

# RESTORATION

(“Boker Tov Adon Fidelman”)



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# RESTORATION

## Film Details

Running Time	105 minutes
Language	Hebrew
Country	Israel
Subtitles	English
Medium	35 mm
Aspect Ratio	1:1.85
Sound	Dolby Stereo
Genre	Fiction/Drama

# RESTORATION

## CAST

Sasson Gabai

Fidelman

Henry David

Anton

Sarah Adler

Hava

Nevo Kimchi

Noah

## CREW

Director

Joseph Madmony

Writer

Erez Kav-El

Cinematography

Boaz Yehonatan Yaacov

Producer

Chaim Sharir

Casting

Emmanuelle Mayer

Editing

Ayala Bengad

Production Design

Yoav Sinai

Original Music

Avi Belleli

Sound

Aviv Aldema

# RESTORATION

## Synopsis

In Tel Aviv's old industrial district master carpenter and restoration artist Yakov Fidelman's world shifts with the arrival at his aging shop of Anton, an eccentric young drifter and day laborer in search of a job. For a meager salary and lunch, Anton becomes the aging Fidelman's apprentice.

Shortly thereafter Fidelman's lifelong business partner dies, leaving the elderly craftsman with dual problems: not only is the shop in deep financial problem, but the partner has left his half of the business to Fidelman's estranged son, Noah.

Noah, an ambitious young lawyer, urges his father to retire and approve construction of an apartment building on the site of the shop. Fidelman, however, refuses to abandon the craft and the business that has been his world. He finds an unlikely ally in his new apprentice, Anton, who works with him to preserve his rapidly disappearing way of life.

At the heart of "Restoration" is the conflict stemming from the concept of fatherhood. Who truly is Fidelman's progeny: the blood son who cares little for Fidelman's life's work, or Anton, the stranger who shares the old man's passion? Fidelman, who failed as a father to Noah, gradually takes on that role with his like-minded apprentice.

The conflict grows when Anton falls in love with Noah's pregnant wife, Hava. The two "sons" compete, not only for Fidelman, but also, for Hava and the baby she carries.

Gradually Fidelman comes to understand that his only hope for redemption and happiness is to learn how to let go of the past, acknowledge his weaknesses and accept the inevitable dictates of time.

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## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

As a film director, as well as a moviegoer, I have always swayed between the film- world's two major poles – the American and the European (more code-words and somewhat shameful generalizations but bearing a grain of truth). I feel that "Restoration" gives expression to both this poles in my love of film, allowing them to co-exist – with some tension but also cross-fertilizing.

Tensions already start with the initial choices – the classic Westerns' "A stranger comes to town" genre but the choice of a gentler/minor tone is the opposite. Anton, the young mysterious apprentice, a kind of drifter, arrives at the restoration workshop in the opening scene of the film. That very evening, Malamud – the co-owner – dies a shameful if poetic death in the arms of a prostitute. Fidelman, who finds himself alone, needs the continuing service of the foreign worker who has embedded himself in his workshop and his life. Anton's arrival sends Fidelman and his family into a spin and creates, thematically speaking, a Shakespearian inheritance struggle though minor in tone between the biological son and the spiritual inheritor - the apprentice.

In this basic positioning of the story I find all I love in movies. The freedom of European or independent cinema in its choice of world and characters: the seemingly lackluster world of petty craftsmen, a mysterious drifter that almost to the end of the film is unfathomable and unknown. The stubborn, difficult character of the master restorer - rejecting his son. These drive the more "genre-like" plots – the quest for the wire - frame that will allow them, if found, to restore the old Steinway Piano that will, as if by magic, solve all of Fidelman and Anton's financial and personal woes...and the search for a prostitute named Claris.

As for Style. What can you say about the style? Stylized yet free-formed? Long shots? Free camera? Making use of natural lighting? Using grainier raw stock? I find all are correct yet distancing from the truth. It's more important for me to talk of the physical essences within the film that make a part of its DNA – the whole tree, oak, mahogany, sometime chestnut. The warm brown tones. The skilled hands lovingly handling the wood. The sawdust covering everything hanging in the air. The miracle that happens every time a piece of junk turns into a shiny piece of furniture. The messy workshop, strewn with furniture and rubble. The sent of furniture polish and varnish... Old Tel-Aviv's disappearing faded streets. The dark lust of the main character, the drifter/apprentice for a heavily pregnant woman, the wife of his employer's son. The mythic father-son relationship. Biology fighting spirit and winning. I hope this partial account, these musings, give you some information about the film.

