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The Romanian Cinema
at the XXII-rd Edition of
the Karlovy Vary International
Film Festival

Special edition : "Romanian Film 1980"

Summary :

I Romaniafilm presents in the Festival Competition :

"Gently Was Anastasia Passing"
(Duios Anastasia trecea)

Screenplay : D.R.Popescu

Direction : Alexandru Tatos

A "Film Company No. One" Production

Achieved in the Studios of the "Bucuresti" Film Production Centre

The scriptwriter - D.R.Popescu : "...I have not heard of a poor film
made on an excellent screenplay."

The director - Alexandru Tatos : "Anastasia... was a very special film
for me..."

The cameraman - Florin Mihăilescu : "... photography has a difficult
task in this film..."

Anastasia - A film of our time

The actors :

Anda Onesa - A modern Antigone

Amza Pellea - Power in the service of cowardice

Excerpts from the Press

II Romaniafilm presents in the Festival Competition (opera prima)

"Gently Was Anastasia Passing"
(Duios Anastasia trecea)

Screeplay : D.R.Popescu

Direction : Alexandra Tatos

Photography : Florin Mihăilescu

Music : Lucian Mețianu

Starring : Anda Onesa, Anza Pellea, Laszlo Tarr

A lesson in sensitivity, bravery and human dignity, offered by young and fragile Anastasia to some apparently strong but essentially cowardly men".

The scriptwriter - D.R.Popescu : "... I have not heard of a poor film made on an excellent screenplay."

A prosewriter, a playwright and scriptwriter, D.R.Popescu was born in the Păușa - Bihor commune, in 1935, August 19th. He made his literary debut in 1954 with the short-story "A Chess Game" published in the Star magazine. Four years later his first novel, The Days of the Week was published. The critics noticed the originality of the stories which he gathered in the volumes : The Sun Shade (1962), The Girl from the South (1964), The Slumber of the Earth (1965). His first dramatic work entitled The Dream dates from 1965 while his first original script, A Midsummer Day's Smile, from 1963. Nevertheless, the author seems to prefer the theatre which can be enriched and perfected every moment : "As a playwright you've got the chance of variants, of a second or third mise en scène, while the film is a final edition... I have not heard of a poor film made on an excellent screenplay." Though his collaboration with the movie industry continued in 1967 with The Saturday Night Dance and with Păcală in 1973. D.R. Popescu did not betray his first passion. "There is a great difference between scriptwriting and prosewriting. Prose is literature while script is an artifact which can, of course, be written elaborately but it does not commit you to the same extent as literature. You are more detached when you write a script."

And indeed, the scripts of the films mentioned seem to be written quite non-committally, a feeling which comes perhaps from D.R. Popescu's natural ability to switch from a genre to another. Nevertheless he approaches one of the most committed chapters of film-making, namely that of social comedy.

In 1979 D.R. Popescu comes again in the limelight with the film version of his short-story Gently Was Anastasia Passing, published in 1963, which he endows with particular suggestive force and universal human value, stemming from the naturalness and simplicity of a touching cinematographic story, from the dramatism of words uttered against cowardice, dishonour, and fear.

The director - Alexandru Tatos : "Anastasia was a very special film for me..."

Alexandru Tatos was born in Bucharest on the 9th of March, 1937. He is a graduate of the Institute of Theatrical and Cinematic Arts 'Ion Luca Caragiale', theatre direction department. The success he reaped in the theatre and at the T.V. has turned his steps towards movie-making. In 1976 he directed his first film, Red Apples (The Second Prize at the International Film Festival 'Man and Labour' in Lublin, 1977). Followed Astray (1977) and the House Among Hills (1979, a T.V. film).

The director's professionalism and seriousness made D.R. Popescu entrust him with the script of the film Gently Was Anastasia Passing. Shortly after, the writer stated : "My meeting with Tatos as a film director was the result of my seeing him work as a theatre director. He is not a mechanic that makes his characters move on the stage from the left to the right, he is a creator... Tatos knows how to create an atmosphere, how to structure the scenery, to immobilize the characters to a point, how to read them and judge them, not in the manner of a mere manipulator but in the manner of a critic, of an artist who recreates and rethinks everything. By this he imparts on them a creative coordinate."

In his turn Tatos, who have waited a few years to see the writer's story become a script, stated : "Anastasia was a very special film for me not only because it embodied my most ambitious project so far but also because of its dramatic making; and at the same time, I hope, because of the modalities by which I approached it, at least

in comparison with its literary matter."

