

A&D STUDIO AND CINE FANTOM PRESENT  
Neo-Soviet cinema

PROJECT BY AN INDEPENDENT DIRECTOR SVETLANA BASKOVA

# “FOR MARX...”

2012, Russia, 100 min.



## Berlinale Forum 2011 Screening dates:

07.02.13 21:00 CinemaxX6 (press screening) EN

08.02.13 22:00 CinemaxX4 EN

09.02.13 16:00 CineStar 8 EN

11.02.13 20:00 Cubix 9 EN

17.02.13 16:30 Delphi-Filmpalast GER

“WE HAD BEEN TAUGHT TO DESPISE THE POWER MONEY FOR YEARS.  
IT’S BEEN 20 YEARS NOW. WE STILL DON’T KNOW HOW TO LIVE”

Svetlana Baskova

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A&D STUDIO and CINE FANTOM  
“FOR MARX...”

Director – **Svetlana Baskova**  
Producers – **Anatoly Osmolovsky, Andrey Silvestrov, Gleb Aleinikov**  
Script and production design – **Svetlana Baskova**  
("Green Elephant", "Head", "Mozart")  
Camera – **Maksim Mosin, Egor Antonov**  
Sound – **Kirill Vasilenko** ("The Inhabited Island", "4")  
Editing – **Veronika Pavlovskaya**

CAST:  
**Sergey Pakhomov** – a trade union activist, the foreman of a foundry  
**Aleksandr Kovalev** – a trade union activist, the master of a foundry  
**Lavrenty Svetlichny** – a trade union activist, a legally grounded marxist  
**Victor Sergachev** – Sergey Victorovitch, the father  
**Vladimir Epifantsev** – Pavel Sergeevitch, the factory owner  
**Denis Yakovlev** – Dodick, the assistant of the factory owner  
**Vladimir Yakovlev** – Nikolay Semenovitch Bodrikh, the deputy minister  
**Mikhail Kalinkin** – the chief of a foundry  
**Nikolay Shilin** – Uncle Kolya  
**Victor Yurkov** – a young guy  
**Vyacheslav Ganenko** – a front-door security guy  
**Aliya Khairulina** – a mother  
**Maria Mikhailova** – a girl in a red coat  
**Albertina Belova** – a young guy's relative  
**Aleksey Andriyuk** – a security guard  
**Maksim Kornushin** – security guard

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE 8 FEBRUARY 2013 IFF BERLIN



# SINOPSIS

The film is about a clash between workers from the Soviet generations and wild realities of Russian capitalism. The plot is based on a real story of today's crisis when production owners sort out their problems by means of cutting workers' wages which are anyway low.

The shootings were held in Cherepovets, Nijny Novgorod, Yaroslavl and Moscow (ZIL Factory and the Fabrica project).

2010. Russia. The main hero, a factory worker, joins an independent trade union at the factory he works for. Having witnessed the trade union leader being murdered and due to administration's blackmailing him, he betrays his friends. A class conflict arises and provokes the hero into a humane riot.

The idea is to show the duality of Russian mentality which paradoxically combines cruelty and placidity, loyalty to the agenda and betrayal, envy and friendship.



## PRESS

The main point is to make the bien public understand that people working at factories are civilized, that they are not alcoholics how many would think. Actually, working on the film, I met a lot of activists from workers' movements. Many of them don't drink or smoke. Many of them are really well-educated. In general the film is about what we should do to encourage people's going to work at factories.

***Svetlana Baskova, interview for the press-conference  
VOICES***

The nation is always sceptical about the intellectuals who betrayed it.

You may show your film to critics at the Kinotavr festival, but it's totally different when the audience consists of the people right from your story. We actually needed Kinotavr just for institutionalization, for getting famous enough, to make people know the film. And when you decide to show a film of this kind to the unprepared audience, to workers, you're really afraid of having an unpredictable reaction. You are an intellectual, you go to them, but they can literally spit at you. Nevertheless, this is the audience I feel very important for me. I really like discussing my film with workers.

***Svetlana Baskova, interview for the Siberian Land  
newspaper***

Svetlana Baskova shot the most topical film of the year – "For Marx...". Having left the ghetto of avant-garde trash, she's lost nothing of her legendary independence. Although, the idea of making a film about a bunch of trade union activists dying in their fight against the mad oligarch, even with no lyrical storyline, must itself shock the establishment even more than endless swearing, lakes of blood, and scenes of sexual abuse – everything usual for Svetlana's previous films. She's managed to make a film, which in the vein of Godard aesthetics may freely be called political, and

not in the way of conjuncture. Regardless of obvious logic, Baskova did not go to pseudodocumentary, but she transferred the socio-economic collision into the language of Shakespearian drama.

