

Document Citation

Title	Lovers' romance
Author(s)	Andrei Konchalovsky Tatyana Chebotarevskaya
Source	<i>Soviet Film</i>
Date	1975
Type	article
Language	English
Pagination	No. 1, p. 13-17
No. of Pages	7
Subjects	Koreneva, Yelena (1953), Moscow, Soviet Union Kindinov, Yevgeni (1945), Moscow, Soviet Union
Film Subjects	Romans o vlyublyonnykh (A lover's romance), Konchalovsky, Andrei, 1974

SOVIET FILM
1975 #1

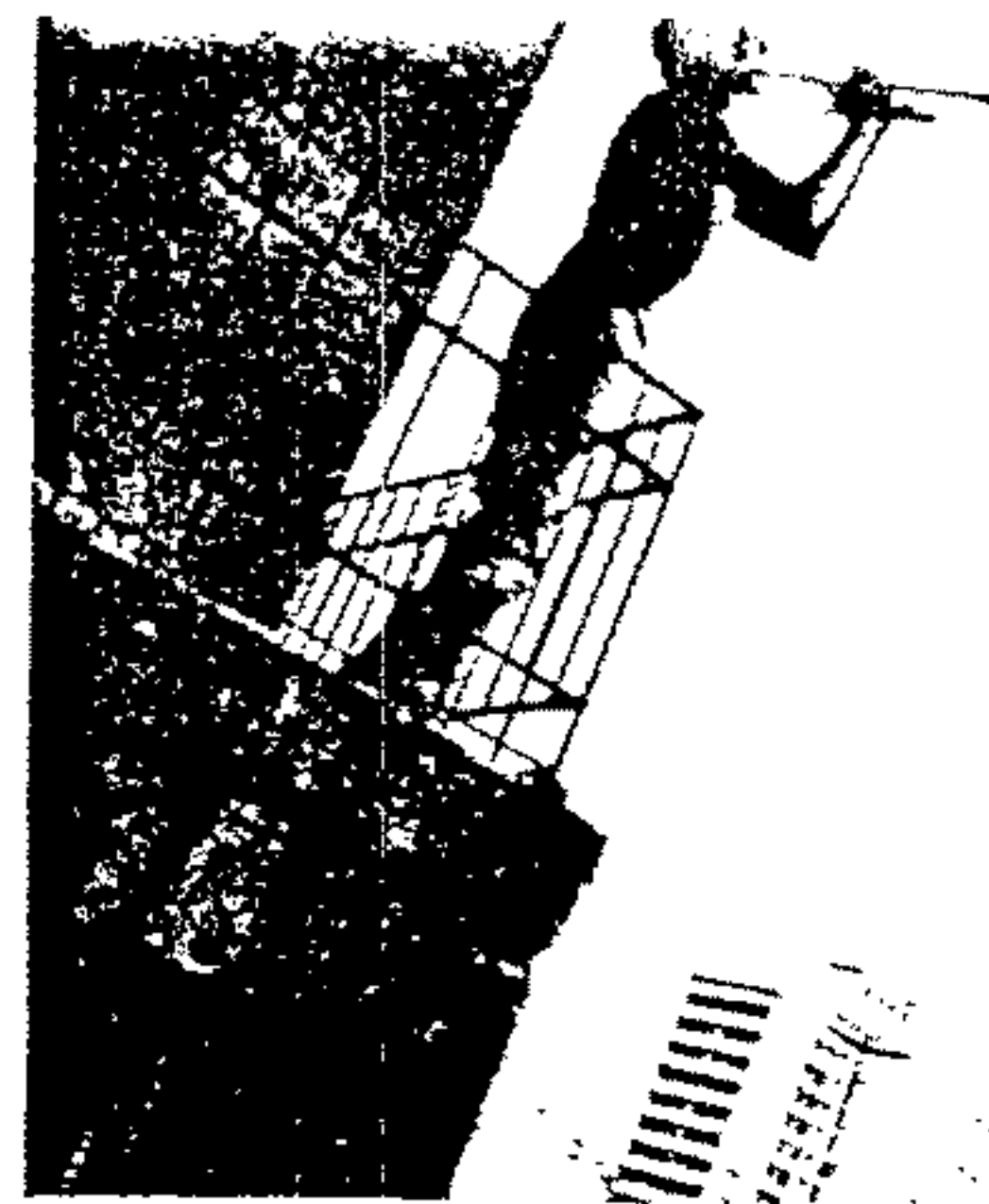
“LOVERS”



