

## Document Citation

Title	<b>Nostalghia</b>
Author(s)	Andrei Tarkovsky Cesare Biarese
Source	<i>Reid Rosefelt</i>
Date	
Type	press kit
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	20
Subjects	Giordano, Domiziana (1959), Rome, Italy Yankovskiy, Oleg (1944-2009), Dzhezkazgan, Karaganda Kazakh SSR, Soviet Union Josephson, Erland (1923), Stockholm, Sweden Tarkovsky, Andrei (1932-1986), Zawrashje, Iwanowo, Russia, Soviet Union
Film Subjects	Nostalghia, Tarkovsky, Andrei, 1983

# NOSTALGHIA

## Nostalgia

### PRODUCTION CREDITS

Director.....ANDREI TARKOVSKY

Screenplay.....ANDREI TARKOVSKY  
TONINO GUERRA

Director of Photography.....GIUSEPPE LANCI

Art Director.....ANDREA KRISANTI

Editors.....AMEDEO SALFA  
ERMINIA MARANI

Costume Designer.....LINA NERLI TAVIANI

Production Manager.....FRANCESCO CASATI

Assistant Directors.....NORMAN MOZZATO  
LARISSA TARKOVSKY

Sound.....REMO UGOLINELLI

Musical Direction.....GINO PEGURI

Music.....GIUSEPPE VERDI  
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN  
RUSSIAN FOLK SONGS

Makeup.....GIULIO MASTRANTONIO

Makeup Assistant.....COSIMO ROMANO

Hair Stylist.....IOLE CECCHINI

Cameraman.....GIUSEPPE DE BIASI

Assistant Cameramen.....GIANCARLO BATTAGLIA  
LUIGI CECCHINI  
GUGLIELMO MODESTINI

Set Construction.....MAURO PASSI

Production Assistants.....FILIPPO CAMPUS  
VALENTINO SIGNORETTI

Continuity.....ILDE MUSCIO

Still Photographer.....BRUNO BRUNI

Costumers.....ANNAMODE 68 s.r.l.



Production Credits / 2

Special Effects.....PAOLO RICCI  
Sound Mix.....FAUSTO ANCILLAI  
Sound Effects.....LUCIANO ANZELLOTTI  
                                MASSIMO ANZELLOTTI  
Production Companies.....OPERA FILM PRODUCTIONS for RAI CHANNEL 2 (Italy)  
  SOVIN FILM (Moscow)  
  GAUMONT

## CAST

Gortchakov.....	OLEG YANKOVSKY
Eugenia.....	DOMIZIANA GIORDANO
Domenico.....	ERLAND JOSEPHSON
Gortchakov's Wife.....	PATRIZIA TERRENO
Chambermaid.....	LAURA DE MARCHI
Domenico's Wife.....	DELIA BOCCARDO
Civil Servant.....	MILENA VUKOTIC
Farmer.....	ALBERTO CANEPA

Italy, 1983

In Italian with English subtitles

## Color and Black and White

Running Time: 120 minutes

Unrated by the MPAA

A Grange Communications Release

Cannes Film Festival 1983  
Grand Prix for Creative Cinema  
International Critics Prize (FIPRESCI)  
Ecumenical Jury Prize



"The word 'nostalghia' does not have exactly the same meaning in Russian that it has in other languages. It defines a much more complex sentiment, one that mixes the love for your homeland and the melancholy that arises from being far away. . . . It is an illness, a moral suffering which tortures the soul. It is fatal if one is not able to overcome it, but it can only be contracted in a foreign country. If I find myself in a region anywhere in the U.S.S.R., I can feel sadness, but not 'nostalghia.'"

Andrei Tarkovsky



## SYNOPSIS

Behind the opening credits appears the Russian country home of Gortchakov (Oleg Yankovsky), a Russian poet, nestled by a lake. The image is a memory, as Gortchakov is currently staying in the Italian province of Tuscany to study the life of Pavel Sinovsky, an 18th Century Russian composer who had lived there. During the course of NOSTALGHIA, Gortchakov's memories of Russia and his experiences in Italy begin to merge in his consciousness: elements of the past, present, and his imagination become one.

