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The Old And The New (The General Line)

1929 72 min. Silent
B&W Rental: \$35.00

Directed and written by Sergei Eisenstein and Grigori Alexandrov; original title: "Staroy i novoye;" photography by Edouard Tisse. With Marfa Lapkina, Vasya Buzenkov, Kostya Vasiliev. English titles.

The Old And The New is Eisenstein's first (and only completed) film based on a contemporary subject. Begun in 1926, work on *The Old And The New* was halted while Eisenstein made *October* for the anniversary of the Revolution in 1927. Finally completed in 1929, the film emerged somewhat differently than originally planned, and after criticism from Stalin personally, a new ending was shot and attached. The film was made in support of the mechanization of agriculture, and tells of the initiative and courage of a peasant woman



struggling against superstition, greed and hostility. The Eisenstein anthology pieces in this relatively neglected work includes the scenes of prayer for rain, the wheat-cutting contest, the comic "marriage of the bull" sequence, and the symbolic cream-separator montage.

Eisenstein had difficulty in editing *The Old And The New*, partly because in 1929 he was already thinking in terms of the new possibilities in sound cinema (he signed the famous Pudovkin-Alexandrov-Eisenstein manifesto on sound cinema while still working on this silent film). Nonetheless, Eisenstein developed and put into practice new concepts of montage in editing *The Old And The New*—the idea of "visual overtone" leading to a "filmic fourth dimension," achieved through "overtonal montage." (PVB)