ROMANCE,,

NEW FILM

ROMANS O VLYUBLYONNYYH
 ("Romans o vlyublyonnyh")
 In colour, 70 mm., 3,625 m.
 Script by Evgeni Grigoryev
 Director Andrei Mikhalkov-Konchalovski
 Cameraman Levan Paatashvili
 Sets designer Leonid Pertzev
 Composer Alexander Gradski
 Starring Yelena Koreneva, Evgeni Kindinov,
 Iya Savvina, Innokenti Smoktunovski,
 Vladimir Konkin and others
 Mosfilm Studios production



*Yelena Koreneva as Tanya and
 Evgeni Kindinov as Sergei*





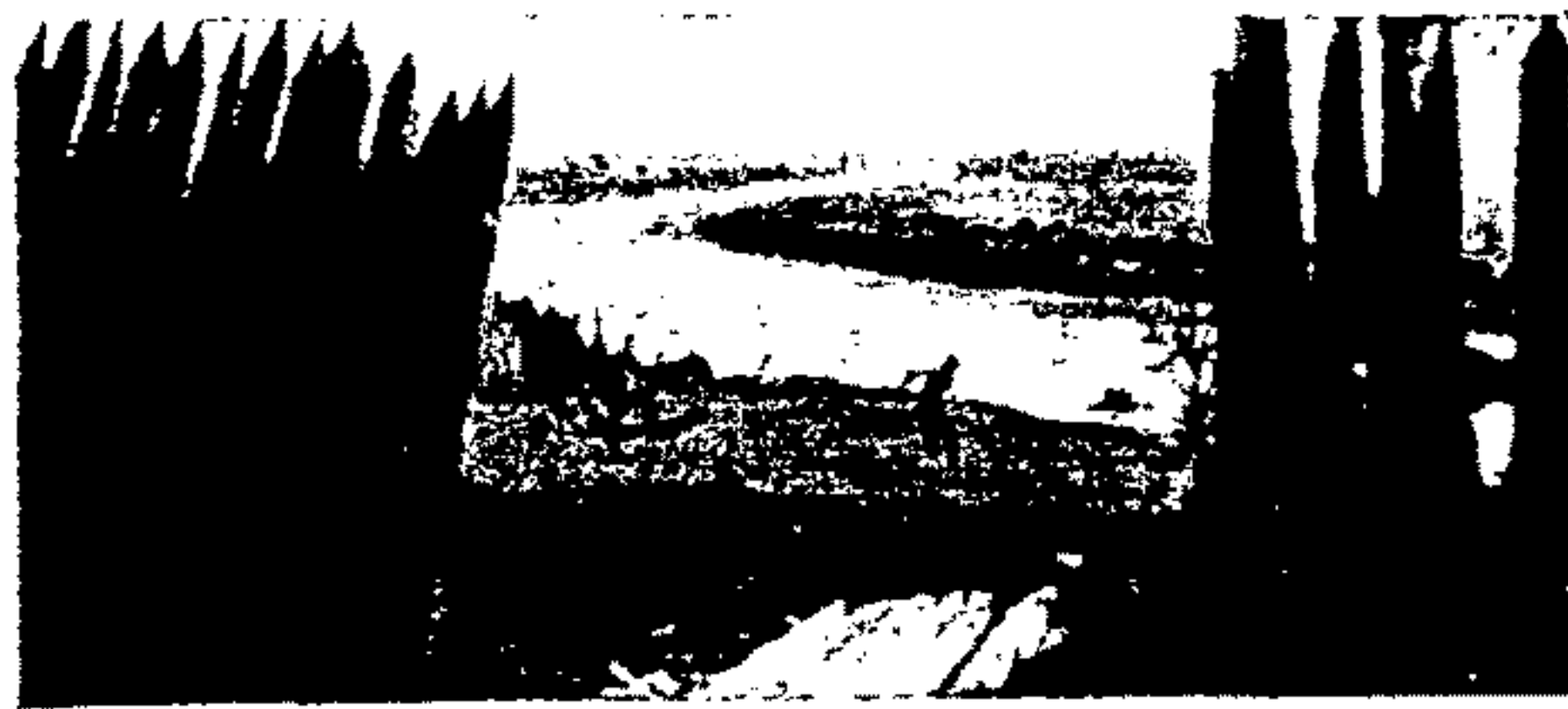
HRISTO HRISTOV,
film-director (Bulgaria):

