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CONTEMPORARY CINEMA

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USSR

АФОНЯ

(Aphonya)

1975. Color. 1.33x1. 90 minutes.
In Russian with English subtitles

Director: Georgy Daneliya

Screenwriter: Alexander Borodiansky

Cinematographer: Sergy Vronsky

Music: Moisey Vienberg

Principal Cast: Leonid Kuravlev, Evgeny Leonov, Eugenia Simonova,
Borislav Brondukov

Production Company: Mosfilm

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Moscow Film Festival 1975

Aphonya is a serious study of an irresponsible approach to life. Daneliya, the Georgian director so well known for his absurdist view of the world, here portrays a working-class anti-hero: a convivial enough plumber who lives uncritically; abutting his hollow life with petty graft and drunkenness while basking in self-complacency as a member of the "honest working class."

Frustrated, *Aphonya* eventually questions that there might be more to life than installing flower-patterned sinks, and searches for the answer in the idealized village of his youth, where progress has already been to board up his old abandoned house.

A sadness, which we had felt underpinning the film's humor all along, explodes in *Aphonya's* manifest loss of ties to traditional foundations of family and village life, and Daneliya resolves his hero's dilemma in an unexpected manner.

—CAROL WIKARSKA