



WEST BANK STORY is a March, 2014 LVCA dvd donation to the Hugh Stoupe Memorial Library of the Heritage United Methodist Church of Ligonier, Pennsylvania. Below is Kino Ken's review of that film.

18 of a possible 20 points

****1/2 of a possible *****

Key: *indicates outstanding technical achievement or performance

(j) = juvenile performer

United States 2005 22 minutes color live action short musical comedy

Producers: Ari Sandel, Bill Boland, Pascal Vaguelys, Amy Kim, Ashley Jordan, Ravi Malhotra

Points:

- 2 Direction: Ari Sandel*
- 2 Editing: Avi Youabian* and Stephen Thurston*
- 2 Cinematography: Gavin Kelly
- 1 Lighting: Matthew Barbor
- 2 Written by: Kim Ray*, Ari Sandel*
- 2 Music: Yuval Ron
- 2 Choreographer: Raymond Del Barrio*
- 2 Sound: Richard Mercado*, Sam Lewis*, John Sanacore*, Alex Ullrich*, Brad Whitcanack*, Bob Packo* (mixer)
- 1 Acting
- 2 Creativity

18 total points

Cast: Ben Newmark (David), Noreen DeWulf (Fatima), A. J. Tannen (Ariel), Joey Naber (Ahmed), Haguy Wigdor (Ruvik), Oren Rehany (Uri), Nicholas Massouh (Mustafa), Will Greenberg (Shlomo), Sharif Abrams (Mahmoud / Masked Palestinian with I.D.), Daniella Diezba (Ludmila), Keith Lal (Mohammed), Assaf Cohen (Menorah Mickey), Raymond Del Barrio (Bruce), Anthony Shams (Palestinian Customer), Roger Marks (Israeli Customer), Herschel Remer (Rabbi with Torah / Fiddler on Roof), Jillian Schmitz, Chelsea Hackett, Monica Flores, Shaby Akhavi, Alan Wall, Karim Cheik Ali, Meyra Cordova, Murray Phillips, Eric George, Zack Gray, Amber Lone, Carey Ysais, Paulette Ysais, Nicole Sullivan, Heather Lipson, Paul Brown (Dancers), Amick Byram (David's Singing Voice), Anita Vasan (Fatima's Singing Voice), Steven Memel (Ariel's Singing Voice), Peter Pergelides, Eric Butler, Roger Crenshaw, Ayana Haviv (Background Singers), Stormy (the camel), Jeffrey Tedmori (j) (Kid in Restaurant)

Winner, 2006 Academy Award, Best Live Action Short Film

From the film's official web site comes the information that it includes seven dance numbers and was shot over a period of fourteen days on a budget of about \$74,000.00. WEST BANK STORY has played more than 115 film festivals and won 25 awards.

Owing more than a little to WEST SIDE STORY, which it parodies quite cleverly, WEST BANK STORY is a short musical comedy featuring wittily terse dialogue, two love ballads, superior choreography, spicy music, and flawless editing. There are five complete songs which serve both as showpieces and also as bridges between scenes. "Our People Must Be Fed" seems fairly unique to this film, stating the core problem and leading us directly into a neighboring restaurant's setting. "When I See You" is the short film's combination of "Maria" and "I Feel Pretty."

David, a soldier on patrol for Israel, catches sight of fetching Fatima, Palestinian cashier of Hummus Hut falafel stand. He can't resist her, despite the fact she is employed in a fast food outlet competing with his brother Ariel's Kosher King. This leads to a declaration of his feelings in song. His introspective tune sharply

contrasts with preceding hectic character introductions, slowing the pace, permitting auditors to catch their breaths.

“We’re Gonna Build It” lays out the central conflict as restaurant employees in Israel’s Koshers decide to protect themselves from Palestinian intruders by walling them out. Sound familiar? The concept of Jews successfully erecting any structure elicits scornful mocking from Hummus Hut employees. But just to make sure it doesn’t serve its purpose effectively, they resolve to bomb the Koshers. That will strike a blow for Palestinian freedom while simultaneously eliminating the competition. Their countertheme “We’re Gonna Break It” is WEST BANK STORY’s parallel to the “RUMBLE” number in WEST SIDE STORY.

Meanwhile, Fatima has responded favorably to David’s overtures when he accommodatingly passes her through a border checkpoint separating the two express food vendors. So they soon engage in a “Love Song” duet. It’s intended to parody the fire escape serenade in the older musical.

Later, when Fatima and David enter Hummus Hut together, the girl attempts to introduce her beloved to an arrogantly biased Achmed, owner of the establishment and Fatima’s brother. He, in turn, immediately assumes the role of righteously defensive elder, pushing David backwards into a stove. That belligerence causes spillage and consequent ignition, leading to a raging fire. The Israeli beats a quick retreat as Koshers employees rejoice in the devastation across the way, hailing him as a hero. But a nonpartisan breeze just may have a surprise in store.

From dynamically choreographed opening dance to delightful conclusion, WEST BANK STORY richly rewards viewers. Composer Yuval Ran, an oud player with Sinai study credentials, blends virtuoso Palestinian chant with Jewish klezmer rhythms, marrying jazz and folk seamlessly throughout. Stunning choreography designed by Koshers’ Bruce, Raymond Del Barrio, is thrilling to watch, further enhancing the film’s entertainment value. With impeccable sound, reinforced by effective acting and engaging song, Ari Sandel’s film is a truly irresistible miniature suitable for family viewing.

More information about the film is available at www.westbankstory.com.