Accompanying Gortchakov in Italy is Eugenia (Domiziana Giordano), his Italian interpreter and a woman of Botticelli-like beauty. Her feelings for him are quite strong, but she is frustrated by his aloofness. On a misty afternoon, they visit an old church. When Gortchakov decides not to join her, Eugenia enters alone. Once inside, she has difficulty kneeling in front of the altar, as if, while facing the painting of the Madonna del Parto by Pierro della Francesca, something inside her resisted her will. She asks an old man, the sacristan of the church, why she sees only women performing the church rituals. He answers that women are, in his opinion, only useful for childbearing and the church.

When Gortchakov and Eugenia return to the hotel, the cultural barriers which face him as a foreigner arise as an issue between them. Eugenia recalls a newspaper article about a Southern Italian domestic worker who burned down the house of her Northern Italian employer because she was homesick for her native Calabria. Gortchakov reveals that Sinovsky, the Russian composer whose life he is following, ached for Russia when he came to Bologna to study at a prestigious conservatory. Yet, when Sinovsky returned to his homeland, he became an alcoholic and committed suicide.

When Gortchakov returns to the stillness of his room, the cultural barriers which he believes exist between Russia and Italy begin to break down in some extraordinary visions. A dog which was previously seen only in his memory



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knocks over a glass in the room; a superimposed image of Eugenia appears together with Gortchakov's wife; and his wife appears pregnant on the hotel room bed posed like the Madonna del Parto in the Italian church.

Gortchakov's interest is piqued by the sight of Domenico (Erland Josephson) wading in the hot-spring baths of Bagno Vignoni with his clothes on, holding a candle. The baths are legendary, having once been used by Saint Catherine. The other bathers gossip about Domenico while Gortchakov carefully observes him. They call him a madman, saying that he had forbidden his family for years from leaving the house because he had believed the world was coming to an end. Gortchakov asks Eugenia to take him to see Domenico at his home, claiming that "he's not mad, he has faith." She obliges him, despite her exasperation with his caprices and his lack of interest in her. When they arrive at Domenico's house, and Gortchakov seems intent on spending some time with a man Eugenia considers to be insane, she leaves, telling Gortchakov that she is through with him and is going to Rome to see another man.

The day Gortchakov spends with Domenico is an eerie and mystical experience for both of them. Through bright sunlight, rain comes dripping into Domenico's house--a building full of rooms in total disrepair, each of them empty but for a few scattered mementos, and a dog just like the one in Gortchakov's memory. Doors open to evoke recurring visions of Gortchakov's home in Russia; Domenico relives the nightmare of his family being taken from him, and freed from the house, by the police. The "madman" is convinced that if he had crossed the baths at Bagno Vignoni with a lighted candle he would have saved mankind, but he has been forbidden from entering the baths by the local townspeople. He has one urgent spiritual request for Gortchakov: that in his place, Gortchakov must wade across the baths with a lighted candle before he leaves Italy.

When Gortchakov returns to his hotel, he finds Eugenia there. Haranguing him for his behavior, she ends by calling him a hypocrite. Gortchakov has had enough; still feeling resentful, Eugenia leaves him. He suddenly gets a bloody nose and feels weak. Lying back, he dreams of his family at home in Russia in front of a magnificent sunrise.

Gortchakov spends the next day wading around an abandoned building flooded with well-water, drunk on vodka. He tells a story to a little Italian girl who



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doesn't understand a word. When he drifts off drunkenly into sleep, a book of poems he had been carrying with him and reading catches fire. In Gortchakov's dreams he walks up to a mirror and Domenico's reflection stares back at him. Through his encounter with Domenico, the presence of Italy seems to have pierced deeply into Gortchakov's Russian psyche. While before he had refused to accompany Eugenia into the church, he now dreams of walking through the ruins of the Cistercian abbey of San Galgano.

After arriving in Rome and preparing for a flight to Moscow, Gortchakov receives a call from Eugenia. She is with her new lover, Vittorio, and wishes him well on his trip home. As an incidental note, she tells Gortchakov that Domenico is in Rome, staging a public demonstration. Domenico has also asked her to remind Gortchakov of his request to wade across the baths at Bagno Vignoni with a lighted candle. As soon as he hangs up, Gortchakov cancels his flight to Moscow and returns to Bagno Vignoni.

Meanwhile, Domenico is atop the statue of Marcus Aurelius in the Campidoglio, surrounded by a large crowd. He shouts to the crowd a warning--to listen to the "madmen," the poets, the "sick." Dismissing them, he wails, will surely mean the end of the world. He pours gasoline over himself, and lights himself on fire. In flames, he falls to the ground. Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" blasts from a planted speaker until the police arrive.

