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**200 Foreign Leaders of
Soviet Film Distribution:
Selected Collection**

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What foreign films were popular in the Soviet film distribution? How did the film press and the audience evaluate and evaluate these movies?

In this monograph, for the first time, an attempt is made to give a panorama of two hundred foreign films popular in the USSR in the mirror of the opinions of film critics and viewers.

The monograph is intended for higher education teachers, students, graduate students, researchers, film critics and historians, journalists, as well as for a circle of readers who are interested in the problems of cinema, film criticism and film sociology.

Reviewers: Professor M. Tselykh, Professor A. Levitskaya.

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Table of contents

Introduction	4
200 popular foreign films in the Soviet film distribution in the mirror of the opinions of film critics, film critics and viewers.....	5
Appendices.....	168
Appendix 1. <i>Yesenia</i> and other top-grossing feature films of India, Mexico, Pakistan, Egypt, Iran and Lebanon in the USSR film distribution.....	168
Appendix 2. List of the highest-grossing films of India, Pakistan, Mexico, Egypt, Iran and Lebanon in the film distribution of the USSR.....	171
Appendix 3. The highest-grossing foreign westerns in the USSR film distribution.....	174
References.....	175

Introduction

What foreign films were popular in the Soviet film distribution? How did the film press and the audience evaluate and evaluate these movies?

In this monograph, for the first time, an attempt is made to give a panorama of two hundred foreign films popular in the USSR in the mirror of the opinions of film critics, film critics and viewers.

Quotes from audience reviews are taken from comments published on the Kino-teatr.ru and Kinopoisk portals, and the main figures for film attendance of foreign films in the Soviet film distribution are from M. Zhabsky's monograph "The Socio-Cultural Drama of Cinema. Analytical Chronicle 1969-2005. (Zhabsky, 2009), statistical data from the Soviet Goskino, RGALI archive, the sites *Kinopoisk*, *Kino-Teatr*, information materials of S. Kudryavtsev and other sources.

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Based on the attendance figures, it is (expectedly) clear that foreign films of entertainment genres (adventure, melodramas, comedies, detectives, westerns, action, science fiction) turned out to be the most in demand among Soviet viewers.

The top 100 highest-grossing foreign films in the Soviet box office included several dozen Indian, Mexican, Pakistani, and Egyptian films (mainly melodramas), which, due to their specificity, are included in a separate list (see Appendix). A separate list (see appendix) also includes foreign films in the western genre (mainly produced in Yugoslavia and the GDR, plus the American *The Magnificent Seven* and *Mackenna's Gold*), which were leaders in the Soviet box office in the 1960s - 1970s.

Based on the analysis of cinema attendance figures, it can be quite reasonably asserted that only movies that crossed the threshold of thirty million viewers in the first year of showing in cinemas could enter the top hundred most popular foreign films in the Soviet film distribution.

Alas, the statistics of Soviet film distribution is far from available for all foreign films, therefore, our book did not include, for example, such films that are memorable for experienced domestic film fans, such as *The Devil and the Ten Commandments*, *Grand Prix*, *Pharaoh* and many others.

So, this is selected collection, telling about two hundred foreign leaders of the Soviet film distribution.

The monograph is intended for higher education teachers, students, graduate students, researchers, film critics and historians, journalists, as well as for a circle of readers who are interested in the problems of cinema, film criticism and film sociology.

This book continues the series of monographs (<http://kinopressa.ru/5748>) previously published:

Fedorov, A. Thousand and one most popular Soviet movie: opinions film critics and spectators. Moscow, 2021-2023. 1270 p. <https://ifap.ru/library/book615.pdf>

Fedorov, A. 100 most popular Soviet TV movies and serials: opinions film critics and spectators. Moscow, 2021. 146 p. <https://ifap.ru/library/book619.pdf>

Fedorov, A. Soviet sci-fi movies in the mirror film critics and audience opinions. Moscow, 2021. 170 p. <https://ifap.ru/library/book621.pdf>

Fedorov, A. The Record holders prohibited Soviet movie (1951–1991) in the mirror of film critics and audience opinions. Moscow, 2021. 120 p. <https://ifap.ru/library/book624.pdf>

200 foreign films popular in the Soviet film distribution in the mirror of the opinions of film critics and viewers

Spartacus. USA, 1960. Directed by Stanley Kubrick. Distribution in the USSR – 1967: 61.2 million viewers in the first year of distribution. Repeat distribution in the USSR – 1984 (+ another 28.2 million viewers).

Stanley Kubrick's (1928-1999) interpretation of a Roman slave revolt led by the legendary Spartacus is a timeless drama of power struggle and betrayal. Large-scale shooting of the thousandth extras, superstars of world cinema in the lead roles. Stereo sound. Giant screen. The film's audience success in the 1960s was undeniable.

Of course, today in the light of the "computerized" *Gladiator* something in *Spartacus* looks old-fashioned. But time has no power over the temperamental game of Kirk Douglas and the aristocracy of Laurence Olivier. Yes, and Kubrick was already then Kubrick: the Master with a capital letter...

Spartacus was released to the screens of the USSR with a seven-year delay, but this did not in the least affect its fantastic success with the public: 63 million viewers in the first year of its release in cinemas. The only thing is that only two melodramas were able to get ahead of him in the Soviet box office among foreign films: the Mexican *Yesenia* (91.4 million viewers) and the Indian *Tramp* (63.7 million viewers), as well as the legendary American western – *The Magnificent Seven* (67 million viewers) speaks volumes.

The Soviet film press met *Spartacus* generally positively, chiding for "excesses" and approving for "the fight against tyranny".

So the film critic Sofya Dunina (1900-1976) wrote, that "Kubrick has created a very lush, decorative film that combines all the hallmarks of an American 'historical' action movie with superb acting from the leading actors. ... In the film, very spectacular, staged with many ethnographic and cinematic excesses, there seem to be two directions: the magnificent aesthetics of the action movie, seasoned with bloody entertainments characteristic of ancient Rome, and the socio-moral theme of the formation of an advanced person of all eras to the spiritual and civil freedom of his people" (Dunina, 1967: 23).

And film critic Yuri Khanyutin (1929-1978) noted in the *Soviet Screen*, that *Spartacus* "nabout all conditions, this is a typical Hollywood action movie. More than three hours of screen time, millions of dollars spent, luxurious scenery, thousands of extras, big names of performers. According to the established custom, it is customary to pour contempt on films of such parameters, stating with satisfaction the insignificance of the content covered with magnificent form. ... Yes, all this is a magnificent and breathtaking spectacle!, but this picture has become something more than just a picturesque spectacle from Roman life with indispensable and inevitable Hollywood clichés (Khanyutin, 1967).

In Russian times, this picture is already assessed on the basis of other positions.

For example, film critic Yevgeny Nefedov emphasizes that "the powerful epic breath of the film, scrupulously (up to the gallery of sculptures and tablets that serve as the background for the opening credits!) reproduced atmosphere does not overshadow the analysis of socio-political mechanisms, leading to the important idea that the uprising hastened the establishment of an imperial form of government in Rome: only a strong state could preserve the existing social order. ... The original visual solution (the conspicuous contrast of the red robes of the rebellious slaves and the white togas on the Romans invested with power) once

again testifies to the intentions of the authors to create not just a film about the uprising, but a work that is revolutionary in spirit – about the victory of the revolution, even if when she was defeated” (Nefedov, 2011).

One way or another, but most film critics and viewers still believe that Kubrick showed in *Spartacus* himself to be an excellent professional, spectacularly staging crowd scenes and revealing the performing abilities of a talented cast (Vetrova, 2000: 74).

The opinions of today's viewers about *Spartacus* vary, although positive feedback prevails:

“My favorite historical film ever! Actors are brilliant! In a word, a masterpiece! (Viksy).

“Somewhat lengthy (by the standards of a modern viewer), but, of course, a very spectacular and large-scale movie. Although the American almost "happy ending" and a typically Hollywood tear squeezer at the end somewhat spoiled the impression, it is worth recognizing that, along with *Cleopatra*, this picture is perhaps one of the most famous and significant historical films in world cinema" (Trusflight).

“Personally, I am not enthusiastic about Kubrick's *Spartacus*. The story of the slave uprising was turned into a melodrama” (Whirlwind).

Four Musketeers / Les quatre Charlots mousquetaires. France, 1974. Directed by André Hunebelle. Release in the USSR – 1978: 56.6 million viewers for the first year of showing in cinemas.

Strange, but true: Andre Hunebell's (1896-1985) highest-grossing film in the Soviet box office was not the legendary *Fantômas* (and not the costume adventure films *The Hunchback*, *The Captain* and *Parisian Secrets*), but one of the later works of this director: a comedy on the verge of a foul called *The Four Musketeers*, where the members of the then promoted pop group *Charlot* portrayed musketeer servants, who performed all the known (and unknown) exploits from the novel by Alexandre Dumas...

In the year of the release of this film in Soviet distribution, film critic Yuri Bogomolov (1937-2023) wrote that “The mischievous, merry, and adventurous plot is rapidly rushing after the inexhaustible invention of the singing and dancing Charlot, while the glorious musketeers trail somewhere in the tail, in the background, showing a hundred times less resourcefulness and wit” (Bogomolov , 1978).

Already in Russian times, film critic Denis Gorelov noted that “in old age, men can be playful – which applies not only to the king and the cardinal, but also to the director Hunebelle, who at the time of filming was a full 78 years old. So he gave France to the obscene third estate, which was quite in line with the national tradition” (Gorelov, 2019).

The opinions of modern viewers about the *Four Musketeers* are rather contradictory.

Pro:

“In the distant times of the exceptionally peaceful life of the Soviet country, we, the children of this great country, enjoyed this film many, many dozens of times” (R. Andov).

“Very sweet, light, film, even now it looks good. I remember very well how, as a child, everyone ran to the cinemas to see this film (and its sequel, *Four Against the Cardinal*) many times” (Eagle).

“This film is very funny, although the humor in it is rather farcical at times, but it is a pleasure to watch. ... André Hunebell spent his whole life making mainly costume films – *The Hunchback*, *The Captain*, one of the many adaptations of the real *Three Musketeers* by

A. Dumas, etc. And in his old age, he unexpectedly surprised me. He took and shot a parody of the movie that he had been making all his life” (B. Nezhdanov).

Contra:

“I saw this movie in the cinema and didn't like it. The humor is pretty average” (Nord).

The Taming of the Shrew / Il Bisbetico domato. Italy, 1980. Directed and written by Castellano & Pipolo. Release in the USSR - since October 1983: 56.0 million viewers in the first year of the show.

In the 1970s – 1980s, Adriano Celentano gladly accepted the invitations of the highest grossing comedians in Italy, former screenwriters (by the way, who worked with Eldar Ryazanov on *Italians in Russia*) Castellano (1925-1999) and Pipolo (1933-2006). Together they released about a dozen comedies, which began with the *My Adolf, called the Fuhrer*.

The popular comedy *The Taming of the Shrew* became the most profitable Italian film of 1980. The directors gave here their own (very far from Shakespeare's original) interpretation of the wandering plot. Adriano Celentano appeared in the tried and tested appearance of a phlegmatic, rude dork, the owner of a prosperous farm, an inveterate forty-year-old bachelor. It is (although not immediately) that the coquettish guest (Ornella Muti) tames him...

... Exhausted by a long road, the main characters are wandering along a deserted highway at night. Drivers of rare cars pay no attention to their desperate signs. "They don't stop because I'm not alone", – says the heroine and asks the gloomy farmer to hide behind the bushes. Smiling charmingly and even enticingly baring her knee, the young woman gracefully waves to a passing car. He instantly stops. The driver jumps out of the car and... paying no attention to the young beauty, rushes to the imperturbable farmer, – they say, what are you hiding, signor, let's give a lift...

You should not look for any social, satirical motives in this unpretentious plot, of which there were many in the classic "Italian comedy" of the times of Pietro Germi (1914-1974). Castellano and Pipolo offer a hilarious spectacle, moderately rude, moderately eccentric, with the participation of stars who are well aware of the comedic element. Celentano demonstrates here his inimitable facial expressions and feline plasticity of movements. He is at ease and at ease in a conventionally tricky world, where a salty word and a paradoxical, worldly situation turned inside out peacefully coexist.

Already in the 21st century, film critic Denis Gorelov gave his version of one of the reasons for the popularity of this comedy among Soviet viewers: “A sincere dork has always been a great Russian dream, it is not for nothing that the locksmith Gosha is so loved here. Moreover, if in traditionalist cinematographies the culmination of the family world was the public flogging of a shrew with a rein or old galoshes..., Celentano, the son of a rather vulgar grassroots culture, showed miracles of upbringing, confining himself to taking out a bed with an undressed darling on a tractor to the village square” (Gorelov, 2019).

In principle, film critic Georgy Bogemsky (1920-1995) wrote about the same thing, only in other words, back in the 1980s: “Celentano and the clever script writers (they are also directors) managed to catch the problems and disputes floating in the air today and gave them a comedic interpretation. Oddly enough, the rude masculinity, if not rudeness, of Elia, who treats the city "fifa" so harshly, somehow impresses some of the spectators and, it would seem, even more strange, the spectators. Apparently, everyone is pretty tired of reflective and feminized men – both on the screen and in life – just like masculinized women who are not aware of the power of their charms or who do not know how to use them. The film captures modern "environmental" discussions just as sensitively – the sympathy of the audience is caused by the call for a healthy and simple village life, the preaching of healing physical labor. In general, watching the audience's reaction to this film, you realize that not only the film critic, but also the sociologist has something to think about” (Bogemsky, 1986).

Many viewers today adore this comedy:

“Great family comedy with great actors! With pleasure I review this picture, I always rest my soul” (Irina).

“I really like this movie. He is still from those times when they knew how to shoot without vulgarity and unusually funny” (Olga).

But there are, of course, viewers who did not like this movie:

“Still, the film is weak, superficial and at times stupid” (Tundra).

“I am somehow indifferent to Celentano, so this comedy did not make a special impression on me” (Anna).

Zorro. Italy-France, 1975. Directed by Duccio Tessari. Release in the USSR - since October 1976: 55.3 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Duccio Tessari (1926-1994) during his long cinematic career directed three dozen films of various genres, but *Zorro* became the most famous of them.

... The noble avenger and protector of the poor hides his face under a black satin mask, but bravely draws his blade against insidious and vicious enemies...

The story of the romantic handsome Zorro appeared on the screen in a total of sixty film / television versions. For example, we saw Antonio Banderas (*Mask of Zorro*) in this role. And many years ago, the kids adored Zorro performed by Douglas Fairbanks.

In the costume adventure film *Zorro*, Duccio Tessari made a bet on the popularity of Alain Delon and did not fail: the picture was a huge success in Europe, and in the USSR it was completely triumphant. The star of Alain Delon burned then almost like Hollywood. Anyway, he was one of the most popular actors in Europe...

In *Zorro* Delon fences excellently, dashingly rides a horse and fights amazingly. And all this, mind you, without any computer effects! In a word, this is not a movie, but a dream of a teenager in the 1970s...

Viewers of Zorro still like:

“I saw this movie for the first time in high school. He made an indelible impression on me. The image of Zorro (Alain Delon) is a fluttering cloak, a black mask, courage... and modesty. ... Wonderful musical arrangement, humorous moments” (Varvara).

“One of my favorite childhood films. A classic of the genre is an adventure film about a fighter for justice and freedom. And how filmed fencing! The final duel between Zorro and the Colonel is a masterpiece” (Baldachin).

“Whatever you say, the movie is amazing. And the best Zorro is Delon. Quite a tough plot, not sentimental snot and romantic princes and princesses. Clear principles of all sides, diluted with a share of well-balanced humor and sarcasm ... do their job ... How much you watch, you don't get bored. For all time. Doesn't age. So, a classic” (Tal).

King Kong. USA, 1976. Directed by John Guillermin. Release in the USSR – 1988: 46.0 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

In 1976, director John Guillermin (1925-2015), who directed many well-known spectacular films, invited Jessica Lange to star in *King Kong*, another version of the adventures of a giant ape found in the jungle. This remake of the 1933 film of the same name played on the well-known tale of *Beauty and the Beast*.

The picture of J. Guillermin can hardly be called an acting one. The main focus, of course, is on the supermonkey, whose grandiose radio-controlled mock-up cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. The actors were left with purely decorative functions and elementary emotions (terrible fear, the joy of getting rid of the threat of being crushed, etc.).

Jessica Lange plays a beautiful blonde who, to her misfortune, captivated the heart of King Kong. For the role, she had several excellent opportunities to demonstrate her slender

and flexible body, which, apparently, was not difficult for a professional fashion model. That's probably all...

Meanwhile, the success of *King Kong* in the Soviet box office was huge: teenagers (and not only them, of course) poured into the "perestroika" cinema halls to immerse themselves in the world of adventure ...

Film critic Marianna Shaternikova (1934-2018) wrote that "In the original *King Kong*, filmed during the reign of the strict Hays Code, eroticism was barely guessed, implied, and this careful balancing on the brink of what was permitted only benefited the film. In the new picture, everything has become more frank, straightforward, and therefore rougher and even, as it were, somewhat more stupid. In the famous scene of the original, Kong, holding the girl in his palm, looked at her puzzledly and tried to undress her like a child would a doll. The new Kong pokes his thumb and tears the straps on the shoulder of the heroine with a rather experienced movement, and the expression of his physiognomy is interpreted, in general, unambiguously. So De Laurentiis brought King Kong back to new generations of viewers. And yet something elusive has gone. A little added rationality, Kong became more understandable and humanized- and the former naive magic has slightly diminished. ... And yet King Kong is alive. It was very successfully invented half a century ago. I think that a considerable number of his descendants will fulfill the dictates of the times-say, to fight terrorists and defilers of the natural environment. He, apparently, has been tamed forever, turned into just a very tall monkey, has lost the aura of mystery, threat, and strangeness. Well, let him live in a domesticated form. In the current ecological situation, thank you for being alive" (Shaternikova, 1989: 136-137).

Film critic Yevgeny Nefedov believes that "Through the efforts of genuine wizards from the "seventh art" (Carlo Rambaldi, Glen Robinson and Frank Van der Veer received a special Oscar award), the corresponding episodes lost their mythological and romantic, almost fabulous intonation, sounded realistic and, if not scientifically, then scientifically. Even when Kong tears open the jaws of a giant snake, and first of all when he disperses a crowd of onlookers in New York, breaks a subway train like a clockwork toy and shoots down a helicopter on the roof of the World Trade Center, it is difficult to get rid of the feeling of ... authenticity of the atmosphere. The feeling is sharply enhanced by the presence of Jeff Bridges, whose humanistic views and critical attitude to corporate politics, with a sincere love of nature, with the appearance of a typical "hippie", Prescott, apparently, was only able to realize the tragedy of the Monkey King and ... humanity, by his own greed and stupidity destroyed a unique creation. In my opinion, this is by no means bad and served as a sufficient justification for the very appearance of a "remake" of an ageless work, at least until it degenerated into exorbitant melodrama in a weak and obviously belated sequel" (Nefedov, 2011).

And film critic Dmitry Savochkin recalls his childhood impressions of watching this movie: "To this day, sometimes when I roll my eyes, I remember how King Kong blew on Jessica Lange to dry her after bathing, or how he fell from a height of a hundred and something meters, shot down by fighters. I still remember very well how King Kong ate crocodiles, spreading them on stones like sprats from a can, and only very recently I discovered that this scene is not in the film: it must have been in the movie *King Kong Lives*. For me, these films, as for any child, naturally merged into one in my head. We hardly perceived the story of King Kong as a philosophical influx, about "a monster that was killed by beauty." ... For us, the giant monkey was a symbol of power, and also ... permissiveness, she stole a heifer, made her her living toy, and no one will punish her for that... Although, no. Still, they were punished. And that was the real tragedy because it brought the child back from his childhood world, where you could do anything and never think about the consequences, ... to a world where you had to be responsible for any freedom. And King Kong was the last hero who preached true freedom, not limited by the stupid boundaries of the adult world" (Savochkin, 2007).

***King Kong* still has a lot of fans among the audience today:**

"I watched it for the first time in the cinema in the year, probably 1988. I was still in elementary school then... I remember how hard it was to buy tickets, they sold like hot cakes. There was a long queue at the box office... But the film was worth the queue. The film made a strong impression on me. At first, I didn't feel sorry for the monkey at all, but at the end of the film I shed a tear when they killed Kong. I went to this movie with my friends several times, and each time I watched it as if for the first time. To today's youth, the film will probably seem primitive in terms of special effects... And, probably, it will seem of little interest. But for me, it's a nice nostalgia for those carefree times" (Andy).

"I watched this film with great interest... This film is the best for me. As a child, I had a rubber toy brought from Hong Kong, which is hung on the windshield of a car. It was the giant gorilla King Kong. He held a huge snake in his teeth, and a woman in his paw" (Valerochka).

"Compared to the original, some sentimentality benefited the picture: the gorilla monster is sincerely sorry in the final scene, the move with the fading heartbeat is not bad" (Retroman).

King Kong Lives. USA, 1986. Directed by John Guillermin. Release in the USSR – 1988: 53.6 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

In contrast to the quite benevolent attitude towards *King Kong* in 1976, some film critics reacted to its continuation called *King Kong Lives* with hostility.

Here is what S. Kudryavtsev wrote about this, for example: "The moderate melodrama of the new version of *King Kong*..., a decade later, was modified in the second series, which was put by the same Guillermin, already into unbearable tearfulness. ... the creation of John Guillermin suffered a resounding failure in the United States at the end of the "Reaganomics" period, losing the first part in attendance by 18.5 times! However, our viewers (the audience was 53.6 million people!) Unexpectedly rushed in the USSR film distribution to the continuation of *King Kong* as if to a Mexican or Indian melodrama... Probably, this happened for the reason that the little Kong was more pitiful than the giant dad waving off planes on top of the Empire State Building skyscraper" (Kudryavtsev, 2007).

Signor Robinson / Il signor Robinson, mostruosa storia d'amore e d'avventura. Italy, 1976. Directed by Sergio Corbucci. Release in the USSR - from January 29, 1979: 52.1 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Italian comedies were very popular in Russia in the 1970s and 1980s. The audience adored Adriano Celentano and Paolo Villaggio (1932-2017) - the main comedians of the Italian screen at that time.

Sergio Corbucci (1926-1990) filmed comedies with both. True, the gangster comedy with A. Celentano and A. Quinn *Bluff*, in my opinion, came out much better than *Signor Robinson* with P. Villaggio. But at one time, this movie also gathered full houses from Moscow to the very outskirts... Indeed, was the story about a klutz who, having got to an island in the middle of the ocean, met a sexy black woman, was not funny against the then boring and insipid background of the "correct" socialist realism?

In the year *Signor Robinson* was released in Soviet distribution, film critic Tatyana Khlopyankina (1937-1993) noted that this comedy "it is ironic through and through, parodic, but parody lives on the screen according to its own laws and somehow knows how to arrange itself in such a way that we do not judge it even for obvious errors against taste that we would forgive any other genre, including just comedy" (Khlopyankina, 1979: 19).

And already, looking at this movie from the 21st century, film critic Denis Gorelov is convinced that the recipe for the success of this film is as follows: "the more stupid the audience, the more grateful: it loves repetitions. It turned out to be a uniform

“repeater Uncle Piggy”. He stumbled over a snake twice, ran away from a boomerang four times, bowed Friday to an immediate dinging 27 times. For five minutes he argued with a parrot, for five minutes he broke the whole island on a coconut, a joke with a cinema, which shows the sea, was duplicated by a joke with a TV, which shows Friday. But he got a good audience: sympathetic” (Gorelov, 2019).

As for the audience of the 21st century, they remember *Signor Robinson* with a warm feeling of nostalgia:

“Wonderful picture! I enjoyed watching it before, and I still enjoy watching it now. *Signor Robinson* is just great!” (Ellen).

“The film is very funny and Paolo Villaggio did a great job of bringing the director's vision to life. I don't know, consciously or not, but the film also received some satirical overtones. Before us... a typical petty bourgeois, a tradesman, rather rude and ignorant, who cares more about his body. He is a child of modern civilization, unable to take a single step without its benefits. Once in an extreme situation, he is forced to show some resourcefulness and ingenuity in order to survive. But most of all, he cares about two things: to fill his belly and satisfy carnal desires” (A. Grebenkin).

“The film is great. This is a true world classic. An example of a comedy genre. ... I remember the wild excitement around him. I watched this film two days in a row at the cinema when it first came out, and both times I laughed, as if undermined, for the whole cinema hall! (L. Eskina).

“All my Soviet childhood I heard about this film from classmates, what is shown there! But I've never seen it, oddly enough. Today I finally looked. ...at least here it was really not in vain that they hung an inscription in cinemas: “Children under sixteen are not allowed to enter” (V. Ivanov).

“Sometimes I watch this comedy on my computer screen to boost my mood. Silly, but distracts from current worries. However, I like many Italian comedies” (Irina).

Recruits go to war / Les bidasses s'en vont en guerre. France-Italy-Germany, 1974. Directed by Claude Zidi. Release in the USSR - from August 7, 1978: 50.1 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

French director Claude Zidi in the Soviet box office, he was unusually lucky: about a dozen of his films appeared on the screens (*Recruits go to war*, *Monster*, *Banzai*, etc.).

Recruits go to war, in my opinion, not the best taste comedy with the pop group *Charlot* turned out to be the highest grossing picture of Claude Zidi in the Soviet box office. And this despite the fact that he had works of a much higher artistic level, which were also shown on the screens of cinemas in the USSR.

Film critic Yevgeny Nefedov notes that in this army comedy “Zidi, along with co-authors of the script, does not skimp on fiction, “shooting” long bursts of gags so enthusiastically that sometimes he stops noticing how they take on a mechanistic character” (Nefedov, 2017).

Opinions of current viewers about this film are sometimes polar.

Pro:

“This is just the kind of film that is good to relax with, under which it is easy to forget about problems, and which perfectly cheers up” (Mabgat).

“Fans of a light, funny comedy will love this film. I like him very much. The comedy is built on absurdity, jokes, ridiculous situations and a lot of gags. It's hard to find even two minutes of cinematic time in a movie without something funny, funny or absurd going on” (Horvat).

Contra:

“The humor is primitive and dirty. Yes, it is very funny when a person is shaved bald – I can confirm. Yes, it looks cool from the outside when a person is poured with shit. Is this humor? No, bad taste” (Fred)

“Even as a very young, young Komsomol member, while still at school and falling for the *Tall Blond...*, I did not perceive this chain of extremely ugly comedians at all. Even with my then undeveloped taste and complete lack of critical experience, I immediately experienced a strong disgust for their antics in all the director's films” (Yuri).

New Amazons / Sexmission / Seksmisja. Poland, 1983. Directed by Juliusz Machulski. Release the USSR – 1986: 49.0 million viewers in the first year of the show.

If Juliusz Machulski had made this naughty comedy in the 1970s, they most likely would never have made it to the Soviet screens. But... erotic-fiction comedy *Sexmission* (1983), even if in a censored version and under a much more innocent name *New Amazons*, was triumphantly released in Soviet cinemas already in perestroika years 1986-1987.

Film critic Myron Chernenko (1931-2004) aptly wrote that Juliusz Machulski “consistent and stubborn in what he does, without suffering from cinematic messianism, a tendency to excessive criticism or, God forbid, social analysis. In other words, he perfectly knows his place in the cinema, he knows that this place is his own. No one has encroached on him so far, and if he does, then in the zone of this “cinema for everyone” there will always be a place for talent, and if necessary, he himself, Machulski, or an unexpected competitor will simply move aside so as not to interfere with the other” (Chernenko, 1990).

At the same time, *Sexmission* uses “a wandering plot about the realm of women, where two men are transferred from our days – a shy scientist and a smart schemer – is permeated with so many current political allusions, allusions and associations that the brave purchasing commission that acquired this picture almost put her party cards in full force on someone's table” (Chernenko, 1990).

Many viewers recall the excitement around the *New Amazons*, released in Soviet cinemas during perestroika:

"Oh! I will never forget what a queue was at the cinema! The first sex film shown in the USSR! There were so many cops, the boys were breaking in – they were not allowed in, but somehow I managed to get in. Delight knew no bounds! Boobs are shown in a glimpse somewhere! And then I remember in TV “*Before and after midnight*” they talked about this film and showed moments that had previously been cut out! And the film itself is cool” (Valera).

“From the height of the past years and from the current frostbitten times, it seems that there is nothing special in the sense of eroticism in the *New Amazons*. And in the mid-1980s, male teenagers were wildly turned on by glimpsed female charms. The severely cut version of the film seemed supererotic...

I remember that some boys took pictures from the screen of the hottest shots, and then sold it at school. And one "unique" managed to bring a rather large cassette recorder into the cinema hall, recorded the sound track on a microphone and let everyone listen to "sex talk" (probably not for free either). So some kids on the *New Amazons* also did "business" (Amateur).

“In this film, I perceived not eroticism much more sharply, but the motives of satirical dystopia. The full version of the film was seen on television much later, but even in the one that was in the box office, the satirical overtones were almost completely preserved. The film shows a totalitarian same-sex society of the future based on deceiving its citizens and falsifying history. For example, that "Einstein was a woman". Or those terrible views of the earth's surface after the atomic war, visible through the periscope, which turned out to be a decoration.

I remember the hype around the film at the box office very well, I even had to buy tickets in advance” (B. Nezhdanov).

“It is amazing that this ironic and elegant fairy tale for adults was created when Poland was literally languishing under the heavy yoke of communism and suffering ... And very soon

after the appearance of the *Sexmission*, the notorious “iron curtain” rusted through. The sickle-hammered fetters collapsed. ...

I have seen this film a dozen times – in the cinema and at home. And suddenly you discover all the new witty grains and humorous sparkles. ... The ironic-political hairpin of Machulski has not lost its sharpness even today. Light, mischievous dystopia. The anarchic macho played by Jerzy Sztur and the intelligent opportunist Lukashovich as his partner in an aggressive anti-male environment half the film try to somehow fit into the new dictatorial order, and for half the film they run away from the chase to freedom. ...

Grimaces of victorious feminism. Liberal tyranny that replaced the traditional and very imperfect society. ... Consider me an inflexible male chauvinist, but no woman will ever film anything equal to such an elegant film satire anywhere” (Yuri).

Dinosaur Legend / Dinosaurs: The Legend of the Strange Bird. Japan, 1975/1977. Directed by Junji Kurata. Release in the USSR - from January 1, 1979: 48.4 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Junji Kurata (1930-2002) made a lot of spectacular films, but in the USSR he received real fame only for his one work.

Dinosaur Legend was released on the screens of the USSR in 1979, when there were still a few years left before the "perestroika" video invasion of horror films, so teenagers watched this movie "with a bang", bringing considerable income to film distribution...

Film critic Denis Gorelov reminds readers that “Japanese tolerance for naturalism is much higher than ours, so the panorama of tablecloths and lanterns thrown on the shore at the moment when the long-necked eats his first breakfast of water cyclists seems to be censorship. However, the upper half of the scuba diving girl, pulled out of the water by her friend, will already stand before her eyes until her death. A giant eye of a lizard or a leg sinking separately after this is absolute trifles, as is the seething of blood in a smoking funnel. The Japanese, as they have been doing for a long time in disaster films, combined horror with a holiday, skillfully playing on the dissonance of relaxed vacationers with a fierce element” (Gorelov, 2019).

Opinions of 21st-century viewers about this film are quite diverse, but for the most part they are shrouded in the aroma of childhood memories:

“The shot with the creeping blood stain on the girl in the lake was generally amazing by the standards of that time. It’s Stephen King! The mystery is that there cannot be so much blood from a wound on the leg, and the dinosaur has not yet dived. But we looked at the effect and did not notice anything. A bloody wave and a sinking girl. Well, when a part of the body flew out of the water ... Which could not fumble for anything with its hand ... Here it is-the beginning of an introduction to Japanese horror classics” (Ed-san).

“Unfortunately, the film is only good until the appearance of dinosaurs in the flesh. Then the frank soyuzmultfilm (puppet animation department) begins, and the dinosaurs are more likely to make you laugh than scare. But the central episode of the attack of the Dinosaur on an inflatable boat with a girl, filmed in a light green fog with very effective music-this is of course a classic” (Golubyaka).

“We take a toy house and break it into pieces with a rubber monster. However, if you disregard from the outright cheapness (but not trashiness, please note!), lack or even complete absence of cruelty..., then you can get a lot of pleasure from the film. Characters are two-dimensional, yes. But bright, memorable, and for some reason causing sincere sympathy – is it not because we live in a completely different time, with different values, or rather, their complete absence?” (Maxyuto).

Black Tulip / La Tulipe Noire. France-Italy-Spain, 1964. Directed by Christian-Jacques. Release in the USSR - from June 1, 1970: 47.8 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration. Re-release in the USSR - 1984 (+ 28.9 million viewers).

In colorful costume adventure movies on a historical theme – *Zorro* and *Black Tulip* – Alain Delon wears camisoles with aristocratic ease, rides and fences with swords. Undoubtedly, *Black Tulip* is not as bright as another hit by Christian-Jacques (1904-1994) – *Fanfan-Tulip*. However, the picture is set in a fascinating and rather ironic way...

A connoisseur of French cinema Alexander Braginsky (1920-2016) wrote that Alain Delon's in *Black Tulip* was "attracted by the prospect of playing two completely different characters against a historical background of events ... He really wanted to repeat the success of Gerard Philip... but, alas, [Delon] did not succeed in this. Unlike *Fanfan-Tulip*, which organically combined burlesque and satire, this time the director, in the name of creating a lightweight, entertaining spectacle, sacrificed the logic of motivations and sometimes elementary plausibility. For the first time, the actor had to ride a horse, fence, participate in fights, and he did it with the usual dexterity and plasticity. But all this was not enough for the complete success of the picture" (Braginsky, 1999: 59).

However, the audience of the 21st century continues to admire the skill of Alain Delon in *Black Tulip*:

"In the distant 1970s, I saw this film, and my childish imagination was shocked by the romantic beauty of Alain Delon, riding a horse with a sword in a fluttering black cloak. I still think that he created the most beautiful male image and I understand that most women are in love with him!" (Sergey K.).

"Delon with his powerful energy, bold, burning beauty simply fills the entire film, you want to watch it again and again" (NVCh).

"Great film, timeless film. Favorite movie. ... Alain Delon is simply gorgeous in the role of both brothers. The same person, but different people. ... A separate feature of the film-humor. Each dialogue can be cut into jokes, aphorisms and anecdotes. So I never laughed! And you can't put it on paper. It must be seen" (M. Scarley).

"Crocodile" Dundee. Australia, 1986. Directed by Peter Fayman. Release in the USSR – 1988: 24.8 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Australian television producer and director Peter Faiman gained fame precisely thanks to the unexpectedly for many "shot" film "*Crocodile" Dundee*.

"Crocodile" Dundee II. Australia-USA, 1988. Directed by John Cornell. Release in the USSR – 1989: 45.9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

A major success for Australian producer and director John Cornell became *Crocodile Dundee II*. Shortly after the shooting of this film, he fell ill and since 1995 has retired from active work in the cinema ...

The box office success of this duology – all over the world and in the Soviet film distribution – was very impressive. What was the reason for this success?

Film critic Alexei Erokhin (1954-2000) believed that "The answer is utterly, painfully simple. She is as simple as this broad-shouldered honest fellow Dundee, the Australian hunter. It is as simple as we are in the depths of our souls. No matter how many intricate ideas there are in the world, over what complex life collisions we would break our heads, unraveling the subtexts and nuances of reality, but this is what we will certainly not

resist – this is the simplest fairy tale itself, the simple sweet tale about Very Good Guy Who is Lucky” (Erokhin, 1988: 17).

Film critic Oleg Sulkin had a similar opinion about the reason for the popularity of “Crocodile” Dundee: “The authors of the film picked up the key (or master key) to the hearts of millions. How? What is their secret, what secret weapon did they invent for the 90th anniversary of cinema, which has already trodden all conceivable paths to the viewer? Perhaps someone will be disappointed. I did not find anything super-original, arch-innovatory in the recipe for “Crocodile”...”. She is as old as the world. The batch here is like this: love, adventure, humor. Moreover, all components do not argue, do not crowd each other, peacefully coexisting in dynamic equilibrium. The film easily fits into the genre limits of "comedy melodrama" or, if you like, "melodramatic comedy". But what does this actually explain? It's time, it's time to look at the main character of this story. Feels the heart – in it is a snag, in it is a clue. ... He personifies the myth-memory of mankind about the "golden age", when people did not yet know sin and were happy as children. He is somewhat akin to the Russian Ivan the Fool (and we remember how he turns out to be quick-witted and decisive) and his numerous brothers from the folklore of other peoples. He is revealed to amuse us from the heart, and in the meantime to teach the mind-reason. And here we come to where we started. This hero is attractive because he is from a fairy tale. From a fairy tale for all times” (Sulkin, 1988: 21-22).

Already in post-Soviet times, S. Kudryavtsev suggested that, “Perhaps this picture was liked thanks to a fresh and unexpected interpretation of old plot schemes, its by no means vulgar, but, on the contrary, kind humor, that pure and sentimental love story that arises, in the end, between characters so different in character and origin. And yet, perhaps more important is a new look at America from a newcomer-stranger who ironically, but without mockery, notices what the Americans themselves are already accustomed to” (Kudryavtsev, 2006).

And film critic Yevgeny Nefedov is convinced that “The lion's share of the extraordinary success (“Crocodile” Dundee - A.F.) is undoubtedly due to the unique, colorful, truly vivid image born from the fantasy of the leading popular humorous TV show. ... However, the special charm of Peter Fayman's painting lies in the fact that the Australian "natural man" goes not just to the metropolis, but to New York... His misadventures in a foreign land allowed the Americans to see their beloved city in a truly new light – through the eyes of a fellow Voltaire's ingenuous (albeit with an adjustment for addiction to provincial taverns), vigilantly noticing all the absurdities and oddities that do not cease to be such because everyone has long been accustomed to them” (Nefedov, 2013).

This dilogy continues to please the audience of the XXI century:

“Favorite movie since childhood! You look – and the soul somehow becomes lighter. And the heroes are so simple, sincere... How many years have passed already, but I still like it” (Varvara).

“Great film about Great love! (without all sorts of sarcasms)” (Yefim).

“I first saw “Crocodile” Dundee somewhere in the second grade, in the cinema, on a huge screen (Australia in full breadth!), And since then this film has taken a strong position in my heart! ... Dundee is an unforgettable and unique image in cinema for all times and peoples!” (Roksolana).

Film forever. The plot is amazing and the actors are amazing! What a charming Linda Kozlowski! Not to mention the amazing Paul Hogan. You can watch it over and over and not get bored! (Svetlana).

“One of the reasons for the popularity of *Dundee*... is that in 1988 such a fresh film came out on Soviet screens, to which the Soviet audience was not accustomed. I myself watched it for the first time as a student back in 1987... I remember standing in line at the box office and

asking a girl who had already watched this film "Is it worth watching?" She rolls her eyes: "God, there are such dresses, such swimsuits, such a man!" (L. Rassokhina).

Fantômas. France-Italy, 1964. Directed by André Hunebelle. Release in the USSR – 1967: 45.4 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Fantomas raged / Fantômas se déchaîne. France-Italy, 1965. Directed by André Hunebelle. Release in the USSR – 1967: 44.7 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Fantomas vs Scotland Yard / Fantômas contre Scotland Yard. France-Italy, 1966. Directed by André Hunebelle. Release in the USSR – 1968: 34.3 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

French cinematic fiction is, of course, not only philosophical parables, dystopias or postmodern delights. There is also a comedy-parody movie series about the elusive Fantômas, who uses submarines and various masks in his criminal arsenal.

Jean Marais in the roles of Fantômas and the journalist Fandor and Louis de Funès in the role of Commissioner Jouve made up in this parody spectacle André Hunebelle (1896-1985) (*The Captain, The Miracle of the Wolves, The Hunchback, Mysteries of Paris*) a wonderful acting duet. De Funès amused the audience with his indomitable energy and funny facial expressions. And Marais conquered the hearts of the audience with his beauty, dexterity and luck...

Plus, the role of the journalist's bride ironically and sexy was played by the charming Mylène Demongeot.

Fantômas is a kind of parody about James Bond in French. Fewer deaths, more humor and jokes. But no less tricks and chases ...

In Soviet times, film critics Victor Demin (1937-1993) and Irina Yanushevskaya (1925-1989) wrote competently about the reasons for the success of the *Fantômas* trilogy. They were sure that "With the creator of *Fantômas*, director Hunebelle, does not hide at all that he is making a "fake". On the contrary, he invites us to laugh at the absurdity of these heroes, these collisions, all this primitive fantastic technique. He affirms the realities of the twentieth century. Even the features of a phantom in the guise of the main character are also a reason for him to laugh. The power of *Fantômas* is too grandiose, his omnipotence is too invincible for the viewer to get rid of the joking attitude towards this. ... *Fantômas* for him is like a magic wand, the touch of which turns any official establishment, any accepted order of things into nonsense, into a convention. Hunebelle will not miss the opportunity to laugh at the police officers who have been fooled for the thousand and first time, at the highly paid official of the world-famous bank, dumbfounded looking at a freshly signed check, from which the ink disappeared in the twinkling of an eye, over respectable casino visitors, who unanimously recognize in Inspector Jouve that youngster who yesterday took away billions of francs from under their noses, carelessly waving his pistol in farewell ... On the contrary, the horrors of *Fantômas* themselves become for him with the attributes of a carnival action, and the role of Inspector Jouve quite naturally goes to the most famous comedian of today's French cinema. ... from a squire under Fandor, Inspector Jouve grew into a completely independent figure, with a different mythological overtones. Jouve is, in fact, we are with you. This is a caricature of our own perspicacity and awkwardness, of our childish impatience and empty, wasted efficiency. Like Ivan the Fool, who lives by different laws than his reasonable brothers, and, in the end, turns out to be a winner, de Funès, in each of his roles, compromises the place he has inherited in the social hierarchy, with the naked simplicity of his plans and the complete impossibility of translating them into reality. His defenselessness before this reality is both ridiculous and pitiful, and if in the finale he still finds himself on a horse, it is only with the help of the same foolish happiness, luck, a game of chance ... Three episodes of *Fantômas* ... show that according to this elementary formula can be molded one film after another: the attention of the viewer is guaranteed. If only Jouve's naive calculations were more intricate,

their unexpected breakdown more stupid, all these antics of de Funes, slapping his forehead, giving slaps to his subordinates, biting his grandiose lip in despair or stretching his mouth to his ears in an idiotic sinister smile, funnier. ... De Funes becomes the focus of these films. Marais gets the flanks. If Inspector Jouve is ourselves, then Fantômas is the personification of our fears, and Fandor is the embodiment of our dreams. The conflict of the film is in the confrontation between the "evil" and "good" adventures that Gramsci wrote about. The "evil" adventure is by its nature anonymous: hence this string of masks, while the identity of Fantômas himself remains invariably encrypted. Fear of the omnipotence of science, fear of the evil of the world, hiding under any faces, fear of the "alien" in general, living according to other laws that are not ours and able to punish us for our sins – this is what Fantômas is. Fandor is a timid hope that all these fears can be overcome with a pair of strong fists. He is also impersonal, Fandor, but only to a different extent: he has descended from the pages of a fashion magazine. His suit by the best tailor, his fiancée, the charming Mylène Demongeot, his fabulous dexterity and the blissful vacuum of his consciousness in matters that do not concern Fantômas: all this betrays in him the representation in the name of a dream. They are two sides of the coin .. That is why the witty Hunebelle quite logically entrusted both roles to one actor. Whether Fantômas is pursuing Fandor in his spacious catacombs decorated in the spirit of *One Thousand and One Nights*, or Fandor is ready to grab the blundered Fantômas, the viewer always understands that this unforgettable Marais is catching itself like a cat catches its own tail. This, on the other hand, allows the restless actor to demonstrate each of the dangerous stunts twice: first he jumps from a speeding train in a Fantômas mask, and then he does the same in Fandor's make-up. Actually, there are no acting tasks in these films before him, in fact. Marais jumps, runs, fights, jumps again, runs again and again scatters cuffs. How not to recall here Pearl White, whose image haunted him in early childhood. That star of cinema at the dawn of the twentieth century, which the boy imitated and whom he so wanted to be like. He looked like her – fifty years later. As Stendhal wrote, "if a person really wants to be a minister, he will become a minister – and this will be his punishment" (Yanushevskaya, Demin, 1969: 118, 213-216).

Film critic Yevgeny Nefedov rightly reminds readers that "A rare work manages to rise to the level of a genuine phenomenon in a country with a still different culture! Fantômas has become as much a regular character in folklore as the protagonists of the most beloved domestic films: *Chapaev*, comedies by Gaidai and Ryazanov, series about Stirlitz and Sherlock Holmes. This was even reflected on the screen, and the village detective *Aniskin and Fantômas* is far from the only example. The unconditional recognition from a vast and multinational audience makes one treat with even greater respect the work of Hunebelle, which, however, already looks with unflagging interest years and decades after its appearance, remaining a true standard in its genre" (Nefedov, 2006).

Of course, the trilogy of André Hunebelle (1896-1985) – witty parody, but some Soviet teenagers "for some reason, then *Fantômas* was taken too seriously, even in a terrible way (and by no means parodic) and generally preferred to be chosen as a bad role model, committing frankly hooligan acts. The image of *Fantômas*, elusive and frightening everyone with his impudent antics, entered a kind of criminal folklore, being reduced to the level of an ordinary "children's horror story", which, of course, does not exclude the presence of black, and sometimes bloodthirsty humor, but is designed, nevertheless, for defiant and terrorizing effect" (Kudryavtsev, 2007).

Lively discussions of thousands of viewers about *Fantômas* are still going on on the Internet. I will give only two characteristic audience responses about this film, which also reveal the reasons for the popularity of this trilogy in the USSR:

"I watched *Fantômas*, well, and then to me, a green fifth-grader, what I saw seemed to be some kind of transcendent phantasmagoria. Along with millions and millions of compatriots, I was later indignant when the "trilogy" was removed from the screen under the pretext (not so unreasonable, by the way) of worsening the criminogenic situation ... Among the yard games,

along with hide-and-see and "war", *Fantômas* was also listed ... But after decades, when revising the "masterpiece", it became clearly clear — yeah, cheap stuff. And what kind of "fools-coddlers with short thoughts" were we that we were "dragging along" (Gremy).

"Of course, from the height of the past years, you can criticize anything. However, it was with the help of this very "cheap little thing" that we were given the opportunity to look at least with one eye into the forbidden, but such an attractive foreign world. Hand on heart, how often have we seen such Paris in all its glory, or a colorful Italian carnival, or an amazing Scottish castle on the banks of the mysterious Loch Ness? ... what a pleasure it was to look at the elegant Fandor, the charming Helene, the funny Jouve! My childhood memories of this film do not seem like nonsense to me, even if it is beautiful. I believe that the films about *Fantômas*, without claiming to be a masterpiece, left pleasant and kind memories for our viewers of those years. And the criminogenic situation has always been difficult even without *Fantômas*" (Efrata).

Hunchback / Le bossu. France-Italy, 1959. Directed by André Hunebelle. Release in the USSR — 1979: 44.9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Hunchback — one of the brightest examples of the film "cloak and sword", for which French cinema was so famous and, in particular, the director of *Fantômas* **André Hunebelle (1896-1985)**.

Film critics Viktor Demin (1937-1993) and Irina Yanushevskaya (1925-1989) wrote that "having staged *Hunchback*, Hunebelle begins her new stage: the stage of costumed historical action films. And if earlier from the "spy" genre he took to the comedy genre the skills of skillfully building intrigue and confusing the viewer with the twists of a tense plot, now intrigue and humorous colors accompany his new creations, as recruits from conquered tribes help the victor to subjugate new lands. The extraction of these lands was the highest achievement of Hunebelle as a merchant and as a creator. His first four films, starring Jean Marais, *Hunchback*, *The Captain*, *The Miracle of the Wolves*, and *Mysteries of Paris*, released at even annual intervals, brought him fame and profits that even Hunebelle could have known before. Only a dream. They were included in the annual top five films that gave the highest fees. Moreover: and *Hunchback* and *The Captain* even received a special award as the best films for young people (with the wording: "For the creation of particularly successful films in a difficult genre, made carefully, honestly towards the audience, bright and talented"). ... Plot? Oh, this won't stop. The advantage of such films is that they are assembled as if from a universal set of episodes, and this does not annoy the viewer at all. He is even pleased that in five minutes of screen time he foresaw in advance the deceit of one character and the successful outcome of such and such a complication. Hunebelle wouldn't be Hunebelle if he didn't use the method of "installation of attractions" in his own way. Attraction number one: the mystery of the crime, resolved only in the finale. Attraction number two: the need for the hero to painfully wait in the wings. Attraction number three: saving a defenseless creature from the clutches of an insidious villain. Now come the main attractions: number four, the chase; number five, six, seven and eight: duels, skirmishes, fights and brawls, fires and floods, miracles of courage spiced with real danger; number nine: scenes of humor (laughter is desirable simpler, almost at the level of a farce). And number ten, of course, is a happy ending, with the reward of a brave lover with a kiss, along with wealth, and by the way, a title. ...

The world and Marais have finally demarcated their spheres: in the circle outlined by the tip of the sword, the laws of the world are invalid. Defenseless innocence, having entered this circle, can no longer be afraid of anything, an insidious person must abandon his intrigues, a bonded person becomes free" (Yanushevskaya, Demin, 1969: 202-209).

Already in the 21st century, film critic Denis Gorelov ironically wrote that *Hunchback* in 1959 "was a completely distilled example of what the evil Godard called "daddy's cinema" to be thrown off the pass. A pinch of Baroque history, an intriguing Indian inheritance intrigue, a full set of current French expressions from "keskesse" to "antrnu", lace

bibs, spaghikoni contractions, Jean Marais with his whole world except us, a well-known orientation in the role of a modest man who shuns the molestation of a nymphet, and a comic servant Bourvil... The simplest feelings for the simplest public; for those who are more complicated: a malicious off-screen commentary on palace movements and state loans of the Tudor era" (Gorelov, 2019).

Many 21st-century viewers continue to enjoy *Hunchback* and evoke fond memories:

"A favorite movie as a kid. Every rare TV show has been a treat for me, an ardent fan of films and books of the cloak and sword genre. Yes, and now sometimes I review it" (Balrog).

"A chic film, and what a colorful one ... Jean Marais seems very convincing, and galloping on a horse, and with a sword in his hand, and in general he is very dexterous ... And, in general, I admire the images created by Jean Marais: barons, counts, *Fantômas*, *Orpheus* and other wonderful roles. Actor" (Novikova).

"One of the few captivating films of my childhood. A beautiful story about honor and dignity. It's also a movie about love. The inimitable Jean Marais, who managed to turn into a hunchback so much that I still admire how he managed it" (Aleftina).

Bluff. Italy, 1975. Directed by Sergio Corbucci. Release in the USSR – 1979: 44.3 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Comedy by Sergio Corbucci (1926-1990) appeared on the screens of the USSR at the peak of Adriano Celentano's popularity, when, having conquered Europe with his songs, he began to actively act in films, having mastered a rough mask, where under the often phlegmatic equanimity of the character lurked extraordinary ingenuity, quick reaction and caustic irony.

Film expert Victor Demin (1937-1993) wrote, that "the most attractive thing in *Bluff*... is the element of farcical, uncomplicated humor. The Italian cinematographers staged the picture to some extent in an ironic look at the techniques and norms of the classic commedia dell'arte. Here, the police are created only to be fooled, and the swindling heroes: to tirelessly bludgeon each other and, in pauses, receive resounding slaps from someone from outside. Here it is easy to escape from prison, easily get money by card tricks or a casual reference to the account of the Marquis de Volantre, who allegedly lives in such and such a hotel. But here it is just as easy to fall into primitive traps set in the way by energetic brothers in the fraudulent industry. And, therefore, again we must seek salvation in a cunning plan in order to deceive a deceiver, to trick a swindler, to cheat an experienced swindler. This is how the story goes. from one trick to another, according to the principle: a thief stole a baton from a thief. At some point, you catch yourself feeling: not only you are confused, but the filmmakers themselves do not distinguish where the endless series of "bluffs" ends and where at least a grain of something genuine is hiding. Love and kindness, as usual, triumph over malice and hatred. But this ending itself sounds quite arbitrary, since both love itself and kindness were called into question twenty times a day by the actions of these broken characters of a reckless picaresque action"(Demin, 1979: 19).

Already in post-Soviet times, film critic Yevgeny Nefedov noted that *Bluff* "looks heavily on George Roy Hill's brilliant 1973 *The Sting*... But Corbucci... makes every effort to ensure that the audience first appreciates the beauty of the game, non-stop and generous with surprises. ... The presence of the sensual and gentle Frenchwoman Corinne Cléry, who became famous in the teasing *Story of O* (1975), despite the manipulations with champagne in her head, brings a bit of spicy eroticism to the action" (Nefedov, 2013).

The opinions of current viewers about *Bluff* are ambiguous.

Pro:

"Awesome movie! Comedy classic! I have seen many paintings with Celentano, and this one is definitely the best" (Zimushka).

"Genius film, one of the best in world cinema" (Ari A.).

"I love this great film, the best film with Celentano" (M. Giganskaya).

"When I first saw *Bluff*, I walked out of the theater in a state of hysterics from an overdose of laughter. My abdominal muscles ached from constant laughter. Of course ... many years have passed since then, and I still watch this fascinating comedy with the participation of a magnificent acting trio from time to time, although of course I don't laugh like that anymore" (Lyudmila).

"Very funny comedy, unexpected plot twists, pretty Corinne Cléry. Anthony Quinn and Celentano made an excellent duet, but they still fell short of Redford - Newman from *The Sting*. The prolific director Sergio Corbucci no longer rose to such heights" (Gena).

Contra:

"Shit film, if in general. The humor is childish and moronic, well, why is it funny when, for example, Celentano enters a store ... staging an illness of scabies, etc. ... A trifle" (Pompey).

Angelica – Marchioness of Angels / Angelique, marquise des anges. France-Italy-FRG, 1964. Directed by Bernard Borderie. Release in the USSR – 1969: 44.1 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Angelica in anger / Magnificent Angelica / Merveilleuse Angélique. France-Italy-FRG, 1964. Directed by Bernard Borderie. Release in the USSR – 1985: 22.9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Angelica and the King / Angelique et le roi. France-Italy-FRG, 1965. Directed by Bernard Borderie. Release in the USSR – 1968: 43.3 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Indomptable Angelique. France-Italy-FRG, 1967. Directed by Bernard Borderie. Release in the USSR – 1986/1987: 24.8 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Angelica and the Sultan/ Angelique et le sultan. France-Italy-FRG-Algeria, 1968. Directed by Bernard Borderie. Release in the USSR – 1986/1987: 24.8 million viewers in the first year of the show.

In the USSR, the films *Indomitable Angelique* and *Angelica and the Sultan* were shown in the second half of the 1980s in a partially abbreviated version combined into two series under the general title *Indomitable Marchioness*.

Luxurious costume movie serial by Bernard Borderie (1924-1978) about the adventures of the beautiful Angelica in the era of Louis XIV was a resounding success in the USSR. And this despite the fact that five of his episodes were shown in different years and in no particular order.

However, this story seemed too primitive and banal to the Soviet film press.

For example, a caustic article was published in the reputable *Cinema Art* journal, where it was written about the film as follows: "The cinema called Bernard Borderies has its own costumes and props. Hats with unlimited ostrich feathers. Solid corsages that give breasts like on a tray. Magnificent glass diamonds. Bloody pleated shirts. Mysterious alchemical retorts, mortars, coils, where everything smokes and gurgles in different colors. A portrait smiling mournfully in the dusk of an abandoned palace is "as if alive". Oriental incense burners... the most ingenious and meaningless intrigues, intrigues and again salvation... The fidget plot will not slow down for a second, letting itself be unraveled, because the cinema, called the Borderies, has its own law: the law of complete concentration on an extraordinary given

minute, subject to complete indifference to what was a minute earlier or will be a minute later. All "whys" and "because" are canceled in a montage of delightful and incoherent events, luxurious "historical" phrases, magnificent, like those very ostrich plumes. All logic seems to be postponed until later ... the former naivete of consumers of novels from the "princess life" still lives in the audience, repeating with unflagging pleasure: "Bastard! cried the duke ... "Is it because, on the contrary, that the viewer has completely lost this naivety and is in a hurry to "Angelica" out of snobbery, like a collector who is able to enjoy precisely her variegation and nonsense, from her gingerbread market romanticism? .. The very same "Angelica" is being done in earnest: it is precisely the popular print in its pure type ... As such, it is subject to research, as is the demand for it" (Inovertseva, 1967: 108).

True, film critic Armen Medvedev (1938-2022) was not so categorical: "Retelling in detail all the adventures of Angelica, her friends and enemies, is like trying to embrace the immensity. In addition, it is very risky to describe situations that are delicate, to put it mildly, replete with fatal passions. And if it weren't for the temperament and taste of director Bernard Borderie, if it weren't for the charm and professional elegance of Michèle Mercier (Angelica), Robert Hossein (de Peyrac), Jacques Toge, Jean Rochefort and other fine artists, things would be bad. I will not call to witness the shadows of the great masters of the adventure genre. And I'm unlikely to disappoint you by saying that after the session is over, you won't remember the beautiful Angelica for long: after all, in the world of art there are many real values, a lot of truly beautiful things" (Medvedev, 1968: 19).

A kind of result of this film franchise was summed up by film critic Vladimir Dmitriev (1940-2013): "Critics — to a large extent — against. Spectators — to a large extent — behind. The former hint at aesthetic illiteracy, the latter — out of touch with the tastes of the masses. To act as an arbitrator or to speak in the name of truth is, firstly, immodest, and secondly, one can get hit in the neck by both sides. Therefore, leaving the arguing to their opinions, let's try to calmly look at the films themselves.

First of all, *Angelica* is not a historical film. It is a historical popular print, using the scenery and costumes of the 17th century not to restore the everyday truth of the past or to explain in depth the reasons for the clash of opposing forces, but to create a great performance that lives according to the laws of a multi-colored spectacle. The basis of the film, as well as the novel, by the way, is not the tomes of scientists, but collections of anecdotes and funny stories, colored pictures, passionate mise-en-scenes of theatrical melodramas. Little plausibility fades into the background it is replaced by the condensed aesthetics of romantic literature: adventure, more adventure, more adventure, love scene, more adventure, rescue, meeting, abduction, more adventure. ... Angelica's personal struggle for her love and the struggle of numerous characters in the picture for the right to possess Angelica create a constant field of tension in which different interests collide, complex calculations and intrigues are used, offensive strategies and repulse tactics are developed. On the chessboard of the plot, Angelica is assigned the role of not a small figure waiting for her fate to be decided, but a furious and active principle, actively interfering in the course of the game and destroying the insidious plans of opponents, up to and including the King of France, with retaliatory and unexpected moves. Another thing, that Michèle Mercier, with her very low acting ceiling, is extremely difficult to hold onto a film. Her decorativeness comes into conflict with the need to reproduce the liveliness of character on the screen, her temperament is not enough for key scenes, her plastic tends to immobility. Realizing this, the director gave his main actress the most favorable treatment: he did not burden him with difficult tasks, he built winning scenes, he demanded the minimum and, I think, received the minimum. But by initially lowering the level of requirements, he lowered the potential of the picture as a whole. The result is natural: Angelica, constantly present on the screen, if remembered, then in the most general terms. Her temperament is not enough for key scenes, her plastic tends to immobility. She is only a faint imprint with an interestingly declared character. ...

But much more interesting and more important is that the film in its own way, at its own level and through its figurative system, accumulates our modern problems, street conversations,

family showdowns, enters into today's discussion about the possibility of true love, about the significance of the spiritual principle, its strength and his weaknesses, about female patience and male fidelity. Only Hossein succeeds in this, only between his Joffre de Peyrac and the viewer of our days a thread of interconnection and understanding is stretched, only thanks to this very talented actor, not so much a genre note as a humanly poignant note of sadness is introduced into the conventional system of cinematic lubok. This is not only the high point of the series, it is also its justification. ...

It is ridiculous to consider *Angelica* the leader of the cinematic process. But it is no less strange to lay on her responsibility for violating public order. *Angelica* is what it is: an entertaining picture that does not pretend to be much, a historical popular print, with its ups and downs, its not fully thought out aesthetics, its more than modest place in the pyramid of world cinema. Such movies were filmed at the dawn of the new art, filmed when it reached visible heights, they are filming now and, we believe, will be filmed in the future. Let's imagine for a second that the entire screen is filled with the *Angelicas*, the *Three Musketeers*, or the *Counts of Monte Cristo*. Nightmare. And if it is filled with some serious problematic films? Hand on heart, do we want this? (Dmitriev, 1987).

The memories of many current viewers about *Angelica* are still romantic and positive:

"I remember how, as girls, we used tricks to go to the cinema hall and enjoy the beauty of Mercier and fall in love with Geoffrey. Everything was so chic and unusual. You won't see anyone now. And then..." (Ella).

"I was fascinated by films with *Angelica* ... At one time I read the entire multi-volume novel by Anna and Serge Golon ... A very beautiful film, actors and costumes. Michèle Mercier is amazing. Geoffrey de Peyrac fascinated me both in the books and in the film" (AVG).

"I love this movie since childhood! All my life just in love with the divine Michèle Mercier! The most beautiful, most entertaining, most beautifully filmed movie of all time! Michèle Mercier is just born for this role! She is the real *Angelica*! And an unreal beauty actress! This movie can be watched a million times, and always with pleasure! It is because of Michèle Mercier. ... Films about *Angelica* — the brightest and most magnificent event in the whole world!" (L. Pyankova).

Only girls in jazz / Some Like It Hot. USA, 1959. Directed by Billy Wilder. Release in the USSR – 1966: 43.9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration. Re-release in the USSR - 1985 (+ 28.9 million viewers).

This comedy by the famous American director Billy Wilder (1906-2002) was released on Soviet screens with a significant delay, after the death of the Hollywood superstar M. Monroe (1926-1962), and caused a real sensation among Soviet viewers.

It is curious that there are still disputes why Billy Wilder did not shoot this picture in color. Someone is convinced that it was the director's original intention to stylize *Some Like It Hot* like old black-and-white gangster movies. And someone, on the contrary, argues that the comedy was filmed in color, but because of the too obvious make-up on the faces of actors dressed as women, they decided to make this movie black and white ... However, color shots from this film, fortunately, have been preserved .

The Soviet press reacted to this now classic comedy in a wide range from "no" to "yes":

The film critic Romil Sobolev (1926-1991) told the readers, that "this film, which has an inner emptiness, attracts with its brilliant form, because it was made by one of the most gifted directors in Hollywood – Billy Wilder. Purely commercial film. There would be no need to

talk about it if it were not for the fact that such interesting actors as Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis play in it and if Marilyn Monroe was not in it. ... the role of Marilyn does not go beyond the role of "the most beautiful woman" imposed on her. She only has to show her "exterior", demonstrate her famous walk, which she does very nicely. Wilder is a director with enough tact not to humiliate her feminine dignity. We began the story of this film with a statement of inner emptiness. Yes, the art critic has nothing to do here. However, for a sociologist, this film is a real find. I wonder if Wilder himself knows that, Deciding to laugh, he in general mockingly (but, of course, justly, for he is one hundred percent American) ridiculed the mores of America?" (Sobolev, 1966).

Soviet ballet connoisseur and film critic Gennady Shmakov (1940-1988), shortly before his emigration to the United States, reminded Soviet readers that the comedy *Some Like It Hot* was a parody of "an American gangster black movie, a dark yet hilarious slapstick comedy with gags and comic proven gimmicks that's been on the movies since their grandma *Charley's Aunt*. Marilyn Monroe played there a singer in a ladies' orchestra, a pretty simple girl who, along with her friends, succumbs to the tricks of two men who sneaked into their jazz in a woman's dress, and falls in love with one of them. In the Wilder film, Marilyn did what she almost always did: she sang, twitching in a nervously syncopating rhythm, showing chiseled legs and teeth of incredible whiteness, and at the same time, of course, teasing with her legendary bust, which confused the imagination and peace of more than one million Americans" (Shmakov, 1971: 95).

Playwright and screenwriter Victor Slavkin (1935-2014) took this comedy more favorably, noting that "the film is based on the trick of dressing a man as a woman, as old as the genre of comedy itself. ... In America, they love to publish books with the tempting title *How to Become a Millionaire*. The film *Some Like It Hot* is a film adaptation of one of the books in this series. The American layman is terribly fond of reading such books and loves to watch such films. After that, he certainly does not become a millionaire. But isn't it a pleasure to relive such an opportunity again and again?

... Sentimental. the film would have been sugary in American style if the authors hadn't added a rather strong dose of parody to it. They not only tell us a banal story, but also have a great laugh at it. That's what makes the movie really interesting.

So, the plot itself is banal. But the way it is told makes us smile for an hour and a half. Giggling, laughing and crying with laughter. With each frame, the stamped frame is overgrown with a tie of funny clutches and unexpected twists. ...

Speaking of... ambiguity. The filmmakers are constantly walking along the wire, risking every second to fall into the abyss, where bad taste and vulgarity await them. But the skillful, ironic acting of Tony Curtis (Joe), Jack Lemmon, Joe Brown, the charm of Marilyn Monroe, the clarity of directing (Billy Wilder) and the wit of the script help to balance on a thin wire.

Of course, many viewers, leaving the cinema, can say that this film did not give them anything. Is this opinion correct? Yes, except for the valuable acquisitions of an hour and a half of laughter, a good mood later, acquaintance with magnificent actors. "Isn't that enough?", – an unsatisfied spectator will object to me. Yes, maybe not enough.

In this review, there are many "for" the film and no less "against". Now the sacred right of the audience comes into force to decide whether it will be among those thirty-five to forty films that we watch during the year, or not, whether we will spend our fifty cents on it or not. I have already spent this money" (Slavkin, 1966: 19).

Already in the 21st century, S. Kudryavtsev wrote that the original title of this film (*Some Like It Hot*), "of course, it hinted at the possibility of not so much external as internal transvestism, which a completely respectable American is able to detect in himself, who has fallen head over heels in love with one of the disguised musicians and is not inclined to give up the object of his passion even when an involuntary forgery is discovered" (Kudryavtsev, 2006).

Film critic Andrei Plakhov claims that this “A film watched to holes still cannot get bored. Marilyn Monroe is dancing the most erotic striptease of all time here: all the more impressive because no clothes fall off her. Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon are also on top, but shorty Wilder is above all – as a director and co-writer. A well-known womanizer and a cynic, he made a high comedy about transvestism as an expression of total ambivalence” (Plakhov, 2013: 81).

