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Samson

1961 119 min. B&W
Anamorphic Only Rental: \$65.00

Directed by Andrzej Wajda; screenplay by Wajda and Kazimierz Brandys, based on the novel by Brandys. Photography by Jerzy Wojcik; music by Tadeusz Baird. With Serge Merlin, Alina Janowska, Jan Cicierski. Polish dialog with English subtitles.

Samson is a vastly underestimated film, both in terms of Wajda's work, in its place within Polish cinema, and as a profound psychological study. The film begins with an incidental accident: Jakub Gold (Serge Merlin) kills a schoolmate in a brawl, and is imprisoned. When World War II breaks out, he is released, but is confined to a new prison: the Warsaw Ghetto. When Gold finally escapes, he finds himself again imprisoned in the ostracizing world of non-Jews, haunted by the fear of being captured, his life made purposeless. Wajda's film is remarkable for its combination of realism with a baroque opulence, for its extraordinarily fluid camerawork by Jerzy Wojcik and an unusually successful use of the widescreen format, and for Wajda's use of naturalistic symbols which achieve an archetypal significance. Merlin's performance, particularly in a long scene when he is hiding out in a cellar, is powerful both for its subtlety, and for sustaining the energy of the inner-life of the character. (MS)



Siberian Lady Macbeth

1961 90 min. B&W Rental: \$65.00

Directed by Andrzej Wajda; screenplay by Sveta Lukic, based on a novel by Nikolai Leskov; photography by Aleksandar Sekulovic. With Olivera Markovic, Ljuba Tadic, Kapitalina Eric. Serbian dialog with English subtitles.

Siberian Lady Macbeth is based on a novella by the important Russian writer Nikolai Leskov, and is a transposition of the Macbeth theme into the Russian steppes. It was directed by Wajda during a period of self-imposed refusal to work in Poland, and the cast, dialogue as well as the principal crew of the film is Yugoslavian. The wife of a rich mill owner has an affair with a young worker while her husband is away; when her father-in-law discovers them, they poison him; the husband is slain on his return, and his young cousin, the rightful heir to the mill, strangled.

Siberian Lady Macbeth is a potent example of Wajda's harsh realism, his obsession with desolate landscapes in

which the smallest details achieve a universal symbolism. Additionally, Wajda's approach to the Macbeth theme bears many social implications, and is a significant document on the social divisions in rural Czarist Russia. Together with Kurosawa's *Throne Of Blood*, *Siberian Lady Macbeth* is a rare successful transposition of Shakespeare to the screen. (MS)

(35 mm prints available for rental.)