At Bagno Vignoni, the baths have been drained for cleaning. Gortchakov, candle in hand, tries to walk completely across the main pool while keeping the candle's flame lit. Twice he fails, until, on a third attempt, he reaches the other side. While the townspeople watch him, mystified, he plants the candle on the wall of the empty pool. He then collapses, his movements echoing those of Domenico when he fell to the ground in flames.

A vision appears: The Russian country house of Gortchakov, with he and his dog sitting in front of it, is now walled within the ruins of the abbey of San Galgano. Snow begins to fall.



## ANDREI TARKOVSKY

Unlike the films of other living Soviet directors, those of Andrei Tarkovsky demonstrate a personal and original vision that places him alongside Wajda, Bergman and Fellini as a major filmmaker of our time. Tarkovsky "makes movies with an ambition and intensity" which has been virtually "absent from Soviet film for over 40 years," writes J. Hoberman in the Village Voice. Ivor Montagu compares the striking images of Tarkovsky's films to Breughel's paintings, finely detailed compositions that have "beauty, harmony and relevance. . . . When one has seen any one of his films once, one wants to see it again and yet again; thoughts chase after one another like hares in March." Tarkovsky's six features and two shorts have each won numerous prizes at international festivals, including the Golden Lion at Venice, the Grand Prize at San Francisco, the Grand Prize at Acapulco, and at Cannes, the Special Jury Prize and the Grand Prix for Creative Cinema.

Andrei Tarkovsky was born in Moscow on April 4, 1932. His father, Arseni, was a well-known poet (some of his father's poems were read aloud for the soundtrack of Tarkovsky's 1975 autobiographical film, *THE MIRROR*). In Tarkovsky's own words, "During my high school period I attended the School of Music, and I did some painting. In 1952 I enrolled in the Institute of Oriental Languages, where I studied Arabic. All this wasn't for me." He left school to work as a geological prospector in Siberia. Then, in 1956, he entered the State Institute for Cinema (VGIK), to study under Mikhail Romm.

While at film school, Tarkovsky created the short, *THERE WILL BE NO LEAVE TODAY*, and for his diploma, the medium-length film, *THE STEAMROLLER AND THE VIOLIN*. The diploma film, Tarkovsky notes, "was very important for me because it was then that I met the cameraman Vadim Yusov, and the composer Vyacheslav Ovchinnikov, with whom I have continued working." The script was by another school friend, Andrei Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky, who later wrote Tarkovsky's *ANDREI RUBLEV* (1966) and went on to become an accomplished director himself (*SIBERIAD*, 1979). The hero of *THE STEAMROLLER AND THE VIOLIN* is a twelve-year-old boy who yearns to be a steamroller driver while he studies to play the violin. The film's themes of dissatisfaction with art as an end in itself, and a rejection



of art as an elite occupation, reappear in Tarkovsky's more mature works. THE STEAMROLLER AND THE VIOLIN won the first prize at a Students' Film Competition in New York.

Tarkovsky's first feature, IVAN'S CHILDHOOD, appeared in 1962 and was greeted enthusiastically around the world. Critics heralded the arrival of a great talent in the Soviet cinema after many years of creative stagnation. The Ivan of the title is a newly orphaned twelve-year-old Russian boy who volunteers to fight the Nazis during World War II. His "childhood" is, instead, a perverted adult existence: Ivan serves as a spy who crosses enemy lines, and who one day fails to return. An epilogue reveals, through a file kept by the Germans in Berlin, that he was condemned to death and hung. Jean-Paul Sartre described IVAN'S CHILDHOOD as "socialist surrealism," and analyzed the remarkably complex and unsentimental approach Tarkovsky used for his melodramatic subject: "Ivan is mad, he is a monster. He is a little hero. In truth, he is the most innocent and touching victim of the war. This boy, whom one cannot help but like, has been forged by violence. . . Isn't there here, in the narrowest sense of the term, a significant criticism of the positive hero?" At the Venice Film Festival, IVAN'S CHILDHOOD won the Golden Lion, and in both San Francisco and Acapulco it received the Grand Prize. The success of IVAN'S CHILDHOOD granted Tarkovsky a degree of artistic independence that was rare for such a young Soviet director.