After the premiere of "Lovers' Romance" film makers and cinema-goers were unanimous in noting the film's high professional quality as well as the conceptual scale of this very poetic picture.

Naturally, this could not have been



achieved simply by conveying the lyricism of the characters' emotions. The important thing is the climate that makes the existence of people like Sergey, Tanya and their friends and relatives possible. The film makers show us the vast expanses of their great country, and here their main concern is to project the inner being of modern Soviet man. This is their supreme task, the focal point of all the expressive elements they employ. When Sergey risks his life to save his comrade we recognize that he cannot do otherwise since his decision is prompted by the moral values of the society that

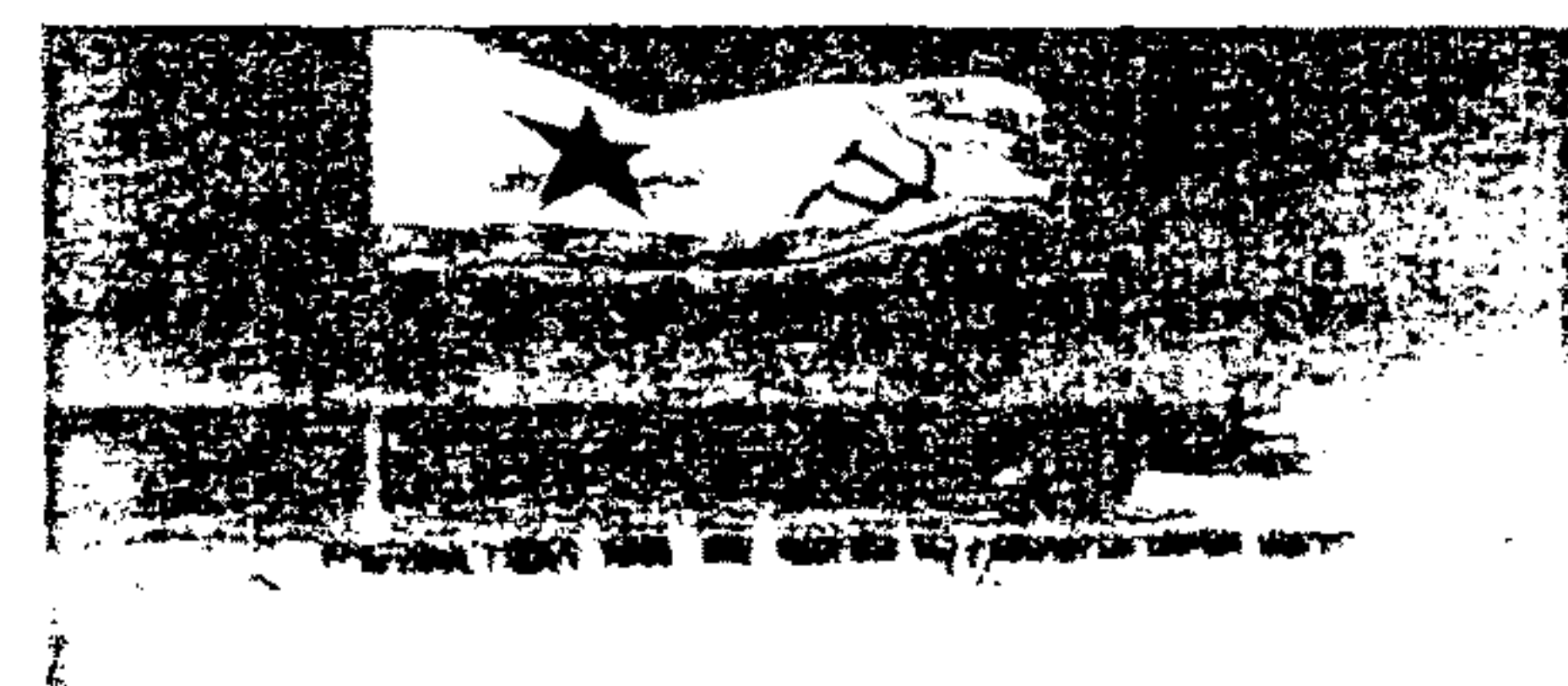


moulded his character. The film reaffirms both the values and principles common to all the socialist countries and the Soviet people's patriotism and magnanimity. The love story bears the tangible imprint of our time because Sergey and his comrades in the Soviet Army and all the other characters in "Lovers'



Romance," act against a precisely defined social background.

The impressive success of "Lovers' Romance" is also explained by the fact that its message is in harmony with the motto of the Karlovy Vary Festival: "For Noble Human Relations, For Firm Friendship Among Nations."



Epic and Poetic

"Lovers' Romance," which received the Chrystal Globe, the highest award at the 19th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, has all the makings of a box-office hit. First and foremost, it is a film about love, youthful love, and the director shows it by going beyond traditional cinematic metaphors in a bold quest for a new idiom.

Instantly and impetuously the screen is filled with the sound of youthful voices, with laughter and love, happy, triumphant, blazing love. Actors Yelena Koreneva and Yevgeni Kindinov, or rather, the characters they play, are seen in the tall grass on a river-bank with a blue sky above them and a calm river beside them. "I'm in love. I'm in love!" one of the two cries, or maybe they both shout these words. They run about, they play and kiss and splash in the sparkling water. And if it rains, the rain is light and warm. It must be difficult to play somebody who is happy. As the saying goes, "all happy families are alike." But the film's young heroine, so ordinary at first sight, overflows with such extraordinary, passionate high spirits that she does become an epitome of happiness and first love. And then – this is the same eternal story – the snub-nosed girl with the long fair hair falls in love with somebody else.

