

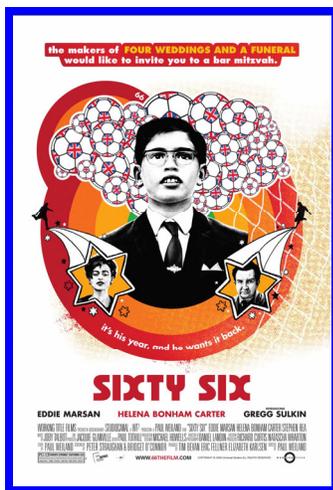
Sixty Six

Directed by Paul Weiland

Based on the “true-ish” story of Weiland’s Bar Mitzvah

(with screenplay by Bridget O’Connor & Peter Straughan)

Principal Actors: Gregg Sulkin + Helena Bonham Carter & Eddie Marsan



Pity poor “Bernie” (Gregg Sulkin); he’s just learned that his Bar Mitzvah is scheduled on the same day as the World Cup Final! Weeks out it can’t possibly matter but of course it does, and once England wins the semi-finals, Bernie’s mother “Esther” (Helena Bonham Carter) must field call after hilarious call from relatives with transparent excuses.

Director Paul Weiland has made “a true-ish story” that will charm the whole mishpokhe.

Tzivi’s Stars:



Metro Chicago Release?

Opens Aug 29, 2008 at AMC Northbrook & Pipers Alley in Old Town

“Bernie Rubens” (Gregg Sulkin) is a nerdy, bespectacled little guy struggling to find a dignified way to survive early adolescence. He’s almost thirteen, and remembering all the hoopla that accompanied the Bar Mitzvah of his elder brother “Alvie” (Ben Newton), Bernie naturally fixates on the day he will officially become a man in the eyes of the Jewish community. Alas, Bernie’s about to learn what most members of the Rubens mishpokhe probably learned in their time too: “Mentsch trakht; Gott lackht.” (“Man plans; God laughs.”)

“Manny Rubens” (Eddie Marsan), Bernie’s sad-sack father, has been a bit too clever with the family finances, so it falls to his wife “Esther” (Helena Bonham Carter) to help Bernie make the best of Manny’s ever-tightening belt. And then, as if things couldn’t possibly get any worse, Bernie finds out that his Bar Mitzvah is scheduled for the same day as the World Cup finals. Surely, with internal family dynamics already weighing him down, this is more than poor Bernie’s skinny shoulders can possibly bear!

Sixty Six is a laugh-through-your-tears type dramedy which succeeds because each member of the large cast is so totally believable. The screenplay flows with naturalistic dialogue and all the actors remain in character, everyone straight-faced, even though all the little things they say and do dance on the razor’s edge of absurdity. In my mind’s eye, I imagine them all doubled over with laughter after almost every take.

For Jewish audiences, *Sixty Six* has a heart-warming “velt mit veltelekh” quality (“world within worlds”). This could be any Ashkenazi family anywhere – the Rubens family just happens to say Hebrew prayers with a broad British accent. Director Paul Weiland describes his film as the “tru-ish” story of his own Bar Mitzvah and he uses raw footage over the closing credits to prove it, but he’s turned painful moments from his own past into narrative magic for the rest of us.

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Helena Bonham Carter... Jewish?

"When [director] Paul [Weiland] phoned up and said, 'Will you be my mother?' I said, 'Yes, of course' -- almost for sentimental reasons. My own mum was triumphant, because I'm quite Jewish on her side of the family. My mum's grandmother was an Austrian Jew called Mitzi Fould-Springer. People think of me as so quintessentially English," she added, with a laugh, by phone from the set of *Terminator Salvation* in New Mexico. "But actually I look just like my mum -- [dark-eyed] and very Jewish."

Read Naomi Pfefferman’s complete interview:

www.jewishjournal.com



The Rubens Mishpokhe



Bernie & Esther

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Sixty Six Review – Special for Chicago's *JUF News*.



Tziviah bat Yisroel v'Hudah (Jan Lisa Huttner) is the managing editor of *FILMS FOR TWO®: The Online Guide for Busy Couples* (www.films42.com), a website devoted to promoting films of interest to both male and female audience members. Jan writes a regular monthly column called "Tzivi's Spotlight" for Chicago's *JUF News*. Her award-winning articles have also appeared in *All About Jewish Theatre*, the *Connecticut Jewish Ledger*, the *Forward*, *Jewish Film World*, and the *World Jewish Digest* in addition to numerous other non-Jewish publications and websites.

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To read more of Jan's reviews of films with Jewish themes & characters,

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