His next film, ANDREI RUBLEV, completed four years later in 1966, is considered by Nigel Andrews to be "the one indisputable Russian masterpiece" of the sixties. Tarkovsky chose as his subject the life of Andrei Rublev, the great Russian icon-painter of the Middle Ages. Reliable historical information on Rublev is scarce, so Tarkovsky invented his own vision of the past, demystifying the reverence of popular legends. The director explains, "I do not understand historical films which have no relevance for the present. For me the most important thing is to use historical material to express Man's ideas and to create contemporary characters." Shooting the film in black and white, he depicts Rublev as a despairing humanist in a brutal world. He observes shocking atrocities committed by feudal lords and invading Tatars, as well as the erotic pageant of uninhibited pagans, frolicking in the nude. In time, he abandons all hope, vowing to remain silent and to stop painting. Many years later, when a local duke seeks a craftsman to build him a bell of unprecedented size, a young boy answers the call. Claiming



to be the son of an artisan who taught him the secrets of his craft before he died, the boy (Kolya Burlyayev, the same actor who played the twelve-year-old hero of IVAN'S CHILDHOOD) sets out to build his duke a masterpiece. Despite seemingly invincible obstacles, the bell is flawlessly completed, and it rings for the duke and throughout the village. Overcome with joy and released anxiety, the boy confesses to Rublev that he had lied and that he had constructed the bell with no prior expertise. A greatly moved Rublev, breaking many years of silence, comforts the boy and tells him that as artists they will work together. A montage of Rublev's icons follows in vibrant color. "The point is clear. If the boy cannot forbear, but must create, how can Rublev, for very shame, accept frustration? Is this not a topical question, unanswerably answered? No words could be more explicit." (Ivor Montagu, Sight and Sound) ANDREI RUBLEV was held up for general release by the U.S.S.R. until 1971, causing a scandal and much speculation in the West. Some believe the Russian censors were shocked by the violence, eroticism and the obsession with religion, all unorthodox for the contemporary Russian cinema. Tarkovsky's inflexibility on cuts had also been cited. In 1969, ANDREI RUBLEV won the International Critics Prize at Cannes, and in 1973 it was selected to be part of the New York Film Festival.

Tarkovsky turned to a novel by Polish science fiction writer Stanislaw Lem for his third feature, SOLARIS (1972). Penelope Houston called SOLARIS "Russia's answer to 2001 not in its display of space hardware but in the speculative quality of its ideas." Tarkovsky was not attracted to science fiction per se, but instead to the ethical questions that arose in the novel. He even contemplated "transferring the entire plot to Earth." Which is where the story opens-- in the Russian country home of a scientist, Kris Kelvin, who lives with his parents and his child. Unusual phenomena are reported on the planet Solaris, and he is called upon to investigate. Arriving at a space station on the edge of the mysterious planet, he finds that his colleagues living aboard the station have either committed suicide or have become insanely obsessed with hallucinations. The surface of Solaris is an oily, cloudy sea, the "Thinking Ocean": a living entity that does not communicate directly, but rather materializes fantasies from human's lives. For Kelvin, Solaris conjures up a perfect double of his dead wife, Hari, who had committed suicide after the failure of their relationship. Although Hari is only a hallucination, Kelvin tries to redress his mistakes in the past and renew his commitment to her. Delving ever deeper into a fantasy world of his own moral conflicts, Kelvin sees at the end of the film



an image from his childhood, he and his father in front of the family cottage, arise out of the surface of Solaris. As a moral parable, SOLARIS has been interpreted in many different ways. Tarkovsky himself says of Kelvin, "I wanted to show by his portrait that the problem of moral firmness, moral purity, penetrates our whole existence, appearing even in those spheres which at first glance are not linked to the moral, for example the penetration of the universe, the study of the objective world, etc." The metaphor of Solaris's "Thinking Ocean" surface is seen by Italian historian Giovanni Buttafava as "the ocean of cinema on which the island of Solaris is floating." Philip Strick sees Solaris as a "turbulent metaphor as much for an imperfect deity as for the psychoanalyst's couch." For whatever interpretation, Strick finds Hari to be "the most seductively tragic other-worlder the cinema has yet shown us. And as a whole SOLARIS is the nearest the cinema has come to capturing the complexities of modern science fiction, with its intermingling of time and memory, acute uneasiness, and emphasis on elegance and style." In 1972 SOLARIS won the Special Jury Prize at Cannes. It opened in New York at the Ziegfeld Theatre in the fall of 1976.