This, however, is preceded by quite extraordinary events. The young hero is called up for army service, and here the poetic and romantic are replaced by the epic. There are impressive scenes of military exercises shown on an epic scale. Our hero risks his life to save a friend, soldiers rescue children – these are all symbols of heroism, honour and the performance of duty.

As played by Yevgeni Kindinov, the hero's exploit and the disappointment in love that follows almost immediately leave ashes in his heart. But gradually, and here again, the film's metaphors change, the young man with clenched teeth warms up to a new love and is carried away by life that reveals new horizons to him, and brings with it maturity. The result is a kind of triptych, showing three facets of a man's life.

Besides the two young heroes, the film's original idiom encompasses a small courtyard in an old Moscow neighbourhood and the many faces that the observant camera records so that we may identify with their lives and concerns. It blends a realistic narrative with symbolic elements. This authentic idiom also incorporates the romantic figure of the Trumpeter as played by Innokenti Smoktunovski. Poetic episodes form the groundwork for an epic, and the song of first love develops into a paean to a new generation, to those who will greet the next century.

The film's premiere was held in Karlovy Vary's large open-air cinema. People put up their umbrellas, for it was raining, and sat with bated breath, their eyes fixed on the screen.

Tatyana Chebotarevskaya

film actress (Poland):

"Lovers' Romance" presents us with an "actors' miracle" that always stirs me profoundly. The 140 minutes of screen time record constant shifts in apparently familiar characters. We watch Yevgeny Kindinov's Sergei change and mature. Tanya, as played by Yelena Kareneva, turns



into a different person, Innokenti Smoktunovskii's talent enables him to show a wide range of moods and feelings, as the Trumpeter. Then there is the small but, to me, very moving part played by Irina Kupchenko, an ordinary kind of girl who tries to appear frivolous and coquettish when she keeps a date with Sergei. But how she changes on



learning that Sergei wants to marry her! The superficial things disappear, like the absurd wig she wearily and pensively removes when she hears the words that are so important to her. This series of brilliant performances is the most notable feature of an original, talented Soviet film.