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## *Joseph Madmony*

### DIRECTOR

- 2010     *Director*     **"Restoration"** ("Boker Tov Adon Fidelman") (feature drama)  
                          P: Chaim Sharir   **Prod. Company:** Yezira Ivrit Ltd., Israel
- 2007     *Script Editor*   **"Srugim"** (TV Drama Series)  
                          D: Eliezer Shapira   P: Jonathan Aroch/Dikla Barkai  
                          **Prod. Company:** Abbot Barkai Ltd./Talismah Productions Ltd
- 2007     *Script Editor*   **"To love Anna"** (Le'ehov Et Anna) (TV Series)  
                          D: Zion Rubin       **Prod. Company:** Channel 10
- 2005     *Director/  
          Scriptwriter*   **"Melanoma, my Love"** (TV Mini-series)  
                          Co-Director: David Ofek   P: Chaim Sharir  
                          **Prod. Company:** Yezira Ivrit Ltd.
- 2002/04   *Chairman*       Israeli Writers Guild.
- 2002/03   *Director/  
          Scriptwriter*   **"The Barbecue People"** ("Hamangalistim") (feature Drama)  
                          Co-Director: David Ofek   P: Lior Shefer/Leon Edri  
                          **Prod. Comp:** Metro Communications
- 1998     *Director/  
          Scriptwriter*   **"The Adventures of David"** ("Alilot David") (drama series)  
                          P: Lior Shefer       **Prod. Comp:** Keshet Broadcasting, (Channel 2)
- 1996-    *Creator/ Writer/  
1997       Director*       **"Bat-Yam New York"** (TV Miniseries)  
                          Co-director: David Ofek   P: Lior Shefer  
                          **Prod. Comp.:** Keshet Broadcasting (Channel 2)

Director and screenwriter Joseph Madmony was born in Jerusalem in 1967. He graduated with the first class of the Sam Spiegel Film School in Jerusalem and went on to write and direct (together with David Ofek) the acclaimed and popular **"Bat Yam-New York"** (1995-97), winner of the 1997 Israeli Academy Award for TV drama series. With Ofek he created **"The Barbecue People"** in 2003. The TV series won accolades and awards both at home and in festivals around the world (participating in over 30 festivals). In 2005 he wrote and directed **"Melanoma My Love"** winning an Israeli Academy Award the following year for Best Drama. A feature film version of the series was officially selected to the Montreal Film Festival and won him the most prestigious Israeli Filmmakers award "The CINEMA". A very busy screenwriter, Joseph contributed to some of Israeli television's most successful television series of recent years.

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## *Sasson Gabai*

### FIDELMAN

- 2010: **THE FISHERMAN** [Jaafar (lead)] (Feature film) D: Sylvain E. Marylin
- 2009: **POLYSHUK** [Polyshuk (lead)] TV Series, 2 seasons D: Shmuel Hasfari
- 2008: **HELLO, GOODBYE** [the police chief](with Gerard Depardieu) D: Graham Guit
- 2006: **DJIHAD!** [Fridman] French Television drama series D: Felix Olivier
- 2006: **THE BAND'S VISIT** [Taufique (lead)] (Feature film) D: Eran Kolirin
- 2005: **AVIVA MY LOVE** (Oded) (Feature film) D: Shemi Zarchin
- 2005: **WAR ROOM** (HAMAL) (Yaakov Hilbi) (TV drama Series) D: Yoni Kay Shafer
- 2000 **HAMACHON** (Alex, 12 episodes) (TV drama series) D: Uri Barabash
- 2000: **MADE IN ISRAEL** (Perach) (Feature Film) D: Ari Folman
- 1995: **SITON** (Siton, 20 episodes) (TV drama series) D: Uri Barabash
- 1994: **THE KASTNER TRIAL** [Kastner (lead) 3 episodes] D: Uri Barabash
- 1994: **BEHIND THE SUN** (the father) (Feature Film) D: Robin Armstrong
- 1994: **LOVE HURTS** (Ben Ari, 4 episodes) (BBC TV drama series) P: Alomo Prod.
- 1991: **TEL AVIV STORIES** (Menashe) (Feature Film) D: Ayelet Menachemi

Born in Baghdad, Iraq, on November 24<sup>th</sup> 1947, Sasson is one of the busiest, most prolific and highly respected actors working in Israeli cinema and theatre. He graduated from Tel Aviv University with a BFA in Drama. He was a member of Mike Alfred's Theatre Group, and for nearly four decades has been a regular on the stages of all Israeli theatres, both repertory and fringe. Among his more notable performances he has taken the lead in such plays as: "Catch 22", "Whose Afraid of Virginia Wolfe", "The Execution", "Rainman" and "Philomena". He has acted in numerous Israeli and international film productions and television dramas, ranging in theme, genre and character from commercial to the abstract. Among many national and international prizes, awards and accolades Sasson was awarded the 2007 Best Actor prize by the European Academy and the Israeli Film and Television Academy and the 1991 Israeli- American Culture Fund Award.

# RESTORATION

## *Henry David*

### Anton

- 2010: **LOVELY DIVORCE** [Rani Averbuch] TV drama Series, D: Ofer Waitzman
- 2010: **BETWEEN THE LINES** [Stas Gorlik] TV drama series D: Yavgeni Roman
- 2010: **TROIKA** [Misha] Television drama series D: Leon Prodovsky
- 2010: **AVIATOR'S WIVES** [Dimitri] (daytime TV drama series) D: Aharon Kaplan
- 2010: **RABIES** (Ofer) Feature horror film D: Nevot Papushado
- 2010: **THE ISLAND** (Hugo) (TV drama Series) D: Ofer Waitzman
- 2009: **WALLS** (Peter) (feature film) D: Dani Lerner
- 2008: **INSULATED** (Galparin) (Feature Film) D: Renen Shor
- 2008: **THE GIANTS** (Michael Fridman) (Children TV series) D: Robi Duanias
- 2007: **THE MYTHOLOGICAL EX** [Ex, episode 6] (TV series) D: Sigal Abin
- 2007: **TOUCHING DISTANCE** [Zorik Mintz(lead) (TV series) D: Roni Ninio
- 2007: **SCREENZ** [Dania (lead)] (TV drama series) P: Lollipop Prod.
- 2002: **CLOSED FILE** (TV series) D: Shai Kanot