In 1975, Tarkovsky completed THE MIRROR, a film more directly autobiographical than any other he has made before or since. "It's the story of my mother and thus of a part of my own life," he has said. "The film contains only genuine incidents. It's a confession." Tarkovsky's parents separated in 1935, and THE MIRROR has been seen as the filmmaker's way of exorcizing repressed feelings from his childhood. Voice-over readings of his father's poems and other, unusually subjective associations lead the viewer through a labyrinth of scenes and images. Memories of the past, nightmares and dreams, newsreel footage, black and white and color, merge to form a "hypnotic," poetic self-examination. Soviet authorities disapproved of THE MIRROR and it is believed that its release was restricted. While Western critics might point to the influences of Resnais and Bergman and their deeply introspective themes, or to Fellini's 8½ as an example of a director's self-appraisal, Russian critics have no such vantage points within their national cinema.

Tarkovsky returned to science fiction in his next film, STALKER (1979), loosely based on a 1973 novel by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky. The novel was set in North America; Tarkovsky transferred the story, without actually specifying its locale, unmistakably back to Russia. Taking place in the future, STALKER concerns a government-restricted, mystery-shrouded area known as the "Zone," at the center



of which exists a "Room" where wishes are fulfilled. The hazards of the unpredictable Zone can only be avoided if one travels with a "stalker," who will illegally guide the uninitiated. Living on the Zone's periphery, with dirty clothes, shaven head and a wretched family, Tarkovsky's stalker resembles a political prisoner in a work camp. He is hired by two intellectuals, an unnamed scientist and a writer, to reach the Room. "In the end," Gilbert Adair writes, "the scientist, denouncing the false hopes the Room must encourage, toys with the notion of blowing it up, while the writer, who sought to spur his flagging creativity, contemptuously declines even to formulate a wish. To the wretched, by now half-demented stalker is left the Sisyphean task of sustaining a doubtful faith of which he is a humble priest but without which he is nothing."

STALKER is rich with allegory. The Zone can be seen as a gulag, an industrial or even a post-nuclear wasteland. As a nether-world of truth (in the Room) and faith (the stalker) the Zone's restricted entry is seen by Gilbert Adair as the means "by which the state could perhaps foster the useful illusion of limited but just attainable freedom." No matter what time frame he chooses, Tarkovsky's art never loses its relevance to the present.

Until late in 1982, when NOSTALGHIA went before the cameras, Tarkovsky had been working tirelessly to secure the backing for his Italian and Russian co-production. NOSTALGHIA was to be his first film with footage shot outside the U.S.S.R., and his first collaboration with a non-Russian crew. In the end, because of difficulties encountered with Sovin Film, virtually all of NOSTALGHIA was shot in Italy. Tarkovsky's cultural hybrid was greatly assisted by veteran Italian screenwriter Tonino Guerra, who speaks fluent Russian and whose wife is Russian. It was Guerra who discovered a newspaper article about a character similar to that of Domenico (played by Erland Josephson). Premiering at the 1983 Cannes Film Festival, NOSTALGHIA shared the Grand Prix for Creative Cinema with Robert Bresson's L'ARGENT.



STATEMENTS BY ANDREI TARKOVSKY  
at the 1983 Telluride Film Festival

At a tribute to Andrei Tarkovsky, Saturday, September 3, 1983:

The birth of cinema was sinful in that it took place on the marketplace, and thus the cinema was born with the purpose of earning money. No other discipline of art was born with this purpose. To this day, whoever makes films must feel the consequences of this fact, of this sinful birth.

To write a poem, all you need is a piece of paper and a pencil. A painter may work alone, having only his canvas to paint on. A book is a book even if it's not published. Franz Kafka didn't publish one single work during his life. Johann Sebastian Bach was an unknown compared to his son, but all his works were on paper, conceived, done. There is no way to make films alone. First of all, one must find the money to make a film. It may be true that film was born to be a distraction, to be an entertainment, but it is not right. Cinema is not an entertainment. It is a highly poetic discipline of art. As Goethe said, "it is equally difficult to read a good book as to write a good book." Cinema is great art. It is not at its greatest when the whole project depends on money and money decides if the project will be actually realized or completed.

For years, the film spectator demanded films that were entertainment, and as a result, the cinema became an entertainment. Now, spectators are disappointed, bored, and are abandoning the theatres. Why do I quote Goethe? Because art is a mystery, because art talks about the infinity and this is a mystery in itself. If I ever made a film that pleased everybody, I would get the feeling that I made something basically wrong. I would not want to make something like a \$100 bill which pleased everybody. But, just the existence of a festival like this one at Telluride brings hope to my life.