***Mikhail Trofimenkov, the Kommersant-Weekend newspaper***

"For Marx..." is a film full of cruel sarcasm directed against bloodsucker oligarchs and incredible tenderness towards common working folk, although it is pretty much broken by the system...

Baskova is obviously nothing like Godard, but either consciously or by intuition she did take his method in service. She developed the idea that cinema potentially may become a more dangerous weapon of the proletariat than a simple rock. Workers from her film in their cinema club discuss "Vent d'est/Wind from the West", "Commissar", "The Working Class Goes to Heaven", they discuss the fundamental films of political cinema. And another idea close to Godard is deconstruction of the language with revolutionary purposes. Baskova intentionally doesn't give her workers swearing as a weapon, as if it were a literature class they discuss Karamzin, Pokrovsky, Gogol and Belinsky... Nonetheless, the traditions of left-sided cinema are lost (or compromised) in the country of once-happened socialism, so they have to be borrowed from western followers of, for instance, Vertov or Pasolini.

But unlike Pasolini, unlike Godard, Baskova comes from contemporary art, and the cinema language for her is just a matter of practice. But following the Master, she takes cinema as a visual kind of creativity which can affect directly, just as political posters do. Meanwhile, having been raised during the postmodernist age, she literally quotes the poster. That's how the placard of "Kalina Krasnaya/Red Arrowwood" by Shukshin looks like. Its place is exactly on the wall in the room where the activists from the independent trade union meet in. We always see this old weary picture through the doorway. The scene repeats with different characters. That's a proletarian "Last Supper" of a kind, it anticipates the final battle which will involve, amongst others, Christ and Judas, Cain and Abel, and you will have a chance to see there much more familiar faces.

***Andrey Plakhov, Cinema Art, november 2012***

Baskova manages to find words and intonation so proper that even her heroes discussing Godard and Brecht sound natural. Starting as an industrial drama, the film turns into an action of a kind closer to the end – wild Russian capitalism does not leave any compromise for the fighting parties. In this conflict Baskova resolutely takes the side of proletariat, and does this very convincingly, enough even to allure people of views far from left-winged.

***Sam Klebanov, distributor, president of the Unlimited Cinema company***

The film powerfully absorbs, as a detective of a kind, but, meanwhile, it possesses uncommon social audacity. For instance, in England, films about workers' rallies was long ago distinguished into a whole cinema branch, but our directors still avoid these uneasy subjects. Perhaps, the author sees her main purpose in determining the border between live-action and documentary, between soviet and post-soviet. It doesn't matter if you're "for" or "against" Marx, only the dots do. They refer to the book of the same name by Louis Althusser.

***Tamara Dondurey, Expert***

"For Marx..." is peculiar at least because this is a film of a long-forgotten genre – an honest industrial drama. The heroes are common factory workers, the conflict is developed around a rebel trade union. Neo-neorealism of a kind. But meanwhile this is a film by Svetlana Baskova, and this is where the story gets additional suspense – during the whole performance you expect this routine of the working class being oppressed by cheeky businessmen to fall to exploitation of "Green Elephant. Especially considering Pakhomov and Epifantsev are again act as antagonists.

***Darya Goryacheva, KinoBizon***

This is an interesting mockumentary about the trade union movement as it is supposed to be. In this class war the working comrades from foundries seem very documentary, and those twats from wild capitalims, on the contrary, look pretty grotesque. Vladimir Epifantsev performs a particularly ludicrous hero, he is almost about to lose his temper and start a massacre. Although, Sergey Pakhomov's nature noticeably differs from his partners. But even if it disturbs at times, it does not after the first third. The workers from the cinema club

are beautiful too, in their own way, they watch Godard and then the organizer of the trade union tells about their meetings.