Born David Hilovski in the USSR on April 28<sup>th</sup> 1979, David is the son of actors who chose acting from an early age. He grew up in Moscow and moved to Israel with his family aged 11. A child actor, he studied at the Nisan Nativ Drama School and later joined the renowned Gesher Theatre where his work included such productions as "A Midsummer Night's Dream", "The Marriage of Figaro" and "Variations for Theatre and Orchestra". The success of television series such as "Touching Distance" and "Screenz" brought exposure, accolades and the 2007 Best Actor Award from the Israeli Academy of Film & Television for his role in the series "Touching Distance". He made his film debut in "**Olympus Inferno**" – a Russian thriller set in South Osetia. Since then he has been one of the busiest, most sought after and respected young Israeli actors working in TV, film and on stage.



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## *Sarah Adler*

### HAVA

- 2009:** **ULTIMATUM** (Tamar) **D:** Alain Tasma
- 2007:** **LOST AND FOUND** (TV Drama) (Mia) **D:** Savi Gavison
- 2005:** **MEDUSAS** (Batia) **D:** Etgar Keret & Shira Geffen  
2007 Cannes FF winner of Camera d'Or/ 2007 Israeli Film Academy – Best Actress award
- 2005:** **MARIE-ANTOINETTE** (Comtesse d'Artois) **D:** Sofia Coppola
- 2004:** **LA MAISON DE NINA** (Nina's House) (Marlène) **D:** Richard Dembo
- 2003:** **SHNAT EFES** (Year Zero) (Anna) **D:** Joseph Pitchhadze
- NOTRE MUSIQUE** (Our Music) (Judith Lerner) **D:** Jean-Luc Godard  
2004 European Film Award 2004 – Best Actress & Best Screenplay
- 2002:** **VARIETE FRANCAISE** (Pascale) **D:** Frédéric Videau
- 1999:** **AFRAID OF EVERYTHING** (Iris) **D:** David Barker  
Official Selection 1999 Sundance Film Festival (American Spectrum section)
- DRESDEN** - Ben Speth  
Official selection 1999 Sundance Film Festival (Frontier section)

Born and raised in France, Sarah left for Israel at age 10 with her parents. In the mid-1990's she went to study drama in New York – first at the HB Studio under Uta Hagen and later at the Lee Strasberg Institute. While in New York she worked with various off-Broadway theatres and actors' groups and made her debut in American films. Sarah has been working in both France and Israel. While acting in films directed by Jean Luc Goddard and Sofia Coppola, among others, and on stage, she has also worked with some of Israel's finest directing and acting talent. Sarah won the European Oscar for Best Actress for her role in Goddard's **Notre Musique** and with crew and cast the Camera D'Or at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival for Etgar Keret's **Medus**.

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## *Nevo Kimchi*

### NOAH

- 2010: **HE'ART SHULAIM** (Footnote) (Fingerfoot) (Feature film) **D:** Joseph Cedar
- 2010: **ASFUR** [Zutta] TV drama series, 2 seasons. **D:** Rani Sa'ar
- 2010: **KIDNAPPED** (Hattufim) [Ilan Feldman]TV drama series **D:** Gideon Raff
- 2009: **POLYSHUK** [Miki Katz] TV drama series **D:** Shmuel Hasfari
- 2007: **BEAUFORT** (Avishai) (Feature Film) **D:** Joseph Cedar
- 2006/7: **LEGEND IN THE GRASS** (Agadat Deshe) [Shachar] TV series **D:** Ofer Barak
- 2004/7: **BIG HEAD** (Rosh Gadol) (Aviv Yaron)) (Television Drama) **D:** Aharon Kaplan
- 2003/10: **JERUSALEM MIX** (Meorav Yrushalmi) (Ephraim Sadeh) **D:** Y. Goldwasser
- 2004 **SUMMER STORY** (Sipur Kayitz) (casualty officer) **D:** Shmuel Haimovich
- 2003 **ISLANDS ON THE SHORE** (TV drama series) **D:** Yeud Levanon
- 1998: **PISCES** (Mazal Dagim) (Feature Film) **D:** David Krainer
- 1995: **MARZIPAN WOMAN** (1X50') **D:** Eitan Green
- 1995: **SITON** (Elisha) (TV drama series) **D:** Uri Barabash

Born on October 30<sup>th</sup> 1965 in Israel, Nevo graduated from *Beit Tzvi* College of Drama in 1993. He was awarded the prestigious *Ada Ben Nachum* and *Yaron Yerushalmi* scholarships while studying. Nevo has acted in some of the most acclaimed, successful and popular Israeli television series of the past decade, including *Asfur*, *Jerusalem Mix* and *Siton*. While maintaining a full and varied film and television schedule, Nevo maintains a prolific stage career. He has worked with all repertory and fringe Israeli theatres and in 2007 won the TheatreNeto Best Actor award for his interpretation of Joshua Sobol's one-man play: "The Last Hour of Voice".

