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THE STONE FLOWER Russian 1946

THE STONE FLOWER was the first Soviet feature film to be produced in full color. The result was so visually beautiful, and so perfectly suited to its subject, that an international award for color films was created at the Cannes Festival especially for The Stone Flower.

The story was adapted from Pavel Bazhov's book, The Malachite Box. It is a fairy tale about a young stone carver, Danila, who desires to carve the perfect flower in stone. The sorceress queen of the Copper Mountain entices him into her kingdom by promising to show him a magical bloom - a legendary stone flower buried in a mountain of gems. Danila abandons his bride on their wedding night to seek this flower. In a fantastic and beguiling scene, the mountains stone by unfolding stone unlock the tunnel to the buried wealth within. Danila finds the flower and makes his perfect copy only to find himself a captive. Finally true love triumphs over ambition, and Danila is restored to the far more beautiful world outside.

The story is pure fairy tale, told with gentleness and charm. It is directed with skill by Alexander Ptushko, previously known for his puppet films. The music and the color, and the proper degree of seriousness, blend to create a world of fantasy. The outdoor woods scenes and the peasant life in the early part of the film offer the loveliest color. The mountain cave of jewels and the legendary flower itself are more brilliant, but also more artificial. More noteworthy are the glimpses into the folklore and the wedding customs of the Ural Mountain region.