

LADY MACBETH: Shostakovich's Banned Masterpiece

"Lady Macbeth: Shostakovich's Banned Masterpiece" is the story of the life one of Russia's most famous composers Dmitry Shostakovich (1906-1975).

A documentary chronicling the composer's life and times, it offers an insight in Shostakovich's deeply complex relationship with the Soviet regime of his time, the persecution he endured under Stalin from communist officials and even colleagues in his own musical circles. It was a grim game in which all the dice were stacked against Shostakovich and yet the great composer persevered, retaining his dignity and talent and to this day is remembered as one of music's greatest composers.

The film is inspired by Shostakovich's famous opera "Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District", one of the key events in his life that brought him worldwide fame and made the young composer (he was just 27 years old at the time) a luminary of world music. When, in 1936, just two years after its premiere, the Opera was banned Shostakovich's life was turned upside down. The sudden reversal of fortune stemmed from Stalin himself - who penned an article in Pravda dubbing it "confusion in the place of music".

Labelled an "enemy of the people" Shostakovich became a social outcast, though he miraculously escaped arrest. His opera was not performed again for nearly 30 years.

By the early 1960s a new version of the opera had been published under the title "Katerina Izmailova" and Shostakovich's famous work seen on stage at theatres worldwide.

The film does not only tell the opera's story - but explores the nature and challenges of an artist's relationship to power, with contributions from composer Sergei Slonimsky, musicologist Iosif Rajskin, chess grandmaster and concert pianist Mark Taimanov and the composer's widow Irina Shostakovich.

RAISA FOMINA

Director General and founder of Intercinema in 1992 for promotion of Russian films abroad and distribution of high quality art films in CIS and Baltic countries.

Among many Russian films successfully promoted and sold abroad are all films by Alexey Balabanov, THE CUCKOO by Alexandre Rogozhkin, SISTERS by Sergey Bodrov, SCHIZO by Guka Omarova (Certain Regard Cannes IFF 2005), THE RETURN (2 Golden Lions at Venice IFF 2003) and THE BANISHMENT by Andrey Zvjagintzev (Golden Palm for Best Actor at Cannes IFF 2007), GARPASTUM by Alexey Guerman (Competition of Venice IFF, 2005), THE ISLAND by Pavel Lounguine (Closing film of Venice IFF, 2006), WILD FIELD by Mikhail Kalatozishvili (Horizons Venice IFF), THE HUNTER by Bakur Bakuradze (Certain Regard Cannes 2011) and many others.

Among foreign films which the company released and which got recognition of audience and critics in Russia and CIS countries are KINGDOM, BREAKING THE WAVES and DANCER IN THE DARK by Lars von Trier, 5 films by Wong Kar-wai, A MAN WITHOUT A PAST and LIGHTS IN THE DUSK by Aki Kaurismaki, 8 films by Francois Ozon, THE PIANO TEACHER by Michael Haneke, GOOD NIGHT AND GOOD LUCK by George Clooney, EMPTY HOUSE and THE BOW by Kim Ki-duk, STILL LIFE by Zan-ke, JAPON, BATTLE IN HEAVEN and SILENT LIGHT by Carlos Reygadas, I SERVED THE KING OF ENGLAND by Irzi Menzel, SECRET by Claud Miller, POETRY by Li Chan Dong and many others.

From 2008 Raisa Fomina has been actively involved in classical music producing. She has produced a lot of concerts and festivals in Russia and abroad, among them a concert of Leonid Desyatnikov music in Milan (Italy); 3 concerts dedicated to 175th anniversary of Chaikovsky in Berlin and Leipzig (Germany), Vienna (Austria); 8 annual Festivals of classical music in Ples (Russia). She produced 3 CDs of classical music: Separation (dedicated to 50th anniversary of Mikhail Khodorkovsky), To a Friend and An Oak Leaf Cello (dedicated to 45th anniversary of Rustam Komachkov, a famous Russian Cello player). The next CD which is in production is dedicated to the film music of Leonid Desyatnikov, one of the best **contemporary Russian composers**.

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Raisa Fomina was awarded with Order National du Merite by President of France in 2002.