MR. GAGA

A film by Tomer Heymann
(100 min., USA, 2016)
Language: English, Hebrew

Distribution

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SYNOPSIS

Ohad Naharin, artistic director of the Batsheva Dance Company, is regarded as one of the most important choreographers in the world. Meeting him at a critical turning point in his personal life, this spirited and insightful documentary will introduce you to a man with great artistic integrity and an extraordinary vision. Filmed over a period of eight years, director Tomer Heymann mixes intimate rehearsal footage with an extensive unseen archive and breathtaking dance sequences.

This story of an artistic genius who redefined the language of modern dance is guaranteed to leave you skipping.

FROM THE PRESS

“Electric...riveting...Choreographic brilliance...Striking performance footage...Excellent. A complex, compelling lead character...Handsome and charismatic, Naharin... Arguably is a genius. The most exciting documentary for fans of edgier modern dance since “Pina”.” VARIETY

“Masterpiece, Cinematic dance magic” Degens Nyheter

“Magnificent, A wonderful portrait and a great film about dance and creation” Toutelaculture

“Shows much of Naharin’s groundbreaking work... goes deep trying to penetrate his psyche... Gets about as close as anyone ever will... So many biographical documentaries fall into the trap of loving their subjects so much that they forget to bring a critical eye to the table. Heymann makes no such mistake. Naharin's life is presented as honestly as possible... If you know nothing of dance, or don’t have the slightest interest in it, you will still be mystified by what is on screen. The Batsheva dancers move in ways you might not even imagine the body could move... Tomer Heymann perfectly melds the performances into the story” HEEB Magazine

MOVIE TRAILER

https://vimeo.com/142112662
“Beautifully shot and thoughtfully assembled, Mr. Gaga is a well-rounded documentary that uses interviews, performances, and behind-the-scenes footage to convey the importance of and fascination with Ohad Naharin, even to audiences that know nothing about dance.” College Movie Review

“A genre-spanning cultural event” Haaretz

“An overwhelming aesthetic experience” YNET

“The most beautiful and important cinematic creation ever made about Israeli dance... an inspiring work” City Mouse

“An intimate portrait of a character that has never been revealed like that” Cinemascope

“A fascinating life story” Israel Today

“A wonderful film, well-made, fascinating, and creating a rare aesthetic experience that teaches us about dance and passion” Saloona

“A spectacular colorful and vocal creation” YNET

“A charming film, charming. Even if you’re not dance freaks – go see Mr. Gaga. I’m going to see it again.” 103FM

“A deep, exciting journey to Ohad Naharin’s life course” AT magazine

“An exciting and special film... strong, inspiring and thought-provoking” Channel 2

“A stirring and fascinating visual experience” Habama

“A breathtaking, powerful and important film about the power of art to connect people wherever they are” NRG

“A Must-See Movie” Jerusalem Post

“Mr. Gaga Directed by Tomer Heymann, Who told the story of Ohad Naharin and told us a story that went beyond the dance. Into a complex web of narratives, about growing up in Israel, the cultural and political contradictions, a world of exile and a longing for home and taking dance to a place of extraordinary pathos and humanity and shared in our media of film a philosophy of democracy in relation to body.” Sofia International Film Festival Jury Statement - Best Documentary Film Award

“The Stefan Jarl International Documentary Award 2016 goes to a film told in many different narrative layers – complex in its form and content – but easy to love. While introducing the universe of an amazing artist, this film opens the doors of a fascinating world: Political, painful, contradictory but ultimately beautiful. Through stylish meaningful sequences, it is rhythmic and visually engaging. This film manages to create a deep portrait of a character while offering us, at the same time, a greater understanding of dance as an unlimited artistic expression. This year’s winner of The Stefan Jarl International Documentary Award encourages us to get a better understanding of our body’s full physical and creative potential. The winner is: Mr Gaga” Tempo Documentary Jury Statement – Best International Documentary Award 2016
Verity Full Review:

INDIEWIRE/THE PLAYLIST - Natalie Portman Talks The Pleasure of Dance in Clip from Mr. Gaga

Interview with the Heymann Brothers in IDFA:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-xjxbguDxA

Interview with Tomer Heymann for the Italian newspaper MANIFESTO:
http://ilmanifesto.global/mr-gaga-and-the-obsession-for-dancing/

Article about MR GAGA in ALMONITOR:

Interview with the Heymann Brothers in Festival Dei Popoli:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFJUh11J_jM&index=11&list=PLtir9_a5gUeGiKDDb9emb9o81zQWzYtYL

FESTIVALS & AWARDS

Audience Award - SXSW Film festival
Best Film Award - Tempo Documentary Film Festival
Best Documentary Award - Sofia International Film Festival
#3 Audience Choice - IDFA
Opening Night Film - Festival Dei Popoli
BFI London Film Festival
San Francisco International Film Festival

DIRECTOR’S NOTE
The seeds for this film were planted about 20 years ago, when I first saw Naharin’s Batsheva Dance Group on stage. My head and my heart experienced a giant upheaval, like a superb cocktail of alcohol and drugs, but without the alcohol and without the drugs. A continuum of movement, music, energy, sexuality, sensuality, and dancers you could fall in love with without knowing why. From that evening on, I became an obsessive consumer of Batsheva’s art of dance. Naharin is a tough nut to crack, very complex and a contradictory character, which makes him a fascinating subject for a documentary film.
TOMER HEYMANN—FILMOGRAPHY