Russian film critic Yevgeny Nefedov believes that the calculation of the authors of this cheerful comedy “seems obvious. Relying on spicy, ambiguous comic situations, enhanced by sparkling, splashing wit dialogues, they went, as they say, along the razor's edge, teasing the censors – and forcing the puritanical-minded masses to laugh to the point of colic in the stomach. ... *Some Like It Hot* has a quality that is rare even for popular comedy films – it does not allow the viewer's attention to weaken during a long two-hour narrative. Literally not a minute of screen time is wasted; even when there are no important twists of intrigue, the audience enjoys incendiary musical numbers, gags and fireworks of reprise lines. This is truly a “hot” spectacle in every sense!” (Nefedov, 2021).

And I must say, this is the case when the majority of modern viewers agree with the positive opinions of film critics:

“The best comedy of all time! Never gets old and always looks easy. And few can boast of this” (Max).

“This film is a textbook – what films should be” (Olga).

“The film can be reviewed thousands of times! ... I love the movie! Super!” (Lesistratus).

The Sandpit Generals. USA, 1971. Director and screenwriter Hall Bartlett. Release in the USSR – 1973: 43.2 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

American producer and director Hall Bartlett (1922-1993) known in the West for the film *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* (1973), film adaptation of Richard Bach's acclaimed novel. However, in the USSR, the melodrama of H. Bartlett became almost a cult *The Sandpit Generals* (1971).

This film of the American "independent cinema" was first shown in the USSR during the next Moscow Film Festival: in July 1971 and was enthusiastically received by the public. Exactly two years later, in July 1973, *The Sandpit Generals* was released all over the USSR and immediately became a cult film for millions of young viewers.

Film critic Andrei Zorky (1935-2006) wrote that “A person who has carefully watched the film *Sandpit Generals* gets the impression as if from two films at once. One of them is documentation. With a “hidden camera” she builds scenes of real life on the screen, homeless, impoverished, especially terrible because it seems familiar to the heroes themselves, natural, like air. This is from this picture the kids pouncing on a pile of slops, the eight-year-old lucky man, who for the first time grabbed a bottle of milk. From this picture: a lair on the seven winds, in which the outcast "generals" live, their last suppers over bowls of leftovers, the piercing cold of nights, when only heat warms the body, only the fever of impending death. From this picture: violent raids of generals on the city, bloody fights of warring gangs. And this is an honest, talented picture of Hall Bartlett, follower and student of director Stanley Kramer. The other is romantic. It contains the leader of the "generals", a hardened, gloomy rapist who suddenly transforms into a knight under the influence of love, and the little "gunner" of the gang, who is imbued with tenderness for the intended victims of the robbery, and his book lover friend, who does not forget to leaf through an interesting novel during the raid. It contains the beautiful death of the heroine (Madonna of the outcast "generals") in loving embraces, and her even more beautiful funeral (remember *Adventurers*) on the high seas. It's no secret that another viewer will prefer this particular, the second film, which was shot by the wrong Bartlett. So why, when

beauty, and good feelings, and good deeds are worth its weight in gold on the screen, do we question this particular romantic layer of the picture? Probably because we measure it by the weight of truth..." (Zorky, 1971: 123).

In general, it was a kind of typical "balanced" view of the Soviet film press on this picture, which practically no one noticed in the USA, and 43.2 million viewers watched in the USSR.

But in post-Soviet times, film critic Denis Gorelov reacted to *The Sandpit Generals* with undisguised irony: "The country of the Zhigan international, fierce cops and early pregnancies, the story of the new gopsosmyk and wolf ticket to life lay in the very heart. The same young colony was waiting for them, their queen wore the same vest, and the commander for each without looking back went to the knife; they were also warmed by the romance of a common table and bread, a stolen guitar, joints for a new girl and the cruel brotherhood of underage marginals" (Gorelov, 2019).

Approximately in the same vein, film critic Mikhail Trofimenkov wrote about this film: "The film ... is abnormal in its normal, not melodramatic even, but hysterical tearfulness, solved in the genre of beach ballet. Soviet viewers considered and still consider *The Sandpit Generals* to be the cry of the Brazilian soul, but this is the cry of the lonely soul of the Hollywood marginal. It has nothing to do with Brazil or the novel that Bartlett filmed. In fact, it was written (1937) by a communist and then still a social realist Jorge Amado, and in the finale the noble leader of a gang of homeless children joined the party" (Trofimenkov, 2013: 34).

Not so postmodernist Ekaterina Volkova believes that "The sentimental drama has won millions of fans, the reason for this is the romantic image of a noble robber, ingrained in the subcortex, thanks to domestic literature, with tenderness towards rebels and opponents of the regime (any). As well as boredom, inspired by boring films about a bright working path. But in addition, the closeness, the soreness of the very topic of homelessness, which has been raised more than once in domestic cinema (literature), whether it is *A Ticket to Life*, *Pedagogical Poem* or *Republic of SHKID*. In a country where wars left thousands of children orphans, a film that ripped off a scab from a wound that had barely begun to heal could not but find a response. Moreover, Bartlett's production is distinguished by an increased degree of sentimentality, in contrast to the original source, where the *the sandpit generals*, while remaining children and poets of the streets, were at the same time criminals. ... The finale of the movie is tragic, the answer to the cry: "Listen to us!" – becomes a shot. Because society does not want to hear the voice of the streets. The satiated one is not interested in what the hungry one cries out for. It is natural that this deafness spread to the perception of the *The Sandpit Generals* by the Western audience, and the call was heard in the "hungry" Soviet Union" (Volkova, 2015).

And film critic Alexei Vasilyev is convinced that film *The Sandpit Generals* is "an unprecedented cinematic freemen. Where Godard himself broke into literary quotes, the universal group sex of film images (there is a minimum of dialogues in the film, and even those are completely functional; entire chains of episodes are often edited to songs, sometimes in Portuguese, sometimes in English). Of course, this is not the only secret of the cult erected around this picture by a whole generation of the sixth part of the land. Of course, there was a mind-blowing song that was played in the evenings in all our doorways in the 1970s, of course – light erotica, pushing for kisses right in the auditorium, of course – the handsome Kent Lane, who is equal to the face of golden curls and a shaved head ... There is no doubt: if it weren't for all this, there wouldn't be those changes that *The Sandpit Generals* brought to the appearance and behavior of our young people in the second half of the 1970s, and perhaps even to this life itself ... However, as they say, on the sly, *The Sandpit Generals* preached freedom of association as the norm of life and cinema, and the fact that everything in the world happens in a single moment of a single human experience, to which a whole life has condensed – and there it's within easy reach of Hesse and Proust, which in a couple of years will go like hot cakes in our

libraries and bookstores. They say that in America, and indeed abroad, this film is not known: this is such a purely our, purely Soviet joke. But isn't this the greatest miracle of cinema: that, contrary to marketing, a film created by filmmakers from one country about people from another would fall in love only in a completely separate and distant third, serving as evidence of the illusory nature of state and language borders and the uniqueness and only veracity of any subjective perception and impressions, to which *The Sandpit Generals* themselves were an anthem, and the whole so-called youth rebellion?" (Vasiliev, 2012).

The cult status of the *The Sandpit Generals* in our Russia is also confirmed by the reviews of the audience of the 21st century:

"Wonderful film. I watched this movie a long time ago, and it made a very strong impression on me. I still love the song *The Sandpit Generals* (Vera).

"I was 11 years old when I watched this film (in a village club, because I couldn't do it in the city: "Children under 16 were not allowed"). The plot simply stunned me: I fell in love with its characters, with the music that runs through the entire film. ... I had a lot of empathy for homeless children. The film *The Sandpit Generals* is my favorite since childhood" (Marina).

"When this film was in theaters in the 1970s, we schoolchildren ran out of school and watched it countless times – both because of the song, and because of the sad love scenes against the background of the ocean, and, if you like, others heartbreaking moments. But he remained deep in the heart, and I think he influenced the generation of young people that remained in that decade" (Suok).

But there are, of course, spectators who absolutely cannot stand *The Sandpit Generals*: "A film that is simply impossible to watch now, a poorly filmed, disgustingly played snotty story" (A. Eliseev).

Tarzan the Ape Man. USA, 1932. Director V.S. Van Dyke. Release in the USSR – 1952: 42.9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Saving Tarzan / Tarzan in a trap / Tarzan Escapes. USA, 1936. Directors: John Farrow, William E. Wellman, George B. Seitz, Richard Thorpe. Release in the USSR – 1952: 41.3 million viewers in the first year of demonstration.

Tarzan Finds a Son! USA, 1939. Directed by Richard Thorpe. Released in the USSR – 1952: 38.6 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Tarzan's New York Adventure. USA, 1942. Directed by Richard Thorpe. Release in the USSR – 1952: 39.7 million viewers in the first year of demonstration.

American writer Edgar Rice Burroughs (1875-1950) in 1912 he came up with the key character of his work, which brought him millions of dollars – Tarzan. After the first novel, followed by continuation. In fact, initially it was an Americanized story of Mowgli, but very soon it became a completely independent commercial product. In total, Burroughs wrote over two dozen stories about the adventures of Tarzan.

Pretty soon, Hollywood became interested in Tarzan. The first film adaptation was made in 1918. Then a series of adaptations arose, close to the original sources and, on the contrary, very free. In the era of silent films, there were seven.

In the 1930s and 1940s, 12 more films were made about Tarzan, played by a five-time Olympic swimming champion Johnny Weissmuller (1904-1984). Some of these films were released in Soviet cinemas as "movie trophies" in 1952 and, against the backdrop of the so-called "era of small films", enjoyed enormous popularity.

To date, six dozen films about the adventures of Tarzan have been shot in different countries of the world. To this we must add about a dozen television films and serials, a dozen cartoons and countless comics.

Film expert Viktor Demin (1937-1993), explaining the reasons for the popularity of these films, recalled how during his childhood “In the year of *Tarzan*, there was not an evening that from the direction of the park there was not heard several times the inviting forest cry, more or less reminiscent of the real one, from the film. This meant that one of my peers, having climbed over the bars of a cast-iron fence on a maple branch, amused himself and his friends. But, fooling around enthusiastically, with some hundredth, thousandth part of his soul, he felt like the master of the African jungle. And I would like to, but I can't say that I stayed away from tarzmania. A home child and a notebook reader, I did not scream with bestial howls. But why else would I run several times for each series, if the fairy tale left me completely indifferent? The fact that: a fairy tale, was understood from the first frames. A lost child raised in the forest cannot learn to speak in two minutes. It is even more difficult for him to learn to think, if in time there will not be a number of people-teachers. And how did he, in what magical way, figured out human values, in the hierarchy of relationships? Oh, don't be ridiculous!.. But – but! But – the dream of every boy about omnipotence. An opportunity to prove everything. Revenge. Put in place. Rescue loved ones from any trouble. To be inaccessible to vile machinations, even to gunshot bullets. And there was something else in him that affected us the most. With super-super-human stature, Tarzan was modest, trusting, rustic in appearance. Defeating anyone, he never got angry. He did not utter a single rude word to his infatuated Jane; even when she was unusually reckless. His time will come: he will readily save his wife from trouble and again keep quiet. The version of *Tarzan* that we had on our screens starred Johnny Weissmuller, Olympic champion in different types of swimming. He was a poor actor, but that probably only helped. He was constrained in communicating with partners, but the plot did not work out otherwise. Wait, it will come to the pool ... that is, guilty, to all kinds of athletic tricks, we will see what these shufflers and talkers are worth with his muscular hands! Not howling from the bushes, I – quite possibly! – tried on this ostentatious modesty, diligently played out meekness, very innocence in front of friends, referring to some kind of mythical "pool" (Demin, 1984).

Reviews about the *Tarzaniada* of the audience of the XXI century, as a rule, are good-natured and positive:

“I watched this movie in a distant happy childhood on TV. Interesting and well made movie! Great actor who played Tarzan! (Viksy).

“Watching the film is quite easy, despite its advanced age. ... It is worth noting the work with dangerous, predatory animals, such as lions, tigers and crocodiles: they were filmed along with people, and this was probably a novelty in those years. Scenes of Tarzan's battles with lions are able to rive the audience to the screen today. ... Artists depicting gorillas in monkey skins practically did not stand out among real monkeys, and the jungle shot on location is perfectly combined with their pavilion staging” (Kirik).

“Weissmuller plays more in the frame due to physical data and natural charm. ... a very naive, but really very good movie for its time” (A. Tochka).

Stunts. USA, 1977. Directed by Mark Lester. Release in the USSR – July 1979: 41.9 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Mark Lester has a lot of box office spectacular movies (*Class of 1984*, *Commando*, etc.), but before the advent of the video era, his most famous movie in the USSR was *Stunts*.

This action-packed picture appeared on Soviet screens in 1979 and attracted the attention of the audience with an unusual plot for those times, connected with the "inner kitchen" of stunt filming in the cinema.

In the year the movie *Stunts* was released, film critic Vera Shitova (1927-2002) wrote that “this film excites with even, genuine truth, puzzling tricks, a sharp and

revealing picture of filming everyday life, where the best double is paid for by mortal risk, it is notable for living figures of the second plan: all these businessmen from the cinema who are ready to do anything to give the viewer for his money is more than minutes when goosebumps run along the skin..." (Shitova, 1979: 20).

Film critic Denis Gorelov walked through the *Stunts* with his characteristic irony: "Hollywood as it is in all its ugliness and the brilliance of a crooked mirror, and even with high-class staged scenes. The fivefold somersault of a car with a thumb into the frame from a crushed cabin impressed the population that was not spoiled by action movies so much that many dreamed of watching the film with a trailer, which was made by a group and required so many stunt deaths. Trash, of course, promised hell. Well, who here could have known that junk studios of the east coast specialize in action films with injuries... That a stuntman in the USA is an underpaid servant of celebrities who take him for a fool from the rodeo and, with condolences, are not even able to remember his last name: "We all just called him Jake". The attitude towards the cool Maine is dictated by the stage of civilization and the place in it of trench warfare and manual labor. The Soviet Union, stuck in the industry, was literally obsessed with stuntmen as the standard of manhood" (Gorelov, 2019).

For many viewers of the 21st century, *Stunts* are still included in the category of "cult retro":

"Actually, I personally learned about this deadly profession by watching a film by Mark Lester. The word "trick" I also heard for the first time while watching this picture. I remember that the first three times I watched it on the largest (there was still such a movie) widescreen screens. ... when, at the beginning of the film, the first stuntman crashed from a great height to the piercing female scream, this made a powerful impression on the inexperienced "boys of socialism." The age-old question you ask yourself when you watch this action movie: "why are these guys risking their lives so selflessly?" (Boris).

Monsieur Cruchot in New York / The Gendarme in New York / Le Gendarme a New York. France-Italy, 1965. Directed by Jean Giraud. Release in the USSR - 1971/1972: 17.3 million viewers in the first year of the show.

The Gendarme Marries / Le gendarme se marie. France-Italy, 1968. Directed by Jean Giraud. Release in the USSR - 1978: 41.8 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

The Gendarme and Aliens / Le gendarme et les extra-terrestres. France, 1978. Directed by Jean Giraud. Release in the USSR - 1981: 35.3 million viewers in the first year of demonstration.

Jean Giraud (1924-1982) made a name for himself on comedies with Louis de Funès (1914-1983). The first of them – *Blow up the bank!* – he put back in 1963. Then *Peak-Peak* (1963) followed, and then from 1964 to 1982 there was a six-part comedy about the adventures of the unlucky gendarme Cruchot, who settled in the fashionable Mediterranean resort of Saint-Tropez, where, of course, there is a lot of sun, sea and beautiful girls...

For various reasons, of all these six episodes, only three got into the Soviet Release: *The Gendarme in New York*, *The Gendarme Marries* and *The Gendarme and Aliens*. By that time, thanks to *Fantômas* and *Oscar*, Louis de Funès was already a favorite of the Soviet public, so tens of millions of viewers who bought up tickets for these comedies did not come as a surprise to film distributors.

In the year of the release of *The Gendarme in New York*" (under the title *Monsieur Cruchot in New York*) in Soviet distribution, film critic Victor Orlov (1929-1972) wrote: "Are you tired of Louis de Funès? No. And never get bored. Because this

world-famous actor invented his own special strange world. The world seems to be normal, real, the world of today's streets, houses, advertisements, cars, busy business and just as intensely idle life: but in which jumps, has fun, gets angry, an abnormal, unreal, charming elderly fat man, a typical middle bourgeois with a completely atypical character. He would like to turn the whole world upside down. He has an incomprehensible stupidity: that is, a complete disregard for the rules of behavior in the world and in society, a complete lack of orientation, a complete denial of the real situation around. He has a volcanic, unstoppable temperament: having decided something, being inspired by something, getting angry at something, he moves towards a fictitious goal with the purposefulness and swiftness of a torpedo, leaving behind broken shop windows, disrupted meetings, boxes scattered all over the street, stunned friends and relatives, broken stairs and broken chairs... He is always on the move, he jumps, breaks down, runs, gesticulates, grimaces. But Louis de Funès is French. Louis de Funès is an actor of world talent, and therefore, dancing on the edge of a knife, he never breaks into bad taste.

His art, of course, is akin to the art of a clown. But he is a "solar clown". On his "number" – they do not see clearly. But they laugh a lot. He wants to turn the world around. But this is not a protest. This is a short pose. The world remains unshaken, only slightly damaged, because in the films with de Funès twice as many things are broken and written off as scrap than in a normal film. The world remains. And leaves it – in a new film – a plump figure of an actor who remembers: human laughter prolongs people's lives. Oh, this is wise stupidity! And, having rehabilitated the artistic notion of "stupidity", we can say with a light heart: watch a stunningly stupid film with Louis de Funès in a stunningly stupid role! The situation is not important. The plot is not important. The environment is too. One thing is important – the film will again jump, have fun, get angry, break chairs and destinies, disrupt the meetings and doors of Louis de Funès. Undying de Funès. Terribly funny de Funès" (Orlov, 1972).

Already in the 21st century, film critic Denis Gorelov noted that "Corporal Cruchot was born in the same year as Inspector Clouseau, was the same idiot and lived an equally long and happy six-part life. Like the whole French province, he was to the right of the Pope, adored the calm, the bells and being a big frog in a small swamp. He kowtowed before his superiors and ate privates. He felt resentment towards the victim. Blowed the whistle. Peeping through binoculars (voyeurism is the Achilles' heel of hypocrites). He raised his eyes to grief, drumming with playful fingers. It was considered a mortal sin to violate the speed limit. ... Indeed, each series of gendarme intrigues, through symbolic manicure intervention, is easily transformed into a movie about six Swedes on the Cote d'Azur, their troubles and pleasantries with the police" (Gorelov, 2019).

Many current viewers still appreciate these "gendarmerie" comedies, returning to them again and again:

"Watching each of the series about these gendarmes, it becomes clear and understandable that such films are masterpieces, later becoming real classics, the property of not only national culture, but also world cinema as a whole. I have watched these films many times already, and I will not stop watching, because they carry goodness, joy, tenderness and a drop of happiness" (Vitas).

"The most wonderful film! Although I first saw it as a child, I still sometimes review it with great pleasure!" (F. Pignon).

"I really like all the films with the gendarme, so funny and fun. Always a good mood" (Valera).

Sunflowers / I Girasoli. Italy-France-USSR, 1970/1971. Directed by Vittorio De Sica. Release in the USSR - from May 25, 1971: 41.6 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

This production by the eminent Italian director and actor Vittorio De Sica (1901–1974) was a great success in the Soviet box office.

... Early 1940s. Antonio (Marcello Mastroianni) is drafted into the Italian army and sent to fight on the eastern front. At home, his beautiful Giovanna (Sophie Loren) is waiting for him ... And now, twenty years later, she decides to come to the USSR to find her beloved...

Still, the USSR had a special attitude towards the Italians who fought on the Eastern Front. It is impossible to imagine that a director, for example, even from the GDR, would be given the opportunity to make a film in the Soviet Union, according to the plot of which a Russian woman nurses a Wehrmacht soldier frostbitten in the winter Don steppes, and then also show this movie on Soviet screens ...

In the year *Sunflowers* was released to Soviet film distribution, film critic Vladimir Shalunovsky (1918-1980) assessed De Sica's work very positively, mentioning that in this film he felt "the look of an artist benevolent towards our people" (Shalunovsky, 1971: 16).

Years passed, and already in the 21st century film critic Mikhail Trofimenkov clearly did not like *Sunflowers*, he believes that neither the skill of De Sica, "nor the participation of Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni save the film: sentimental spreading cranberries. ... Judging by the film, in the 1960s it was not easier to cross the Iron Curtain, especially for yesterday's prisoner, from whom spies should not leave at all. It is enough to ask the collective farm board for a ticket to Italy. However, if the film consoled at least one Giovanna or Chiara, mourning her lover who disappeared near Stalingrad, he fulfilled his humanitarian mission" (Trofimenkov, 2008: 11).

It seems to me that film critic Vladimir Gorsky is right: "among the undoubted artistic merits of the movie, it is impossible not to single out the frightening realism with which the Soviet Union is shown. It is difficult, even with a strong desire, to recall at least a few similar works, where the living conditions in our country at that time would be so reliably and, importantly, simply, not deliberately shown. Nothing in common even not only with Hollywood films that depict us (and the country as well) in a known way... This is due to the fact that the events of *Sunflowers* are not limited to the most beautiful lands of the Apennine Peninsula. The movie gives a unique opportunity to look at Lauren in the surroundings of the streets of Soviet cities and villages. ... Russian actress Lyudmila Savelyeva, who impressed the director in the film adaptation of *War and Peace*, will become a precious decoration for everything. ... The picture is the response of Italy recovering from the defeat to the war, claimed many lives. The response is in no way state, not political, not prudent. The response is sensual, human, infinitely tragic and doomed. ... *Sunflowers* is a film about us, about them. This movie, which came from abroad, from the side of fascism that once reigned, is so close to the Russian audience, so poignant. It clearly shows that (it is true) there are no national prejudices. There is only love, only feelings" (Gorsky, 2014).

Melodrama *Sunflowers* today many viewers of the XXI century like it:

"*Sunflowers* is one of the best anti-war films! About youth and love ruined by the war. For me, this film is like a passionate condemnation of war, crippling love and human destinies!" (Frenchwoman).

"Awesome movie! Great actors! Low bow to them! (Viksya).

But there are, as usual, negative opinions about the film:

"The whole story of the rescue of an Italian by a Russian girl is implausible. What was she doing there, in the steppe (in the field), alone in a fierce winter? Looted? She took off warm clothes and jewelry from enemy soldiers if they came across? It can't be, say... Everything can be from war, hunger, cold and poverty. But why then to save rushed? Out of pity? What the hell is a pity if you go looting? And if she didn't loot, then what kind of pity for the enemy can a Komsomol-athlete-beauty, brought up at that time by the Stalinist school and the Leninist

Komsomol? ... And where are the rest of the peasants in this case? The moment of the hero's salvation is a mystery to me. And Savelieva, of course, is completely unsuitable for this role. ... Young Mordyukova would be in her place here. But by that time she was already too old for the heroine ... And the whole world knew Savelyeva because of Natasha Rostova. She had a crazy reputation. She was also invited to film abroad, but ours were not allowed. So they were invited to this role. To raise the prestige of the film even more, I think" (N. Mileiko).

Marriage Italian Style / Matrimonio all'italiana / Mariage à l'italienne. Italy-France, 1964. Directed by Vittorio De Sica. Release in the USSR - from November 22, 1965: 41.4 million viewers in the first year of the show.

One of the best works of the famous Italian director Vittorio De Sica (1901-1974) started out as an actor in the pink phone cinema of the Mussolini era. In the 1940s, already as a director, he staged the masterpiece of neo-realism *The Bicycle Thieves*. And in the 1960s he worked in a variety of genres: from drama (*The Recluses of Altona*) to comedy (*Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*).

It was during these years, making films for producer Carlo Ponti, that De Sica created a brilliant film duo of Marcello Mastroianni and Sophia Loren. They worked together very often. And in *Marriage Italian Style*, as always, they play brightly and psychologically accurately.

The sparkling dialogues of the play by Eduardo De Filippo, which formed the basis of the film, gave rise to the creation of temperamental and voluminous characters.

Sophia Loren wonderfully played a former prostitute who, by cunning, married a "tough" ladies' man (M. Mastroianni). And Vittorio De Sica once again showed his thorough knowledge of the emotional Italian soul.

Viewers of the XXI century still admire this picture:

"Legendary film, legendary actors! This film has everything: drama, melodrama, comedy, and most importantly and no vulgarity. The film is shot with sophistication and vitality" (Valari)

"You can watch endlessly. And every time, like the first one, you are impressed for a long time. A film for the ages" (Tamara).

Monster / L'Animal. France, 1977. Directed by Claude Zidi. Release in the USSR – 1980: 41.3 million viewers for the first year of demonstration.

French director Claude Zidi was unusually lucky in the Soviet box office: about a dozen of his films appeared on the screens. For comparison, out of a dozen and a half films shot by Robert Bresson, only one got into Soviet distribution. Of the 17 paintings by Alain Resnais, only two. Approximately the same number of 70 (!) Films by Claude Chabrol. And not a single work of such famous French masters as Jean-Luc Godard, Agnès Varda or Marguerite Duras.

However, why be surprised: unlike his "elite" colleagues, Zidi shoots **comedies** with the participation of major European stars – Pierre Richard, Jane Birkin, Louis de Funès, Annie Girardot, Koluche, Gerard Depardieu, Philippe Noiret, Belmondo...

True, it all began in the 1960s with films of "author's cinema". For about ten years, Claude Zidi was an assistant to the famous cameraman Jean Rabier (in the films of C. Chabrol). In 1970, he became the chief operator of Michel Drache's drama *Eliza, or Real Life*. It would seem that Zidi has the prospect of becoming one of the respected masters of the European camera school.

But the meeting with the pop-comic group *Charlot* unexpectedly changed his fate. Since 1971, Claude Zidi has been making a series of eccentric comedies (*Recruits go to war*, etc.). Rough and unpretentious in their gags, the humor of these movies was an undoubted audience success, which caused many sequels and imitations.

Comedy *Monster*, no doubt, a class higher. Belmondo got two roles here at once: a pampered and capricious film actor with a "bluish" tinge and his brave understudy stuntman.

The beauty Rakel Welch (*One Million Years B.C.*) was chosen as Belmondo's partner. The film was a huge hit with audiences...

However, the Soviet film press reacted extremely negatively to this movie. For example, the review of the famous film critic Miron Chernenko (1931-2004) published in the *Cinema Art* journal was called "A parody that turned into vulgarity": "No matter how inventive the director was, he still lacked a plot for a full-length film, hence all that cocktail of chained and unchained quotes and the fashionable game in bourgeois cinema based on ambiguous erotic motifs" (Chernenko, 1981: 188-189).

But already in the 21st century, film critic Marianna Kaplun noted that "although the film is downright overloaded with comic scenes, you don't get tired of such an abundance of humor, but, on the contrary, you expect another sparkling joke. In addition, the picture also contains a serious message – who should be considered a true professional in his field: a stuntman wise with experience and all sorts of injuries, who honestly works out his bread, or a pampered superstar, who is only capable of smiling and playing in front of an audience?" (Kaplun, 2018).

Viewers of the 21st century still like *Monster* today:

Comedy for all time and for all generations. Inimitable Belmondo, charming Raquel Welch (especially beautiful in a leopard dress), wonderful music" (Tatyana).

"It seems to me that in the Soviet film distribution, all films with the participation of Jean-Paul Belmondo were simply doomed to success. Here, Raquel Welch was added to the very well-known Soviet audience to the French actor, which greatly enlivened this cheerful comedy. A full cinema hall is probably a typical picture at this screening in all cities" (Nord).

"Another masterpiece by Claude Zidi with indispensable musical accompaniment by maestro Vladimir Kosma. Jean-Paul Belmondo in the image is magnificent, joking and fooling around recklessly. An actor with an unremarkable appearance, thanks to his charm and strong charisma, captured the hearts of viewers around the world. There is really a lot of irony in the picture, good-natured, flirtatious, there is something to smile even decades after the film's release. ... What a quote is worth: from him "Society consists of two types of people: those who pay taxes and those who spend them" (Dnipro).

The Medicine Man / Znachor. Poland, 1981. Directed by Jerzy Hoffman. Release in the USSR - 1983. 41.1 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Jerzy Hoffman is one of the most famous Polish directors, many of whose films (*Pan Wołodyjowski, The Flood, The Leper, The Medicine Man*, etc.) were successfully shown in the Soviet film distribution.

According to the data that I have, and they, alas, are far from complete, Jerzy Hoffman's melodrama *The Medicine Man* is one of the most popular Polish film in the Soviet box office.

In the year of the release of this melodrama in Soviet distribution, film critic Boris Kokorevich wrote that the success of *The Witch Doctor* "the talented actor Jerzy Binczycki, the leading actor, contributes to a large extent. He is trustworthy and very charming. Some film critics are somewhat dismissive of the melodrama, referring it to a low genre. The dispute between its supporters and opponents has been going on for a long time. With their new film, Polish filmmakers have once again shown that there are no secondary genres in art, that all genres are good, except for the boring ones. And you can't refuse the staginess and entertainment of *The Medicine Man*" (Kokorevich, 1983: 13).

Film critic Miron Chernenko (1931-2004), a connoisseur of Polish cinema appeared on the pages of the *Cinema Art* journal with a long article about *The*

***Medicine Man*, with detailing reasons for its popularity. In particular, he wrote about this film as follows:** “What an exquisite, what a sarcastic pamphlet one could compose about *The Medicine Man*, what gems of critical wit to discover, what erudition to display, what exquisite taste... How one could complain about the fate of a director who once, who now... And what a dashing title could be given to this opus, paraphrasing the scathing titles of fifteen-year-old reviews (“The Berry Goes Down”, “Was There a Boy?”), or come up with your own, original and no less spectacular, which would decisively “put on place” is so innocent, so defenseless in this film of its deliberate and defiant innocence. Especially since the authors of *The Medicine Man*, Jacek Fuksiewicz and Jerzy Hoffman, seem to have done everything to bring their work under the crushing blows of criticism. Indeed, today – in Poland, in about ten months of Release, the film gathered five and a half million viewers, we are starting to ask for tickets for it even on the distant approaches to cinemas) a frank fairy tale, without even bothering to modernize it a little or take an ironic look at this story, which indeed “there was no sadder in the world.” Which, as befits the classics of “popular genres”, with extraordinary ease puts the plot of a two-part movie into an annotation of one phrase: a cruel fate lies in wait for a world-famous surgeon ...

... the motif of social inequality is just one of the usual calls of popular genres, far from the most reliable, although in such a melodrama as *The Medicine Man*, it would be difficult to do without it. Much more important here are emotional calls, addressed not so much to the first signal system of the viewer and not even to the second, but directly and directly to the third, as a result of which the viewer's throat is intercepted by a spasm of pity and sympathy for the orphans and the poor. Let's start with the main thing. Is there love in the picture? Is love. And what a! All-consuming, all-conquering, disinterested, faithful, devoid of even a shadow of eroticism, love that overcomes all obstacles and asserts its victory over hostile circumstances not with a surge of reckless passion, but with quiet, I would say, judiciously shy happiness “to the grave.” Let's go further. Is there a beautiful heroine and a handsome hero? There are... There are fatal circumstances. ... It is on these circumstances, on their ingenuous interweaving, that the plot of the two-part picture is based, it is they that form its plot, emotional reinforcement, tightly tying the most disparate, it would seem, twists and turns into a tight dramatic knot. ...

This list of traditional tricks of the popular feuilleton novel could be continued, since in *The Medicine Man* nothing is truly forgotten from the proven arsenal dating back to Eugene Sue and Charles Dickens (by the way, Honore de Balzac and Fyodor Dostoevsky did not disdain them). ... firmly tying into a tight dramatic knot the most incomparable, it would seem, twists and turns. ...

And all this, probably, would have been met very ironically, if the *The Medicine Man* had appeared at least a decade and a half ago. And all this today, when cinema has grown older, and criticism is probably wiser, and the viewer is more legible, requires a much more calm, thoughtful conversation in order to at least just find out what is in such stories, the fabulousness of which, unreality, deliberate escapism are undeniable and visible to the naked eye. What is there in them that attracts millions of viewers? ...

It's just curious how our film studies (including the author of these lines) shyly bypassed this “Hoffman phenomenon”, which does not fit into aesthetic stereotypes, a master who defiantly changed authorial, individual cinematography with popular, mass, commercial cinema, if you don't be afraid of this at all swear word. And it seems to me that right now, in connection with *The Medicine Man*, it would be good, finally, to pay tribute to Hoffman Hoffman, to support what he himself formulated in one of his long-standing interviews with exhaustive laconicism and undeniable polemic: “Cinema is too expensive entertainment so that it can be ignored by the viewer. ...

Probably, this is what is most important in *The Medicine Man* (and in all previous popular Hoffman films) the characters living on the screen with an open heart, doing things, experiencing their joys and sorrows at the level of the same open heart of the audience, throwing invisible bridge from heart to heart. ... It can be said, however, that the appeal to the third signal system is not the highest purpose of art, especially since it is not yet clear for sure whether it exists at all. However, the audience's need for films of this kind indicates that the adult, serious, analytical cinematography of our day does not provide people with some very important moral,

emotional, spiritual microelements, that such a need is growing. Jerzy Hoffman was one of the first to feel this audience hunger in the cinema of the socialist countries: he responded to unformulated needs for sentimental education and self-education back in those years when popular genres were revered unconditionally and generally recognized as "low" genres. And so, it seems to me, the time has come to treat what he does with proper critical understanding and respect. Moreover, the viewer who watched *The Medicine Man* has already voted for him" (Chernenko, 1984: 146-150).

Apparently, the mechanisms of popularity of *The Medicine Man* described by Miron Chernenko are also in demand by today's viewers:

"Good and kind Polish cinema, still loved by many people" (Alexander).

"The film is interesting, kind, watched many times once. You empathize with the heroes, psychologically everything is on the level" (M. Dunaeva).

"One of the greatest films I've ever seen" (Valentin).

"One of the masterpieces of world cinema! Thanks to this picture, you understand the true role and urgent task of culture and art: to illuminate a person from within with a spark of God!" (Elena).

"Today, this wonderful kind film was repeated on TV. I watched and cried again. ... he has not aged at all. How lacking are now such soul-stirring films!" (Hydrangea).

Queen of *Chantecler* / La Reina del Chantecler. Spain, 1962. Directed by Raphael Gil. Released in the USSR – 1967: 39.7 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Raphael Gil (1913-1986) in the USSR it is known for this film. The musical melodrama *Queen of Chantecler* appeared on Soviet screens without much advertising, but soon became one of the box office champions. And this despite the fact that the press met the picture ironically, and *Moskovsky Komsomlets*, in general, published a caustic article about the *Queen of Chantecler*...

Journalist and poet Sergei Chudakov (1937-1997) wrote about *Queen of Chantecler* as follows: "It may be objected: you wrongly judge the film for a nonsense, vulgar plot, because this is a musical, the main thing here is songs, beautiful toilets, the charm of an actress. Yes, but the trouble is that songs in the amount of 7 pieces in Spanish go like a kind of vignettes, and the audience absorbs mainly the plot and the "chic" surroundings. The actress is beautiful, although she has some kind of outdated, languid type of beauty. ...

No, I don't want to deny the existence of certain pleasant things in *Queen of Chantecler*. Colors, eyes. Healthy, pleasant people in exciting or irritating situations. In general, after a twenty-degree frost, you don't want to look at anything, as soon as at the landscapes of the resort – San Sebastian. Let this film go somewhere on the side; there would be fans of it. And, of course, no critic should get in touch with him or somehow – God forbid! – "analyze". For what?! Going to films of this type is a matter of taste. To whom a watermelon, to whom a pork cartilage. But events overwhelm such a modest outline. *Queen of Chantecler* – alas! – is a gross success in our theaters. There is a literal drowning of the Moscow public of all ages in these sugary colored bourgeois "whipped cream" (Chudakov, 1967).

Everything would be fine if Sergei Chudakov limited himself to this. But then he went on a direct attack on the Goskino purchasing commission, reproaching it for bad taste and ignoring true cinema art: "For example, I would gladly read an essay: "Films of the most cinematically important countries for ... a year and our purchases for distribution" or "Trends in world cinema and what of the new trends reaches the eyes of the Soviet audience". Or I would like to study, for example, such a report of the commission: "The work of which particular directors is most characteristic of modern French cinema? And if the question is clear enough, then why was only the first of Truffaut's five films ("400 Blows") bought for our Release, while Godard and Resnais were shown only once in Moscow in the festival order? Here we saw at the last festival the picture of Jean-Luc Godard *Alphaville*, read an approving analysis of this film in

Komsomolskaya Pravda. So buy it instead of the *Three Musketeers!* and commercial movies with Jean Marais! Or at least explain why, instead of Godard and Resnais, they feed us *Parisian Secrets* and films of the third-rate Le Chanois (*Papa, mama, maid*, etc.). ... In the Soviet box office there was, unfortunately, not a single film by the best Spanish director Luis Buñuel" (Chudakov, 1967).

It was precisely this sharp criticism of Soviet Goskino that the high authorities did not like: Sergei Chudakov's article was published in February 1967, and in March of the same year, the editor-in-chief of *Moskovsky Komsomolets*, Alexei Flerovsky, was fired (to whom other claims had accumulated by that time).

In this regard, five years later, film critic Victor Demin (1937-1993) recalled that "during the period of the full house at the *Queen of Chantecler*, where our viewer first saw and heard Sara Montiel, one serious film critic [an obvious reference to the article by Sergei Chudakov, who, however, was not a film critic – A.F.] menacingly attacked this movie under the rumble names of Dovzhenko and Bergman, Bunuel and Kurosawa. There would be no need for this. No need to put yourself in a ridiculous position. Vaudeville is bad not because Shakespeare and Sophocles are given in the same theater. Vaudeville, if bad, is only in comparison with other, good vaudeville. Because the laws of measure, taste and tact are written for this genre too" (Demin, 1972: 19).

Without touching on the acute problems of the procurement policy of the State Film Agency, film critic, journalist and poet Victor Orlov (1929-1972), in his reflections on the *Queen of Chantecler*, entered into a dialogue with viewers/readers about the foreign "film movie": "It is worth the release to take courage and shoot on the screens a foreign "raspberry" – a super action movie where thoughts are inversely proportional to muscles, a twisted detective or a revue with a striptease allowed to be shown to children after sixteen – as the same thing begins. Criticism, brought up on the best examples of art and calling for the best examples, chokes with indignation. At the same time, however, there is some loss of a sense of humor and oblivion of the truth that not every film should be a philosophical treatise. Poison feuilletons and furious essays are written.

A certain part of the readers, obviously compassionate and accepting the fate of the *Unknown Woman* or *Queen of Chantecler*, as their own, does not remain in debt. It is shameful and sad to read letters in the midst of a controversy about some kind of *Black Glasses* or *Queen of Chantecler*. It's a shame, because the words that other readers use to address critics are rarely heard even on the last platform of the tram. It is sad because the intensity of passions is penny, and tomorrow the warrior for the honor of the "queen" will not remember not only his words, but also the very fate of the "queen". Any cheap stuff disappears faster than the smell of gasoline. This is one of the saving properties of human memory.

But in the very heat of passions there is a disturbing symptom. People don't just throw their jackets on the ground and start, like Shura Balaganov, mumbling: "Who are you?" and piercing the enemy with their eyes. Why is there an innocent Shura! I can confess that at one time, in response to an article about *Black Glasses*, I received a letter from Odessa. It contained exactly forty-three words. None of them, except for my name and the signature of my correspondent, can be said aloud ...

This means that there are at least two miscalculations in our polemics. The miscalculation of critics, either by the extremeness of the assessment, or by the unsubstantiated tone of those who offended a friend-viewer. The miscalculation of the viewer, who did not believe his friend-critic and hostilely accepted his every word. ... I noticed one feature. There is something deeply personal about angry letters from readers. As if the critic didn't just take apart the weak image, the helpless direction, as it should be, but offended the well-known Charito, who lives nearby, on the fifth floor ...

Here – the real bust, bust from kindness. ... It is this kindness of the audience, the kindness of empathy that we, critics, need to understand and, perhaps, not be judged so harshly. By the way, bad directors and screenwriters use this kindness with might and main, clicking on "forbidden tricks", exploiting especially sentimental situations with tears and hugs, broken dreams, noble sluts and poor beloved mothers. And we need to tell the viewer about this with

interest and sympathy – that he is sometimes slipped second-rate art, and with it his own vision of life... , brings to mind the aphorism of one astronomer: “The more I look at the harmony, expediency and beauty of the inorganic world, the more insistently I wonder whether our organic life is a disease of the planet? With one correction, that the disease of the planet is probably bad cinematography” (Orlov, 1967: 8).

The view of post-Soviet film criticism on the *Queen of Chantecler* and the work of the leading actress and famous singer Sara Montiel (1928-2013) is reflected in the article by Olga Reizen: “Montiel ... starred in a lot of empty, monotonous melodramas, which were called “Films with Montiel”. She was neither a good actress nor a brilliant singer. ... The sweet world of melodrama was Montiel's natural habitat” (Reizen, 1997: 100).

However, film critic L. Muratov was a little more lenient towards this movie: “The beautiful Charito, the singer of the Madrid variety show *Chantecler*, is not exactly a professional trader in love, but is intriguingly carefree in relation to a number of prohibitions of bourgeois morality. The depravity of this beautiful suffering sinner involuntarily seems old-fashioned, so it does not fit with the modern freedom of morals of European life. Here we again encounter the half-heartedness of the Spanish commercial screen: it is forbidden to show a naked body – and it demonstrates the charms of a star, inventing a pop act with a bed in ruffles and a song, performing which, the beauty is looking for a flea in the folds of a translucent nightgown; he is forbidden to depict “free love” – and he transfers it to an indefinite time and space. ... Everyone forgot about the genre within which Charito loves and suffers. This genre is musical melodrama, with its conventions and laws. Let's not expect genuine drama and psychological authenticity from Sarita. Another question is whether the actress herself is faithful to the genre she has chosen and is so organic to her. She often breaks his laws – either through the fault of the screenwriter and director, or obeying her own impulses, forcing her to turn to “serious” topics and give “in-depth” interpretations. In *Queen of Chantecler* musical melodrama is burdened with situations that are contrary to its nature” (Muratov, 1973: 106-107).

A more accurate understanding of the reasons for the popularity of the *Queen of Chantecler* can probably be quotes from audience reviews of this film:

“A wonderful film, colorful, filled with the charm of the theater. Alberto is refined, Santi is young and fresh, like a flower pure and naive. The heroine herself is beautiful, graceful... If I haven't seen this film for a long time, then I miss it” (L. Shcherbakova).

“The film *Queen of Chantecler*, without a shadow of a doubt, is very good” (V. Anchugov).

“This is the most beautiful sight in many years. ... And the beauty Charito continues to enchant men of the 21st century” (Aleksey).

“I love Sara Montiel” and *Queen of Chantecler* very much: colorful, good music, a fascinating love story, an interesting plot, wonderful vocals” (Petya).

“It is in this film that I am personally interested in just the songs performed by Sara Montiel. And that's it. Although I express just my personal opinion, I do not impose on anyone. I know women who are very fond of this particular film of all with the participation of Sara Montiel. What I did not like: inconsistencies in the script, flaws, many storylines are only outlined, and immediately break off. ... I don't like the selection of actors for this film, the inability of the actors to play and look elementary, to match the role, the plot. ... Other films with Sara Montiel made a much greater impression on me, I remember and liked them, and you believe them, trust them, love them. (I really love the films *The Violets Saleswoman* and *My Last Tango*)” (Marina).

Who are you, Dr. Sorge? / Qui êtes-vous, Monsieur Sorge? Germany-Italy-France-Japan, 1961. Directed by Yves Ciampi. Released in the USSR - 1964. Re-released in the USSR - 1985. 39.2 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

This film directed by Yves Ciampi (1921-1982) came out on Soviet screens and immediately became a sensation. A foreign film about a Soviet intelligence officer, where, contrary to prevailing stereotypes, he appears not only as a professional in his field, but as a man who is not indifferent to beautiful women...

In the year of the first release of the film *Who are you, Dr. Sorge?* the Soviet film press greeted him quite warmly. So the theater and film critic Boris Medvedev (1920-1969) wrote in the *Cinema Art* journal that “despite obvious miscalculations, inaccuracies, Ciampi's film is truly stout, imperiously holding our attention for almost three hours. And most importantly, it fills the heart with pride for one of the most courageous fighters against the brown plague, a German by father (he is the grandson of an associate of Marx and Engels: Friedrich Sorge), a Russian by mother, who was born in Russia, a member of the CPSU(b) since 1925, Comrade Richard Sorge” (Medvedev, 1964: 101).

And at the time of the re-release of this movie in the USSR, film critic Grigory Simanovich wrote that the authors of the film “prudently balanced their artistic efforts, directing them equally to recreating a sharp adventure intrigue, and to reveal the outstanding human character of the hero, his moral world, his psychology and spiritual properties” (Simanovich, 1985: 17).

Already in post-Soviet times, film critic Yevgeny Nefedov noted that “a bit of uncertainty allowed Yves Ciampi to build a composition in a non-trivial way: in the spirit of Wellsian riddles about a person who remains incomprehensible, whether we are talking about the imperious “citizen Kane” or the infernal “Mr. Arkadin”. Who are you, Dr. Sorge? .. An amazing effect arises: a public person, a personal friend of many influential statesmen, a secular lion and a ladies' man in fact – the owner of completely different qualities. Only people from the inner circle, agents from the carefully selected group of “Ramsay”, really knew Richard: a staunch communist, a man of unparalleled courage with nerves of steel, a great tactician and strategist, who for a long time emerged victorious in an exhausting confrontation with counterintelligence. This could not but arouse the respect of even enemies!” (Nefedov, 2017).

And film critic Denis Gorelov did not miss the opportunity to notice that the actor “Thomas Holtzman, at the behest of the time, portrayed a star agent who plays war, and does not really push. His hero thought, existed, clinked glasses of champagne at embassy briefings and passed microfilms in chocolates. None of the ladies who appeared on the screen missed the gymnast's steel hands: Baroness Sakurai, the head of the secretariat of the embassy Brown and the wife of the ambassador Wolf were just Helma, Yuki and Lily for him. Discussing geopolitics, he washed the back of a blonde sitting in a tub. With a light gait, a playboy entered the granite of national history” (Gorelov, 2019).

Viewers of the XXI century and today remember this film:

“It looks easy, with interest, wonderful actors. Stirlitz, Palmer, Bond – all behind! (Annone).

“A very interesting film, it is watched in one breath. It is a pity that the Soviet “wise” leadership did not trust Sorge before the war” (Weimar).

“The film for its time, of course, is very significant. Thanks to him, the viewer learned about the hero. But now it looks like a movie monument... Thank you, Ciampi, but time has passed” (Marina).

The Great Race. USA, 1965. Directed by Blake Edwards. Release in the USSR – 1976: 38.9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

In the mid-1960s, film entertainment master Blake Edwards (1922-2010) directed the spectacular adventure comedy *The Great Race* with the participation of three bright Hollywood stars of the first magnitude: Tony Curtis (1925-2010), Jack Lemmon (1925-2001) and Natalie Wood (1938-1981).

The picture got into the Soviet Release with a ten-year delay and cut out episodes in which Russia was shown in the original version of the movie. However, this did not in the least hinder the box office success of the film in the Soviet film distribution.

Immediately after the screening of *The Great Race* at the Moscow International Film Festival, film critic Mikhail Bleiman (1904-1973) wrote that every situation in the film parodies some genre of American cinema. ... It is difficult for me to name specific objects of parody, I do not know the parodied films, or rather, I know, but not all of them. But the generality of parody lies in the fact that it captures the most essential features of the object, and the standard of American mass cinema production is such that it is easy to substitute one film for another. Blake Edwards' film parodies even itself, its scale as a "super action movie". The discrepancy between the technical luxury of the film and the lightness of its parodic content seems to me not accidental – it is part of the film's intention. I will not list individual situations of the film, sometimes genuinely witty and even brilliant, his old and new "gags". It is hardly necessary. Let me just say that the movie is probably too witty. Sometimes it is tiresome" (Blayman, 1965: 156).

Film critic Tatiana Khloplyankina (1937-1993) correctly noted that B. Edwards "tried to use literally every trick possible in cinema in his comedy. Being an ardent admirer of Charlie Chaplin and films featuring Douglas Fairbanks, Edwards sought to create a kind of synthesis of comedy and adventure film, a kind of "supercomedy" (Khloplyankina, 1976).

Already in post-Soviet times, film critic Vladimir Gordeev wrote that *The Great Race* is "one of the last Hollywood monsters of that time, magnificent but slow blockbusters, with obligatory musical preludes and interludes (colorful static pictures to bravura or not very music, arranged for the orchestra, which are made so that the unhurried viewer bursting into a movie show, nothing missed, even if he was late, and the one who was already sitting in the hall was bored, but not too much)" (Gordeev, 2013).

Film critic Denis Gorelov writes about the reasons for the success of *The Great Race*: Edwards, like Gaidai, was a silent film buff who had driven dry the boom of interest in the silent eccentric that took place in the early 1960s and lasted until the end of the bipolar world. In his *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, five episodes of *The Pink Panther*, the *Victor/Victoria* cabaret burlesque, and these *The Great Race*, the mustachioed men grimaced, goggled, and minced on tiptoe, the ladies fenced with umbrellas and changed into men's clothes, and all together strove to flop on the ass, break the house, the airship, the car and the European world order, after which a dozen times to stick a cake in each other's faces. In order to stretch the farce to a full meter, an energetic ride to the cherished goal was best suited... The battle of the sexes, begun in the Victorian era and by 65 not yet ended with the victory of the intermediate feminine/masculine, delighted Edwards always as an excuse to put the proud and proud women in the puddle... He regarded feminism as a forgivable womanizing blather..." (Gorelov, 2019).

There are many fans of the *The Great Race* among the current spectators:

"I love this movie. Repeatedly watched in childhood and adolescence, and yesterday once again I enjoyed it. One of the best American comedies. Gorgeous handsome Curtis. Natalie Wood is charming, and her outfits are breathtaking" (Lena).

"The other day, with a childhood friend, we recalled how on vacation we rode bicycles (five kilometers) to a club to watch this film. During the session, I laughed so hard that I fell off my seat. And the way back was barely overcome, as they "tear their stomachs" from laughter, sorting through the funniest moments of the film. I will never forget this picture or the artists who starred in it. And it's not so much in nostalgia for those times, but in the undoubted quality of the film. He is the best cure for the blues!" (Marina).

"If you love bright beautiful films and beautiful bright actors in catchy beautiful costumes, but don't like to cry and worry during films, then this is the film!" (Hydrangea).

Who is who? / Cop or Bandit / Flic ou voyou. France, 1978. Directed by Georges Lautner. Release in the USSR - from January 1981: 38.9 million viewers in the first year of the show.

One of the highest-grossing French directors, Georges Lautner (1926-2013), was happy to make films about policemen and bandits. On this basis, he found a common language with Jean-Paul Belmondo. One has only to be surprised that this meeting happened so late – in 1978. After all, since the beginning of the 1960s, Belmondo felt himself in the comedy-parody element like a fish in water.

One way or another, the parody of *Cop or Bandit*, based on the stamps of a detective and a police thriller, brought to the crest of success the figure of a kind of French agent 007-Commissioner Borowitz.

The hero Belmondo, at times posing as an Italian mafioso, sauntered through Nice in a dazzling white suit and with an equally dazzling smile. Under the pulsating rhythms of electronic music, freeze-frames flashed with the use of a varioscreeen and rapid. An enchanting cancan of dashing tricks and chases began ...

Borowitz's movements are lazy and careless. A tired smile never leaves his face. He deals with enemies in a very peculiar way. One takes off his pants. The other is completely stripped naked. The third makes a deadly "steam room" in a heating cabinet ...

If the fight against crime by legal means is impossible, the hero Belmondo goes ahead. Fortunately, he has enough revolving-sporting abilities...

The elastic rhythm of this movie, short, "clip" editing, "hit" music, bright colors, stunning stunts unfailingly riveted the audience from different countries. The brainchild of the Lautner-Belmondo tandem for several months occupied the top lines in the bestseller lists of French and European Releases.

Here is what Alexander Braginsky (1920-2016), a connoisseur of French cinema, film critic, wrote about the film *Cop or Bandit*: "Everything that happens in the film, as if on purpose, is devoid of motivation. ... But Belmondo at the same time in the best way strengthened the myth of an invincible hero in the eyes of his fans. The filmmakers first sought to entertain them. ... Since it is already known that the heroes of Belmondo do not sink in water and do not burn in fire, the viewer willingly joins the proposed game, trying to guess how Stan Borowitz will deal with the bandits" (Braginsky, 1998: 140-141).

However, film critic Miron Chernenko (1931-2004) believed that this film was not so simple, and that Georges Lautner exquisitely and casually used in his film "the features of the classic "black film" in its American edition: it's not for nothing that Belmondo every now and then allows himself a slight allusion to this: either in a suit like from an advertisement for the "stormy forties", then in a sliding gait of a slightly stooping man, then in the equanimity of an emphasized courageous face, in memory of Humphrey Bogart, who once raised this entertainment genre to the level of the most unrealistic truth about the "American way of life" (Chernenko, 1981: 18).

The opinions of current viewers about the film *Cop or Bandit* are often opposite.

Pro:

“A light, laid-back crime comedy, Belmondo is brilliant (as always), Michel Galabru brilliantly complements the main character, Marie Laforet looks languid in her role, which is an undoubted advantage. The entourage of Nice is good, the topic is very topical, especially for our outstanding country, everything is played brilliantly, not without sparkling French humor” (Daigton).

“The film is wonderful! Look at it in one breath. Even the credits at the beginning make you want to rewatch, thanks to the great music” (Sanechka).

“One of my favorite films with Jean-Paul Belmondo! ... A movie should be watched solely for the sake of the actor who played the main role, but in no case is it recommended to look for a deep meaning in it. The artist looks so natural in the role of such a male himself, to whom everything without exception is permissible, that it is impossible not to believe him. ... And also, undoubtedly, light, French with an amazing charm, inherent only to the French. ... This movie should be watched easily and agree with all the conventions, but if you take it seriously and make some demands, then all this charm will disappear” (Dnipro).

Contra:

“Over time, this film does not look at all. At least our generation. I am so amazed at how it was possible to shoot such idiotic hack work” (Yuri).

And the Rain Washes Away All Traces / Und der Regen verwischt jede Spur. Germany, 1972. Directed by Alfred Forer. Release in the USSR - from December 17, 1973: 38.8 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Director Alfred Forer (1914-1986) made many entertaining films, and some of them hit the Soviet cinemas (*Among the Kites, Faithful Hand – a friend of the Indians, Seven Days Term, And the Rain Washes Away All Traces, Three in the Snow, Only the Wind Knows the Answer*). All the movies of Alfred Forer, which were shown in Soviet cinema halls, were a great success with the audience.

A very free melodramatic fantasy on the theme of Pushkin's *Snowstorm* under the openly sentimental title *And the Rain Washes Away All Traces* still has a lot of fans.

During the years of the release of this melodrama in Soviet distribution, a large critical article was published in the *Cinema Art* journal, where its authors edifyingly and ideologically verified asserted that “a mediocre film ... *And the Rain Washes Away All Traces* speculates on ... aesthetic material, giving a melodramatic banality in anti-Nazi terms, as a concept of crime and punishment. In this case, we have a classic example of how politics becomes fashion in bourgeois cinema. The political accent is given not in the forehead, but in a hint, the film is designed for a double addressee: if you want, you can cry in the old fashioned way over the unlucky marriage experiences of young Christina. But if you are an astute viewer, then in the melodrama you will be able to find actual problems and philosophical complexes. Turning to serious topics could be rejoiced, but the trouble is, that this is just speculation. With much more craft meticulousness, the authors present the twists and turns of sentimental intrigue. ... this is a film about love, and according to the terms of the genre, it is intended to be attractive to the audience. The authors create a whole cascade of bright lyrical shots. But in the sentimental idyll of these shots there is an obvious "albumness" ... this is a typical example of imitation of a lyrical drama. ... No wonder that the viewer who watches a lot of ersatz art sometimes loses the sense of proportion and taste. Succumbing to a clever craft deception, he loses his sense of reality, mistaking a cheap surrogate for genuine values” (Chernyshev, Pronin, 1974: 163-166).

Opinions of 21st century viewers about this film are often very different.

Pro:

"I watched the film as a child, but I still remember it. Bright, colorful, beautiful film about tragic love. It is a pity that it is rarely shown on TV" (Vera).

"The film is beautiful and colorful, although many people don't remember it at all, but I still have it in my memory, although I have never seen it again. That's the impression he made on me!" (Jeanne).

Contra:

"I don't think this film is interesting now... Sentimental and weak: almost Bollywood" (Sonya)

"The film did not impress. All the characters are unsympathetic to me" (Rufina).

Vikings. USA, 1958. Directed by Richard Fleischer. Release in the USSR - from November 26, 1979: 38.6 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Robust Hollywood professional Richard Fleischer (1916-2006) during his long career, he directed more than a dozen full-length feature films, of which *Vikings*, *New Centurions* and *Incomparable Sarah* got into Soviet distribution.

The adventure film *Vikings* tells the story of the royal family of ancient England, which is being raided by the Viking tribes... The film attracted Soviet (and not only) viewers not only with exotic costumes, but also with the bright roles of Hollywood stars: Kirk Douglas (1916-2020), Tony Curtis (1925-2010) and Janet Leigh (1927-2004).

The *Vikings* still have many fans today:

"Here you have chic scenery, and a love story, and an ornate plot, and the actors are all handsome and beauties – Hollywood! Kirk Douglas is expressive and courageous, Tony Curtis, despite his beard, also looks good, and Janet Leigh, well, just a beauty! And in the background are the most beautiful landscapes and decorations of old castles! You can feel the scope, you can feel the skill of the art director. And add here another ornate plot, with a couple of touching moments, unexpected twists and here it is a wonderful film!" (Vitas).

"Although the plot of this film, like most of the so-called "historical films" I have watched, is a kind of fantasy of the screenwriter, I really liked the film itself. Filmed very spectacular, large-scale and interesting. Even the melodramatic love line, as is usually the case when watching such films, did not infuriate a bit. And yes, the acting is good. Kirk Douglas is great as always. Well done man! Clearly a great talent! Tony Curtis, which greatly pleased, also played excellently. ... Janet Leigh is just a beautiful girl and a good actress. ... In general, it turned out to be a test action movie in a historical setting. Adventure movie classic. And now, in the era of the triumph of computer special effects, it looks in one breath" (Whirlwind).

The Deep. UK, USA, 1977. Directed by Peter Yates. Release in the USSR – 1981: 37.9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

This solid exotic-themed thriller was directed by Peter Yeats (1929-2011). Here and gorgeous underwater shooting. And mystic. And exciting chases. *The Deep* had significant release fees. Viewers in many countries liked this story about the search for underwater treasures. And although in the Russian box office *The Deep* was released on screens with significant cuts (the "undesirable" erotic and scary scenes were removed), this did not stop her from captivating the hearts of teenagers. The girls really liked the courageous and courageous Nick Nolte, and the boys liked the beautiful Jacqueline Bisset.

In the year of the release of *The Deep* in the Soviet distribution one film critic wrote that there "sometimes the authors lack a sense of proportion, the events appear as a kind of heap of bloody horrors" (Kozlov, 1981: 18).

But film post-Soviet film critic Vladimir Gordeev writes that this film “permeated with the spirit of the 70s and pierces with nostalgia for the Soviet times ... An amazing feeling, and you don’t understand what caused it. In all other respects, this is a rather unhurried film, with excellent camera work, exotic landscapes and beautiful music written by the classic of American cinema John Barry, who was nominated for the Golden Globe Award for the music” (Gordeev, 2006).

And Vladimir Gordeev is right about this: the audience of the 21st century today is watching this movie with a touch of nostalgia:

“A beautiful film, I always remembered it, I recently reviewed it with great pleasure. Looks exciting, just like in his youth” (Balcony).

“Amazing underwater shooting (and great timing!), nice actors (despite 1977, a nice game at 100%!). Interesting story. Touching ending. I got a lot of pleasure” (Tal).

“Great, action-packed film, watched in one breath! Great casting, wonderful nature and great underwater footage” (Alex).

“One of my favorite adventure films!!!” (Misha).

“Great story, great actors, amazing footage, a real eye-catcher!” (Mustang).

Let Them Talk / Digan lo que digan. Argentina-Spain, 1967/1968. Directed by Mario Camus. Release in the USSR - from February 23, 1970: 37.8 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Spanish director Mario Camus during his film career directed over thirty films of various genres, including those that had festival success. However, in the USSR, only one of his works, *Let Them Talk*, was recognized by nearly 38 million viewers.

It is very difficult for the youth of the 21st century to understand how popular the Spanish singer Rafael became in the USSR after the show of the musical melodrama *Let Them Talk*. But viewers of the older generation, of course, remember how the movie recordings of his hits “Digan lo que digan” & “Cierro mis ojos”... How millions of girls were thrilled in the cinema halls, waiting for their princes, at least a little like Rafael...

Film critic Denis Gorelov is right: “The audience, with all their tolerance, grumbled at the plot (there is, in truth, no plot there – with three hundred authors of the script), but in the conditions of the pop tsunami that covered the white world, unisex and “excesses of all kinds of bad things”, both traditionalist extremities of Europe valued conservatism and the so-called “performing culture”: a short haircut, outstretched arms, a trained voice, a jacket with a tie, songs about archaic values and brotherly love. And the grass was green, and the pistachio shirt, and the tie, as always with Latinos, purple, and the rainbow rainbow, without symbolizing same-sex marriages. The sunsets were burning and there was love. So we sang Muslim, and Karel Gott, and Dean Reed, and Polad Bulbul oglu, and white Gott flares were considered the height of stage liberties” (Gorelov, 2019).

Rafael and his songs have many fans today:

“...I don't like loud phrases, but... *Let Them Talk* without exaggeration is the sun of our youth! With what trepidation, even for the hundredth or two hundredth time, you put on a disc and freeze in anticipation of the first chords. And how sweetly you envy those who watch this film for the first time and are amazed at their discovery” (Valentina).

“The film *Let Them Talk* I first saw in 1970, and for the rest of my life Rafael’s amazing voice entered my heart. ... And when difficult moments came, and my heart became especially sad, I sang melodies from this film. Sadness went away, it became happier and warmer. I carried the inimitable voice of the singer through my whole life in my heart” (Galina).

“A film that is impossible to forget if the heart and soul are alive. In the film, in addition to an amazing voice and beautiful songs, there is so much sincerity and purity that after watching it, you yourself seem to become cleaner!” (Marianne).

“The film is amazing! ... After the next viewing of the film *Let Them Talk* I left the hall, bought a ticket again and went to the next session. And so it went on until this film was shown in the cinemas of the city” (I. Filippova).

“I studied at the school. We girls were just not our own from Rafael. We got pictures taken at the cinema! All eight songs on two small discs were listened to a hundred times. In 1973 she met a girl from the Rafael Society. She had stacks of his photographs, they were learning Spanish. Why, I asked. “To talk to him when he comes to us!” they answered” (Anela).

“I read that the film *Let Them Talk* conquered millions of people around the world, not only me! This is truly a wonderful movie! Rafael's songs are incomparable, and his voice is simply amazing! I am fascinated by Rafael's voice like everyone else. I repeat, Rafael is a wonderful singer, and a charming person” (Necro).

Pitkin's Hospital Adventures / A Stitch in Time. UK, 1963. Directed by Robert Asher. Release in the USSR - since March 1966: 37.8 million viewers in the first year of the show.

British director Robert Asher (1915-1979) gained fame precisely thanks to comedies with the popular comedian Norman Wisdom (1915-2010), who for many years played his favorite character, Mr. Pitkin, who always fell into a series of hilarious adventures.

The eccentric comedy *Mr. Pitkin Behind Enemy Lines (The Square Peg, 1958)* had a huge success in the USSR.

In the wake of this success, another comedy was bought for screening in the Soviet Union, called *Pitkin's Hospital Adventures*, and it also gave a very tangible box office.

Film critic Tatyana Vetrova wrote that Norman Wisdom's acting style “farical tricks, gags, dressing up, reincarnations are characteristic. ... The hero of Wisdom wanders from film to film. This is a simple guy, unlucky, but resilient. He is awkward, ridiculous, zealous to the point of stupidity, does not navigate the situation, often frankly stupid. But at the same time, he evokes sympathy with his naivety, bordering on infantilism, and spontaneity. Every now and then getting into trouble, he stands for justice, fights for the dignity of the "little man" (Vetrova, 1997: 142-143).

But the culturologist and film critic Alexander Kukarkin (1916-1996) believed that the art of many Western comedians, including Norman Wisdom (*The Square Peg* and *A Stitch in Time*), “did not mark the revival of “comic”, rather testified to its decline. It was built on almost unlimited arbitrariness and did not at all “cleanse human souls from any rubbish left over from the past,” which Igor Ilyinsky rightly sees as the goal of the cheerful genre. These comedians did not rise above the court jesters and, laughing at trifles, tried not to offend anyone. Therefore, it was mainly stunt or parodic comedy that was cultivated, but not satirical” (Kukarkin, 1985: 281).

The opinions of 21st century viewers about *A Stitch in Time* are usually very positive:

“Norman Wisdom is our old friend from the movie *Mr. Pitkin Behind Enemy Lines*. Something in the hero of Wisdom has changed: now he is not a soldier, but a seller in a butcher's shop. But a lot has remained the same... Pitkin himself has remained the same, full of energy and desire to do everything as best as possible and, as a result, always getting into funny situations” (Igor).

“I am madly in love with this film, and I associate it with the New Year, because when I was little, it was shown just on New Year's Eve or during the New Year holidays. A sweet, naive, funny and kind film” (Nadya).

“The Chaplin-style ending is impressive, when the hero suddenly takes off the mask of a comical character and utters words that are very relevant even today about the injustice of Western society, where the jaded elite does not see the suffering of people who live next to them. The dependence of Western medicine on sponsors, the flourishing servility, is maliciously shown. Perhaps it was thanks to this that the painting was purchased in the USSR” (Oleg).

Big Walk / La Grande vadrouille. France-UK, 1966. Directed by Gerard Oury. The film topped the list of the highest-grossing French films at the box office in France for four decades in a row: 17 million viewers in the first year of its release. Release in the USSR – 1971: 37.8 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

As a director, Gerard Oury (1919-2006) first became famous in the brilliant comedy *The Sucker (Le Corniaud, 1965)*, with the wonderful duet of Louis de Funès (1914-1983) and Bourvil (1917-1970). The next joint work of this trio, *Big Walk* (1966), polished the comedy principles found in *The Sucker* to a shine: a conflict of self-assured and arrogant arrogance with a modest and low-key rusticity, backed up by elaborate eccentric tricks, many of which were rooted in the folklore traditions of the booth, circus and "comic" era of the "Great Silent".

