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Earth 9:00

Alexander Dovzhenko (USSR, 1930)

Earth unfolds in cinematic space; there is a mad logic to its imagery, like the mad dance of its hero, Vasili, down the moonlit road to his death. Each startling image is precisely linked to the others much as the peasants it portrays are linked through their shared passions, miseries, and mysteries. This is how Dovzhenko tells a story—a rather simple one of Ukrainian villagers coming to terms with collective farming against the brutal resistance of the kulaks and the more subtle resistance of tradition. In addition to the Dovzhenko catalog of earthly symbols, which here reach an apotheosis, there is a daring poetry to the treatment of people and animals alike. A horse is made to “talk”; a grieving young widow wails, naked, totally exposed. The cycle of death in life, expressed in the horizontal attitude of a dying man at absolute peace, looks forward to the similarly serene surrealism of moments in *The Flaming Years*. *Earth* is at once Dovzhenko's most experimental and cohesive film, his last silent, and, for most, his masterpiece.

- Written by Dovzhenko. Assisted by Julia Solntseva. Photographed by Danylo Demutsky. With Semyon Svashenko, Stepan Shkurat, Solntseva. (54 mins, Silent with English intertitles, B&W, 35mm, PFA Collection)

Preceded by an extract from The Golden Gates (Zolotie vokota). Julia Solntseva, USSR, 1970.

Made from fragments of Dovzhenko's films and diaries. “Golden shavings from the great man's desk; an angel's-eye view of Alexander Dovzhenko” (Gilbert Adair). (20 mins, In Russian, Color, 35mm, PFA Collection)