

**MAGNIFICENT FAILURE**

A film by Jasmine Kainy

Photography: Ronie Kalderon

Additional Filming: Jasmine Kainy, Yoni Evans, Racheli Rusineck, Ido Yoav, Ben Shwartz

Music: Harold Rubin

New York Music: Harold Rubin, Perry Robinson, Ed Schuller, Bob Meyer

The Tel Aviv Art Ensemble:

Zvi Yaff, Steve Horenstein, Ariel Shibolet, Shmuel Frenkel, Isbaella Ordnung, Boaz Arbel, Yoni Silber

Sound: Haim Furer

Sound editing: Itamar Eshpar

Online editing: Serge Bezrukoff

Editor: Tal Brog

South African Crew:

Production manager: Neil Bowan

Sound: David Hawkins

Security: Albert Kubheka

Research: Keren Cohen

Post production supervisor: Gil Talkowsky

Production manager: Efrat Suzin

Producer: Noam Shalev

Production: Highlight Films

Israel 2008, 61 min., Colour, Original version (Ivrit w/ English subtitles)

Director Jasmine Kainy is present for q/a



WHAT MAKES MUSIC LAUGH?

25. - 28. Juni 2009

Konzerte - Filme - Ausstellungen - Gespräche

Babylon Mitte | Rosa-Luxemburg-Str. 30 | 10178 Berlin

Veranstalter: Helma Schleif | TMP Productions | A division of FMP FREE MUSIC PRODUCTION Distribution & Communication e.K.

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From Johannesburg to Tel-Aviv and back: the story of Harold Rubin, the musician and artist who was tried for blasphemy.

"Magnificent failure, that's the secret to art, really. Because you're never going to get there," says the artist and musician Harold Rubin, and his blue eyes glitter with an inner smile.

Rubin, 77, lives in Tel Aviv today and is an influential figure in the art and jazz scenes, despite his art being far from the mainstream.

Nothing in Rubin's daily life alludes to the great drama that his art evoked more than 40 years ago, when he was a young up coming artist in Johannesburg, protesting against Apartheid with his art and music. In the 1950's he risked his life and freedom when he played with black musicians, against the law of Apartheid. But in 1962 he did something that really put him at risk: Rubin made 'My Jesus', a painting protesting against the use of religion and God in the name of racism and cruelty in South Africa. He was charged with 'blasphemy', put on trial, which reeked with anti-Semitism, and faced nine year in jail. And so Rubin left Johannesburg for good and moved to Tel Aviv...

For years Rubin has kept his Johannesburg stories to himself. But when he turned 75, his step-daughter, the director Jasmine Kainy began documenting his life as an artist in Tel Aviv. An unexpected turn of events brings the South African stories forth and Rubin finds himself on a journey back to his dramatic art-life in Johannesburg 40 years ago. Will his journey be also a 'Magnificent Failure', or will he get there?



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Harold Rubin

Artist, jazz musician, architect, and teacher, Harold Rubin was born in 1932 to a Jewish family in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Art was always a big part of his life, Rubin started drawing and painting as a child, and never stopped since. Music came a bit later into his life: he started studying classical clarinet when he was 16 years old, and discovered Jazz very soon after.

In the climate of Apartheid, Rubin chose to be part of the protest, which he expressed in his art and music. Risking incarceration, Rubin played Jazz with black musicians, in clubs, in Sophiatown – Johannesburg's black township, and even in his own home. In 1960 he came out with the first artistic protest against the rule of Apartheid when he published a set of prints called 'Sharpeville' protesting the massacre of black demonstrators which took place there that year.

In Johannesburg of the 1950's Harold Rubin was a dominant figure in the Jazz music scene of the city and an up-coming artist: between 1956 and 1962 he had five one-man exhibitions in prominent galleries around Johannesburg. This promising career was cut short at the end of 1962 when he was charged with blasphemy for his drawing 'My Jesus', put on trial and was facing a 9 years jail sentence. Though he was acquitted, the blasphemy charge, which reeked with anti-Semitism, changed Rubin's life forever, and he left South Africa and immigrated to Tel-Aviv, Israel.

In Tel-Aviv Harold Rubin continued to paint and make music, while always seeking new challenges and boundaries to break.

Since he left South Africa he has had 48 one-man exhibitions and 26 group shows in galleries and museums in Israel, Holland, Germany, England, USA and South Africa. 6 of his works were incorporated into public buildings such as universities and hospitals. His work was also printed in 5 publications in Israel, Holland, the US and South Africa.

Throughout the years Rubin had been teaching life-drawing in several art-schools among them the acclaimed Bezalel Art Academy.

Rubin continued to make music in Israel as well, and he soon became a leading figure in the Israeli Jazz scene. Defined by music critics as "the most innovative and fascinating jazz musician around," Rubin has been, for years, performing and recording in Israel, Europe and the US.

Rubin formed 9 bands of jazz and free music among them 'Zaviot', a band that became very successful, received an award at the Red Sea Jazz Festival and toured Europe for a while.

Rubin has performed solo and with others in scores of Jazz clubs in Israel, Europe and New York and took part in several festivals.

So far he has recorded 13 albums, and was a guest artist in 7 albums.

In 2008 he received the Landau Prize for performing arts.

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