"I tried to render its amazing texture and wonderful merging of the fantastic and of the real, of dream and present-day life in a very simple way. Set against the world of commonness I wanted the idea, the metaphor, the fantastic, the nightmare to be born within and to create an underlying matter which would be unseen company for the image on the screen. Whether I managed or I failed I am not ready to say yet.

This time I have decided on other means of expression. In the first place there is the dramatic script with a wealth of ideas, more penetrating and overwhelming than everything I have come into touch so far. The capitalization of these ideas, the approach by means of a metaphoric formula which I have already tested as a modality in theatre but which works differently in a film, the fact that the subject is no longer drawn from the present and that this time I am compelled to reconstruct the reality of a different time, my decision not to stick to an exact reconstruction but to look for metamorphoses of images in keeping with the permanently interesting suggestions of D.R. Popescu's script - all these are cinematic novelties for me."

The cameraman - Florin Mihăilescu : "... photography has a difficult task in this film..."

He is a graduate of the Institute of Theatrical and Cinematic Arts 'Ion Luca Caragiale', photography department. He made the photography for some of the most well-known and reputed Romanian films. His style is characterized by high professionalism, stamina, dynamism, ripe imagination and suggestive force.

Filmography

1974 - The Lust for Gold (together with Iosif Damian); Philip the Kind; 1975 - The Town Seen from Above; the Long Drive; 1976-Red Apples; 1977 - Astray; Special Issue; 1978 - This Above All(together with Anghel Deca); 1979 - Poor Ioanide.

Relative to the film Gently Was Anastasia Passing Florin Mihăilescu said : " I know that photography has a difficult task in this film. We have set our minds on keeping a permanent, more special relationship between the close-up on the main characters (a close-up in the abstract meaning of the word, not in point of framing) and the background (also to be understood in its wider social meaning as a

chromatic, graphic atmosphere). It is not an easy task since this relation preserved for the whole of the film must take into account the permanent change occurring in the characters. The cameraman must spot out practical solutions to do this. For how else could he perform the task which requires the intuitive feeling of certain states of spirit to be translated into photography but by resorting to the photographic apparatus.

So I'm working on an experiment; to place differently (and this time I'm speaking from the point of view of photography) the face of a character as against the others."

Anastasia - A film of our time

Alexandru Tatos and Florin Mihăilescu speaking about the significance of their film :

" We were particularly interested in man, in everything connected to the generally human, in everything that, starting from the reality of the story acquired - and this was also the case of the short-story - a more complex meaning...

The point of view on the epoch, on certain real or possible happenings of that time is above all the point of view of the present years... The danger of war has not been banished from the earth and neither have the social and political consequences hence deriving. That's why Anastasia seems to us a film of our time."

The Actors:

Anda Onesa - A modern Antigone

She was born at Pucioasa-Dîmbpvița on the 21st of May 1960. At present she is a student of the Faculty of Philosophy in Bucharest. In 1977 she was discovered by director Timotei Ursu who cast her in September where she played a part that unveiled her fresh talent to the public and to the critics.

A year later Anda Onesa interpreted one of the leading parts in Tragic Holidays while in 1979 she made quite a show in Tatos's film Gently Was Anastasia Passing. In 1978 the Association of Romanian Cinemamen awarded her the Honorary Diploma for Beginners (ex-aequo).

In her latest film Anda Onesa plays the part of a young teacher.

whose behaviour in a most tragical situation reminds us of Antigone's bravery and staunchness. Anastasia's gesture acquires a symbolical value with wide implications. To bury a stranger, "a man who is neither her lover, nor her brother or at least her country fellow Anastasia defies all authority and especially the cowardice of men around her". "She does it because she cannot stand the idea of a humiliated, degraded man... Anastasia makes a gesture which has the value of a warning and which arouses consciences. A warning launched against a world that seems no longer to believe in anything or to respect anything."

In this frightened and appaled world Anastasia's sacrifice acquires mythical significances which turn the heroine of the village on the Danube banks into a modern Antigone.

Amza Pellea - Power in the service of cowardice

He was born in Băileşti, on the 7th of April 1931. He is a graduate of the Institute of Theatrical and Cinematic Arts 'Ion Luca Caragiale'. One of the most appreciated Romanian film and theatre actors, professor at the Institute, awarded several prizes and national distinctions Amza Pellea also cut a good figure internationally. At the International Film Festival in Moscow, 1977 he was awarded the Prize for the Best Actor (for the part played in The Doom). 21 years of untired work, of thorough self-sacrifice on the altar of film-making, 21 years and more than 65 parts in the most variegated films. Filmography :