My intuition tells me that the masses of the film audience are in a very critical moment now and they are expecting and willing to find in cinema something different, not an entertainment, but something more deep and more substantial that



## Statements by Tarkovsky / 2

will refer to their lives. I hope that producers will return to the time which they have forgotten when they were friends, co-authors, and co-creators of the works done by artists. You may say I'm an idealist, but I believe all this very deeply. This festival supports my great hope.

At a second tribute, the following day:

Try to watch NOSTALGHIA not as a movie but as a film. Look at it as if it was the window in a train travelling through your life and you see through the window what will happen. In my opinion, the rhythm of a film is the most specific thing in the personal style of each director. So, to preserve my personality and my self, I have chosen this particular rhythm, this particular pace, which is my pace. I believe that cutting the film short, to make it fast and intense is somehow against the spirit of filmmaking. The only service I can give to you, the spectator, is not to make a step towards you, but instead to remain myself, and only when I remain myself may I really share something, or give something of myself. And that's what I hope will happen with this film. I don't believe real artists can take a different position.



### WHAT ARE THE CONCERNS OF ANDREI TARKOVSKY?

A seminar on September 4, 1983 at the Telluride Film Festival

Andrei Tarkovsky: I would like to express a personal point of view: that the world is divided between two kinds of people. One kind are people who believe they are born to be happy. A Russian writer once wrote: "Man is born for happiness as the bird is born for flying." This quotation makes me laugh. I belong to the other part of humanity. I believe we are on this planet in order to accomplish some spiritual growth. If we die a little more spiritually developed than when we were born, then we can say our lives have been successful or accomplished. That is the belief of this second part of humanity, which I belong to. I believe deeply that the human spirit, the human soul, is immortal. If I couldn't believe this, I wouldn't be able to survive even ten minutes, because my life would be senseless to me. If this senselessness is the price of happiness, if it is identical to happiness, then happiness is not my option. There are things far more important in this world than happiness.

In the personal world you've created on film, there are a lot of recurring images. For example, the extensive use of fire and water in ANDREI RUBLEV, THE MIRROR, NOSTALGHIA, and others. Would you elaborate on what these personal images mean to you?

Tarkovsky: As far as water is concerned, I think that maybe my next film will be an underwater film, and that water is taking over more space in my filmmaking. Or maybe I should shoot a film about the deluge. Anyway, all these elements are an unconscious way of expressing in the form of matter the sense of time, which is for me the most substantial topic. When I see all this water around me, and the reflection of light in water, I think that all the water of the world is one molecule, and it gives me the feeling of unity in matter. Water for me is like the blood of the material world.



Would you elaborate on how you conceive of the use of black and white or color or something in between, what is appropriate to what aspect of what you're showing?

Tarkovsky: It's very difficult to talk about how I conceived of this in my films. I like black and white very much and I consider it my duty not to forget black and white. Color can never be the same as black and white once was. Color in cinema is inadequate for life, it's not like life, it's not realistic. Unless we concentrate on it in our normal perception of the world, we don't feel colors or abstract colors from the rest of the form which is surrounding us in a psychological sense. Black and white is closer to the psychologically true perception of the world, it's more naturalistic.

Do you feel you can realize your artistic aims working within the system of the Soviet Union?

Tarkovsky: During my career in the Soviet Union, I made five feature films, and all of them were films I wanted to do.

Do you plan to return to the Soviet Union now and make films there, or do you have any desire to make films in the United States?

Tarkovsky: If you've seen NOSTALGHIA, you should understand what will happen. As for my immediate plans, I will be directing the opera Boris Godunov at Covent Garden in London, and I am preparing Hamlet as a film. To be precise, at the moment I am waiting for permission to come from the Soviet Union to allow me to continue my work in the West.

What was the spiritual tradition or religious environment in the home that you were raised in?

Tarkovsky: I grew up in the family of a poet, so you might say it was a family of educated people, of intellectuals. But out of all the influences on me which I am aware of, the biggest is Nature. I was brought up close to Nature and Nature has a definite role in my spiritual formation. My favorite book is Thoreau's Walden.



Do you feel you're a poet?

