



Directed by Andrei Tarkovsky

[Review by Gary W. Tooze](#)



28 year-old Andrei Tarkovsky's 43 minute diploma film from the All-Union State Cinema Institute, entitled "*The Steamroller and the Violin*" has come to Region 1 DVD. This easy to view, versatile format is a blessing to his legion of cinema fans in the west who crave and obsess on his small body of only seven full length features completed prior to his death in December of 1986. The film was co-written by Tarkovsky's fellow student, Andrei Konchalovsky. It took them six months to complete the script.

Even being an ardent Tarkovsky fan and advocate, I was not expecting much from this student work, but I ended up being even more overwhelmed than I was with many of his other films. In my first viewing of this short film of unpronounced depth, detail and subtlety, I was passively gripped in my seat.



The excessively well thought out scenes and action co-ordination comprise only a few hours in the tenuous relationship between a harmless young musician and a gruff but amiable construction worker. The evolving chemistry buds gently while avoiding sentimentality. Many sequences compare the daily activities of them both male characters; paving for Sergei and violin practice for Sasha. They both appear indifferent to the females that cross their paths and infringe



Perhaps Tarkovskly's most accessible film, "*The Steamroller and the Violin* " has touches of brilliance and distinctive shot development found every few minutes. Purposeful exterior shots and intentional angles are contrasted to hazy dream sequences and kaleidoscopic moments of personal pause. The congenital bond of man and boy is apparent yet underplayed.



The casting is also quite skilled with pinpoint mannerisms and delicate and perceptive facial expressions from all performances. Close-ups are infrequent as is the un-authoritative background music, but lighting and shadows are explored more extensively and appear very naturally placed within the scenes that they are utilized.

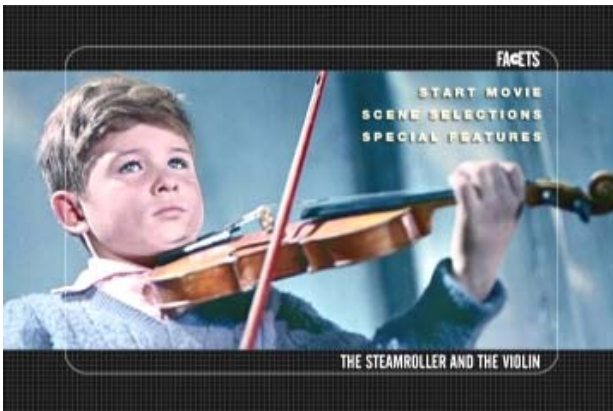


Extremely accessible for non-art cinema viewers and those unfamiliar with Tarkovsky's style, "*The Steamroller and the Violin*" proves a perfect introduction. For the Facets DVD disc the price tag is perhaps a shade exorbitant at \$24.95 especially considering it is a short film with minimal extras. However, as this is probably the most influential avenue for many uninitiated viewers to delve into the master directors other offerings. It may be the most adept starting point and therefore could be deemed as a priceless introduction. If, after watching this, many others become intrigued to seek out other artistic auteur expressions then it is indeed worthwhile. This is great fodder for fans and neophytes alike. I strongly urge you to see it. ★★★★★ out of ★★★★★ .

Film and DVD Details



CLICK on above DVD Cover for a larger version.



The colors are soft yet contain full deep blues and defined edges, not unlike some Technicolor. There are a number of hairs and cue blips appearing onscreen at times. The dialogue is in Russian with clear yellow, non-removable English subtitles. The sound is very clear with negligible errors.

Flaws, only a few: the cover has our lead character playing with his wrong hand. With the abbreviated length of the film, it would have been more than appropriate to include a documentary, interviews, commentary, trailers etc. to the DVD extras. The text based biography is well done but sadly slight considering the market of this product (keen Tarkovsky fans). Grateful that it has been brought to DVD Region 1, but craving more in the area of supplements!

★★★★☆ out of ★★★★★

Full Cast and Crew for Katok i skripka (1960)

Directed by
Andrei Tarkovsky

Writing credits
S. Bakhmetyeva (story)
Andrei Konchalovsky
Andrei Tarkovsky

Cast (in credits order)
Igor Fomchenko Sasha
Vladimir Zamansky Sergei
Marina Adzhubei Mother
Yuri Brusser (as Yura Brusser)
Vyacheslav Borisov (as Slava Borisov)
Aleksandr Vitoslavsky (as Sasha Vitoslavsky)
Aleksandr Ilyin (as Sasha Ilyin)
Lyudmila Semyonova
rest of cast listed alphabetically
Natalya Arkhangelskaya Girl
Zhenya Fedchenko

Technical Information

Release Information:

Studio: Facets Video
Theatrical Release Date: August 19, 1962
DVD Release Date: June 11, 2002
Run Time: 43 minutes

Edition Details:

- Region 1 encoding (US and Canada only)
- Color

M. Figner
Gena Klyachkovsky
Igor Korovikov
Kolya Kozarev
Antonina Maksimova
Tatyana Prokhorova
G. Zhdanova

Original music by
Vyacheslav Ovchinnikov

Cinematography by
Vadim Yusov

Film Editing by
Lyubov Butuzova

Production Design by
Savet Agoyan

Costume Design by
A. Martinson

Makeup Department
A. Makasheva makeup artist

Production Management
A. Karetin production manager

Sound Department
Vladimir Krachkovsky sound

Special Effects by
B. Pluzhnikov special effects
Albert Rudachenko special effects
V. Sevostyanov (II) special effects

Other crew
Emil Chatschaturjan conductor

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Send mail to GaryTooze@dvdbeaver.com with questions or comments about this web site.

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