...During the Second World War, two Frenchmen – an opera house conductor and a worker-painter – help English pilots get out of Nazi-occupied Paris. Agree, this plot scheme could become a good basis for a psychological drama or a romantic adventure film. But in the best traditions of the French comedy, Gerard Oury, by no means neglecting the possibilities of the adventurous line, turned the *Big Walk* into a grandiose laughter attraction. And then everything went into action, even the textbook vaudeville situation with mixed up rooms and beds got its development from Gerard Oury, although instead of deceived wives and husbands on the screen – a German officer and his adjutant...

Even before the release of the film *Big Walk* in the Soviet distribution, film critic Miron Chernenko (1931-2004) wrote that “Gerard Oury has an unmistakable sense of the viewer ... Oury knows the secrets: the traditional simpleton of French cinema is Bourvil, the traditional cunning de Funès. This is half the battle. And if you add a dozen or two seasoned gags, a pinch of Gallic humor in a polished dialogue, a bit of chilling situations, indispensable philosophy in the cheapest, pocket edition, and a couple of mockery of the British, you'll have an excellent commercial comedy, impeccably accurately designed for the almost professional cinematic memory of a constant cinema visitor. ... Moreover, Uri is not so simple as to offer the viewer only the familiar. He is smarter and more experienced, he wraps the whole set of experienced grimaces, situations and gags in a brand new military-patriotic wrapper: two Frenchmen rescue English paratroopers, phlegmatic and raster, during the last war” (Chernenko, 1967).

However, in the year of the release of *Big Walk* in the Soviet film distribution, the film critic I. Lishchinsky was more strict and wrote in the *Soviet Screen* that “the plot and the whole atmosphere of what is happening, in fact, are of little concern to the director. War and occupation, English pilots and German SS – all this is quite arbitrary ... In reality, Gerard Oury cares only about a comic trick, about a paratrooper landing right in the gaping mouth of a hippopotamus in a zoo, about a bucket of paint that will break right in front of the Nazi general's nose ... At the same time, the director cannot be denied either ingenuity or professionalism. He knows his business. Oury stages, so to speak, a "pure" comedy, a comedy without any extraneous impurities. It is connected with life by all the same comic masks of Bourvil and de Funès. I am not talking about the fact that the film had to show how hard the enemy occupation is, and that not only idiots served in the German commandant's office, and that it is not so easy for a Parisian house painter to impersonate a Wehrmacht general. Comedy has its own laws and rights. But still, as you can see, too pure a comedy now and then turns out to be a comedy on idle. Something is missing. From time to time you catch yourself thinking that you are both funny and bored at the same time. ... in *Big Walk*, the playwrights and the director play only the outward contrast of two comic temperaments, a contrast that is perhaps

enough for a chain of repetitive situations, but not enough for a real comedy. It's a pity" (Lishchinsky, 1971: 17).

However, I suspect that few Soviet viewers were bored during *Big Walk*. And, as film critic Denis Gorelov aptly noted, here and "Russian culture was also influenced: the phrase "Ich bin sick" entered the language so much that everyone managed to forget where she came from, and she is from here" (Gorelov, 2019).

Many current viewers still love *Big Walk*:

"The best comedy of all times and peoples. The duet of Funes and Bourvil is so funny that knowing by heart all the lines, every facial movement, you still laugh as it is possible to laugh only in childhood. The best pill for a bad mood" (Irina).

"This film is like a reference book for our family! This is a masterpiece from the first frame to the last! How good it is! The actors are wonderful! The duet of two great comedians is incomparable and unique! ... It gives such a charge of vital energy, which, at times, is beyond the power of hundreds of other films taken together!" (O. Simakova).

"I first saw this movie in 1971 when I was eight years old. I saw Paris, funny Germans, handsome English pilots, hilariously heroic French. Then I went to this film at least a hundred times and always in the hall roared continuous laughter, people left the cinema exhausted from laughter. I still laugh, although already in the same way as in childhood. The film is brilliant. The cast is great" (Shikotus).

But in every barrel of honey there is, of course, a drop of tar:

"I can't share the enthusiasm of the majority here. Even as a child, he seemed stupid to me, with primitive humor. Suffice it to recall the scene with the German soldier with slanting eyes. Such episodes about the stupidity of the enemy are hardly humor, rather stupidity. ... De Funès' antics are also not an example of incomparable humor" (V. Loginov).

Folk Romance / Romanzo popolare / Romances et confidences. Italy-France, 1974. Directed by Mario Monicelli. Release in the USSR – since October 11, 1976: 37.6 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Mario Monicelli (1915-2010) began making comedies in the late 1940s. The most famous were such talented works of his as *Policemen and Thieves*, *Intruders*, *as always*, *remained unknown*, *Don't miss*, *Asunta! (Girl with a Pistol)*, *We Want Colonels*, *Folk Romance*, *My Friends*, etc.

In the comedy *Folk Romance* a lively worker (Ugo Tognazzi) marries a young girl (Ornella Muti) on his own head, and – of course – soon she has a young lover, besides – a policeman (Michele Placido)...

Rising actress at that time Ornella Muti has been called one of the most beautiful actresses in world cinema more than once. A slender figure, radiant eyes, sometimes sparkling with kindness, sometimes piercing with cold ... Photos of the charming Ornella, in which Italian and Estonian blood was mixed, were on the covers of all film magazines on the planet.

Like another star of the Italian screen, Stefania Sandrelli, she started acting very early. The famous master of political detective Damiano Damiani invited Ornella to play the main role in his film *The Most Beautiful Wife* when she was only 14 years old. This role brought the first success. This was followed by invitations to numerous erotic comedies and melodramas.

In the comedy *Folk Romance* Ornella Muti appeared before the audience in all the beauty of her youth.

The opinions of the Soviet film press about this talented picture differed significantly.

Film critic Georgy Bogemsky (1920-1995), who specialized in Italian cinema, regretted that “the desire to artificially introduce folk motives into their comedies was not crowned... with success in some works of directors whose progressive views are all in doubt. Mario Monicelli's *Folk Romance*, so familiar to our viewers ... for all its external "sociality" and "nationality", in essence, is a very banal story of adultery with frank love scenes and extremely obscene dialogue (with translation and dubbing somewhat smoothed)” (Bogemsky, 1976: 143).

But film critic Valery Turovsky (1949-1998) wrote, that in the film by Mario Monicelli “bitter and bitter humor is perfectly combined with a benevolent attitude towards people. He sees their vices, their darkness and superstition, but he always has the strength to smile. Not to condemn: namely, to laugh a little at your heroes, and their prejudices. Perhaps this helps them more than the most severe accusation and condemnation” (Turovsky, 1976).

The impressions of the male part of the audience from the *Folk Romance* are still colored by the admiration of Ornella Muti:

“Good film, trembling memories. ... I am a teenager. Probably my first erotic session (and how did the usher miss it?) Oh, that Ornella! Mentally imagined her this way and that as my wife, but not fate...” (KVN).

“Watching this simple, wonderful film again and again, you remember your youth and selfless love for Ornella, dreams of this wonderful girl. The scene with Placido in the barn is the sexiest in the history of world cinema! Although, there is nothing “such” in this (from the height of the years I have lived)” (Karon).

But part of the female audience is set to the *Folk Romance* in a completely different way:

“Very ugly scene in the barn, unaesthetic. I was convinced of this by revisiting it after many years! There is not the slightest desire to revise the film itself, it is somehow dreary and unpleasant. This is my impression of him. And it's so ugly to shoot an erotic scene with Ornella Muti – you have to manage it” (Leta).

In any case, the almost forty million viewers who watched *Folk Romance* in the USSR in the first year of its screening alone suggests that the audience of the 1970s as a whole was clearly predisposed to the perception of the rather frivolous plot twists proposed in the film by Mario Monicelli and his ensemble cast...

And to some extent, the massive success of *Folk Romance* is connected with the audience's hunger for erotica on the screen.

It's Time to Love / Doslo doba da se ljubav proba. Yugoslavia, 1978-1980. Director and screenwriter Zoran Calic. Release in the USSR - from February 15, 1982: 37.6 million viewers in its first year in theaters.

The Yugoslav director and screenwriter Zoran Calic (1931-2014) made a lot of films, but it was the melodrama *It's Time to Love* that became his main hit.

A big fan of ironic retellings of film plots, film critic Denis Gorelov writes about this movie as follows: “High school students Bobo and Maria are in the back seat of their father's Mercedes "doing the editing" and waiting for the baby. Relatives are furious, the school is out, classmates are scouring Belgrade in search of the good Dr. Mengele. After the abortion, Maria makes her first adult decision. There will be more Yugoslavs in the next series” (Gorelov, 2019).

With such a plot, it is not at all surprising that this Yugoslav film firmly became one of the leaders of the Soviet box office in the first half of the 1980s. Crowds of young people rushed to the cinema halls to look at "free relations" in an "almost Western", although at the same time a socialist country.

Film critic Miron Chernenko (1931-2004), who is not inclined to such arrogant texts, wrote about the film *It's Time to Love* as follows: "Zoran Calic shoots: first slowly, as if trying on, and then decisively and uncontrollably... a kind of cinematic saga about several generations of two Belgrade families, about the maturation of the youngest, about how they begin to learn about the world, themselves, those around them, about the growing up and aging of their parents, about growing up of themselves, about how they themselves behave when they become parents, about, in other words, how a decade and a half of the life of numerous characters of this action passes. ... And he begins the story with a description of the lyrical, awkward, reverent love of Maria and Boba, from the first kisses and first quarrels, he confronts this feeling with the "noble" indignation of the parents (true, not all) and teachers (but these – without exception, which in itself attracts many schoolchildren to cinemas, rejoicing at the disgrace of teachers and educators). Therefore, he does not spare colors in depicting the defenselessness of lovers and the hostility of the adult world, rejecting from the threshold their right to their own feeling, to their own, independent life. This opposition of two non-intersecting age worlds is especially typical for the first two films of the cycle: *Crazy Years* (1977) and *It's Time to Love* (1980), rightly united by our release into a two-part film under the general title *It's Time to Love*, which retained all the plot lines, all its lyrical, comedic and melodramatic intensity – and the fatal pregnancy of Mary, and the loss of the unborn child, and the final break with the parents, and reconciliation, and the end of school, and the beginning of an independent life, and, finally, a wedding, which, as you know, crowns any lyrical plot. And I would have crowned any of the director's colleagues, except for himself, who knew from the very beginning that real life would begin only after the wedding, that now no less fascinating, and, moreover, love worries almost untouched by Yugoslav cinema could be brought to the forefront of the plot adults" (Chernenko, 1986).

The good memory of this picture has been preserved by the current viewers today:

"It was a wonderful young film. One of the few memorable from the Yugoslav cinema. We watched it several times, maybe because they were young themselves" (Lena).

"Well, who among us does not remember himself in these two pure-hearted creatures of Boba and Mary! Guys, this is the best and purest film about youth. It has the most faithful friends (I wish everyone like that), the most beautiful song, the most beautiful actors. And most importantly, this film is not instructive, it is cautionary and warning, even helping young people sort out their feelings within themselves" (Kamo).

"I remember the impression this film made on us when it came out. Went to the cinema to see it several times. The film is very beautiful, with good music, interesting actors. And we were as young as the heroes of the film ... Many years have passed since then. I didn't watch the movie anymore, but I always remember" (Natasha).

"I saw this film for the first time in the cinema, then I was 16 years old. You can imagine a scoop, and this film was for me like a "beam of light" in this scoop, with its "routine" and "dullness of landscapes." To say that I was "impressed" by this movie is an understatement. I was dumbfounded, depressed, depressed and devastated, and that's it.-straightaway! Until now, when I remember this movie-"goosebumps". Maybe it's because I was 16 then? (Serge).

Parisian Secrets / Les mysteres de Paris. France-Italy, 1962. Directed by André Hunebelle. Release in the USSR – 1964: 37.4 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Parisian Secrets is one of the most vivid memories of my childhood. At that time, few Russian viewers had the opportunity to read the famous novel by Eugene Sue. But his film adaptation was watched by millions. And the queue (was it really?) at the box office of cinemas, as they say, early in the morning...

Fatal passions raged in the film. Love was beautiful and romantic. The noble hero of Jean Marais – the marquis de Sombray heroically climbed out of the flooded basement. Fought with a gang of villains. And in the final, trampled justice triumphed ...

Parisian Secrets – a typical costume film from the arsenal of the famous master of "cloak and sword cinema" André Hunebell (1896-1985) *The Hunchback, The Miracle of the Wolves, Captain*). A bright spectacle without halftones and parodic passages. True, a few years later the same Hunebelle and with the same Jean Marais (1913-1998) in the title role shot a magnificent parody trilogy about Fantômas. But that was later. In 1962, Hunebelle was still in the grip of the romantic melodrama of bygone years...

In the late 1960s, film critics Victor Demin (1937-1993) and Irina Yanushevskaya (1925-1989) reminded readers that “with the Soviet audience met Yunebell through the film *Parisian Secrets*. The picture caused controversy in our press. Reviewers defended Eugene Sue’s novel against shameless filmmakers. Many recalled Marx’s words about this novel as a guiding thread that the director and screenwriters should have followed. Others tactfully reasoned with Marais: was it worth dropping your name by participating in such a frank craft? And everyone noted that the film has too many fights, too little psychology and no social analysis at all. A review in *Komsomolets* in the city of Petrozavodsk was titled: “Where does the Marquis du Sambreuil lead teenagers?” It was about the impact of Marais’ poking on fragile youthful souls. Bumps rained down on the marquis: he was at odds with the political literacy. In our opinion, a mistake was made here from the very beginning: the film was approached with the highest criteria, whereas he was a typical "cinema bis" phenomenon. The phenomenon is not one of the best, although not at all mediocre. But, of course, when one such work is approached with demands that are conceivable only in real art, when all claims to “cinema bis” are vented on it, absolutely nothing remains of the film” (Yanushevskaya, Demin, 1969: 209).

Already in the 21st century, film critic Vladimir Gordeev noted that the film *Parisian Secrets* is now "looks very old fashioned. Looking at it, one does not believe in any way that a "new wave" already existed at that time. They don't make movies like this anymore, and they don't need to. You can't outdo the classics, you can't over-sincere the old-fashioned artisan sincerity” (Gordeev, 2011).

Opinions of 21st century viewers about *Parisian Secrets* vary significantly.

Pro:

“We watched with such delight and interest and could not tear ourselves away. ... And they always admired the courage and courage of Rudolf. ... I have always loved, love and will love Jean Marais. To love his heroes and films where he played” (V. Anchugov).

“A cute old movie from my childhood! J. Marais is one of the most beloved actors of that time. What did our children need then? Beautiful actors, beautiful costumes, expensive unprecedented interiors: everything is fabulous and beautiful. Fights, music, the main character defeats evil once again” (Teresa).

"Great romantic movie! I remember him from my school days. I just looked again, although I already know everything. It attracts with its sublime nobility, striving for justice, readiness to fight evil” (A. Boinikov).

"Very interesting film. You just don't get distracted. I recently watched it again. I love all films where Jean Marais plays. They are all so interesting. And film *Parisian Secrets* is the best movie for me" (Valerochka).

Contra:

"I came to the conclusion that there is no worse film adaptation than with Marais. Hunebelle twisted the plot completely. ... I saw the previous film adaptation in 1943, with Marcel Herrand. A production much closer to the novel" (E. Logoev).

Scaramouche. USA, 1952. Directed by George Sidney. Release in the USSR - from August 2, 1965: 36.1 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Director George Sidney (1916-2002) throughout his creative biography made entertaining films of various genres. In 1952, he filmed the novel *Scaramouche* by Rafael Sabatini, which takes place in France, right before the 1789 revolution.

Scaramouche appeared in the Soviet film distribution with a 13-year delay, which did not prevent him from attracting millions of boys to cinemas, admiring sword fights and the very atmosphere of adventure.

Viewers of the 21st century often have opposite opinions about *Scaramouche*:

"Of course, now it doesn't look the way today's viewers might want, but that's the beauty of it. Look at the magic when a movie is made without special effects and a huge budget, when the script holds and does not let go, does not let you take your eyes off the screen. Yes, the timing could be a little bit shortened, but because of this, *Scaramouche* probably lost that regularity and slowness, all the charm with which the actions flow here. ... The actors are just brilliant with their characters. Everyone knows what he is doing and why. The atmosphere in this film is so pleasant that it cannot even be expressed in words: you just need to see it once. You watch and get great pleasure from watching" (Existentialist)

"What can I say... Disappointment is the mildest word. Personally, it has always been difficult for me to understand: why, having undertaken to film already well-established literary plots, many screenwriters and directors begin to twist them beyond recognition. ... *Scaramouche* by George Sidney is another example of an elephant climbing into a china shop. From the plot of the book, of course, something remained, but just something. And okay, for the better. Otherwise, everything is exclusively to create another American action movie in French scenery" (Change).

The 7th Voyage of Sinbad. USA, 1958. Directed by Nathan Juran. Release in the USSR – 1960: 32.3 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration. Re-release in the USSR - 1977 (+37.8 million viewers).

Directed by Nathan Juran (1907-2002) started working in cinema as an artist. Since 1952, N. Juran has become a director, actively working in such genres as detective, fantasy and western. We can safely say that if other spectacular films by Nathan Juran (*First Men on the Moon*, *Invaders of the Earth*, etc.) would also have hit the Soviet film distribution, they would also have had considerable audience success. But only one of his works, *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad*, was published in the USSR (albeit twice).

The Golden Voyage of Sinbad. USA, 1974. Directed by Gordon Hessler. Release in the USSR – 1977: 38.4 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Gordon Hessler (1925-2014) during his entire career he staged entertainment films, but only *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad*, which he filmed, got into the USSR.

A fairy tale has always attracted an audience of millions. And not only young. This was well understood and understood by filmmakers who have long filmed such stories with the involvement of special effects and travel to exotic countries...

Film tales about the travels of Sinbad from this number. Therefore, it is not at all surprising that *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* and *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad* enjoyed great success in Soviet cinemas.

But the Soviet film press treated these *Sinbads* very dismissively. Film critic, journalist and songwriter Victor Orlov (1929-1972) wrote, for example, in the *Soviet Screen* that “The costume-fantastic American action movie *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* was surprisingly bad. And ten-year-old boys laughed, looking at the inept dummies of "fairy-tale monsters", and the most naive girls turned away from the stupid and slobbering scenes of explanations and the hugs of heroes" (Orlov, 1966: 14).

Already in the 21st century, film critic Yevgeny Nefedov, praising *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad*, wrote that in *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad* he “would like to make a lot of complaints about the first half of the story, which unfolds according to the laws of traditional adventure cinema, with minimal involvement of bizarre supernatural creatures. I’m still ready to admit that John Phillip Lowe did a good job with the role and that, by the way, is more in line with the usual ideas about how Sinbad looked like ... but ... But why did the authors suddenly decide that the intrigue they invented was so interesting that it would seem to the public to be self-valuable ? Wrong opinion... However, the situation is changing radically – for the better! – at the moment when Kura undertakes to demonstrate the power of black magic. ... Finally, the climactic duel between the cyclops centaur and the enraged griffin can safely be declared one of the highest achievements of Harryhausen. The golden journey will end at a decent level” (Nefedov, 2018).

Modern viewers remember these films quite often:

“The film was remembered forever, as a memory of childhood, as a beautiful and fascinating fairy tale, which I still review with great pleasure! Thanks to the creators and performers for leaving an unforgettable mark on the world of cinema!” (Vigilant).

“One of my favorite childhood films. Ran to this movie several times in a row. And all my life I dreamed of seeing him at least once again. How happy I was (already at an adult age!), Having acquired a cassette with a film. Everything in this film was amazingly unusual” (O. Goryacheva).

“As a child, I watched the entire series of films about Sinbad with delight and some “benign” cinematic horror: a cyclops, a dragon, a statue that came to life from the bow of a ship, and so on, frightened and fascinated, as expected. However, I will give the palm in this part not to "large-scale" horror stories, but to a small disgusting creature like a harpy, which an evil wizard created using his own blood. This, I will tell you, my friends, was very scary!” (Thea).

“Yes, the monsters in both films are right! I also remember how all the spectators were hypnotized by the princess's servant, who appeared from the jug in the form of a snake woman! But there are also funny moments in the film: for example, Sinbad’s parting words to the princess before she plunges into the lamp: “If anything, call me for help!” (Efrat).

The Three Musketeers / Les Trois mousquetaires. France-Italy, 1961. Directed by Bernard Borderie. Release in the USSR – 1963: 36.9 million viewers for the first year of showing in cinemas.

Bernard Borderie (1924-1978) is better known as the director of five episodes about the adventures of the beautiful Angelica, but he also has many other box-office films to his credit, among which the bright and dynamic film adaptation of *The Three Musketeers* is far from the last. It was from this film that the popularity in the USSR of the blond beauty Mylène Demongeot (1935-2022), who played the insidious Milady, started ...

It should be noted here that the love for the films of the cape and the sword was very stable among the Soviet audience, and these movies could gain thirty million viewers, even if they were released on the screens of the USSR with a twenty-year delay. And *The Three Musketeers* by Bernard Borderie was generally lucky: they ended up in the Soviet film distribution just two years after the Paris premiere ...

Current viewers generally remember these *The Three Musketeers* quite kindly:

“When the film *The Three Musketeers* came out, we were 11 years old. And we ran to see this film wherever it was going, even to the other end of Moscow, watched it countless times. And since then, we have not taken any other adaptations of Dumas's novel seriously. And the image created by the magnificent Gerard Barret remained for me the ideal of a man for the rest of my life” (S. Rokotov).

“The best film adaptation, the most charming Constance (Perret Pradier), the most fatal Milady (Mylène Demongeot) and the real d'Artagnan! In addition, Richelieu, as from a portrait, and Planchet is more cunning than which, and it is difficult to imagine. The indescribable atmosphere of real Paris, the French flavor ... This is Dumas! (Equa).

“Why do I think the 1961 film of Borderies is the best? I answer: by the totality of all the constituent components of the cinema, and not only because of the image of Milady. I like everything in this version: beautiful costumes, great acting, great soundtrack, etc. Another thing to consider is the first impression factor. ... It is also necessary to take into account that there are more than a hundred adaptations of Dumas' novel in total ... Personally, I consider Borderies' film the most successful compared to other adaptations of Dumas's novel that I have seen” (Tatiana).

But there are, of course, viewers who absolutely do not like the interpretation of the novel by Dumas, presented by Bernard Borderie:

“Too long, heavy. Fights are exhausting. Much of the book was not included, and, on the contrary, much was added from myself. ... Mylène Demongeot is too young to play the role of Milady” (E. Logoev).

Anatomy of Love / Anatomia miłości. Poland, 1972. Directed by Roman Załuski. Release in the USSR - from September 10, 1973: 36.8 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

In the melodrama *Anatomy of Love* (1972), Polish director Roman Załuski opposes the replacement of true love with "partnership", "lovemaking"; in a parable-like, ironic form, "anatomizing" the psychology of the relationship between two thirty-year-old heroes (they were wonderfully played by Barbara Brylska and Jan Nowicki). It is clear that on the almost button-down Soviet screen of the 1970s, the appearance of this Polish film with a defiant title at that time aroused great interest of millions of viewers.

Film critic L. Muratov believed that “Brylska removes makeup from the face of her heroine in the literal and figurative sense of the word: her Eva is given by an ordinary, “grounded” woman, who does not particularly care about her appearance, wearily returning from work, not devoid of nervous self-affirmation in scenes of a collision with a loved one, with her mother and even unaware that modern Adam cautiously perceives a poorly prepared dinner by her as a kind of warning signal or, more precisely, an unforgivable sin of a woman. In a word, this heroine of the film, the very name of which, apparently, is polemical in relation to all the beautiful-hearted and romantic film stories about love, has lost any supernatural character of the former roles of the actress. ... Naturally, in comparison with such an Adam of a programmed stable formation, Eva-Brylska, living with feeling, cannot but become a kind of “anachronism”.

Actress, as if contrary to the film's anti-romantic title, it affirmed all-consuming love as truth and carried it as a symbol of faith. In fact, the entire role of Eva – Brylskaya is an intimate and quiet confession of feelings, "spoken" in an undertone, to oneself, marked by minutes of spiritual reflection, anxiety, suffering, expectations, timid hope, subconscious, elusive and hidden feelings and motives, which, however, are "read" on the screen. Expressed with restraint, subtly, in a delicate manner, they, merged into a harmonious whole, create, as it were, a continuously sounding chamber melody of the role - quiet and mournful, sad and dreamy" (Muratov, 1978: 19-21).

Already in the 21st century, film critic Denis Gorelov complained that "there are quite a few films about a man and a woman in the world, despite the demand. Just a man and a woman, casual adult lovers, easy on sex, but extremely timid for genuine rapprochement. With muted age, but not lost feelings. Without burning eyes, friends of confidants, inappropriate, albeit dramatically productive, intervention of older relatives. Without the frequent use of the word "love" (it's a pity that Release interests require it to be included in the title). With already good clothes and not yet embarrassing nudity. With a special softness of years and a sudden breakdown in tears. ... In our country, the film would have been watched for one name – as it happened. "In Russia, the entire anatomy was immediately cut into a basket," Brylska sarcastically in anniversary interviews. ... But even without that, there was something to check out. In a country where cinematic 30-year-olds went together to the theater and to friends with a bottle, but they never had breakfast together, the everyday liberties of extramarital relations were especially impressive. Restaurants with flowers. Evin painting of the church. Weekends in mountain hotels, where unregistered people are accommodated without interference. BB2 outfits: it seemed that for the film she demolished the entire collection of the fashion house for the autumn season. Red bell-bottom, turtleneck and scarf under a furry gray short coat. Yellow blouse with a scarlet belt under a white mini. A black dotted jacket with a white tie and matching skirt. What was considered in Russia as a shout of closed shows, they wore it to work. Women smoked without hearing reproaches by future offspring. On weekends, we sulked in the pref with married friends. They ate with wine. In short, they did not follow the moral character. I liked the look" (Gorelov, 2019).

Interest in *Anatomy of Love* has not faded among the current audience:

"Great film. Of those that are rightly called cult or epochal. The director so accurately and deeply captures the main thing – the evolution of loving relationships, that you simply don't notice the little things" (Alexey).

"I liked the film very much, like all Polish cinema of those years. It would seem impossible to simultaneously talk about such concepts with such frankness and delicacy: love, trust, passion, fidelity, friendship. A full-fledged study, the "anatomy" of the origin and development of the feelings of a man and a woman" (Shalikuchu).

"The film is wonderful, the relationship of two loving people is always a complex, delicate matter. The film was made with an accurate understanding of the psychological difference in the perception of the same things by a man and a woman, "a man reacts to the content, a woman – to the form in which it is presented" (NHF).

Sorceress / La sorcière. France-Sweden, 1955. Directed by André Michel. Release in the USSR – 1959: 36.4 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

French director André Michel (1910-1989) staged three dozen films and series of various genres, but only one of his movies was well known in the USSR. But what a *Sorceress* with young Marina Vladi! This picture became a sensation in the Soviet film distribution in 1959, and millions of girls, fascinated by the film and the actress, immediately began to copy her hairstyle and mannerisms...

Film critic Ariadna Sokolskaya (1927-2021) recalled that the *Sorceress* “our critics reacted quite harshly in their time. We, as you know, do not like modernized adaptations. And in the *Sorceress* modernization is evident. Instead of a poor Polesye village of the last century, on the screen is a deaf, but relatively comfortable corner of today's Sweden. Instead of the tall, resolute and rude dark-skinned Olesya, there is the golden-haired Lorelei. ... Of course, *Sorceress* is as idyllic as the cruel, bitterly truthful *Olesya* as the life of the modern Swedish province is more satisfying and easier than the old dark life of the Little Russian peasants. And yet ... Still, in the lightened, caressing the eye, a little sentimental film by André Michel, there are a lot of Kuprin's motives. It is not for nothing that the appearance of the French actress Marina Vlady is so firmly connected in the memory of the audience with the frames of this picture.

In *Sorceress* Marina (then still very young) played, perhaps, her best role. Barefoot, with straight hair flowing down her back, in a low-cut sackcloth sewn by a Parisian tailor, she, oddly enough, merged with a living, real forest. Bare feet habitually and softly stepped on the coniferous crust, the elastic, strong body moved so easily and freely that everything became natural. Even a spectacular, thoughtfully exotic outfit did not seem fake against the backdrop of real nature. The actress lived on the screen freely and joyfully. She made us believe that she grew up in this forest, knows all its paths, and the black doe that follows her on her heels is not tamed by anyone, but, like birds and squirrels, feels her own in Inga. In Marina Vlady, there really was something of the original element: some not offensive resemblance to a young, beautiful animal, the earthly, enticing power of healthy and chaste flesh.

Transparent "goat's" eyes brightened on a simple-hearted, cheeky face; the soft lines of the neck and shoulders flowed down to the wide wrists. Big, heavy, she surprised with her unexpected flexibility, inaudible, flying gait, plasticity of quick and graceful movements. Her heroine was more serene and simpler than the Kuprin *Olesya*. The mysterious halo that surrounded the Polissya “witch” lost its prophetic, formidable shade in the picture. Marina Vlady adapted the role to her data. Her love Inga is more naive, brighter – there is no hidden drama in it, a dreary foreboding of an imminent and inevitable separation. The harsh, bitter generosity of *Olesya* was replaced by the eternal power of attraction, the suppleness of a meek, obedient to instinct, girlish soul. The actress softened the contrasting colors, moved away from the tragic theme of the image. But what she understood and loved in the story of Kuprin – mergence *Olesya* with nature, the charm of a young, pure nature – has received in her performance of the original freshness” (Sokolskaya, 1968: 18-19).

Already in post-Soviet times, film critic Denis Gorelov wrote that “the authors of *Sorceress* preferred tradition, but brought their honest grain into the general bins. The type of swamp fortuneteller required non-standard attractiveness – the choice of a stray dancer of Russian blood Marina Vlady was akin to inviting the Latvian Artmane to *Native Blood* or the Polish Brylska to *The Irony of Fate...* The role of an inopportunistly naughty guest was very suitable for Maurice Ronet with his vicious grin and suffering eyes. And for the national culture, success had such consequences that it can only be described in a fairy tale” (Gorelov, 2019).

The *Sorceress* has many fans today:

“A wonderful, romantic story, it turned out much more expressive than in the original source by Kuprin, and this is a great merit of the actors” (Tanya).

“I saw this movie in the late 1950s. He shocked me with the depth of feelings between young people and the atmosphere that reigned around them at that time. This is a great movie about love!” (B. Karpov).

Convoy. USA, 1978. Directed by Sam Peckinpah. Release in the USSR - from November 8, 1985: 35.9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Most likely, without even knowing it, the American director Sam Peckinpah (1925-1984) became in 1977 "cinematic enemy No. 1" for the Soviet press. Almost all of the then Soviet

publications, in one way or another touching on the topic of cinema, met with indignation the appearance on the world screen of Peckinpah's film *Iron Cross* (*Steiner – Iron Cross*), which took place on Russian Malaya Zemlya in 1943. And all because Peckinpah dared to contrast in his Westernized military drama the "bad" fascist boss (Maximilian Schell) and the "good" German intelligence officer Steiner (James Coburn). The picture was accused of distorting historical facts, slandering the Soviet army and, of course, justifying fascism and promoting violence.

Thank God, today any domestic film fan can easily be convinced of the absurdity of these accusations. Of course, Peckinpah's knowledge of our country, apparently, was very approximate, which is clear from the somewhat naive depiction of the life of Russian soldiers. Undoubtedly, the picture is devoid of psychological depth and, unlike *Straw Dogs*, lends itself to an unambiguous interpretation. But the position of the authors of *Iron Cross*, in my opinion, does not contain even a trace of revanchism. It is initially humanistic, anti-war. In short, in the 1970s, the film was, in fact, used as a scapegoat for an era of ideological and political confrontation...

In the last eight years of his life, Sam Peckinpah managed to direct only two films.

Convoy (1978), starring Kris Kristofferson, told about a spontaneous protest of huge truck drivers, who demonstrated their dissatisfaction with the rudeness and rudeness of the "jammed" policeman.

In the thriller *Osterman's Weekend* (1983), starring John Hurt, Rutger Hauer, Burt Lancaster and Dennis Hopper, there was talk of a confrontation between two special services, because of which CIA agents are accused of collaborating with the KGB...

I don't think that this, by and large, ordinary film would have become the last point in the director's creative biography if it weren't for pneumonia, which he suddenly fell ill at the end of 1984. The best doctors were powerless to help the body cope with the disease. On December 28, 1984, Sam Peckinpah died in a California clinic.

Already after the death of Sam Peckinpah, when the story of the *Iron Cross* lost its relevance, the USSR decided to release the *Convoy* on the screens ...

In the year of the release of *Convoy* in Soviet distribution, film critic Victor Demin (1937-1993) noted that "among the controversial, changeable figures [of Hollywood directors – A.F.], the figure of Sam Peckinpah seems to be perhaps the most bizarre. Each of his sensational films, which did not know the box office failure, is built primarily as a tense, rapidly unfolding action, with a spectacular clash of polar-minded characters, which inevitably leads to a physical clash, on fists or with a variety of weapons in hand, from the coldest to the super-hot. One gets the impression that this talented director, inexhaustible in the most fantastic inventions, is most concerned with winning the title of "record holder" for some time — the creator of the "best chase", "best fight", "the most painful scene" from a series of episodes of torture, violence and bullying, which the ordinary American film repertoire likes to show off. ... And meanwhile, in each of Peckinpah's works there was a clearly formulated idea, most often of a liberal kind, sometimes not God knows what philosophical depth, but with attempts at a universal generalization. Either he denounced the rampant cruelty in the modern world, or he mourned the present person, who forgot the former integrity of his ancestors in offices and in front of the TV ...

Convoy... is a great gift for fans of fast-paced, famously and endlessly growing action, according to the formula that has developed in Hollywood of "chase road film" – the history of a road chase" (Demin, 1985: 16).

Already in post-Soviet times, S. Kudryavtsev wrote about the *Convoy* as follows: "Of course, one can agree that a weak script is compensated by almost heroic directorial efforts, and Peckinpah demonstrates his passion for attraction moments to the full, supposedly wasting creative energy on a film that is not worth it at all. But this director, who always quarreled with the producers, almost failed to create during his entire career just for his own pleasure, — and it is a sin to reproach him for his desire and even thirst for throwing out his fantasy over the edge. "The meaning of the convoy in motion", — says one of the

characters in the picture. Here is the cinema, that is, etymologically — "motion fixation" is, according to Sam Peckinpah, a mesmerizing way of capturing and slowing down the moments of fast-moving reality. Long live movie fanatics like Peckinpah!" (Kudryavtsev, 1995).

And film critic Denis Gorelov believes that the reasons for the popularity of *Convoy* in the USSR (especially among the male part of the audience) lie in the fact that "the truck driver has always been known in our country as the standard of prosperity, courage, guild mutual assistance and shameless sexism — it was gratifying to know that in faraway America he is perceived in the same way and the cops are not liked in the same way. The call signs *Crazy Horse*, *Black Widow*, *Bald Skull*, and *Mississippi Sore* were sweet to the ear, especially *Old Iguana*, although no one knew yet that it was the nickname of Peckinpah himself" (Gorelov, 2019).

***Convoy* is still being discussed with pleasure by the audience, especially by men:**

"The only and far from the best film by Sam Peckinpah, which somehow miraculously got into Soviet distribution in 1985. Apparently, our ideologists saw in the film distant echoes of the struggle of the proletarians for their rights. Critics wrote about chauffeur solidarity, which allows truck drivers to resist the arrogance of the traffic police. And the people simply poured into cinemas to watch the American "action movie" that rarely hit the Soviet screens. Strict censors severely cut the film, deleting all the scenes that contained any hint of sex, as well as for some reason some moments related to giving bribes to policemen" (Vasya).

"The actors did a great job! Lots of funny moments! By the way, if anyone noticed, the film uses slow-motion footage in some places (when a policeman slaps his hand on a dusty hood, etc.). It emphasizes the moments, makes them expressive! And the people poured, by the way, to the cinemas, not so much to watch the action movie, but how much — to the truck races and just to the enviable independence of the rubber duck in front of the cops! It turned out great!" (Valentinos).

Starman. USA, 1984. Directed by John Carpenter. Release in the USSR – 1987: 35.8 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration (according to other sources - 23.3 million viewers).

In this sci-fi film by the famous American director John Carpenter (*Christina*, *The Thing*, *In the Mouth of Madness*), melodramatic motives are clearly traced. The plot of *Starman* (perhaps the kindest and most touching picture of Carpenter) is quite simple. A space alien (Jeff Bridges) takes the form of the deceased husband of an ordinary Earth woman (Karen Allen). And although the action of the movie is sometimes aggravated by scenes of persecution, there are no naturalistic scenes of violence and creepy monsters familiar to most of the director's films.

By and large, *Starman* is a vivid example of the good old Hollywood, equipped with special effects technologies... In this sense, the central attraction of the film is the scene of the introduction of an alien creature into... the hair from the head of a deceased person, followed by its life-size cloning of the deceased's shell ...

In the same year that *Starman* was released, film critic Andrei Shemyakin published an imaginary joke interview with John Carpenter in the *Moviegoer's Companion*, noting that "the film is about eternal values — "love, friendly affection, mutual assistance, the same throughout the universe." The picture in an adventure, even if in a melodramatic form, raises moral questions. And what an actor! I am sure that the audience will love him" (Shemyakin, 1987: 17).

Viewers of the 21st century remember *Starman*, as a rule, with pleasure:

“A very romantic film that should not be forgotten! It has everything I like about cinema: romantic feelings, extraordinary events and a little humor. A bit of everything, except that the script itself is unexpected to the maximum. ... dreams come true” (Lesistrata).

“A very good science fiction film with subtle psychology about the relationship of two people from different planets. The film *Starman* is a pleasant film in which: romantic feelings, extraordinary events, a subtle psychological analysis of what is happening. But the film director made a mistake in the sense that he portrayed a kind alien as a creature similar in psychology and soul to earthly people, which is wrong, because in life aliens have a soul and a different psychology...” (A. Markov).

“An amazing, pure romantic film with an amazing humane symphonic ending. We must pay tribute to the musical accompaniment and the professional work of the whole team done with love” (Agorbylev).

“The actors who starred in the lead roles were able to convey all the feelings. We observe with interest how an earthly woman and a “star” man develop sympathy, smoothly flowing into love. There are, of course, very touching moments in the film. For example, I really like the scene where the alien tells Jenny, who considers herself infertile, that she will have a son. Very dramatic. And, of course, the final farewell scene is emotional” (Julia).

Romeo and Juliet / Romeo e Giulietta. Italy-UK, 1968. Directed by Franco Zeffirelli. Release in the USSR – 1972: 35.7 million viewers in the first year of demonstration.

When I happened to visit the Franco Zeffirelli (1923-2019) Museum in Florence, I got acquainted with great interest with the exposition dedicated to the film *Romeo and Juliet*: there were presented costumes of the main characters, photographs and video clips about how the shooting went, recordings director's interview...

And I immediately remembered how this film in 1972 made a strong impression on me, then a schoolboy. First of all, the fact that Romeo and Juliet were played not by forty-year-old uncles and aunts, as in Soviet theaters, but by young peers of legendary characters ...

The Soviet film press responded very positively about the film *Romeo and Juliet* even before its release in the domestic film distribution.

For example, film critic Tatyana Khlopyankina (1937-1993) praised this film “that violently protests against the devaluation of feelings, against spiritual misery, against attempts to deprive the word “love” of its original, lofty and significant meaning. How beautiful and young the world shown in the film is! Young mothers are the proud signors of the Montagues and the Capulets. Young men of Verona. They are overwhelmed with strength, temperament, love of life, but the strength has nowhere to go. And they fight, fight, at first playing, amusing the crowd, reveling in their own dexterity, and when they see blood, they get scared, because they really didn’t need blood at all, but just a good fight – for fun. But for all the unnaturalness of this enmity, the film is surprisingly harmonious. This is a world that reveals itself with the tragic love of Romeo and Juliet, striving for harmony and finding it in Juliet's smile and Romeo's joy, in the impulse of these teenagers to each other. Maybe, The film's greatest success is that Romeo and Juliet don't come into it as established, significant personalities. They become like that only when they fall in love” (Khoplyankina, 1969).

The literary critic and writer Valery Geydeko (1940-1979) assessed *Romeo and Juliet* quite positively, but with critical remarks, in the year when this film was released in Soviet distribution: “The screen version of the famous Shakespeare’s tragedy is solved with energetic, sharp touches. The director of the film, Franco Zeffirelli, is a theater director, but in this, his second cinematic work, there is nothing from the stage. The film is dynamic, expressive, made in an emphatically modern manner. The director recreated the external details very carefully, and, probably, historians will have nothing to complain about either in the costumes of the heroes of the film, or in the guise of castles, fountains, shopping malls of Verona. But the behavior of young Veronese – their manners, gestures, conversations –

is by no means the sixteenth century. It is not the quiet streets of a small Italian town that make them remember, but our days, the same Italy or France with excited crowds of youths on noisy city highways. ... Of course, not all pages of Shakespeare's tragedy are equally subject to modern interpretation. And no wonder that there are scenes in the film shot in a fairly familiar and traditional manner, there are episodes that are probably obviously uninteresting to the director and therefore performed superficially and hastily. ... But, thus simplifying the main collision of the tragedy, the director to some extent deprived the picture of that enduring relevance that makes the love story of these two young people look like ordinary love stories. ... Zeffirelli took a certain risk by inviting young actors to the main roles. In essence, both sixteen-year-old Olivia Hussey and seventeen-year-old Leonard Whiting cannot be called actors in the strict sense of the word. It can even be assumed that they will no longer act in films, or, in any case, will no longer achieve the luck that accompanied them in this film. Here, in essence, they play themselves: their youth, passion, temperament. ... Anyway, we return to the traditional question: how fully does the film adaptation correspond to the literary source? The answer has already been sufficiently determined: Zeffirelli consciously sharpens some motives, consciously, sometimes demonstratively, muffles and omits others. And it is precisely from here that some of the costs and losses of this original, polemically sharp, talented and bright film" (Geydeko, 1972: 15).

Loyal fans and even fans (who, by the way, created a special website dedicated to this film on the Internet) have Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* and today there are a great many:

"It seems to me that this is the best film in the history of the adaptation of this tragedy! An amazing director, the game of young actors is interesting, and the music makes the heart beat faster. They don't make movies like this anymore!" (Irina).

"A touching, beautiful, tender film. Great actors and great music. The best, in my opinion, adaptation of this play" (Natalia).

"Certainly the best adaptation of Shakespeare's great tragedy! Acting, costumes and scenery, amazing mesmerizing music, hearing which the heart beats faster, and, of course, a wonderful production that is as close to the text as possible. After viewing, there is a wonderful feeling of tenderness and purity. When I watched it for the first time, I was simply delighted with the play of the young actors who played the main roles. In a word, a masterpiece" (S. Demeniev).

Cartouche. France, 1962. Directed by Philippe de Broca. Release in the USSR - May 23, 1977: 34.9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Director Philippe de Broca (1934-2004) made a number of successful entertainment films: *Cartouche* (1962), *The Man from Rio* (1964), *The Misadventures of a Chinese Man in China* (1965), *The Magnificent* (1973), etc. Some of them ended up in the Soviet film distribution.

Jean-Paul Belmondo has always sincerely loved a bright entertaining spectacle. He liked to do without understudies in dangerous stunts. Here he was not stopped even by a serious injury during the next car chase. Therefore, the path from the star of the "new wave" (*On the last breath*) to the star of the box office action movie was short for Belmondo. Even in the historical adventure film by Philippe de Broca *Cartouche* he consolidated the image of his show hero. Courageous, bold, successful owner of a muscular torso, witty conqueror of women's hearts, unstoppable in achieving the goal. Belmondo played a similar image, for example, in the film *Spouses of the second year*, which takes place during the French Revolution. Belmondo's partner in *Cartouche*, the charming Italian Claudia Cardinale, was also good.

Film critic Alexander Braginsky (1920-2016) wrote that "many viewers saw in the *Cartouche* the features of the popular *Fanfan Tulip*. Indeed, they have a common origin. Both

are fond of women outside their circle: Fanfan – the king's daughter ..., *Cartouche* is a secular beauty, unable to appreciate his impulse. But in the picture of Christian-Jacques, the Fronde was seething, a mockery of those in power, of the “war in lace”, while Philippe de Broca epicly sang the exploits of a loner. ... Both films entertained, but in different ways. ... Jean-Paul Belmondo performed dangerous stunts himself, refusing the services of a stuntman. And it completely satisfied both those who are looking for only entertainment in the cinema (and they are the majority), and those who seek to find food for the mind and heart” (Braginsky, 1998: 75).

Opinions of current viewers about the *Cartouche* sometimes differ significantly.

Pro:

“During my Soviet childhood, this was my favorite film. In that pre-video era, I experienced real, great happiness when I saw this film in a nearby cinema ... There was an impression of something insanely romantic, beautiful and sentimental, especially in the final music, to which the carriage sinks” (Lizaveta).

“A well-done adventure film. One can only wonder how it was allowed to be released in a capitalist country, since the ideas of the revolution are very talentedly advertised in it, and most rich people are depicted as bastards and villains” (Sputnik).

Contra:

“Unsuccessful imitation of *Fanfan-Tulip*”. Belmondo successfully played a criminal redneck and a sexual maniac. Is that how it was intended? The only one who succeeded was Claudia Cardinale” (Fred).

“The film was good in its time, now hopelessly outdated, never becoming an immortal classic. Explicit search with pathos, looks with a sense of falsity. Doesn't touch” (Lena).

Tootsie. USA, 1982. Directed by Sydney Pollack. Release in the USSR – 1984: 34.8 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Ancestors of Sidney Pollack (1934-2008) came to America from Russia. They settled in a small town and started their own business. The father of the future famous director was a pharmacist. He dreamed that when his son grew up, he would receive a solid and prestigious profession as a dentist. But little Sidney didn't seem to be tempted by the prospect of drilling teeth and turning crowns for the rest of his life. For days on end, he was lost in parking lots, where you could watch movies on a giant screen without getting out of your car. Of course, Sidney didn't have a car. He watched films standing up, gradually turning into an inveterate moviegoer. And from film mania to acting school, as they say, at hand. At the age of twenty, Sidney made his debut on stage, and soon began to seriously think about directing. In the 1960s, he was already among the notable filmmakers in the United States

One of the most successful films of his film career was *Tootsie*, a comedy starring Dustin Hoffman and Jessica Lange. In this picture, an unemployed actor is forced to impersonate a woman in order to get a role in a television series. Sydney Pollack exemplifies the system of show business with satirical brilliance. But as always, he does not forget about the love line, this time resolved in a cheerful eccentric way...

Undoubtedly, against the background of two benefit roles (male and female), played by Dustin Hoffman, the work of Jessica Lange remains in the background. But even here she managed to find memorable features, details for her charming heroine.

In the year *Tootsie* was released in Soviet distribution, film critic Valentin Mikhalkovich (1937-2006) wrote that “the action of this picture is replete with funny episodes, the narration is swift and elastic, it develops directly and easily; It seems that the picture was taken in one breath. However, the film press reports that eight screenwriters worked on it – alternately, dozens of script options were created: three directors staged the picture – also alternately, until Sydney Pollack finally took the reins of power into his own hands. Tears invisible to the world remained behind the scenes, on the set, and we have the opportunity to

watch one of the most fun, subtle and, at the same time, sharply social comedies that have appeared in world cinema in recent times” (Mikhalkovich, 1984).

In post-Soviet times, film critic Tatyana Vetrova confirmed that “even the seemingly purely entertaining comedy *Tootsie*, one of the highest-grossing films in the history of American cinema (and popular in our country), touches on the burning issues of feminism, shaded by the director’s bitterness about the displacement of the real art of television show. Dustin Hoffman, the true co-author of *Tootsie*, who masterfully played the transformation of an unemployed actor into a female actress who got a role in a soap opera, first makes thousands of viewers admire the independent character of his Dorothy, and in the finale rips off her mask and thereby overthrows their idol who turned out to be a man!” (Vetrova, 2000: 132).

Opinions of 21st-century viewers about *Tootsie* often differ significantly:

“The film is superb. ... My favorite scene is when *Tootsie* stirs the salad with two forks, looking at Jessica with a touching and loving look when she is with a child” (Liana).

“A very benevolent film, a vacation film, a vacation film, a weekend film. ... At that time, few people knew about the so-called feminization, emancipation and masculinization and thought about the meanings of these words. Good comedy” (Igor).

“A great movie! Funny, witty, at the same time – psychological and relevant to this day. In the 1980s, my family and I enjoyed watching it in the cinema, laughing heartily” (Tigrunka).

“This film is very ideologically inflated, it is typically feminist propaganda packaged in an attractive wrapper. Here is the sexism of the director, who does not consider women to be human, and the problems of wives who are beaten by their husbands. Harassment of women at work, declarations of women's independence. Discussing whether power makes women masculine. In all these questions, Dustin in the clothes of a woman gives the "correct answer" how women should act, put things in order. Up to the purchase of electric shock batons for livestock, which need to scare away men. In general, men are really depicted as cattle, fools ... and women are so smart, cuties. This film is a delicate thing” (Ekibas).

Warlords of Atlantis. UK, 1978. Directed by Kevin Connor. Release in the the USSR - from December 30, 1981: 34.7 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Director Kevin Connor during his career directed more than three dozen entertainment films of various genres, and some of them were shown in the Soviet film distribution.

In the *Warlords of Atlantis* a certain brave professor in 1896 goes in search of a sunken civilization, but an unknown monster attacks the bathyscaphe under water...

During the years of the release of this fantastic movie, the Soviet film press mostly passed it over in silence. But already in the 21st century, analyzing the *Warlords of Atlantis*, film critic Denis Gorelov, in my opinion, rightly writes, that the authors of the film “raked into one cauldron all possible utopia: superhumans in white chitons and slaves with implanted gills, goblins in egg-shaped helmets and the Loch Ness monster with a hump and flippers, Jurassic lizards and a freed creative mind with a pro-fascist bias. As a result, the classic Fort Boyard came out – a decorative prison washed by the sea with gold placers, along which, bypassing obstacles, physically developed blondes with a team spirit and local Amazons in short tunics run in single file. ... in a word, we have another prehistoric comic book about the secrets of closed systems” (Gorelov, 2019).

Viewers of the XXI century still remember the *Warlords of Atlantis* with a kind word:

"Super movie. In this fantastic picture, in a camouflaged form, the old truth is given out that aliens are operating on Earth, fraudulently luring earthly talents into their networks" (Evgeny).

"The scenes with the attack on the bathysphere by the dinosaur and the swamp monster were pretty scary for those years. In the cinema, the girls really screamed in fear. Quite a solid plot, high-quality special effects: if the film were to be released on the big screen now as a retro-show, it would certainly attract viewers even now" (Alexander).

The Adventures of Odysseus / Ulysses. Italy, 1954. Directed by Mario Camerini. Release in the USSR – 1962: 34.0 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Mario Camerini (1895-1981) started working in silent films. During his cinematic career, he directed about three dozen full-length feature films of various genres, including adaptations of classic works.

In the year of the release of this film in the Soviet distribution, the *Cinema Art* journal published a detailed article entitled "Odysseus, his wife and a little theory", which stated that "cinema-not-art" really exists. There are many. Quantitatively, it probably predominates. Its artistic potential is close to zero. Ideological too. But it's a spectacle. It's fun. It is a pastime, certainly not without pleasure. ... This "non-art" has its own rating scale. Their "good" and "bad"; their failures and achievements. Let's say, *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad* – on the internal scale of "non-art" – is at best a three. *The Adventures of Odysseus* is a higher score" (Inovertseva, 1962: 56).

Already in the 21st century, Georgy Petrov notes that after the cuts made in the film before the release in the USSR film distribution, there were significant changes in the concept of the work: "The Soviet version, as you might guess, is much more idealistic. The Soviet Odysseus has no right to be too cruel – so much as to kill a woman, even if this woman is a traitorous servant. And he has no right to be too infantile to, even succumbing to a magical illusion, spin around in front of a mirror in new clothes, like a real fashionista. Accordingly, the son of the Soviet Odysseus has no right to break loose and raise his voice at his mother, and even more so to sharply push her away. ... On the other hand, the Soviet version very clearly emphasizes the theme of Odysseus's theomachism – of course, but what about the rivers back!" (Petrov, 2019).

Few 21st century viewers remember this film today:

"The artists are matched harmoniously. Kirk Douglas is moderately ironic and cunning here. On the spot and Silvana Mangano with Anthony Quinn. The technique of tricks is excellent for its time ... And today it's not a bad thing, even a downhole little thing!" (V. Plotnikov).

"I saw the film for the first time as a child on black and white TV, but it still made a strong impression then. Now revised already in color. The film still looks, and does not even seem particularly old-fashioned. This time I noticed that both Penelope and Circe are played by the same actress – Silvana Mangano" (B. Nezhdanov).

"Everyone who has watched this film will notice the absence of the naturalism that is fashionable in our time ("hardcore", as they call it among the youth), because in the fifties, even in the West, society forced filmmakers to observe the norms of decency. For example, let's take the scene of the blinding of the Cyclops Polyphemus, known to everyone from the school bench. In the film, the process of gouging out the eye is not shown - it is only shown how Odysseus and his comrades bring a stake to the face of a giant and the screams of a cyclops holding his head. Everything else remains behind the scenes. And if this film were shot now, then with full confidence we can say that its creators would definitely show it with all the smallest details ... For now, alas, not only filmmakers, but society itself (especially in the West) practically does not comply with the norms decency" (Red Whirlwind).

Dangerous Pursuit / Cross the River in Anger. Japan, 1976. Directed by Junya Sato. In the USSR – 1977: 33.7 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Director Junya Sato is one of the most famous Japanese directors, who has been making films in spectacular genres for many decades. *Cross the River in Anger* – an action-packed detective with thriller elements was one of the favorites of the public in the Soviet film distribution of the second half of the 1970s.

Film critic Yevgeny Nefedov notes, that “some plot twists and turns may not seem convincing enough, but rather introduced for purely spectacular reasons. The prosecutor, suspended for the duration of the investigation from his official duties, will have to clash in the mountains with an angry bear, hastily master the control of a small plane, make his way (to Tokyo!) Through a police cordon on a horse. But the authors succeeded best of all in moments in which one feels following the traditions of Alfred Hitchcock, especially since the initial premise (the prosecution of a knowingly innocent person) is quite in the spirit of the maestro of suspense” (Nefedov, 2018).

The opinions of the audience of the XXI century about this movie are ambiguous:

“This film perhaps ... to modern consumers of the Hollywood mainstream, the picture may seem old-fashioned and prosaic. And at one time, her attributes hit the Soviet public without fail” (Boris).

“It's hard to be objective about a movie that literally shook the psyche of a ten-year-old teenager, which I was in the fall of 1977. Time washed out almost all the details of the film. ... But I always have an inexplicable aching feeling from touching the unknown culture, traditions and aesthetics of a distant and mysterious country in the Far East. ... After nearly 37 years, I managed to rewatch this film. Of course, the detective from the 1970s of the last century is largely anachronistic and naive, and in places slips into literal primitivism. Few special effects cause a smile and appeal to indulgence. However, I caught myself on the fact that I still like this movie! And what is most surprising, I felt almost the same emotions that owned me back in 1977! The magic of the film has not disappeared” (I. Sapsan).

“In general, this picture was made according to the classic canons of Soviet romantic detectives: brave, honest heroes and vile villains who must be punished! This is exactly what she is captivated by. It is difficult to predict how the movie will be perceived by modern viewers. But if you like to get nostalgic about retro films with a classic “good triumphs over evil” approach, then it might be worth a try. After all, perception, as you know, is an individual thing” (E. Kolpakov).

Private Detective / L'Alpagueur. France, 1975. Directed by Philippe Labro. Release in the USSR - from August 28, 1978: 33.5 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Philippe Labro has long retired from directing, but many viewers still remember his strong thriller *L'Alpagueur*.

This is a good example of a crime thriller that was shown on Soviet screens under the camouflage name *Private Detective*. His courageous hero (J.-P. Belmondo), hunting for the killer, is not inclined to worry about the use of illegal methods of combating crime.

Roger – the hero of this movie – earns his living by handing over lawbreakers to the police. For the sake of the implementation of the "blue dream" – the purchase of a small island in the warm southern sea – he tracks down a strange maniac killer named Hawk. Both of them – Roger and Hawk – are engaged in a risky business that requires nervous tension, strength, dexterity, a sophisticated mind, impeccable possession of weapons. And they operate in similar ways. Roger, with a disarming smile, undresses naive English tourists to change after escaping from prison, beats half to death truck drivers who mistook him for a bandit. The Mysterious

Hawk (Bruno Kremer) also smiles when he kills his victims, though much sadder and weaker. But one of them was less fortunate. Those are the rules of the game...

In Soviet times, many film critics scolded this movie and other action films starring Jean-Paul Belmondo for promoting violence as a way to solve problems.

Here is what, for example, film critic Andrey Plakhov wrote: “I willingly join those who love exciting detective stories, witty comedies, romantic melodramas, especially if the artistic Jean-Paul Belmondo is involved in them. But I can't say enough about what worries me. Increasingly, in films of this kind, we meet the cult of a muscular superman hero, not burdened with either conscience or compassion. If in *Magnificent* this unattractive accent was weakened with the help of sly irony, and in *The Bride and Groom of Year II* – due to romantic pathos, then already in *L'Alpagueur* he showed through completely. Vulgarity, admiring brute force, and sometimes very sophisticated cruelty characterize a number of other paintings with the participation of Belmondo: *The Heir*, *The Corpse of My Enemy*, *Professional*. And here's the last thing we saw at the box office – *Le Guignolo*. From it it is obvious: if this is indeed a game, it is a bloody game, and the more hands, the more strong fists will be used” (Plakhov 1983: 17).

However, Soviet viewers did not listen to such opinions of film critics and continued to buy tickets for films with Belmondo.

Viewers of the XXI century, as a rule, have a positive attitude towards *L'Alpagueur*:

“The film is wonderful! Talented acting and very beautiful music! Real atmospheric cinema... Classics of cinema” (O. Durbin).

“In my opinion, one of the best roles of Belmondo. But as for the Soviet rolling version, if my memory serves me, ... the finale was cut off there” (Alexey).

Sun Valley Serenade. USA, 1941. Directed by Bruce Humberstone. Release in the USSR - from June 26, 1944. Re- Release in the USSR - from January 1961: 33.4 million viewers.

Bruce Humberstone (1901-1984) directed about fifty entertaining films and television series, but it was *Sun Valley Serenade* that brought him real fame. After the Second World War, B. Humberstone made several adventure films about Tarzan (*Tarzan and the Bad Safari*, *Tarzan's Deathmatch*) and in the early 1960s on television, where he ended his directorial career in 1969.

The musical comedy entered the fund of world film classics, thanks to the jazz orchestra of Glenn Miller (1904-1944), it went to the Soviet film distribution twice, each time successfully gathering tens of millions of viewers.

And the audience of the 21st century still remembers the *Sun Valley Serenade*:

“Film for all time! Sparkling, great sounding and magical. With all my heart I am grateful to those who participated in its creation!” (K. Petrova).

“I love the film for the music, for Sonya's great skating, for the snowy views, for Chattanooga-too-too, for the Miller Orchestra ..., the atmosphere...” (Olena).

ABBA: The Movie. Australia-Sweden, 1977. Directed by Lasse Hallström. Release in the USSR - from August 1981: 33.2 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

At the turn of the 21st century, director Lasse Hallström became famous for his films *Chocolate* and *The Cider House Rules*, and Soviet viewers got acquainted with one of his first films, *ABBA*.

By the time this concert film appeared in the Soviet box office, the *ABBA* group, thanks to movie recorders and records, was already very popular in the USSR. The success of the film could probably be even more impressive if it were not for the artificial restriction of its screenings caused by the protests of "ideologically correct comrades"...

Thus, *ABBA* became, probably, the only Western film with trendy pop music that got into Soviet distribution. Prior to this, Soviet viewers were offered mainly to listen to Indian melodies or Mexican-Argentinean-Spanish tangos in the cinema ...

Film critic Denis Gorelov believes that the popularity of this group "from Moscow to the outskirts" was so huge, because "ABBA met the most inert standards of the pensioners of the USSR. She sang softly, but loudly – for the elderly and the young. She came from a gingerbread shop, forever neutral, with a social package in Sweden. She did not fight for peace at all ... They were allowed even on New Year's Eve after the GDR television ballet – the highest degree of admission. ... Probably, we, the whole country, were that rookie reporter who pretends to be his own on the board, and he only manages to look at the outgoing limousine from behind. And the poor man dreams of girls A sitting on his lap, and guys B let themselves be slapped on the shoulders and ride on a yacht. In reality, all these raspberries went to the film director and clip maker of the group, Lasse Hallström, who believed in himself so much that he later filmed for Hollywood *The Cider House Rules*, *Chocolate* and *What's Eating Gilbert Grape*" (Gorelov, 2019).

The impressions from the show of this movie were remembered by the audience for a long time:

"The film is great. One of the best musical films in the history of world cinema of all time. *ABBA* is a super group. ... among the people this group has always been very popular. Especially, I think in the former USSR. And personally, I have always been indifferent to the opinion of music critics and the so-called "experts" in music. This, by the way, applies to cinema as well. I have my own views and tastes and I either like it or not. It doesn't matter what others say about it. And the film *ABBA* I watched for the first time as a child. I remember the crazy queues when the film was at the box office. ... It seems to be a simple plot. But it is so coolly staged, and the music of *ABBA* itself is something" (Ruslan).

"Actually, at that time, it was really a breakthrough, an event. For the first time, a film about a really super popular Western group appeared on the screens of the country. If the film had been released about five years later (and the Soviet film distribution most often did this), then there would be no hype (at least, such a hype). I remember going to him six times!" (Baby Roo).

These are the things... Can you imagine if at least one film with the participation of the *Beatles* was released in the USSR?

SOS Concorde / Case Concorde 79 / Concorde Affaire' 79. Italy, 1979. Directed by Ruggiero Deodato. Release in the USSR - since October 1980: 33.2 million (according to other sources - 24.2 million) viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Ruggiero Deodato made quite professional entertainment films, sometimes adventure films, but more often horror films (*Cannibal Hell*, *Cannibal Last World*, etc.). The latter, of course, did not get into the Soviet film distribution, and became available only on pirated video in the era of "perestroika"...

In the action-packed film *SOS Concorde*, reporter Brody tries to investigate the crime of a plane crash on his own.

This generally ordinary European entertainment production would not have had any success in the USSR if it had not been released in the “hungry” Western cinema in 1980, ten years later, when the Soviet pirated video market was already filled with much better Hollywood entertainment movies .

Film critic Denis Gorelov in the XXI century, I think, is right: for the Soviet film distribution of 1980, *SOS Concorde* “was a real gem: cheap, creepy, unsqueamish, clumsy in the image of the United States... and most importantly, it depicts the sabotage of an unnamed American carrier against European competitors. The director was especially successful in choosing the target of slanderous fabrications” (Gorelov, 2019: 102-103).

However, even today, *SOS Concorde* has fans in the Russian expanses:

“From time to time I review *SOS Concorde*, and I feel that for me personally this film, as a separate detective story, is not outdated. ... I also liked the musical theme of the film ... I am sure that I am not alone here” (Boris).

“*SOS Concorde* is a fine example of thrilling adventures on land, air and sea, in this case involving the mystery of the crash of the *Concorde* supersonic liner. ... We must pay tribute to the director Ruggiero Deodato, he created a magnificent "non-stop action" film, which takes place in exotic places on the globe” (Kabanov).

“*SOS Concorde* is a high-quality fusion of a purely European spy detective and, in part, a disaster film, although it is the detective part that prevails in the film, offering the viewer a powerful and well-thought-out intrigue and bright plot twists, dressed in excellent direction ... I recommend this bright picture to everyone fans of detective stories, thrillers and connoisseurs of Italian cinema, and I think the movie will not disappoint you at all” (Sumarokov).

Fanfan Tulip / Fanfan la Tulipe. France-Italy, 1951. Directed by Christian-Jacques. Release in the USSR – 1955: 33.0 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Director Christian-Jacques (1904-1994) was one of the favorites of the Soviet film distribution, so a whole bunch of his films (*Fanfan Tulip*, *Babetta Goes to War*, *Law is Law*, *Black Tulip*, etc.) in different years successfully went on screens from Moscow to the outskirts.

Perhaps, *Fanfan Tulip* is the most famous film starring Gerard Philip (1922-1959), in which costume adventures were seasoned with comedic stuffing and parodic flair.

Film expert Lyubov Alova wrote that “decades passed, several new generations were born and grew up, but even for them the name of Gerard Philip is associated with youth, temperament, wit, recklessness and daring inherent in his world-famous Fanfan-Tulip from the film of the same name by Christian-Jacques” (Alova, 1997: 148).

Film expert Yakov Ioskevich (1926-2020) believed that “the director – and even more so the performer – managed to enrich the usual form of an adventure film with many nuances that drew the viewer's attention not only to living, active heroes, but also to an ironic understanding of the military fever, which the powers that be are often obsessed with” (Ioskevich, 2011: 57).

And S. Kudryavtsev noted that *Fanfan Tulip* “with outward innocence and naivete, a rather frivolous attitude to historical events and the absence of special artistic claims, he keeps an amazing charge of vivacity and optimism, an inexhaustible love for life, boundless faith in

achieving the most incredible goals, carefree condescension to all hardships and misfortunes. ... And this picture is also characterized by lightness and grace, good taste and subtlety of style in the story of the adventures of a young rake in the time of Louis XV” (Kudryavtsev, 2006).

Viewers of the XXI century are still supportive of the *Fanfan Tulip*:

"Legendary film! Gorgeous Gerard Philip and charming Gina Lollobrigida! They made a beautiful couple! I see them, and only them, as Fanfan and Adeline ”(Andrey).

“In my opinion, this is a very successful comedy-parody film on a historical theme for the early 1950s. It turned out very funny, original and unique” (Nord).

“A wonderful comedy in the best traditions of French cinema. Watched it 3 times in a row. ... Gerard Philip is perfection itself. Here they are, French grace, wit, daydreaming, glibness, cheerfulness and lightness. For so many years, Gerard Philip has not been in the world, and his work in the cinema continues to give pleasure, sadness and joy ”(Lucy).

Death Among Icebergs / Orca: Killer Whale. Italy-Netherlands-USA, 1977.
Directed by Michael Anderson. Release in the USSR – 1982: 33.0 million viewers in the first year of demonstration.

