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The air is filled with shouts of children, riding scooters down a sunny street of Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia. Suddenly there is a screech of brakes; in an instant a crowd has gathered — shouting, talking, gesticulating. For a moment it conceals from us a small boy of about eight, with a cautious look in his brilliant black eyes, and his sister, thin and restless with a pugnacious expression on her face, ready to rush to her brother's defence. And while the frightened truck driver curses the boy, and the indignant crowd with truly Georgian temperament abuses the mother who permits her children to play in the streets, a slim, black-haired girl takes the children by the hand and leads them out of the circle of people, paying no attention to the unflattering remarks directed at her.

This is the opening scene of "Somebody Else's Children," produced by gifted Georgian cinematographers.

Could Nato (the name of the young woman) have dreamed that this incident would change her whole life, that these unwashed, uncared-for children, "somebody else's" children, would become dearer to her than anyone else on earth?

What was in store for Nato (played with deep psychological insight by Tsitsino Tsitsishvili, a student of the Tbilisi University), for this trustful, straightforward girl, standing on the threshold of life? First there would be a happy and devoted love for Dato (played by Otar Koberidze), the father of these children, joy in caring for the family, then the sharp pain when Dato leaves her and his own children for another woman.

The intensely dramatic story is related with austerity and courage and without a hint of sentimentality.

A clear-sighted observer, Tenghiz Abuladze, known for his work as co-director of "Magdana's Donkey," has a gift for discerning the significant and the amusing, the touching and the unexpected in life, and his picture is marked by subtle shades of meaning and expressive cinematographic details. He has revealed a deep understanding of child psychology and an extraordinary ability for working with child actors.

One of the film's greatest achievements is portrayal of the children: restrained and fair-minded Gia, played by Mikho Borashvili, and lively, excitable Lia, played by Nani Chikvinadze. Both child actors have already won wide popularity in the film "Magdana's Donkey."

"Somebody Else's Children" contains many distinctive national features and conveys the local atmosphere, both through the character portrayal and also through Levan Paataashvili's photography of Tbilisi, with its wonderfully beautiful buildings, the embankments and the swift, yellow waters of the Kura River. Equally expressive are the views of the city by day, bathed in brilliant sunlight, and by night, with twilight falling slowly and a cool breeze coming from the high Kojar mountain.

... The final shots of the film flash by. Through the streets of the awakening city walks a young woman, a small boy and girl clinging to her hands. The children look up at her with love shining in their eyes. It is hardly credible that this young woman only recently fled from the home where she had been so happy. Dato had gone away, and she was hurt and humiliated. No doubt she would never have crossed the threshold of that house again if not for the children. Seeing their grief-stricken faces from the window of a train, which was gathering speed, she jumps off the train and returns to them.

On this optimistic note the film ends. "Somebody Else's Children" is a film about love of children and is impregnated with true humanism, lyricism and dramatism.



SOMEBODY EL



SE'S CHILDREN



A GRUZIA FILM STUDIO PRODUCTION

TSITSINO TSITSISHVILI • OTAR KOBERIDZE

DIRECTED BY TENGHIZ ABULADZE