# RESTORATION

*Erez Kav-El*

## SCREENWRITER

- 2010     **"Another Life"** (Chaim Acherim) – TV Drama Series  
Principal Writer and Creator (13 episodes with Joseph Madmony)  
**Production Company:** T.TV Productions LTD/Keshet Broadcasting  
P: Tzafir Kochonovski & Miri Ezra
- 2010     **"Troika"** (a.k.a "Shlosa") – TV Drama Mini- series  
Principal Writer and Creator (4 episodes)  
**Production Company:** Riki Shelach Productions/Hot Media  
P: Riki Shelach
- 2009     **"Five Hours from Paris"** (Chamesh Sha'ot Mi Paris")  
Feature Drama (with Leon Prudovski)  
**D:** Leon Produvski **P:** Chaim Mecklberg, Esti Yaakov-Mecklberg, Moshe Edri, Leon Edri  
**Production Company:** Tutim Productions/Keshet Broadcasting (Channel 2 / Hot  
Media / with the participation of the Israeli Film Fund
- 2007/8   **"SCREENZ"** (Masachim) – TV Drama Series  
Writer (for first & second series)  
**Production Company:** Lollipop Productions/Yes Media  
P: Udi Segal & Yoram Mendel
- 2008     **"GOOD INTENTIONS"** (Kavanot Tovot) – TV Drama Series  
Writer  
**Production Company:** Yezira Ivrit Ltd./Keshet Broadcasting (Channel 2)  
P: Chaim Sharir
- 2006     **"LIKE FISH OUT OF WATER"** (Kmo Dag Bli Maaim) – TV Drama  
Screenwriter (with Leon Prodvovski)  
Production Company: Locolindo Productions./Reshet Broadcasting  
P: Yohanan Weller & Freddy Ziscrout

Born 1977 in Israel, Erez grew up in Israel and Belgium. He graduated Tel – Aviv University with a BA in Film & Television Screenwriting. Erez has been awarded the 2009 Haifa Film Festival discovery (emerging Talent) award for his screenplays for the acclaimed TV series "**FIVE HOURS FROM PARIS**", an official entry in the Toronto Film Festival for that year. He is currently teaching screenwriting at Tel Aviv University and at the Jerusalem Sam Spiegel Film & Television School as well as working as a script editor for film and television.

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## *Boaz Yehonatan Yacov*

### DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

- 2009/10: **"TRAFFIC LIGHT"**\_(Ramzor) (Seasons 2 & 3) (TV Series)  
Director: Ohad Perach Producer: Elad Kuperman & Guy Levi  
Production Company: Kuperman Productions for Channel 2 Television.
- 2009: **"AJAMI"** (feature film)  
Director: Yaron Shani and Scandar Copti. Producer: Mosh Danon,  
Production Company: Inosan Productions.
- 2009: **AMOS Oz: Straight to the sun** (documentary)  
D: Jonathan & Masha Tzur
- 2005/09: **"PARSHAT HASHAVUA"** (TV drama Series)  
Director: Rani Blaier Producer: Anat Assoulin  
Production Company: Anat Assoulin Productions
- 2008: **"NOAH'S ARK"** (TV drama series)  
Director: Rani Blaier Producer: Oriana Givoly-Ganigar  
Production Company: Oriana Productions for Reshet Broadcasting (Channel 2)
- 2007: **"WHEN WILL WE KISS?"** (TV drama series)  
Directed by: Alon Ben Ari and Shai Kapon Producer: Dikla Barkai  
Produced by: Abbot Barkai Productions/Israel 10
- 2006: **"MY FATHER MY LORD"** (Summer Holiday) (feature film)  
Director: David Volach Producer: Eyal Shiray  
Production Company: New Israeli Foundation for Cinema and Television

Boaz, the Director of Photography, was born in Israel in 1969. One of the busiest and most sought after cinematographers currently working in the Israeli film & television industry, Boaz has been working on feature films, TV drama series and documentaries (a detailed list is available on request.) Boaz has D.O.P'd the multiple award winning **"AJAMI"** – among other accolades the film was nominated for the 2009 Foreign Film Academy Award (Oscar), was awarded a special distinction Camera D'Or at the 2009 Cannes Film Festival and the Sutherland Prize at the London Film Festival. He was DOP on the second and third series of the highly acclaimed and popular comedy television series **"TRAFFIC LIGHT"**, winning a 2009 Emmy award for Best Foreign Comedy Series for the second series. He has recently completed work on the feature film **"DR. POMERANTZ"**.