In this movie Michael Anderson (1920-2018) very timely spoke out in defense of the animal world of the seas and oceans. Separate scenes of the film are made with extraordinary skill, tensely, harshly. In the picture, in addition to the handsome whale, wonderful actors Richard Harris and Charlotte Rampling are busy. The former model Bo Derek demonstrates her athletic figure... However, the second nature of the script and directing, in my opinion, minimizes all acting efforts, leaving an opportunity for cameraman Ted Moore to shoot beautiful sunrises and sunsets and majestic whale jumps to the sad music of Ennio Morricone. ..

In 1982, film critic Vladimir Dmitriev (1940-2013) reacted to this film history more negatively: “The film directed by Michael Anderson *Orca*, which received the title *Death among Icebergs* on the Soviet screens, is almost defenseless against criticism. Extremely dependent in terms of issues and style, it can and does cause irritation with its genre patchwork, which incorporates elements of a western, melodrama, horror film, as well as popular science and species films. This is justified not so much by naive anthology, although it is directly stated, but by some thematic simplicity that allows you to use other people's finds, inserting extensive cinematic quotes into your work and not shy away from bloody or sentimentalized clichés. And the plot of the picture, which managed to fit a lot of inconsistencies and lack of motivation in an hour and a half, no longer withstands a serious attitude, which, even taking into account the conventionality of the chosen manner of narration, can hardly be forgiven by the authors of the film, if not too loving, then at least respecting their skill. Yes, and the actors, including good ones – Richard Harris, Shalotte Rampling – played their roles with a minimum of energy. ... The list of failures and miscalculations can be endlessly wound on a critical spindle ... However, the cast from *Jaws*, clumsy and untalented, still lives on the screen and lives its own life and even enters into a kind of conflict state with the phenomenon that gave rise to it. ... The animal [in *Orca*] personifies not evil to be destroyed, as in *Moby Dick* or to some extent in *Jaws*, but, as it were, the highest truth of nature, protesting against human violence” (Dmitriev, 1982 : 8-9).

However, film critic Igor Evdokimov believes that “*Orca* is by no means the worst representative of the *Jaws* clones. It's a spectacular movie with a strong cast, rugged polar beauty, and a devilishly inventive killer whale. Fans of the genre are probably already familiar with the film, and for those who want to join the "animal horrors" this is an excellent number 2 after Steven Spielberg's masterpiece (not to mention the fact that *Orca* is definitely better than all the *Jaw's* sequels)” (Evdokimov, 2018).

And film critic Denis Gorelov reasonably recalls that “the ritual battle of a Man with a Very Large Fish is the main motif of American mythology, nurtured by *Moby Dick*, popular there at the level of our *Eugene Onegin* as a *Clever Book* in General. The plot of martial arts emerges from them with enviable regularity – one *Old Man and the Sea* is enough to understand the significance of the mythologeme for the national character. Moreover, if the books of the XIX and the first half of the XX century. certified the priority of man and his tanned character, the environmentalism of the 1970s shifted the focus towards the unreasonableness of Homo sapiens in nature management” (Gorelov, 2019).

Film critic Alexei Vasiliev gave the highest rating to this film: “In the scene where Nolan's schooner leaves for the duel, there is a close-up of Harris' sea-blown face in a chain mail hood; behind it, the serpentine of the village with moorings and figures lined up along them leaves in a gray-blue perspective. The frame is the cinematic equivalent of Brueghel. ... Finally, the battle of the whale with the human: the ratio of the sizes of the opponents gives the picture the appearance of an apocalyptic vision. Is it worth waiting for the apocalypse to re-evaluate an unrecognized masterpiece?” (Vasiliev, 2013: 372).

Current viewers tend to have good memories of *Orca: Killer Whale*:

“I liked the movie. I was very impressed by the story about the fight to the death of a poacher and a male killer whale, who takes revenge on him for the death of his girlfriend. This film should be a lesson for those who are merciless towards nature” (Barbos).

“Even in my school years, I watched this film in the cinema, on the big screen, with stereo sound, I remember the cry of the killer whale. A very entertaining film, beautiful shots, and what music. I especially remember the ending, the eyes of the killer whale...” (M. Novikova).

“I saw the film for the first time in my distant school years, recently with great pleasure I watched it again. I never saw anything better (the struggle and life of man and animals). Wonderful film, great music, excellent performance by Rampling (I remember this actress from this film) and Harris! Well, the plot – there are no words, the drama of aerobatics” (Mag).

Cleopatra. USA-UK, 1963. Directors: Ruben Mamulian, Darryl F. Zanuck, Joseph Leo Mankiewicz. Release in the USSR – 1979: 32.9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

The most expensive and large-scale peplum of the 1960s was undoubtedly *Cleopatra* (1963). The cost of it amounted to 44 million dollars, and although only one director is listed in the credits – Joseph Mankievich (1909-1993), in fact, during the four years of filming there were three directors. The film was started by Ruben Mamulian (1897-1987) and finished by producer Darryl F. Zanuck (1902-1979). As the head of the MGM company, he considered it necessary to mount the many hours of *Cleopatra* material on his own.

Interest in the film was fueled by the press for any reason, all the more so because these reasons were enough, because the frequent scandals between Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton constantly teetered on the brink of a foul. *Cleopatra* went around all the screens of the world (having reached, however, with a long delay and to the expanses of the USSR), although, obviously, it was inferior in terms of directing to the "peplums" of William Wyler and Stanley Kubrick.

Soviet film critics disliked *Cleopatra* immediately and forever. As an example, I will give lines from the book of Romil Sobolev (1926-1991): “No matter how much and rightly they scolded this picture, wild in its plot, one cannot help but notice that it offers an incomparable spectacle: to watch for more than four hours on the most vulgar imaginable, hopelessly stupid *Cleopatra* – Taylor – hellish torment. ... It is not at all necessary to write about this in order to enter into disputes with countless critics of this absurd Hollywood creation, which is already conceived and monstrously inconsistent in its various parts. ... The

rule of action films – to cast the most popular actors in the lead roles – in the case of Taylor led to a crushing failure; the laughter caused by the quarrelsome and well-fed Cleopatra buried everything that the operators and artists managed to do...” (Sobolev, 1975: 187-188).

However, film critic Yevgeny Nefedov believes that “after the time has elapsed, *Cleopatra* is perceived, oddly enough, more favorably. Mankiewicz tried not only to take into account the finds of the creators of the paintings of the same name in 1917 and 1934, but also, if possible, to use the entire colossal potential accumulated by the peplum. ... Even Taylor at certain moments (the spectacular appearance of a beauty wrapped in ... a carpet; an angry tirade against Caesar, who was forced to set fire to part of the funds of the Library of Alexandria) achieves credibility” (Nefedov, 2017).

Opinions of 21st century viewers about *Cleopatra* are often polar.

Pro:

“I think this is the most beautiful historical film. I admire the pair of E. Taylor and R. Barton. ... I love films with their participation, they play couples in love very touchingly” (Novikova).

“This film struck me for a very long time and forever. This *Cleopatra* is still the most beautiful of all! One costume with golden feathers delights and fascinates!” (Viksyia).

“Elizabeth Taylor embodied exactly the queen that everyone wanted. She is beautiful, charismatic, majestic, smart, passionate, etc.” (Maximilian).

“Great Liz as a great queen! Only she! No matter how much this film has been criticized for a bad game, excessive pomposity, there is still nothing better, and there will not be. ... How can you forget the legendary shot when she winks at Mark Antony upon arrival in Rome! Oh, those charmingly insidious violet eyes - you can forgive everything for them...” (Versoise).

Contra:

“It's impossible to watch... All the actors play badly” (Verano).

“Terrible film. What is Ancient Rome, what is Ancient Egypt! .. Yes, there is no Rome or Egypt at all ... There is a theatrical, American to the core production, reminiscent of some kind of Broadway musical, only without songs, something popular, unnatural, boring ... Here, I found the word – all for fun! Americanism... Very bad impressions from the film” (Leta).

“The film is a perfect vampuka and theatrical sleaze. And the point here is not that the story is distorted (yes, we really don't know much about this *Cleopatra* from surviving sources). ... All this could be forgiven if the movie came out tritely interesting. And it turned out very boring, stilted, without any glimpse of anything. It's a shame that Taylor will always be associated with this poof. ... A complete and well-deserved failure!” (Amy du Soleil).

Nude Maja / La Maja desnuda / La Maja nue. Italy–France, 1958. Directed by Henry Coster. Release in the USSR - from February 28, 1968: 32.8 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Directed by Henry Coster (1905-1988) gained fame in Europe directing the famous entertainment films *Peter* (1934) and *Little Mama* (1935), and then had a very successful career in Hollywood.

The *Nude Maja* is a costume melodrama about the love between the famous Spanish artist Francisco Goya (1746-1828) and the Duchess of Alba (Ava Gardner), who posed for his famous painting.

The Soviet film press reacted to the *Nude Maja* with undisguised irony.

So Film expert and critic Sofya Dunina (1900-1976) wrote that in this film “everything is perfectly sustained in terms of colors, according to the drawing. Revived Rococo, in which living feelings, bold passion, freedom-loving thought must perish and perish. And the

struggle and death are beautiful, bright and elegant, like red blood on the snow-white shirt of the wounded Goya. Everything is a little arbitrary, like in a fairy tale, where feelings are strong, as in life, and life is beautiful, as it does not happen in life. Such is the genre, this is its right, this is also its strength, as well as in the beauty of open passions, an extremely intense struggle not for life, but for death ... Let's not be hypocritical: the melodrama genre has many fans, and *Nude Maja* will bring them great pleasure” (Dunina, 1968: 27).

Viewers remember this film in the 21st century:

“Very beautiful Ava Gardner! Nature is beautiful! Gorgeous costumes! And the movie is good!” (Viksyta).

“The luxury of the interiors, the beauty of the characters, the magnificent scenes with dances and episodes that seem to resurrect Goya's cartoons ... all this is pleasant to look at, but that's all. From the Duchess of Alba they made almost a revolutionary, and from Goya – an irresistible matador and macho. ... In general, a typical beautiful film, close in style to Hollywood cinema of that time, with good actors who professionally performed the director's task. Our film with Banionis is much better, it is deeper and more precise” (NVC).

The Man-Orchestra / L'homme orchestra. France, Italy, 1970. Directed by Serge Korber. Release in the USSR - from October 30, 1973: 32.7 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

French director Serge Corber (1936-2022) staged films of different genres: from comedies with de Funes to melodramas and erotic frivolities...

In my opinion, *The Man-Orchestra* is one of the most successful comedies starring Louis de Funes (1914-1983), moreover, dance-musical and a little parody.

In 1973, *The Man-Orchestra* became for three tens of millions of Soviet viewers a kind of window into the trendy world of European pop culture. Still would! Contrary to the tradition of releasing Western films on Soviet screens with a colossal delay, *The Man-Orchestra* was released in the USSR only three (!!!) years after its filming...

***The Man-Orchestra* ironically embodied on the screen exactly that European style of the 1970s, about which film critic Denis Gorelov wrote:** “Advertising flocks of mimic dancers in flared trousers, apache collars and caps with a giant visor in kindergarten colors fluttered across the screens. They fluffed their eyelashes, did can-can steps, and in their most mature ages portrayed a flower garden of mentally retarded crumbs. ... Against this background, the man became infantilized and almost disappeared from the musical, flickering on the periphery of the plot in the name of comic numbers. ... Equally dressed sky swallows and half-haired half-men, nobody's children and plastic instead of thought were a characteristic sign of the era of disco, anime and commercials. The light music of good morning organized the living space of the golden billion, and it seemed that there would be no end to this dancing paradise in yellow and blue wigs with the refrain of PitiPitipa” (Gorelov, 2019).

Memories of *The Man-Orchestra*, as a pleasant entertainment, warm the souls of many today's spectators:

“This is one of my all-time favorite films, it is in my category of films that you can watch 20 times and want to watch 20 more times” (Gudsan).

“An amazing film: beautiful, funny, musical ... Delight” (V. Prokop).

“In this wonderful film, it's like they collected all the comedy that you could think of. Scenes with scales and food, Evans' bedtime story, rehearsals, casting... Comedy of comedies!” (Erna).

“A bright, dynamic film, I liked it so much in 1973 that I went to the cinema several times ... I remember my friends and I really liked the hair with a parting in the middle of Olivier de

Funes, who played the role of Philip Evans. After that, there was a fashion for such a hairstyle” (Umirzak).

Romancing the Stone. USA-Mexico, 1984. Directed by Robert Zemeckis. Release in the USSR – 1989: 32.7 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

In *Romancing the Stone* by Robert Zemeckis comedy and parody episodes are organically woven into the adventure canvas about the search for a giant green diamond. Leading actors Michael Douglas and Kathleen Turner lead their roles with a fair dose of irony.

Of course, it was not Spielberg who pioneered a series of film adventures in exotic countries. American cinema developed this commercial vein half a century ago. But, following the well-known proverb “New is well forgotten old,” Spielberg, and after him Zemeckis, in the 1980s confidently returned millions of viewers to cinema halls, leaving comfortable chairs in front of the TV.

With all the stylization, irony and parody (however, by no means accentuated), *Romancing the Stone* is built according to the canons of a traditional fairy tale, where there is a frog princess, a handsome prince and, of course, a bunch of insidious villains. The plain-looking writer Joan, in the course of action, becomes a dexterous and resourceful beauty, with whom, of course, a slender and courageous superman, who is also a seller of rare parrots, falls in love ... The crown of this story, no doubt, can only be a happy ending, in film criticism articles usually called “happy ending”.

Rhythmically, *Romancing the Stone* is very well structured, with emotionally intense episodes evenly spaced by slow pauses that give impressionable viewers a chance to catch their breath to immediately get excited again, watching the heroes attack snakes and crocodiles, or (which is no better for Joan and her brave companion) of a gloomy-looking mafioso...

Before us is an entertaining movie in a refined form. However, with all the ease with which this picture is staged, one cannot help but feel a kind of spectacular directorial culture, Spielberg's “school”, based, I dare to think, on respect for the diverse tastes of the audience.

The authors, taking into account the interests of those who perceive this tale as a true fact, do not forget about the “older” viewers, here and there scattering parodic quotes, details and hints around the film that turn *Romancing the Stone* (by analogy with *Indiana Jones*) on an exciting film expedition through the adventurous plots of the world screen.

Film critic Mikhail Levitin (1953-1989) was right, in *Romancing the Stone* “everything is a little bit frivolous, detached, with irony, but in bulk again – an oppressive atmosphere of danger, gripping tension” (Levitin, 1989: 7).

Film critic Sergei Lavrentiev agreed with him, emphasizing that this story “told by Zemeckis in the genre of a parody of tabloid adventure fiction: the director here showed not only knowledge of the subject, but also an inimitable ability to be both deadly serious and brilliantly ironic. ... And should the viewer (especially the young one) be blamed for the fact that he, it is possible, will take all this charming mess too seriously? The perception of film parodies presupposes a detailed acquaintance with the subject of parody” (Lavrentiev, 1989).

Already in the 21st century, film critic Yevgeny Nefedov noted that “*Romancing the Stone* is not devoid of malice in relation to the works of such masters as Michael Curtiz, Howard Hawks, John Huston, reproducing situations similar in entourage, but acquiring a completely different, ironic, and sometimes undisguised sarcastic sound. The classical contrast of the collision of a dream (more precisely, dreaminess) with rough reality, so subtly conveyed in the game by Kathleen Turner, is impeccably sustained” (Nefedov, 2008).

So there is nothing surprising in the fact that *Romancing the Stone* continues to appeal to today's viewers:

"I love watching this movie. Kind, positive, funny, uplifting, and indeed vitality. Wonderful actors and their characters, how beautifully they dance in the bar. M. Douglas is here as handsome and sexy as anywhere else, and, of course, he plays very well" (Novikova).

"A great movie that has it all: super adventure, comedy, romance. You watch it in one breath, as if for the first time" (RPV).

"For me, *Romancing the Stone* is not just a beautiful romantic story that is captivatingly presented on the screen. This is one of the symbols of childhood dear to my heart, inseparable from that unforgettable era of the late 1980s. ... So many warm feelings associated with the memories of such films!" (Rabban).

But, it is true, sometimes there are also such reviews:

"What a cheap thing ... And once, in the 1980s, unspoiled and inexperienced Soviet viewers watched this dregs and rejoiced. A bunch of simple, cheap Hollywood clichés, a mandatory kiss at the end... They always hug and kiss at the end of films... Everything is dull" (Leta).

Sitting Pretty. USA, 1948. Directed by Walter Lang. Release in the USSR - from June 10, 1968: 32.6 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Director Walter Lang (1896-1972) started working in Hollywood back in the 1920s, during his long career he directed about three dozen entertainment films, however, the Soviet film distribution did not favor him.

His 1948 comedy *Sitting Pretty* hit the screens of the cinemas of the USSR only in 1968, however, despite the frank black-and-white "retro", it gathered over 32 million viewers in the first year of its demonstration in cinema halls...

The plot line of this funny comedy is quite simple: three American kids play naughty for their own pleasure, and not one nanny can cope with them. And then the "mustachioed nanny" comes into play...

The current audience writes about this film, as a rule, warmly:

"Human vices are wittily ridiculed, with sarcasm. It was fun to watch. Especially the speed with which gossip spreads around the city. And the cast is good" (Aleftina).

"A light comedy with a touch of a little satire on the mores of a small town with the same gossip and discussion. However, the main thing here is the brilliant play of Clifton Webb and his non-standard pedagogical methods in educating not only children, but also adults" (Andrey Medved)

Under the Black Mask / Poor Rich / Szegény gazdagok. Hungary, 1959. Director and screenwriter Frigyesh Bahn. Release in the USSR - from September 16, 1963: 32.5 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Frigyesh Bahn (1902-1969) began his career before the Second World War, in total he has more than three dozen films of various genres. The greatest success in the Soviet box office was his costume romantic-adventure film *Under the Black Mask*, which was set in the era of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Viewers of the 21st century still warmly remember this film:

"I saw this film twice in the 1960s, in cinema and on TV, recently found it on the net and revised it again. Today, perhaps, it will seem a little naive, but a colorful and spectacular film about an aristocratic robber. As if Robin Hood is the other way around" (B. Nezhdanov)

"I liked this film, it was shot in the same style as other Mora Yokai adaptations of those times (*The Hungarian Nabob, Zoltan Karpaty, Sons of a Man with a Stone Heart...*) True, at first I

thought that this is a classic film of a cape and a sword, but the man in the black mask turned out to be completely different from the noble hero" (Alice).

The Secret of the Island of Monsters / Misterio en la isla de los monstruos. Spain, 1981. Director Juan Pique Simon. Release in the USSR – 1985: 32.5 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Juan Pique Simon(1935-2011) directed a dozen and a half entertaining films, one of which – *The Secret of the Island of Monsters* – also got into the Soviet film distribution.

This quite ordinary Spanish adventure movie passed through the screens of Soviet cinema halls very successfully, fortunately, that it was released in the USSR in a year when VCRs had not yet become a mass phenomenon.

The Soviet film press treated *The Secret of the Island of Monsters* with disdain. **So film critic Valentin Mikhalkovich (1937-2006) wrote on the pages of the Soviet Screen,** that an adventure film stuffed with all sorts of "effects" and monsters is, in fact, nothing more than an ordinary commercial craft (Mikhalkovich, 1985).

Viewers of the XXI century evaluate this movie ambiguously.

Pro:

"Great adaptation of Jules Verne. ... I enjoyed it more than I expected. Initially, my plans were just to watch a Spanish film about healthy caterpillars. And to hell with them, that in the film they are given very little time. Let be. But what a movie, what a movie!" (Neutral).

Contra:

"You are sincerely surprised: how could you like this then? Yes, and not just like it, given the fact that the whole court went to the second screening of this film. ... But, if for their time rubber scarecrows looked realistic and quite decent, then in the early 1980s these carelessly made rubber costumes and dolls, moving their paws with their mouths that do not close, rotating back and forth like idols, were outdated, well, simply obscenely" (B.H. Angel).

Spell of the Serpent Valley / Kłątwa Doliny Węży. Poland-USSR-Vietnam, 1987. Directed by Marek Pestrak. Release in the USSR – 1988: 32.3 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Marek Pestrak directed about a dozen full-length feature films and series, but in Russia he is known mainly for two fantastic films of Polish-Soviet production: *Pirx Pilot's Investigation* and *Spell of the Serpent Valley*.

The success in the USSR of *Spell of the Serpent Valley*, which openly used the key motifs of Steven Spielberg's adventure fantasy about Indiana Jones, was quite natural, since the Soviet film distribution of 1988 was not yet saturated with Hollywood products, and VCRs had not yet become an obligatory accessory for every family.

Film critic Yevgeny Zharkov is right: "*Spell of the Serpent Valley* is a typical low-budget "answer to Hollywood"... For those who saw this "masterpiece" of joint Soviet-Polish creativity directly in the late eighties, the film evokes a strong sense of nostalgia. To the modern generation of viewers, the picture will seem incredibly boring and terribly amateurish. ... Special effects are even difficult to call this word, because they are more likely to cause healthy laughter than admiration. ... I am arguing from the position of time and place, because as a boy, sitting in the cinema, I perceived *Spell of the Serpent Valley* as an exceptionally interesting and fascinating spectacle. Now that I have something to compare with, and I don't mean the current high-tech opuses, but the paintings of the same years, only produced in the USA, England and France, the absurdity of *Spell of the Serpent Valley* is obvious. The proverb says that without fish and cancer – fish" (Zharkov, 2010).

Film critic Alexei Gribanov fully agrees with this opinion about the film *Spell of the Serpent Valley*, who reasonably believes that “special effects are the main trouble and the main feature of the film. The “first Polish special effects specialist” Janusz Krol, who participated in the work on the film, complained that, due to the modest budget, not all ideas were realized. So, the funny cardboard kite was supposed to be a flying dragon. In an interview, Marek Pestrak reproached Soviet specialists for the bad decorations of the cave, which completely did not correspond to the original plan” (Gribanov, 2014).

The same Alexei Gribanov told readers that “perhaps some kind of spell was indeed cast on the Valley of the Serpents, but now none of the leading actors are left alive. Roman Wilhelmy died at fifty-five from liver cancer, Krzysztof Kolberger died at the age of sixty after a long illness. But the life of Eva Salatska ended most terribly and tragically: the dream woman of Soviet middle school students died at the age of forty-nine from anaphylactic shock caused by a wasp sting” (Gribanov, 2014).

Viewers of the 21st century treat this film as a product of the pre-computer era, designed for the Soviet audience, which is almost not familiar with Western science fiction products:

“People of the eighties were not at all spoiled by such plots, each such film was held with a bang, with crowded halls. Before the era of video salons, there were still two years left, we didn’t know about any *Star Wars*, especially *Indiana Jones*, and we didn’t know. On which, of course, the authors of this, albeit controversial in places, but I think it is a very worthy film, played ... There is not a single empty seat in the hall! To say what impression the film made on me then would be an understatement. At times, I, thirteen, hid behind a chair, it was so scary, it was so exciting! And those scenes in the dungeon! The kite seemed as natural as cardboard! The mutation scene generally led to a state of animal horror! Later, as an adult, I watched it, of course, already with a smile, but so far this film is one of my favorites” (A. Pozdeev).

“Well, even if a lot of things were done unprofessionally and now it seems ridiculous, but the film was interesting to watch! After all, at that time the province was not spoiled by box-office cinema, they just watched, empathized!” (Vika).

“I remember watching when I was eight years old ... I remember. A good adventure horror with elements of fantasy. Of course, now it doesn’t look like that anymore, but the oppressive atmosphere of the jungle and the cellars of the underground temple still looks somehow intimidating, and the musical accompaniment is very well chosen. Of course, the rough composite shots and the ridiculous stuffed papier-mâché monster are the real deal. But this is taking into account that the film was nevertheless shot not in Hollywood, but by us and the Poles” (Ener).

Operation *Saint Januarius* / Operazione *San Gennaro*. Italy-France-Germany, 1966. Directed by Dino Risi. Release in the USSR - from March 1968: 32.1 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Italian director Dino Risi (1916-2008) was one of the most commercially successful filmmakers in Europe, working in different genres, but mainly in the comedy.

In this funny crime comedy, criminals decide to steal the treasures of Saint Januarius, which are stored in Naples...

Already in the 21st century, while in Naples, I specifically went down to the basement of this church to see the treasures of St. Januarius. It turned out that everything there is exactly as shown in the film (treasures under a glass jar, etc.)...

Operation “Saint Januarius” I first watched as a schoolboy, and I still remember my enthusiastic impressions of the very atmosphere of the film by Dino Risi, brightly colored with irony and humor... Even then I got great pleasure from the brilliant game of Nino Manfredi and

Toto... I recently reviewed this picture without dubbing, already in Italian, and again plunged into the semi-parodic atmosphere of the Neapolitan comedy...

The Soviet film press reacted very warmly to this comedy by Dino Risi.

For example, film critic and film critic Georgy Bogemsky (1920-1995) wrote about the *Operation Saint Januarius* as follows: “Risi chuckles at some features of the Italian... character, customs, life, and at the same time parodies Hollywood gangster films. He contrasts the soulless cruelty of American robbers with the humanity of their Neapolitan colleagues: they are kind in soul, revere their parents and old customs, even God-fearing” (Bogemsky, 1967).

Film critic Romil Sobolev (1926-1991) agreed with this opinion, he believed that this comedy was “strikingly funny and witty... The success of Dino Risi's comedy lies in something else: first of all, I think, in its correspondence to life reality. ... What is important is what Risi laughs at and how. He does not hide the shortcomings of his compatriots, but their family scams, their fussiness and pretentiousness cause him not sarcasm, but only ridicule. Another thing is the Americans. Risi shows them with an evil and merciless irony” (Sobolev, 1968: 25).

It is curious to note that this film is liked by the audience in the XXI century:

“Undoubtedly, a brilliant comedy! Dynamic, witty, light... The authors remarkably ironize many Italian passions: piety, football, sociability, family ties, love for their stage... In general, the film looks much more interesting than many modern handicrafts” (Kon).

“I love this film, I watched it on the big screen three times, later on TV again. Captivating plot, witty dialogues, unexpected ending when the rogue Dudu, who was about to steal the treasure, becomes their savior. Seductive villain Maggie (Senta Berger). And one of the last roles of the great Toto” (B. Nezhdanov).

My Last Tango / Mi último tango. Spain, 1960. Directed by Luis Cesar Amadori. Release in the USSR – 1971: 31.8 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Luis Cesar Amadori (1902-1977) during his long career in cinema managed to stage over 60 (!!!) full-length feature films, mostly of an entertaining nature. In my opinion, many of the films of this director, if they were bought for hire in the USSR, could bring considerable profit at that time...

The musical melodrama *My Last Tango* was released in Soviet cinemas very late: 11 years after its creation. But this did not in the least prevent more than thirty dozen spectators from watching and rewatching it in cinema halls.

But the Soviet film press reacted negatively to this film.

Film expert Victor Demin (1937-1993) wrote in the Soviet Screen that “Sara Montiel is a good singer, and Maurice Ronet is a first-class theater and film actor. But the more they try to put on a cloak of plausibility over their experiences, the clearer it becomes that we are facing mannequins. ... Watching all this is very embarrassing. The laws of the genre make it difficult to believe that this is serious, that the happy ending will not take place. And if so, then the heartbreaking suffering of the heroine, who allegedly became blind and allegedly drove her lover away from herself, looks like blasphemous antics. So at the carnival, well-fed and happy people put on freak masks... There are things that are unworthy to play with. In recent years, domestic cinema has not spoiled us with musical films. Naturally, the void craves to be filled, and some viewers, in the simplicity of their hearts, may mistake a speculative and untalented craft for "living life." That would be the most upsetting” (Demin, 1972: 19).

And film critic Rosa Kopylova argued that “the film *My Last Tango* is remarkable both for the naive mossy direction, and for the extremely dense concentration of the most inveterate dramaturgical clichés: Hias de Orduña and Luis Cesar Amadori molded their film according to the recipes of a very worn and old-fashioned aesthetics, long ago donated by the capitalist film industry to the “aid fund” underdeveloped countries. In this film there are: a fat, voiceless prima donna; vegetables flying onto the stage; a pop diva who suddenly loses her voice, as a result of which the heroine sings from behind the scenes; the paralyzed bride of a loved one; prolonged travesty; philosophy (“pity cannot replace love in our life!”); roses, buds, bouquets, baskets, bows; lilac, blue and pink peignoirs, silver mink and a series of breathtaking hats; heroism, manifested by our “violet” during a sudden outbreak of fire; the already mentioned blindness and the sacrificial rejection of love; lost and found father; birds released from the cage into the wild; and, finally... an aunt playing the double bass. There is also a fiancé. A pale, inexpressive shadow, with an ironic smile addressed to who knows who, passes through the film Maurice Ronet, who was promised the main male role, but was entrusted with the duties of an extra.

In the pictures with Sara Montiel, only Sara Montiel “works” and “works”. And she is well versed among the rubbish committed by the screenwriter and director, she is at ease in an atmosphere where Ronet’s professionalism suffocates. Sarita – Martha sings, dances, flirts, puts on a man’s suit, starting to look like Francesca Gaal and Marika Rokk at once, suffers, consoles herself and sings again. What can be found in such a film and in such a heroine? The easiest way to explain the triumph of Sarita is the aesthetic underdevelopment of the mass audience or its indulgence. But everything is much more complicated, and if we talk about Spain, then much more dramatic. ... [In Spain] an incredibly heavy press of censorship bans. The doom of any true word. Rejection from the pan-European cultural development. ... the commercial screen paradoxically begins to replace non-conformist cinematography, capturing the mood of the public, its spontaneous resistance to “brainwashing” with its box office “mustache”. On this wave, Sarita and others like her rise up, offering instead of state propaganda of “great history”, “high feats” and “high passions”, their program of “simple feelings” (Kopylova, 1973: 101-103).

Victor Demin also tried to explain the reasons for the popularity of *My Last Tango*: “Such films have their own charm, their own fabulous, ingenuous world, with songs, jokes, flowers and applause, with picturesque poverty and even more picturesque luxury, with tears in the penultimate part and with an indispensable final kiss on the so-called diaphragm. It’s easy to say, “That doesn’t happen in real life.” And if the film is staged not according to life, but according to a dream? ... “Make us beautiful!” So demanded, if you remember, Ivan Ivanovich from Mayakovsky’s “Bath”, and his friend Madame Mezalyansova expressed herself even more clearly: “Show us beautiful people in beautiful landscapes!” Life flies, anxious, difficult, stormy, to match the century. But another viewer still prefers to go to the cinema oasis. Everything is there as you want, there is the sea, the sun, youth, love, there a charming artist looks with a charming look and gently kisses: even if not you, but your full-fledged representative Maurice Ronet, who perfectly showed what you would like to be. This film is a painkiller, a film is a sleeping pill, and even with the guarantee of the most beautiful dreams” (Demin, 1972: 19).

However, the majority of viewers either did not read such critical articles or did not pay any attention to them. And they liked in this melodrama exactly what the Soviet film press so stubbornly criticized.

Moreover, *My Last Tango* has a lot of fans today:

“Amazingly beautiful film. According to the plot, it is a banal melodrama, but because of the beauty of the actors (bravo, Montiel and Ronet!) and the charming voice of Sara, I want to revise and revise” (Irina).

“Deep in its meaning, content and a very beautiful film. It is remembered immediately, from the very first viewing, and you want to review this film again, and then again and again. Perhaps the best musical-melodramatic film starring Sara Montiel. Maybe thanks to this film, Sara Montiel was called the queen of melodrama? Who knows! .. Although, maybe I'm just captivated by the charm of this film. ... I just really love this classic movie. ... Surprisingly beautiful and harmonious couple Sara Montiel and Maurice Ronet, who play excellent dramatic roles here and look very beautiful. Bravo. Bravissimo. They are just wonderful. For the sake of this duet alone, it is worth putting all your affairs aside and watching this film! .. A whole waterfall, a cascade, of the most beautiful songs performed by Sara Montiel. The most beautiful songs! ... Actually, I don't know What do I like most about this movie and who. Absolutely everything” (Marina).

One Million Years BC. UK, 1966. Directed by Don Chaffee. Release in the USSR - from June 23, 1969: 31.8 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

During his long career, director Don Chaffee (1917-1990) made about three dozen entertainment films and serials, but only *One Million Years BC* got into the USSR, and it had a tremendous success with the public ...

The rarest case: for this film in the Soviet box office, no dubbing was required, since its characters – primitive people – spoke in a guttural language invented by the authors...

The plot of this adventure film was already very exciting for children and teens (and not only), and then dozens of scantily clad pretty girls, led by Raquel Welch, starred in the film.

So *One Million Years BC* went throughout the Soviet Union with a bang...

Viewers of the 21st century remember this spectacular movie even today:

"A great movie! Many critics today write somewhat condescendingly about Ray Harryhausen's effects in terms of computer time (although his dinosaur stunts are, as always, brilliant here) and completely overlook the film's superbly built lyrical line and excellent acting” (Paul).

“Cave glammers in Armani skins, with mid-60s hairstyles and unobtrusive make-up. Puppet dinosaurs are included. Cool!” (Basil).

“Great interesting movie. Bright, colorful. Beautiful women. Muscular men. I have always loved and still love such films” (V. Anchugov).

“The girls were recruited for the film credits, long-legged, athletic, tanned. Blondes and brunettes, one more beautiful than the other, pure striptease, looked wonderful in their rags, very sexy! For their sake, it is worth seeing the picture, especially for the old zhairs” (Pompey).

Short Circuit. USA, 1986. Directed by John Badham. Release in the USSR – 1988: 31.7 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

John Badham went to his first resounding success for six years, putting about a dozen television films from 1971 to 1976. And at 35, he woke up famous: his disco musical with Johnny Travolta *Saturday Night Fever* immediately after the premiere became the hit of the season. However, D. Badham's fame was of a special kind. He was admired not by critics, who annually watch many equally professionally made films, and not by numerous viewers (they simply did not pay attention to the director's name in the credits of the film they liked), but by the producers. They immediately realized that after Steven Spielberg and other masters of box office cinema, another star appeared in the Hollywood sky.

In the mid-1980s, John Badham directed the fantasy comedy *Short Circuit*.

...One of the robots of the secret military base finds himself in charming Stephanie's (Ellie Sheedy) camper van and... falls in love with her, dances shyly and ridiculously in the living room

of the cottage, dares her unsympathetic fiancé, but... The loss is discovered at the base, and begins hunting for the obstinate robot.

All these episodes are filmed in an excellent comedic rhythm. Nowhere, perhaps, is the measure of good taste violated. Literally in some half an hour you feel for the robot (great work of engineers and designers!) as if it were a living hero. And again, as in the two previous films by John Badham (*Blue Thunder* and *War Games*), in *Short Circuit* the anti-militaristic theme sounded distinctly. Contrary to the violent action films, the picture, albeit in a comedic, somewhat naive form, protested against the cult of weapons.

In the year of the release of *Short Circuit* in the Soviet distribution, film critic and culturologist Kirill Razlogov (1946-2021) wrote that in this film “the lead actors readily take a backseat to the new generation of pop star Robot #5, ingeniously designed by a team of graphic designers and special effects specialists. Their role in this film is no less, and perhaps more, than the director himself. And it is "No. 5" that becomes the direct expression of the author's thought about the charm of humanized technology and the pitiful impotence of representatives of military-industrial and scientific corporations who have lost their humanity” (Razlogov, 1988: 22).

Film critic Tatyana Khloplyankina (1937-1993) was sure that the secret of the impact of *Short Circuit*: “We must look for the viewer not inside him, but in ourselves. We humanize this creature, our imagination, skillfully and prudently awakened, makes us see in this "Fifth Number", naughty from a short circuit, either a mischievous boy or a gallant gentleman... And our reaction to the film is explained by gratitude for the fact that we were returned to childhood, and our imagination was given the opportunity to work” (Khloplyankina, 1988: 129).

Viewers of the 21st century, as a rule, also respond positively to this film:

"Great movie of all time. A reusable masterpiece” (Pushistik).

“Such a great movie! I saw him for a long time, the episode made me laugh a lot, how a robot, having got into the house of one girl, says: "We need information!" She gives him a thick book, he leafs through it in a second and again says: “I need information,” and so on until he leafed through all the books in the house, and when he again demanded information, the girl turned on the TV for him” (Vera).

“An old funny, kind and humane film. Now it looks boring and does not cause admiration, but at one time, probably, it could impress with technical achievements. The robot itself did not inspire me too much, probably because it does not have the appearance of a person But it's quite interesting and funny, it's very simple and looks easy” (Bob).

Labors of Hercules / Le fatiche di Ercole. Italy-Spain, 1958. Directed by Pietro Francisci. Release in the USSR – 1966: 31.5 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

The Italian director Pietro Francisci (1906-1977) was very fond of making spectacular films from ancient life (*Anthony of Padua, The Queen of Sheba, Attila the Conqueror, The Siege of Syracuse, Labors of Hercules, Sinbad and the Caliph of Baghdad* and etc.). And I'm almost sure that if the whole series of his exotic films were bought in the USSR in a timely manner, a lot of money could be earned on them ...

But in the end, only *Labors of Hercules* got into the Soviet Release (and even then with an eight-year delay).

The Soviet film press greeted *Labors of Hercules* with hostility.

For example, film critic Victor Orlov (1929-1972) published a long and very caustic article on this subject in the *Soviet Screen*, noting that this film “collects its audience: people who love adventure, not indifferent to antiquity. People come out after the

session – not delighted, not annoyed. They go out – and they forget both Hercules and his exploits. So, is it a bad movie? Not really. There is nothing so criminal in it. There are adventures. There is tempo and rhythm. There are some good outdoor shots. There are even natural ruins, and mountains, and the sea. ... is it made for him? But for nothing. In any case – without much intention. No search. Without thought. Or rather, with one thought: how to fit the ancient legend, and the era, and its characters under the primitive concepts of the bourgeois film market. How would it be smarter to let them pass into the meat grinder, called the entertainment machine” (Orlov, 1966: 14).

Already in the 21st century, film critic Yevgeny Nefedov reacted much warmer to *Labors of Hercules*, noting that “Francisci’s success was undoubtedly dictated by the exceptionally good choice of the title character, and the American bodybuilder Steve Reeves soon became the highest paid actor in Europe... a team of film writers, including such an experienced and gifted screenwriter as Ennio De Concini, nevertheless approached the process adaptation of ancient Greek myths responsibly, allowing the Reeves demigod to demonstrate not only strength and dexterity, but also outstanding ingenuity, which, coupled with a heightened sense of justice and a thirst for truth, helps in unraveling court intrigues, and even in a fight with the Nemean lion, in a confrontation with the ferocious Cypriot bull and in other feats sung by people for centuries. In part, this made it possible to compensate for the well-known laconism, if not the scarcity, of scenery and tricks” (Nefedov, 2016).

Today, *Labors of Hercules* is remembered by a few viewers:

“What can I say about the film: it is interesting, the actors did their best, the music is in the theme, but the plot ... Although I don’t know much about the myths of Ancient Greece, I felt that the creators’ imagination was present in the movie. ... Despite this, there is an instructive meaning in the picture. ... But I myself will hardly return to this film” (Mysterious Stranger).

“It would seem that by inertia we should expect that the film will reflect, first of all, the famous exploits of the hero, but no, of all of them, only the victory over the Nemean lion is in the frame... But the story of the rune is a big part of the plot, and the screenwriters made Hercules the most important participant in the voyage, eclipsing even Aeneas. ... From the beginning to the end of the film, starring Steve Reeves shows off his quite impressive bodybuilder figure, playing a character for whom there are almost no tasks that are physically impossible for him. However, the image is not reduced to an athletic interpretation. ... the scriptwriters make Hercules not only an athlete and a warrior, but also a hero-lover, which again looks quite convincing. It is curious that in transposing old stories in a new way, the filmmakers almost removed the fantastic element from them, even the fleece is the skin of an animal without a special fabulous golden sheen. The only exception is Jason's duel with the dragon... In general, we have not enough stars from the sky, but quite solid within the framework of its genre, a peplum about one of the most famous ancient heroes. No special pluses or nightmarish minuses were noticed” (Terens).

White Line Fever. USA–Canada, 1975. Directed by Jonathan Kaplan. Release in the USSR - from August 1, 1977: 31.5 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Directing career of Jonathan Kaplan began in the early 1970s. After *White Line Fever*, he directed a number of other films and series.

But his most famous works were the sharp psychological drama *The Accused* (1988) with Jodie Foster and *Love Field* (1992) with Michelle Pfeiffer.

From 1997 to 2005, Jonathan Kaplan also produced and directed forty episodes of the television series, starring Anthony Edwards and George Clooney.

The road action *White Line Fever* tells the story of a truck driver who decides to go against his criminal boss, who is mired in fraud...

Spectacular painting by Jonathan Kaplan was purchased in the USSR, clearly because of its revealing pathos.

In the year *White Line Fever* was released in Soviet distribution, film critic Vikcor Demin (1937-1993) wrote, that “Jonathan Kaplan does not belong to those American directors who are called masters of thoughts. On the contrary, a professional director of film repertoire, he does not like to flaunt his own original theme or the unique features of his production style. However, even in his work, typical of the "average" American repertory level, it is easy to notice elements of social criticism, calling honest people to unity, caustic denunciation of corruption: all that has become a remarkable phenomenon in the work of the best masters of US cinema today” (Demin, 1977: 20).

***White Line Fever* still has a lot of fans today:**

"Awesome movie! It was a great pleasure to watch it! Amazing acting, cool stunts, exciting story!" (Leonid)

"A real 'cult' movie from the 1970s. The romance of the road, brotherhood and the struggle of truckers against corporations. Fights, mutual assistance on the road and opposition to the rich "masters of life" who can do anything. Always up to date. For young people, it will look archaic and drawn out after the action games that have been filmed since then, but this does not change the essence: it does not matter how much money and power the enemy has, if you are right!" (Andrei).

Playing four hands / Le Guignolo. Italy, France, 1979. Directed by Georges Lautner. Release in the USSR - from August 31, 1981: 31.5 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

About fifty films: comedies, detectives, thrillers, parodies – for more than seventy years. Such is the balance of one of the highest grossing directors of French cinema – Georges Lautner (1926-2013).

There was a time (at the turn of the 1980s) when five of his films were released in the USSR at once, which, of course, did not go unnoticed. The audience filled cinema halls to overflowing, and critics (including the author of these lines) unanimously reproached Lautner for the aestheticization of violence and were indignant that death was sometimes served to them as one of the attractions of "black humor" ...

Against the background of the current "market" Russian action films, Georges Lautner's semi-parody films seem almost unattainable peaks in terms of professionalism.

For example, in Georges Lautner's crime comedy *Le Guignolo*, Belmondo plays a swindler and adventurer. It is transferred from Paris to Venice. From the deck of a comfortable ship to the rooms of a luxury hotel. From the count's castle to the expressways. The stunts in the film, as always in the Lautner-Belmondo tandem, are on top. But humor, in my opinion, is here and there of a rather dubious taste ...

– Name the actors who would star only in masterpieces! – Belmondo reasonably remarks in an interview, – If you agree only to outstanding roles, then in your whole life you will play two or three times...

One way or another, but the films of Georges Lautner are not once or twice proved that the word "professional" refers not only to the main character, brightly played in his famous painting Belmondo. And today it is unlikely that any of us will reproach Georges Lautner for saying something like this: “Psychological things make me bored. I'm trying to entertain people who are bored with serious problems. I've always tried to be a commercially successful director."

Honest recognition, devoid of ambitious claims. However, watch Lautner's films and decide for yourself...

As for the audience of the 21st century, they often evaluate the *Le Guignolo* from opposite positions.

Pro:

“An elegant and captivating film. Like all films with Belmondo, it looks easy. Of the memorable scenes, one can note the arrival of the boat right in the lobby of the hotel and the overturned car with the main character closer to the finale. Humor is also appropriate and in moderation” (Nord).

“For me, *Le Guignolo* is absolutely the best film with Belmondo at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s. The rest is missing something – tricks, humor... In the nomination "adventurous comedies" I put "10" out of 10!" (G. Volanov).

Contra:

“The film is pompous, pretentious and extremely tasteless. It gets everyone here. Actually, all the characteristics that we usually give out to late perestroika cinema and the "masterpieces" of the early nineties fit well with this film. It seems that not only Belmondo suffers from narcissism, but the entire creative team helps him in this. Unfortunately, this film is no exception to the films of the then movie star period. Rather, it is simply the most characteristic of his benefit films” (Yuri).

War and Peace. USA-Italy, 1956. Directed by King Vidor. Release in the USSR – 1959: 31.4 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

The famous American director King Vidor (1894-1982) debuted in the era of the Great Mute, in the mid-1950s he decided to film the novel *War and Peace*, and although the director was often reproached for not only cutting off almost all military scenes, but also depriving the screen narrative of the philosophical depth of the original, nevertheless, a chamber love story against the background of the war looked very good” (Kartseva, 2000: 26).

In the same vein, writer, screenwriter and film critic Victor Shklovsky (1893-1984) assessed King Vidor's *War and Peace*: “The scene of the duel between Dolokhov and Pierre Bezukhov is very good. It is successful in its pictorial solution, in the accuracy of seeing Russian nature (or in the accuracy of guessing about it). Cold sun, untrodden snow illuminated by the morning sun, cold – and people who are brought by fate to the barrier. The scene shows what a wonderful director shot the picture. The actress for the role of Natasha, Audrey Hepburn, was chosen very boldly and very interestingly. The scene of the ball is beautiful – the first ball at which Natasha dances. Other characters raise controversy and doubt, but the same cannot be said about Andrei Bolkonsky, played by Mel Ferrer. This handsome actor, taking his rightful place on the screen, does not play the role of Andrei Bolkonsky either well or badly. Clever and useless for the war, tragically not included in the events of the hero, the actor Ferrer did not see.

Next comes the conditional decisions. Tolstoy's Princess Marya is an ugly and inwardly significant woman. This role is entrusted to the very attractive Anna Maria Ferrero. From Princess Marya, the director took away the main difficulty of her life, the main burden that the girl carried – ugly, walking with strong manly steps, aging and poetic. Helen, played by Anita Ekberg, is very weak. Helen – with her shoulders polished by countless glances, a self-satisfied fool who sees and hears nothing but her interests, a cowardly predator – is turned into an ordinary woman. ... The great merit of the picture is that it shows, and shows well, the stubbornness of the Russians in battle and the greatest difficulties in the battle with the Russians. The movie was filmed with respect for the Russian people, and this deserves not compliments, but recognition of the merits of the American director who saw the truth. ... We saw the movie, logically constructed, skillfully played, but the truth of Tolstoy, his feat of a realist writer are obscured by a system of literary conventions. The movie looks with interest, and sometimes, as in the scene of Natasha's first ball, it captures the viewer. It impresses with the grandeur of the production and its seriousness” (Shklovsky, 1958).

It seems to me that film critic Mikhail Kuznetsov (1914-1980) was right: after the screening of this film adaptation in the USSR, even “the most demanding, the most strict connoisseurs of the novel *War and Peace* were subdued by Audrey Hepburn, her performance of the role of Natasha Rostova. King Vidor's film is an attempt to screen Tolstoy's brilliant epic with a serious, creative passion. Thoughtful, careful attitude to the great literary original – that's what first of all inspires respect in the film. There is good luck here, but not a little and that causes an ironic, and even annoying smile in our viewer. ... And not only these details – Kutuzov did not work out in the film, Andrei Bolkonsky is pale and inexpressive, Platon Karataev is completely unsuccessful, Helen is a standard Hollywood "diva"... Even the interesting acting work of Henry Fonda (Pierre Bezukhov) is far from indisputable. ... at the first appearance before the audience, Audrey Hepburn makes us feel in her heroine the primacy of inner beauty. And the further the film goes, the more different and surprisingly poetic facets of the character of the heroine the actress reveals to us. ... And when we see the face of Hepburn-Natasha in full screen, then it flares up, goes out, runs into a shadow or illuminates her fresh, touching feelings with a ray of hope. And when you think about her game at this moment, the usual word of criticism seems tactless – artistic techniques. Tactless, because not acting technique, but really the deepest feelings, sincere excitement, life itself, which captured the whole being of the actress, is now visible on the screen” (Kuznetsov, 1965: 120-124).

True, the famous literary critic and film critic Lev Anninsky (1934-2019) was more strict with this film, arguing that “King Vidor tried in two episodes to drive in all the somewhat winning plot links of the novel, but he disposed of the little things and details with ease: he freely sacrificed them or arranged them as it was convenient” (Anninsky, 1980).

Opinions of 21st-century viewers about King Vidor's film *War and Peace* differ significantly.

Pro:

“I like it. Beautiful costume film, for aesthetes. Great actors. The director very carefully approached the great novel and, in general, Russia. It is impossible to convey the whole essence of this work in three hours, so I think there is no need to find fault too much” (Valari).

“I watched with great interest! ... Filmed with great love for the work, carefully. ... And the role of Natasha Rostova turned out no worse than ours. Audrey was amazing. In addition to words of admiration, I "believe" every frame. I will say that “their” Bolkonsky, Helen, Kuragin and even Pierre impressed much more than the domestic ones ... The interiors and scenery of the film also look absolutely authentic” (O. Tarasova).

“For me, this is perhaps the only foreign film adaptation of Russian classics that does not cause me rejection. Of course, the "pearl" of the picture is the incomparable Audrey Hepburn. ... Oddly enough, in this film adaptation there is almost no "spreading cranberry" inevitable in such cases. ... Of course, the philosophical component of the novel has almost disappeared, the picture is a high-quality melodrama from Russian life” (Igor).

Contra:

“The movie is complete rubbish. Nothing but irritation. I love Audrey Hepburn so much. That's the only reason I looked. And in general, I watched a lot of film adaptations – no one directed Bondarchuk better” (Nera).

The Unlucky / La Chevre. France, 1981. Director and screenwriter Francis Weber. Release in the USSR - from December 2, 1983: 31.4 million viewers in the first year of the show.

In the famous comedy trilogy *The Unlucky, The Dads* and *The Runaways*, Francis Weber may have used the model of the characteristic masks found in *The Escape* (1978) by Gérard Oury. One way or another, the duet of a rough giant-strongman and a helpless muddler-intellectual fell in love with the audience. And it doesn't really matter what the characters in the movie do: searching for a missing girl (*The Unlucky*), finding out

which one of them is the real father of a runaway boyfriend (*The Dads*), or fleeing from the police after an unsuccessful bank robbery (*The Runaways*).

The comedies of Francis Weber attract, first of all, with the graceful ease with which the action balances between funny and sentimental, rude eccentricity and melancholy lyricism. These are films of paradoxical situations, excellent tempo, open human feelings and acting benefit performances.

Film critic Alexander Braginsky (1920-2016) noted that *The Unlucky* told a simple story. ... The comic gags in this film were unpretentious, but they worked for the plot, causing a cheerful animation in the hall. The film was a legitimate success at the box office” (Braginsky, 1998: 97-98).

Film critic Yevgeny Nefedov rates *The Unlucky* more highly, arguing that through the efforts of Francis Weber “one of the best and most memorable comic duets in the history of cinema was born ... His offspring has the unique property of never getting out of date – and delivers a lot of fun with every new (hundredth, thousandth) viewing. This time, the film director-dramatist almost does not resort to satire, to lyrics, or, even more so, to sentimentality, focusing on gags, ridiculous situations, and, above all, on perfectly written characters” (Nefedov, 2022).

The opinions of 21st century viewers about *The Unlucky* are generally positive:

“This is a classic of the French comedy genre. The Richard-Depardieu duo opened here in all its glory. Depardieu plays a sort of French-style James Bond, and Richard – a walking disaster, a chronic loser with exorbitant conceit. The plot in the film is full of humor, but there is also a detective component. In a word, a good film to cheer up” (N. Volkov).

“A breathtaking comedy, such adventures are awesome, you watch and just enjoy, the old films are so interesting and most importantly there is no vulgarity in them, everything is natural, and the performance of Pierre Richard and Gerard Depardieu is beyond praise” (Glass Packet).

“I don’t even know how many times the whole family watched this wonderful comedy! And so many more times, probably, they would have watched ... After all, it belongs to those films that never get bored! Interesting story with great actors-a simple recipe for a good mood!” (Barbara).

On the Trail of the Tiger / Bridge / Most. Yugoslavia, 1969. Directed by Hajrudin Krvavac. In the USSR - from November 16, 1970: 31.3 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Hajrudin Krvavac (1926-1992) mainly made spectacular films on a military-partisan theme, all of them enjoyed considerable success with the audience: both in Yugoslavia and in the USSR.

The action of the action-packed film *Bridge* takes place in Yugoslavia in 1944, when brave partisans are fighting against the Nazi invaders...

Film critic Miron Chernenko (1931-2004), in my opinion, rightly noted that that in the film *Bridge*, as well as in other films directed by Hajrudin Krvavets, “quite realistic exploits of the professionals of the underground and partisan struggle are brought to the level of a heroic epos, to the level legends about folk heroes who are invulnerable to an enemy sword and arrow (in this case, to a bullet and a grenade), who are able to personally scatter hosts of enemies, move mountains (in this case, blow up an enemy airfield, raise a strategically important bridge into the air, set fire to a giant petrol storage). And in accordance with this, he displays on the screen not just fighters against fascism, but high professionals, “craftsmen of the resistance”, who know all the secrets of their craft, not without reason

remembering how they fought in Spain, where the Yugoslav volunteers became famous for their ability to conduct a secret war behind enemy lines, where they fought for the freedom of another people those “universities” of partisan struggle that were so useful to them, who survived and survived, after only a few years, in their homeland. ... the high professionalism of directing, the acting team... are combined with the highest professionalism of the characters who do their dangerous work with such self-sacrifice and passion that simply cannot become obsolete, just as no virtuoso work becomes obsolete” (Chernenko, 1986).

The current audience responds to the film, as a rule, warmly:

“I love *Bridge* since childhood. I watched it a few times then. ... Impressions from this film have not dulled, but rather sharpened. Tense and dramatic intrigue, excellent acting, very good staging of battle scenes and stunts” (A. Boinikov).

“Of course, [in Soviet cinemas] this film, even in black and white copies, looked with interest, but the picturesque shooting, the beauty of the Yugoslav mountain landscapes disappeared almost completely. Bata Zhivoynovich is a great actor, in this role he looks no worse than Belmondo or Ventura” (B. Nezhdanov).

Age of love / La Edad del amor. Argentina, 1954. Directed by Julio Saraceni. Release in the USSR – 1955: 31.1 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

One of the most prolific directors in the world – Julio Saraceni (1912-1998) – directed about 60 (!) entertaining films, mostly comedies and musical revues. The musical film *Age of Love* shot by him was a triumph on Soviet screens.

Musical melodramas and comedies starring the Argentine singer and actress Lolita Torres (1930-2002) were a huge success in the USSR, despite the grumblings of Soviet film critics, who kept reminding readers that the movies with her participation were “infinitely far from the burning problems, which worry the Argentines today” (Furikov, 1965: 116).

True, the same film critics often noted that “the seriousness of Lolita Torres' aspirations, the desire of the actress to free herself from the framework of the role of a performer of pop songs, from the dependence that those who dictate the policy of the Release repertoire impose on her, bribe. It is known that cinematography often projects onto the screen not only those character traits of the hero that are given to the image by the playwright, but also certain personal qualities of the performer. The character of the actor, in addition to his will, is, as it were, made available to the perception of the audience. In the films *Age of Love*, *A Bridegroom for Laura*, we followed with sympathy Soledad, Anna Maria, and Laura: the kind, pretty heroines of Lolita Torres. She endows them with such character traits that were not discovered by either the playwright or the director. Lolita Torres herself lives in them, there is a certain identification of artistic images with a real person” (Furikov, 1965: 117).

However, in the year of the release of the *Age of Love* in the Soviet film distribution, the reputable *Cinema Art* journal published a detailed article where this film was evaluated very positively: “True optimism and sparkling fun is different ... the film by Julio Saraceni *Age of Love*. Music is the soul of this film. ... Interesting, truly exciting (as the Soviet moviegoer was convinced of this) makes the picture the play of a young, exceptionally gifted actress Lolita Torres ... Lolita Torres captivates the viewer with great stage charm, wonderful dances, immediacy and ease of their performance. But the main strength of her talent is her excellent vocal abilities” (Belousov, 1955: 94).

Already in the 21st century, film critic Olga Palatnikova reminded the audience that the *Age of Love* came out in the mid-fifties, not much time after the war. How much grief in the country, how many bleeding wounds, unhealed, how many unfortunate women. Among all this, such lovely, charming melodramas come out, where the heroine is a

charming, talented, musically gifted girl, with humor, with optimism, with pressure. She was loved for her music, and for her beauty, and for her talent, and for her gullibility – for everything (Palatnikova, 2007).

Lev Lurie believes that “In the Soviet Union, Lolita Torres was perceived not only as a singer and actress, but also as ... the first “temptress”. Her dances, filled with erotic energy, became in the fifties the maximum that Soviet moviegoers were allowed to see. ... Lolita Torres was popular not only as an actress, but also as a singer. This music, which is completely unusual for Russia, is some kind of, as they would say now, a mix of Spanish, Argentinean and even Russian” (Lurie, 2007).

And film critic Alexei Gusev believes that “due to temperament, due to some peculiarities of the cultural development of Latin America, their melodrama, which underlies all films with Lolita Torres, turns out to be sincere. In soap operas, we find it funny, disgusting. ... Spectators are pleased with the melodramatic plots of films with Lolita Torres, and the authorities are satisfied with the ideological content. The heroine Torres is always a poor girl, always opposes the bourgeois world, always eager to work and despises material wealth. The heroines played by Torres impress the Soviet authorities. Films with the participation of the actress do not leave the screens, and she herself is a welcome guest in the Union” (Gusev, 2007).

Age of Love still evokes warm memories of the audience today:

“Great movie! Good storyline and great acting. Wonderful songs performed by the delightful Lolita Torres!” (Bell Larisa).

“The film, of course, is terribly naive, the plot is very similar to many current Latin American soap operas, but not bad for its time, the music is good and Lolita is magnificent” (B. Nezhdanov).

The New Centurions. USA, 1972. Directed by Richard Fleischer. Release in the USSR - from October 14, 1974: 31.1 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Richard Fleischer (1916-2006) debuted back in the 1940s and was considered one of the strongest professionals in Hollywood. He has such famous spectacular films as *Vikings*, *Fantastic Journey*, *Doctor Dolittle*, *Boston Strangler*, *Conan the Destroyer*, *Red Sonja*, etc.

In R. Fleischer's crime drama *The New Centurions*, elderly cop Kilvinski is paired with young cop Fuller in Los Angeles. And they have to see everything, especially in the neighborhoods of the poor ...

This picture obviously did not go on about the fans of funny police adventures, as it was quite realistic and psychologically accurate...

In a review published in the *Soviet Screen* in the year of the release of *The New Centurions* in the film distribution of the USSR, it was noted “ideologically consistent” that “the police, an institution of bourgeois society, is forced to fight crime, the brainchild of relations prevailing in this society. However, this social aspect is absent in the film, since the author's attitude to reality does not go beyond purely emotional assessments. As a result, some attempts at generalization become dangerously ambiguous” (Doroshevich, 1975: 5).

In the Soviet film distribution of 1974-1975, *The New Centurions* were very successful, bringing together more than thirty million viewers in cinema halls. And viewers of the 21st century still remember this bitter drama:

“In my opinion, this is one of the best films about the police. I watched it as a child, it left a very strong impression. I reviewed it now, the sharpness of the impression has not decreased” (Elena).

“The best film about the police in the USA (strong literary basis + lack of clichés characteristic of many films dedicated to law enforcement officers): the harsh everyday life of the police: physically and psychologically exhausting work beyond working hours, in gratitude for which the beloved wife can say “Let's get a divorce, I don't see you at home.” No superheroes solving 100% of crimes... No happy ending” (Nantes).

The Sucker / Le Corniaud. France-Italy, 1964. Directed by Gerard Oury. Release in the USSR – 1968: 30.9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Before being on the other side of the camera, Gerard Oury (1919-2006) devoted twenty years of his life to acting. After studying with the famous Michel Simon, he was accepted into the troupe of the *Comedie Francaise* theater. However, he did not work there for long: shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War, he emigrated to Switzerland, where he again tried to find his place in the artistic world.

Returning to Paris, Gerard Oury made his film debut (*Antoine and Antoinette*, etc.), in the 1950s he wrote several scripts: *Two-leaf Mirror* for André Cayatte, *Babette Goes to War* for Christian-Jacques...

One way or another, all paths led Gerard Oury to directing. But *Hot Hand, Threat, Crime Doesn't Pay Off* did not become a sensation in cinemas.

But already in *The Sucker*, Gerard Oury found his magic wand in the duet of Louis de Funes and Bourvil. This comedy broke all box office records of the French screen. The spectators of many countries laughed heartily, seeing what funny situations the shy and naive hero of Bourvil got into, whom the nervously mobile character of de Funes tried to use for his criminal and smuggling purposes.

From time to time, our television again releases the unfading *The Sucker* with *The Big Walk* on the screen, and new generations of viewers still laugh merrily at the adventures of the heroes of Bourvil and de Funes.

One cannot but agree that “the heroes of Bourvil are ordinary, ordinary, ordinary people. Of which there are hundreds of thousands, they are stupid and funny, they are on their own minds and always get into trouble, they are worthy of ridicule, but they did not deserve bullying. Bourville very subtly feels this line, this measure of humor and satire, which allows him to make fun of shortcomings, but does not humiliate human dignity” (Alova, 1997: 30).

But the characters of Louis de Funes were always assertive in building their cunning plans, which, as a rule, failed, but still did not give up and went towards their goal ...

A merry comedy with the participation of Bourvil and Louis de Funes *The Sucker* was shown for the first time in the USSR in July 1965 as part of the Moscow International Film Festival.

And the newspaper *Soviet Culture* hastened to accuse this movie of advertising a bourgeois way of life: “With all its system, the film is calling: “Buy it! Buy! Visit our hotel! Our restaurant! ... What we saw on the screen is just one of the varieties of the detective-adventure, tourist-advertising genre, so common in Western cinema” (Petrova, 1965: 4).

Already in the 21st century, film critic Denis Gorelov writes that in *The Sucker* one fussed – the other was stupid. One gesticulated – the other gave phlegm. One chemist, bug, combined – the other sang in the shower (arbitrary stress). They sang so well that they seemed to be an inseparable duet – and they played only three films together and in each they dragged some dumb load across France. *Through Paris* – a smuggled ham past German patrols, in *The Sucker* – golden bumpers, in *The Big Walk* – downed English pilots. Hiding food, English people and jewelry for a piece of fame, pork and a million is very, very, very French” (Gorelov, 2019).

***The Sucker* and today** is one of the favorite comedies of many viewers:

"The film is wonderful. An example of classic French comedy with the inimitable Bourvil and Louis de Funès. I've watched it countless times and never get bored. This film is a great cure for a bad mood" (Igor).

"A brilliant comedy, one of the best examples of the golden age of French cinema, the duo de Funès-Bourvil is inimitable: a rogue and an honest man, a lot of funny episodes, Gerard Oury is the master of cinema comedy of beautiful France!" (Daigton).

Love at First Sight / Amor a primera vista. Argentina, 1956. Directed by Leo Fleider. Release in the USSR - since 1960: 30.8 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Leo Fleider (1913-1977) during his career he directed three dozen films, mostly entertaining (*Zorro's Nephews*, *Girl for Two*, *Music Scale*, *Debutantes in Love*, *Charm of Love*, etc.). In the USSR, his musical comedy with the participation of the popular singer and actress Lolita Torres (1930-2002) *Love at First Sight* was a huge success.

The film *Love at First Sight* today is thoroughly forgotten by the mass audience, but some viewers still find time to watch it:

"It seems that the plot of the film is simple, unremarkable, a light musical comedy with incendiary musical numbers" (T-Tatiana).

"With the plot, of course, is so sucked from the finger... No, I did not expect twisted scenario collisions from a light musical comedy, but also outright absurdity – from the same" (G. Volanov).

The Ring with a Mermaid / Signet Ring / Sellő a pecsétgyűrűn. Hungary, 1965. Directed by Imre Mihaifi. Release in the USSR - from April 1, 1968: 30.8 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Against the backdrop of the famous Hungarian directors Zoltan Fabry (1917-1994), Miklos Jancso (1921-2014) and Istvan Szabó, director Imre Mihaifi occupied a rather modest place in the "table of ranks", but the audience for some of his films was considerable. So in the USSR, the detective story *The Ring with a Mermaid* (in Hungary it was filmed as a TV movie) in the first year of the demonstration was watched by thirty million viewers in cinemas.

In the course of the plot of *The Ring with a Mermaid* in 1944, the Gestapo is developing an operation to destroy the Hungarian underground, but the character of Zoltan Latinovich (1931-1976) does everything to resist this...

But in the XXI century, *The Ring with a Mermaid* is almost forgotten by the audience, and few people remember this rather fascinating movie...

Lost Dreams / Give a Husband to Anna Zaccheo / Un marito per Anna Zaccheo. Italy, 1953. Directed by Giuseppe De Santis. Release in the USSR – 1956: 30.7 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

The melodrama *Give a Husband to Anna Zaccheo* was directed by Giuseppe De Santis (1917-1997), a well-known master of neorealism.

In the Soviet box office of *Give a Husband to Anna Zaccheo* was a great success.

But among professionals, the attitude towards this melodrama was different. So Andrei Tarkovsky (1932-1986) wrote in his famous article "Captured Time" that "De Santis in the final scene of his *Give a Husband to Anna Zaccheo* placed, as everyone remembers, the hero and the heroine on both sides of the metal fence. This lattice says so

directly: this couple is broken, there will be no happiness, contact is impossible. It turns out that the specific, individual uniqueness of the event acquires the most banal meaning due to the fact that it has been given a trivial violent form. The viewer immediately hits the "ceiling" of the director's thoughts. But the trouble is that for many spectators such blows become pleasant, they become calm: the event is "experiential", and besides, the thought is clear, and you don't need to strain your brain, your eye, you don't need to peer into the specifics of what is happening. The viewer begins to decompose if you give him such food. And yet similar bars, fences, fences have been repeated many times in many films, everywhere signifying the same thing" (Tarkovsky, 1967).

In the 21st century, viewers rarely remember this picture. Here is an excerpt from just one review: "The ingenuous story of a sultry Italian beauty, poor, but honest, trusting, deceived, fell groove in groove on the heart, nourished by Nekrasov's memorized "What are you greedily looking at the road", this hymn to beauty and justified by aesthetics alone, the moral right of beauty to a better share, for a well-fed, comfortable, worry-free life. ... The very title [of the film] ... prompts the idea that modern Italy is not able to provide a husband, at least somewhat worthy of the beautiful, sensual, ingenuous and frivolous Anna Zaccheo. There is no man. Shredded. Hopelessly and irrevocably degenerated in a poor and decisively humiliated country after the war, with its total unemployment and foreign policy of an impotent positioning himself as a macho" (G. Guzhvina).