2014 Aliza – Jerusalem International Film Festival, AICE film festival.
2011 The Queen Has No Crown – Berlinale FF, Krakow Int’l FF, Frameline, SF Jewish FF, NewFest and more.
2010 I Shot My Love – Premiered at Berlinale FF, Best Documentary - HotDocs, Audience Award - Taiwan Documentary Int’l Film Festival, Best Documentary - Side By Side LGBT Film Festival, Best Director & Best Film - Madrid LGBT Film Festival, Special Jury mention - Queer Lisboa LGBT Film Festival, Grand Prix & Best Documentary - Warsaw Jewish Film Festival, Sheffield DOC/FEST and more. Theatrically released in over 20 German cities.
2009 The Way Home – Best Documentary Series award at the Jerusalem IFF and Best Documentary Series at the Israeli Documentary Competition.
2007 Out of Focus – Haifa Int’l FF, Montpellier Dance FF, San Francisco Jewish FF and more.
2007 Debut – Best documentary series - Israeli Documentary Competition.
2007 Black Over White – Haifa International Film Festival, Mississippi IFF, Barcelona Jewish FF, Philadelphia Jewish FF and more.
2006 Paper Dolls – 3 awards at the Berlinale Film Festival, 2 awards at the Identities Film Festival, Best International Feature award at the Los Angeles Festival, Best Documentary Award at the Cinemanila International Film Festival in the Philippines, First prize in Warsaw Jewish FF and more.
2006 Bridge over the Wadi – IDFA, Silverdocs, Golden award Shanghai Int’l TV festival, Audience award at one world FF, First prize Docudays FF, Audience award Watch Docs Human Rights.
2003 Aviv-Fucked-up Generation – HotDocs, Bangkok World FF, Minneapolis Jewish FF, Sao Paolo Jewish FF and more.
2001 It Kinda Scares Me – Best Documentary Award at Taipei Int’l FF, Best Documentary Award at Haifa Int’l FF, Best Documentary Award at Melbourne Int’l FF, Best Documentary Award at Turin Gay&Lesbian FF, Audience Award at NY Israfest, Israeli Academy Award for best documentary and more.
DISTRIBUTION STATUS
More than 80,000 people have already seen MR GAGA in cinemas all over Israel in 5 Months. Press is stellar and word of mouth strong, and the film still playing.

Theatrical distribution deals for MR. GAGA have already been concluded in:

FRANCE
By Michel Zana - Sophie Dulac Distribution

GERMANY
By Alexandre Dupont-Geisselmann - Farbfilm Verleih GmbH

POLAND
By Jakub Duszyński - Gutek Film Ltd.

ITALY
By Anastasia Plazzotta - Wanted Cinema

SWEDEN
By Marie Strauss - Folkets Bio

CREDITS
Director: Tomer Heymann
Producer: Barak Heymann
Executive producer: Diana Holtzberg
Cinematographer: Itai Raziel
Editors: Alon Greenberg, Ido Mochrik, Ron Omer
Artistic Advisors: Talii Vernia-Hatsor, Pia Forsgren, Roni Azgad
Researchers: Lily Yudinsky, Daniela Reiss, Tali Shamir-Werzberger
Sound designer: Alex Claude
Music: Ishai Adar

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ABOUT OHAD NAHARIN

Naharin was appointed Artistic Director of Batsheva Dance Company in 1990 and has served in this role except for the 2003–4 season, when he held the title of House Choreographer. During his tenure with the company, Naharin has choreographed close to 30 works for Batsheva and its junior division, Batsheva – The Young Ensemble.

Naharin’s compelling choreographic craft and inventive, supremely textured movement vocabulary have made him a favorite guest artist in dance companies around the world. His works have been performed by prominent companies and garnered him many awards and honours for his rich contributions to the field of dance:

Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from the French government (1998), New York Dance and Performance (Bessie) Award for “Naharin’s Virus” (2002), New York Dance and Performance (Bessie) Award for “Anaphaza” (2004), a Doctor of Philosophy honoris causa by the Weizmann Institute of Science (2004), the Israel Prize for dance (2005), a Doctor of Philosophy honoris causa by the Hebrew University (2008), the EMET Prize in the category of Arts and Culture (together with Yair Vardi, 2009), the Samuel H. Scripps American Dance Festival Award for Lifetime Achievement (2009), Dance Magazine Award (2009), an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree from the Juilliard School in New York (2013), Honorary Fellowship by the Tel Aviv Museum (2014) and an Honorary Fellowship by the Rupin Academic Center (2015).

In addition to his work for the stage, Naharin has pioneered Gaga, an innovative movement language. Gaga, which emphasizes the exploration of sensation and availability for movement, is now the primary training method for Batsheva’s dancers. Gaga has also attracted a wide following among dancers around the world and appealed to the general public in Israel, USA, Europe and Australia, where open classes are offered regularly.