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## *Chaim Sharir*

### PRODUCER

**Chaim Sharir** is one of the busiest producers in Israel. Among his feature film productions, "**Circus Palestina**", a feature film directed by Eyal Halfon, won the Israeli Academy award for **Best Film**, script, music and actors and represented Israel for US Foreign Film Academy Award (Oscar) nomination. His philosophical comedy "**Everlasting Joy**" or "**The Life and Adventures of Baruch Spinoza as reported by his vigilant neighbors**" (1996), directed by Igal Bursztyn, was shown in Tel Aviv movie theatres for three consecutive months and won the 1997 Haifa Film Festival **Critics Award**, the 1996 Israeli Academy Award and the Jerusalem Film Festival Cash Prize for **Best Screenplay**. Sharir's other film productions include: **The Italians Are Coming** (1995) by Eyal Halfon, an Israeli-Italian co-production starring Franco Nero; "**Newland**" (1994) by Orna Ben-Dor, an Audience Favorite at the Montpellier Mediterranean Film Festival; "**Blind Man's Bluff**" (1993) by Aner Preminger, Winner of the Best Film Awards at the Jerusalem International, Montpellier Mediterranean and Montevideo Film Festivals and "**Gentila**" (1996) by Agur Schif winner of the Haifa Film Festival for Best Film.

Chaim's current release, "**Restoration**" (Boker Tov Adon Fidelman) directed by Joseph Madmony, has been officially selected to premier at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival.

He has just completed principal photography on two films: '**By Summer's End**', a unique coming of age story and family drama directed by Noa Aharoni and "**The Ballad of Weeping Springtime**", an exploration of friendship and the healing powers of music, directed by Beni Torati. Both films are now in Post-Production.

Chaim Sharir was the Chairman of Israel's Film and Television Producers Association from 1996 to 1997 and between 2007 and 2009.

He has served as the Chairman of Israel's Academy of Motion Pictures and Television for 7 years. He was the Head of Productions and Vice President of RESHET (NCP) – the 2nd commercial broadcast channel.

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## AWARDS

### **Jewish Motifs International Film Festival 2012 – Warsaw, Poland**

Winner - Best Film

Grand Prix – Golden Warsaw Phoenix Award

### **Israel Academy for Film and Television – Ophir Awards 2011**

Nominated for 11 Awards

- Best Feature Film (Chaim Sharir, producer)
- Best Director (Joseph Madmony)
- Best Actor (Sasson Gabai)
- Best Supporting Actor (Henri David)
- Best Supporting Actress (Sarah Adler)
- Best Cinematography (Boaz Yehonatan Yacov)
- Best Screenplay (Erez Kav-El)
- Best Editing (Ayala Bengad)
- Best Production Design (Yoav Sinai)
- Best Original Music (Avi Belleli)
- Best Soundtrack (Oleg Kaiserman, Aviv Aldema, Israel David)

### **Jerusalem Film Festival 2011**

Winner - Best Feature Film

Winner - Best Editing (Ayala Bengad)

Winner - Best Music (Avi Belleli)

Winner - Best Cinematography (Shai Goldman)

### **Karlovy Vary International Film Festival 2011**

Winner - Best Film

Grand-Prix Crystal Globe Award

### **Toronto International Film Festival 2011**

Official Selection

### **Sundance Film Festival 2011**

Winner - Dramatic Screenwriting Award

Official Selection - World Cinema Dramatic Competition

# SCREEN DAILY

## Restoration

24 January, 2011 | By Mark Adams, chief film critic



Dir: Joseph Madmony. Israel. 2011. 105mins

**An artfully made and intelligently nuanced film, *Restoration (Boker Tov Adon Fidelman)* is an elegantly made Israeli drama in which 'restoration' is both the core of the film (it is largely based in a failing furniture restoration business) and a metaphor for attempts to repair fraying family relationships.**

*Restoration* is a gently compulsive look at contemporary Israeli society.

It may be too gentle and low key to appeal to anyone other than quality art-house distributors, but it is beautifully shot and impressively put together, and deserves to find further festival recognition.

After his long-time business partner dies, 70 year-old Yaakov Fidelman (Sasson Gabai) is astonished to find that their restoration shop is in dire financial difficulty. His old partner Max bequeathed his share of the business with Yaakov's son Noah, with whom he barely gets along.

Noah would rather used the ramshackle old building as a location for a new build of apartments, but Yaakov is determined to keep things going, it being the only way he can retain his solitary and extremely insular way of life.

When his apprentice Anton discovers a battered 1882 Steinway piano hidden away at the back of the store, there is a glimpse of hope for the business, but experts say that it would need a new baseboard and even then may never be worth the money Yaakov hopes it would be.

And with the relationship between Yaakov and Noah strained to almost breaking point, Anton – a mysterious character who seems to be on the run – starts to fall for Noah's heavily pregnant wife Hava, which leads to further rifts and

conflict.

*Restoration* is a gently compulsive look at contemporary Israeli society, and director Joseph Madmony is aided by a thoughtful and insightful script by Erez Kav-el, which delves into little seen areas, but never opts for grandstanding moments, instead allows the delicate tension to develop.

When Yaakov first goes through Max's belongings after his death, he finds a camera and is bemused to find footage of the elderly Max enjoying the tender ministrations of a prostitute just before his death. Yaakov searches out the prostitute to try and understand his old partner better, and also to help fill a gap in his life.