***Vladimir Lyashenko, Gazeta.ru***

Baskova is back – asking one of the most stirring questions of today's (Russian) society: the human being and his/her/its relationship with the constitution. No, "Za Marksa" is not about Pussy Riot, it's not about pink protest, not about art for art's sake, not about freedom of speech. It's not even about political battle on a large scale – opposition, democracy, the diversity of movements. It goes further, I would say. Set on a micro scale (a factory plant somewhere out there in the Russian provinces), it's about the largest of majorities still (and again) being kept silent: workers. If earlier on many of us believed in the slogan "Workers United can never be Defeated", Baskova's movie tells the story of how in contemporary society this very core idea of Marxism can very well be defeated (and not only because it seems so difficult to unite, in our beautiful times of post-everything multitude). The gradual disintegration of this workers' union (or rather: the ruthless distinction by a new oligarch class of owners and managers) is shown as a sad fairy tale with a neo-avantgarde look (and some fantastically ironic sideglances to Godard, Tarkovskij & co – the Brechtian style is to be taken seriously here) and it reminds a mindful audience of Zelimir Zilnik's cracking late attempts in docu-fictional anti-capitalism. Go or it. For Marx.

***Barbara Wurm, goEast***

## ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

“Svetlana Baskova is an author of outstanding videofilms which create a unique atmosphere of shocking frankness. This is the first time she works for big screens; under outward correctness she hides incredible moral breakdown which is very peculiar to her art.” – **Andrey Silvestrov**

“Svetlana Baskova is the only alternative director who has won the attention of broad audience. We have never had such an example of an alternative director.” – **Vladimir Epifantsev**

## THE DIRECTOR’S COMMENTS

***“FOR ME THAT’S THE FIRST FILM IN OUR COUNTRY WHICH WAS CREATED AND MADE FOR A BROAD AUDIENCE IN ORDER TO SUPPORT AN UPRISING TRADE UNION MOVEMENT.”***

First I’ve heard about this movement from my friends and I got really interested and surprised that there are independent trade unions, that they protect their right and that they are in every possible way being prevented from doing this.

I decided to research this issue, I wanted to know if workers possessed some real legitimate rights. I visited many cities, saw many rallies, and everywhere what shocked me was total disrespect from the authorities. Sometimes they didn’t even go out to talk to people.

I filmed everything, the guys from the trade unions gave me a chance to see how it all worked from the inside. I do respect those people – for their constant trying to fight for their dignity, for their challenging the power of money.

## THE PRODUCER’S COMMENTS

The Cine Fantom studio has always been searching for new cinema forms that would unite a broad audience with an advanced one. Nowadays it’s important to develop the cinema which would be dedicated to social problems, not to political or pseudomoral issues. It’s important to use the experience of the soviet cinema in this case. We want to see the traditions reborn. We want to see it topical, we call it neo-soviet cinema. That’s our plan for the next five years. It is very important for the studio that no one but Svetlana makes the first steps in building a basement for a future tower.

**Gleb Aleinikov**

## ABOUT THE AUDIENCE

“We need hundred millions of proletarians from our country, two billion of the Chinese, and another billion of deeply thinking but simple people from all over the world.”

**Andrey Silvestrov**

This is certainly not a Soviet film if we take problems Soviet industrial drama dealt with (“The Bonus”, “We, the undersigned”). But, having called our film that, we want to emphasise the continuity of the audience. We want common working folk to see the film. Their struggles sometimes are tenfold tougher, more sturdiness and critical then they used to be during the Soviet age. So we have a project of screening this film in the cinemas of provincial Russian towns. We want common people and youth interested in the history of our generation as it’s seen from from the interior.

**Svetlana Baskova**

“Even Svetlana Baskova, whose films have always been considered avant-garde and radical, makes a step towards the audience, although still remaining in the framework of her own stylistics and method.”

**Sitora Alieva, the programming director of the Kinotavr festival**

## WHY “FOR MARX...”?

The appearance of capitalism in Russia automatically made Marx's ideas topical. This was Marx who described all the problems we've been facing for the last twenty years: unrestrained yearning for making money limited by no laws or regulations, exploitation of workers for personal enrichment, indifference towards the environment. This is how our “wild capitalism” looks like unbridled by state controlling institutions. “For Marx...” has three dots to symbolise the uncertainty of the results of this historical struggle.

# BIOGRAPHY DIRECTOR



Svetlana Baskova. Director, artist.

“For Marx...” 2012

“One Solution – Resist” 2011

“Mozart” 2006

“Head” 2003

“5 vodka bottles” 2001

“Green Elephant” 1999

“Kokki – a running doctor” 1998

Born on the 25th of May 1965 in Moscow. Graduated from Moscow Architectural Institute in 1989.

Since 1990 has been a free artist. Since 1996 has been working with video and cinema.

Since 2010 has been the director of the BASE publishing house.

Since 2011 has been the director of the Institute for contemporary art and criticism BASE.