ALBERT JOHNSON, director of the Honolulu International Film Festival, University of California Professor (U.S.A.):

"Lovers' Romance" was an unforgettable experience. The film's most attractive feature is its searching atmosphere. One feels it in the screenplay, and in the interesting visual idiom. Director Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky and scriptwriter Grigoryev successfully meet a very great challenge. They tell the



wonderful and ever fresh story of first love, and use both prose and poetry to do so. We sense the heroes as they convey the film's original concept and as our contemporaries, engaged in day-by-day activities. The delicate balance is preserved by the very high professional expertise of the Soviet makers of this film. We fully accept the "rules" laid down by the director and the writer, and we take for granted the free verse spoken



by characters who live in ordinary Moscow apartments. With the gifted photographer Paataashvili we ascend to the skies, take a dizzy leap into the Arctic, discover the charm of the interiors of an old Moscow house, and gaze into the faces of its inhabitants. I found this picture very attractive, as will, I am sure, millions of viewers, for it sounds a warm, optimistic note and seeks to reveal what is noble, pure and lofty in man.





Iva Savina as Tanya's mother

*Irina Kupchenko
as Sergei's wife*



*Vladimir Konkin as Sergei's
younger brother*





The World Through the Eyes of Lovers

DIRECTOR
ANDREY MIKHALKOV-
KONCHALOVSKY

— I knew Yevgeny Grigoryev's interesting work from "Our Home" and "Three Days In the Life of Victor Chernyshev" but his screen play for "Lovers' Romance" simply amazed me, although it has a rather simple plot and its style is certainly non-cinematic, with characters that talk in high-flow free verse. To make such a picture would be extremely difficult. I had no idea of how to approach it. When the Arts Council discussed the script there was a lot of

enthusiastic comment but no one knew how to go about filming it.

The script really was beautiful. It had the vivid, clearly delineated attitudes found only in literary masterpieces.

The plot itself, as I have said, is ordinary enough. The important thing is **how** the script treats love. Its message is that love is a life-creating force. Without it, man dies. Without love, man and whatever is human in man does not exist. We are alive as long as we love, or hope for love. Otherwise we are spiritually dead.

"Lover's Romance" rediscovers the simplest and the most important things: love, of homeland and one's mother, honour, and fraternity. A great deal has already been said about these things, and it takes courage to return to them. Like walking

on a razor's edge, where one false step will make the "romance" false.

In making the film, I tried to be true to Grigoryev's inspired, fearless determination to show things the way they are, even things that seem hackneyed. That was the only way to film such a script. Otherwise, the whole thing would have a self-conscious effect that would be false. I felt I had no right to depart from the screenplay. We were lucky to find Yevgeny Kindinev and Yelena Koreneva for the leading roles. I think they, too, were lucky, because actors rarely have an opportunity to work with material of such high literary excellence. Kindinov as Sergei achieved a great deal, though the challenge seemed, at times, too much for him. At least, I know of no actor who could have played Sergei better. Other actors might have played some episodes more brilliantly or profoundly, but not the part as a whole. Its scope is so broad and universal, ranging from a kind of Till Eulenspiegel to passions that are almost Othello-like. Tanya was an equally challenging part. Yelena Koreneva had to play many dramatic, emotionally weighted moments. Those were not the hardest, though. Even more difficult were the scenes where everything is joy and boundless happiness. This required a very special sincerity, inner freedom and purity of heart.

Yelena Koreneva is a phenomenon in Soviet cinema. Perhaps it is too early to say this, for many promising débuts have proved easy to forget. But her charm, musicality, sense of rhythm, womanliness and emotionality add up to something we have not seen for a long time. She might be compared with Valentina Karavayeva, the unforgettable Mashenka in Yuly Raisman's film of the same name, or the American Shirley MacLane though, of course, each of them has her own individuality, and particular talents.

Many actors with whom I have worked before played in "Lovers' Romance." Iya Savvina was cast as Tanya's mother, Irina Kupchenko (Liza in "Nest of the Gentlemen") and Sonya in "Uncle Vanya") played the

woman whom Sergei marries and who bears him a son, and Innokenti Smoktunovski (Voinitski in "Uncle Vanya") played the Trumpeter, a character which is central to the film's concept.

