

Document Citation

Title	Mournful indifference
Author(s)	
Source	<i>Publisher name not available</i>
Date	
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Skorbnoye beschuvstviye (Mournful indifference), Sokurov, Aleksandr, 1987

MOURNFUL INDIFFERENCE

1983, color, 100 min.

Director: *Alexander Sokurov*
Script Yuri Arabov
Camera Sergei Yurizditsky
Sound Vladimir Persov
Editor Leda Semenova
Cast Ramaz Chkhikvadze, Irina Sokolova

The film MOURNFUL INDIFFERENCE is a fantasy based on George Bernard Shaw's Heartbreak House. The inhabitants of a strange house-boat, isolated from the world, suffer the failure of their illusions. Meanwhile, the world is in the midst of World War I, that senseless, cruel, preposterous war involving millions of people who were turned into a crowd of faceless soldiers engaged in the absurd process of self-annihilation.

The film's characters dwell in the author's house. Shaw's spiritual presence as well as the authentic atmosphere of World War I are reproduced by means of documentary footage intercut throughout the film. Shaw's diaries and letters are also incorporated.

MOURNFUL INDIFFERENCE is the diagnosis of the tragic individualism that confines the film's characters to a narrow world of disfigured passions, and strikes them deaf to the advancement of history and the tragic tendencies of the 20th century. Yet, the film also testifies to a significant global interconnection in which spiritual human existence and a living, sensitive perception of history can confront the century's tragic new war perspective.

Though based on Shaw's Heartbreak House, the film is in fact very different from the play, also incorporating the director's reflections on life, and the cost which humankind, involved in historic cataclysms, will have to pay. The film's action takes place during World War I. While the film's characters try to hide away from that meaningless massacre, it catches up with them even here, and their idyllic world eventually blows up.

MOURNFUL INDIFFERENCE evoked a true thunderstorm of contradictory opinions and evaluations not only from the audience, but from the director's colleagues as well. [See "Filmmaker Alexei Gherman on the Soviet State's Attack on Sokurov."]