**“I WANT AN ANGRY FASTIDIOUS AUDIENCE, I WANT THEM BARKING,  
THIS IS WHAT I WANT.”**

**Now you're receiving many invitations to screen your film on a free basis in various regions. What are the most popular questions from viewers? Does your message draw a significant response?**

During those meetings we always have long and tense debates. I don't consider issues we discuss to be simple, I see them serious. And I am pleasantly surprised, for this is actually the only way for me to estimate inner qualities of my film. The main thing for me is about how our people will react, whether or not it will be interesting and close to them, whether or not I have made a mistake. It's certainly curious to make screenings in Moscow, but real viewers are actually far away. I went to the VOICES festival in Vologda and to Message to Man in St. Petersburg where “For Marx...” was in the same programme with “One Solution – Resist”. In the vein of getting the audience prepared this revealed to be a good duet.

*The 27th of September, St. Petersburg, the Message to Man festival.*

*The 4th of October, Orenburg, V International Cinema Festival “West and East. Classics and avante-garde.”*

*St. Petersburg. A project by the “What to Do” group.*

*“Exhibition as school. One does not have to be left to think this way.”*

**In Saint Petersburg there was a screening organized by the “What to Do” group. Dmitry Vilensky arranged a seminar with artists, trade union activists and workers. The audience was prepared and politically grounded. So how was it?**

The experience was extremely useful, and I hope it will continue. I was really touched and even embarrassed a bit by how the film was taken. They didn't expect anything like this. They were talking about how literal was everything happening on the screen, meaning that this was exactly how the factory owners treated real workers, that no one was really interested in changes, in sharing, in paying enough, and in cutting exploitation of hired labour. They told the owner really took no responsibilities towards workers. They were very kind and wise.

*The 1st of October, St. Petersburg, the Clear Dreams XV festival, the Centre for Contemporary Art of Sergey Kuryokhin.*

**In St. Petersburg there was another screening for a group of activists from an odious party of Kurginyan.**



## What do you think of the party?

Well, "party" is too big a word for them. There are many different people in Peter's, so those Kurginyan guys criticise their leader themselves and try to figure out what is going on in the country. These are people with no complete vision of future. Although ideologically they are for total fairness with no transition periods. They are romantic and they are for the revolution, but they have no one to follow them.

I do not deny anyone. I had to as well endure them to answer a question whether the final should be good or not. This was supposed to support all the activists. One of them, a grown-up lady fairly said that "there was nothing difficult to slay them all but there was about making an optimistic final". And she's right, that's really a difficult task.

*The 23rd of November, Novosibirsk, the "Siberia is the Russian Power" festival.*

*The 24th of November, a meeting with Novosibirsk State University students, a screening of "For Marx..."*

## After having been screened at Kinotavr and VOICES, the film got widely discussed. The other day they started calling and asking about Russian distribution. Have you ever been found by traces left in the press?

Some guys from Academgorodok (a research centre nearby Novosibirsk) asked me to come and screen the film. At the same time there was a festival in Novosibirsk itself, so the organizers of it invited me as well. The programme was a bit tense, and there were many young people, so I first expected wicked questions and no serious issues. But the discussion went really well, and I want to draw your attention that the opinions those young and clever people expressed were really respectable. People from Academgorodok made the same impression on me.

*The 2nd of December, Ekaterinburg, the Kinoproba festival Lipetsk, 15.00, the Cinemascope club*

## So you shot in Kaluga, Lipetsk and many other company towns. Did you manage to screen your film there?

Lipetsk! This is where everything started! Many activists from there told me lots of things when I was making the script. It did help me, and I was glad to come there, but unfortunately I didn't happen to meet everyone. That's how their job is.

If you're an activist and finally get fired, then you also get to a black list and become unable to find a job in

your city. So you move and lose all your connections with your friends and your place. They can even press on you psychologically sending the police for you twice a week just for nothing. They can stalk you. They can beat you so you understand you should not be going anywhere alone. If you want to go to an important meeting, then you can easily be stopped in a connection with some drugs thing or a murder happened recently. You go to the police office, spend there about three hours and then just go home. The thing is that you miss the meeting. And this happens really often. They even remove medical records from the dossiers of young boys so they have to go to the army.

After being attacked once you are not anymore, because people know about it very quickly. So if you're known then there are less chances you will be beaten.

Many can't endure this permanent pressure, of moral and psychological responsibility. But they are totally open. Everyone knows what they're doing, and that's why they're being oppressed at work.

