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U.S.S.R. 1971

Pirosmani

Wed 5 Dec 8.45/Fri 7 Dec 11.15

Director: Georgy Shengelaya

Production Company: GRUZIAFILM STUDIO

Screenplay: ERLOM AKHVLEDIANI, GEORGY SHENGELAYA

Photography: KONSTANTIN APRYATIN (colour)

British Distributor: CONTEMPORARY FILMS

Leading Players:

*Avtandil Varazi, David Abashidze, Zurab Kapianidze,
Teimuraz Beridze, Boris Tsipuria, Shota Daushvili*

KALOVY VARY FILM FESTIVAL 1972

MOSCOW FILM FESTIVAL 1973

Short: Punch (Italy)

Directors: Giulio Gianini, Emanuele Luzzati

Niko Pirosmani was a great Georgian primitive artist and *Pirosmani* is simply a beautifully made film about his life and times of neglect — leading to his death from a broken heart. This may sound unpromising since lives of artists and musicians have seldom made good movies (how many ways are there of telling a story of frustration and poverty and unrecognised genius?) *Pirosmani* solves such problems superbly. It has a fascinating Georgian setting and an element of surprise in that the artist's greatness is not widely known outside the Soviet Union. His work was done before 1920. He resolutely refused to compromise and took meagre pay — often just food and drink — for works to be hung in bars and restaurants. He lived alone, unable to establish contact, least of all with the love of his life, a singer whom he frequently painted. Most importantly though, the director and his great cameraman (Konstantin Apryatin) have succeeded in an audacious experiment, utilising colour control and a visual style based on the painter's technique. The film is shot in muted tones, mainly ochres, browns and luminous golds — occasionally highlighted with red. Many compositions are enclosed within a frame: the walls of a theatre or shop or cafe. It is a triumph of style enhancing subject.—*Brian Baxter.*