAILS

Genre – *Drama*
Year – *2014*
Format – *DCP*
Length – *105 min*
Original languages – *Hebrew & Arabic*
Subtitles available –
English / French / Hebrew

WORLD SALES

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