1960 - The Thirst; 1961 - The Famous 702; 1962 - Tudor; 1963 - The Sea-Cat; 1964 - The Hawks; 1965 - The White Ward; The Outlaws; Blazing Winter; 1966 - The Dacians; 1968 - The Column; 1969 - The War of the Princesses; 1970 - The Last Crusade (Michael the Brave); 1971 - Ipu's Death; The Power and the Truth; 1973 - Captain Ion's Arrow; Adventures in the Danube Delta; The Last Bullet; 1974 - The Immortals; An Inspector Accuses; The Oaktree Extreme Emergency; The Owners; 1975 - Cantemir; A Father for Sunday; 1976 - Accident; A Comedy in Zigzag; The Doom; Three Days and Three Nights; 1977 - Shots in Moonlight Night; For Motherland; 1978 - Melodies, Melodies; Revenge; Soldiers Never Cry; Song to Romania; The Arms of Venus; The Elusive Billionaire; The Golden Man ; 1979 - The Moment; Michael

Amza Pellea's latest part is different from those he impersonated so far. The mayor he embodies takes his job seriously, and prompted by a disease-like fear - connected to the lot of his son whom he has hidden to save him from drafting - he moves from coolness and an apparent kindness to retaliation and brutality as a result of the power he exercises, which he never winks to put in the service of his cowardice. Thus, he hopes not to get involved in Anastasia's rebellious act that tends to acquire a legendary aura.

Excerpts from the Press

1. On the director :

For Tatos, film-making is no adventure. It marks a mild and earnest headway made on the quite known path of the show of ideas open to the contemporaneity."

Cinema No. 4/1980

The director sees a lot of things. He sees the close-up and the long-shot, he sees the whole and the detail. The gentle title of the film occasions a happy meeting of a highly vigorous writer and an extremely sensitive film-director."

Tatos thirsts for the genuine and he does everything to achieve it.

The director is very good at creating types."

Romania Liberă No. 11026 /April 9, 1980

"Tatos's film does not find the echo and the scope of Antigone's tragic pattern...It preserves the tone of a cold, distant description, willingly lucid and even showily lucid... And indeed, Anastasia 'passes' like a memento of dignity and truth..."

Contemporanul No.15(1744)/April,11, 1980

"From the very first scenes the film catches the attention by the way it magnifies a varied human typology, by its expressive atmosphere, by the beauty of photography.

Gently Was Anastasia Passing, a film made with minuteness and dainty is a touching creation which has a deep-going and troubling educational message."

Scînteia No.11705/April, 9,1980

2. On the cameraman :

"Florin Mihăilescu's photography is deep (both visually and intellectually), poetic (the partisans and their horses crossing a

river at night) and intelligently achieved (the armed fight vaguely outlines in the blue fumes of fog and smoke)."

Romania Liberă No.11026/April, 9,1980

"Tatos did not attempt alone to fathom consciences. He was seconded by Florin Mihăilescu, a cameraman sharing the same artistic outlook.

The photography evolving towards the two ideatic levels of the narration changes under the burden of constant zooming - actually, the only obvious rhythm of the film - in a sort of alternation of still close-ups and brisk and violent gestures brought to the forefront and shock-engendering."

Contemporanul No.15(1744)/April,11, 1980

3. On the Actors:

"Extremely difficult was Anastasia's part entrusted to Anda Onesa; overwhelming for her delicate shoulders... She is at her best in moments of lyrical nature, of childish obstinacy or restlessness and anguish of solitude."

Cinema No.4/1980

"Sensitive, appropriate, and modern, Anda Onesa's performance is flawless. The scene when the heroine finds out about her lover's death is unforgettable..."

Romania Liberă No.11026/April 9,1980

" Anda Onesa manages to impersonate a character who is actually the expression of a feeling - that of human dignity in any circumstances and at all times. The actress bestows on the personage a memento-like quality."

Contemporanul No. 15(1744)/April 11, 1980

"Anda Onesa puts in Antigone all her extraordinary simplicity her purity and inner quiet, her part being a difficult undertaking made up of brisk silences verging from the real to the unreal."

Scînteia No.11705/April 9,1980

"Amza Pellea makes use of all his theatrical experience to cover a part which begins with an exercise of power and ends with a murder".

Romania Liberă No.11026/ April 9,1980

"...not Amza Pellea as mayor...not Amza Pellea choosing a new adventure of artistic knowledge which compels him to restrain his

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gestures, to interiorize and talk with his eyes, to fill the silences and gaps with expectations, to expand the meaning and the destiny of a character that evolves with the unusual circumstances, moulded in the cauldron of time."

Contemporarul No. 15(1744) /April 11, 1980

LL Romaniaafilm presents in the Festival Competition (opera-prima) :