Once I were in Kaluga on the 1st of May. They were so united. I walked beside their column. but there were also men trying to hide. And it was pretty stupid, for the protesters knew them by sight. They were from the anti-extremist department. But the guys from Kaluga managed to organize a big trade union and they have a whole system of teaching, they even have special classes held by psychologists, jurists, economists and so on. I've already said once that at little and young productions it is easier to organize a trade union. So in company towns it's absolutely impossible. They only exception is "Edinstvo" in Tolyatti. They are in my film "One Solution – Resist."

## Where (according to what you feel) is the most radical (revolutionary) audience? Which social strata attended the screenings?

The word "revolutionary" does not fit here. Trade unions are about hard work, about classes with jurists, psychologists, economists. Cities with trade unions are really ALIVE, there's a hope you're not alone, there's solidarity, which is the best word here. This is what people give to each other and how they endure pressure and humiliation. They know how to answer correctly, what exactly they can demand, and how to unite breaking no laws and humiliating no one. In some cities activists work with the lowest police units explaining them their rights. But sure it is difficult. The audience which invites me now is socially active, but even a

simple viewer does not stay indifferent, for I presume everybody is now concerned with the question “how to live this day?”

**Still, did you have any intention of creating a manifesto and making people fight for their rights in the field?**

You see, it's too difficult to make a manifesto. There was no task of this kind. And there's been no manifesto for four years. I was just worried during the crisis time and saw only the people who couldn't stand being humiliated anymore. In some cities the salaries were of five thousand, and people didn't know whether to buy food or pay your bills in order not to be evicted. Old people have incredible difficulties. They never feel good, but this being anxious about what to eat tonight is utterly humiliating. So the time worsen the situation and made it really noticeable. I don't want anyone to connect my film to the events in Moscow. I made a film about working activists, about people of labour.

**What do you expect from the Berlinale screenings?**

My audience must be unbiased and ready for negative reactions. This is something real, something I'm interested in. I don't need a friendly audience. I'm ready to fight for it, but I can do it myself. I want an angry fastidious audience, I want them barking, this is what I want. I don't know what to expect from a refined european viewer at Berlinale. They never knew communism. Yeah, there was Eastern Berlin... But this very difficult to discuss, and in the vein of art it's almost imposible to make the audience clearly understand it.

**You have an idea of another project. Please, tell me about it and its connection with “One Solution – Resist” and “For Marx...”**

Yes, I want to make another film. Yes, it does sound infantile, but still you have to do something to make it work. Perhaps, it is good “For Marx...” got to Berlinale. And to find money for new projects I maybe have to mention my appreciation of the european cinema... Maybe it's important to say we grew up on Godard and Fassbinder... But this would be a lie. We do love them, although we now would expect something more radical from Godard now. We grew up with different contradictions and their criticism turns for us to burning pain, uncurable trauma and endless mistakes. “NOTHING as a result”, as would a poet Pimenov say.

With my new project I want to try to help everone to overcome this trauma. I'm sure I can do that.

**What trauma are you talking about? It's been 20 years, many generations changed one another...**

The severest visual trauma was about a generation much older than me, by that time they'd already chosen their paths, realised their public stances and started actualising their selves. We watched them, and due to our adventurist age managed to stay. But it got scarier and scarier. If I were a comedian, I'd say we came right to the market economy which really flavoured in the West, although we cried and they sang – this the thing. It's always going to be like that: they and we. Like people with a broken car by the highway with no other drivers and people who listen to the radio about it. Let's go back to the trauma. We're well educated, we have never known a lack of teacher's love, free love, I have to notice (meaning free education in the SU), and we've made our choices. The next generation called “lost” consists of young people who our government is not interested in at all. They do not have a chance to get a proper education, they do not know where to go, for there's too much information and no notion of who is to be believed. This is why new schools appear. Only due to initiatives from beneath. There are people who are not indifferent to the youth, and who feel real responsibilities and have a clear and comprehensible public stance.

