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16 West 61st Street, New York, N.Y. 10023 (212) 247-6110  
Telex: 238282



**“A STUNNINGLY  
BEAUTIFUL  
FILM.”**

—WALTER GOODMAN, NEW YORK TIMES

**“...YOU MAY FIND  
YOURSELF MOVED  
AS YOU HAVE  
NEVER BEEN  
MOVED BEFORE.”**

—ANDREW SARRIS, VILLAGE VOICE

Andrei Tarkovsky's

# **THE SACRIFICE**

Starring Erland Josephson Susan Fleetwood Allan Edwall  
Cinematography Sven Nykvist. Art Direction Anna Asp  
Produced by Farago Film AB/Katinka Farago and Svenska  
Filminstitutet/Anna-Lena Wibom Directed by Andrei Tarkovsky

3/90



# THE SACRIFICE

A Film by Andrei Tarkovskij

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<i>Script and Direction</i>	Andrei Tarkovskij
<i>Cinematography</i>	Sven Nykvist
<i>Camera Assistants</i>	Lasse Karlsson, Dan Mvhrman
<i>Assistant Director</i>	Kerstin Eriksdotter
<i>Assistant Director</i>	
<i>post-production</i>	Michal Leszczylowski
<i>Continuity</i>	Anne von Sydow
<i>Editing</i>	Andrei Tarkovskij, Michal Leszczylowski
<i>Editing Consultant</i>	Henri Colpi
<i>Executive Producer</i>	Anna-Lena Wibom, Swedish Film Institute
<i>Production Manager</i>	Katinka Farago, Farago Film AB
<i>Interpreter</i>	Layla Alexander
<i>Sound and Mixing</i>	Owe Svensson, Bosse Persson
<i>Art Director</i>	Anna Asp
<i>Technical Manager</i>	Kaj Larsen
<i>Wardrobe</i>	Inger Pehrsson
<i>Make-up and Wigs</i>	Kjell Gustavsson, Florence Fouquier
<i>Special Effects</i>	Svenska Stuntgruppen; Lars Höglund, Lars Palmqvist
<i>Casting</i>	Priscilla John, Claire Denis, Françoise Menidrey
<i>Laboratory</i>	FilmTeknik; Nils Melander
<i>Unit Publicists</i>	Aina Bellis, Lars-Olof Löthwall
<i>Sales</i>	Swedish Film Institute/Lena Enquist
<i>Running Time</i>	145 min; 4,085 m/35 mm
<i>Colour</i>	Eastmancolor
<i>Screen Ratio</i>	1:1.66
<i>Release Date</i>	May 9, 1986, Stockholm May 14, 1986, Paris
<i>Music</i>	J. S. Bach, and Swedish and Japanese folk music

*A Swedish-French Co-Production*  
**The Swedish Film Institute, Stockholm, Argos Films S.A., Paris**  
in association with  
Film Four International, London,  
and Josephson & Nykvist HB, Sveriges Television/SVT 2,  
Sandrew Film & Teater AB  
and with the participation of  
The French Ministry of Culture

## Cast

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<i>Alexander</i>	Erland Josephson
<i>Adelaide</i>	Susan Fleetwood
<i>Julia</i>	Valérie Mairesse
<i>Otto</i>	Allan Edwall
<i>Maria</i>	Gudrún Gísladóttir
<i>Victor</i>	Sven Wollter
<i>Marta</i>	Filippa Franzén
<i>Little Man</i>	Tommy Kjellqvist



## Synopsis:

Exiled Soviet filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky's new work is an extraordinarily beautiful filmic testament. Set in the dreamlike world of Faro island, he delivers a story about a middle-aged Swedish intellectual who is slowly slipping from the web of social interaction. When the outbreak of World War III severs his connection with his family and the world, he turns inward and is disturbed by what he finds in his heart. His only chance for salvation is to give up everything, and to that he sacrifices himself to save his young son. In the space of 24 hours, Tarkovsky's protagonist celebrates his birthday, lives through the outbreak of World War III, has sex with a witch, takes a vow of silence and destroys his worldly possessions. Using Ingmar Bergman's favorite cinematographer Sven Nykvist, and Erland Josephson, a veteran actor of the Bergman troupe, Tarkovsky animates every frame of his parable with poetic spirituality.

## Introduction

The issue I raise in this film is one that to my mind is most crucial: The absence in our culture of room for a spiritual existence. We have extended the scope of our material assets and conducted materialistic experiments without taking into account the threat posed by depriving man of his spiritual dimension. Man is suffering, but he doesn't know why. He senses an absence of harmony, and searches for the cause of it.

I wanted to show that a man can renew his ties to life by renewing his covenant with himself and with the source of his soul. And one way to recapture moral integrity—the state in which one no longer simply contemplates the value of material things, or allows oneself to function merely as a subject for society's experimentation—is by having the capacity to offer oneself in sacrifice.

