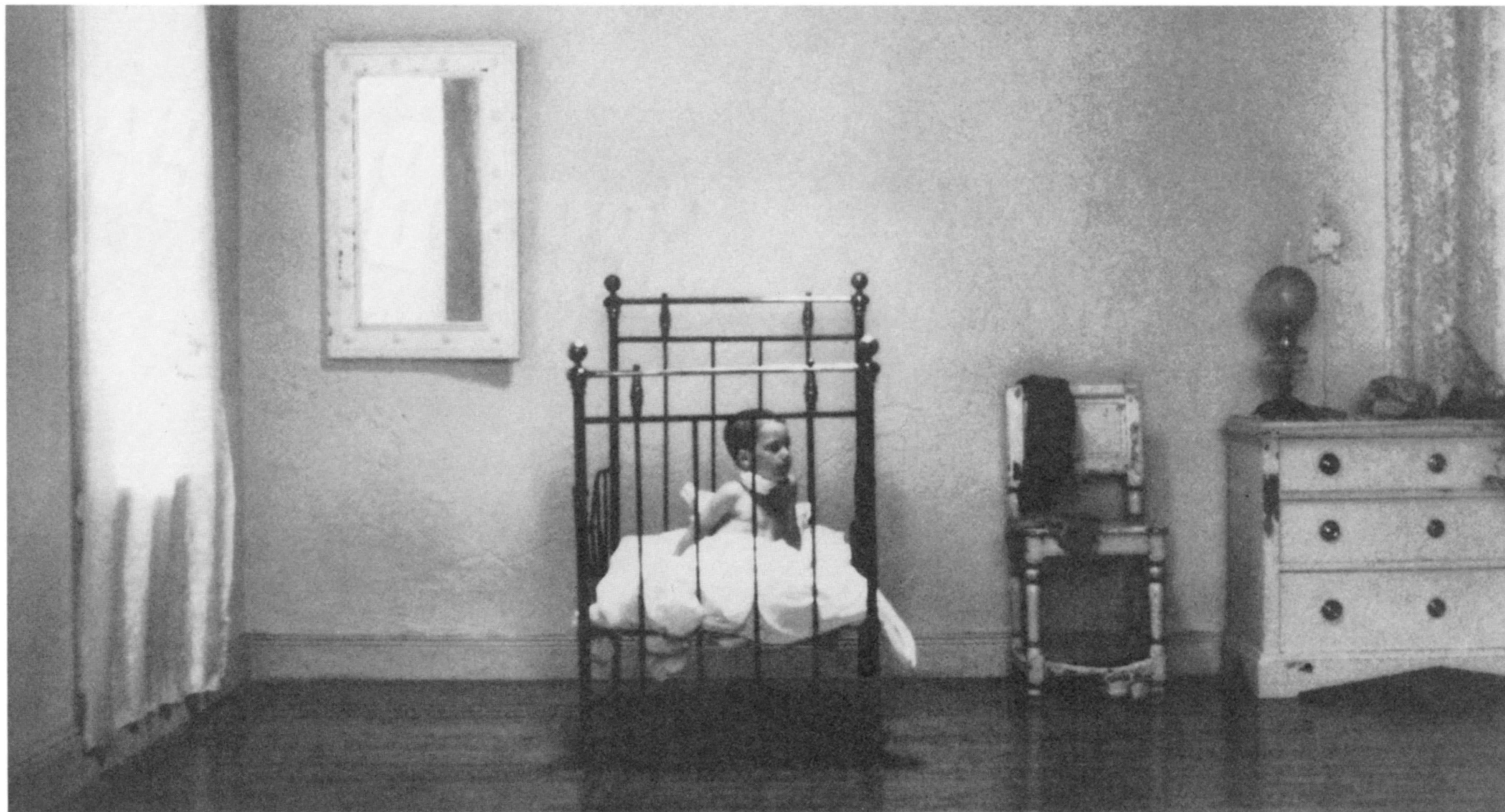


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Robert Lepage
INTRODUCES:

Offret

The Sacrifice

Andrei Tarkovsky

SWEDEN/FRANCE, 1986

149 minutes ■ Colour/35mm

Producer: **Katinka Farago**

Screenplay: **Andrei Tarkovsky**

Cinematographer: **Sven Nykist**

Editor: **Andrei Tarkovsky, Michal**

Leszczyłowski, Henri Colpi

Production Designer: **Anna Asp**

Sound: **Owe Svensson**

Music: **Watazumido Shuso**

Principal Cast: **Erland Josephson,**
Susan Fleetwood, Valérie Mairesse,
Allan Edwall

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"How does one define a culture of the north? It probably has a lot to do with one's relationship to the landscape, but I believe it also has a lot to do with one's perception of time. Russian director Andrei Tarkovsky defines himself as a time sculptor. His last effort *The Sacrifice* is set in Sweden and captures the soul's darkness amidst the lavish light of the midnight sun that corrupts the very notion of time. Though aesthetics vary greatly from one filmmaker to another, there is definitely something northern in the works of Tarkovsky, Bergman and even Claude Jutra that makes time palpable. *The Sacrifice* is not only Andrei Tarkovsky's most brilliant achievement but also constitutes his artistic testament."

— Robert Lepage

The Sacrifice, Russian master Andrei Tarkovsky's last film, focuses on a distinguished writer who makes a pact with God to save the world from nuclear destruction. He will renounce everything he holds dear — his family, his possessions, himself — if everything can return to normal. The film opens with an extended sequence focusing on a man and a child planting a tree, introducing us to the quotidian joys that will soon disappear, while setting us up for the intensity of the gut-wrenching, apocalyptic horrors that will follow, horrors that prefigure the most absolute kind of destruction.

The film concludes with a bravura ten minute take of a burning building that is far more horrifying and powerful than

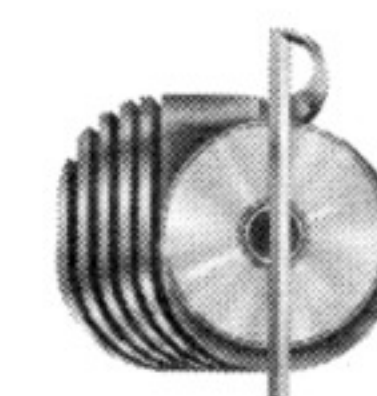
anything any CGI genius could ever think up. As revealed in Chris Marker's penetrating and poetic analysis of Tarkovsky's work *Une journée d'Andrei Arsenevitch*, part of this year's *Real to Reel* programme, this painstaking, elaborate scene had to be re-shot, as Tarkovsky's health began to fail and the money for the production began to run out. Still, it remains one of cinema's most memorable and remarkable dénouements.

Perhaps Tarkovsky's most raw and demanding film (it lacks the generic, comfortably metaphysical trappings of *Solaris* and *Stalker*), and certainly his most Bergmanesque, *The Sacrifice* is a shocking reminder of cinema's underused capacity to invoke transcendence.



Robert Lepage is a prolific playwright, actor and director. His debut feature, *Le confessionnal*, opened the Toronto International Film Festival in 1995 and went on to win a number of Genie awards, including Best Film, Best Artistic Direction and Best Direction. He has been named a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres de France. Filmography: *Le confessionnal* (95), *Le polygraphe* (96), *Nô* (98) and *Possible Worlds* (00).

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