Sister Carrie / Carrie. USA, 1952. Directed by William Wyler. Release in the USSR – 1969: 30.4 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Films of the outstanding master of the world screen William Wyler (1902-1981) appeared in the Soviet box office quite rarely and often with great delay.

This happened, for example, with the melodrama *Carrie*, which was released on Soviet screens 17 years after the American premiere.

The Soviet film press treated this movie quite strictly.

For example, film critic Elena Kartseva (1928-2002) wrote the following in the year *Carrie* was released in Soviet cinemas: "They say that [William Wyler] has never made a mediocre film in his creative work. Unfortunately, the latter is not entirely true, because our meeting with Wyler's work this year began with a mediocre picture – *Carrie*. True, Wyler himself considers it the only one he regrets staging. The director wanted to resurrect an era in her, but it turned out that nobody in Hollywood was interested in this. The script did not include not only the social motives of Dreiser's novel, but also the atmosphere of the time, which was clearly felt in it. The result was a standard love melodrama, which in France, for example, was called *The Great Desperate Love*. But even in this unsuccessful work one can see the most characteristic features of Wyler's style. This director is deservedly called an unsurpassed master of film adaptations. During his long life, he adapted many novels and plays for the screen, each time revealing an amazing command of the language of cinema. Even in *Carrie* one is amazed at how the director, in the short scene of Hurstwood's arrival in his rich, respectable family, was able to describe the situation prevailing there with just a few strokes. ... In Wyler's best film adaptations, this ability to briefly, accurately and expressively characterize the era, environment, characters manifested itself especially strongly" (Kartseva, 1969: 13).

Audiences of the 21st century treat *Carrie* warmly:

"Beautiful old Hollywood movie. ... I remember as a girl I watched it twenty times. ... I wanted to restore this film in my memory and compare it with today's perception. All the same. The same delight from the magnificent adaptation of the classic work by T. Dreiser" (Violetta).

“Everything, as always, destroys money. And it would seem – finally happy. Until the money intervened... A great game by all the actors, emotionally, brightly. ... She also sobbed sobbing” (A. Anisimova).

Old Gun / Le Vieux fusil. France-Germany, 1975. Directed by Robert Enrico. Release in the USSR – from January 17, 1977: 30.4 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Robert Enrico (1931-2001) (*Adventurers, Secret, Eagle or Tails, Red Zone, Wind from the East*, etc.) is one of the most famous French directors. The drama *Old Gun* is perhaps his best work. Neither before nor after did the director manage to achieve such an impressive artistic result.

The plot is based on a classic plot: a peaceful man is compelled to take revenge...

At the same time, Robert Enrico managed to avoid stamps. He carefully recreated the atmosphere of the last months of the occupation. Etienne Becker's camera reverently conveys the feeling of serene happiness of a doctor who, against all odds, wants to stay out of politics. Frames where the smiling father (F. Noiret), mother (R. Schneider) and daughter are pedaling bicycles along the forest road to the magical music of Francois de Roubaix, flash with irretrievable nostalgia every time the hero, distraught with grief, remembers his forever crossed out by the Nazis past. In the second half of the picture, the hero Noiret has almost no words: a frozen pain in his eyes, intuitively precise movements of a recently relaxed overweight body, hands tightly squeezing a weapon...

At first glance, it may seem strange how an actor with the appearance of Philippe Noiret – somewhat awkward, devoid of sports and social gloss – could become a star. However, it is worth seeing at least one film with his participation and all doubts disappear forever. The charm and talent of Noiret capture instantly. Popularity came to the actor in the 1960s, after participating in the films of Louis Malle (*Zazi in the Metro*) and René Clair (*All the Gold in the World*). Perhaps his largest work in the 1970s-the role of a doctor in the *Old Gun*, for which he deservedly received the Cesar Prize.

Philippe Noiret (1930-2006) managed to show how a tragic turning point occurs in his peaceful and kind hero, who strives to stay away from politics and war: the Nazis kill his wife and daughter... And now yesterday's quiet happiness seems like a distant dream. With unruly hands, he takes an old gun, and with every movement he becomes more collected, tougher, more confident in his right to revenge.

The problem of forced, provoked revenge interests the authors not only in itself, but also in the context of the impact that violence has on the protagonist. He kills cruel murderers, rapists and executioners, but each shot is given to him by an incredible effort of will, because every time he sees in front of him not just a hated target, but also a person ...

Reviews of domestic film critics for this film – as in the days of the USSR, so in the XXI century – as a rule, positive.

For example, S. Kudryavtsev writes that Romy Schneider (1938-1982) in the *Old Gun* “truly magnificent in the role of a wife, full of charm and extremely open, one might say, wide open to the outside: towards life, radiating a joyful light, generously giving smiles and looking at the world with cheerful, sparkling eyes. Her face is simply illuminated with love - for her husband and daughter, for that happy pre-war time, when everything seemed full of amazing peace and tranquility. But already in the episode of the holiday in the castle, Julien finds Clara crying in the basement - a premonition of anxiety, a vague anxiety, as if inadvertently touched her with their wings, allowing her to feel the whiff of an imminent tragic death” (Kudryavtsev, 2006).

And film critic Yevgeny Nefedov recalls that the film the *Old Gun* “became the subject of controversy primarily in France itself, where, by the way, it also caused a noticeable

audience response: the approach of filmmakers did not seem to everyone undeniable from an ethical point of view. The image of an old gun, which Dandieu takes out of a hiding place and quickly clears of grease, can be interpreted, if desired, not only in a socio-historical way (the invaders forced a person of a purely peaceful profession and meek disposition to take up arms), but also in a psychological, almost Freudian key. Why not a symbol of aggressive instincts dormant in a civilized individual for the time being – until the moment when circumstances themselves force one to resort to violence?! And towards the end – and the flamethrower forgotten by the soldier becomes in the hands of the owner of the castle an instrument of retaliation: the SS officer understands too late the reason for the strange deformation of his own reflection in the mirror... At the same time, Julien's fate, in a sense, personifies the fate of the entire country, which capitulated to the Third Reich too quickly (and, to be honest, shameful) – and by no means showed solidity in relation to the Nazis afterwards. There were heroes of the Resistance, there were supporters of the Nazis, but the overwhelming majority of the population took a wait-and-see attitude, secretly hoping that the troubles and hardships that befell other nations, primarily the Soviet people, would bypass them” (Nefedov, 2017).

Viewers of the 21st century remember the *Old Gun* and today:

“The film should be seen by everyone at least once. This is how it should be love, family, relationships in the family... The actors are excellent, it couldn't be better, F. Noiret is a harmless seal that turns into an angry lion when the meaning of life is lost. Romy Schneider is my favorite actress, I imagine her like this in life ... For me, this film is not about war, not about losses and revenge, but about the fact that one must live and love here and now...” (Novikova).

“Personally, I perceive this film as a struggle of a simple, one might say ordinary, Frenchman against fascism. The film shows that Julien is not distinguished by either external data or physical strength. ... A man is simply obliged to protect his home, his woman, his children” (Aleftina).

American Kidnapping / The Fantastic Seven. USA, 1979. Directed by John Peyser. Release in the USSR - from January 7, 1983: 30.4 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

John Peyser (1916-2002) during his life he made many entertaining television films and serials. *The Fantastic Seven* is also a TV movie, but in the USSR in 1983 it was released theatrically, which turned out to be very successful.

One of the current viewers quite vividly writes off the situation in which this adventure film found itself in the USSR: “For 30 million Soviet viewers who managed to get through to the “adult” session in a matter of weeks, he became a real gift. Is it worth it to talk about schoolchildren who, by hook or by crook, tried to get to the *The Fantastic Seven*, and then excitedly talked about how “this one, well, how it will give it to that one! And that one right into the water – bang! Do you remember how the Chinese broke the board, and that fool argued with his forehead on the board – bang! And fig! No, guys, you do what you want, but he hit him for real! He flew so much that he broke the jukebox!” (Bean).

However, what is particularly surprising: films of this type are shot in batches today, only based on computer special effects. And they go widely – both in cinemas and on television, finding their grateful audience...

The Count of Monte Cristo / Le Comte de Monte Cristo. France-Italy, 1953. Directed by Robert Verneuil. Release in the USSR – 1961: 30.2 million viewers for the first year of demonstration.

Director Robert Verneuil (1907-1979) made his first film back in the early 1930s, and then regularly delighted the French public with his films of entertainment genres. His most

famous works were two adaptations of the novel *The Count of Monte Cristo*, one of which hit the Soviet box office and was a huge success.

Meanwhile, film critic Victor Demin (1937-1993) and Irina Yanushevskaya (1925-1989) wrote that “it was the most ordinary among the many other reworkings of the novel by Dumas. By the way, director Robert Verneuil had already tried his hand at this material eleven years before. Then, during the period of fascist occupation, Pierre-Richard Wilm, a star of the thirties, a fatal hero, with equal success bearing the burden of his loneliness among the hot sands of North Africa, and in the icy expanses of Alaska, and in the furnished emptiness of high-society salons. His choice for the role of Monte Cristo was predetermined by his entire on-screen fate. But then, in 1942, the text of the novel was severely curtailed. Now, in 1953, the cinema is in full swing: two series, color, a gallery of stars. And, of course, the main role went to Marais – with a deliberate indulgence in the importance of poses, with permission not to look, but to look, not to walk, but to step. The majesty of the star here in the context of the entire work is read as the royal majesty of the fugitive from the Castle of If, who curbed the evil, all-destroying power of wealth and made it bring good and do justice to revenge” (Yanushevskaya, Demin, 1969: 91-92).

However, many 21st century viewers disagree with this assessment of the film:

“The best adaptation of the novel. I fell in love with this film from the first second, I watch it endlessly and do not get tired” (Milady Dana).

“I really love this movie *The Count of Monte Cristo*. He is the real one for me. I do not accept other versions. ... The film is very beautiful with beautiful talented actors. Very interesting and instructive, he left so many unforgettable impressions” (V. Anchugov).

“A wonderful classic adaptation of the famous novel” (O. Ivanov).

“The film remained in my memory as a vivid impression of my school years. ... I read the novel later and, of course, then I was surprised by the absence of many characters and storylines in the film. But serials had not yet been filmed, and the content of the novel could not be fully included even in a two-part film. Therefore, alterations could be forgiven, since the film has both entertainment, and romanticism, and an exciting plot” (B. Nezhdanov).

Captain / Le Capitan. France-Italy, 1960. Directed by André Hunebelle. Release in the USSR – 1979: 30.1 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

The Uncrowned King of French Entertainment Cinema André Hunebelle (1896-1985) more than once invited Jean Marais to play the main roles in his films (*The Miracle of the Wolves, The Hunchback, Parisian Secrets, Fantômas*). *Captain* is one of the brightest examples of their joint work.

So, *Captain*. Brilliant swordsmanship, spectacular fights and chases... And what about the famous scene in which Jean Marais climbs a sheer wall without understudies! In order to set off the courageous deeds of the hero Marais, the legendary comedian Bourvil became his servant in the film. In a word, entertainment is entertainment!

According to film critics Victor Demin (1937-1993) and Irina Yanushevskaya, director André Hunebelle was well aware that if the film is frankly serious, then this hinders its success with the public, because he lacks irony, “the very irony which, according to the famous saying of Thomas Mann, revives decrepit myths, or rather, helps to hide their decrepitude. ...

[In the *Captain*] Hunebelle... acted with a tried and true method, when both in *The Hunchback* and in the *Captain* Marais chooses Bourvil as a partner: like Sancho Panza under Don Quixote. Bourvil, by proof of the contrary, emphasizes the heroism, skill and nobility of the thoughts of Marais, but he also parodies them.

In the *Captain* there is a scene frank in this sense: an excellent swordsman, Marais teaches the fool Bourvil, for which end to hold the sword and how to carry out the “windmill” technique. It teaches not only Bourvil: at the same time it teaches the viewer, who will even more admire the miracles of dexterity and courage that are happening on the screen when he sees how difficult it is to achieve this. ...

In *Captain...* the duet Marais – Bourvil went even further into the depths of time – to 1616. But again Marais is a poor chevalier named Francois de Capestan, again Bourville is nearby – a commoner, an itinerant magician who met him on the country road of history. Capestan is looking for a mysterious dark-haired girl who, in the midst of a skirmish with insidious enemies, saved him from being stabbed in the back. Along the way, he submits to the all-powerful favorite Concino de Concini a complaint from the nobles of his province about the oppression of his governor. Along the way, he saves the young king from death, whose horses were sprinkled with a drug that causes rabies.

But the most interesting is ahead. The dark-haired girl turns out to be the daughter of the Duke of Angouleme, and the Duke is the head of an anti-government conspiracy. To neutralize the duke, the daughter was kidnapped and locked in an impregnable castle. Capestan saves the captive, taking possession of the castle literally with his bare hands, except for a few daggers, with which he climbs the steep wall of the tower.

Much has been written about this scene. The spectacle is truly unforgettable. Since advertising has long been known to the darkest viewer that Jean Marais works without an understudy, Hunabelle takes every opportunity to, in his own words, “shake the public's nerves.” Ascending the Marais along the pitted wall of the castle, along daggers barely squeezed into the crevices between the stones, Yunebelle shoots as simply and artlessly as Lumière filmed an approaching train. Three or four close-ups: a blade broken off under the foot, fingers numb on the edge of the slab...

It seemed that all this could be filmed in the pavilion. But no, Marais is against it, for him this is the main interest of the role, and Yunebelle only rubs his hands with pleasure – and everything is filmed, as they say, “without fools.” Here is a river for you, here is a rocky shore, and here is Jean Marais, crawling millimeter by millimeter to a window somewhere in the very center of the sky. And when, throwing a rope through the window, he breaks down and sways for a long time at the height of a six-seven-story building, this is again fixed in the most ingenuous way – from above, so that everyone can see: there is no safety net in sight” (Yanushevskaya, Demin, 1969: 204-206).

Many viewers of the 21st century still like the *Captain* today:

“That particular movie, the *Captain*, was my favorite childhood movie with Jean Marais. A magnificent duet of Jean Marais and Bourvil, and Bourvil with a trained horse, and with a dog, an unforgettable, bright, memorable movie, and the Italian actress Elsa Martinelli... This is now no surprise to anyone. But in the last century, these battle scenes looked very bright, exciting and believable. A wonderful film about love and adventure, about the victory of humanity. A movie from my childhood. I revisited it with pleasure after many years. I liked it very much” (Marina).

Captain is one of the indisputable successes of the genre, and the great comedian Bourvil brought additional chic. ... Plus, the unforgettable scene of “climbing” along the castle wall with daggers is something (I won't talk about realism, but the effect in symbiosis with the tensely heroic musical leitmotif is obvious)” (V. Plotnikov).

Captain is a real adventure on the screen, where all the tricks are done “without fools”, everything is real” (Ivan).

Beat first, Freddie! / Slå først, Frede! Denmark, 1965. Directed by Eric Balling. Release in the USSR - from July 1, 1969: 30.1 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Director Eric Balling (1924-2005) made about forty films, mostly of an entertaining nature. In the USSR, his parody *Beat first, Freddy!* was a great success.

In the USSR, where in the 1960s there was not a single James Bond movie at the box office, only parodies of this super-popular franchise were shown (remember, for example, the Czechoslovakian *The End of the Agent*).

Among these parodies was the Danish film *Beat First, Freddy!*, which was watched by three tens of millions of viewers.

Interestingly, this success was despite the fact that 1) Soviet viewers were not familiar with the original; 2) there were no stars in the Danish film, not even European ones; 3) the picture was Release with the age limit "up to 16 years".

Already in the 21st century, film critic Denis Gorelov, as always, ironically reminded readers that "Long before von Trier and *Revenge*, Denmark, prison became an equal film power with the help of a single film. The country... participated in the travesty of the espionage genre as an accidental freak dilettante. Hitchcock was the first to sell this joke to *North by Northwest* – since then, the client's burdock, a hat in feathers, a fraer in a satin tie has become a classic spicy seasoning for the Lenten war of the superpowers. Among the tall blondes in different shoes, it was no wonder to get lost – but Freddie Hansen was not lost, no. ... The war was to be kindled with specially trained pigeons launched at Moscow in cruise missiles – but Moscow did not know about this. Disrespectful comments about the homeland were cut out of the comedies cleanly, with Chinese intransigence, and pigeons were sent to "areas where the Russians have weaker radar installations" (Gorelov, 2019).

Many viewers of the 21st century still remember this parody with pleasure:

"Now it's clear that *Beat first, Freddy!* is a parody of the *James Bond*, and very witty. And then we, not seeing the Bond films, perceived "Freddie" just as a fun comedy. I recently reviewed it – no, it's not outdated at all!" (Krosha Ru).

"One of my fondest childhood memories. Yes, and now with pleasure I sometimes review this film, just recently too. Among other things, I really like the soundtrack... In principle, it seems to me that this film is not so much a parody of Bond, but from the same series of films as Russian *Diamond Arm*, the French *The Sucker* and *Tall Blonde in a Black Boot* ... about how a seemingly simpleton falls into the center of interests of some criminal or police structures. And gradually it turns out that he is actually not at all such a simpleton. And he emerges victorious" (Sergas).

"This film was under the heading "Children under 16". And it was the first film of this category that I saw. I still don't understand why he got into it. Probably because of the pretty waitresses in the restaurant in seductive low-cut tights. But the film was not remembered for this: indeed, a good comedy, and the actors played with good-natured irony. 20-25 years after its release, I bought a cassette with the film and I watched it with no less pleasure" (A. Vyatich).

White Fang / Zanna Bianca / Colmillo Blanco. Italy-Spain-France, 1973. Directed by Lucio Fulci. Release in the USSR - from November 24, 1975: 30.1 million viewers in the first year of demonstration in cinemas.

The Return of the White Fang / Il Ritorno di Zanna Bianca. Italy-France-Germany, 1974. Directed by Lucio Fulci. Release in the USSR - from June 1, 1976: 23.9 million viewers in the first year of demonstration in cinemas.

Lucio Fulci (1927-1996) was famous for its varied palette of entertainment films, among which were sometimes frivolous comedies, spaghetti westerns, giallo and horror films.

It is clear that many of such products did not fit into the framework of the Soviet film distribution. That is why, out of all Lucio Fulci's films, a film adaptation of Jack London's novel *White Fang* was selected for distribution in the USSR with a duet of very popular stars in Europe: Franco Nero and Virna Lisi (1936-2014). In the USSR, they also showed the continuation of this movie: *Return of the White Fang*. Both films were in the Soviet box office with great success. For example, they really liked teenagers who love dogs and adventures...

Opinions of current viewers about the *White Fang* differ significantly:

"With idealized romance, the film is full of magnificent landscapes and undisguised admiration of the harsh beauty of a slightly toy north. ... A dynamic, harmonious, very organic plot, vivid images, great music. In a word, a very good movie of the seventies, a holiday on the screen and in the hall... It was the first film in which I saw Virna Lisi, but I probably fell in love with her screen image forever. ... The film is full of Jack London characters. Everything is so alive and real, as people should be in his eyes. The film is about men with a capital letter, strong, brave, resolute, courageous and women worthy of them and matching them, as it is not surprising in the surroundings of a temporary settlement of gold diggers, seekers of fortune. And all this is set off by a smart, devoted dog, so noble that sometimes it forgives people even their mistakes" (Yulia Andreevna).

"There is no atmosphere here, no feelings for the *White Fang* and his friends, oppositions and adverbs, as well as connection with his best master. It ended up being just a dirty western. ... The villain is disposable and only a miserable aristocratic drunkard. ... Everything is so sugary, wretched and cheap" (Bianca Murin).

The last shot / The Police accuse: the secret service kills / La Polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide. Italy, 1975. Directed by Sergio Martino. Release in the USSR - from March 13, 1978: 29.8 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Sergio Martino throughout his creative biography has shot frankly commercial films in various genres - from comedy to detective, thriller, horror and erotic films.

In the detective story *The Police accuse: the secret service kills*, the police commissioner is trying to figure out who and why is killing high-ranking army officers...

In 1978, film critic Victor Bozhovic (1932-2021) wrote about *The Police accuse: the secret service kills*: "We are far from questioning or discrediting the adventure-detective film genre and are ready to join Voltaire's famous dictum: "All genres are good, except the boring one." ... The concern that the viewer does not get bored is quite understandable, especially on the part of the authors of the detective film. It is important, however, by what means this good goal is achieved. On this issue, the position of the authors of *The Police accuse: the secret service kills* is simple to the point of naivety: they are convinced that the spectacle of a murder cannot get bored, especially if the murders are varied. This approach is typical enough of Western "repertory" film production, from which it would be ridiculous to demand artistic discoveries, or a serious study of life, or even special ingenuity. The task of the film is to entertain and keep the audience in suspense for one and a half hours, using a set of proven tools for this. With this task, judging by the box office success, the film copes successfully. But what is the moral result of these one and a half hours filled with various murders? It can hardly be called positive" (Bozhovich, 1978: 155).

And then Victor Bozhovich emphasized that they are trying in vain to attribute *The Police accuse: the secret service kills* to political detectives: "we have before us... a game: in political relevance, which, however, claims to be taken seriously. ... So, one of the two. Or political motives are taken in their real content: then this significantly changes the function of the

detective story and the requirements for it. Or these motifs are used in a frankly conditional, playful (perhaps satirical) way – then this approach should be expressed in the style of the work. Since *The Police accuse: the secret service kills* did neither of these, the claims of this kind of films to have a political sound should be recognized as untenable” (Bozhovich, 1978: 158).

However, current viewers do not agree with this kind of assessment of *The Police accuse: the secret service kills* and treat this generally “arithmetic mean” Italian film production of the 1970s quite respectfully:

“Everything seems to be familiar, seen and re-seen from the films of Damiani, Elio Petri, Francesco Rosi, Carlo Lizzani (the main masters of Italy's political cinema of the 1970s). But, shooting *The Police accuse: the secret service kills*... S. Martino clearly experienced a sense of professional excitement. At least the finished rhythm of the progressive turns of the plot, ... competent editing of action scenes (especially the autochase of the heroes after the killer eluding them on a police motorcycle) and even some criticism of sinister secret organizations trying to undermine the moral (read Christian) foundations of society: all this gives some reason (in our time) to treat *The Police accuse: the secret service kills* as something more than just an entertaining movie spectacle. ... The disadvantages of the film, in addition to the brutal murders... include the author's (albeit unconscious) desire to promote defeatist sentiments. Teaching potential viewers to the idea that a priori evil will never be punished (which, by the way, smacks of a hidden satanic ideology). In the measuredly calm Brezhnev times, Martino's film seemed like a sensational police thriller. ... But I am sure of one thing for sure: some regulars of the cinemas of the USSR will surely remember *The Police accuse: the secret service kills* with nostalgia in their cinephile soul” (Navodchik).

“A chic film, rightfully one of the first places in a long list of political detective stories in Italian and French cinema of the 1960s-1980s. Many of them feature an honest, ideological lone police commissioner, obviously doomed to failure, and often to death, because it is impossible to fight a system in which crime has grown together with those in power. As time passes, there is not the slightest doubt that all these wonderful, talented films were made for a reason, but in order to accustom "free" citizens of "democratic" countries to obedience, clearly showing how the attempts of singles to find out the truth, not intended to the public and make it public. ... Western democracy is a chimera, because the one who has money and connections always wins; there is practically no freedom as such, everything is under control, any actions are regulated by strict rules, with no less severe sanctions for their violation, but the population does not even think of grumbling, not to mention fighting, because it has been successfully reduced by means of propaganda and poor school education to the level of animals, quite grunting from relatively satisfying individual feeders. Returning to the film, one cannot fail to note the magnificent music and wonderful actors who play the main roles” (Rousse).

Crusaders / Krzyzacy. Poland, 1960. Directed by Alexander Ford. Release in the USSR – 1962: 29.6 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration .

With the work of the famous Polish director Alexander Ford (1908-1980), the situation in the USSR was not easy. As long as he was a communist filming *Boundary Street* (1948), he could be praised (Markulan, 1967: 38-49). On the other hand, Alexander Ford significantly damaged his reputation in the eyes of the officialdom with the "revisionist" film *The Eighth Day of the Week* (1958). At the same time, an article by the film critic Rostislav Yurenev (1912-2002), containing harsh accusations against this picture by Alexander Ford (of course, not released in the Soviet film distribution), was published in a highly specialized publication (Yurenev, 1959: 102) and, therefore, was available mainly to professionals in the field of culture. And most importantly – with his next work – a large-scale color historical epic *Crusaders* (1960), Alexander Ford again returned to a context acceptable to the USSR.

This makes it clear why the film critic Janina Markulan (1920-1978), who did not even include *The Eighth Day of the Week* in the filmography of Polish films of 1947-1966,

compiled by her for the book *Cinema of Poland*, was very positive about the *Crusaders*. Moreover, she noted with satisfaction that “at a time when anti-heroic tendencies were strongest in Polish art, Ford creates a painting that openly sings of heroism as an eternal, enduring category” (Markulan, 1967: 49).

But... the book of J. Markulan was published until 1969, when Alexander Ford decided to emigrate to the West. But after 1969, according to Soviet traditions, film critics tried not to write about him anymore ...

Therefore, even a fleeting mention of the *Crusaders* in line with the fact that “one of the characteristic features of the Polish cinema of the 60s is the genre diversity of films” (Kolodyazhnaya, 1974: 51) was for 1974 a kind of film criticism challenge to censorship ...

Viewers today remember *Crusaders*, as a rule, in a positive context:

“When I saw this film, I was still in school, and it was also a cult film for the guys of my generation. Watched, excitedly retold... Since then I have seen a lot of historical blockbusters, including Polish ones, but this film has still been watched with interest” (B. Nezhdanov).

“I watched the movie *Crusaders* as a kid... it just stuck in my memory for years to come. Especially the main characters. I didn't understand much about love then, but I remember crying over the fates of Yurand and Danusya” (Irina).

“I watched it a long time ago, back in high school. But now it seems that there has never been a better film adaptation. At that time, we were just crazy about the film, we knew it by heart ... And the music there was amazing. I remember the film for the rest of my life” (Dessa).

“I love both Sienkiewicz's novel and this film. By the way, I love more than a trilogy... The film is simply amazingly beautiful. Beautiful actors – the color of Polish cinema! – busy even in small roles. The battle scenes are beautifully choreographed” (Seraphim).

The Lion is Preparing to Jump / Az Oroszlán ugrani készül. Hungary, 1969. Director and screenwriter György Reves. Release in the USSR - from June 14, 1971: 29.4 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

György Reves (1927-2003) against the background of Miklós Jancso (1921-2014), Zoltan Fabry (1917-1994), Istvan Szabo and Marta Meszáros was not so noticeable, but four of his films (*At Midnight*, *Four Adrift*, *Three Nights of Love* and *The Lion is Preparing to Jump*) still got into the Soviet box office.

The Lion is Preparing to Jump is a fast-paced parody of spy movies and, in particular, of the James Bond films.

However, during the years of the release of *The Lion...* in the Soviet film distribution, the reviewer Raisa Zuseva, apparently, could not figure out the genre of this entertaining movie and took it too seriously: “Honestly, this film, for a number of reasons, produces a very complex and even, perhaps, discouraging impression. It is preceded by an introductory inscription that reminds us... of the vitality of Nazism and its racist ideas, of the need to be vigilant and prevent the revival of fascism, which brought untold disasters to the world. ... Meanwhile, the whole atmosphere of this anti-fascist film... is, in our opinion, something between a completely spectacular circus performance and a desperately bad vaudeville with bloody motives, but a happy ending. ... The film is staged quite professionally, it is replete with spectacularly filmed fights and chases, the rhythm of the narration does not weaken and “sag” in it for a minute, the actors play very lively and, one might even say, enthusiastically, and yet this cinematic spectacle is rather amusing than pleases, rather surprises, what worries – the theme of the film and the genre chosen by the authors, the idea of the film – and its embodiment on the screen seem too incompatible for us!” (Zuseva, 1971: 20).

But viewers of the XXI century, as a rule, remember this film with pleasure:

"We were small, and they didn't want to let us in on this "adult film". But we still got through. Liked it very much!" (Andrey).

"One of the favorite films of Soviet teenagers, who were attracted by the inscription "for children under 16", spy themes, fights with chases and imported music... Beast is a kind of Hungarian James Bond. He is handsome, brave, gallant with ladies, knows how to fight and use weapons. The film is filled with arrows with radio beacons, voice recorders in smoking pipes, attempts to injure the victim with ultrasonic telephones, sedative cigars and poisonous ink" (Ancox).

"Incredibly funny parody of the *James Bond*, not inferior to the Czechoslovak *The End of the Agent*... And both of these films appeared on the Soviet screen much earlier than the parodied original. The ending is absolutely amazing. The super agent, having dealt with all the enemies and the main villain, comes out of the water to the shore, and there he is met at once by three determined girls. Before that, he seduced all of them with the help of one catchphrase: "You are my only one!" And at the sight of "the only ones" in the plural, the poor fellow raises his hands ..." (B. Nezhdanov).

The Police Commissioner Accuses / Un comisar acuză. Romania, 1973.
Directed by Sergiu Nicolaescu. Release in the USSR - since January 1976: 29.4 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Sergiu Nicolaescu (1930-2013) during his career directed three dozen films of various genres, among which were large-scale costume-historical productions, westerns, etc. But the greatest love of the Soviet audience for this director was brought by a detective retro series about the fight against crime in post-war Romania, which began with the stylish film *Clean Hands*.

The action of the film *The Commissioner of Police Accuses* takes place in Romania in 1940, when there was a fierce struggle for power...

The Soviet film press reacted positively to S. Nicolaescu's detective films.

For example, film critic Nikolai Sumenov (1938-2014) praised S. Nicolaescu not only for his outstanding external data, but also for the fact that he "performs the most difficult scenes himself, refusing to use understudies and stuntmen" (Sumenov, 1976: 18).

Already in the 21st century, film critic Denis Gorelov, in my opinion, accurately noted that "long-running franchises are usually modeled after comics. The word about the commissar was a secondary comic... Not knowing the best, and they were glad beyond measure: the main thing remained. A polished gentleman, objective, like Themis herself. Death squadrons in sinister leather coats. A cavalcade of killing machines in glimmers of light on the wet pavement... On our side, an elegant medium-caliber revolver and very, very, very expensive suits: in contrast to the spectacular black redneck, the guard of the law had to look like a needle – and he did. Left alone against a whole pack, he melancholy raised the collar of his jacket. In the firefight at the cemetery, the hat that was knocked down in the turmoil was more than eye-catching. The titan of the Romanian genre, Nicolaescu, wrested this kitsch splendor out of the Lenten plot about real party members replacing the dying class of detectives" (Gorelov, 2019: 164-165).

Many viewers of *The Police Commissioner Accuses* still like it:

"Very interesting film. Taken a long time ago, but it looks amazing. I didn't even expect. The ending is unexpected and memorable" (Tatiana).

"An excellent directorial and acting work by S. Nicolaescu, combining elements of a historical, political film and an exciting action movie" (A. Grebenkin).

The Pretender with a Guitar / Big Beat / Mocne uderzenie. Poland, 1966. Directed by Jerzy Passendorfer. Release in the USSR - from October 1970: 29.3 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Jerzy Passendorfer (1923-2003) gained fame for films on a military theme (*Attempt, Baptized by Fire, Colors of Struggle, Shoulder to Shoulder, Day of Epiphany, Last Days*, etc.). *Big Beat* is one of his few works of the "light" genre, in this case, the musical one.

There is an extended love line in *Big Beat*, but almost thirty million Soviet viewers filled cinema halls in 1970 not because of this. The fact is that the famous Polish groups of that time participated in this movie: Skaldowie and Niebiesko-Czarni, from which the legendary Czesław Neman (1939-2004) had not yet left in 1966, since he began his solo career in 1967.

So fans of Polish popular music fled to this movie with all their might...

I agree with film critic Denis Gorelov: this picture "became an outlet through which the worldwide bit-madness leaked to us: the Democrat guys could afford what was considered reprehensible in our country. Skinny white jeans. Men's boots. Electric guitars in the grass. And most importantly: colored turtle-necks, known in the world as *Beatles*, the chorus "ye-ye", harmonica on the rhythm guitar: all the melody of the Liverpool four, skillfully copied by the Skaldowie cover group. Even the Latin alphabet of the Polish alphabet added foreign fashionableness" (Gorelov, 2019: 150).

The Soviet film press accepted *Big Beat* condescendingly.

So the film critic Tatiana Ivanova wrote that "the plot is vulnerable. But both *Skaldowie* and *Niebiesko-Czarni* are really talented, they fulfill their mission on the screen with brilliance. As for the lack of logic and plausibility in the characters' characters, the director of the film, Jerzy Passendorfer, was probably looking for them. Such, after all, is the property of the genre" (Ivanova, 1970: 22).

For today's viewers, *Big Beat* often evokes fond memories:

"Yes, a nostalgic film... I remember watching it in the 10th grade during the winter holidays. Yes, not once! In fact, this was the first film on our screens, where they showed, albeit Polish, but still rock bands (more precisely, then they were called "beat groups")" (Igor)

"Reviewed with great pleasure. I thought it wouldn't work. Turns out there are a lot of funny moments. I forgot... In general, I enjoyed the film, and more from dubbing by our wonderful actors. The phrase "few can sing, but everyone sings" seems to have been taken from today" (Irina).

To the Treasures of the Plane Crash / Race for the Yankee Zephyr. Australia - New Zealand, USA, 1981. Directed by David Hemmings. Release in the USSR - from March 10, 1983: 29.0 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Today, few people probably remember that this tightly crafted adventure film was directed by the famous actor David Hemmings (1941-2003), superbly played by Michelangelo Antonioni (1912-2007) in his cult psychological detective film *Blow-up* (1966), awarded the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival...

...Examining the pictures taken in the park, the photographer (David Hemmings) discovers that he probably witnessed the murder. A visit from an unfamiliar beauty (Vanessa Redgrave) who tried to get negatives from him reinforces his suspicions. But... the corpse in the park disappears without a trace, and uninvited "guests" steal photos from the laboratory. The protagonist sees mimes in the park putting on a bizarre spectacle of playing tennis: without a racket and a ball. The "ball" "falls" next to the photographer. The memes are asking to be brought into the game. And, after a little hesitation, the hero makes a "serve"...

The ambiguity, ambiguity, mystery of the film's plot give rise to a variety of interpretations: from a protest against conformism to a sad statement of the impossibility of a person to change the "rules of the game"...

After playing further prominent roles in the films *Camelot*, *Attack of the Light Brigade*, *Barbarella* and others, David Hemmings decided to try his hand at directing. And, starting in 1973, he managed to put on 14 films and serials. Unfortunately, none of them was destined to become an event in the world of cinema.

Race for the Yankee Zephyr is no exception. This is a professionally and captivatingly told story about how a certain hunter finds a crashed plane with millions of dollars...

Many viewers still remember this movie:

"The film was shot in one breath. Beautiful shooting of mountain landscapes alternate with dizzying chases. We must pay tribute to the operator: he masterfully shot the chase scenes. Sometimes it seems that the head is spinning from these endless chases, but after a minute everything falls into place, and I already continue to empathize with what is rapidly happening on the screen" (Kabanov).

"The first time I saw this film was about nine or ten years old. ... Therefore, with the advent of access to an extensive movie base, it was one of the first ones that I, with a sense of nostalgia, revisited, again plunging into these incredible landscapes... and breathtaking chases by helicopters and boats. ... Of course, the film does not pretend to be any frills, it is as simple as five cents, but it is quite dynamic and surprisingly well played. And there is still more comedy than an action movie. Yes, and there are plenty of adventures" (Black Hol Angel).

"It is difficult to get rid of the feeling that the picture was born solely from mercantile considerations. However, one cannot blame her for this: the cinema honestly tries and copes well with its unpretentious entertainment task. The heroes go through various and very spectacular adventures, including chases in helicopters and sports motor boats, gunfights, kidnappings, fights, etc. They obviously saved on special effects, deciding to compensate for their lack of overflowing irony, in some places completely inappropriate. Everything turned out somehow too cheap, too light. And it doesn't catch on" (Itsmay).

Don't Lose Sight! / La Course à l'échalote. France-Germany, 1975. Directed by Claude Zidi. Release in the USSR – 1979: 28.9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

French director Claude Zidi was unusually lucky in the Soviet box office: about a dozen of his films appeared on the screens.

In the mid-1970s, director Claude Zidi was temporarily fascinated by the duet of the Frenchman Pierre Richard and the Englishwoman Jane Birkin, with whom he staged two dynamic sitcoms in a row – *Mustard Hits My Nose* (in Soviet box office the film went under the amorphous title *He Gets Angry*) and *La Course à l'échalote*.

In both cases, Pierre Richard polished the mask he found of an absent-minded, sentimental and shy intellectual, endlessly getting into trouble, miraculously avoiding many dangers and in love with a pretty woman.

Jane Birkin was as charming in this role as Mireille Dark was in another comedy dilogy with Pierre Richard, filmed around the same time by Yves Robert (*Tall blond in a black shoe*).

In the year of the release of the comedy *La Course à l'échalote* in Soviet distribution, film critic Victor Demin (1937-1993) spoke of her quite kindly, praising Pierre Richard for his skill and ability to adapt the type he found to various circumstances (Demin, 1979).

In the 21st century, the brisk pen of film critic Denis Gorelov also reached this comedy, who noted that “Claude Zidi managed to strike a spark precisely from the head-on collision of the standard with the reckless, the mass with the clownery, and the statutes with anarcho-syndicalism. An ordinary Frenchman, Richard, was placed inside the poles, and the electricity that arose ruffled his hair, like the lion Boniface's. Like the lion, Richard was obscenely liked by the children, I declare with all responsibility. ... The very engine of the plot – the concealment from the public of uncompromising assets – also did not attract attention... Much more beautiful was the attraction with the ashes of the castle, from which one toilet bowl and a bathtub on the second floor were left on long risers, where Richard and his maruha hid under water and did not even boil, but just got wet. Or inflating a bubble from a patch glued to your mouth. Or the ceremonial entry of one's name into the saved documents – with the lighting of a cigar at the end. They are even more important now” (Gorelov, 2019).

Current viewers generally like this comedy. I will give only one typical comment:

“This is my most favorite comedy (Gaidai and Ryazanov are beyond competition). Every time I watch it, I roll with laughter. Richard created such a truly comical image, genuinely, sincerely comical. What are the toilet scenes from the very beginning to the end of this bundle. It's impossible to stop laughing. Scenes with scenes (that's right: scenes with scenes) are great from start to finish. Starting from the moment Pierre cuts down the column and ending with how he grabs the case and disappears with a cheerful girlfriend by the hand, who still has time to curtsy. Also, what a perfect plot! Nothing extra and just enough. ... A very organic comic duo. All other partners of Richard in other films, to a greater or lesser extent, but inferior to Jane Birkin. ... Bravo to Richard and Birkin” (Lyudmila).

The Chase. USA, 1965. Directed by Arthur Penn. Release in the USSR – from September 27, 1971: 28.7 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Arthur Penn (1922-2010) was born in Philadelphia in 1922. Before the war, he graduated from the acting studio, then served in the army. True, he did not participate in the battles. Whether out of boredom, or from a desire not to lose his acting form, Arthur organized an army theater troupe, they say, quite popular among the soldier audience.

After the end of the war, Penn left for Italy. In Perugia and Florence he studied art. He played in local theaters and even staged several performances on his own. Having absorbed European culture, he returned to America and favorably differed from many Hollywood colleagues in the subtle psychological characterization of the characters in his films. Sometimes even the elite symbolism of encrypted images (*Someone Mickey, Alice's Restaurant*).

Of course, Arthur Penn established himself as one of the “pillars” of Hollywood in the 1960s and 1970s with films that had great success with a mass audience (*The Chase, Bonnie and Clyde, Little Big Man*, etc.).

The social drama *The Chase* is one of the few class A Hollywood films that made it into the Soviet film distribution of the 1970s. According to the plot of this film, residents of a Texas town learn about the escape from prison of a local guy Bubber Reeves (Robert Redford). Sheriff Calder (Marlon Brando) opposes mob lynching and wants to save Bubber...

The lessons of Mikhail Chekhov, who, as you know, became one of the pedagogical pillars of the American theater school, helped Arthur Penn to earn a reputation as an "acting director". And in *The Chase*, a very strong cast has developed: Marlon Brando (1924-2004), Robert Redford and Jane Fonda play psychologically convincingly, completely immersing themselves in the sharp conflict of the plot...

Many viewers still remember *The Chase* as one of the important events in life:

"I saw this movie in 1971. Never, before or since, has any picture made such a strong impression on me. When I left the cinema hall, I was literally pounding. Brilliant production by Arthur Penn, and the script... What an idea! All against one, they poison like a wolf... And what actors! ... A person who has watched such a movie will not watch and discuss "grouses" and "teams", just as one who has eaten sturgeon caviar will not rush to the garbage heap to pull potato peelings out of there..." (S. Rokotov).

"The film became an event in its time. I remember, after the first viewing, I left the hall, as if stunned, and walked around under the impression for several days. A whole constellation of outstanding actors" (Igor).

The Toast of New Orleans. USA, 1950. Directed by Norman Taurog. Release in the USSR - from January 18, 1965: 28.5 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

This musical melodrama starring the famous singer Mario Lanza (1921-1959) was directed by the **American director Norman Taurog (1899-1981)** who made many famous musicals and musical comedies (*Broadway Melody, Crazy Girl, Blue Hawaii, Girls! Girls! Girls!*, etc.).

At the heart of the plot of the film *The Toast of New Orleans* is an eternal story about a simple man from the people who is waiting for recognition and success. In this case, in the singing field.

Current viewers tend to have a positive attitude towards this film:

"*The Toast of New Orleans* is a typical fifties musical with all the signs of the times. At that time, this genre was very popular. I am not a big fan of old musical films, but, honestly, I got attached to this with all my heart. Most likely, because everything is done with a twinkle and with humor. There is also a love line here, but not too much of it, which films of this type usually sinned" (Mabgat).

"Now, *The Toast of New Orleans* has been forgotten, but in 1950 this film became wildly popular and gave acceleration to the career of Mario Lanza. ... *The Toast of New Orleans* does not have a complex and intense script, it is a light and attractive film, in which Lanza revealed himself to the fullest. Perhaps this was the reason for the success of the film. ... Separately, I want to note the music: it is admirable. ... *Be my love* is simply a masterpiece" (M. Amir).

Women and Bersagliers / Donne... Botte e bersaglieri. Italy, 1968. Directed by Ruggiero Deodato. Release in the USSR - from October 2, 1972: 28.5 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

During his long creative career, Ruggiero Deodato has directed more than three dozen films of various genres. The most famous of which were the horror films *The Last Feast of the Cannibals* (1977) and *Cannibal Hell* (1979), which, of course, did not hit the Soviet film distribution. But Deodato also filmed musical comedies, and here is one of them – *Women and Bersagliers*, which was released on the screens of the USSR in 1972.

The main role in this unpretentious movie was played by pop singer Little Tony (1941-2013), popular in Italy at that time, who quite often appeared on the screen in musical films.

The Soviet press reacted ironically to *Women and Bersagliers* (See, for example, Ivanov, Trifonov, 1973: 8-9).

Opinions of 21st century viewers about this film are also far from delighted:

"Comedy for one viewing, there is nothing outstanding in this film. ... now it will probably be interesting to watch exclusively for retro lovers. ... A large number of viewers in the USSR can most likely be explained by the title and the fact that this is an Italian film. At least, in the

complete absence of advertising, this was the main thing when choosing a film from the repertoire” (Nord).

“Yes, nothing outstanding, and naive, and a little stupid. What more could you ask for from a light musical film? ... No matter what musical film appeared on the screens, the cinema halls were always crowded, and then they scolded and lamented about the lack of musical films. Why were the boys in the early seventies so excited about this picture? And a counter question: “Where and how could one listen to beautiful Italian melodies in the early seventies? ... And *Women and Bersaliers* – a whole clip of Italian songs! In the early seventies, for the Russian provinces, it was almost a real holiday! What can I add here...” (Fritzenyatka).

Umbrella Prick / Le Coup du parapluie. France, 1980. Directed by Gerard Oury. Release in the USSR - from July 1982: 28.4 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Perhaps this is not the best comedy Gérard Oury (1919-2006), staged *The Sucker* and *The Big Walk*, but quite inventive and funny, all the more so because the comedian Pierre Richard, who became famous after *The Tall Blonde in a Black Shoe*, played the main role in it.

Despite the fact that the *Umbrella Prick* was based on a scandalous political story that cast a shadow on People's Bulgaria and the USSR, for some reason the film got into the Soviet distribution without any problems just a year after the Paris premiere.

During the years of the release of the *Umbrella Prick* in Soviet distribution, film critic Georgy Bogemsky (1920-1995) wrote that “French comedy is true to itself: it rarely seeks to fill the comedy form with any serious content, its slogan remains “No problems!”, and the task is to make the audience laugh as much as possible. The film *Umbrella Prick*... accomplishes this task with success” (Bogemsky, 1982: 15).

And already in the 21st century, film critic Denis Gorelov recalled that “the plot was based on the murder of the Bulgarian dissident Markov in London. Noise, dust and refined idiocy, it, no doubt, entered the annals of detective thrash. It is significant to execute a talker from Radio Liberty with a poisoned umbrella: only a joke country could come up with such a thing, designed to compromise all the bright and dark sides of the Eastern bloc at once. ... Cheap sur aggravated by the fact that the murdered was the full namesake of the current chairman of the Union of Soviet Writers, the author of the Siberian novels *Strogovs* and *The Salt of the Earth* Georgy Markov. ... People in black became corpses before they could fall completely. The assistant professor fought with the dressing room mafia on the roof of new buildings in full contact. The bodygardindus threw his pouch out of his wrist-case and fell, pierced by the umbrella. The corpse of the tycoon Krampe, who a minute ago looked like Zurab Tsereteli, swam alone in the suddenly empty pool. It was impossible to imagine such a scene in a comedy even five years earlier. People was crazy. It's fun” (Gorelov, 2019).

Today's viewers speak of the *Umbrella Prick*, as a rule, warmly:

“*Umbrella Prick* is one of the funniest and most successful comedies starring Pierre Richard! Absolutely timeless French cinema, easily and quickly uplifting!” (Alexander).

“The film is amazing. I saw it for the first time in the summer on vacation in 1981. ... I really liked the film, there are so many funny and interesting things. I especially liked the blonde who worked in the police” (Valera).

Bridegroom for Laura / Un Novio para Laura. Argentina, 1955. Directed by Julio Saraceni. Release in the USSR – 1958: 28.4 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

One of the most prolific directors in the world – Julio Saraceni (1912-1998) – directed about 60 (!) entertaining films, mostly comedies and musical revues. The musical film *Age of Love* shot by him was a triumph on Soviet screens.

Bridegroom for Laura is another musical film by J. Saraceni with the participation of Lolita Torres (1930-2002), where her heroine, due to the financial problems of her aristocratic family, decides to become an actress...

In the second half of the 1950s, the popularity of the Argentine singer and actress Lolita Torres in the USSR was fantastic, so there is nothing surprising in the fact that this movie gathered almost three dozen million viewers in the first year of its demonstration...

Mr. Pitkin Behind Enemy Lines / Out of Place / The Square Peg. UK, 1958. Directed by John Paddy Carstairs. Release in the USSR - from September 26, 1960: 28.1 million viewers in the first year of the show.

John Paddy Carstairs (1910-1970) directed films of various genres, mostly entertaining, but the most famous of his films (at least in the USSR) was a military comedy, which received the name in Soviet film distribution *Mr. Pitkin Behind Enemy Lines* starring famous British comedian Norman Wisdom (1915-2010).

Gathering almost thirty million spectators in the USSR in the first year of the demonstration alone, this picture amused the audience with reckless tricks and rude jokes, especially since the Nazis were the main objects of ridicule...

Today's viewers are rather skeptical about this film:

"I think my first Pitkin film will be my last; this kind of humor is too flat for me. I involuntarily compare it with the French military comedy *The Big Walk*, which also does not differ in such refined and subtle humor, but compared to Pitkin, *The Big Walk* is simply brilliant comedy masterpiece!" (G. Volanov)

Leper / Tradewata. Poland, 1976. Directed by Jerzy Hoffman. Release in the USSR - from September 18, 1978: 28.1 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Jerzy Hoffman is one of the most famous Polish directors, many of whose films were successfully shown in the Soviet film distribution.

Along with *The Medicine Man*, *Leper* is one of Jerzy Hoffmann's most famous melodramas.

Film critic Yevgeny Nefedov believes that "The success of *Leper* is easiest to explain by the love of the audience, and first of all the audience, for melodramas, for beautiful and (in the best sense of the word) sentimental love stories, especially when it comes to refined aristocratic customs. The richness of the interiors (and in general – the feeling of the historical era) Jerzy Hoffman will not yield to our outstanding compatriots who turned to the literary classics of the 19th century... Yes, and the misalliance as such, emerging contrary to the generally accepted norms and tastes of the representatives of the nobility, contrary to the irresistible will of the family and the hopes of relatives, dreaming about the marriage of Valdemar with Melania Barska, only contributes to an additional, let's say, passions. ... In the *Leper*, Hoffman and cameraman... demonstrate the maximum delicacy of cinematic writing,

which acquires an impressionistic character, conquer with refinement and attention to the nuances of the states of mind of the beloved. But as events unfold, the elegiac mood, suggestive of a noble aristocratic spirit that has sunk into oblivion, definitely has no place left. Picture arranged by representatives of the so-called. the cream of society obstruction of celebration ... gives out in the director a sophisticated connoisseur of the traditions of the "Polish school", which conquered the world with the expressiveness of film language" (Nefedov, 2014).

There are many admirers of *Leper* among the audience of the 21st century:

"I watched this movie again. atmospheric film. Great performance by all the actors. So many halftones, shades!" (Rufina).

"This is one of the most beautiful love stories. ... The extraordinary beauty of the main character attracts throughout the film. And, of course, luxurious costumes, beautiful interiors: everything is intertwined in the most beautiful way in one film" (Novikova).

"I watched this film several times, ran to different cinemas and roared at the end. Indeed, a poignant love story" (Lena).

A Man and a Woman / Un Homme et une femme. France, 1966. Directed by Claude Lelouch. Release in the USSR - from January 1, 1968: 27.9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

...He-race driver. She-film producer. For each of them, a tragic incident took away a loved one. But then they met, and ... "sha-ba-ba, pa-ba-da-da-da"... The bewitching music of Francis Lai sounded.

The surf rustled on the English Channel. Memories flashed by in a series of dazzling flashes. And a new and at the same time old, like the world, love story began ...

This movie was shot in the same breath.-in just two months, by the method of improvisation, spontaneous dialogues. It turned out to be touchingly lyrical, humane and surprisingly emotional.

Crowned with the gold of Cannes and an Oscar, Claude Lelouch's melodrama *A Man and a Woman* became a fetish, a talisman, an obsession for him.

The triumph of 1966 haunted him. He wanted at all costs to repeat, and even surpass this success.

And all subsequent years, Lelouch, one way or another, remembered him on the screen. Sometimes this longing for a finest hour was already manifested in the very title of the film (*Another Man, Another Chance*). Sometimes it took on a derisive tone. Like the scene where in the prison cinema, the prisoners watched the delightfully filmed footage of the final meeting of the heroes of *A Man and a Woman (New Year)*.

And finally, in direct continuation-the film *A Man and a Woman 20 Years Later* (1986), where after a long break, wonderful actors again starred together: Jean-Louis Trintignant and Anouk Aimé... Here, in addition to the touching relationship between long-lost lovers, the story of their grown-up children is added, and a detective intrigue about a cruel killer is intertwined. In addition, the characters of the film are filmed and filmed in films, and filming episodes are also included in the action. Plus, of course, footage from the real *A Man and a Woman*. And all this in a bizarre montage, impeccably polished in previous paintings.

And somewhere between the attraction detective stories and "car racing" stories, the views of the slightly aged Trintignant and Aimé are remembered. Not characters, but great actors who have managed not to lose themselves over these 20 years and are still able to keep the attention of the audience by their very presence on the screen.

... In the fall of 2019, a new film by the legendary Claude Lelouch *The Best Years of Life* was released on European screens-the final part of the legendary trilogy about the love of *A Man and a Woman*. This is some kind of goodbye: with already really aged Jean-Louis Trintignant and Anouk Aimé... This is a sad, touching and talented film...

And finally, a little personal recollection. A long time ago, at one of the film festivals, I was literally a stone's throw from Claude Lelouch, and I really wanted to approach him and express

my admiration for his *A Man and a Woman*. But, alas, I didn't dare... It's a pity, now, apparently, I will never have to talk to him again...

In Soviet times, film critic Irina Rubanova wrote, what nand the life material that formed the basis of *A Man and a Woman*, “nor its interpretation by the author-director, are not new and do not bring discovery. Perhaps, there is a taste of literature in the film: such lyrical stories with a happy ending are often brought by conventional fiction. But no matter how one treats *A Man and a Woman*, it is impossible not to pay tribute to the actors: Anouk Aimé and soft, serious Jean-Louis Trintignant. For Anouk Aimé, being in this film had a special meaning. For the first time in a Lelouch film, she became the author of the character she created. There is open evidence of this. “It was real fun, almost like a family game,” recalls Anouk Aimé. – Instead of forcing the actors to cram the text, Lelouch said: "You will express this thought at the moment that seems most appropriate to you, but otherwise do what you want." And he himself, on the sidelines, did what he wanted, with a camera. It is clear that with such a system of work, the actor must bring a significant part of his experience into the image. Lelouch appreciated the rare ability of Anouk in purity, invariably conveying eternal feelings to the viewer: love, devotion, respect. The director of *A Man and a Woman* needed to enlist actors capable of poetic stylization: his film is not a story of one love, these are poems about love in general. That is why it is so important how the picture is shot and how it is played. The role of Anouk Aimé is a rich score of feelings prompted by maturity, human and creative. Enchanting modesty, forbidden longing for happiness, melancholy unbelief, timid hope: these diverse emotions are merged into a single melody, sonorous and bright, by skill and inspiration. In this melody is a feeling, timid, relentless, tender, bitter, mature, hot, feeling, which is not given to experience an ordinary nature, and ordinary actors can not express” (Rubanova, 1971: 49).

In the 21st century, film critic Lidia Kuzmina assessed *A Man and a Woman* differently, emphasizing that the director improvisationally used “a wealth of metaphors and dissolved the love story in the rhythm of the road, in the sound of the sea, in the sounds of rain, which seems to have stepped over all meteorological norms, "flowing down" to its symbolic meaning – "erase random features"... Ultimately, he was not talking about the poetry of feelings about the poetic beauty of the world. ... Probably, this is one of the secrets of the film's extraordinary success: the director had the opportunity to peep poetry in life, and he managed to keep this feeling” (Kuzmina, 2009: 77).

***A Man and a Woman* still has many fans today:**

“This is the best movie about love that I have seen in my 62 years of life. He reached us late, so I saw him for the first time after graduation. I fell in love with him so much that, I remember, I looked for him in all the cinemas and in a couple of years I watched more than twenty times. Then it got to the point that I could just retire, close my eyes and watch by myself, without a cinema. Became a silent fan. I was shivering from everything: from color, and from music, and from how the cameraman worked, and from acting... Now I have it on disk, and you can watch it on the Internet. Which I use from time to time. No matter how much you look, you don't get bored, but you discover something new” (Nadya Mileiko).

“Perhaps one of the reasons for the success of this film in general, and especially with us, is that the author managed to show the value and self-sufficiency of private life without any ideas and layers. On the screen, people are absolutely free in their personal time. And no one dares to interfere with them, to reproach them, to dictate something to them. Everything is in their own hands. At that time, we still didn't know how to shoot, show, and, in general, at least imagine life like that” (Yuri).

Divorce Italian Style / Divorzio all'italiana. Italy, 1961. Directed by Pietro Germi. Release in the USSR – 1964: 27.8 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

The Soviet press greeted the satirical dramatic comedy of Pietro Germi (1914-1974) *Divorce Italian Style* very warmly.

Perhaps, it was then, after the *Divorce Italian Style*, that Stefania Sandrelli was talked about as a rising star. She played her part with the sly grace of youth. And at the end of this brilliant film, the audience understood that they had found a scythe on a stone: the womanizer Baron Fefe (M. Mastroianni), having sent his wife to the other world and married young Angela, becomes a cuckold himself... Divorces in Italy were then prohibited by law, and the film was perceived unusually sharply.

Film critic Lyudmila Pogozeva (1913-1989) wrote that *Divorce Italian Style* is a “satirical comedy that makes fun of Sicilian customs. Here everything is pointed to the grotesque. Everything here is ridiculous and absurd: and passion, and love, and even death. Absurd is the impossibility of divorcing an unloved wife, the way of life, hypocrisy and savagery of morals... There are no positive characters in a comedy. Only laughter is positive. Marcello Mastroianni appeared in a completely new role in the film – in a sharp, almost grotesque manner, he played an aging husband, a baron ... peering at a young beauty from the dressing room window ... A brilliant film” (Pogozeva, 1964: 111).

Film critic Georgy Bogemsky (1920-1995) noted that “It was a new film in every respect. It marked the beginning for Italy of the genre of sharp socio-ethical satire, or, rather, tragicomedy; it was new to Germi himself, who had never directed this kind of film before; it was also new for the lead actor Marcello Mastroianni, who created a completely grotesque image. The film, as you know, had a social impact: it was a contribution to the struggle of the Italian public against medieval legislation, backward morals, age-old prejudices. In this big film by a big director, with a big actor, sixteen-year-old Stefania Sandrelli got the role of her age-mate Angela. A new character appeared in Italian cinema with rather unusual traits: a mixture of youthful uncertainty and impudence, humility and arrogance, languid apathy with sudden bursts of violent temperament” (Bogemsky, 1970: 172).

Already in post-Soviet times, film critic Lyubov Alova emphasized that “today, *Divorce Italian Style* is one of the most iconic films of its time and a typical example of “Italian comedy”. ... For the experienced filmmaker Pietro Germi, *Divorce Italian Style* was a debut in this genre... and he managed to create a stylistically coherent satirical work in which self-acting, it would seem, sketch episodes do not destroy, but, on the contrary, form the overall structure paintings” (Alova, 2009: 114-115).

Viewers of the XXI century *Divorce Italian Style* like today:

“Great movie, one of my favorites. And very atmospheric: real Italy with a southern Sicilian accent, a baroque palace... I do not get tired of revisiting this film” (Rain).

“Brilliant performance by Marcello Mastroianni. She looked without stopping. How interestingly his face changed depending on the plot. You even sympathize with his hero, as far as you can sympathize in a tragicomedy” (Aleftina).

“Incomparable film. I can't agree that he's not funny. When I first watched, I did not expect that the hero would bring his cunning plans to life, for some reason I thought that everything would somehow collapse. And watching Ferdinando was terribly funny: Marcello Mastroianni just played smartly. Therefore, the tragic ending for me was a complete surprise. ... And all the same, when you look and you already know how it will end, it is impossible not to laugh. ... That, probably, is the charm of this film, that you both laugh and worry from the heart” (Tamara).

“One of my favorite Italian comedies: wonderful acting, unique atmosphere, humor...” (Ilona).

Not Caught – Not a Thief / Ni vu, ni connu. France, 1957. Directed by Yves Robert. Release in the USSR – 1961: 27.8 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Famous French director Yves Robert (1920-2002) was remembered by the audience, first of all, for the parody dilogy about the adventures of the Tall Blond, although he also had such a psychologically subtle dramatic comedy as *Hello, Artist!*

However, the first European success of Yves Robert is associated with the comedy *Not Caught – Not a Thief* (1957) with Louis de Funès (1914-1983), who was not yet a superstar of the French screen.

This comedy appeared in the Soviet box office in the early 1960s and immediately became very popular.

Its popularity continues with many viewers of the 21st century:

“One of the first films that introduced me to the work of Louis de Funès... From childhood, I remember the cries of his parrot: “You are beautiful, Bléro!”, When the tails of pheasants obtained during poaching were sticking out from under the hero’s jacket” (Soloviev).

“Not a movie, but a song! Many cool moments, for example, when the hero of de Funès and the head of the prison return from a night "walk", they stand at the gates of the prison, and at that moment the watchman and all the other "inmates" sneak from the opposite side: "We went to the *Moulin Rouge*" (Lenusya).

“A classic of French comedy... As Blaireau... de Funès is hilarious: it shows quite clearly the makings of everything that will later attract millions of viewers to the screens in the world-energy, cunning, inconsistency of appearance with human dignity, typical grimaces, small movements, loudness. ... And in the film, however, as in all French films, there are beautiful girls, sparkling humor and a wonderful picture of the life of a small provincial French town. A good old movie for those who are nostalgic for a good movie” (Bob)

“One of the first roles of Louis de Funès, in which his wonderful talent as a comedian was revealed. ... The film unfolds gradually, like a flower, captivating with the simplicity of the rural life of a small French town. The director manages to capture the attention and soul of the viewer from the first minutes, immersing his attention completely in the life and funny adventures of the characters ... Undoubtedly, this is a masterpiece of cinematography” (Perseus).

Single / Le Solitaire. France, 1986. Directed by Jacques Deray. Release in the USSR – 1989: 27.8 million viewers in the first year of the show.

The Americanized style of gangster-cop films is typical of the French director Jacques Deray (1929-2003), from year to year making a win-win bet on the image of Jean-Paul Belmondo and Alain Delon (*Borsalino, Three Must Be Removed, Marginal*).

Of course, in all these movies you can feel the “French flavor”. Either the image in the frame looks too elegant, or the psychologism of the characters in other episodes goes beyond the rigid framework of "Americanism".

But in general, the general plot scheme remains:

- gangsters live according to their strict laws, obeying a kind of criminal "code of honor";
- killer maniacs and rapists, knowing that law enforcement officers are on their trail, challenge them, committing one daring crime after another;
- returning from prison, a noble hero (gangster, policeman or secret agent) takes revenge on his offenders...

In *Single*, however, a slightly different option is given. Belmondo's character avenges the death of a friend...

The classic investigation is often replaced in films of this sort with thriller prosecutions. When the viewer must freeze in suspense for the next murder...

True, film critic Sergei Lavrentiev considered that “the story unfolds in Deray extremely sluggishly. There is no talk of any directorial arrangement of the plot. All-encompassing lethargy, moreover, is not compensated by the seemingly obligatory brawls and shooting for the genre: they take up unforgivably little screen time in *Single*. It seems that Jacques Deray, as an experiment, decided to build a police action movie on some dialogues, hoping that the commercial success of the movie would be ensured by the fact that the main role was played by the irresistible Belmondo, for the happiness of a new meeting with which the public would forgive any directorial negligence. But it is possible that Belmondo himself talked about Deray in much the same way: after all, the actor worked with an experienced professional. In any case, in the sluggish atmosphere of a "quiet" action movie, the actor feels extremely organic. Of course, the gait is still springy and the figure is athletic, but the aged face shows fatigue... Here and the film looks somehow devoid of energy, as if aged with its creators” (Lavrentyev, 1989).

However, film critic Andrey Zorky (1935-2006) was kinder to *Single*: “Does a meeting with our favorite actor bring us joy or grief even in an everyday, “passage” film for him? Personally, I am inclined to believe that it is still joy. The fact is that even in an ordinary picture, a great master brings charm, the attractiveness of his personality, a myth, a legend that surrounds his screen world. In the “case of Belmondo” it is fearlessness and dexterity, spontaneity, excitement and composure of the hero, balancing at the limit of his strength, on the edge of the abyss and at the same time maintaining true French humor and love of life” (Zorky, 1989: 13).

Viewers of the 21st century seem to be inclined to agree with the opinion of Andrey Zorky:

"Serious work. For men. I saw the film more than once and still worried ... As often happens, Belmondo is opposed by his colleague... The methods of Belmondo's character are tough, but he is dealing with the most dangerous opponent. An excellent film *Single*, like everything else, where my favorite actor is filmed” (Irina).

“It is clear that Belmondo has aged in this film, but still keeps his mark” (D. Ravik).

“Wonderful film. I recommend it for those who haven't seen it to watch it. Belmondo in the role of Commissar Stan is magnificent... However, as in his many other roles” (V. Sidorenko).

"Great movie! One of my favorites” (Foxik).

Wolf Echo / Wilcze echa. Poland, 1968. Director and screenwriter Alexander Ścibor-Rylski. Release in the USSR - from June 30, 1970: 27.7 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Director and screenwriter Alexander Ścibor-Rylski (1928-1983) for many years he collaborated with Andrzej Wajda (1926-2016), for whom he wrote the scripts for his famous films *Ashes*, *Man of Marble* and *Man of Iron*. In 1963, A. Ścibor-Rylski made his debut in directing, at first in the comedy and drama genres. However, in the late 1960s, he directed two action films: *The Outlaw Leaves a Trail* (1966) and *Wolf Echo* (1968).

For Soviet viewers, of particular interest was the fact that the Estonian actor Bruno Oja (1933-2002), who had previously made a strong statement in the film *Nobody Wanted to Die*, which also took place in the first post-war years...

Viewers of the 21st century remember *Wolf Echo* very warmly:

“One of my favorite films from my childhood. Bruno Oja is just a real hero. A handsome, strong and fearless soldier who is fired from the army for insolence, but fights alone against a gang of assassins in police uniforms. Great music, stunning landscapes, mountains, rivers, valleys and a dynamic storyline” (Alex).

“A well-made action movie, I always liked such action-packed films with strong men” (Vanya).

Frozen / Hibernatus. France-Italy, 1969. Directed by Edouard Molinaro. Release in the USSR - from June 28, 1971: 27.6 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Brilliant comedian Edouard Molinaro (1928-2013) in the second half of the 1960s, directed two films with Louis de Funès (1914-1983): *Oscar* and *Frozen*, both of which were film adaptations of popular theater plays.

However, the Soviet film press did not favor these comedies. For example, an article was published in *Soviet Screen*, which stated that “Louis de Funès simply occupied the film comedy of France, making it more ridiculous and... more monotonous. ... In *Frozen*, our furious modernist Louis de Funès is forced to dress in the fashion of the beginning of the century, prop up his chin with a giant starched collar and portray his own wife's fiancé, gallantly swinging her on a swing” (Lishchinsky, 1972: 18-19).

However, the opinions of film critics in no way affected the film's popularity with twenty-seven million viewers. Even today, this cheerful and inventive comedy is not forgotten by the audience:

“*Frozen* fascinated me, as they say, de Funès unes simply attracts attention and does not let you be distracted for a second, it draws you into the film like a funnel!” (Sunlight).

“De Funès is the same everywhere: a brilliant eccentric and a funny grimace, and in this creation of Molinaro, the great Louis did not let us down. The plot is also good: a funny utopia, colorful references to the "belle epoch" of the early 20th century” (Daigton).