Here, then, is a man who sacrifices himself for someone, a man who understands that to save

himself, even physically, he must become absolutely oblivious to his own ego and make room for his own spirituality, thereby gaining entry to another realm.

Even though in our world his actions seem absurd, and even though he is a trial to those around him, still it is by accomplishing these very acts that he demonstrates his freedom.

The film is a poetic parable. Each episode can be interpreted differently. I am well aware that it is a film at variance with the prevailing ideas of our time; it "flows against the stream", as it were. But need I point out that I am a believer, and that I am astonished by the spiritual (and by no means *only* spiritual) suicide that we are rushing toward, even though no regime is forcing us to it? I feel closer to the eastern mode of thought, in which a person—instead of being ensnared in polemical superficialities—can still be summoned by an Inner Voice.

(Excerpt from an interview  
with Andrei Tarkovskij  
by Annie Epelboin, in Paris,  
March 15, 1986)



# Andrei Tarkovskij talks about ...

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## *his first encounter with film-making:*

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Some film-makers know from the start that cinema is the right thing for them. I had doubts, had little feeling for it. I knew there were major technical aspects but had not understood that cinema is a means of expression like poetry, music or literature. Even after shooting *Ivan's Childhood* I had not understood the director's role. Only later did I realize that cinema gives you the possibility of achieving spiritual essence.

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## *author films:*

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Cinema is based on two types of directors who make two different types of films: those who imitate the world they live in, and those who create their own world—the poets in cinema. And I believe only the poets will go down in the history of cinema, like Bresson, Dovsjenko, Mizoguchi, Bergman, Bunuel, Kurosawa.

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## *time:*

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I think cinema is the only art that operates within the concept of temporality. Not because of its developing in time; there are also other art forms that do so: ballet, music, theatre. I mean "time" in the literal sense of the word. What is a take, from the moment we say "action" till the moment we say "stop"? It is the fixing of reality, the essence of time, a way of preserving time which allows us to roll and unroll it forever. No other form of art can do that.

Therefore, cinema is a mosaic made of time.

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## *water:*

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There is always water in my films. I like water, especially brooks. The sea is too vast. I don't fear it, it is just monotonous. In nature, I like smaller things. Microcosm, not macrocosm; limited surfaces. I love the Japanese attitude to nature. They concentrate on a confined space reflecting the infinite. Water is a mysterious element due to its monocular structure. And it is very cinegenic; it transmits movement, depth, changes. Nothing is more beautiful than water.

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## *colour:*

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Colour films seemed more realistic at their dawn but now they are in a blind alley. Colour cinema is a great mistake. All forms of art aim at truth and then seek a generalization, a model idea. But truth in life does not correspond to truth in art.

Colour is part of our physiological and psychological perception of the external world. We live in a coloured world but don't realize that unless something makes us aware of it. We don't think of colour while looking at this coloured world. But when shooting a colour scene we organize it and close it up in a frame that we force upon the audience and we give them thousands of such colour postcards. To me, black and white is more expressive and realistic because it does not distract the spectator but enables him to concentrate on the essence of the film. I think colour made the cinematographic art more false and less true.

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## *film-making as a profession, and as a way of life:*

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I enjoy inventing my films—writing the script, creating the scenes, looking for locations. But the shooting is not interesting. Once all has been thought out you have to shape it into a film technically, and that is boring.

I never managed to separate my life from my films, and I have always had to make crucial choices. Many directors manage to live one way and express other ideas in their work; they are able to split their conscience. I am not. To me cinema is not just a job. It's my life.

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## *audiences:*

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I never think of the audience's attitudes. It is difficult to be in their shoes; it's useless and unpleasant. Some people try to predict the future success of a film. I am not one of those. The best attitude towards the audience is to remain oneself, to use a personal language they will understand. Poets and authors do not try to be liked, they do not know how to please. They know the public will accept them.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DECEMBER 29, 1986

Noted Russian film director, Andrei Tarkovskij died yesterday, Sunday, December 28th in Paris, France after an elongated battle with cancer. He is succeeded by a wife and a son.

Born in Zavrozje in the district of Ivanov in 1932, Tarkovskij grew up in an artists' village near Moscow. It was not until 1954 at the age of 30 that he made his feature film debut with "Ivan's Childhood" which won seven international awards, among them the Golden Lion at The Venice Film Festival. Other of his films which have won him industry praise through the years include "Solaris," "The Mirror," "Stalker," and "Nostalgia."

His most recent film, "The Sacrifice," (which is currently being shown in Los Angeles, Chicago and Boston) was the first film to ever win four awards at The Cannes Film Festival. In 1986 the film took The Grand Prix Special Jury Award, The Award for Best Artistic Contribution, The Fi Presci Prize and The Ecumenical Award.

Hailed by his peers in the film community, Ingmar Bergman has been quoted as saying: "Tarkovskij is for me the greatest, the one who invented a new language, true to the nature of film, as it captures life as a reflection, life as a dream."

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