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Delirious Cinema: A PFA Treasure

I Am Cuba 7:30

Mikhail Kalatozov (Cuba/USSR, 1962)

(*Soy Cuba/Ja Kuba*). The most exciting recent addition to the PFA Collection, from Gosfilmofund, Moscow, here is an extraordinary example of "pure" cinema in the service of politics. "A true *film maudit*. Impossible to see in Cuba (where it was called *I Am NOT Cuba*), and scorned in Russia as agitprop kitsch, *I Am Cuba* was made in 1962 as an act of Soviet-Cuban friendship. Yevgeny Yevtushenko gets credit for the film's poetic structure—a loose series of choreographed tableaux in praise of the revolutionary spirit. It is also a deliciously one-of-a-kind movie, wildly schizophrenic in its bizarre mix of Slavic solemnity and Latin sensuality" (Tom Luddy, *Telluride*). "The most brilliant Soviet film since the 1920s. Kalatozov and cinematographer Sergei Urusevsky have...realized Eisenstein's dream: an epic of the revolutionary struggle of the oppressed Latin American masses, using visual images and nearly no dialogue. [They] have used their 'emotional camera' to an extent which has to be seen to be believed. using handheld camera, wide-angle lenses, oddly tilted angles which distort...and elaborate crane shots..." (Steven P. Hill, *Film Quarterly*).

• Written by Yevgeny Yevtushenko, Enrique Pineda Barnet. Photographed by Sergei Urusevsky. With Luz María Collazo, Jean Bouise, Sergio Corrieri, José Gallardo. (138 mins, In Spanish and English with Russian voiceover; English synopsis, B&W, 35mm, PFA Collection)