Grigoryev's script is, in fact, extremely conventional. We did not want to conceal this conventionality. We wanted the audience to understand that what they saw was not a segment of real life but something invented and performed for them. We wanted, however, to make this "non-truth" convincing and moving, to make audiences identify themselves with the characters and suffer with them. To fill in the gap between the "non-truth" and the "truth" we needed an intermediary between the director and the audience. This is what Smoktunovski's Trumpeter stands for. This character addresses the audience, as it were, on the actors' behalf, saying, "Now I will tell you, and the actors will perform, a most beautiful story."

We made a film about love, a love sustained by suffering. The fact remains that life puts obstacles in the way of love, reality works to destroy love and, by the same token, works to strengthen it. Life separates people and puts distances between them. People are increasingly on the move nowadays, by land or by air. So they must learn to preserve their love. There can be no code of hard and fast rules in human relations; they acquire meaning only through experience, hard and bitter though it may be. Love encompasses the universe. A man who loves is capable of heroism and incapable of baseness. Love transforms life; it purifies and illuminates the world. It makes the world look different. So we wanted to show the world through the eyes of lovers, to show reality seen from those heights.

The events recorded in textbooks are the high points of history. But in between, history also moves ahead; history is being quietly made all the time. A meeting of two loving hearts is also a kind of historical event. Love gives the spiritual fire that kindles life. It has always been so and it always will be.



Yelena KORENEVA

Yelena Koreneva is very sincere when she speaks about her plans for the future. "After I graduate from the Shchukin School of Drama I want to play on the stage. If all goes well, I also want to appear in films. And in five years or so, perhaps, I shall really take up painting." We may believe that if Yelena's desire to paint finally becomes urgent she will undoubtedly dedicate herself whole heartedly to it, in the same way as she recently devoted herself to making "Lovers' Romance."

Luck, of course, helped in getting her cast in the role of Tanya. But after that everything depended on Yelena. Only those who have first-hand knowledge of film-making know how much hard work is involved. These people find her Tanya amazingly authentic proof of her talent and industry.

Yelena Koreneva, now 21 year old, comes from a family who are all in films. Alexei Korenev, her father, is a Mosfilm director ("Adam and Heva," "Taimyr on the Line," and "The Midday Recess," the latter two being TV serials). Natalia Koreneva, her mother, is assistant director at Mosfilm, where she specializes in coaching actors. It was she who "discovered" the now popular Vladislav Dvorzhetski. Yelena's sister Masha is a book artist, but she has also appeared in "The Midday Recess" and "The Hottest Month." Yelena, the youngest, is continuing the family tradition. She made her film debut in "Taimyr on the Line." Next came a TV film called "A Promotion" and, finally, "Lovers' Romance."



Yevgeni KINDINOV

Cast in several films within a relatively short period Yevgeni Kindinov soon won the admiration of both critics and audiences. In his first season with the Moscow Art Theatre after graduating from the Art Theatre school, the talented young man played a strong-willed, tough sailor in the Art Theatre production of "The Kremlin Chimes." Soon after, director Manos Zaharias gave him a complex psychological role in his film "The Executioner." Seeing Vergelis, one of twelve Greek soldiers who revolts against the atrocities he must commit, audiences immediately recognized that a mature, thoughtful actor was making his screen debut.

One year later Kindinov was enlisted for the film "Urban Romance." His role of a young doctor was Kindinov's first test in portraying a man of his own generation.

In "Newlyweds," where he played a young worker, Kindinov brought originality to his portrayal of a man of strong character and deep feeling. He continued along the same lines in "At His Own Request" where he played Kostya, a worker who dreamed of becoming a man of letters. However, he chooses to be a blacksmith, saying he would rather be "a poet at the factory than an apprentice in poetry." Kostya's dedication to his calling is one of his most distinguishing qualities.

To date, the part of Sergei in "Lover's Romance" appears to be Yevgeni Kindinov's best. Here, too, he has made the role of a modern young man memorable.