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ANDREI TARKOVSKY

POET IN EXILE



Tarkovsky often protests that his films should simply be 'experienced' like a collection of poems; but his form of nostalgia can be understood more precisely than he has been prepared to credit. Following his announced defection in July 1984 ('I do not seek to

work abroad, but there seems no way I can work at home'), the director's resemblance to the central characters of his films has grown closer than ever. Among the quicksands of uncharted territory, his isolated travellers roam on a probably terminal quest to reconstruct the elusive contentment of younger years.

Setting aside the consistent anguish in his work whether made in Russia or elsewhere (confirming that his voyages to the interior are as much personal as political), Tarkovsky's 'poems' are resoundingly fluent in at least two vital ways. His technical mastery – the exquisite, crystalline camerawork and the startlingly casual acceptance of dreams and memories as part of everyday imagery – is a celebration of pure style from which no audience can emerge unscathed. And his perpetual theme – the symbiosis between the human and the elemental – celebrates a global unity too easily forgotten in contemporary cinema. Home or away, he's an exile to be welcomed with open arms. – *Philip Strick.*



Wed 13 Feb
8.10

**Ivan's
Childhood**

(Ivanovo detstvo)

His family dead, his heart set on revenge, 12-year-old Ivan roams the wastelands of the Eastern Front as self-appointed battle scout for the Russian Army. Tarkovsky's first feature, it appeared at the time to be perpetuating the war-epic tradition of Chukhrai and Kalatozov. Now we can see it more clearly as a fascinating introduction to Tarkovsky's poetic jigsaw, with mirrors, stalkers, and dreams from his own childhood, as personal an elegy as anything he has done. USSR 1962. Plus *The Steamroller and the Violin* (1961), Tarkovsky's sensitive diploma work.



Sat 16 Feb
7.00

**Andrei
Rublev**

Co-scripting with Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky, Tarkovsky constructs eight imaginary episodes from the life of the Russian icon painter, journeying through the slaughter and desecration of the 1400s. Given nothing to support his belief that God is to be found in man, Rublev abandons creation and speech until the 'miracle' with the bell reconfirms his faith, celebrated in his paintings. The spectacular horrors of Rublev's world are counterbalanced by the film's many images of pure beauty. USSR 1966. 180 mins. Tickets £3.60. Standby £2.80.

The *Solaris* miracle is a process whereby a distant planet fathoms the fears and memories buried in its observers' minds and externalises these into living beings. As a result, an astronaut re-lives a doomed relationship with his lost wife. In the Stanislaw Lem novel, Tarkovsky found the elements of obsession and repetition he needed for access to his own life. Light on *Star Wars* hardware, but rich in recollections of lost worlds, *Solaris* is not simply one of the great s-f films – it's a magnificent autobiographical text. USSR 1972. 165 mins.

Thu 21 Feb
6.00

Solaris



Dazzling, baffling exploration of Tarkovsky's infancy, adolescence and marriage, intermingling newsreel actuality with the reconstruction of memories, fantasies and hallucinations. Protesting its simplicity, Tarkovsky calls the film a confession. Tracing the resemblances, the recriminations and the reconciliations between three generations of his family, he sets *Mirror* in his customary borderland between public and private territories; it's an elusive confession, perhaps, but one of moving and melancholy grandeur. USSR 1974. With *Anatoly Solonitsyn*.

Thu 21 Feb
9.00

Mirror

(Zerkalo)



The *Stalker* guides illegal visitors through the overgrown labyrinth of the Zone, an area of alien traps and treasures containing a Room where wishes may come true. *Stalker's* latest clients, a writer and a scientist, make the long search with him, squabbling and questioning as they go, unaware that an alien gift may already exist *outside* the Zone. With its religious and political resonances, the film tempts all kinds of meanings. As a purely visual adventure, it is quite hypnotic. USSR 1979. With *Alexander Kaidanovsky*, *Anatoly Solonitsyn*. 161 mins.

Fri 22 Feb
8.00

Stalker



Andrei, a Russian writer, wanders the villages of Tuscany in self-imposed exile while the myths, miracles and mysteries of the countryside and its people remind him of the family and homeland he senses he may never see again. On meeting with a similar outcast, he's entrusted with a project of salvation which – in a sequence of extraordinary suspense – he struggles to complete. Tarkovsky's spellbinding journal of displacement, written with Tonino Guerra (with resultant echoes of Antonioni and Fellini), unfolds through some of the director's most astounding images. Italy-USSR 1983/With *Oleg Yankovsky*, *Erland Josephson*, *Domiziana Giordano*.

Mon 25 Feb
6.10

Nostalgia

