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My Grandmother (Moya Babushka)

Franz Kafka meets Charlie Chaplin in this Soviet Georgian film, a riotous, scathingly anti-bureaucratic satire and a genuine piece of grotesquerie descended from Gogol and the Soviet Eccentric Cinema (FEKS) of the twenties. For invention, My Grandmother matches any film of the French avant-garde, taking in all kinds of advanced filmic devices such as stop-motion, bits of puppetry and animation, as well as expressionist decor and exaggeratedly angular shooting. The energetic music track will have you dancing a Soviet-style Charleston along with the film's most memorable character, a bureaucrat's wife (the wide-eyed, wild-haired B. Chepnova) who is caught up in a frenzy of bourgeois living. Her husband (the equally comic A. Takaishvili) personifies the indolence, irrelevance and obduracy of a State system that resembles nothing so much as a giant ~~machine~~ winding down. ^{scoreboard?} ~~(The "grandmother" of the title refers to the patronage that keeps the machine greased.)~~ What are we to think when, at the film's end, he is reprimanded by a Lenin-like worker, shot from the ground so that he looks ten feet tall? Suppressed for half a century, this irreverent blast has lost none of its immediacy, or its relevance. -- Pacific Film Archive

When he loses his job, he learns the true value of a "grandmother"--a slang term for the patronage and privilege that keep the machine greased.