Tarkovsky: The answer will become simple if you divide film directors into two groups. The first group are directors who are realists, who try to reconstruct the world around them on the screen. The second type of director is one who is creating his own world. And this second group of directors are called poets. It may be a dubious claim that I belong to the second category, but the proof is that there are so many people who don't approve and don't accept my world. My world is not a common world. It's good that people disagree with me because it would be very sad if we all agreed on everything, living in harmony and co-operation like in paradise.

Do you have anything to say about Kurosawa's experiences in the Soviet Union, and particularly with regard to the conflict between Man and Nature?

Tarkovsky: Nature in Kurosawa's film is against Man, but it is more Man who is rebellious and fights Nature. I worked for two years in Siberia. When I arrived there, I became a victim of all the insects, all the flies and mosquitoes of Siberia. And an old man who was looking for gold told me that I had two choices: either I could go back to Moscow the next day or I could stay. But in order to stay in Siberia, I would have to ignore all these flies, mosquitoes and other insects. Just feed them a bit. Otherwise I would go mad. There was no way in between. And I stayed for two years to work in Siberia. From that time on, no insects ever touched me.

How would you compare literature and film as a medium for expressing philosophy?

Tarkovsky: It makes no sense to compare them, and this comparison shouldn't be made. One should just divide one from another, separate one from the other. If they're connected, it's only a mechanical connection between literature and film. If we separate them, then we see them as distinguished, and that different principles apply to each of them. Literature is a story, description by means of language. In film what is essential is the expression of infinity by fixing the flow of time.



INTERVIEW WITH ANDREI TARKOVSKY

by Cesare Biarese, Rome, March 23, 1983

How was NOSTALGHIA first conceived, and then how did you develop this idea?

Tarkovsky: For a long time I've wanted to analyze the state of the soul and the feelings of a Soviet intellectual in a foreign land. That is to say, my own condition at this moment. As I was making this film the impressions I had as a tourist transformed themselves into more profound emotions. The colors became more vivid. The film became an echo of the condition of my soul and my suffering: the echo of the thoughts of a man who has left his mother country a year ago. NOSTALGHIA takes place in Italy because it is a country I know well. I have been there many times and have taken with me many impressions. And it may be the only foreign country where I feel close to its people. But NOSTALGHIA is not about my attitude towards Italy. Neither was the film made to discourage traveling. It's about my experience there, of my detachment from my own country. In a certain sense, it's the story of an illness, of an amnesia: "nostalghia."

What are the origins of your "nostalghia"?

Tarkovsky: I think one must look in the direction of the absence of spiritual communication for the answer to that question. One suddenly has the feeling of being at the top of a mountain; where the pressure is low and the air is thin. It's very difficult to express with words. Perhaps "nostalghia" can be explained by the loss of faith and hope.

You have intimated in the past that one of the themes of NOSTALGHIA is the inter-mixing of cultures--something problematic, even impossible, if I understood you correctly.

Tarkovsky: At first I wanted this theme to occupy an important place in the film. But then I changed my mind. There was only enough material there for a brief conversation. I realized that a work of art, whatever kind it is--be it literary, musical, theatrical, etc., can only be understood in its totality by individuals who grew up in that cultural milieu which also gave birth to the



## Interview with Tarkovsky / 2

work of art. Someone who is attuned to a different culture can think he understands it, but he's only fooling himself. A forest described in a Japanese book has nothing to do with a forest in Sicily or Siberia. I could never see the forest in the same way the author or his countrymen do. The knowledge that I may have of geography, of art, or of local literature doesn't change anything. There always remains the feeling of something foreign or exotic which I cannot grasp.

It is said that poetry, not as a literary genre, but as a way of seeing the world, is universal. Couldn't that be the link between different cultures?

Tarkovsky: I am convinced of that. But it's not that simple. It presumes we are all on the same wavelength. Somebody once said, with good reason, that it is as difficult to write a good book as it is to read one. The whole problem is there. Also today, we can no longer live poetry. A volume of poetry before it is published requires months, years of work. Who would pay for this? Society has become indifferent to the needs of the poet, and artists in general. Society wishes to ignore the fact that if these "madmen" were to disappear, then society would destruct in its own turn.

I see a very close relationship between your films and poetry. Your films are open to a different way of perceiving, which is in fact, closely linked to poetry. Where does this come from?