Season of Love. Japan, 1969. Directed by Umetsugu Inoue. Release in the USSR - from June 15, 1970: 27.6 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Umetsugu Inoue (1923-2010) during his long film career directed more than a hundred (!) films and television series, of which the *Season of Love* got into Soviet distribution, which managed to gather more than 27.6 million viewers in cinema halls. In addition to the melodramatic plot, young Soviet viewers were attracted to the *Season of Love* by the music of the *Pinky & Killers* group ...

In a colorful musical melodrama *Season of Love* tells about a pretty girl who meets an experienced man on her way...

***Season of Love* and today some viewers remember:**

“The picture has its own charm, it is interesting to plunge into the era of the 1960s, the stories of those times are usually romantic and uncomplicated, but the more sensual and closer to the heart. I would say that this movie is for all time. The actors do not play, but live their role, the music leaves a mark on the soul, the script is clear and understandable to the viewer. Like 50 years ago, so now, people love and part, suffer and fall in love again!” (Julia).

“For the Soviet public, not spoiled by the variety of entertainment, any foreign film was a significant event. They went to it with their parents, then with school friends, then they went as students ... For a fairly demanding modern taste, Japanese melodrama of the 1960s can easily seem too naive. But if you feel for 90 minutes the spirit and atmosphere of that time in the USSR, you can understand why the *Season of Love* was so popular. ... Japanese melodrama was

a successful compromise between Western liberalism and Soviet happy everything to ease tensions. ... By the way, a few spicy scenes still made their way through the censorship ... And still, a rather severely shredded version was spinning in cinemas” (Ex-Kovu).

The Flood / Potop. Poland-USSR, 1974. Directed by Jerzy Hoffman. Release in the USSR - 1976: 27.6 million viewers in the first year of screening (per episode of this four-episode film).

Jerzy Hoffman is one of the most famous Polish directors, many of whose films were successfully shown in the Soviet film distribution.

A large-scale film adaptation of the prose of Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846-1916) was filmed in the best traditions of psychological drama and historical costume saga.

In the year of the release of *The Flood* in Soviet cinemas, a connoisseur of Polish cinema, film critic Irina Rubanova wrote that the viewer sees on the screen “a temperamental, colorful spectacle, full-blooded, very different characters, true and petty feelings, low and sublime passions. He also sees that the story here is not only competently and scrupulously restored in its concrete form ... but also mastered like a home, which, of course, is the direct merit of the director. ... *The Flood* combines the features of different films: battle and adventure, adventurous and epic, comedies and melodramas. And there is no discord (again, the merit of the director) because the staged huge picture, full of events and spectacle, shines with the delight of noble courage, chivalrous masculinity, impatience for a feat, a thirst for adventure” (Rubanova, 1976: 5).

Film critic Valentina Kolodyazhnaya (1911-2003) wrote about the same thing: “Jerzy Hoffman reproduced on the screen both of Sienkiewicz's heroic-romantic novels *The Flood* and *Pan Wolodyjowski* with great skill. Fights, dashing attacks, military tricks, sieges of fortresses, drinking parties and robberies, passionate love and villainy, self-sacrifice and betrayal, woven together in an entertaining dynamic plot, unfolded in a magnificent and spectacular setting. ... The main thing in *Pan Wolodyjowski* and *The Flood* is the atmosphere of achievement” (Kolodyazhnaya, 1974: 74).

Feedback from modern viewers about *The Flood* is usually positive:

“I consider this picture Hoffmann's greatest success: an excellent choice of actors, excellent direction and script. ... The best historical film!” (Cactus).

“I read Sienkiewicz's novel even before the release of the film, and therefore I was looking forward to its release, and the film did not deceive expectations. A grandiose epic film with large-scale battle scenes ... And from the very beginning I imagined Olbrychsky in the title role, since in those years he was probably the only Polish actor suitable for such a role ”(B. Nezhdanov).

With Clean Hands / Cu mainile curate. Romania, 1972. Directed by Sergiu Nicolaescu. Release in the USSR – 1974: 27.6 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Sergiu Nicolaescu (1930-2013) during his career directed three dozen films of various genres, among which were large-scale costume-historical productions, westerns, action. But the greatest love of the Soviet audience for this director was brought by a detective retro series about the fight against crime in post-war Romania, which began with the stylish film *With Clean Hands*.

The Soviet film press, not seeing in it the expected anthem of the communist legitimacy of Romania, met this film with caution.

So the film critic Vsevolod Revich (1929-1997) wrote about the film *With Clean Hands* as follows: “The professionalism and shortcomings of the political consciousness of one character, the ideological and inexperienced nature of the other – by pushing this duet together, you can strike a lot of bright psychological sparks, because the heroes have something to learn from each other. But this, unfortunately, does not happen in the film. The heroes are not spiritually enriched and do not change – as they entered the picture, we see them in the same way in the last episode. And their dispute hangs in the air about how to achieve the establishment of socialist legality... Miclovan flaunts his apoliticality, but for the viewer it remains unclear where this apoliticality comes from – from a posture, from hard-won convictions, from a lack of intelligence? ... But in the course of the film, the shooting man begins to please the authors more and more, and in the last scene, where Miclovan personally carried out the massacre of the bandits, they are already frankly admiring him, romanticizing him. ... The on-duty set of cinematic stamps emphasizes the artistic weakness of the picture” (Revich. 1974: 4).

A film critic and writer Nina Tolchenova emphasized that the film *With Clean Hands* is addressed to a very specific viewer who, first of all, is looking for entertainment in the cinema: the sharpness of the plot. This cinematography does not hide its frankly “cash” purpose, it does not disguise itself (Tolchenova, 1974: 21).

Already in the 21st century, film critic Denis Gorelov claims that the film *With Clean Hands*, with taken by order of the Romanian Ministry of Internal Affairs, ... was conceived as a transfer of the detective trade from non-party professionals to communist nominees. The frontman of the doomed class, Miclovan, unconditionally died in the finale – which made it possible to paint his image with less rosy colors than in subsequent films in the series... The Soviet audience was avidly following Romania 1945, which had not yet put an end to the black market, jewelry houses, tailoring studios and Hollywood imports... And the manner of taking cans in nylon stockings, hitting targets in a semi-squat and driving on the steps of limousines with teaching staff at the ready directly went back to the blissful times of Prohibition, whose antiheroes are still nostalgically muttered to this day: “They had style”. Six black Opels with corpses strewn across the paving stones near the cracked bank – it was a luxury show” (Gorelov, 2019).

One way or another, viewers of the 21st century still remember the film *With Clean Hands*:

“How wonderful he was – this heroic commissar Miclovan! A hard face with a smile that made hardened bandits' knees tremble. Always dressed to the nines, in an elegant suit and hat. And of course, a faithful revolver on the belt, instantly flying out of the holster and from which there are no misses. I went to see this film countless times as a child – I knew it by heart. Compared with Miclovan, Sergiu Nicolaescu was perhaps Belmondo in *Private Detective*. Why so much love for this film? I think the secrets are simple: the purity of the genre (classic action) and the craftsmanship. There were no boring thoughts about the meaning of life here, but a quick duel of good guys with bad guys under the screeching sounds of shots ... Good with fists defeated evil, and it was right” (Svanass).

Once upon time in America. Once Upon a Time in America. Italy-USA, 1983. Directed by Sergio Leone. Release in the USSR – 1989: 27.6 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration (according to other sources - 23.8 million viewers).

The final work of the famous Italian director Sergio Leone (1929-1989) was the film-novel *Once Upon a Time in America*, as if drawing a line under the gangster sagas of American cinema.

In this picture, the possibility of reading it at different levels of perception was originally laid down. In this drama about the fate of the boys from the Jewish quarter of New York, who became gangsters, De Niro brilliantly played one of them, in which the criminal business replaced the human one year after year. No wonder the most exciting scenes of the film are the hero's memories of his distant childhood, where there was true friendship, first love and, in spite of everything, the joy of life.

The episodes related to the childhood of the main characters are structured in the film in such a way that almost every viewer can easily project them onto their own lives.

And the enchanting music of Leone's regular composer, Ennio Morricone, who wrote a whole symphony for the film, helps to go on a journey through the waves of childhood memory. Where piercing sadness is replaced by anxious chords of expectation. And sensual lyrics – languid motives of hopelessness and irretrievability of loss...

To some, the film *Once Upon a Time in America* must have seemed like an exquisite retro-styled version of *The Godfather*. For some, a militant, staged according to spectacular canons: with shots, fights, blood and love. For someone – a sad philosophical reflection on the impossibility of happiness, in the name of which a person voluntarily or involuntarily steps over the eternal commandments.

Of course, the appearance of the film *Once Upon a Time in America* in the Soviet film distribution of 1983-1985, for obvious reasons, was simply impossible to imagine. But the onset of "perestroika" made its own adjustments – and this picture at the turn of the 1990s gathered 27.6 million viewers in the USSR in the first year of the demonstration.

Film critic Valery Turovsky (1949-1998) in the year of the release of the drama *Once Upon a Time in America* in Soviet cinemas wrote, that Sergio Leone “endures almost the entire course of the film in an atmosphere of constant tension, he does not give the audience the opportunity to relax even for a second, knocking episodes off their foreheads, returning to the past and jumping over times and years” (Turovsky, 1989: 15).

Indeed, *Once Upon a Time in America* cinematically “close to perfection. All components of the film, even seemingly incompatible ones, were wonderfully harmonized: entertainment and multi-level depth of reading; cruelty and charm, epicness and intimacy – all this ... is permeated with one poignant nostalgic theme” (Alova, 2002: 103).

Viewers of the XXI century, as a rule, rate this film very highly:

“One of the most touching and at the same time cruel films that I have ever seen in my life. And the music? In my opinion, this is the best that Morricone wrote for cinema. And Woods? And De Niro? ... If it wasn't for *Once Upon a Time in America*, I would hardly have understood, no, rather, I would have realized what it is – a gangster saga” (Anna).

“A magnificent film about life, love and friendship... Masterfully shows the relationship of first teenagers, then mature men, love in its physical and mental aspect, passion, hatred. And all this against the backdrop of American history. ... Lots of brilliant scenes. ... The most ingenious music of Ennio Morricone” (Quasi).

“The film is amazing, one of the best Hollywood films, a real classic. Despite the fact that there are many dirty moments in the film, it all looks absolutely natural and does not cause condemnation. You understand that in this case this is simply necessary” (Anyuta).

The Trap / Capcana. Romania, 1973. Directed by Manole Marcus. Release in the USSR – since September 1975: 27.5 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Manole Marcus (1928-1994), of course, was inferior in fame Sergiu Nicolaescu (1930-2013), and his most popular film in the USSR was the action-packed *The Trap*.

This Romanian action movie, which takes place in 1948, to some extent echoes a series of retro films started by Sergiu Nicolaescu's *With Clean Hands*...

Film critic Denis Gorelov wrote, that in Romania in the 1970s, “cinema dubbed the former dual power. Sergiu Nicolaescu filmed a franchise about the ace of pre-war detective commissioner Tudor Miclovan. Manole Marcus made a series about a recruit with a membership card, Commissar Mihai Roman. Over time, as in life, the commissars were destined to converge in order to freeze as a stronghold of the people's legal order... "We'll finish next time," the scoundrels, who did not expect a rebuff, hurried into the mountains. "There won't be a next time," a comrade with a machine gun snarled at the door. ... With individualism, a hat, a vest, the hero, of course, ascended to the archetypal *High Noon* by Fred Zinnemann. The idea (the people, they say, are always on the side of the truth) did not allow us to fully work out the plot about the sheriff, who was thrown by fellow citizens to be devoured by visiting guest performers but he still had to fight alone” (Gorelov, 2019).

Some viewers still remember *The Trap* with a kind word:

“Wonderful film. ... this picture is made in a harsh manner than the films of S. Nicolaescu. There is more realism here, no chases and fantastic shootouts. It's more of a western. Imagine this change in plot: a policeman arrives in a small, remote town in the Wild West. The town is terrorized by a gang. Local residents are frightened, weak-willed. The sheriff is bribed by bandits. The policeman arranges a holiday in the saloon, lures the bandits and almost single-handedly fights them. The same is masterfully embodied in this film” (A. Grebenkin).

Sea Cat / Pisica de mare. Romania, 1963. Directed by Gheorghe Turku. Release in the USSR – from January 4, 1965: 27.3 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Gheorghe Turku directed about a dozen films of various genres, some of them, including *Sea Cat*, were shown on the screens of the USSR.

Spies in the *Sea Cat* hunt for strategic raw materials, and Romanian counterintelligence for spies. Who will win? The answer, I think, does not need to be deciphered...

Romanian films about bandits and spies often attracted an audience of tens of millions in the Soviet film distribution.

So the now completely forgotten spy detective *Sea Cat* managed to attract over twenty-seven million viewers in 1965.

Some of the audience of the XXI century remembers this film today:

“For my long-standing childhood perception of the mid-1960s, this detective film made a huge impression. I remember how the Cat was taken to clean water – they caught it. I would like to watch this film again, remember, compare “yesterday's” impressions with fresh ones” (I. Sorokin).

"Very good detective. Has not become obsolete over time. The Romanian counterintelligence deftly catches no less clever and resourceful spies. Like to revisit, A film with its own special Romanian flavor” (Alex).

Oscar. France, 1967. Directed by Edouard Molinaro. Release in the USSR – 1968. 27.2 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Brilliant comedian Edouard Molinaro (1928-2013) in the second half of the 1960s directed two films with Louis de Funès (1914-1983): *Oscar* and *Frozen*, both of which were film adaptations of popular theater plays.

In the amusing adaptation of the play by Claude Magnier (1920-1983) *Oscar*, Edouard Molinaro made full use of the comedic gift of Louis de Funès (1914-1983), where he plays a bourgeois who finds himself in an eccentric whirlpool of events ...

The audience in the cinemas laughed with might and main, but the harsh Soviet film critics scolded the director for that "in the movie *Oscar* – in a work of banal and low taste – he surrounds his manufacturer with some kind of egg-shaped chairs, fantastic floor lamps, fills the house with ceramics, abstract structures, lattices, aquariums and an aviary with pheasants. ... Acting so much and so often, Louis de Funès, of course, hardly develops his already established image" (Lishchinsky, 1972: 18-19).

Film critic Mark Kushnirov, however, praised Louis de Funès for his comedic talent, but also reproached the authors of the film, since "from the very first frames, it is clear that we were slipped not a comedy, but at best a clownery. The whole thing, in fact, comes down to an empty and noisy somersault collegium, confusion and running around. The spectator mechanically smiles and laughs, realizing that it is stupid in this case to complain about the lack of life credibility. Even money is not capable of teasing the imagination, except perhaps the most primitive" (Kushnirov, 1969: 153).

But the audience continues to admire this funny and temperamental comedy:

"I love this movie! Light, witty, with great dialogue, very elegant and very French comedy. And de Funès, with his incredible energy and brilliant, polished eccentricity, plays unusually well and accurately. A classic of the genre, to be sure!" (Valeria M.).

"This movie-a real benefit performance of Louis de Funès. In the best sense of the word. His game is simply sparkling, I can't pick another word. I love all the films with the participation of this actor, but, in my opinion, in the *Oscar* he gave all 200 percent. Fantastic! The American remake was nowhere near" (Igor).

"The film can be attributed to the genre of "comedy of errors". The action takes place in the same room. For a film, especially a comedy one, such a production-hard task. Actually, it's technically easy to shoot, but it's hard to achieve a result. The moviegoer is tired of the closedness of the screen space. But the team managed, the film turned out to be intriguing and funny" (Yuri)

Three hundred Spartans / The 300 Spartans / Lion of Sparta. USA, 1961. Directed by Rudolf Mathe. Release in the USSR – since October 1970: 27.1 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Directed by Rudolf Mate (1898-1964) started his career (first as a cinematographer) in silent films. In the 1940s he became a director, usually making spectacular films aimed at mass audiences. In the Soviet box office there was, for example, his musical melodrama *Serenade of Great Love* with Mario Lanza (1921-1959) in the title role.

The large-scale peplum *The 300 Spartans* was one of the last films of R. Mate. This time he told a legendary story, when in 480 BC the powerful ruler of Persia Xerxes decided to conquer free Sparta...

This picture is still liked by many viewers today:

"The film looks very easy. Now they would call him a fighter. It is filmed in such a way that the action is not stretched out, the plot is clear, the roles of the main characters are played well" (Nord).

"A wonderfully shot film about the unbending courage of people who remain true to their duty until the last moment. ... Even today, many years later, it is breathtaking. I watched it as a boy, then with my children, and now with my grandchildren. But for some reason, more and

more tears in my eyes ... All the time it seems that I am there, together with Leonid and his soldiers, on the edge of the wedge in their last battle ..." (Igor Povetkin).

"Another strong impression of childhood, which has not lost its strength so far! A real, beautiful and exciting film that leaves vivid emotions. The Spartans felt their responsibility for the people they rallied together and led with them" (Kirsch).

Bedroom Window. USA, 1986. Directed and written by Curtis Henson. Release in the USSR – from August 29, 1988: 27.1 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Director Curtis Henson (1945-2016) began Hollywood's career back in the late 1960s. For more than forty years of work in cinema, he directed about two dozen films of various genres, many of which remained in the history of cinema (*Bedroom Window*, *Wild River*, *LA Confidential*, *8 mile*, etc.).

... A certain maniac kills women. Who is he? The answer to this question (of course, far from immediately) is given by the thriller *Bedroom Window*, filmed clearly under the influence of Hitchcock films... The picture, in my opinion, turned out to be stylish, with memorable acting Steve Guttenberg, Elizabeth McGovern, Isabelle Huppert...

In the year of the release of *Bedroom Window* in the Soviet film distribution, Yulia Ivanova noted: "The skill with which the director throughout the film makes the viewer an accomplice in the action, makes him empathize, be surprised, rejoice... Yes, yes, rejoice. This feeling, perhaps, noticeably prevails here over others. The director never forgets to defuse the most tense moments with a joke, and the audience greets the finale with a smile" (Ivanova, 1989: 29).

The opinions of today's viewers about the *Bedroom Window* often diverge:

"But the excellent thriller *Bedroom Window*! The plot is well thought out, the intrigue grows well, it is well filmed, which is why it looks in one breath. ... Outset, plot development, climax, denouement: everything is on the movie. And your task-captivate the viewer and make him excited-she performs on a solid "five"" (M. Petrova).

"Friends, this is purely an American film, where everything seems to be clear, but a couple of accidents do not allow you to immediately decide and reveal everything. As a result, a chain of tragedies and absurdities (the maniac, of course, is the elusive and smartest Pinocchio in his juice), and justice-retribution comes only as a result of a series of offenses of the protagonist, who is forced to take the course of events into his own hands. ... this is such an American installation-only a lone hero is capable of an act" (Yuri).

Hungarian Nabob / Egy magyar nabob. Hungary, 1966. Directed by Zoltan Varkoni. Release in the USSR – from August 7, 1967: 27.0 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Zoltan Varkoni (1912-1979) began making films in the early 1950s. Of the fifteen films he directed, almost all of them got into Soviet distribution (a rather rare case!) (*Black Diamond*, *Innocent Killers*, *Hungarian Kidnapping*, *Stars of Eger*, *Hungarian Nabob*, *The Fate of Zoltan Karpaty*, *Sons of a Man with a Heart of Stone*, *Haber's Photo*, *Three Stars*, *Catastrophe*, *Pillar of Salt*, etc.).

Screen adaptation of the novel by Mor Yokai (1825–1904) *Hungarian Nabob* is one of the most successful movies of Zoltan Varkoni in the Soviet film distribution. The audience liked the story of the life of the noble family Karpaty, unfolding in first half of the 18th century. Passions, quarrels raged here, and aristocrats fought duels...

In the year of the release of *Hungarian Nabob*, journalist Galina Senchakova wrote that the intrigue in this film adaptation is "complex and intricate: it will not yield in its intricacy to the intricate plot of an adventure film. But on the other hand, *Hungarian Nabob* can easily compete with any psychological drama in terms of the accuracy and depth of revealing the characters' characters" (Senchakova, 1967).

Opinions of 21st-century viewers about the *Hungarian Nabob* are usually positive:

"Interesting, beautiful, spectacular film" (Igor).

"In those years, I really liked the Hungarian film adaptations of novels by Mor Jokai. I read books, including *Hungarian Nabob*... The film *Hungarian Nabob* quite accurately, although somewhat schematically, conveys the content of the book, and the production looks very colorful in color and on a wide screen" (B. Neжданov) .

Death of Tarzan / Tarzanova smrt. Czechoslovakia, 1962. Directed by Yaroslav Balik. Release in the USSR – from December 9, 1963: 26.9 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Yaroslav Balik (1924-1996) during his long career he directed 23 films, of which the dramatic comedy *Death of Tarzan* enjoyed the greatest success in the USSR.

Yaroslav Balik decided to present his version of "Tarzaniada", with an emphasis on exposing the vices of bourgeois society...

Today, few people remember this picture, although in the 1963/1964 season in Soviet cinemas, during the demonstration of this movie, they persistently asked: "No an extra ticket? One of the reasons is a rumor started by someone that this film is a direct continuation of the American "trophy" films about the adventures of Tarzan...

He Gets Angry / Mustard Hits My Nose / La moutarde me monte au nez. France, 1974. Directed by Claude Zidi. Release in the USSR – since May 1983: 26.8 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Claude Zidi was extremely lucky in the Soviet film distribution: almost all of his famous films were released on the screens. However, why be surprised: Zidi directed comedies throughout his directorial career with the participation of the biggest stars of French cinema: Louis de Funes (1914-1983), Annie Girardot (1931-2011), Jean-Paul Belmondo (1933-2021), Coluche (1944-1986), Philippe Noiret (1930-2006), Pierre Richard, Jane Birkin, Gerard Depardieu...

In the comedy *Mustard Hits My Nose*, Pierre Richard polished the mask he found of an absent-minded, sentimental and shy intellectual, endlessly getting into trouble, miraculously avoiding many dangers and in love with a pretty woman.

And Jane Birkin as a movie star here is as charming as Mireille Darc in another comedy dilogy with Pierre Richard, filmed around the same time by Yves Robert (*The Tall Blonde in the Black Shoe, The Return of the Tall Blonde*).

The audience still recalls with pleasure this cheerful comedy, which, although it suffered in the USSR from censorship scissors, still retained its foolish enthusiasm:

"The film is truly a gem of French comedy, one of the most eccentric of Claude Zidi's" (Denis).

"Jane Birkin is beautiful, charming and funny here. Especially in the scene with the cowboy scuffle (as revenge on all male scoundrels)" (D. Jump).

The Iron Mask / Le Masque de fer. France–Italy, 1962. Directed by Henri Decoin. Release in the USSR – from September 7, 1964. Re-release in the USSR – from 1974: 26.7 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Henri Decoin (1890-1969) began making films in 1933. During his long career, he managed to stage about five dozen films of various genres, mostly entertainment (*The Devil's Daughter, The Bedroom of High School Girls, Secrets of the Alcove, Four Women in the Night, Folies Bergère, Cat, The cat releases its claws, The Frenchwoman and Love, The Iron Mask*, etc.).

Embroidering cinematic patterns on the margins of the historical prose of Alexandre Dumas, Henri Decoin, with the help of the screen master of the "cloak and sword" and film musketeer Jean Marais (1913-1998), created a fascinating costume story about a mysterious prisoner, like two drops of water similar to King Louis XIV ...

Viewers of the 21st century remember this adventure film with pleasure:

“Distant childhood... *The Iron Mask*. A little boy, with bated breath, looks at the exciting adventures... The bright colors of the film, a young woman with golden silky hair...” (Kartsev).

“The film is cheerful, light, with elements of comedy... It is watched in one breath – from the first frame to the last (masterpiece!)... I want to rewatch the finale: simply luxurious! My seductive magician and kind genius is my beloved Jean Marais” (V. Lee).

Death is Called Engelchen / Smrt si rika Engelchen. Czechoslovakia, 1962. Directors and screenwriters Jan Kadar, Elmar Klos. Release in the USSR – from March 16, 1964: 26.7 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Jan Kadar (1918-1979) and Elmar Klos (1910-1993) began filming together in 1952. From 1952 to 1969, they made several notable films, including such well-known dramas as *Death is Called Engelchen* and *Shop on the Square* (Oscar award).

In 1969, Jan Kadar emigrated to the United States. Remaining for some time in Czechoslovakia, Elmar Klos was suspended from work in cinema, which is why he worked in Germany as an assistant director in the 1970s. In the 1980s, he returned to his homeland, where he made his last full-length feature film, *The Bison* (1989).

The drama *Death is Called Engelchen* tells the story of a former member of the Czechoslovak resistance movement, who, after the Second World War, decides to take revenge on the Nazi executioner named Engelchen ...

In the year of the release of this picture in the Soviet film distribution, journalist V. Veshnyakov wrote, that “the enemy in the film is given in close-up. He is cruel, many-sided, cunning. It's hard to fight him. You can win only by risking your life, selflessly going to your death. Thoughts about the difficulties of the war, about the meaning of the feat are embedded in the film narrative. The viewer is given the right to evaluate the correctness of the actions of the characters. ... Years fly by. Novels are written about the war, films are made. And only those works will excite our contemporary, in which the past tense speaks to you in a voice that has not cooled down. *Death is Called Engelchen* is just such a film work” (Veshnyakov, 1964: 3).

Alas, this film, which received the Golden Prize of the Moscow Film Festival in 1963, today seems to be almost forgotten by viewers...

Open up, police! / Rotten / Les Ripoux. France, 1984. Directed by Claude Zidi. Release in the USSR – 1986: 26.7 million viewers in the first year of the show.

French director Claude Zidi was unusually lucky in the Soviet box office: about a dozen of his films appeared on the screens.

The name of the comedy *Les Ripoux* (a slang word derived from *Rotten*) has not found an adequate translation into Russian. Therefore, the film was released on the Russian screen with a faceless caption *Open, police!*

Alas, with the help of Soviet censors, an offensive metamorphosis took place with this picture, recognized in its time in France as the best work of the year. She had unceremoniously stopped the final. Let me remind you that the two main characters, an elderly police commissioner (Philippe Noiret) and his young assistant (Thierry Lhermit), parted at the prison gates. In the hope of stolen millions, the elder took the common blame and received a sentence. After being released, personage of Noiret looked around, but...

In the "Soviet" version, the laconic inscription "The End of the Film" sadly followed. Which instructively testified: here, they say, what are the "wolf laws" of the Western world – my friend appropriated the money and fled, leaving the poor fellow commissar to the mercy of fate and rain...

This ending had nothing to do with the real *Les Ripoux*. In the original version, a faithful friend was waiting at the prison gates of the commissioner, who all this time was actively multiplying the jointly acquired capital...

Meanwhile, Zidi's film was not only good entertainment, but also a sad reflection on the inevitability of corruption, on the erosion of morality, on the omnipotent power of money, capable of turning even ideal guardians of the law into clever swindlers over time...

A wonderful performance by a duet of talented actors whose characters organically fit into the world of the Parisian bottom, confident direction, elegant pictorial solution, backed up by Francis Ley's melodic music, led *Les Ripoux* to a well-deserved success. Unfortunately, it didn't get a boost in Zidi's next comedy, *The Intruders Association*, or in the sequel, *Les Ripoux vs. Les Ripoux*. These were works without fiction, without a second plan, without acting success... True, they were also accompanied by considerable audience success ...

The Soviet film press reacted quite favorably to *Les Ripoux*.

So in the year of the release of *Les Ripoux* in Soviet distribution, screenwriter and film critic Farhard Agamaliyev noted that Claude Zidi's films "always have a sharply dynamic plot, abound in witty dramatic turns and dialogues" (Agamaliyev, 1986: 16), and then praised Philippe Noiret for his acting skills.

Film critic Kirill Razlogov (1946-2021) wrote, that "the secret of the picture's success, perhaps, lies in the demonstrative opposition of self-confident "progress" and the strength of traditions that do not fit into the framework of the rationalization and Americanization of not only the investigation, but the whole way of life and thoughts of good old France, of course, far from sinless, but more human and therefore indulgent to natural human weaknesses. And although we cannot agree with this position of enlightened opportunism, the talent of the actors and the accuracy of the sketches of everyday life and customs make *Les Ripoux* a very peculiar realistic portrait of those average Frenchmen who accepted the film and ensured its success" (Razlogov, 1985: 147).

Viewers of the 21st century still appreciate this crime comedy today:

"The film is wonderful. Noiret and Lhermit are amazing in their roles. ... The film looks in one breath, the script, the actors, and the music ... I can't even count how many times I have watched this film!" (Marusya).

“A fervent comedy ... Yes, the French knew how to shoot comedies, and the film *Les Ripoux* has not lost its relevance in our time” (Daigton).

“I love French comedies, especially those with a crime story, so the film *Les Ripoux* is one of my favorites, he is ironic, dynamic and with good acting work” (Spectator).

“Lhermit and Noiret seem to play together all their lives, amazingly harmonize and complement each other in all scenes, looking at the intoxicating play of the actors is a pure pleasure. For the ridiculous immorality of everything that happens on the screen, leading to colic in the stomach, subtle, witty jokes, the film was placed in my collection immediately after viewing. Subsequently, in the wake of the success of his film, Claude Zidi will shoot the continuation of the adventures of the heroes and then the third part of the picture. However, the former ease of narration, the daring courage of the characters and the ingenious humor will disappear forever and these will already be good, but completely different stories” (Surrender).

Waterloo Bridge. USA, 1940. Directed by Melvin Le Roy. Release in the USSR – from January 18, 1955: 26.6 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Melvin Le Roy (1900-1987) began his directing career in the 1920s. With more than forty films, he has become one of Hollywood's most celebrated filmmakers.

In the melodrama *Waterloo Bridge* with the brilliant duet of Vivien Leigh (1913-1967) and Robert Taylor (1911-1969), a British officer, once in love with a beautiful ballerina, goes to war... He still does not know that he is still destined to meet with your beloved...

Film critic Ariadna Sokolskaya (1927-2021) wrote, that *Waterloo Bridge* is “a melodrama with beautiful characters, subtle feelings, an excess of nobility and an indispensable woeful end. All this, of course, contributed to the success. Critics admired the charm and sincerity of Vivien Leigh. She really managed to breathe life into a very conditional image and endowed the “blue” Myra with a strong personality” (Sokolskaya, 1973: 91).

Waterloo Bridge appeared in the Soviet film distribution with a fifteen-year delay, but still turned out to be close to the hearts of almost 27 million viewers, fascinated by the love story performed by famous actors.

This is also evidenced by the reviews of the film audience of the XXI century:

“The most beautiful acting couple in Hollywood. The film causes great sadness and regret ... How I wish they were happy in the film” (Vasily).

“Such a beautiful film... One of Vivien Leigh's best roles. How good she is in the scene where they dance in a cafe, and at the station, when Roy suddenly appears, and at his house, when her heroine is overwhelmed with conflicting feelings - and hope for happiness is replaced by despair” (Irenka).

“The classic of films about love, the picture is old, but still emotional, I watched it several times and tears always well up. Although I am a fan of melodramas, and I like many movie stories about love... But classics are classics, they are for centuries” (Vera).

Parma Convent / Chartreuse de Parme. France-Italy, 1947. Directed by Christian-Jacques. Release in the USSR – from August 31, 1953. Re-release in the USSR – from February 21, 1972. 26.6 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Christian-Jacques (1904-1994) directed several dozen films, of which the most famous were *Parma Convent*, *Fanfan Tulip*, *Law is Law*, *Babette Goes to War*, *Strong Evidence*, *Black Tulip*, *Second Truth*, etc.

The melodrama *Parma Convent* tells about a priest who is more interested in love than religion...

The emotional duet of Gerard Philip (1922-1959) and Maria Cazares (1922-1996) was liked not only by the French, but also by the Soviet audience, who accepted this picture of Christian-Jacques with great enthusiasm.

Film critic Alexander Braginsky (1920-2016) wrote, that *Parma Convent* "to some extent a story about the education of feelings... The historical setting (Italy of the middle of the last century), the rebellious spirit of Stendhal's novel, his protest against tyranny and despotism: all this was perfectly embodied in the character of his hero Fabrizio del Dongo – Gerard Philip. The young actor played the lyrical episodes especially penetratingly" (Braginsky, 1966: 180-181).

But the opinions of the audience of the XXI century about the film *Parma Convent* differ:

"One of my favorite films. And one of the most beloved and truly talented actors. Gerard Philip... I remember seeing him for the first time in Fanfan as a teenager. Then *Parma Convent* when I cried the whole second half of the film. ... Yes, this is the golden fund of world cinema" (J. Clelia).

"The first film in my life, over which I sobbed in three streams! Amazing!" (Viksy).

"I didn't like the movie at all. The book is very difficult to read, and accordingly the film adaptation of Stendhal's novel is the same" (Valerochka).

Secrets of the Burgundian Court / Miracle of the Wolves / Le Miracle des loups / Conspiracy of the strong / La Congiura dei potenti. France–Italy, 1961. Directed by André Hunebelle. Release in the USSR – from May 12, 1980: 26.5 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

The Uncrowned King of French Entertainment Cinema André Hunebelle (1896-1985) more than once he invited Jean Marais to play the main roles in his films (*Captain, The Hunchback, Parisian Secrets, Fantômas*). *Miracle of the Wolves* is one of the brightest examples of their joint adventure creativity.

XV century. Louis XI fights the Duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold. Palace intrigues, knightly customs. And the noble hero of Jean Marais, rescuing the kidnapped beauty...

Film critics Inna Solovieva and Vera Shitova (1927-2002) wrote about such films starring Jean Marais (1913-1998), what's "heat full gallop he got into a fight to save the offended, or with royal generosity made happy the ugly woman forgotten by God, or, covering his face with a masquerade half-mask, revealed the cruel truth to the strong and wrong of this world – all these [pictures] ... were the property of the viewer, who retained an ingenuous thirst heroism and justice. Marais gave himself to these films, sublime and cheap, with absolute generosity. In his again legendary, again almost fairy-tale heroes, popularly noble, implausibly magnanimous, lived, however, the ideal of nobility and generosity was completely genuine, not humiliated either by thousands of copies of the film, or by postcards bought up in kiosks around the world by enthusiastic fans" (Solovieva, Shitova, 1965: 111).

The *Miracle of the Wolves* was released on the screens of the USSR with a great delay, but this did not prevent it from gathering over 26 million viewers at the screens of cinema halls, that is, almost the same number as the *The Iron Mask*, released to the Soviet film distribution with enviable efficiency.

And there are a lot of positive audience reviews about this color adventure movie today:

“I liked the movie. I have always loved and still love films of those years and of this genre” (Valerochka).

“The film did not seem old-fashioned and naive to me, because I watched it not as a realistic film, but as an artistically designed fiction against the backdrop of historical characters. Based on the Dumas novels. Therefore, I looked with pleasure at the acting, magnificent costumes” (CNV).

Mr. Septim's Restaurant / Grand Restaurant / Le Grand restaurant. France, 1966. Directed by Jacques Besnard. Release in the USSR – from September 16, 1974: 26.3 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Jacques Besnard (1929-2013) directed mostly entertaining films and TV series. He did not gain fame as a great comedian, but his comedy *Mr. Septim's Restaurant* was a considerable audience success.

One day, during dinner at the restaurant Septim (Louis de Funès), someone kidnaps the President of one of the countries friendly to France ...

In the year of the release of this comedy in the Soviet film distribution, film critic Romil Sobolev (1926-1991) wrote that “In different roles, de Funès almost does not change: the character he created has the constancy of a mask. Every time he strikes us with his indefatigable energy, brightness and speed of reactions, ridiculous exaggeration of facial expressions. He screams, laughs, makes faces, rushes around the screen, twisting incredible intrigues, plotting cunning plans that constantly turn against him. Perhaps Louis de Funès is not as deep as Bourvil, not as subtle as Pierre Etex, not as significant as Jacques Tati. However, the comedic technique of the actor is truly brilliant, and the films with his participation are truly funny. And for comedy, this is not so little” (Sobolev, 1974).

The opinions of the current audience about the comedy *Mr. Septim's Restaurant* sometimes differ:

“I didn't like the film, some kind of nonsense” (Alexey).

“Compared to other films with the participation of Louis de Funès, this one is somewhat weaker. But, of course, there are finds” (Slava).

“Very sweet comedy. I got from watching what I expected: a good mood and smiles. I advise you to watch it in any state of mind... Everything is according to the classic canons of French comedies, everything is very nice and good” (Anjolio).

“I love de Funès, and this is a very funny comedy” (Alice).

Shadows over Notre Dame / Schatten uber Notre Dame. GDR, 1966. Directed by Kurt Jung-Alsen. Release in the USSR – from September 4, 1967: 26.3 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Kurt Jung-Alsen (1915-1976) began directing films (and later TV series) in the 1950s. The most famous were his movies: *The Cache on the Elbe* (1962) and filmed for TV *Shadows over Notre Dame* (1966) and *Police Telephone - 110* (1974-1976). In the USSR, *Shadows over Notre Dame* was first released to the cinema, the TV premiere took place only in November 1970.

... On the eve of the Second World War, several political assassinations are committed in Paris, which are carried out by a pro-Nazi group. A brave journalist decides at his own risk to start his own investigation...

The Soviet film press reacted to the detective story *Shadows over Notre Dame* rather reservedly.

For example, in the year of the release of this picture in the Soviet distribution, film critic Vasily Kisunko (1940-2010) wrote: “It seems that the director at some point was afraid that he would be “uninteresting”. And he began to pile up events for their own sake. ... Everything is aimed at the spectacularity of microscopic: within the framework of a film that lasts almost four hours – details. They are spectacular, these underground chapels, endless shots, escapes from the concentration camp, exposure of provocateurs. But is this the true wealth that is hidden in the material of the film? Of course no. ... Please understand me correctly: I do not at all stand for artificial hybridization, for the indispensable and violent mixing of the detective genre and psychological drama where it is not necessary. But *Shadows over Notre Dame* is a film about the fight against fascism... And that is why special attention was needed here to the development of human characters and the comprehension of the chain of events. The absence of such comprehension leads to the fact that a film on a subject that contains golden placers for the artist turns out to be a passing narrative with long-fashioned poignant situations, albeit spectacularly presented from the screen” (Kisunko, 1967: 14).

Today's viewers speak about this movie mostly positively:

“Very good, solid detective... The plot is exciting. From time to time I review this film with great pleasure” (Lukyanych).

“Very interesting film. For two episodes, it looks with great interest, in constant tension. A wonderful play of actors... Over the years, relevance has not been lost” (I. Peter).

Jane Eyre. USA–UK, 1970. Directed by Dilbert Mann. Release in the USSR – from January 2, 1973: 26.3 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Director Dilbert Mann (1920-2007) is Oscar winner for the drama *Marty* (1955), also known for such films as *Love Under the Elms* (1958), *At Midnight* (1959), *Pink Jungle* (1968), *Kidnapped* (1971), *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1979) and others.

... The orphan Jane Eyre (Suzanne York) is brought together by fate with the owner of the castle, Rochester (George Scott), who is hiding some secret...

Film critic and editor Leonid Nekhoroshev (1931-2014) in the year of the release of this film in Soviet distribution wrote that “they now like to make “musicals” out of such stories, and then the conventions of the old-fashioned genre, combined with the conventions of the genre, bring a smile to the faces of the audience. The film *Jane Eyre* is staged and played realistically, seriously. Behind the conventions of the plot twists and turns, the unconditional value of devotion, love and kindness peeps through” (Nekhoroshev, 1973: 19).

Opinions of 21st century viewers about this melodrama differ significantly:

“The amazing actors George Scott and Susannah York, the cinematographer and composer under the direction of Dilbert Mann, created such a film masterpiece, in comparison with which the original seems like a ladies' novel” (Nikolai).

“Very weak, in my opinion, production. ... Susanna York is such a beauty there! Candy is simple, caramel, not Jane Eyre. Personally, I like the versions with Zila Clark and Charlotte Gainsbourg much more. By the way, the latter in the role of Jane Eyre, in my opinion, most closely matches the character of the book” (Thea).

The Day of the Dolphin. USA, 1973. Directed by Mike Nichols. Release in the USSR – from December 1, 1975: 26.2 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Director Mike Nichols (1931-2014) is one of the most famous Hollywood directors (*Primary Colors, Wolf, Postcards from the Edge of the Abyss, Business Girl, Silkwood, Day of the Dolphin, Catch 22, The Graduate, Who is afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, etc.).

In the fantasy drama *The Day of the Dolphin*, a biologist (George Scott) conducts experiments with dolphins, who enter into a dialogue with him... But the military wants to use dolphins for their own purposes ...

In the mid-1970s, *The Day of the Dolphin* enjoyed great success in the Soviet box office (which cannot be said about the fate of this film in the American box office). The reason was not only in the professionalism of the director and the leading actor, but also in the very "dolphin" theme, very popular in the USSR of those years. It should also be borne in mind that there were few American films (especially new ones) in the Soviet film distribution of the 1970s, and almost every one of them aroused increased interest among the mass audience.

The responses of the audience of the XXI century to the film *The Day of the Dolphin* are quite diverse:

“*The Day of the Dolphin* is a very touching film, made with love for marine life. Also, the film has an ethical connotation, compassion and mercy for dolphins come to the fore” (Julia).

“I understand why this movie looks with elements of nostalgia in the echoes of memory. ... Yes, and a mixture of science fiction with a detective story, against the backdrop of a beautiful (yachts, tropical islands, villas on them) "branded" life, and even with a completely appropriate generally accepted thesis about the militarization of science in capitalist countries and its dependence on the money of the big bourgeoisie. Well, from the latter I fully understand the purchase of this film for domestic distribution-very ideologically correct plot” (Kaana).

“Actually, after watching, I have only two unresolved questions. First – how did the author of the daring *The Graduate* Mike Nichols manage to shoot such trash? And what the hell was George Q. Scott doing, who was at the peak of his career in Hollywood after the recent *Patton*? Theoretically, it seemed that if you add up two large quantities: a successful director and a skilled actor, then something intelligible plus / minus should appear at the output. But this production was suitable only for hire in the Soviet Union... Well, frankly, the overweight and far from athletic George Scott was chosen extremely unsuccessfully for such a role... And given the frankly delusional plot, in which only squeaky words remained from the Frenchman's novel: talking dolphins *Catching the Wave* with this film was possible only in the countries of the socialist community. It is by participating in such projects that strong directors and actors easily lose their hard-to-create reputation” (Akatos).

Once upon a time there was a policeman / Il etait une fois un flic. France-Italy, 1971. Directed by Georges Lautner. Release in the USSR – from November 25, 1974: 26.1 million viewers in the first year of the show.

About fifty films – comedies, detectives, thrillers, parodies – for more than seventy years. Such is the balance of one of the highest grossing directors of French cinema – Georges Lautner (1926-2013).

In the film *Once upon a time there was a policeman* comedy is combined with detective intrigue. It tells the story of how a Campana policeman travels to Nice to deal with one of the crime bosses...

The main role in this film was played by Michel Constantin (1924-2003), who was born in France in the family of Russian emigrants Khokhlovs. His father was of a noble family,

during the years of the civil war he fought in the army of Denikin; after the defeat of the Whites, at the end of 1920, he ended up abroad with his wife. Prior to his film debut, Konstantin Khokhlov was a small businessman, sportsman and journalist. In the second half of the 1950s, Michel Constantin began acting in films (*The Hole*), then, already in the 1960s, he played prominent roles in such famous films as *Tinned Throats (Lumberjacks)*, *Second Wind*, *Survivor's Law*. In the 1970s – in the *Lion's Share*, *The Clan of Marseilles*, *Suitcase*. Then his career came shooting in television series...

The opinions of today's viewers about this film differ significantly:

"Today I found this movie on the Internet. Reviewed completely. Amazing thing: it is perceived freshly and with lively interest. And the details of the then France, Nice and in general-now even more interesting than then" (Yuri).

"A great movie! Humor and suspenseful plot. Michel Constantin brilliantly plays this stern, courageous hero" (Baldachin).

"For me, the film is so-so. For a comedy this humor is not enough, for a detective – the intrigue is rather weak. Also causes great doubts and an invitation to the main role of Michel Constantin. In my opinion, he would have looked much more organically in a supporting role" (G. Volanov).

Last Cartridge / Ultimul cartus. Romania, 1973. Directed by Sergiu Nicolaescu. Release in the USSR – from June 26, 1975: 26.1 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Sergiu Nicolaescu (1930-2013) during his career directed three dozen films of various genres. But the greatest love of the Soviet audience for this director was brought by a detective retro series about the fight against crime in post-war Romania, which began with the stylish film *With Clean Hands*.

The *Last Cartridge* begins with the scene of the death of Commissar Miclovan (Sergiu Nicolaescu). His successor decides to take revenge...

Despite the fact that the character Sergiu Nicolaescu, beloved by the audience, appears in this film for a short time, the *Last Cartridge* has a lot of fans in the 21st century:

"Great fighter! Choban-one of the best Romanian actors! A very strong scene in the cemetery... where he places a bunch of violets and a cartridge on his friend's grave, and Miklovan seems to be looking after him with a smile. It takes my breath away" (Dita).

"A wonderful, exciting made criminal detective (with elements of an action movie) ... Illarion Chobanu played the main role well" (A. Grebenkin).

The Thief of Bagdad. UK-USA, 1940. Directors: Ludwig Berger, Tim Whelan, Michael Powell. Release in the USSR – from March 1, 1944. Repeated Releases in the USSR – from September 12, 1954, from December 26, 1960: 26 million viewers.

One of the directors of *The Thief of Bagdad* was a classic of British cinema Michael Powell (1905-1990) (*Stairway to Heaven / A Matter of Life and Death*, *Tales of Hoffmann*, *Wild Heart*, *Peeping Tom*, etc.).

Director Tim Whalan (1893-1957) less well-known to mainstream audiences, although he has produced notable films such as *Ten Days in Paris* and *Swing Fever*.

Director Ludwig Berger (1892-1969) began his film career at the turn of the 1920s.

The Thief of Bagdad is one of the most famous film adaptations of Arabian fairy tales, awarded several Oscars. The duel of a brave boy and an evil wizard in the 1940s was watched

with bated breath not only in the USA, but also in the USSR (the picture fell into the stream of so-called "trophy" movies). The insidious and cunning magician in the film was played by the famous German actor Konrad Veidt (1893-1943), who started in silent films. It was he who played in the standard of film expressionism – *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. And then he consolidated his success in English-language cinema in the sensational melodramas *The Men in Her Life* and *Casablanca*...

Film critic Alexander Doroshevich wrote that when *The Thief of Baghdad* was released in Soviet theaters in 1944, it attracted the audience with rich colors, many tricks, lush scenery, and the unlimited possibilities of cinema in interpreting a fairy tale plot. *The Thief of Baghdad*, "released for Christmas 1940, turned out to be a pretty solid picture. In the tense pre-war years, with their imperceptible line between the calm comfort and the nearby nightmare, Korda caught the audience's need for an adventurous fantasy children's fairy tale for adults, breathtaking and at the same time soothing. ... The general mythological archetype extracted from the Arabian tales in *The Thief of Baghdad* continues its life today in the most seemingly intricate plot intricacies of both *Conan the Barbarian* and *Indiana Jones*" (Doroshevich, 1990: 97-98).

Many viewers today remember this movie fairy tale:

"A big-budget, spectacular production with quality-for-the-time composite footage and other visual effects that were successfully used in cinema for at least another couple of subsequent decades" (Retroman).

My Poor Beloved Mother / Pobre, mi madre querida. Argentina, 1948. Directed by Homero Manzi, Ralph Pappier. Release in the USSR – from August 5, 1957: 25.9 million for the first year of the demonstration.

Homero Manzi (1907-1951) was a poet, politician and musician, he has only two full-length feature films to his credit.

Ralph Pappier (1914-1998) directed about a dozen full-length feature films (*Crime, Brunette, Satan's Holiday, School of Champions, The Last Clown*, etc.).

In the musical melodrama *My Poor Beloved Mother*, a beggar woman recalls her life, in which there was everything: love, betrayal, death...

This picture appeared on the screens of the USSR during the "thaw" and, as it turned out, fell into the mood of compassion for the mass audience.

Today, this once very popular painting is rarely remembered:

"My first memories: I remember that after watching this film, absolutely all the women of my city sniffed, wept bitterly. In my memories there are many songs with a guitar and something very sad. ... Then I found this film. I decided to find out: why did women cry so much? And imagine... I didn't expect it myself, from the very first shots, tears flowed from me. I cried because of the performance of the actress who played the role of the old mother. And then there were tears from time to time. That's when I realized why the whole city was crying over this picture. ... Dynamic action, a wonderful plot, excellent acting and, finally, a beautiful actor who plays the main role" (Lera).

Twelve Girls and One Man / 12 Madchen und 1 Mann. Austria, 1959. Directed by Hans Quest. Release in the USSR – since 1960: 25,9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Hans Quest (1915-1997) was born into a family of musicians. After the end of the Second World War, he worked in theaters, and in 1955 he made his debut in film directing. In

total, he has 25 films / television films, mostly entertaining (*A man does not always have to be beautiful, A girl without pajamas, Twelve girls and one man, Ten little Indians, etc.*).

The musical comedy *Twelve Girls and One Man* was a great success in the USSR film distribution. The female part of the audience, of course, was captivated by the article of the leading male actor: the Austrian skier and champion of the VII Winter Olympic Games Tony Seiler (1935-2009).

Current viewers tend to treat this film with sympathy:

“Lovely film, good music, the views are generally outrageous. ... The protagonist has a wonderful dog... Everything is a model for a girl...” (Evgenia).

“A fairly primitive comedy, but the entourage. It is something! On high-quality color film, snowy mountains, blue skies and pretty girls are amazingly beautifully shot! According to the genre of musical comedy, the film is literally permeated with music, and good music. I especially liked the cha-cha-cha with "alpine skiing figure skating!" (G. Volanov).

“I watched the film with great pleasure... wonderful music, the enchanting atmosphere of the Austrian Alps, all this gives the film a special charm” (T-Tatiana).

“For 1960, an absolutely outstanding entertainment film!” (Anna).

Mystery of the Cipher / Secretul cifrului. Romania, 1959. Directed by Lucian Bratu. Release in the USSR – from December 26, 1960: 25.9 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Lucian Bratu (1924-1998) made more than a dozen films, but the Soviet audience liked the detective *Mystery of the Cipher* the most.

Today, this movie is firmly forgotten: both by the audience and film critics...

Fanfares of Love / Fanfaren der Liebe. Germany, 1951. Directed by Kurt Hoffman. Release in the USSR – from September 7, 1958: 25.8 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Kurt Hofmann (1910-2001) all his creative life has been making entertaining films.

The plot of the musical comedy *Fanfare of Love* was adapted a few years later for the Hollywood hit *Some Like It Hot*. And here and there, two musicians left without earnings get a job in a women's orchestra...

Viewers of the 21st century remember the *Fanfare of Love* without much enthusiasm:

“Taste, of course, but *Fanfare of Love* is a film for one time. ... With the actors – a complete disaster: that's who, honestly, from *Fanfare of Love* we knew then, and we know now ?! ... Comparing *Fanfare of Love* with the ingenious *Some Like It Hot* is simply ridiculous!” (G. Volanov).

Fanfare of Love is just a fun comedy with inserted musical numbers. The film is simple and unpretentious, but today it is quite tiring to watch such a movie, the film is outdated” (Fritsenyatka).

Three in the Snow / Drei männer im schnee. Germany, 1973. Directed by Alfred Forer. Release in the USSR – since 1976: 25.8 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Director Alfred Forer (1914-1986) made many entertaining films, and some of them hit the Soviet cinemas. All the movies of Alfred Forer, which were shown in Soviet cinema halls, were a great success with the audience.

In the comedy *Three in the Snow* in the Alpine resort, a millionaire was confused with a car mechanic, hence all the plot twists...

The Soviet film press reacted very negatively to *Three in the Snow*, accusing this film of promoting a bourgeois lifestyle.

In particular, an article in the *Cinema Art* journal drew the attention of readers to the fact that “using a rather banal plot device, the authors gradually begin to introduce the idea of general equality, which, allegedly, has been achieved by today’s “consumer society”. Theorists of the “post-industrial” world declare that an extensive system of information, public spectacles and entertainment equalize all classes and social strata. In such reasoning, common in the West, a person is interpreted in one aspect – as a consumer. The creators of the entertaining film *Three in the Snow* ideologically think about the same. Since, they say, the requests of a millionaire, a hairdresser or a car mechanic are limited by their physical capabilities, then, therefore, they are equal. Therefore, the modesty of Tobler’s requests and needs sticks out so persistently in the picture.

It is typical for handicraft art that each storyline has a utilitarian function, the primitive meaning of which always lies on the surface. If Tobler’s metamorphoses inspire the idea of total equality, as if characteristic of the bourgeois world order, then the adventures of the handsome Dorfmeister propagate the antediluvian myth that bourgeois society presents its chance to everyone. It is only important that you are a little lucky, and you do not miss your happiness, which is usually realized on the screen either in the form of a lottery win or in the form of an inheritance, and most often in the form of a rich bride, which, in the opinion of a gullible consumer of “mass culture”, more authentically and realistically. Note that in the context of this kind of opus, happiness and wealth are synonymous. The millionaire Tobler’s daughter is attracted just in time by Dorfmeister, who always has a draught in his pocket...

Director Forer and screenwriter Purzer certainly have a professional knack for “mass culture”. By taking hackneyed situations, by carving out a plot according to tried-and-true standards, they can unobtrusively and delicately enough stuff a comedy strip with glorification of the bourgeois way of life in accordance with the latest concepts of capitalist apologists” (Pronin, 1976: 157-160).

It is curious that even today the audience continues to argue about this uncomplicated movie:

“It’s worth watching this film through the eyes of 1976... The film is very bright, optimistic and simply beautiful, and it also has a flavor of comedies from the 70s. It’s good to go to a movie like this with friends, and even better-With girl-good mood for the evening after it is guaranteed!” (A. Obratsov).

“The film turned out to be very trifling compared to the really light and witty story of Erich Kestner. Much of the plot was redone, the events were transferred from the 1920s to the 1970s” (B. Nezhdanov).

Toy / Le Jouet. France, 1976. Directed and written by Francis Weber. Release in the USSR – from May 26, 1978: 25.8 million viewers for the first year of demonstration.

Francis Weber's career did not begin at all with the cinema. He devoted several years to medicine and scientific research. Then he became a journalist for Radio Luxembourg. And then it went and went: reports, radio sketches and plays, stories published in prestigious Parisian magazines. From radio plays, Weber moved on to theatrical dramaturgy. Then he wrote dialogues and screenplays for films by Georges Lautner, Henri Verneuil, Philip de Broca, Edouard Molinaro...

In short, directing became a necessity for F. Weber, and he made his debut with the satirical comedy *The Toy* (1976), where the hero of Pierre Richard, the unemployed journalist Francois Perrin, despite the temptations of comfortable conformism, challenged the all-powerful head of the concern. In this comedy, despite the mass of funny gags and eccentric situations that arose around the unexpected decision of the young son of a millionaire to buy a live journalist instead of a toy, there was a lot of bitterness and sadness. And the sad music of Vladimir Kosma did not seem superfluous here.

The international success of F. Weber's first film turned out to be so great that American producers, who love remakes, offered Richard Donner (*The Omen, Superman, Lethal Weapon*) to make his own version of *The Toy's* (1982) a few years later. The role of the journalist went to the actor Richard Pryor in it... As expected, it turned out much worse...

In the year of the release of *The Toy* in the Soviet distribution, the film press reacted very positively to it, insisting on the useful anti-bourgeois pathos of the film:

For example, theatrical figure and film critic Victor Gulchenko (1944-2018) emphasized that this comedy was “to some extent created under the influence of ‘political cinema’, although there are no special treacheries committed by rascal police officers, and the mafia does not pursue on the heels of a conscientious lone prosecutor” (Gulchenko, 1978: 5) and praised the eccentric game by Pierre Richard.

And film critic Valentin Mikhalkovich (1937-2006) noted, that “when you look at this picture, it seems like you need to laugh. It’s not like choking with laughter, pushing a neighbor, but just smiling, rather bitterly than joyfully. And, indeed, how can one not laugh at the absurdities of bourgeois life” (Mikhalkovich, 1978: 19).

Many viewers today consider the comedy *The Toy* one of the best:

“I really love this movie. Instructive and touching. That the love of a child cannot be bought with any toys, luxury houses-nothing but love, attention and understanding. The boy was a toy in the hands of a rich father, spoiled, capricious, he also treated everyone and Francois considered a toy. François taught the boy the most important-kind, sensitive attitude towards people” (A. Alekseeva).

“One of my favorite French films, it teaches kindness and compassion without the obsessive moralizing that many social films do. The film has not lost its relevance even today” (Irina).

Don't miss, *Asunta!* / *Girl with a Pistol* / *La Ragazza con la pistola*. Italy, 1968. Directed by Mario Monicelli. Release in the USSR – since July 1970: 25.7 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Mario Monicelli (1915-2010) began making comedies in the late 1940s. The most famous were such talented works of his as *Policemen and Thieves, Intruders, as always, remained unknown, Girl with a Pistol, We Want Colonels, My Friends*, etc.

Mario Monicelli found the perfect actress for his comedy *Girl with a Pistol* – Monica Vitti (1931-2022). It was she who mischievously and psychologically accurately played the Sicilian Asunta, who decided to take revenge on her lover who had fled from her...

The Soviet film press regarded *Girl with a Pistol* ambiguously, but at the same time praised the undeniable comedic talent of Monica Vitti.

In the year of the release of this picture in the Soviet distribution, film critic Mikhail Belyavsky (1904-1982) wrote that it is “full of the most unexpected situations. A young Sicilian, a child of nature, in England lives and acts according to the laws and rules of her temperamental homeland. This alone opens up huge comedic possibilities for the authors. ... [Monica Vitti] appears before us in a new, completely unexpected capacity – a brilliant comedic actress. Our press has already talked about this film... as a purely commercial one. Well, we can agree with this definition. But still, the picture, although indirectly, undoubtedly fights against ossified traditions and laws with the weapon of laughter” (Belyavsky, 1970: 19).

And film critic and screenwriter Roza Kopylova wrote, that the talent of Monica Vitti manifested itself in “the temperamental and ingenuous Asunta, the newly-appeared female Candida, who appeared from the Sicilian patriarchy right into the epicenter of European civilization, into foggy-glass-stone, modern London with the inevitable addition of plastic. Mario Monicelli led Vitti through a series of funny ups and downs, giving her the opportunity not only to make her laugh, but to create a whole character in her own way and even show it in development. Having nothing against being seduced, but absolutely not wanting to be abandoned, Asunta, under the parting word of the whole village (“Don’t miss, Asunta!”), Goes in search of the insidious Vincenzo Macaluse, in order to either force him to marry, or commit a “bloody vendetta”. ... Vitti plays not so much a country girl of modern Italy as a walking notion of an 'Italian from the people' from the time of neo-realism, maintaining a distance between herself and her heroine, which does not hinder the comic effect at all” (Kopylova, 1976: 38).

Many viewers like this comedy today:

"Awesome comedy! Luxurious Monica Vitti! Even now you look and, indeed, laugh heartily. Of course, not like, as children, sneaking into the “Adults Only” session... My opinion today is that this film is a comedy masterpiece that anyone who appreciates a good solid and meaningful comedy should watch” (Maria).

“I revisited this film with pleasure and once again admired the talent of Monica Vitti. How emotional and at the same time charming Asunta turned out to be in her” (Alefina)

Testament of the Turkish Agha / A koppany aga testamentuma. Hungary, 1967. Directed by Eva Jurges. Release in the USSR – from December 14, 1970: 25.6 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Director Eva Jurges (1925-1997) began her film and TV career in the second half of the 1950s. For more than thirty years, she has staged about sixty films, often they were adaptations of famous literary works.

... Second half of the 16th century. A Hungarian nobleman dies from the saber of a Turkish Agha during a tournament, but the Hungarian's son swears revenge... Such is the plot of the historical movie *Testament of the Turkish Agha*...

Viewers still remember this picture:

"A great movie. ... sometimes comedic, but still there is a tragedy here ... The first time I saw it as a schoolboy-was wildly excited. Very good music, staging fights, duels are just on top. Reviewed recently. I liked it again, I remembered my school years. Respect" (Protven).

"Interesting adventure movie. Cheerful and captivating. And the soundtrack is catchy" (Whirlwind).

Distracted Police Inspector / Inspector la Bavure. France, 1980. Directed by Claude Zidi. Release in the USSR – from November 12, 1982: 25.6 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Director Claude Zidi was unusually lucky in the Soviet box office: about a dozen of his films appeared on the screens.

In 1980, Claude Zidi's *Distracted Police Inspector* apparently gave screenwriter and director Francis Weber a good idea to use Gerard Depardieu in an openly grotesque, comedy-eccentric capacity. The role of a gloomy strong man-gangster, with whom an unlucky weakling (Coluche) fights, served for Depardieu as a kind of sketch for Weber's famous movies *Unlucky*, *Dads* and *Runaways*.

Comic situations in *Distracted Police Inspector* is largely built on the fact that the policeman, performed by the popular comedian Coluche (1944-1986), clearly does not correspond to his responsible work: every now and then he gets into a mess...

In the year of the release of the comedy *Distracted Police Inspector*, journalist Galina Senchakova wrote that "the success of Coluche is primarily in the democratic nature of the image-mask created by the actor. The hero of Coluche is a simpleton, gullible, good-natured, somewhat shy, timid, and not very lucky. By virtue of his nature, he now and then gets into a mess. For the same reasons, he knows how to find a way out of a difficult situation. The sleazy inspector is him. Of course, films with Coluche are always comedies. However, laughter is laughter, but sometimes comedy turns into a dramatic side. And sometimes there are incredible adventures in it. For example, in *Distracted Police Inspector* there is a whole detective set: the police, the criminal, not even one, finally, there is a crime. Of course, all comedy. ... However, Coluche is ridiculous even in a rage. Gerard Depardieu, Coluche's famous partner in this picture, has his eyes popping out of his forehead in horror when the bulldozer destroys the house with a bulldozer, where he hid an overly curious hostage journalist. And we laugh. So the comedy was a success..." (Senchakova, 1982).

The opinions of current viewers about this comedy, as a rule, vary significantly:

"The usual, with a stupid plot, flat jokes, but a fun French comedy. You can watch it once, but no more!" (Alex-1959).

"I don't remember how many times I watched this movie, I lost count. And Coluche himself in the title role is magnificent, and paired with Depardieu, he is simply incomparable" (M. Kirillov).

Rhapsody. USA, 1954. Directed by Charles Vidor. Release in the USSR – from May 3, 1960: 25.5 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Charles Vidor (1900-1959) known for such films as *Dead End*, *Cover Girl*, *Gilda*, *Joker*, *Farewell to Arms!* and etc.

In the musical melodrama *Rhapsody*, a rich young woman played by Liz Taylor (1932-2011) falls in love with a violinist played by Vittorio Gassman (1922-2000), but soon she meets a pianist played by John Erickson (1926-2020).

The Soviet press met *Rhapsody* unkindly, emphasizing that "in practice, it turns out that sometimes that part of foreign film production, which expresses bourgeois tastes

and ideals, turns out to be beyond the shelling of our criticism. The so-called "commercial cinema" (by the way, the term is very approximate, because *Roman Holiday* and *Rhapsody* are created, guided not only by financial considerations, but also by ideological considerations) is designed for a mass audience. ... *Rhapsody* is not just a sentimental melodrama, but frank speculation on the "eternal theme" of love, as if by the way promoting the full service of burgher well-being. Brushing aside a serious critical analysis of such films, we seem to be guided by the simplest syllogism: since it is mediocre, since it is a fake for art, then it is safe. But in reality, products of this kind do their job, infecting a solid part of the audience with an alien ideology and morality. ... when choosing an object for the application of one's forces, criticism should proceed from what is of real importance in the ideological struggle against bourgeois ideology. Helping millions of people develop a clear appreciation and immunity to false art: isn't this an interesting and exciting task for a critic?!" (Tolstykh, 1963: 66-67).

Many viewers still like this musical love story:

"A very beautiful film, shot through with great music" (Ella)

"Amazing film! Amazing actors, chic style of Liz Taylor, of course: music is great and luxurious!" (Valari).

Love under the Elms / Desire Under the Elms. USA, 1957. Directed by Dilbert Mann. Release in the USSR – since July 1966: 25.5 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Dilbert Mann (1920-2007) is Oscar winner for the drama *Marty* (1955), also known for such films as *At Midnight* (1959), *Pink Jungle* (1968) and others.

The drama *Desire Under the Elms* told about the enmity and passion in the Cabot family ... At the center of this picture was a psychologically complex duet of two outstanding actors: Sophia Loren and Anthony Perkins (1932-1992).

The Soviet press reacted to this drama ambiguously.

So the philosopher and film critic Vladimir Razumny (1924-2011) wrote that "along with commercial production and modernist films, modern bourgeois cinema occasionally features works that are close in spirit to critical realism. They give a relatively truthful picture of a society where man is a wolf to man, where the bestial laws of individualism operate, as in the jungle. As a rule, such films are adaptations of famous literary works. This is exactly the film *Desire Under the Elms*, directed by D. Mann based on the play of the same name by the American playwright Eugene O'Neill. Money, its formidable corrupting power, turning native people into blood enemies, forcing children to betray their parents, and parents to kill children: this is the theme interpreted by the playwright" (Razumny, 1966).

Literary and theater critic Naum Berkovsky (1901-1972) took the film *Desire Under the Elms* much stricter, emphasizing that "Sophia Loren has a snake woman on the screen, even in her appearance, in an elongated figure, in a small round head, in wavy body movements, something snake-like and snake-like is presented to us. In the American film, the New England farmer and her fierce, venomous passion for her own stepson are indistinguishable one. Sophia Loren will have nothing left, if you subtract the terrible, her destroying sexual experiences. There is no man, there is a concubine, first a father, then a son, then one and the other, disgusted by one, lusting for the other with the passion of a whole terrarium, or, moreover, with the passion of a whole menagerie. ... Sophia Loren had a lot of power and art, no less than that temptation, but there was no poetry here either before or after the start of events, everything was eaten up by crime and crimes. The social theme, so vivid in Tairov's play, sounds much more deafening in the American film" (Berkovsky, 1969: 379-380).

Viewers of the XXI century, as a rule, rate the film *Desire Under the Elms* highly:

“I love watching this movie. Amazing acting. The role of Sophia Loren is one of the best in her filmography” (Novikova).

“A very good film with the incomparable Sophia Loren. Once again I was convinced that she is a brilliant versatile actress. Difficult dramatic role, heavy psychological cinema” (Velary).

Death of a Scoundrel / Mort d'un pourri. France, 1977. Directed by Georges Lautner. Release in the USSR – since November 1979: 25.4 million viewers in the first year demonstrations.

