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Dovzhenko's

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Earth (Zemliya) 9:35

The great Ukrainian director Alexander Dovzhenko was Larissa Shepitko's teacher. His last silent film *Earth* is considered his masterpiece. The story is simple enough, pitting young peasants of a Ukrainian village who want to set up collective farms, against the kulaks (rich landowners) who try to protect their land. Vasili, the chairman of the collective, buys a tractor with the collective money and takes the land by force. The collective is a success, but Vasili is ambushed and killed. With the priest expelled, his comrades give him a "modern" burial, singing songs of their new life while rain falls on the crops. Dovzhenko's concern is less with plot than with the lyrical expression of a universal theme—the life cycle of man, which he believes to be bound inextricably to the land—developed through a constant juxtaposition and intertwining of images of life and death. In the opening sequence, for instance, shots of corn and wheat rippling in the wind and fruit on the trees suggest a harvest; an old man lies dying. He eats an apple, as does his young grandchild. Life goes on. The exquisite photography by Dovzhenko's regular cameraman Danylo Demutsky (*Arsenal*) is well served by our excellent 35mm print.

• Directed and Written by Alexander Dovzhenko. Photographed by Danylo Demutsky. With Semyon Svashenko, Stepan Shkurat, Mikola Nademsky, Julia Solntseva. (1930, 54 mins, Silent with English intertitles, 35mm. Print from PFA Collection)