The film is beautifully shot by Boaz Yehonantan Yacov, and while perhaps too subtle to appeal to mainstream audiences, there is a real tenderness and compassion on view here..

Production company: Yezira Ivrit Ltd, Israel Film Fund

Producer/sales contact: Chaim Sharir, [chaim@sharir.name](mailto:chaim@sharir.name)

Screenplay: Erez Kav-el

Cinematography: Boaz Yehonantan Yacov

Production designer: Yoav Sinai

Editor: Ayala Bengad

Music: Avi Belleli

Main cast: Sasson Gabai, Henry David, Nevo Kimhi, Sarah Adler

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Posted: Sun., Jan. 23, 2011, 2:39pm PT

## Restoration

**Blood is thicker than varnish remover in "Restoration," a handsome production of intriguing surfaces.**

By JOHN ANDERSON

**Blood is thicker than varnish remover, and more caustic, in "Restoration," a handsome production of intriguing and perhaps incongruous surfaces, given the knotty domestic rancor at the core of its story. Marked by disquietingly beautiful imagery, this drama should find a place among speciality auds and those who want to stay abreast of developments in Israeli cinema -- which, as director Joseph Madmony's film indicates so strongly, seems to be moving away, more and more, from the overtly political/allegorical in favor of the character-driven.**

The look of "Restoration" is superb, the pace deliberate, the tone morose -- and the story slow in coming. But the characters are well defined and the emotions genuine, and the subtext borders on the otherworldly.

Max Malamud, a bit like Jacob Marley, is dead. And when he's found on his couch, having expired in the middle of sex with a now-absent prostitute, it throws his working partner, Yaakov Fidelman (Sasso Gabay), for a loop. Equipped with neither social skills nor business acumen, Fidelman handled the craft side of their antique furniture business, while Malamud provided the public face and, presumably, financial talents. But the business is in trouble, it turns out, and Fidelman, who seems depressive anyway, has to figure a way out.

What he increasingly seems to fear (and Gabay's performance is a quietly eloquent portrayal of unspoken unease) is that he's never been a whole person, Malamud having provided the missing parts of his character and taken them with him when he left.

No one around Fidelman, certainly not his son Noah (Nevo Kimchi), does much to allay his fears. At Malamud's funeral, Noah reads kaddish, the deceased having no heirs. But as becomes increasingly clear, the unpleasant Noah was looked on as a son by Malamud, who, intentionally or not, usurped Fidelman's patriarchy along with everything else. As Noah tries to sell the shop out from under his father, the young man's position, too, is invaded -- by Anton (Henry David), who becomes a surrogate son to Fidelman in the restoration business, while falling unwisely in love with Noah's wife, Hava (Sarah Adler), who is about eight months pregnant.

The screenplay, by Erez Kav-El, is ambitious, quasi-Shakespearean and just barely resists a Rod Serling-style venture into the supernatural; Malamud doesn't reappear, but he certainly haunts the proceedings, as do the missing aspects of Fidelman's character. Anchoring all the unspoken and/or suggested elements of the story is its 500-pound metaphor -- an 1882 Steinway piano that Anton,

who happens to play, and play well, discovers under the dust of Fidelman's shop. Selling the piano could offset Fidelman's financial woes, but it needs a new sound board to achieve its potential worth -- in other words, all the refinishing in the world won't restore its value, if its metaphoric heart isn't made whole again. This is far more subtle onscreen than in the retelling, but those who appreciate a film in which things are expertly made or done will find one in "Restoration."

Gabay gives a terrific performance in helmer Madmony's unorthodox movie, the p.o.v. of which centers on its least pleasant character. A far more attractive antidote to Fidelman is Adler, whose Hava is neither the stereotypical bedraggled wife nor the odd plaything for Anton, but a significant character in her own right.

Production values are first-rate, notably the work of d.p. Boaz Yehonatan Yacov. Original Hebrew title translates as "Good Morning Mr. Fidelman."

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# Forward.com

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## In a Tel Aviv Attic, It's a Case of Workman, Repair Thyself

*Yossi Madmoni's 'Restoration' Is Named as an Official Selection at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival*

**By Gabrielle Birkner**

Published February 02, 2011, issue of [February 11, 2011](#).

Set in a cavelike workshop, in dimly lit rooms, in alleyways and under heavy cloud cover, "Restoration" (*"Boker Tov, Adon Fidelman"*) is almost entirely devoid of sunlight. It's a surprising choice for a movie that takes place in Tel Aviv, a seaside city that is far more sunny than gray. And yet, the color palette is a fitting backdrop for the dark and beautiful story.

"Restoration," a new film from director Yossi Madmoni, was the only Israeli picture to be named as an official selection of the 2011 Sundance Film Festival.

The film's finely drawn protagonist is Yakov Fidelman (Sasson Gabai), an elderly recluse who has spent his entire working life sanding, stripping and polishing antique pieces of furniture to return them to their original glory. Shut up in his atelier, Yakov wants "to escape to a dark place, almost like a hibernating animal," Madmoni told the Forward. After the death of his charismatic business partner, Malamud, Yakov learns that the furniture restoration business is on the verge of collapse and, without financing, destined to shutter. To complicate matters, Malamud has left his half of the failing workshop to Yakov's son, Noah (Nevo Kimchi), who is young enough to help his father secure a mortgage, but nevertheless seems determined to sell off the property.