Tarkovsky: What is poetry? An extremely profound and original way of thinking and expressing the world. The poet is someone who through the intermediary of a single image can succeed in sending back a universal message. A man passes close by another man, looks at him but doesn't see him. Another man can look at this same person, and all of a sudden will smile, simply because that man, whom he also did not know, touched off an explosion of associations. With art it's the same thing. It's enough for the poet to take a fragment and turn it into a coherent whole. Yet there are some people who find this process boring. These are the ones who want to know everything, in small detail, like accountants or lawyers. For the poet, it might only be necessary to show a toe that sticks out from under a garment to create and evoke an entire world.



### ERLAND JOSEPHSON

Currently starring as the magical Uncle Isak in Ingmar Bergman's FANNY AND ALEXANDER, Erland Josephson is best known internationally for his brilliant performance as Liv Ullmann's immature husband in Bergman's SCENES FROM A MARRIAGE (1974) and as Ullmann's friend and confidante in Bergman's FACE TO FACE (1976). In his native Sweden, Josephson is known not only as a consummate actor, but also as a director, screenwriter, poet, essayist, best-selling novelist and as a major figure in the national theatre. Born in Stockholm on June 15, 1923, he grew up in the intellectual atmosphere of his upper-middle-class Jewish family. His friendship with Ingmar Bergman began nearly forty years ago, when both were young men in the theatre. Josephson has acted in many Bergman films, beginning with the director's second, IT RAINS ON OUR LOVE (1946), and including TO JOY (1950), BRINK OF LIFE (1958), THE MAGICIAN (1958), HOUR OF THE WOLF (1968), THE PASSION OF ANNA (1969), CRIES AND WHISPERS (1973, as the doctor who was Liv Ullmann's lover), AUTUMN SONATA (1978), and the roles noted above. Josephson has grown over the years to personify for Bergman the cold intellectual, secure on the surface but tormented underneath. Josephson says of Bergman, "He has enormous originality and imaginative power. Speaking as an actor, he's especially good to work with because he has great respect for the individual artist's own attributes and personality." He collaborated with Bergman on many scripts, including the one for the director's 1964 comedy, ALL THESE WOMEN. In 1966, Josephson replaced Bergman as head of the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm, after being a member of the company for ten years. He remained the company's head until 1975, overseeing its twenty or so annual productions. Josephson has also written and directed numerous shows for Swedish television. His maiden directorial effort in film, ONE AND ONE, made in collaboration with long-time Bergman cinematographer Sven Nykvist and actress Ingrid Thulin, was released in the United States in 1980. That same year, Josephson wrote, directed and starred in his second film, THE MARMALADE REVOLUTION, a story about the personal rebellion of a professor unhappy with his passive existence. The international success of SCENES OF A MARRIAGE and FACE TO FACE gave Josephson the opportunity to take roles in the films of respected directors outside Sweden, including: Liliana Cavani's BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL (1977), Damiano Damiani's I'M AFRAID (1977), Franco Brusati's TO FORGET VENICE (1980), where he starred as the wistful, aging



aristocrat, Dusan Makavejev's MONTENEGRO (1981), playing the wealthy businessman-husband of Susan Anspach, and now NOSTALGHIA for Tarkovsky.

#### OLEG YANKOVSKY

Oleg Yankovsky, a respected actor of the Soviet cinema, starred in Tarkovsky's 1975 film, THE MIRROR, as well as numerous works by other directors, including: Eugenie Karellov's SLUZILI DVA TOVARISCA (1968, "Two Army Comrades"), Vladimir Basov's SCIT I MEC (1968, "The Shield and the Sword"), Stepanov's JA FRANCISK SKORINA (1970, "I Am Francisk Skorina"), Moskalenkov's GONSCIKI (1975, "The Runners"), Sergei Mikaelian's PREMIA (1976, "The Prize"), Emil Loteanu's THE SHOOTING PARTY (1978, opened September 1981 at the Public Theatre), Erast Garin and Zesja Lochsmna's OBYKNOVENNOE CUDO (1980, "A Normal Miracle"), Zacharov's BARON MUNCHAUSEN (1981), and Boloian's POLETIJ VO SNE I NAJAVU (1983, "Flights Into Illusion and Reality").

#### DOMIZIANA GIORDANO

Actress Domiziana Giordano played a number of roles in Italian television before making her screen debut in NOSTALGHIA. Variety commented, "Domiziana Giordano, looking like a more voluptuous and certainly more savage Botticelli's Venus, has beauty as well as the most luminous star quality."