**JANE ENKIN REVIEWS FASCINATING FILM BY HOWARD RYPP,'GIMPEL THE FOOL RETURNS TO POLAND'- WINNIPEG INTERNATIONAL JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL 2024 JUNE 14, 4:30**

*by Jane Enkin, May 27,2024*

This film is fascinating, tender, and moving. From the dream-like opening shot of an old-world Jew, walking a path through an overgrown graveyard, we are led into the experiences of Gimpel the Fool and of  Howard Rypp, director, actor and creator of the film.

The documentary is based on Rypp’s tour of Poland with his one-man play drawn from Isaac Bashevis Singer's story Gimpel the Fool. While in Poland, Rypp was filmed in conversations with Polish theatre professionals and on drives to sites of interest. Most evocatively, he was filmed in costume as Gimpel, wondering at all he sees.

The film is carefully and beautifully crafted. There are deep, saturated colours in scenes of Gimpel in the director’s play and in his wanderings. Paler, more realistic sunlit colours appear during conversations and Rypp’s visits to towns and neighbouring sites. The evocative lighting in scenes from Rypp’s one-man play of the story contributes to the overall feeling of the film. I especially enjoyed a scene in which Gimpel, a baker, tossed sprays of flour into the air, magically catching the light. The film returns often to an interview with Bashevis, who died in 1991, speaking of towns he lived in before the war and what they meant to him and his writing. Rypp visited these towns during his time in Poland. During his tour, Rypp became concerned about lingering antisemitism in Poland and avoidance of the past on the part of many people there. Nevertheless, he was heartened to speak with Polish professionals who are passionate about creating awareness of the vanished pre-war Jewish community of Poland.

 The effort has paid off in a tender, powerful film.