Hope comes not through any rapprochement between father and son, but thanks to the discovery by Yakov's mysterious new apprentice, Anton (Henry David), of an 1882 Steinway in the back of the workshop. With some significant repairs, the piano would be worth more than enough to keep the business afloat. A classical pianist by training, Anton dedicates himself to salvaging the Steinway — doing much of the work his boss's increasingly unsteady hand cannot complete.

"Restoration" marks Madmoni's first feature as a solo director, and his first time directing another writer's script. In 2003 he co-wrote and co-directed "The Barbecue People." The family drama, about an Iraqi-Israeli clan that gathers to mark Israel's Independence Day, was nominated for 12 Israeli Film Academy awards. Since then, Madmoni has been working primarily as a writer for Israeli television. He served as script editor for "*Srugim*," a popular sitcom about the social life of Modern Orthodox young adults, and more recently, as a writer for "*Haim Aherim*" ("Another Life"), a dramatic series about a yeshiva student who dreams of becoming a dancer.

Madmoni said that in the early versions of the screenplay, "Restoration" revolved around the question of whether or not the store would be saved. The director worked on the script alongside screenwriter Erez Kav-El, a colleague on "*Haim Aherim*," for about a year and a half. What resulted was a story in which the survival of the shop became secondary to the two love triangles — one familial, the other romantic. There's one love triangle, involving Yakov, Noah and Anton, "between a father, his biological son and his spiritual son," Madmoni told a Sundance audience, and another between Noah, Anton and Noah's very pregnant wife, Hava (Sarah Adler).

Although no American distributor had signed the film as the festival closed, the quality of the writing made it an audience favorite. Even the Sundance jury was taken with the story, and Kav-El carried home this year's top honor

in the world cinema dramatic screenwriting category.

Unlike other contemporary Israeli films that have been well received in America, “Restoration” is not about regional conflict (“Waltz With Bashir,” “Lebanon”) or religion (“Ushpizin,” “Kadosh”). So on one level, it’s a family story that transcends cultural boundaries and national borders; on another, though, it is a requiem to a pre-cosmopolitan Tel Aviv — replete with low-rise buildings, small stores and people working with their hands. That part of Tel Aviv is “getting smaller with each passing year,” said Madmoni, who saw “Restoration” as an opportunity to film what’s left of Old Tel Aviv before it all but disappears behind glassy high-rises and retail chains. He even hired a quartet of street musicians that performs outside his daughter’s school to play small but key roles in the film.

Madmoni, who grew up in an ultra-Orthodox enclave in Jerusalem, now calls Tel Aviv home. His mother’s family came to what is now Israel from Iraq in the late 19th century, and his father’s family emigrated from Yemen around the same time. The yeshiva and film school graduate, who keeps the Sabbath but does not wear a yarmulke in public, said he is still religious — if not by his late father’s Haredi standards.

“In religious neighborhoods, fathers and sons have a lot of quality time together,” Madmoni said. Fathers “give their sons lessons; they walk you to synagogue and walk you home.” Which is why, he surmises, he is particularly drawn to stories about the inherent complications of father-son relationships — also a theme of his next movie.

“My father was religious, and I am not religious in his terms,” he said during an interview. “Like Noah [in the film], I did not take the torch from my father.”

What he did take from his father was the inspiration for the film’s first and final scenes, which provide rare glimpses of faith. As the movie opens, Anton encounters a man offering to help passersby wrap tefillin. The first time he sees the man, he walks right by; the second time, he considers the offer. “It’s not a religious film, but religion is an option for someone searching for himself,” Madmoni said.

*Gabrielle Birkner is the web editor of the Forward.*

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## SUNDANCE REVIEW: Israeli Film 'Restoration' a Quality, if Somber, Picture That Could Find Art-House Success

1:02 AM 1/31/2011 by James Greenberg

### The Bottom Line

An old-fashioned slice of life from Israel more personal than political.

### Venue

Sundance Film Festival, World Cinema Dramatic Competition

### Cast

Sasson Gabay, Henry David, Nevo Kimchi, Sarah Adler, Ruth Borenstein

### Director

Yossi Madmony

**The film, part of the World Cinema Dramatic Competition, is the kind of small-scale, well-crafted story that used to be a staple of European cinema and is rarely seen nowadays, at least in the U.S.**

PARK CITY -- An Israeli film more about the internal state of its characters than the state of the country, *Restoration* is the kind of small-scale, well-crafted story that used to be a staple of European cinema and is rarely seen nowadays, at least in the U.S. It's still a potent formula in the hands of fine actors and a director like **Yossi Madmony** who knows how to slowly build a story with small strokes and telling details. This kind of quality, if somewhat somber, picture could find some success at what remains of art houses and enjoy a solid afterlife in home viewing.