Georges Lautner (1926-2013): about fifty films: comedies, detectives, thrillers, parodies, filmed over more than seventy years.

Philip Dubaye (Maurice Ronet) kills a deputy with a dubious reputation, and his friend Xavier (Alain Delon) tries to provide him with an alibi... But Philip's own life is in danger...

In *Death of a Scoundrel* Alain Delon again met on the set with his longtime partner – Maurice Ronet (1927-1983), with whom they played in such iconic films as *In the Bright Sun* and *Pool*. Alas, this joint work was the last for these outstanding actors: on March 14, 1983, Maurice Ronet died of cancer in a Paris hospital at the age of 55...

During the years of the release of *Death of a Scoundrel* in the Soviet distribution, the film press sought to emphasize the anti-bourgeois orientation of this movie.

So film critic Nikolai Sumenov (1938-2014) wrote that “the film the *Death of a Scoundrel* is built according to the laws of a classic detective story: a series of mysterious murders, the search for a criminal, his exposure, but the authors of the French film used the popular genre to create a work of social-critical, anti-bourgeois, I would even say political direction. One of the main themes of progressive Western cinema is the denunciation of corruption, the venality of senior officials, and criticism of the police apparatus” (Sumenov, 1979: 20).

Already in the 21st century, the dashing film critic Denis Gorelov emphasized in his ironic review that *Death of a scoundrel* is the “film about the complex, full of dangers of the life of embezzlers causes mixed feelings in Russia. On the one hand, they also love Delon here and feel sorry for Ornella Muti in a white raincoat. On the other hand, they do not like deputies quite strongly. We have passed the two-hundred-year French path of revolutions, restorations, terror, dictatorship and bloody pan-European expansion in the seventy, finding ourselves at the end of the century at the same point of complete loss of national passionarity and the selfishness, nepotism and corruption that grow from there. Willingness to steal everything that lies, sell everything that they buy, and lie down under any active subculture ... so long as the house in village and the cow with the boar do not suffer. The difference is in tolerance for abuse. France of the 1970s, voting for the socialists, is clearly ready to turn a blind eye to the face of morality and sympathize with their favorite artists. Delon in the final pushes a mature speech about the two dangers of a tired society: disorder and order. And he puts a bullet in the commissioner, who decided to punish the thieves with his own means. In Russia, by the beginning of the 2000s, anarchy had reached such limits that no one had been afraid of black justice for a long time” (Gorelov, 2019: 222).

Viewers of the XXI century and today remember this film:

"Great film! A heartfelt, vital story and a wonderful, unsurpassed game of an outstanding, inimitable actor of all time – Alain Delon! The film is relevant even now, forty years after its creation!" (Alex-1959).

"The film is a bit long, lacking dynamics. But you can watch for the sake of Delon! Everything rests on his charisma" (Francoise).

Hurricane. USA, 1978. Directed by Jan Troel. Release in the USSR – from June 7, 1982. 25.3 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Director Jan Troel began working in film in the early 1960s. Soon he announced himself as one of the most promising European directors with the films *Here's Your Life* (1966) and *Ene, Bene, Res* (1968, prize at the Berlin Film Festival). Significant works of cinematography were his *Emigrants* (1971, nominated for an Oscar) and *The Bride of Zendi* (1974, David di Donatello Prize), *Hamsun* (1996) and other.

Hurricane was staged at the intersection of the genres of melodrama and disaster film. 1920s. In the course of the story, American artist Charlotte decides to visit her father, the governor of a distant island. It is there that Charlotte is waiting for love and severe trials...

At the suggestion of producer Dino De Laurentiis (1919-2010), Roman Polanski began work on *Hurricane*, but problems with American law prevented him from making this film. Then the filming contract was signed with the famous Swedish director Jan Troel, who completed this expensive project together with the famous cinematographer Ingmar Bergman Sven Newqvist (1922-2006).

Alas, the box-office expectations of Dino De Laurentiis did not come true: at a cost of \$22 million, *The Hurricane* was able to collect only 4.5 million greenbacks in American cinemas. True, in the unspoiled Hollywood blockbusters. In the USSR, the film was waiting for success: more than 25 million viewers wanted to look at the exotic.

The Soviet film press preferred not to write about the *Hurricane* almost. But the American film press crushed this film into powder. Famous film critic Roger Ebert called it the worst film of 1979,

The opinions of Russian viewers of the XXI century about the *Hurricane* are contradictory:

"A strikingly beautiful film, although a seemingly banal story" (Gulp).

"And a good, and beautiful, and very exciting film. And how much beautiful eroticism there is in it, as before they knew how to make beautiful films about love without vulgarity" (Novikova).

"Initially, I was sure that this was a disaster film. In general, this is how it turned out: the last quarter of an hour of the picture. And the rest of the time was taken up by a boring love story, which, to be honest, did not affect me at all" (G. Volanov).

"Typhoon is incomparable here, one of the best roles. Everything else: actors, plot: at the level of factory amateur performances" (T. Thutmose).

Meeting with a Spy / Spotkanie ze szpiegiem. Poland, 1964. Directed by Jan Batory. Release in the USSR – from July 19, 1965: 25.2 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Jan Batory (1921-1981) during his career directed 13 full-length feature films, many of which had considerable success in Polish and Soviet film distribution.

The detective story *Meeting with a Spy* has everything that is needed in such movie stories: a clever, cunning and ruthless Western "infiltrator" (Ignaci Machowski), a charming

beauty "on the hook" (Beata Tyszkiewicz), a dynamic plot, often with unexpected twists... And all this is dissolved in the atmosphere of the 1960s, filmed in the spirit of cinéma vérité.

This movie still has fans:

“Wonderful movie! Nothing extra! Actors, setting, filming conditions. Natural scenery of a bygone era. Chance meetings and episodes” (Al-r).

The Adventures of Odysseus / Le aventure di Ulisse. Italy-FRG-Yugoslavia, 1968. Directed by Franco Rossi. Release in the USSR – from September 27, 1971. 25.2 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Franco Rossi (1919-2000) directed mainly films of entertainment genres, which, as a rule, were successful with the public (*Seducer, All in Love, Countersex, Three Nights of Love, Complexes, Dollies, Witches, Caprice in Italian, Youth, Youth*, etc.). Due to the frivolity of the plots, the films of this director, as a rule, did not get into the Soviet film distribution. But there was an exception: the colorful *The Adventures of Odysseus* (in the original-television series), where for inexperienced Soviet viewers there were no special “swagger”...

In *The Adventures of Odysseus*, one of the main roles was played by the famous Greek actress Irene Papas, who fell in love with Soviet viewers in *Elektra* and *Zorba the Greek*...

This film had everything that attracted the audience in all ages: love, exoticism, an entertaining plot ...

For this, some people of the 21st century also loves this film...

Tall blonde in a black boot / Le Grand blond avec une chaussure noire. France, 1972. Directed by Yves Robert. Release in the USSR – 1974: 25.2 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Return of the tall blond / Le Retour du Grand blond. France, 1974. Directed by Yves Robert. Release in the USSR – 1976: 23.9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

French director Yves Robert (1920-2002) was remembered by the audience, first of all, for the parody dilogy about the adventures of the Tall Blond, although he also had such a psychologically subtle dramatic comedy as *Hello, Artist!*

Back in the mid-1970s, film critic Tatyana Khlopyankina (1937-1993) wrote that “in the foreign detective story, two types of hero are now especially popular. Either he is a superman, or quite the opposite: an intellectual, an absent-minded dreamer, completely accidentally drawn into the cruel games of warring intelligence agencies and brilliantly emerges victorious from the most deplorable situations only because his humanity, simplicity, spontaneity seem to those around him to be a diabolical cunning that cannot be deciphered in any way. This is exactly what the “tall blond in a black shoe” was like... Yves Robert liked dealing with the blond so much that he was returned to the screen again. Again we will see the Paris airfield, a bustling crowd, gloomy fellows hiding behind poles, and a tall blond on the escalator (an elegant quote from the first film), however, this time not in black, but in a red shoe. God, many months have passed, and his enemies have still not wised up: still think the quiet, polite violinist is a super agent, still gloomy, unlucky and have a passion for identical costumes” (Khlopyankina, 1976).

Rights film critic Lyubov Alova: True popularity came to Pierre Richard precisely after the premiere of the parody film *Tall Blonde in a Black Shoe* by Yves Robert (1972-2002), “which, according to the actor himself, helped him find not only a role, but also create his own mask. His character, an intellectual, a timid and shy person, naturally, as a result, is terribly

awkward, and again, as a result, terribly unlucky. But at the same time, he is kind, talented, sympathetic and always acts as a champion of goodness, a defender of justice” (Alova, 1997: 123).

I agree with film critic Yevgeny Nefedov: “The notorious black boot, which, due to a stupid joke of friends, was forced to put Franus Perrin on during his return to Paris, is undoubtedly a caustic attack on the irresistible James Bond, always dressed to the nines: dressed in an impeccable English suit and expensive patent leather shoes . As much as agent 007 performed by Sean Connery or Roger Moore easily and gracefully, with an invariable ironic smirk, coped with the most difficult missions, the very thought of the involvement of an awkward violinist, a real “distracted person”, who always gets into trouble and finds himself in funny situations, seems ridiculous intelligence and counterintelligence operations” (Nefedov, 2009).

Viewers of the 21st century are still returning to watching this parody dilogy:

“For our generation, this is even a kind of cult film. It had everything for us: such an alluring and inaccessible France (which we will never see like this again), a special style in everything and the complete opposite of our then gray ordinary life. Actually, the film is not for children, but it became so popular among teenagers of that time” (Yuri).

“I still enjoy watching French comedies with Pierre Richard... When the music of Vladimir Kosma from *The Toy* or *Tall Blond* just starts to sound, you already start to smile involuntarily. ... I adore Richard: such a helplessly absurd, but with remarkably cheerful eyes, always an optimistic hero” (Tanya K.).

Three Men Must Be Removed / Trois hommes a abattre. France, 1980. Directed by Jacques Deray. Release in the USSR – from August 23, 1982: 25.2 million viewers in the first year of the show.

The Americanized style of gangster-cop films is typical of the French director Jacques Deray (1929-2003), from year to year making a win-win bet on the image of Jean-Paul Belmondo and Alain Delon (*Borsalino, Three Men Must Be Removed, Marginal*).

... A professional card player (Alain Delon) helps a wounded man: takes him to the clinic, and soon notices that he is becoming the object of someone's surveillance...

Alain Delon staged similar films with a strong intrigue of a thriller on his own. And although his paintings *In the Skin of a Policeman* and *Indomitable* cannot be attributed to masterpieces, in terms of rhythm, tempo and professionalism, in my opinion, they are no worse than *Three Men Must Be Removed* by Jacques Deray. Retelling the plots of such movies is a thankless task. And the point here is not only that they sometimes look alike. It's just that their audience success does not depend on the originality of the plot, but on strict observance of the laws of the genre, the dynamics of the action and, of course, the image of the star actor.

On the eve of the release of the detective story *Three Men Must Be Removed* in the Soviet film distribution, film critic Galina Dolmatovskaya (1939-2021) wrote, that this action film resurrects the image of a mysterious and sad hero, memorable, for example, from Melville's *Samurai*, Delon was the producer of the film, it was adapted to him (Dolmatovskaya, 1981: 16).

A connoisseur of French cinema – film critic Alexander Braginsky (1920-2016) also reacted quite positively to this film (Braginsky, 1999: 35).

And already in the 21st century, a sharp-tongued film critic Denis Gorelov caustically noted that “films with Delon have always been distinguished by high mortality.

There is a suspicion that a whole staff of screenwriters feeds near him, imprisoned solely for the invention of new cinematic ways of killing people. ... The rest was an add-on, an optional dessert to the main course. Delon, as always, flaunted expensive watches and soft-colored shirts under a light-colored jacket without a tie. He liked to chase killers around Paris and away from them. ... But of course, the passion to bite the owners of private villas with a lattice fence, a collection of paintings and bloodhounds lowered for the night was of the greatest interest, which was, of course, strongly dissonant with his right-wing views: apparently, grassroots origin made itself felt. If Belmondo more often drove scumbag maniacs, Delon competed with entire state corporations, pillars of the bourgeois world order, mired in corruption and embezzlement” (Gorelov, 2019: 225-226).

Opinions of 21st century viewers about this film are often opposite:

“A wonderful political thriller, Alain Delon and Delilah di Lazarro are a dazzlingly effective couple, a handsome Frenchman and a charming Italian nymph, a strong plot and a cruel denouement. The golden era of the great French cinema, which, alas, has irrevocably passed” (Daigton).

“Scary movie, it has a lot of murders, a lot of violence! These stamps of the detective genre literally prevail in this film! We will not see anything new here either in the plot or in its development, only stencils and stamps. Why does Mr. Delon have so many empty, monotonous things in his work?” (Barbitomacus).

Air Adventures / Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines or How I Flew from London to Paris in 25 hours 11 minutes. USA, 1964. Directed by Ken Annakin. Release in the USSR – from November 11, 1968: 25.1 million viewers in its first year in theaters.

Ken Annakin (1914-2009) during his long film career directed about forty films.

Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines or How I Flew from London to Paris in 25 hours 11 minutes is the adventure comedy about the air race of pilots from different countries from London to Paris, which took place at the beginning of the 20th century, was a great success with the Soviet film audience.

Already in the 21st century, film critic Yevgeny Nefedov wrote, that the authors of *Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines or How I Flew from London to Paris in 25 hours 11 minutes* "generally do not hide the fact that they are guided by popular comedies about car racing, which will be further confirmed by the sequel... It is not uncommon to turn to retro. Yes, and the vehicles chosen by the characters, which, of course, bring their own, unforgettable specifics, are not the only thing that the authors have relied on. The "highlight" of the idea seems to be, rather, playing with the nationalities of enthusiasts speaking on behalf of states fighting for primacy and – more broadly! – for the right to be considered advanced. ... Perhaps the opposition of the pilots required a more subtle approach, and even the talents of such artists as Alberto Sordi and Terry-Thomas could have been revealed brighter” (Nefedov, 2017).

Viewers today sometimes recall this film:

“The features of the national character of Europeans are very well presented in the film, which is reliably noticed and creates funny situations in the course of the plot development” (Nord).

Banzai. France, 1983. Directed by Claude Zidi. Release in the USSR – since March 1985: 25.1 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Claude Zidi was one of the favorites of the Soviet film distribution.

Shortly before his death in a car accident, Coluche (1944-1986) starred with Claude Zidi in two comedies: *Banzai* and *Kings of Joke*, in my opinion, far from the most successful.

In *Banzai* a kaleidoscope of rapidly changing events unfolded on the screen, carrying the protagonist from country to country, from continent to continent. The action was subject to unrestrained, although in many ways banal eccentricity and was clearly organized in terms of tempo and rhythm. Each of the episodes lasted no more than 10 minutes, not having time to get bored and attracting with the exotic slums of Harlem, the dens of Hong Kong and the landscapes of the African deserts. The effect of compensation was not forgotten either: for an hour and a half each spectator could feel like a hero lucky in love and unharmed in all extraordinary circumstances. Like the movies with the Charlot group, *Banzai* undoubtedly had all the signs of a series and could easily continue indefinitely...

***Banzai* has a lot of fans today:**

"Great comedy, great movie. However, you need to watch it only with Soviet dubbing. Scream! ... Watched a thousand times! I consider this film one of the best in Coluche's filmography" (Alenda).

"Great film! Very well conveys the atmosphere of France (and not only her) of the early eighties. Classical French sitcom. And definitely one of the best roles of Coluche" (D. Ravik).

The Red Mantle / Den røde kappe. Denmark-Iceland-Sweden, 1967. Director and screenwriter Gabriel Axel. Release in the USSR – from April 23, 1968: 25.0 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Winner of the Oscar for the drama *Babetta's Feast* (1987) — Gabriel Axel (1918-2014) directed many outstanding films, but in the USSR he is known mainly only for the historical drama *The Red Mantle* (1967), in which the main role was played by the actor Oleg Vidov (1943-2017).

In the Soviet era, any participation of Russian actors in Western films was a sensation. But the interest in the *Red Mantle* was fueled not only by the fact that the main (!) role in it was played by Oleg Vidov, who looked like a real Scandinavian in it, but the fascinating inscription on the posters of cinemas "Children under 16 are not allowed", which in this case (despite on certain censored banknotes in the Soviet rolling copy) was not a snag: the rather bold erotica in this harsh picture was unusual for the audience of the USSR.

The Soviet film press reacted to the *Red Mantle* in general positively.

So film critic Tatyana Khlopyankina (1937-1993) wrote about this film as follows:

"Old legends are easy to tell. The feelings of their characters are simple and understandable. The chain of circumstances that gave rise to this or that event is extremely clear. The appearance of the past time can also be quite accurately imagined, because objects of ancient utensils, descriptions of rituals and customs have been preserved. And the cinematographer takes up the challenge. People in ancient costumes walk around the screen, raise old goblets to their lips, call each other by names that are no longer there, fight in the most primitive way: and everything in these films seems to be observed, everything is accurately shown, only the feeling of the antiquity of what is happening is lost, that unthinkably huge distance that separates the nose from the heroes of ancient legends. The *Red Mantle* seems to be made in full accordance with the laws of ordinary costume mites: that is, soundly, seriously,

without any attempt to reshape the old legend in a new way. Of course, one can say that the idea of the film is very modern, since the conflict between humanism and cruelty, between love that conquers the ancient strife, and the strife that ruined love, will never, as they say, lose its relevance. But with all this, one can hardly say that the *Red Mantle* is a kind of breakthrough into modernity. So it's just a costume movie? A legend that has turned into a bright cinematic spectacle on the screen? Yes. But there is something in this film that distinguishes it from the stream of ordinary staged movies. ...

In costume films devoted to the past, there is usually no element of surprise in front of this past. Time and the characters in them live in today's active, verbose rhythm, and we also perceive these dramatizations without any surprise. The long outfit of *Cleopatra*, the sword of *Spartacus*, the tunic of *Odysseus*: this is spectacular, beautiful, but not at all surprising. It's not from the past. It's just props. The "Red Robe" is made differently. Its authors ... tried to convey the unusualness and charm of antiquity. A saga is a prose story interspersed with verse, we read in studies on the Old Norse epic. The rhythm of the old saga: with its alternations of prose and poetry, with the suddenness of transitions from peace to outbursts of unbridled passions is preserved in *Red Mantle*. Household items, clothes, utensils, the chain mail of warriors and their simple swords: all these mute participants in ordinary costume ribbons in the *Red Mantle* gained meaning and meaning, because they seemed to be returned to their element, to the past, living on the screen in its own special, somewhat slowed down and majestic rhythm. ... The film is beautiful, as are its characters. There is nothing vulgar, unnatural in this beauty. Without trying to reshape the past at their own discretion, the authors simply gave us the opportunity to read the old saga and present its heroes as accurately as possible" (Khloplyankina, 1969: 150-152).

In a similar vein, film critic and writer Nina Tolchenova wrote about the *Red Mantle*:

" *Red Mantle* is the film is not only for those who love "action movies"... Medieval castles, tournaments, knightly armor, heavy swords, galloping horses, merciless battle, fight to such an inexorable fury that no longer knows mercy... The harsh life of the ancient Vikings is presented in this color film convincingly enough... As you will see for yourself, this film is not for people with weak nerves... Not only the ability to transform, but also a happy appearance, speaking of a strong, courageous character, attracts Oleg Vidov, who plays the role of Hagbard" (Tolchenova, 1968: 18-19).

The audience of the XXI century refers to the *Red Mantle* ambiguously:

"I watched this film as a 12-year-old boy... Then the film shocked me with realism, northern romance, and, of course, a key love story: a variant of the immortal Romeo and Juliet. Having reviewed it as a mature person, I saw all the shortcomings: more than a modest work of costumers, poor surroundings, and frankly weak camera work. Nevertheless, the very spirit of the Norwegian fjords, the atmosphere of the medieval Scandinavian sagas could not be killed in me. One of the best Viking movies, ... very hard, and therefore – truthful" (Anderswit).

"The modest budget of the movie deprived the story of any scale: there are no troops, a fleet, and indeed sane scenery. Fifteen people in the sweat of their brows portray fierce fights, but they are more reminiscent of gatherings of inexperienced role-reenactors. ... The sluggish work of the cameraman only emphasizes the cheapness of the project, and the almost complete absence of music in this not the most verbose film at all turns viewing into a very tedious task. ... All the atmosphere is based on the harsh Scandinavian fjords, all the acting is on Bjornstrand. Yesterday's student Vidov (who, of course, is extremely pleasant to see visiting a foreign classic), slicing through the rocks in a *Star Trek* outfit, impresses more with his youthful beauty than with his acting performance. The others, including his plot companion, are so inexpressive that you don't immediately notice at what point the love scene, probably cut out in Soviet distribution, is replaced by a scene with a waving log" (Lemr).

“The scarcity of the budget, apparently, did not allow creating a more or less decent epic, and staging fights now can only cause a smile. ... The main characters can only boast of external beauty, our Vidov is still trying to play something and looks in the frame, his partner is rather present and more or less noticeable when without clothes... Gunnar Bjornstrand, one of Bergman's favorite actors, is also noticeable in the role of Sigvor. ... Of course, you can look at young Vidov and the Scandinavian fjords, but without enthusiasm” (A. Medved).

The Drums of Destiny. South Africa-UK, 1962. Directed and written by George Michael. Release in the USSR –from April 6, 1964: 24.9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

British documentary filmmaker and traveler George Michael directed only three films, and in the USSR his *The Drums of Destiny* was very popular, where the audience was captivated by the shooting of wild animals...

Today the film *The Drums of Destiny* is almost forgotten: both by the audience and film critics, although in the mid-1960s, millions of Soviet boys (and adults to boot) enthusiastically watched this exotic movie ...

Acquaintance by Marriage Announcement / Run After Me So that I Can Catch You / Cours après moi ... que je t'attrape). France, 1976. Directed by Robert Pouret. Release in the USSR – from January 30, 1978: 24.9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Robert Pouret directed not so many films, mostly comedy genre.

The heroine of the comedy *Run After Me So that I Can Catch You* (in the Soviet box office – *Acquaintance by Marriage Announcement*), brilliantly performed by Annie Girardot (1931-2011), lives alone and childless, and her work is not one of the most prestigious: haircut dogs. The second character in this amusing story, the tax inspector in an equally excellent performance by Jean-Pierre Mariel (1932-2019), is also single, although he has an adult son from his ex-wife. They are brought together by a newspaper ad in the dating section...

The Soviet film press reacted very positively to this film: “The first place in the film certainly belongs to Annie Girardot, her charm and talent, which undoubtedly deserve the attention of the audience” (Ivanov, 1978: 19).

This comedy is remembered by today's viewers:

“Another film with the brilliant Annie Girardot” (Tatiana).

“I was pleased to look at France in the 1970s, which I always admired as a child in films... where I always dreamed of visiting, but, alas... Regarding the plot, I’m not enthusiastic, but it’s quite suitable for evening viewing at dinner as a background” (Teresa).

Red and black / Le Rouge et le noir. France–Italy, 1954. Directed by Claude Autant-Lara. Release in the USSR – from October 18, 1955: 24.8 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Claude Autant-Lara (1901-2000) is one of the most French filmmakers who started back in the 1930s.

In the well-staged film adaptation of *Red and Black*, the legendary Gerard Philip (1922-1959) played the role of the ambitious Julien Sorel, who enters the service of a tutor in a rich house, and the role of Madame de Renal was played by the no less legendary Danielle Darrieux (1917-2017).

French cinema connoisseur Alexander Braginsky (1920-2016) wrote, what's in *Red and Black* "clearly and truthfully, Gerard Philip revealed the complex, contradictory image of Julien Sorel. He showed that here the mind and ambition came into conflict with the impulse of the heart. The artist was able to convincingly prove that Sorel's ambition and hypocrisy were prompted to him by life itself, by the desire to break out of the bottom, to succeed, to make a career. Like many other heroes of Philip, he chooses love to achieve his goal and, like them, fails, unable to overcome his true feelings. Gerard excellently revealed this duality of Julien Sorel, but did not find equivalent colors for the two different looks of his hero. As a result, the scenes with Madame de Renal are much stronger than those with Mademoiselle de la Mole, like all lyrical scenes in general, they are much superior to those where Sorel the ambitious works" (Braginsky, 1966: 184-185).

A film critic Andrei Zorky (1935-2006) praised the performance of Daniel Darier: "We find her at the beginning of the film *Autant-Lara* immersed in a sleepy, idyllic (as far as this expression is appropriate here) world. This world is changing with the advent of the young Sorel. The interest awakened in Julien can be explained, it would seem, by the most natural feeling of gratitude and respect. Julien does not yell at children, does not speak vulgarities, does not at all resemble those around him. Daniel Darier, following Stendhal, seems to be drawing not yet love, but its presentiment, its approach. ... And Daniel Darier has to show the finest acting skills in order to convey the most important nuance of the Stendhal novel. The actress does it brilliantly. Her heroine is touching in her love and yet somewhere a little funny, pathetic – in panic horror before the young "winner of hearts", in violently revealed remorse. But love rises above these realistic scenes which awakens something new in the heroine, gives rise to rebellious – akin to Sorelian – strength. The feeling embodied by Daria is deeply tragic. It will go through separation, tantamount to dying, through the pangs of conscience and the pangs of trampled and newly found feelings, through weakness, betrayal in the name of the same love... And amazingly – in a novel that mercilessly criticizes literally all layers of social and spiritual life of France, drawing the life of his two heroes is like an endless journey through the circles of hell, the only bright point, the only possible moral force is the love of two people, surprisingly similar in fate, rebellious and broken. No wonder critics perceive the life of Madame de Renal as a kind of "female version" of Sorel's fate. The actress reveals to us the subtlest movements of the soul, a multi-colored spectrum of emotions. Her heroines experience the full measure of human feelings. But what do these feelings mean – besides tenderness and love, suffering and self-sacrifice?" (Zorky, 1965: 27-32).

Maiden Rosemary / Das Madchen Rosemarie. Germany, 1958. Directed by Rolf Thiele. Release in the USSR – since 1966: 24.8 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Rolf Thiele (1918-1994) during his film career directed about four dozen films, the most famous of which were *Rosemary the Maiden*, *Labyrinth*, *Lulu*, *Love Carousel*, etc.

In the tragicomedy *Maiden Rosemary* a girl with "lightened social responsibility" becomes the mistress of a certain rich man and then gets involved in espionage...

Already in the 21st century, S. Kudryavtsev wrote that "the heroine of Rolf Thiele, played by Nadya Tiller, who became famous thanks to this, turns out to be the last individualist who tried alone and at any cost to succeed in life. ... An additional sarcasm is that the beginning of the film is repeated in the finale to the smallest detail. The only difference is that Marga has now taken the place of Rosemary" (Kudryavtsev, 2006).

Viewers of the 21st century remember *Maiden Rosemary* as follows:

“The film is a waste. ... From the first shots, the director throws the viewer into a wheel: order turns into chaos in it... And even the fear of death is not able to stop Rosemary, because she has accelerated so that she can no longer stop” (E. Savonicheva).

“The actress reliably, qualitatively and consistently showed all the narrow-minded personal rationality of her character, which also turned out to be interspersed with emotional irrationality, due to the conflict of which an inevitable catastrophe occurs. So having ascended due to chance and bodily attractiveness, representatives of the opposite sex believe that they control all their surrounding elements as the notorious “mistress of the sea”. And although the plot line and the game of other actors do not shine with originality (but they do not reject bad taste), the authors managed to... convey meanings and ideas. And these techniques are varied and song-musical numbers and purely symbolic performance episodes: like the appearance of bourgeois in a cavalcade of their limousines and their same cavalcade on foot at meetings. An interesting film, with a creative framing of moralizing meaning, attractive even today by its permanence of the situation” (Kaana).

Serenade of Great Love / Serenade einer großen Liebe. Germany–Italy, 1958. Directed by Rudolf Mathe. Release in the USSR – from August 4, 1969: 24.8 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Rudolf Mate (1898-1964) started his career (first as a cinematographer) in silent films. In the 1940s he became a director, usually making spectacular films aimed at mass audiences. In the Soviet box office there were his *Serenade of Great Love* starring Mario Lanza (1921-1959) and the spectacular peplum *Three Hundred Spartans*.

In the musical melodrama *Serenade of Great Love*, a famous opera singer first cancels his performance at the Vienna Opera and then leaves for Capri...

The film was released in Soviet cinemas exactly ten years after the legendary Mario Lanza, who died at the age of 38 from a heart attack...

***Serenade of Great Love* still has many fans today:**

“The film made a big impression. An excellent plot, wonderful songs and, most importantly, their excellent performance by M. Lanza” (Alois).

“I love musical retro films. ... I love such plots, which are shown in the picture, when a poor noble girl finds her love” (Tatiana).

The Snows of Kilimanjaro. USA, 1952. Directed by Henry King. Release in the USSR – from June 7, 1967: 24.7 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Henry King (1886-1982) started making films back in the era of the Great Mute. Known for the films *In Old Chicago*, *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* and others.

In melodrama *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*, the writer Harry (Gregory Peck), while in Africa, near Mount Kilimanjaro, having been wounded in the leg, recalls his life...

In the Soviet film press in the year of the release of *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* in the all-Union film distribution, in my opinion, it was rightly noted that in the film, from all the variety of memories of the Hemingway hero, “only those are selected on which to build an exciting box-office film... Particular preference is given to memories of women, there are many women on the screen, and they are all seductive, and each of them plays a fatal role in Harry's life. ... And if such films according to Hemingway as *The Old Man and the Sea* or *Fiesta* can be called at best a semi-success of cinema, then *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* apparently does not deserve this either. Despite the fact that the film has a lot of picturesque views and spectacular melodramatic scenes. Despite the fact that the main roles in it are played by such actors as ... Gregory Peck and Ava Gardner” (Ivanova, 1967: 22).

The opinions of the audience of the XXI century about the *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* are quite diverse:

“Good, beautiful film! Very charming Ava Gardner and courageous Gregory Peck! I watched it a long time ago, I want to rewatch it” (Viksy).

“In general, it turned out to be a spectacular Hollywood melodrama with a happy ending, but not Hemingway. I watched the film once in the cinema, it seemed slightly stretched. ... The colors then seemed bright, but a little unnatural” (B. Nezhdanov).

“Like in many films about Africa, attention is captured primarily by shooting various animals in their natural habitat (for example, a huge herd of hippos has never been seen before), but a noticeable combination of location and studio shooting with actors, of course, and in the eyes of those who have not seen all these animals, looks at least funny (and dishonest to the viewer). ... A. Gardner plays the role of a beautiful girl, atypical for himself, without any affectation and pretentiousness, soft and sensual, loving wife and future mother (in this role she is completely unrecognizable)” (Retroman).

White Buckle / Bila spona. Czechoslovakia, 1960. Directed by Martin Frič. Release in the USSR – from January 29, 1962: 24.7 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Martin Frič (1902-1968) began his career back in the 1930s – with film adaptations of the novel *12 Chairs* by I. Ilf and E. Petrov and N. Gogol's play *The Inspector General*. After the detective story *White Buckle*, he directed the films *Rose of the North*, *People from the Vans* and *Top Secret Premieres*, etc.

In the detective story *White Buckle*, the Czechoslovak police successfully expose the robbers...

Once very successful in the Soviet box office (almost 25 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration!) *White Buckle* is almost forgotten today. He is remembered only by rare viewers...

Roman Holiday. USA, 1953. Directed by William Wyler. Release in the USSR – from June 1960: 24.6 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Films of the outstanding master of the world screen William Wyler (1902-1981) appeared in the Soviet box office quite rarely and often with great delay (*The Best Years of Our Lives*, *Roman Holiday*, *How to Steal a Million*, *The Liberation of L.B. Jones*).

Roman Holiday appeared on the Soviet screens belatedly and even before the release of the mass film distribution was received quite warmly by the film press:

“...From a fictional country, a young princess Anna arrived in Rome with her retinue. Fed up with the receptions and official ceremonies of the court, Anna takes the first good opportunity to break free and mix with the simple cheerful people of the big city.

Fate confronts Anna, who has fled from her retinue, with the American journalist Joe. He recognizes the princess as his casual acquaintance and seeks to collect as much sensational material about her for the newspaper in order to win a bet with the editor.

Anna perceives everything around her with childish spontaneity and curiosity. Forgetting about her high position, she enthusiastically rides a scooter, eats ice cream, sitting on the steps of the Plaza de España, cuts her bangs, dances with a hairdresser in a pub and even participates in a fight with the police sent to search for her. Anna likes simple, hitherto unfamiliar people, the princess likes their life, which she is deprived of in a boring and prim palace. Anna manages to fall in love with the cheerful and broken journalist Joe.

However, the whole course of events reminded her that she is a princess and therefore cannot choose her beloved according to the call of her heart.

The journalist's professional interest in the "disappeared" princess was replaced by Joe's affection and sympathy for this charming girl. Let the bet be lost, But he does not use the sensational material he has collected! In the final scene, when the princess is speaking at the press conference, Jo hands Anna incriminating photographs...

Thus ends this entertaining comedy. Lyricism and subtle humor are intertwined in it with motifs of social satire. Realistic, lively scenes from the everyday life of the Romans, deeply humane images of ordinary people are opposed by the world of an arrogant and spiritually empty aristocracy, served in the techniques of the grotesque, caricature.

It is curious that numerous offspring of endangered well-born families participated in the filming. Not catching, obviously, the author's satirical intention, the Italian princesses, countesses, baronesses, the ex-consul of Horthy Hungary Esterhazy and many others. ... The satirical scenes are so poignant that one of the European monarchical states protested against the demonstration of the film.

Roman Holiday again confirmed the great skill and talent of William Wyler" (Dobokhotov, 1958).

However, later in the same *Soviet Screen* was published more "ideologically consistent":

"But I still went to see the American film *Roman Holiday* when I found out that this picture was directed by William Wyler and that Audrey Hepburn and Gregory Peck played in it. We remember Audrey Hepburn from *War and Peace*. Of course, her Natasha Rostova is not exactly what we imagine her to be. This is not surprising: it is probably difficult for a foreigner to embody the image of a Russian – in appearance, in character, in fate. But let's be fair to Audrey Hepburn. Let it be controversial, even incomplete, but she solved the problem, perhaps the most difficult for any actor. Gregory Peck has great charm and impeccable... he is a skillful and truthful artist. And finally. William Wyler...

The plot of *Roman Holiday* is fictitious... The eccentric princess terrifies the royal family, parliament and "high society" with her unwillingness to reckon with traditions and etiquette... True, there is one more feature in the film that makes it not only ridiculously old-fashioned but also falsely propagandistic. Wyler not only defends the right to love for his heroine, He also pities the poor representative of the royal family" (Bleiman, 1960: 14-15).

The opinions of 21st-century viewers about *Roman Holiday* are generally very positive:

"Awesome movie. I watched it a few times, and recently watched it again and couldn't put it down until the very end. And it seems to be an easy genre and what an example of the finest study of characters. And with what love Rome is filmed here, as if the directors themselves felt the joy of the heroine, who for the first time managed to live a normal human life" (Habibi).

How To Steal a Million. USA, 1966. Directed by William Wyler. Release in the USSR – from January 6, 1975: 24.6 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Films of the outstanding master of the world screen William Wyler (1902-1981) appeared in the Soviet box office quite rarely and with great delay...

The fascinating romantic comedy *How to Steal a Million* attracts, first of all, with the beautiful and talented duet of Audrey Hepburn and Peter O'Toole.

Audrey Hepburn created a certain type of femininity in the cinema of the 1950s: emphasized elegance and at the same time openness, immediacy.

Peter O'Toole became famous as a theater actor early in his career, he shone in London in the productions of Laurence Olivier himself. Ironic grotesque, eccentricity – a kind of signature style of O'Toole.

In *How to Steal a Million*, his character is a detective whom Audrey Hepburn's character convinces to help her steal a figurine from a Paris museum. She needs this because her father

makes copies of works of art and passes them off as originals, an elegant figurine is one of them. To save her father from exposure and inevitable prison, a loving daughter is ready for anything...

In the year of the release of this comedy in the all-Union distribution (and it took place almost ten years after the American premiere), the Soviet film press responded ambiguously to it, emphasizing in every possible way that much more was expected from the film classic.

Film critic Tatyana Khlopyankina (1937-1993) reminded readers that “the plot associated with fakes and museum thefts is now very common in world cinema, as, indeed, the genre of the ironic detective or detective comedy itself, which Wyler's movie gravitates to. But the hand of the master is visible here too. The film is made in an excellent rhythm, the attention of the audience is won from the very first frames and does not weaken throughout the entire action. The participation of such well-known actors as Audrey Hepburn and Peter O'Toole also adorns this entertaining and cheerful movie” (Khlopyankina, 1975: 22).

And film critic Yan Bereznitsky (1922-2005) emphasized that “there would be no great sin in the secondary nature of the plot scheme and national diversity if Wyler's movie remained Wyler's movie. That is, bring the director to the plot scheme something of your own, personal. The trouble with the movie is not so much in its diversity, but in its facelessness. ... Fortunately, the venerable director apparently feels the inferiority of this "lyricism" reduced to the plot function and does not really insist on it. In all other respects, the excellent air-conditioned air of this first-class stamped picture may well pass for an atmosphere and in no way interfere with the pleasure calculated for two hours and five minutes” (Bereznitsky, 1975: 4-5).

Viewers of the XXI century, as a rule, are still delighted with this film, which has long become a classic of the genre:

“Masterpiece! Filigree work of actors, director, screenwriter and cameraman! Film for all time. Bravo!” (A. Loseva).

“Super! ... You experience the delight of watching the film: everything is elegant and fun! Aerobatics. I would give him the highest category!” (Lysistrata).

“I love, love, love this movie! Actors, game, humor, atmosphere, theme of art, surroundings, music, plot twists and turns attract to the screen: I can watch endlessly!” (A. Seliverov).

Magnificent / Le Magnifique. France–Italy, 1973. Directed by Philippe de Broca. Release in the USSR – from March 3, 1975: 24.6 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Philippe de Broca (1933-2004) all his creative life shot adventure films and comedies, sometimes melodramas. Almost all of them had considerable audience success: *Cartouche*, *Man from Rio*, *The Misadventures of a Chinese in China*, *The Oldest Profession in the World*, *Dear Louise*, *Magnificent*, *Incorrigible*, *Gentle Cop*, *Aphrodite's Surprise*, *African*, *Gypsy*, etc.

In the early 1970s, Jean-Paul Belmondo (1933-2021), along with director Philippe de Broca, wittily poked fun at the superman type of hero in a Bond parody called *Magnificent* (unfortunately, this film was quite heavily cut by Soviet censorship, and became available to the general public in the original only in the Internet era).

Belmondo played two roles here at once: the writer of tabloid detectives Francois Merlin and the fearless agent of the "Bond spill" Bob Saint-Clair. The paradox was that Bob was the literary brainchild of François himself. And that was before Superman, oh, how far. Burdened with countless debts, "creating" his "immortal masterpieces" in a cramped apartment on the outskirts of Paris, poor Francois alternately fought with plumbers and electricians who did not want to fix the work of the bathroom and the electrical network. That with the manic

stubbornness of a breaking typewriter. That with the miserly publisher, for whom the payment of an advance of a hundred francs was tantamount to suicide...

The enemies of Francois appeared on the pages of his novels in the most vile form. *Magnificent Bob* easily – in short breaks between phone calls and countless amorous adventures – dealt with conceivable and inconceivable outrages on Earth... At the same time, mockery at the clichés of spectacular action movies did not prevent Belmondo from feeling organically in the lyrical love line of the loser Francois and the university student (Jacqueline Bisset).

- Superman, in my opinion, is a sad phenomenon, – as if commenting on *Magnificent*, Belmondo himself once said. “Nothing touches him. It is devoid of the shortcomings that give our life an inimitable charm...

At the same time, in my opinion, film critic Yevgeny Nefedov is right, *Magnificent*, “undoubtedly, is not at all limited to a brilliant mockery of the clichés of the glorious movie series and, at the same time, of the entire Superman cinema, introducing shootings, fights, explosions, etc., presented in a hilariously exaggerated form. The authors manage to build a witty interpretation of such waste paper quite in the spirit of psychoanalysis, boldly bringing to light the circumstances of the birth of such "masterpieces", all kinds of "throes of creativity" and "sources of inspiration" of their authors. Although at the same time they themselves are sarcastic about highly intellectual (Freudian or neo-Freudian) attempts to interpret prose, which Kristin is obsessed with” (Nefedov, 2007).

However, in the year the *Magnificent* was released in the all-Union distribution, the Soviet film press reacted ambiguously to it.

For example, film critic Yuri Bogomolov (1937-2023) wrote: “It is easy to see that the picture... begins as a witty parody of certain literary (as well as cinematic) products, ultimately claims to be something more: to parody the very multi-storeyed reality that brought to life the ghost of Bob Saint-Clair . The idea, however, was not entirely successful” (Bogomolov, 1975: 4).

But the journalist and film critic Alexander Asarkan (1930-2004) noted that “cliches developed by Western popular culture are ridiculed in the film directed by Philippe de Broca ingeniously and funny. Even a viewer who is not very familiar with characters like the famous James Bond will certainly appreciate the accuracy of parodic accents” (Asarkan, 1975: 20).

The attitude towards the *Magnificent* of the current audience, as a rule, is very friendly:

“Really, funny and, at the same time, a wise and kind film. One of the few that, due to its originality, is remembered for a lifetime, practically from the first to the last frame, this opinion is shared by many of my friends. I watched this film for the first time as a child, and only many years later, in hindsight, I understood its deep ideas that it is possible and necessary to overcome the gap between escapist fantasies and reality, to gain self-confidence, integrity and harmony of one's personality. And besides this, only in post-perestroika times it became clear that the scenes from the novel created by the hero Belmondo are a direct parody of Bondiana” (Alexey).

“In many ways, this is a parody of Bond, many episodes of the *Magnificent* almost literally repeat some scenes from the James Bond films, but, of course, in a parodic, grotesque form” (Igor).

Enemy Mine. USA, 1985. Directed by Wolfgang Petersen. Release in the USSR – since April 1989: 24.3 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Wolfgang Petersen (1941-2022) after the success of the drama *The Boat* (1981) and *The NeverEnding Story* (1983), he began to work successfully in Hollywood, where he

directed several successful spectacular films (*Enemy Mine*, *In the Line of Fire*, *Air Force One*, etc.).

End of XXI century. Enemies captured the rich regions of the Galaxy, a space war began... This is the plot of this fantastic film, which became one of the last hits of the "late perestroika" Soviet times.

In the year of the release of the film *Enemy Mine* in the all-Union distribution, film critic Valentin Mikhalkovich (1937-2006) wrote in his intricate review as follows: "Worshipping the past is called passeism. The creator of *The NeverEnding Story* and *Enemy Mine* is no doubt a passeist. For him, the history of mankind is truly endless, since it makes its movement in a circle. ... The passeist does not often turn out to be optimistic. Petersen is inherently optimistic because he believes that the past is achievable" (Mikhalkovich, 1989: 28).

Film critic Vsevolod Revich (1929-1997), was simpler in style, but remained clearly dissatisfied with the film *Enemy Mine*: "First of all, this film is 100% secondary. Its visual side is borrowed from the notorious "Star Wars", and the content: from one of the most kind and touching films of the last decade – *E.T.* by S. Spielberg. ... You can judge for yourself the validity of the second statement. Fantasy is good and justified when it is impossible to do without it, when the introduction of fantastic devices gives the model of life such expressive powers that it is impossible to give it by ordinary means. But after all, the same situation played out not between a man and a lizard, but between ordinary people, would look much better and would be experienced much more acutely" (Revich, 1989: 14).

However, the 21st century film critic Vladimir Gordeev is even more severe, believing that "the first three quarters of the film *Enemy Mine* is a sluggish and boring spectacle, diluted with unpretentious German humor... But the last quarter is a solid action, not devoid of drama" (Gordeev, 2007).

Viewers of the 21st century regarding the film *Enemy Mine* are clearly divided in opinions on "for" and "against":

"*Enemy Mine* first of all, a wonderful, wise story, on which this film was shot! Kindness, decency, tolerance, mercy, attention and respect for foreign culture, the desire to understand, finally, all this will always be in demand. Anywhere in the galaxy" (Thea).

"I am skeptical about such a movie. ... From the point of view of the work done and the complexity – cool, from the point of view of the charge that the film carries in itself – the charge is negative. ... I don't like being manipulated and testing me for strength. How can American cinema, constantly exploiting the theme of the apocalypse, intergalactic wars, etc., teach mercy and kindness?" (Broadway).

Golden Symphony / Symphonie in Gold. Austria, 1956. Directed by Franz Antel. Release in the USSR – from August 25, 1958: 24.2 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Franz Antel (1913-2007) liked to make bright entertaining films, and the audience loved to watch them (*My Daughter Lives in Vienna*, *An Ideal Woman in Search*, *Imperial Waltz*, *Golden Symphony*, *The Sweetest Fruits*, *Congress Dance*, *Marriage Sanatorium*, *Espionage*, *Emperor's Ball*, *Love, Girls and Soldiers*, *Sexy Susan's Sweet Sins*, *Sexy Susan Sins Again*, *Why Did I Say Yes Twice?*, *Pleasure House*, *Casanova & Co.*, *Hotel of love in Tyrol*, etc.).

Many films by Franz Antel were clearly not suitable for Soviet distribution, but here is a color musical melodrama featuring The Vienna Ballet Ice Revue called *Golden Symphony* came up and even very well.

Yuri Komyagin wrote, that when the *Golden Symphony* was released on Soviet screens in the late 1950s, it caused “a lot of positive emotions among the public. After all, Soviet viewers were eager to see on the big screen not only revolutionary heroic, pathetically significant, but also something brightly entertaining, in order to get away from the rather harsh Soviet reality into a movie fairy tale for at least an hour and a half. Some former fellow citizens who first saw the *Golden Symphony* in the late 1950s still recall with emotion how fascinated the film was then. At film forums, I saw testimonies of individual moviegoers who plunged into the Austrian magic 10-12 times in a row” (Komyagin, 2018).

Even today, viewers sometimes remember this film:

Concert film with figure skaters. ... The feeling that there was more filmed, but something was cut ... There are many inconsistencies in the plot... It looks, especially the numbers with the skaters are good” (Evgenia).

“I vaguely remember what a sensation he made when he came to the Soviet audience. Which is not surprising: against the background of *Spring on Zarechnaya Street* and other film masterpieces of that time, he looked like a revelation...” (K. Morris).

It's a Mad Mad Mad Mad World. USA, 1963. Directed by Stanley Kramer. Release in the USSR – from March 9, 1966. Re-release in the USSR – 1985: 24.2 million viewers in the first year of the show.

irected by Stanley Kramer (1913-2001) was truly a favorite of the Soviet film distribution. And all this because S. Kramer was officially considered a progressive foreign filmmaker, exposing the vices of bourgeois society and a friend of Soviet filmmakers...

In the adventure comedy *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*, the main characters, by all means, want to find a large amount of money buried somewhere in Rosita Beach...

Released to the all-Union film distribution quite quickly, the film *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* was a resounding success among teenagers and young people who seized on the "American way of life" at least with the help of the screen. However, even an adult audience was not averse to laughing and relaxing on this masterfully made movie, without delving into the "revealing" and "social" motives of this picture by S. Kramer.

Already at the turn of the 21st century, film critic T. Tsarapkina wrote, that the comedy *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*, made on a large staged scale, occupies a special place in Kramer's work, "the director was looking for a grain of comedy not so much in the plot of the comedic character of the performers as in comparing his picture with the classic American comedy of the silent period 1920s. The movie, replete with stunts, farcical and guignol episodes, ridiculed human weaknesses and, most importantly, the passion for enrichment, which deprives people of reason” (Tsarapkina, 2000: 71).

The comedy *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* is remembered by the audience with pleasure today:

“The movie is awesome. At one time, it looked like a comedy revealing greed. Now it is already a wonderful document about the details of American life fifty years ago. And it should be noted that these were the most prosperous years for Americans. Everyone envied them” (Yuri).

“Last night it was shown on TV, I could not resist and watched the film to the end, and this is until three in the morning. Plus he laughed and could not fall asleep for a long time. And I

don't regret it! It is clear that my childhood impressions of multiple viewings of this American comedy influence the attitude towards the film. Of course, then they were brighter, stronger. But even now I got pleasure and a good mood" (Alexander).

"A real classic of American comedy, a fascinating plot, very interesting characters, bright colors. I can imagine what a gift this film was for Soviet viewers who did not even dream of ever getting to the USA from the country "behind the Iron Curtain"! My parents told me that in the 60s they revised it three or four times!" (Anton).

Capricorn One. US–UK, 1977. Directed and written by Peter Hyams. Release in the USSR – from August 15, 1980: 24.2 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Peter Hyams has been making films since the early 1970s. He has such notable action-packed films as *Capricorn One*, *Hannover Street*, *2010: The Year We Make Contact*, etc.

In the course of the plot of *Capricorn One*, American astronauts are preparing for a flight to Mars, but instead of a real flight, they are secretly taken to the desert, where they must simulate their stay on the "red planet" with the help of television cameras...

Already in the 21st century, film critic Denis Gorelov ironically commented on the plot of this fantastic film as follows: "The conspiracy theory of lunar bugs has taken deep roots. In the video from the Moon, the American flag was staked in the complete absence of the atmosphere, Professor Neil Armstrong babbled something incoherent: these and other nebulae gave rise to a boom in suspicions of being fake... Such versions warmed our collective heart. ... The plot, budget, release date *Capricorn One* rhymed with another futurological action movie of those years, *Hangar 18*, about a space shuttle meeting with aliens and an attempt by the federals to hide the ends from the nation along with the crew" (Gorelov, 2019).

True, film critic Alexander Doroshevich complained, that *Capricorn One*, "beginning as an investigation in the spirit of the Watergate case from *All the President's Men*, ends in the spirit of a Bond thriller, which somewhat reduces its overall revealing effect" (Doroshevich, 2000: 191).

Spectators of the 21st century remember *Capricorn One* quite often:

"Looks great ... especially if the first time and do not know that in the end even suddenly a happy ending. Aerial acrobatics performed by helicopters and biplanes are breathtaking. Of particular value is the astronaut clinging to the braces. Perhaps better than the similar film *Hangar 18*". (Egor).

"At one time, the film attracted attention with its entertainment (especially if you watch the widescreen version), and even more with an unusual plot. After this film, you will involuntarily think: were the Americans on the moon? What if this event was concocted in the pavilions by Hollywood craftsmen?" (B. Nezhdanov).

Kidnapping of the Girls / Rapirea fecioarelor. Romania, 1968. Directed by Dinu Koca. Release in the USSR – from August 4, 1969: 24.1 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

The action of this costume adventure film *Kidnapping of the Girls* takes place in the 18th century, when the Turks owned the Romanian lands. But the recalcitrant haiduks tried to resist the invaders...

Dinu Koca clearly specialized in the screen adventures of haiduks. His films were enormously popular with Romanian and Soviet teenagers, who played haiduk for hours after watching their next valiant adventures...

It is curious that today about the *Kidnapping of the Girls*, which brought together over 24 million viewers in the Soviet box office in 1969/1970, few people remember... Alas, the fashion for valiant Romanian haiduks has sunk into oblivion...

Mom's Smile / La sonrisa de mamá. Argentina, 1972. Directed by Enrique Carreras. Release in the USSR – since 1975: 24.0 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Enrique Carreras (1925-1995) was one of the most notable in Argentina, on his account there are quite a few films of various genres popular in Latin America: *Charley's Aunt*, *The Three Musketeers*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *My First Girlfriend*, *Operation San Antonio*, *Argentinean Marriage*, *Mom's Smile*, *I Like This Girl*, *Crazy Women*, etc.

The musical melodrama *Mom's Smile* captivated the Argentinean and Soviet public in the 1970s with a story about the singer Angelica, who one day finds out that she has an incurable disease... And then her children decide to fulfill her cherished desires...

It is interesting that the leading lady in this film, Libertad Lamarque (1908-2000), lived for 92 years, and everything was in her life: a suicide attempt, and the kidnapping of her daughter, and scandals, and 800 recorded songs, more than six dozen films (*Tango*, *White Roses for My Black Sister*, etc.).

Already in the 21st century critic Alexei Vasiliev wrote that *Mom's Smile* is “one of those paintings that formed the circle of plot and aesthetic preferences, and indeed the very sentimental beginning of Pedro Almodovar when he was a teenager” (Vasiliev, 2007).

So, millions of Soviet women shed burning tears over this touching musical story, but today's viewers have almost forgotten what *Mom's Smile* was like...

The Man in the Iron Mask. UK–USA, 1976. Directed by Mike Newell. Release in the USSR – from May 21, 1979: 24.0 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Mike Newell has been making films of various genres (mainly entertainment) since the 1960s. In many cases, he prefers adaptations of well-known literary works. But he also has notable works staged according to original scripts (*A Dance with a Stranger*, *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, etc.).

... 1662. Paris. Louis XIV (Richard Chamberlain) has a twin brother (his role was played by the same Richard Chamberlain), who has been hidden for many years... The story of the "Iron Mask" has been filmed more than once in different countries and still attracts viewers. The Mike Newell version was very warmly received by the Soviet audience in the late 1970s, and this movie still has a lot of fans ...

In the year of the release of *The Man in the Iron Mask* in Soviet distribution, the Soviet press generally reacted quite favorably to him.

For example, film critic Alexander Braginsky (1920-2016) wrote that although *The Man in the Iron Mask* has a bit of irony, it is “full of unexpected plot twists. It has something for the actors to play, and something for the audience to experience for everyone, even for children. These are the laws of this genre” (Braginsky, 1979: 18).

The Stunt Man. USA, 1978. Directed by Richard Rush. Release in the USSR – from July 30, 1982: 23.9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Richard Rush (1929-2021) directed a dozen films of different genres during his career, but it was *The Stunt Man* who brought him the greatest fame.

...A criminal who escaped from prison accidentally ends up on the set and, again, accidentally kills the main stuntman. The director agrees to hide the poor fellow from the police if he replaces the deceased...

The Stunt Man with a brilliantstarring Peter O'Toole at one time, it was widely and with great success among the public in the Soviet box office.

The Soviet film press reacted to the *The Stunt Man* in general positively: it was noted that although this movie “gravitates much more towards commercial cinematography than towards the sharply critical art direction to which Lindsay Anderson's work belongs, rightfully attributed to the English film classics. ... there is another layer in the picture, albeit thin, undeveloped, but still from time to time showing through to the surface, which allows us to speak about the certain involvement of this sometimes too deliberate and crackling "carnival" in the reality of serious life problems, about the well-known sincerity of the authors. It is not for nothing that so much in life seems to them a profanity, a juggling, an attempt to pass off a trifle as significant!” (Filimonov, 1983: 162-163).

Already in the 21st century, film critic Denis Gorelov wrote, that “the film itself extended the series of film illusions, paradoxes and hoaxes encrypted in it. At the left studio, nothing before or after, an unremarkable director shot an unconditional masterpiece of the decade” (Gorelov, 2019: 43).

However, the film critic Georgy Samsonov had a completely different opinion: “*The Stunt Man* is a very personal, hard-won film. Its creator, Richard Rush, spent nine whole years of his life on it: completed in 1978, the picture was released only two years later. Rush did not hide the fact that Eli Cross is his alter ego, and therefore it is not surprising that the image of the director in this film turned out to be so deep and multifaceted” (Samsonov, 1993).

And film critic Yevgeny Nefedov noted that “Peter O'Toole's inspiring performance... captures the very essence of such a mysterious and multifaceted phenomenon as directing. ... However, the main, albeit invisible, albeit incorporeal, character remains the genius of Rush himself, taming the texture, building, starting from the prologue, countless accidents and coincidences in such a way that a suspicion involuntarily creeps in: it could not have done without the intervention of Providence. The illusion on which the cinema is based ... turns out to be more convincing - in any case more attractive – than the true reality. From here, it is only a step to the conclusion in the spirit that the easiest way to change reality is through the control of other people's dreams and unrealizable dreams, fueled by an ongoing cascade of breathtaking tricks. This gives the witty, dynamic, spectacular film a philosophical depth, and most importantly, the echo of a prophecy shouted by the artist, but not heard by many” (Nefedov, 2015).

Viewers of the XXI century, as a rule, highly appreciate *The Stunt Man*:

"Film-legend! Everything is on top: the script, the actors, the music. Has not lost relevance” (Marysya).

“One of the best movies about how movies are made. One of the best roles of Peter O'Toole (that's where the "Oscar" should have been awarded!), and, perhaps, the best roles of Barbara Hershey and Stephen Railsback. Bright, piercing, touching without falsehood. Lively dialogues

and a musical theme that cannot be forgotten... A multi-layered and multi-problem story... An illusion that suddenly penetrated into reality... Human life, made dependent on a movie" (Thea).

Born Free. UK–USA, 1965. Directed by James Hill. Release in the USSR – since December 29, 1969: 23.8 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

James Hill (1919-1994) began his film career in the second half of the 1940s. He was attracted by adventure stories.

African savanna. Kenya. A lioness who came to people as a cub... The film *Born Free* was one of the most popular among the Soviet children and family audience of the late 1960s – early 1970s... To some extent, this film became a kind of compensation for unrealizable trips to exotic countries for the multi-million audience of the USSR.

Viewers today speak very warmly about this touching movie:

“The film is very moving. It makes us look at things familiar to us in a different way. The story of the lioness made me understand that friendship is possible between people and animals” (Tenchik).

“Amazing picture! A very sweet, gentle story. A film about friendship between humans and formidable wild animals. I watched it a long time ago, but I still remember it with trepidation in my soul. ... The final scene touches to tears...” (A. Swan).

“A kind film about animals, very relevant even today, when there are even fewer of them. The environmental theme in the cinema was only gaining momentum then, but then there were already many such films” (Ivan).

Two Men in the City / Deux hommes dans la ville. France–Italy, 1973. Directed by José Giovanni. Release in the USSR – from September / November 1975: 23.7 million viewers for the first year of demonstration.

José Giovanni (1923 - 2004) was a man of a very unusual fate. Critics have long loved to colorfully describe the thorny path to success in art. Especially if this or that artist, writer, singer, actor, director, before finally finding himself, changed several professions that are very far from all sorts of muses.

But even against this background, the biography of the famous French writer, screenwriter and director José Giovanni seems extraordinary.

He was 17 when the Nazis entered Paris. Not having finished school, J. Giovanni became a fighter of the Resistance movement. But shortly after the war – a new sharp turn in fate: having contacted the criminal world, Jose ends up in prison... The “classic” veteran of the fight against Nazism did not leave him, solidly telling the younger generation about the heroic past. But contrary to the logic of circumstances, a terry recidivist did not turn out either.

Sitting in a prison cell, José Giovanni conceived his first, largely autobiographical novel, *The Hole*, which was published when its author was 34 years old.

In the late 1950s, the novel was filmed by the talented director Jacques Becker. So the heroes of J. Giovanni first appeared on the screen.

And their creator worked without a break. One after another, novels were published with strong and courageous characters who above all value strong friendship and a code of honor.

In the first half of the 1960s, based on novels and screenplays by J. Giovanni, films were made by such notable directors as Claude Sauter, Jean-Pierre Melville, Robert Enrico.

The film by R. Enrico *The Adventurers* was perhaps the greatest audience success, largely due to the star duet of Alain Delon and Lino Ventura, who personified strength, perseverance, determination, loyalty, readiness for self-sacrifice, unbridled passion for risk and harsh tenderness...

They say that José Giovanni was dissatisfied with the direction of Robert Enrico in this film, which served as one of the impetuses for another change: in the same year, the writer and

screenwriter directed (based on the same novel!) His first film, *Survivor's Law*. But to A. Delon and L. Ventura, Giovanni, apparently, had no complaints. Feeling his actors, he made with them, perhaps, his best films.

The main thing in the Giovanni-Delon tandem was the painting *Two Men in the City*, where the theme of the impotence of a loner in the fight against the injustice of the state machine merged with a protest against the death penalty. Skillfully using the laws of melodrama, crime drama and thriller, J. Giovanni painfully showed the failure of the attempts of the former prisoner (A. Delon) to free himself from the stigma of "marked".

When the film was released in Soviet Release in the mid-1970s, some critics were quick to reproach him for the sugariness, banality, implausibility of the image of a prison guard (although I believe that this is one of the best and most impressive in its psychologism role of Jean Gabin), who helps the hero with all his might return to normal life-this, they say, does not correspond to the "wolf grin" of the Western world. Alas, even the assessment of this, in fact, melodramatic (in a good sense of the word) picture was influenced not by art criticism, but by ideological, propaganda criteria. The sincere humanism of the film does not seem outdated even today, because the theme of Good and Evil, the atonement of sins, the most terrible of which José Giovanni considered betrayal, is eternal...

Viewers of the XXI century, the film *Two Men in the City*, as a rule, rate very highly:

"The impression and admiration of the duet of Gabin and Delon for life. Can anyone really say after this one film that Delon has no acting talent? Gabin is simply inimitable, an absolute genius. Michel Bouquet played beautifully, I was ready to strangle him. The first film in my life, over which I shed tears in my youth" (Lika).

"The film is wonderful, it started my acquaintance with the art of the great Master Jean Gabin. The plot is reminiscent of an ancient tragedy-inexorable fate, only not by the will of the gods, but due to completely earthly motives" (Fedorchik).

"In the Soviet box office, the film was widely and successfully, but it was unlucky in one thing: it was released in black and white and lost a lot of entertainment because of this. In color, I saw it only on TV in the nineties. The impression is much stronger, besides, there were no cuts. In the full version of the film, I understood that the inspector disliked Gino in the first place because he refused to become an informant (roughly speaking-snitch) for the police. And the defense speech of the lawyer in the new translation sounded different, it was even mentioned that the death penalty exists only in totalitarian countries (in France, during the years of the film's release, there were heated discussions about the abolition of the death penalty)" (B. Nezhdanov).

Golden Tooth / Zlatniyat tooth. Bulgaria, 1962. Directed by Anton Marinovich. Release in the USSR – from July 1, 1963: 23.6 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration. Film distribution in Bulgaria: 3.6 million viewers (the population of Bulgaria at that time was approximately 8 million people).

Anton Marinovich (1907-1976) at first he was a film critic, but since 1945 he became a director and directed a dozen films, among which the spy film *Golden Tooth* was the most popular in the USSR.

Recruited by Western intelligence, Captain Lipowski was sent to People's Bulgaria, where he gradually realizes that he was on the side of Evil...

Here is what the Bulgarian film critic A. Yanakiev wrote about the film *Golden Tooth*: "The main character is portrayed as very attractive to the public, and this is due to the fact that he successfully defeats the "enemies" that threaten state security. The image presented by the actor Georgy Georgiev-Gets is strong, effective, cold-blooded, it has a lot of the

chivalrous charm of Batman. Formally, the end of the *Golden Tooth* is tragic, but it is perceived as a victory and triumph.

The film looks different now. Captain Lipowski captivates with his exceptional and respectable qualities for many reasons. First of all, this is a tsarist officer ... He was obviously trained and trained by good instructors, and we can assume that these were American specialists. Obviously, the agent *Golden Tooth* also possessed personal qualities that allowed him to be an independent and strong-willed person. He, and not the slightly vaudeville Captain Kirchev of the state security, became a moral winner and a truly dramatic hero. In addition to the main plot, the film also shows another plan, which showed the superiority of the life of the bourgeois past of Bulgaria and the modern West. I wonder if anyone from the millions of people at that time could read the contents of the film in a similar way? If so, then no one, of course, did not dare to say it out loud. Ideological censors, who were constantly looking for a hidden meaning, this time did not show due vigilance” (Alexander Yanakiev. Perspectives of Bulgarian cinema (a view from the 21st century) 1960–1970s in Bulgarian cinema. *Bulgarian art of the 20th century*. Moscow, 2015: 170-171).

The Sound of Music. USA, 1965. Directed by Robert Wise. Release in the USSR – from August 2, 1971: 23.5 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Oscar-winning director Robert Wise (1914-2005) is a recognized classic of world cinema, who directed such famous films as *West Side Story* and *The Sound of Music*.

...Salzburg in the 1930s. Seven children, their overly disciplined widower father (Christopher Plummer) and charming teacher Maria, brilliantly performed by the inimitable Julie Andrews... This is the legendary musical *The Sound of Music*!

I agree with film critic Garena Krasnova: the wonderful actress Julie Andrews at the time of *The Sound of Music* was in the prime of her talent, “her rich, expressive voice gave a new sound to the songs of Rodgers and Hammerstein... And the sense of humor inherent in this actress helped to muffle the melodramatic accents inherent in such stories” (Krasnova, 2000: 168).

Although, “of course, one cannot fail to pay tribute to the truly beautiful musical and dance numbers... Yes, and Christopher Plummer... turned out to be quite convincing, remaining in the memory of tens of millions of viewers almost exclusively in the image of Captain von Trapp: a man of high moral principles and iron will, who love helps to overcome the known callousness of the soul. But if the rhythms of the New York West Side conquered with their authenticity, the lively breath of the streets, then this time the background is idyllic views of nature, as if from advertising postcards or wall calendars” (Nefedov, 2014).

***The Sound of Music* has a lot of fans today:**

“Super movie. He exudes so much cheerfulness and carelessness” (Alexander).

“I really like this movie. He is the most musical. A beautiful film about love ”(O).

“This is a wonderful, musical fairy tale. This is a masterpiece designed to develop people's taste in a completely accessible way. Everything there is about do-re-mi, about flats, sharps, out-beats, thirds, fifths and quarts: there would be a desire to hear and learn. There's lovely music, great performance. It's a love story... And for the most part, it's a wonderful, entertaining wonder” (Olena).

Dacians / Dacii / Les Guerriers. Romania-France, 1966. Directed by Sergiu Nicolaescu. Release in the USSR – from June 16, 1969. Re-release in the USSR – from August 17, 1985. In Romania: 13.1 million viewers. In the USSR: 23.5 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Sergiu Nicolaescu (1930-2013) during his career directed three dozen films of various genres, among which were large-scale costume-historical productions. But the greatest love of the Soviet audience for this director was brought by a detective retro series about the fight against crime in post-war Romania, which began with the stylish film *With Clean Hands*.

Roman Empire vs Dacians. Sergiu Nicolaescu's peplum called *Dacians* was one of the most expensive cinematic projects in Romania in the 1960s and enjoyed great success.—both Romanian and Soviet viewers.

The Soviet film press reacted quite favorably to the *Dacians*.