## BIOGRAPHY PRODUCER



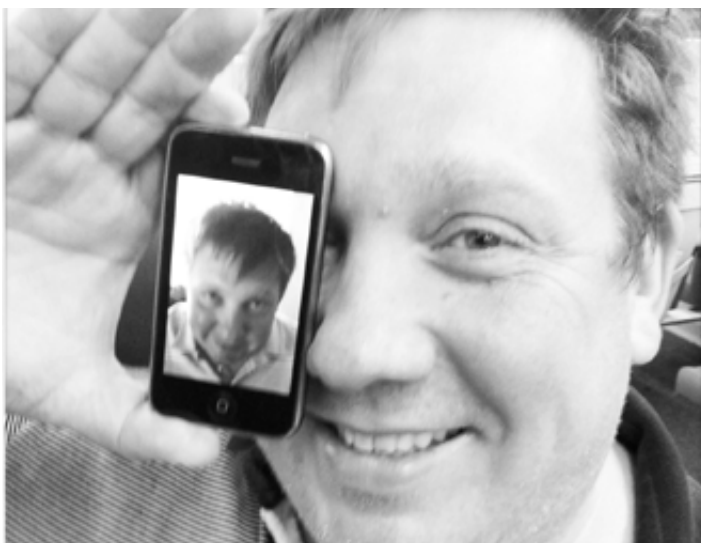
### Andrey Silvestrov

Producer, director and author of the films **“Volga-volga”** (2006, with Pavel Labazov, premiere at the Rotterdam IFF), **“Brain”** (70 min, 2010, premiere at the Moscow IFF), **“House in Furmanny”** (documentary, premiere at the Gogolfest, Ukraine), **“Birmingham Ornament”** (68 min, 2011, with Yuri Leiderman, special “Venice” version premiered at the Venice IFF, the best experimental film at Syracuse IFF 2012). The general producer of the Cine Fantom Promo company.



### Anatoly Osmolovsky

Producer, artist, theorist, curator. Lives and works in Moscow. Leader of the **E.T.I. (These)** movement, organised **“Netseziudik”**, **“Non-government verification committee”**, **“Vote against everyone! Now”**, and the **“Radek”** society in 90-es. Participated in Dokumenta XII, Cassel, at Moscow Biennale in 00-s. Publisher and the editor-in-chief of the Base magazine.



### Gleb Aleinikov.

Author of the films **“Ameriga”** (1990-2000), **“Dzenboxing”** (1998-2000). Since 1988 has been teaching the art of cinema directing at the Studio of Individual Direction and at Russian Academy of Theatrical Art at the course of Boris Yukhananov. Since 1995 has been the director of the Cine Fantom cinema club. Organises the Cine Fantom festival. Since 2002 has been the director of the marketing department at the CTC channel. Since 2005 has been the director of the marketing department at the Domashny channel. Director of the marketing department of the CTC Media company. From 2008 to 2010 was a head of the marketing and development council at the Rossiya channel. Since 2010 has been the deputy head of the Muz-TV channel. Since April 2011 has been the deputy head of the CTC channel.

## SHORT RESUMES CAST



### **Sergey Pakhomov. Actor.**

Also known as “Pakhom” and “Pakhomich”. Born in 1966 in Moscow. In 1981 finished the Krasnopresnenskaya art school. In 1985 graduated from Kalinin College of Applied Arts. In 1984-85 participated in private exhibitions. In 1988 started participating in bigger events in Russia and abroad. In 1988-2000 studied modern art in Europe and the USA. Became famous after his roles in films by Svetlana Baskova “Kokki – a running doctor” (1998), “Green Elephant” (1999) and “5 vodka bottles” (2002). His best role is believed to

be the subaltern officer from “Green Elephant”, the film which drew a wide response from Russian society. Due to literalism in dialogues and sets, and the effect of the “live” camera the film was highly estimated in foreign criticism.



### **Vladimir Epifantsev. Actor.**

Born on the 8th of September in 1971 in Moscow, in a family of actors.

In 1994 graduated from the acting faculty of Shukin Institute for Theatre (V. Ivanov’s course), then studied at the directing faculty of the Russian University of Theater Arts (P. Fomenko’s workshop). At the same time started a project called «Prock-theatre».

Acted the principle part in «Caligula» and the role of Treplev in «The Seagull.»

In 1997–1998 was the presenter on a trash tv-show «Drema/Somnolence» on the TV-6 channel. Later

participated in the «Kultivator/Cultivator» and the «Muzoboz» shows.

Directed music videos for the Lyapis Trubetskoy, Tarakany, and other music bands.

In 2007 participated in a tv-project «Korol Ringa/King of the Ring» by Aleksey Chumakov under a pseudonym of Blood Squirt (a name of one of his theatre performances)

In 2008–2009 participated in Russian shows «Tantsi so Zvezdami/Dancing Celebrities» and «Korol Ringa/King of the Ring». Since 2010 has been the presenter on the «Genialny Syshik/Genius Detective» show on the REN-TV channel.

In 2012 participated in the reality-show «Poliglot/Polyglot» on the Kultura/Culture channel.

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