Veteran Israeli actor **Sasson Gabay** plays Fidelman, an old-fashioned wood restorer who is lost after his partner of 40 years passes away. With a perpetual two-day growth and a scowl on his face, Fidelman is as broken down as the shop he runs in an old section of Tel Aviv. Since the death of his wife and growing distance from his son Noah (**Nevo Kimchi**), Fidelman seems to have little connection to the world beyond the sawdust of workplace.

But this is not exactly a booming business and Noah is eager to turn the property into apartments, further alienating father and son. Even the pregnancy of Noah's wife Hava (**Sarah Adler**) does little to lift the old man's spirits. Against all odds, he is holding on to the life he has known for years, and something has to change.

When that change arrives it's hardly noticeable. Fidelman hires Anton (**Henry David**) to help him clean up and do menial work around the shop. He's a mysterious young man running away from his family's wealth and his past as an accomplished musician. It's never really explained what has set him on this path, but gradually he and Fidelman form a fragile bond, replacing the one missing with his son. Further complicating this triangle is an attraction between Anton and Sarah.

As Fidelman's finances become more desperate, Anton discovers an antique Steinway piano in the store that could solve all their problems if it can be restored. But that requires a recast metal frame and delicate scrapping and staining, work that brings the old man and his helper closer together.

Madmony moves things along at a deliberate pace, calibrating the subtle emotional swing. At the center is Gabay's reserved but powerful performance, building to the point where he will have to choose between his

spiritual son and his biological son. He is able to suggest a world of hidden feelings by just shifting his gaze. And cinematographer Boaz Yehonatan's old world lighting effectively adds to the dark, brooding tone.

Ultimately, the film is more about Fidelman's restoration than the piano's. The story feels so real that one can imagine it continuing after the film is over. Life goes on.

*Venue: Sundance Film Festival, World Cinema Dramatic Competition*

*Production companies: Yezira Ivrit*

*Cast: Sasson Gabay, Henry David, Nevo Kimchi, Sarah Adler, Ruth Borenstein*

*Director: Yossi Madmony*

*Screenwriter: Erez Kav-El*

*Producer: Chaim Sharir*

*Director of photography: Boaz Yehonatan Yacov*

*Production designer: Yoav Sinai*

*Music: Avi Belleli*

*Costume designer: Keren Ron*

*Editor: Ayala Bengad*

*No rating, running time 106 minutes*

# The Boston Globe

## Indelible impressions

*Fathers, other inspirational figures mark Jewish Film Festival offerings*

By Loren King | Globe Correspondent | October 28, 2011

You don't have to be Jewish to love the Boston Jewish Film Festival. You just have to love movies.

At the advanced (for a film festival) age of 23, the BJFF, which runs Nov. 2-13, has matured into New England's largest Jewish cultural event. But the films remain its focus and its core. Among the memorable characters in the 32 features and documentaries this year are a newspaper reporter doggedly investigating allegations of sexual abuse against rabbis, an influential modern dancer 86 years young, a nebbish professor who commits a crime of passion, a neurotic German/Jewish filmmaker in the Woody Allen mold, and the most famous bisexual Jewish radical intellectual poet you've never heard of.

So, what's not to like?

Fathers and sons, by blood or by choice, abound in **"Restoration"** (Nov. 6, West Newton Cinema), director Joseph Madmony's drama about second chances and rebirth. Set in the old, industrial district of Tel Aviv, the film is about a taciturn, widowed furniture restorer, Yaakov Fidelman (Sasson Gabai, who starred in "The Band's Visit"), whose longtime partner in the antiques business, Malamud, dies suddenly. Fidelman realizes that it was the outgoing Malamud who kept the business going and even cultivated a strong relationship with Fidelman's son, Noah (Nevo Kimchi), a lawyer. While Noah tries to convince his father to convert the dusty old antiques store building into apartments, Fidelman begins to form a bond with Anton (Henry David), a mysterious young musician who'd recently taken a job at the shop. Against the advice of Noah, Anton and Fidelman painstakingly restore a rare and valuable Steinway. Meanwhile, both "sons" vie not only for Fidelman's attention but also for Noah's engaging, pregnant wife, Hava (Sarah Adler). Beautifully crafted, "Restoration" is about the things we value, and what's worth keeping.

<http://www.bostonglobe.com/arts/movies/2011/10/28/indelible-impressions/SpGwo53UxK4SheHv2dZ13M/story.html>

# Orlando Sentinel

## Movie Review | “Restoration”

November 04, 2011

By Roger Moore, Orlando Sentinel Movie Critic



★ ★ ★ 1/2

Yaakov, played by Sasson Gabai of "The Band's Visit," is an aged Israeli furniture restorer whose partner just died. That death makes him take stock of both his business — Max was the one who charmed vendors into selling to them on credit —

and his lonely, loveless life. Even his son wants to sell the building and move dad into retirement. But a new assistant thinks an antique piano they have and could restore will be their salvation. Joseph Madmony's film is a compelling drama of old age and a profession few have need for anymore.

[http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2011-11-04/entertainment/os-movie-jewish-filmfest-2011-20111104\\_1\\_jewish-film-fest-sholem-aleichem-jewish-mark-twain](http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2011-11-04/entertainment/os-movie-jewish-filmfest-2011-20111104_1_jewish-film-fest-sholem-aleichem-jewish-mark-twain)