Film critics Inna Solovieva and Vera Shitova (1927-2002) wrote about the film *Dacians*:

“There is a concept of world standards. In science and industry, this is a very respected concept. The film *Dacians* meets the world standards of "big historical film". Supercolossus is not one of the largest, but quite conscientious. In relation to the past events underlying it, perhaps one of the most conscientious: despite the fact that, in general, directors working in this genre, even the most knowledgeable ones, always break through an almost painful need for gag-anachronisms: they are with the same they obsessively squeeze characters with school-famous names onto the screen, as well as violate any chronological plausibility of their appearance (for example, in *Spartacus* out of nowhere: a fat and cynical old man Gaius Gracchus, who in history died a young and stern hero of civil virtues fifty years before Thracian uprisings...).

Sergiu Nicolaescu is polite with facts and names... The film is characterized by a measure of staging scope and modest thoroughness in everything: from historical costumes to following the canons of the genre. No competition with *Cleopatra*, no competition in expenses and brilliance of guest stars, but a clear knowledge that films of this kind cannot be obtained without famous actors (and the Romanians have Marie-Jose Nat) and, most importantly, without accumulation "masses"... The whole picture is done with skill and cleanly. She does not pretend to be anything else, she is what she is. He does not pretend to be a reconstruction of the past, he does not indulge in philosophizing over the origins of the national character, just as he does not indulge in other problems. It's got some great beat scenes, again not competing with the bravura classics of the chariot race and naval battle from *Ben Hur* or another chariot race from *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, but knowing their experience and success. This is how the scene of the ambush and defeat of the Roman cavalry in the gorge was filmed. The special authenticity is very good: the authenticity of the pure work of the stage director and the athletes, a work whose purity is not stained with real animal blood and where the most cruel, closest plan of battle always retains the noble shade of its almost ballet effeminacy. *Dacians* belongs to the cinema of open convention. As such, this picture can be accepted or not accepted” (Solovieva, Shitova, 1967: 116).

Already in the 21st century, film critic Denis Gorelov noted that, “it seems that Nicolaescu did even more for his own than de Gaulle did for the beaten French, although much more. *Dacians* are silent and courageous. They speak in proverbs and do not break their ski caps in front of anyone. They, like Mitki, do not want to defeat anyone, but they win all the time. ... Like the Indian series, it was a movie of an inexpressibly beautiful gesture” (Gorelov, 2019: 155-156).

Opinions about the *Dacians* of the audience of the XXI century differ significantly:

“A masterpiece never gets old. A wonderful movie about life and death” (Viksy).

“A very mediocre movie... False in terms of showing the historical past. There were no freedom-loving Dacians and treacherous Romans, but there were two predators — strong and smart and weak and arrogant (this is about the Dacians)” (Eduard).

Tiger Akbar / Der tiger Akbar. Germany, 1950. Directed by Harry Peel. Release in the USSR – from November 26, 1951: 23.4 million viewers for the first year of demonstration.

Director and actor Harry Peel (1892-1963) began working in films in 1912. With the advent of the Nazis to power in Germany, he began to faithfully serve the regime (from 1933 to 1945 he was a member of the National Socialist German Workers' Party), for which he received six months in prison after the end of World War II. Since 1950, already in Germany, he returned to cinema again.

... The tamer Johnny met the tamer Jutta, and as usual, they fell in love with each other. But Akbar the tiger rebels against their love...

The circus melodrama *Tiger Akbar* became one of the audience hits in the USSR, gathering more than 23 million viewers in 1951/1952 in the first year of the demonstration alone.

Today, *Tiger Akbar* is hardly remembered: neither by the audience, nor by film critics...

Light Behind the Curtains / Feny a redeny mogott. Hungary, 1965. Directed by Laszlo Nadashi. Release in the USSR – since March 13, 1967. 23.3 million viewers (per episode) in its first year of distribution.

Laszlo Nadashi (1927-1983) throughout his creative career, he staged mainly action films (*Big blue sign, Light behind the curtains, Number unknown, Murder of a girl, Round-up, Culprit unknown*, etc.).

In the masterfully staged detective story *The Light Behind the Curtains*, the insidious spy made his way not just anywhere, but right into the Hungarian state security agencies...

Viewers today sometimes recall this spy movie:

"Strong spy detective. Too bad it's black and white and there are a lot of dark scenes. Men are mostly handsome, Magda, in general, is charming..." (Evgenia).

"An admirable film. Excellent musical accompaniment, black-and-white canvas, beautiful acting emphasize the mystery of what is happening on the screen, make the film memorable for centuries" (Serg-39).

Pretty Business / La Belle affaire. France, 1973. Directed by Jacques Besnard. Release in the USSR – from May 27, 1974 (according to other sources – from December 1974): 23.2 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Jacques Besnard (1929-2013) directed mainly entertaining films and serials (*Mr. Septim's Restaurant, Pretty Business, The Beautiful Englishwoman, The Return of Arsène Lupin*, etc.).

In the crime comedy *Pretty Business*, drug traffickers set up a "luggage office" in a cafe, the owners of which are initially unaware of anything...

In the year of the release of this movie in the all-Union distribution film critic and writer Nina Tolchenova wrote: "Being an outright parody of a gangster movie, *Pretty Business* is, unfortunately, perhaps too rife with death and murder, although the picture cannot be denied wit. I am not a fan of such, too "sharp" stories. What I personally like most in this typically French film is the polished, truly masterful play of the actors, who portray an unlucky but very friendly married couple with inimitable humor" (Tolchenova, 1974: 22).

Film critic Valentin Mikhalkovich (1937-2006), analyzing *Pretty Business*, reminded readers: "A lot of plot schemes have already been developed in the detective story. Of these, one could make something like Mendeleev's detective talina. From such an imaginary table, Jacques Besnard, director of *Pretty Business*, chose a well-established, traditional scheme, which was invented in the late 1920s by the American writer Dashiell Hammett in the novel *Red Harvest*. This scheme consists in the fact that one person finds himself between two gangs, provokes skirmishes between them, the skirmishes become more and more decisive and effective, finally there is a final bloodshed in which everyone who has not yet been finished off is mutually destroyed, and the only survivor remains on the battlefield lone hero. Jacques Besnard does not have Hammett's bitter thoughts about the inner, "spiritual" relationship between gangsterism and fascism. The creator of *Pretty Business* seems to be kindly patting his hero on the shoulder: "Well, come on, soak something else!" (Mikhalkovich, 1976).

Some viewers of *Pretty Business* still like it: "A wonderful film in the best French tradition, a wonderful crime comedy that is still competitive today" (Fred 2013).

Escape / La Carapate. France, 1978. Directed by Gérard Oury. Release in the USSR – since September 11, 1989: 23.2 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration (according to other sources: 21.2 million viewers).

Perhaps this is not the best comedy Gérard Oury (1919-2006), but quite inventive and funny, all the more so because the comedian Pierre Richard, who became famous after *The Tall Blonde in a Black Shoe*, played the main role in it.

In the comedy *Escape*, Gérard Oury, in his usual manner, beats a duet of two stars. Pierre Richard, as always in the image of a "tall blond", played the role of an unlucky and absent-minded lawyer in this picture, and Victor Lanoux (1936-2017): a courageous and strong superman. The possibilities of these comedy masks were successfully used a little later by the screenwriter and director Francis Weber in *The Unlucky* (1981), *The Dads* (1983) and *The Runaways* (1986).

Despite the fact that *Escape* was released on Soviet screens already at the end of perestroika, when Western film production was already a fairly frequent guest in the USSR, *Escape*, thanks to the skill of the director and the incredible popularity of Pierre Richard, managed to collect in cinema halls quite rare at that time more than twenty tens of millions of viewers.

Here are the opinions of today's viewers about the *Escape* are very controversial:

"A fun, light film. It was funny to watch the adventures of a lawyer and his client, a thief, taking place during significant historical events in France. I want to watch it again and again" (Barbos)

"Primitive comedy with humor below the baseboard. For some reason, the director made a bet not on the comedic gift of Pierre Richard, but on undressing actresses behaving like ladies from the street. ... Or a chase scene. At first, the police "sits on the tail" of the fleeing protagonists. Then he abruptly disappears somewhere so that the main characters have time to put the prostitute out on the street, who begins to undress "fun" and provokes a big accident of many cars. And then... a piano in the bushes: the police appear. And she, of course, does not catch anyone, but, admiring the prostitute, crashes into other cars. Rave. ... I consider this film far from the best in the career of my beloved Richard" (Alentuva).

Les Misérables / I Miserabili. France-Italy-GDR, 1958. Directed by Jean-Paul Le Chanois. Release in the USSR – from February 8, 1960: 23.1 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Jean-Paul Le Chanois (1909-1985) is the undisputed classic of French cinema, who staged such notable films of different genres as *Address unknown, Dad, mother, maid and me, Dad, mother, my wife and me..., Les Misérables, Frenchwoman and Love*, etc.

Jean Valjean (Jean Gabin) spent a good two decades in hard labor, but under the influence of a priest he decided to embark on the path of Good... its old-fashioned solid charm, and the acting work of Jean Gabin (1904-1976) deserves all praise...

In the year *Les Misérables* was released in all-Union distribution, this film was enthusiastically received on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* magazine (1960. No. 4: 15), but 12 years later a specialist in the field of French cinema – film critic Alexander Braginsky (1920-2016) was more strict, noting that Le Chanois, “trying to make (by his own definition) the true hero of the picture the people of Paris, in love with freedom, the director in a number of episodes achieved an undoubted success. However, the desire to include the maximum number of episodes of the novel in a two-part film led to fragmentation. ... the harmony of the film was broken. It breaks down into a series of scenes, some of which might be missing altogether. Clearly aware of this, the authors introduced the off-screen voice of the "writer", which was intended to connect the various episodes of the picture. However, "Hugo himself" does not save the situation. The inevitable patter was not to the benefit of the film” (Braginsky, 1972).

But many viewers still have a positive attitude towards this film version of *Les Misérables*:

“Forever I remember the episode when Valjean burned his hand with a red-hot poker. It was terrible. From this film, Jean Gabin remained for me Jean Valjean and my favorite actor. ... I look with loving eyes” (Irina).

“The best film adaptation of Hugo's novel, albeit greatly reduced. It is very difficult to film a two-volume epic in 3 hours. But the actors are just perfectly matched... In addition, the film has excellent colorful scenery” (Kudenlak).

The Adventures of Robin Hood. USA, 1938. Directed by: Michael Curtiz, William Keighley. Release in the USSR – from August 16, 1952: 22.9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Michael Curtiz (1888-1962) began his film career in the 1910s. Having directed dozens of spectacular films, he has become a kind of Hollywood legend.

William Keighley (1889-1984) (started filming *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, but then, due to a serious budget overrun, was replaced by Michael Curtiz) is much less famous, but he also directed many notable films.

The Adventures of Robin Hood is a brightly colored costume production starring the legendary Errol Flynn (1909-1959).

Film critic Vladimir Gordeev believes that *Captain Blood's Odyssey* was "a great movie, but *The Adventures of Robin Hood* is even better. It has more tricks, more humor, finally, color appears in it, and the authors use the new features to the fullest: bright costumes, the play of chiaroscuro in the forest twilight, etc. and so on. I've watched a hell of a lot of Robin Hood movies and Curtiz's is definitely the best. It is very energetic, fascinating, with excellent witty dialogues, there is absolutely no heaviness and tediousness in it, which other productions

sin, even such spectacular ones as Ridley Scott's *Robin Hood*. And, of course, Robin Hood, played by Errol Flynn, is the most charming Robin Hood in the history of cinema: a lord who parted with his title and estates without regret and turns into a cheerful forest elf fighting for justice" (Gordeev, 2011).

Film critic Yevgeny Nefedov also highly appreciates this adventure film: "Over time, technical advances... are, of course, harder to assess. Today, it is not so much the variegated color palette that impresses (it's just not surprising that in the future the directors will abandon bright green robes in favor of clothes of less flashy tones), but the splendor of the scenery and, first of all, the skill of swordsmanship... At the same time, *The Adventures of Robin Hood* remain not only an excellent spectacle, but also a curious artistic document. ... Especially indicative, in my opinion, is the final phrase of King Richard, who publicly promises that from now on there will be no repressions, injustice and inequality in the state. And this, by the way, is not the only evidence of the popularity of then in Hollywood – and in general in American society, with difficulty recovering from the consequences of the Great Depression – socialist ideas" (Nefedov, 2015).

***The Adventures of Robin Hood* has a lot of fans now:**

"The film is very good for its time. Raises morale. ... Of course, the film is naive, especially for us living in the 21st century. ... But for the mere fact that the creators returned Robin as an adult, many thanks to them!" (Guy).

"The story is very captivating, told in the classic canons of an adventure film. And it should be noted that the film in color, at a time when the vast majority shot on black and white film, looked simply amazing in its time. And even now it looks great, despite some archaisms" (Oscar).

New Don Juan / Don Juan. France-Spain, 1956. Directed by John Berry. Release in the USSR – from September 13, 1965: 22.9 million viewers in the first year of the show.

John Berry (1917-1999) began his directing career in Hollywood in 1945, but due to the fact that he was a member of the Communist Party, he soon got blacklisted and lost his job. In 1951, J. Berry emigrated to France, where he quite successfully continued his film career. In 1964 he returned to the US, where he directed both films and television series.

In a costume comedy about a servant of *Don Juan*, John Berry made a bet on Fernandel (1903-1971) and did not fail: the picture was a success in Europe.

Today, however, this film is thoroughly forgotten: both by film critics and viewers...

Heavenly Thunder / Le Tonnerre de Dieu. France-Italy-FRG, 1965. Directed by Denis de la Patelière. Release in the USSR – since December 1966: 22.9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Denis de la Patelière (1921-2013) was one of the most successful French masters of commercial cinema. He liked to make (tele)films about Commissioner Maigret, about the Count of Monte Cristo and Marco Polo, and so on. In the USSR, some of his films were well known ...

In the melodrama *Heavenly Thunder*, an elderly doctor (Jean Gabin) brings Simone (Michèle Mercier), a "night moth", to his estate with the noble goal of bringing her back to a respectable life... This is a kind of version of *Pygmalion* that was very popular with Soviet viewers of the second half 1960s...

In the year of the release of Heavenly Thunder in the all-Union distribution, film critic and editor Irina Kokareva (1921-1998) wrote that "Gabin is always a bright

human personality of our days, with her sense of the drama of life and the contradictions of human existence, and yet with her invariable optimism coming from understanding the deep connection with her people”, and in *Heavenly Thunder* he played one of the best their roles” (Kokareva, 1966: 27).

Viewers of *Heavenly Thunder* still like it today:

“The film, indeed, is one of my favorites with Gabin... It seems to me that Gabin simply did not play at all in his old age. He was present on the screen, and that was enough. And this cannot be explained by talent alone. There was still something elusive in him in his old age, which gave such an effect. When I watch a film, I always think: it's a pity that Michèle Mercier has become forever for the audience and producers only Angelica. In this film, she has a successful role, she does not look like a black sheep against the background of eminent actors” (Alexander 42).

“Amazingly subtle, heartfelt, kind black and white cinema! Wonderful melody! Bright, lively, full-blooded images! Jean Gabin is simply unique in this role. And what I like: his hero, despite his kindness and humanity, is not perfect (not cloyingly perfect)... Michèle Mercier is divinely beautiful in this film (however, as always!)” (Ellen).

Phantom of Morrisville Castle / Phantom of Morrisville / Fantom Morrisvillu. Czechoslovakia, 1966. Directed by Bořivoj Zeman. Release in the USSR – from June 19, 1967: 22.9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Bořivoj Zeman (1912-1991) directed a dozen full-length feature films of various genres (*Dead Among the Living, Angel on Vacation, Proud Princess, Once Upon a Time There Was a King, A Very Sad Princess*, etc.), but his most famous work was *Phantom of Morrisville Castle*.

In this brilliant parody of detective stories and mystical films, the action takes place in the mysterious castle of Morrisville, which is haunted by a ghost at night ...

Film critic Denis Gorelov wrote about *Phantom of Morrisville Castle* like this: “The Czech amusement park, which toured for months at the Central Park of Culture and Culture, achieved a similar effect with a labyrinth of horrors: shock, squeal and laughter at the same time. The iconic episode of *The Phantom...* was built on the synthesis of fear and laughter, in which the villain lurking around the corner of the gallery, hearing steps, raised his dagger at the level of his throat and stabbed into the void, because an evil dwarf slithered under his arm on his dwarf deeds. ... Honestly, when the ceiling began to descend on a blonde and a brown-haired woman with a harp in prison, broke the harp, bent to the floor, and only at the last moment the detective pulled them out on the carpet, pinching the hem of the dress, that was an extra-class attraction, a real moon – a park. And a piece of fresh meat on the bald head of a sleeping esquire to lure the tigers. And a giant cleaver-ax from the wall with a slight pressure on the pedal. And a banjo that turned into a disc machine gun. And a banjo that turned into a disc machine gun. And the bald, hooded ghost himself, who looks more like Death from Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* than any *Fantômas*, as the reference books try to assure us” (Gorelov, 2019: 248-249).

Current viewers also favor this stylish parody:

“A fun, stylish, kind movie with great music. A wonderful, subtle parody of all common clichés of classic English detective stories (both literary and cinematic). The cast is great and everyone is clearly enjoying the performance. This is truly: a cure for melancholy and a comedy for all time!” (Thea).

“Revisited *Phantom of Morrisville Castle* with great pleasure! It is interesting that at school this film seemed scary, but now it is perceived exclusively as an adventure comedy with elements of parody...” (Turquoise).

Runaways / Les Fugitifs. France, 1986. Director and screenwriter Francis Weber. Release in the USSR – 1988: 22.9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration (according to other sources - 20.9 million viewers).

Francis Weber is one of the most famous screenwriters and directors of French comedies.

In *Runaways*, a lawyer (Pierre Richard) unwittingly becomes the "accomplice" of a professional bank robber (Gerard Depardieu). Now they are forced to hide from the police together ...

Funny comedy "trilogy" by Francis Weber, which had a huge audience success, is united by the participation of the tandem of Pierre Richard and Gerard Depardieu. Richard and Depardieu, like most of the outstanding French actors, have a great sense of the genre and are able to play this kind of burlesque scenes ad infinitum...

Maybe F. Weber used here a model of characteristic masks, found in *Escape* (1978). But, one way or another, the duo of a rough giant-powerful and helpless stretch of an intellectual came to the viewer's taste. And it doesn't matter much whether the characters are searching for a missing girl, finding out which one of them is the real father of a runaway kid or fleeing from the police after a botched bank robbery. Francis Weber's comedies appeal primarily because of the elegant ease with which the action balances the funny and the sentimental, the gruff eccentricity and the melancholic lyricism. They are films of paradoxical situations and beautiful tempo-rhythm, open human feelings and actor's benefit performances.

Like Pierre Richard, Gerard Depardieu also had his own comedic mask in these films: his character was a huge bumpkin, crushing everything in its path with the power of giant fists. And no matter what the hero did, he, in fact, always remained the same: predictable in actions, reactions, facial expressions and gestures. At the same time, the very personality of Gerard Depardieu is so significant that he, like, say, Jean Gabin or Jean-Paul Belmondo, never bothers the public, although often (as in the case of the comedies of Francis Weber) his screen image remains the same, even if even with new touches, humorous dashes, funny gags...

By the way, Francis Weber confirmed his professional class in America, where he was invited to make a remake of *Runaways*. Martin Short and Nick Nolte did a good job in this comedy. However, in my opinion, without the virtuoso brilliance of Richard-Depardieu.

In the year of the release of *Runaways* in the all-Union distribution, an article published in the *Soviet Screen* noted that "unlike Claude Zidi, whose films mostly have no other task than to make you laugh in any way, Weber is more subtle. And it's not even that his pictures are not devoid of social subtext. The main thing for Weber is an interesting story. And the genre, the choice of actors and everything else is the closest and most acceptable way for him to tell this story. ... In the *Runaways*, as always with Weber, the laughter is built on witty and tense comic situations subtly on the edge of absurdity. In general, this sense of "on the edge" is unusually important for comedy as such. After all, here it is so easy to slip into banality, into blatant psychological gaffe, and simply unfunny. This feeling has never failed Weber up to this point, and it has not failed this time either... The most valuable thing in Weber's pictures and especially in *Runaways* is the organic combination and interaction of three lines: comic, dramatic and lyrical. Weber achieves this thanks to a precise dramaturgical construction and the precise distribution of the actor's tasks. ... The director (who is also a playwright) as if attacking us from three sides, striving to take the audience into a tight ring, to imprison them for the entire hour and a half, and is quite successful in this matter, achieving the main thing: a live, emotional connection with the audience. We love his characters, worry about them, and, of course, we laugh. And this laughter has nothing to do with when something heavy falls on someone's head or when a piece of cake flies at someone" (Stishov, 1989: 26-27).

And film critic Sergei Lavrentiev emphasized that "Francis Weber's comedy the *Runaways*, even in its plot, is not much different from the director's previous films familiar to

our viewers. ... Two comic characters who are complete opposites of each other (played by Depardieu and Richard) find themselves embroiled in an Adventure. Moreover, at the center of speculative and exciting events, there is invariably a child, whose presence brings melodramatic intonations into the film. ... Weber found a truly gold mine. This plot scheme is fraught with endless possibilities for variations. So if in a couple of years we are offered another "melodrama-comedy" created by a tried and tested recipe, we are not surprised and happy to go to theaters" (Lavrentyev, 1989).

Already in the 21st century, film critic Yevgeny Nefedov noted that "Francis Weber is a comedian from God. Having again brought together Pierre Richard and Gerard Depardieu in tandem (and thus continuing the development of the previously discovered gold mine), he nevertheless did not repeat himself banally. He did not follow the example of many colleagues, who over and over again present their favorite duets to the public..., exploiting the usual, once found comic masks. ... The director-screenwriter fundamentally builds a new, original dramaturgical conflict, only vaguely reminiscent of what we saw in previous films" (Nefedov, 2016).

Viewers in the XXI century are very fond of this comedy:

"Very bright and touching film! The last scene is unforgettable! And the music! Miracle!" (N. Barkovskaya).

"One of the best French comedies. Both Richard and Depardieu are simply inimitable" (A. Dyachkov).

Three Men and a Baby in a Cradle / 3 Hommes et un couffin. France, 1985. Director and screenwriter Coline Serreau. Release in the USSR – 1987: 22.9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Director and screenwriter/writer Coline Serreau shot a dozen full-length feature films, but the maximum popularity fell on her comedy *Three Men and a Baby in a Cradle*.

The unexpected success of the *Three Men and a Baby in a Cradle* in France (10.2 million viewers in the first year of its release in cinemas) and Europe surprised Hollywood producers so much that they immediately bought the rights to a remake, and it also became a commercially successful project.

In the year of the release of this funny comedy in Soviet distribution, film critic Valentina Ivanova (1937-2008) tried to figure out the reasons for its success: "Meticulous critics talk about the "enduring values" of being, that simple love stories, and especially, are completely unusual! – about love for children suddenly began to be a success again. For some reason. And yet, it's understandable why. The viewer is probably too tired of the endless massacre on the screen, on the one hand, and of the so-called "experimental film" and "new cinema", on the other hand. In Serreau's movie, there is neither one nor the other, but there is a charm of artlessness, it is what is called "without pretensions." In addition, I think this is a typical French picture: with slight misunderstandings, with a healthy dose of irony in relation to the characters, and to all the events that take place, with a cute ordinary character who are not supermen, not "stars", but just typical average French people" (Ivanova, 1987: 18).

Already in post-Soviet times, S. Kudryavtsev wrote that "French screenwriter and director Coline Serreau created three feminist films before this film, which caused some response because of their controversial topical subject matter. However, no one could have imagined that her touching comedy about male bachelors who are forced to take care of a baby, the daughter of one of them, would not only become the champion of the year, but in general the highest grossing picture of the 1980s in France. ... Such an incredible excitement around a seemingly simple plot, in principle, can be explained by the undoubted craving of the

audience on both sides of the ocean for sentimental paRelease feelings, which many tend not to advertise, but are always ready to feel in the darkness of cinema halls. Light and witty combination of comedy and melodrama in a sub-genre of family comedy works even more fail-safe than in the case of romantic comedies relating only to love stories” (Kudryavtsev, 2006).

Of course, this film still has its fans today, especially among women:

“I’ve liked the American remake since I was a child, but after watching the original, it began to seem dimmer. The French version is filmed much deeper and more truthfully. European cinema seems boring to Americans, they remake them more compactly and at the same time larger scale, to the detriment of the realities of time. If you love classic French comedies, you won’t regret it, this film keeps up the vibe” (Angela)

Love in September / Septemberliebe. GDR, 1960. Directed by Kurt Metzig. Release in the USSR – from February 12, 1962: 22.8 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Kurt Metzig (1911-2012) staged films of different genres, sometimes they were clearly politically biased movies, sometimes spy stories, and sometimes even fantasy.

What can German girls do if they really want to! Here in the film *Love in September* one such girl even saved her fiancé, a chemist, who fell into the clutches of insidious spies ...

Today, the spy melodrama *Love in September* is completely forgotten by viewers and film critics, but in the Soviet film distribution of 1962, almost 23 million viewers watched it. Still, love and espionage is a sure map of mass success!

Well, unless one of the older generation viewers writes like this: “Something is a familiar name, I seem to have seen it once, but I just can’t remember what this film is about...”

Babette goes to war / Babette s'en va-t-en guerre. France, 1959. Directed by Christian-Jacques. Release in the USSR – from August 22, 1962: 22.7 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Director Christian-Jacques (1904-1994) was one of the favorites of the Soviet film distribution, so a whole bunch of his films (*Fanfan Tulip, Babetta Goes to War, Law is Law, Black Tulip*, etc.) in different years successfully went on screens from Moscow to the outskirts.

During the years of the release of the comedy *Babette Goes to War* in the USSR, the *Soviet Screen* magazine published a very critical review, which stated that “Babette is an empty place in the film. I mean the image of the heroine, as it is written by the screenwriters, developed by the director and played by B. Bardo. Having lost the folk basis of the central image, Christian-Jacques seems to have lost the best features of his comedic gift. His lightness begins to border on lightness, ease with carelessness, wit with frivolity, fun with vulgarity. All this is jarring, starting from the very first shots depicting the “glorious flight” from France of the inhabitants of a brothel who did not want to become free prey for the enemy. ... I have a higher opinion of French wit” (Vladimirov B. Babet goes to war. *Soviet screen*. 1960. No. 17).

Viewers' opinions of the 21st century diverge significantly from the conclusions of the Soviet Screen reviewer:

“Charming comedy with the beautiful Bardot. "Papa" Schultz is satirically depicted, and this is one of the film's successes. The hostess of the salon is also good with the phrase "We will not give them up for free" (Alexey).

“A wonderful, very witty film that would do credit to any director. One of Brigitte Bardot's best roles. Elegantly, with humor, as far as possible, the fate of ordinary Frenchmen during the

war is shown. The Nazis are shown as not stupid, just Babette outplays them due to female charm, apparent rusticity and elementary luck. This film shows why women are the best scouts” (Fred).

Adventurers / Les Aventuriers. France-Italy, 1967. Directed by Robert Enrico. Release in the USSR – from June 17, 1968: 22.7 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Directed by Robert Enrico (1931-2001) was one of the most famous French cinematographers of the 20th century.

After graduating from film school, Robert Enrico at the age of thirty was already the author of a good dozen short films. Some of the journalists predicted the difficult fate of the director as an "author for the elite." However, at the age of 35, Enrico abruptly changed course, staging the action-packed films *Tinned Throats* and *Adventurers* according to the scripts by J. Giovanni, and then, already in the 1970s, he shot the poignant drama *The Old Gun...*

In "Adventurers" two friends (Alain Delon and Lino Ventura) fall in love with the same girl and together with her go in search of sunken treasures...

So, Alain Delon and Lino Ventura (1919-1987) in this film by Robert Enrico played courageous sea treasure hunters. Cinematographer Jean Boffeti filmed them against the backdrop of romantic landscapes. And it was not easy for the charming heroine Joan Shimkus to make a choice...

The film was a great success. Largely thanks to the stellar duo Delon-Ventura, who personified strength, perseverance, determination, loyalty, readiness for self-sacrifice, insane passion for risk and harsh tenderness...

It is said that J. Giovanni (1923-2004) was dissatisfied with Enrico's directing, which was the impetus for his own directorial debut.

But to Delon and Ventura, J. Giovanni, apparently, had no complaints. Feeling his actors, he made with them, perhaps, his best films *Last Known Place of Residence* and *Two Men in the City...*

When *Adventurers* was released in the Soviet cinemas in the summer of 1968, Soviet Culture was very critical of them, in spirit of "ideological study" emphasizing that "the film of Enrico and Giovanni is purely entertaining. It has no social problems. It does not even take time, except for the cut of the costumes, the hairstyle of the heroine, the brand of cars. It is only by these signs that it can be established that the action of the picture takes place in our days. True, in one episode, time seems to burst into the film with black-and-white shots, which depict the flight of white colonialists from one of their African countries. But that's just how it seems. This episode is just a plot move that the authors need. Naturally, these shortcomings significantly reduce the artistic merit of the picture" (Soviet Culture, 1968: 4).

Film critic Mikhail Belyavsky (1904-1982) and editor Andrey Ershtrem wrote about the *Adventurers* in the same vein: "It is a pity that the picture was made according to the traditional canons of Western adventure, the so-called commercial cinema. ... And yet there is no doubt that professionally tailored, beautiful to the point that at times it becomes frankly false, the adventure film will attract the attention of many viewers. But will it excite, will it make you think and will it be remembered? We doubt!" (Belyavsky, Ershtrem, 1968: 19).

However, viewers then and now seem to disagree with such film critics:

"Great film, I watched fifteen times as a child, now I have lost count. Excellent acting, a dashing plot and, of course, the incomparable music of Francois de Roubaix... I went to the cinema, having absolutely no idea what it was, sat for an hour and a half with my mouth open and immediately ran to the box office for a ticket for the next session" (S. Manekin) .

“This film is, in my opinion, the brightest example of romantic cinema. I watched it when it first came out on our screens. I was not yet twenty, and at this age, romantic motives are especially acutely perceived. Probably, we all raved in childhood searching for treasures and read the corresponding books. The film shows devilishly charming characters performed by Lino Ventura and Alain Delon. What subtlety in the expression of feelings! True friendship between them, the friendly attitude of both towards the girl, gradually turning into love. Eternal attempts to get out of poverty, to gain independence, which only money can give. ... The film has a strong emotional impact, which is greatly enhanced by beautiful music. I recently looked at it again, the impression is the same as the first time” (Makarov).

So, *Adventurers* still has a lot of fans among the audience today. And the author of this book is one of them...

Hangar 18. USA, 1980. Directed by James L. Conway. Release in the USSR – since March 1982: 22.7 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

James L. Conway always gravitated towards the sci-fi genre. But in the USSR he was known mainly from the *Hangar 18*.

On the eve of the US presidential election, a UFO flew to Earth, and the US military hid 18 in a secret hangar... Why? So, what is next? Such was the plot of the fantastic film *Hangar 18*...

Soviet moviegoers in the early 1980s were still far from overdosing on Hollywood sci-fi action films, so almost 23 million viewers watched *Hangar 18* in the first year of the demonstration alone...

In the year *Hangar 18* was released in all-Union distribution, the Soviet film press, of course, emphasized the political aspect of this film.

So science fiction writer Alexander Gorbovsky (1930-2003), reminded readers of the “space aliens” hypothesis: “It seems natural that this thought, having been refracted in popular science literature, and then in scientific and artistic works, has now come to the screen of feature films. However, it would hardly be fair to say that the American film *Hangar 18* is devoted only to this topic. Although a significant part of the scenes take place inside the alien ship or in space, the main conflict lies in a different plane. Similarly, although there is an inevitable shooting and an equally inevitable chase in the film, the true nerve of the action lies outside of these events. Everything that happens on the screen: a meeting with a different mind, the discovery of the secret of the origin of mankind, the very fate of heroes, scientists and astronauts: all this turns out to be something of a third-rate in the face of another, political reality. For those, who makes decisions, who is at the helm of events, the main thing is completely different: the presidential elections and what effect what is happening can have on their course. Everything is subject to it, and everything is sacrificed to it. Those who have seen the American film *Capricorn One*, cannot but remember him. To remember not only because of such parallel situations as “the state against astronauts”, space scenes or chase scenes, but because of more hidden and deeper political parallels. There is nothing surprising. The same political reality of today's America gives rise to overlapping attempts to interpret it on the screen. The space-adventure plot is the artistic language of this attempt. And in that I in another film, we are talking, in fact, about one thing: about the readiness of politicians in modern America to sacrifice the cosmic future of mankind in order to achieve or retain power. Are they ready to sacrifice only space? What about disarmament, detente? This is not a rhetorical question. And although none of the characters in the film asks it, this question arises in the creation of everyone who watches the film” (Gorbovsky, 1982: 15).

Viewers of the 21st century still remember this film:

"I was still a boy then and we watched it in the cinema several times. And then I rewatched it... After the end of the session, from the grown men sitting somewhere behind me, I heard "...yeah, a very interesting film." And indeed: the shooting was so attractive and natural that it was impossible to take your eyes off the screen even for a second. I am still surprised by the director's fantasy to show an alien ship from the inside. And this is in 1980?! I wonder where he got his information from? And most importantly - no embellishments. ... I put 5 plus! The film is out of competition!" (S. Grinenko).

"In 1982, when I saw him, to say that I was shocked, then just to say nothing. But now I looked it over again: and it seemed to me rather boring and drawn out (whether it's the *Capricorn One* case!). There's nothing to be done, class B" (Slava).

No problems / Pas de problème! France, 1975. Directed by Georges Lautner. Release in the USSR – from June / August 1976: 22.6 million viewers in the first year of the show.

About fifty films – comedies, detectives, thrillers, parodies – for more than seventy years. Such is the balance of one of the highest grossing directors of French cinema – Georges Lautner (1926-2013).

At the age of thirty, Georges Lautner was already well known in the "narrow circles" of Parisian filmmakers, first as an assistant director, and then as the author of several short films. His feature film debut took place in 1958, coinciding with the emergence of the "new wave" of the French screen. It was the comedy *Pimply Baby*.

Having staged several films with the participation of Bernard Blier, Georges Lautner made a commercially very successful series about the "black monocle".

There was a time (at the turn of the 1980s) when five of his films were released at once, which, of course, did not go unnoticed. The audience filled cinema halls to capacity, and film critics (including the author of these lines) unanimously reproached Lautner for the aestheticization of violence and were indignant that death was sometimes served to them as one of the attractions of "black humor"...

Against the background of the current "market" Russian militants, Georges Lautner's semi-parody films *Once upon a time there was a policeman*, *A Cop or a bandit* in terms of professionalism seem almost unattainable heights.

In the crime comedy *No Problem*, a certain wounded man gets into the apartment of the main character (Miu-Miu) and dies in a couple of minutes. What to do? How to get rid of a corpse?

And from the point of view of the black humor of *Pulp Fiction* by Quentin Tarantino, fussing with a corpse in Lautner's film *No Problems* seems, in general, to be a "daddy's movie"... However, Miu-Miu felt at ease in the elements of the black humor of this movie, not without errors of taste parodied the drama Volker Schlöndorff *Murder intentional and unintentional* (1966).

In the year of the release of the film *No Problems* in the all-Union distribution, journalist Anatoly Makarov although noted "black humor" and "guignol" style, took it too seriously, emphasizing the bad morals of bourgeois society (Makarov, 1976: 21).

Viewers of the 21st century, on the contrary, relate to the movie *No Problems* precisely in the spirit of its genre:

"The most beloved French comedy! lovely, light, pleasant, funny. You can watch endlessly, a panacea for a bad mood! And what humor!" (Nina).

"Wonderful, stylistically subtle, life-affirming sparkling "black comedy". ... And now it looks with unfading interest. The French, unlike the Americans, know how to shoot comedies in such a way that they reach the line beyond which vulgarity begins, but never cross this line. Great music by Philippe Sard. The melodic motive turns into a Neapolitan song, then into a

cheerful folk French, then into a classical play. The acting ensemble is remarkable” (A. Grebenkin).

If innocent: Let go / Night Hunt / If He Hollers, Let Him Go! USA, 1968. Directed and written by Charles Martin. Release in the USSR – from July 15, 1971: 22.4 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Charles Martin (1910-1983) was the director of about a dozen films and series of various genres, and has always occupied a rather modest place in American cinema.

In this crime drama escaped black prisoner hopes to prove his innocence...

The Soviet film press reacted very sympathetically to this film, emphasizing political and anti-bourgeois motives.

For example, film critic Mikhail Belyavsky (1904-1982) wrote that this is a progressive “a picture about discrimination, about injustice, about the humiliation of the black population in the most “advanced” country of the capitalist world. ... Such is the cruel truth of American reality, only in life things do not always end so happily, as after many twists and turns it ended in the film” (Belyavsky, 1971: 22).

In the Soviet film distribution in 1971, this drama gathered more than 22 million viewers at the screens, but today it seems to be completely forgotten...

The Adventures of Haiduk Angel / The Outlaws of Captain Angel / Gaiduki Shaptekaya / Haiducii lui Saptecai. Romania, 1970. Directed by Dinu Koca. Release in the USSR – 1972: 22.4 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Dinu Koca clearly specialized in the screen adventures of haiduks. His films were enormously popular with Romanian and Soviet teenagers, who played haiduk for hours after watching their next valiant adventures...

This time, the adventures in the film are connected with the fact that the valiant warrior Angel becomes the new captain of the haiduks ... And he has a lot to do: the villains continually build various intrigues...

Film critic Dmitry Pisarevsky (1912-1990) noted that already many times, “beginning with the famous *Robin Hood* with Douglas Fairbanks in the title role, cinema, referring to the image of a noble robber – the defender of the poor, focused not so much on the hero’s fair struggle, but on his dizzying adventures. This film is set in the same manner. ... All this is saturated with cinematic dynamics, where the main thing is the galloping of horses, the sound of saber cuts, spectacular fights and chases. And for those viewers for whom this will not be enough, there are still songs – excellent songs” (Pisarevsky, 1972).

In the Soviet film distribution of 1972, *The Adventures of Haiduk Angel* gathered more than 22 million viewers (mostly teenagers), but today this film, as they say, is forgotten, abandoned ...

Quiet Apartment / Csendes otthon. Hungary, 1957. Directed by Frigyes Bán. Release in the USSR – since December 29, 1958: 22.3 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Frigyes Bán (1902-1969) since the 1930s has directed over three dozen full-length feature films (*Impenetrable Night, The Last Song, Cadet Love, Somewhere in Russia, Girl of*

the Night, Date by the Sea, Night Music, Hit Me in the Face, Baptism by Fire, Spiral Staircase, St. Peter's Umbrella, Sun on Ice, etc.).

The film *Quiet Apartment*, combining the genres of comedy and melodrama, tells a funny story about how Andras and Eva, as a result of officials' mistake, received warrants for the same apartment...

Alas, few people remember this rather touching film today...

Pretty Mister "R" / Simmaticul domn R. Romania, 1970. Directed by Stefan Roman. Release in the USSR – since June 1971. 22.3 million viewers in the first year of the show.

Stefan Roman (1936-2012) during his career, he directed only six full-length feature films and series, but it was a parody of spy movie *Pretty Mister "R"* brought him success in the Soviet film distribution in 1971.

In *Pretty Mister "R"* a certain professor inadvertently spoke about his scientific discovery, important for military purposes. And now the enemies decide to blow up the professor's laboratory...

The Soviet film press reacted quite warmly to this spy movie.

For example, the film critic Raisa Zuseva wrote that *Pretty Mister "R"* really has all the necessary features and signs of action-packed, adventure films and therefore looks with keen interest and not even without excitement for the fate of the characters: regardless of whether the film was created with a smile or seriously by its authors (Zuseva, 1971: 17).

In the scarce for foreign action films Soviet film distribution in 1971 *Pretty Mister "R"* managed to gather over 22 million viewers at the screens, but today, perhaps, almost no one remembers him...

A Cure for Love / Lekarstwo na miłość. Poland, 1965. Directed by Jan Batory. Release in the USSR – from April 24, 1967: 21.2 million viewers for the first year of the demonstration.

Jan Batory (1921-1981) was one of Poland's highest-grossing directors whose films were successful in Soviet cinemas.

The crime comedy *A Cure for Love* delighted admirers of Joanna Chmielewska's work, especially since good actors played in it. This is a stylish and ironic adaptation, where there is not a single false note.

Kalina Jędrusik (1931-1991) wonderfully played in this film a lady who decided to engage in a dangerous game with criminals... The performance of the entire ensemble of actors (Andrzej Lapicki alone!) deserves all the praise!

Big Maneuvers / Les Grandes manoeuvres. France, Italy, 1955. Directed by René Clair. Release in the USSR – 1969: 20.9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

In the year of the release of the melodrama *Big Maneuvers* in the Soviet film distribution, film critic Vera Shitova (1927-2002) reminded readers that the outstanding French director René Clair (1898-1981) said this about this film: "From my point of view, the theme of love can never be insignificant." And he confirmed these words by making the film so simple. Such. If you like, banal in plot – and so high in art, so serious in

moral outcome. ... This film is noted for its high artistic skill – the subtle veracity of the actors Gerard Philip and Michelle Morgan, the elegant confidence of René Clair directing, the sophistication of color schemes. ... and now the film is notable for its nobility and rare expressiveness of the color scheme. A faithful student of the famous French Impressionist painters, René Clair achieves not only everyday accuracy, but also the semantic fullness of the frame” (Shitova, 1969: 19).

And it should be noted that the skill of René Clair attracts viewers today:

“Great melodrama. With light humor and lyrical spirit, with genuine passion and serious overtones. The game of actors – from leading performers to episodic characters – is beyond praise. A romantic film that can claim the highest marks in its genre: subtlety and elegance, sophistication and nobility: qualities that only films made by true aristocrats from cinema can boast of” (Igrek).

“To be honest, *Big Maneuvers*... seemed to me in many ways similar to *Beauties of the Night*: the previous work of the same director with the same leading actor. In both paintings, all attention is focused around the figure of the central character – in *Beauties of the Night* this is the composer, and in *Big Maneuvers* – the cavalry officer. In both cases, these heroes bathe in hypertrophied adoration of the fairer sex, and most importantly, both heartthrobs are represented by the same face of the outstanding French actor Gerard Philip, who was at the very zenith of his fame in those years. ... In general, as in other works by René Clair, the funny in the *Big Maneuvers* is adjacent to the sad, and the frivolous to the deep. ... *Big Maneuvers* is a musical picture in many respects, containing a lot of sun, good humor, love lyrics, dynamic (in a characteristic French spirit) development of the plot. In my opinion, the film is slightly inferior in variety to *Beauties of the Night*, but it is also very good in its own way: René Clair simply did not know how to make a bad movie” (D. Uzala).

Vabank. Poland, 1981. Director and screenwriter Juliusz Machulski. Release in the USSR – 1984: 18.5 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

Vabank II / Vabank II czyli Riposta. Poland, 1984. Director and screenwriter Juliusz Machulski. Release in the USSR – 1987.

This parody dilogy by one of the highest-grossing Polish directors, Juliusz Machulsky (*Sexmission, Kingsize*, etc.) was a huge success in the Soviet film distribution, gathering tens of millions of fans of ingenious intrigues, witty remarks and an excellent sense of style.

Film critic Denis Gorelov wrote that Machulski masterfully portrayed “to the sound of elegant Poland of oblong cars, oblong mufflers and oblong panenki with low laughter in the Cancer Neck caramel register. Poland of veils and poster stands. A Poland of style – something that generations of urban Poles still keep from storms like a spark in their bosoms. Machulski will then make a cloud of comedies... but in none, even in the sequel, will he reach the level of that finest boutonniere work, which was the first *Vabank*. A movie in which everyone is dressed with the dandy pretensions of a real mafia, but without its plebeian pressure. A cinema in which everywhere – in restaurants, offices, rented apartments – a low light is on, giving the interior a noble matte twilight of advertising photos. A movie in which a gangster, having learned about the death of a comrade, locks himself in the attic and plays the trumpet. ... When ... a killer is stabbed through the curtain with a stiletto and a scarlet ring comes through the white veil of his open mouth, even death becomes a cynical art vignette” (Gorelov, 2019).

However, many film critics, unlike Denis Gorelov, did not consider the second part of *Vabank* to be weaker than the first.

Miron Chernenko (1931-2004) noted that after *Vabank* Juliusz Machulski director made a sequel in such a way that it "not only is not inferior to its predecessor, but in some ways exceeds his: the elegance and careless professionalism of directing (this, apparently, after a year's stay at American studios, where he learned a lot), the ability to build an enchanting adventure spectacle" (Chernenko, 1990).

Analyzing *Wabank II*, film critic Anna Kagarlitskaya drew the attention of readers that "everything in this film is "like in a movie". Prisoners are abducted from prisons with the dexterity of an anecdote. Masterfully and ingeniously stage their own death. They carry out a skillful operation, "making up" pre-war Poland under Nazi Germany, thereby disrupting the international gangster plan. And in general, the alignment of forces is strange: it turns out that there are good swindlers, and there are bad ones, there are noble swindlers, and there are immoral ones. These are the rules of the game proposed by the film: and this film is the game. The principle of paradox, familiar from O'Henry's short stories, triumphs in it, and the flavor of a picaresque novel is preserved, here the nostalgic haze of the 20s turns into a parody of the fashionable retro style. Worried about the fate of the romantic "bear-bear" Quinto and sincerely wishing death to the infamous banker Kramer, the viewer is unlikely to believe in the reality of the existence of just such heroes. Well, of course, all this is not serious, it is a light joke, an elegantly conceived and executed farce. Although blood is blood here, not cranberry juice, and good gains strength in the fight against evil, and friendship strengthens hearts. So this witty story hides a certain moral lesson, where eternal truths are hidden under the mask of a crafty fantasy" (Kagarlitskaya, 1987: 16).

Today's viewers are ready to enjoy *Vabank* again and again:

"Of course I like it! This is where the plot, the atmosphere of the time and the brilliant acting are perfectly combined! Smart, funny, talented. And, characteristically, the continuation is no worse than the beginning. And what music!" (Thea).

"*Vabank* is both a country, and an era, and a genre, and an acting school. And if also the talent of the director and screenwriter" (Leonid).

Appendices

Appendix 1

***Yesenia* and other top-grossing feature films of India, Mexico, Pakistan, Egypt, Iran and Lebanon in the USSR film distribution**

Of course, I could not do without a separate analysis of the highest-grossing foreign film in Soviet film distribution in its entire history – *Yesenia* (Mexico, 1971). Moreover, the Mexican melodrama *Yesenia*, embodying the most characteristic features of similar world productions, has its own pronounced folklore features (typical, however, of most Indian, Mexican, Pakistani and Egyptian films of the melodramatic genre).

Yesenia. Mexico, 1971. Directed by Alfredo B. Crevenna. Released in the USSR – 1975: 91.4 million viewers in the first year of demonstration in cinemas.

Alfredo B. Crevenna (1914-1996) directed 152 (!!!) full-length films during his long career, but only the melodrama *Yesenia*, which was destined to become the highest-grossing film in the USSR film distribution in history, got into Soviet distribution.

With a fantastic figure of 91.4 million viewers in the first year of showing in cinemas, *Yesenia* outstripped not only all the comedies of Leonid Gaidai and Eldar Ryazanov in attendance, but also the achievements of three Soviet film distribution leaders (*Pirates of the 20th Century*, *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* and *Crew*). Not a single foreign film that has been in the Soviet box office (including all Indian melodramas) has also been able to achieve such an impressive result.

Yesenia is the story of a Mexican girl in infancy who ended up in a gypsy camp, and then fell in love with a brave officer...

It is probably safe to say that *Yesenia* weaves together the key plot motifs of dozens of melodramas (mostly Indian, Mexican, Pakistani and Egyptian), which have become record-breakers in Soviet film distribution year after year.

The Soviet film press met *Yesenia* very critically.

At the same time, film critic Yuri Smelkov (1934-1996) tried to understand the reasons for the enormous audience success of this film in his article in *Soviet Screen* magazine: "It's very easy to be ironic... it's very easy to explain that *Yesenia* and others like her are lifeless, artistically primitive and made from ready-made stamps. But the irony seems inappropriate to me, because the tears in the cinema hall were sincere... Lifeless? And if a person wants it to be not like in life, but "like in a movie", so that – beautiful dresses, and love to the grave, and a gypsy wedding? All this has already been said and written a thousand times. This is what keeps me from wanting to climb the enlightening tribune for the thousand and first and explain that the purpose and purpose of art is not to demonstrate beautiful dresses and fatal passions, but in a truthful, accurate, deep study of the world and the person in it... Well, that's all – still couldn't resist! To prove the lack of content and artistic inadequacy of such paintings is not difficult and even pleasant, but that's the trouble, that it can only be proven by someone who himself thinks so. And for someone who sincerely cries over *Yesenia*'s sorrows and just as sincerely rejoices when everything ends well for her, nothing can be proved, since the voice of feeling, as a rule, is stronger than the arguments of reason. Therefore, it makes sense to take out,

so to speak, the conversation about the level and quality of such films and try to look at them from the point of view of box office success and the reasons for it.

At first glance, these reasons are simple and understandable. He loves her, she loves him, there are obstacles on the way to their happiness, but they are successfully overcome – that's the whole movie. Options: obstacles are insurmountable, then tears in the hall flow not in the middle, but at the end of the session. Additions: the second pair of lovers is comedic (as in an operetta, where the main characters are accompanied by a "cascade"), an exotic entourage.

At the same time, one film, containing all these indispensable elements, is a noisy and stormy success, while the other is not exactly a failure, but gathers, say, in Moscow, several hundred thousand spectators, while the first – millions. There are, therefore, some qualities, seasonings to the mandatory set, without which everything depreciates.

It seems to me that there are two such qualities: the absolute seriousness of intonation and the equally absolute isolation, the tightness of the plot conflict, the absence of any correlation with real life. ... no motivations, but a lot of passions. And the viewer's empathy arises, since the film appeals to simple and eternal human emotions, and it is quite clear who to sympathize with and who to resent. The simplicity of the plot and the seriousness of intonation open up scope for emotional perception; they go to such films "to worry" and after the session they say: "Good movie – I cried to my heart's content." The emotional tone of *Yesenia* and similar films is very high - not only critics blazing with righteous anger should take this into account, but also the authors of films that seem to have a thought and quite serious content, but everything is so cool, so sluggish, as if it were not a work of art, which should not only excite minds but also shock hearts, but a lecture on an actual topic...

... Only these emotions are akin to those that we experience on the rides in the park of culture and recreation. After all, it's also scary there when they twist and turn you in three dimensions, it's funny when you see your own face in a crooked mirror, and in general there are as many experiences as you like, you even get tired. The viewer of *Yesenia's* emotions are evoked by approximately the same simple and trouble-free means, and the sad thing is not that these means work flawlessly, but that they are accustomed to be considered the means of art. If you like, the most disappointing thing is just the letters to the editor, because their authors sincerely believe that they have seen a wonderful film, a work of art. And therefore it is possible to reject other works only on the grounds that they are unlike *Yesenia*. That they are not all and it is not immediately clear that the heroes are not divided into positive and negative, into angels and villains.

I am not against melodrama films or entertainment films, I am against them being recognized as the only ones worthy of attention and entitled to the title of works of art. Let there be a movie in which everything is "like in a movie", but it hardly makes sense to fence it off from real cinema, which tells deeply and truthfully about real, unimagined life!" (Smelkov, 1975: 8-9).

In his report to All-Union Conference on Genres, held by the USSR State Cinematography Institute together with the State Film Institute (December 1976), film critic and culturologist Maya Turovskaya (1924-2019), based on an analysis of three film favorites of the mass audience (*Yesenia*, *Bobby* and *Queen of Chantecler*), substantiated the formula for their success: 1) a conflict based on a sharp inequality of lovers (social in *Bobby*, national and social in *Yesenia*, moral in *Queen of Chantecler*); 2) the exoticism of an unusual, gypsy, rich or "beautiful" life, as well as bright distant countries; 3) moments of outbursts of emotions (replacing catharsis).

Six years after *Yesenia* was shown in the USSR, film critic and culturologist Neya Zorkaya (1924-2006) significantly supplemented this "Turovskaya's formula" and gave a detailed and in-depth analysis of the reasons for the mass success of melodramas of this type.

Neya Zorkaya wrote that from the point of view of art criticism, *Yesenia* is "hopeless: a semi-professional, handicraft popular popular print... From the point of view of film criticism, this is what is called "pre-Lumiere cinema". It's like that. And millions of our compatriots

watched this film. Went with families, demanded additional sessions. Advertising? There were no ads. Modest shields and the inscription: *Yesenia*. And they were not disappointed when they found out that it was about a gypsy girl. And through the secret, hitherto unknown to sociologists, or film critics, or Goskino figures, the channels of “word of mouth”, instantly informing the country from the Kola Peninsula to Kushka, his unprecedented advertising spread” (Zorkaya, 1981: 101).

Further N. Zorkaya rightly drew the attention of readers to the fact that the traditional “calls” of mass commercial cinema did not work in *Yesenia*. A modest budget, the complete absence of well-known actors in the USSR, “No spectacular effects (do not count as such the colorful gypsy wagons or the attack of robbers, theatrical mummers in the night forest?). And the knife fight is quite modest. And the most modest breaking of dishes in a restaurant...” (Zorkaya, 1981: 103).

As a result, Neya Zorkaya came to the conclusion that *Yesenia* and similar melodramas have “regular, internally ordered by some “rhythms” or patterns (like constantly repeating combinations of loops in knitting) plots where reality is “adjusted”, aestheticized, has long been brought into line with theatrical vicissitudes – it is these plots that are the most favorite among the viewer. A minimum of novelty with combinations of the well-known, colorfulness and brightness, “experience”... but everything is within moderate limits, intransigent, short-lived and sweet tears, easily drying up with a happy and secretly foreseeing ending, in the most intense dramatic situations throughout the entire plot. The model, the archetype of such perception (reading, looking) is listening to an entertaining story or, earlier, a fairy tale. Listening is naive, selfless, ingenuous, perception is holistic, undivided, not separating “what” from “how”, not controlling and not correcting what is seen, heard, read by one's own life experience. On the contrary, a reminder of his own, the viewer, life in such cases is undesirable. A complete switch to the world of heroes (“another” life) is valued. This world should not be similar to the real one, the surrounding one, on the contrary, should differ from such in juiciness, richness of colors, should be fascinating and very beautiful, but at the same time not too exotic, which is very important for the reader, listener, viewer — some kind of bridges, albeit heavily decorated, are needed between reality and the screen, stage, book. All these requirements are met in the best way by the film *Yesenia* and fully complies with them” (Zorkaya, 1981: 111-112).

***Yesenia* has a lot of fans today:**

“For the first time I saw the film *Yesenia* at the cinema when my husband served in the army. Emotions were running high. I have watched the movie many times and keep it in my library. From this series I really like *Wild Heart*, also a very beautiful film” (Laura).

“For all its naivete and fabulousness of the plot, the film has a kind of magic, forcing it to be reviewed again and again. Beautiful actors, spectacular outfits, music, excellent acting... give rest to the soul” (Rufina).

“I have watched this movie so many times in almost 40 years! ... The film, of course, I adore! I once even had frames cut from film, begged from the projectionist” (333).

“When I first heard the name, it seemed to me that it was connected with the great Russian writer Yesenin. I was told that the film is very interesting, and it's about a gypsy. I went and, of course, did not regret it, on the contrary, there was a sea of positive emotions of delight. I watched the film many times” (Valerochka).

“Yes, there is something to complain about in this film... but I don't want to. The film in its genre promotes eternal human values. Sweet fairy tale. Pushing high-browed (or rather, narrow-minded) “intellectuals” is out of place here” (Leta).

Appendix 2

List of the highest-grossing films of India, Pakistan, Mexico, Egypt, Iran and Lebanon in the film distribution of the USSR *

1. Yesenia / Yesenia. Mexico, 1971. 91.4 million viewers.
2. Tramp. India, 1951. 63.7 million viewers.
3. Bobby. India, 1973. 62.5 million viewers.
4. White dress. Egypt, 1973. 60.1 million viewers.
5. Disco dancer. India, 1982. 60.9 million viewers.
6. Avenger. India, 1976. 60.0 million viewers.
7. Revenge and law. India, 1975. 58.9 million viewers.
8. Sangam. India, 1964. 57.5 million viewers.
9. Zita and Gita. India, 1972. 55.2 million viewers.
10. Motherly love. India, 1966. 52.0 million viewers.
11. Flower in the dust. India, 1959. 49.3 million viewers.
12. Devotion. India, 1969. 47.4 million viewers.
13. Flower and stone. India, 1966. 46.4 million viewers.
14. The son of the prosecutor. India, 1968. 45.5 million viewers.
15. Hamraz. India, 1967. 42.4 million viewers.
16. Love in Kashmir. India, 1965. 40.7 million viewers.
17. Wild Heart / Corazón salvaje. Mexico, 1966. 41.7 million viewers.
18. Beloved Raja. India, 1972. 40.1 million viewers.
19. Four roads. India, 1959. 39.8 million viewers.
20. Mazandaran tiger. Iran, 1968. 39.6 million viewers.
21. Zorro's big adventure. Mexico, 1975. 38.4 million viewers.
22. Poem in stone. India, 1964. 38.1 million viewers.
23. King of the jungle. India, 1976. 37.9 million viewers.
24. Unknown woman. Egypt, 1959. 37.9 million viewers.
25. Sayha. Pakistan, 1968. 37.6 million viewers.
26. Protracted retribution. India, 1973. 37.6 million viewers.
27. Black glasses. Egypt, 1963. 36.3 million viewers.
28. Elephants are my friends. India, 1971. 34.9 million viewers.
29. Love in Simla. India, 1960. 34.4 million viewers.
30. Mister 420. India, 1955. 34.3 million viewers.
31. Stay awake! India, 1956. 33.6 million viewers.
32. Ram and Shyam. India, 1967. 33.4 million viewers.
33. Ganges and Jumna. India, 1961. 32.8 million viewers.
34. Love date. Mexico, 1958. 32.3 million viewers.
35. Love and tears. Egypt, 1955. 32.0 million viewers.
36. Eternal tale of love. India, 1977. 32.0 million viewers.
37. Abdullah. India, 1980. 31.9 million viewers.
38. Stranger. India, 1974. 31.4 million viewers.
39. Long live love! India, 1966. 30.2 million viewers.
40. The Secret of Joao Corral. Mexico, 1959. 30.1 million viewers.
41. Cunning against greed. India, 1972. 30.1 million viewers.
42. According to the law of honor / Trident of the god Shiva. India, 1978. 29.7 million viewers.
43. Don't leave me alone. Egypt, 1975. 29.4 million viewers.
44. Two strangers. India, 1976. 29.3 million viewers.
45. Anupama. India, 1966. 28.4 million viewers.
46. Teens. Egypt, 1960. 28.3 million viewers.
47. Gold earrings. Pakistan, 1960. 28.0 million viewers.
48. Love is life. India, 1976. 27.8 million viewers.
49. She and the devils. Egypt, 1969. 27.5 million viewers.
50. Untouchable. India, 1960. 26.8 million viewers.
51. You are my life. India, 1965. 26.7 million viewers.
52. White roses for my black sister. Mexico, 1970. 26.6 million viewers.
53. Illegitimate son. India, 1978. 26.2 million viewers.
54. Like three musketeers. India, 1984. 26.2 million viewers.

55. Test of love. India, 1975. 26.0 million viewers.
56. Watch out, Zuzu! Egypt, 1972. 25.9 million viewers.
57. Unwilling impostors. India, 1974. 25.9 million viewers.
58. Fight in the valley. Egypt, 1953. 25.8 million viewers.
59. New Delhi. India, 1956. 25.7 million viewers.
60. Lord of fate. India, 1978. 25.2 million viewers.
61. Hurricane. India, 1952. 25.0 million viewers.
62. Forever yours. Egypt, 1963. 24.9 million viewers.
63. If you are not with me. India, 1983. 24.8 million viewers.
64. The road to happiness. India, 1969. 24.6 million viewers.
65. Treasures of an ancient temple. India, 1983. 24.5 million viewers.
66. My name is clown. India, 1970. 24.4 million viewers.
67. Three brothers. India, 1982. 24.2 million viewers.
68. Amrapali. India, 1966. 24.0 million viewers.
69. The beauty of love. Egypt, 1968. 23.9 million viewers.
70. Such a liar. India, 1979. 23.9 million viewers.
71. Mute and love. Lebanon, 1967. 23.8 million viewers.
72. Oaths and promises. India, 1978. 23.8 million viewers.
73. Who and how. India, 1983. 23.8 million viewers.
74. Mushroom man. Mexico, 1975. 23.7 million viewers.
75. Mistakes of youth. Egypt, 1965. 23.6 million viewers.
76. In the name of love. India, 1960. 23.4 million viewers.
77. Samrat. India, 1982. 23.0 million viewers.
78. Mother's love. India, 1952. 22.9 million viewers.
79. The most honest sinner. Egypt, 1973. 22.9 million viewers.
80. Deliverance. India, 1977. 22.9 million viewers.
81. Long night. Iran, 1978. 22.9 million viewers.
82. Bombay in the arms of the night. India, 1968. 22.8 million viewers.
83. Juan Gallo. Mexico, 1961. 22.7 million viewers.
84. Honor my wife. Egypt, 1967. 22.5 million viewers.
85. Golden belt. Mexico, 1975. 21.6 million viewers.
86. Baiju Bawra. India, 1952. 21.4 million viewers.
87. European bride. Iran, 1964. 21.2 million viewers.
88. In captivity of palace intrigues. India, 1978. 21.1 million viewers.
89. Almighty. India, 1982. 20.9 million viewers.
90. Girls should get married. Egypt, 1973. 20.5 million viewers.
91. Life or death. Egypt, 1955. 20.4 million viewers.
92. Imp. Egypt, 1963. 20.2 million viewers.
93. Peach blossom. Mexico, 1970. 20.0 million viewers.
94. Murder in a quiet quarter. Egypt, 1967. 19.8 million viewers.
95. Men look the same. Egypt, 1970. 19.1 million viewers.
96. Unloved, 1949. Mexico. 18.9 million viewers.
97. Dancer. Pakistan, 1972. 18.6 million viewers.
98. Alive again. Egypt, 1958. 18.1 million viewers.
99. Maiden Monastery. Egypt, 1967. 17.9 million viewers.
100. If you are not with me. India, 1983. 16.9 million viewers.
101. Forbidden love. Egypt, 1971. 16.8 million viewers.
102. Travel companion. Iran, 1976. 16.7 million viewers.
103. We want a scandal. Egypt, 1973. 16.5 million viewers.
104. Voice of love. Egypt, 1973. 16.0 million viewers.
105. One of the girls. Egypt, 1968. 16.0 million viewers.
106. Reshma and Shera. India, 1971. 15.6 million viewers.
107. A man in our house. Egypt, 1961. 15.1 million viewers.
108. A victim of deceit. India, 1984. 14.9 million viewers.
109. Price of love. Egypt, 1970. 14.4 million viewers.
110. Thin thread. Egypt, 1971. 14.3 million viewers.
111. Under the cover of night. India, 1956. 13.9 million viewers.
112. Flame of love. Egypt, 1970. 13.7 million viewers.
113. Man of my heart. Egypt, 1966. 13.3 million viewers.
114. Feeling. Pakistan. 13.2 million viewers.
115. Forced bet. Egypt, 1973. 12.9 million viewers.

116. Family talisman. Iran, 1959. 12.8 million viewers.
117. Honestly. Egypt, 1972. 12.4 million viewers.
118. Mirror. Egypt, 1970. 11.5 million viewers.
119. Victim of intrigue. Iran, 1970. 11.4 million viewers.
120. Girls and women. Egypt, 1974. 11.3 million viewers.
121. Sea devils. Egypt, 1972. 11.2 million viewers.
122. Wedding by proxy. Egypt, 1964. 10.8 million viewers.
123. Pure in soul. India, 1960. 10.7 million viewers.
124. Youth in a storm. Egypt, 1971. 10.4 million viewers.
125. A thousand nights on a bed of stone. India, 1963. 9.5 million viewers.
126. Behind the scenes of the circus. Egypt, 1968. 9.4 million viewers.
127. Stronger than fear. Egypt. 7.7 million viewers.
128. Rosalia's letters. Mexico, 1962. 6.4 million viewers.
129. Saint Lucy's pearl. Mexico, 1962. 5.2 million viewers.
130. Paper man. Mexico, 1963. 3.8 million viewers.
131. Janko. Mexico, 1961. 2.7 million viewers.
132. Weaver of miracles. Mexico, 1961. 1.0 million viewers.

Compiled by film historian Alexander Fedorov, 2023

*** Only those films are shown for which it was possible to find data on attendance in millions of viewers.** The data are given on average for one episode of the film (if the film is a multi-episode one).

Sources: lists according to Soviet film distribution data in the quarterly brochures "Information on the number of viewers who watched feature films over 12 months of demonstration according to data on... Moscow: Goskino, Directorate of Cinematography and Film Distribution; lists given in the monograph: Zhabsky, M.I. Sociocultural drama of cinema. Analytical Chronicle 1969-2005 Moscow: Kanon+, Rehabilitation, 2009, statistical data from the RGALI archive; lists compiled by S. Kudryavtsev (kinanet.livejournal.com), site Kinopoisk, etc.

Appendix 3

The highest-grossing foreign westerns in the USSR film distribution *

1. The Magnificent Seven. USA, 1960. Directed by John Sturges. In the USSR - from June 18, 1962: 67.0 million viewers (hereinafter - for the first year of film distribution).
2. Mackenna's Gold. USA, 1968. Directed by J. Lee Thompson. In the USSR - since July 1974: 63.0 million viewers.
3. Winnetu - the son of Inchu-Chun / Last of the Renegades. Germany-Yugoslavia-Italy-France, 1964. Directed by Harald Reinl. In the USSR - from August 25, 1975: 56.0 million viewers.
4. Zorro. Italy-France, 1975. Directed by Duccio Tessari. In the USSR - since October 1976: 55.3 million viewers.
5. A Faithful Hand is a Friend of the Indians / Flaming Frontier. FRG-Yugoslavia, 1965. Directed by Alfred Forer. In the USSR - since August 1968: 46.5 million viewers.
6. Apaches. GDR-Romania-USSR, 1973. Directed by Gottfried Colditz. In the USSR - from September 23, 1974: 40.9 million viewers.
7. Treasure of the Silver Lake / Der Schatz im Silbersee. Germany-Yugoslavia-France, 1962. Directed by Harald Reinl. In the USSR - from June 24, 1974: 39.8 million viewers.
8. Among Kites / Frontier Hellcat. Germany-Yugoslavia-France-Italy, 1964. Directed by Alfred Forer. In the USSR - since September 1980: 38.8 million viewers.
9. Zorro's Big Adventure. Mexico, 1975. Directed by Raul de Anda. In the USSR - from January 24, 1977: 38.4 million viewers.
10. Chingachgook – Big Serpent / Chingachgook, die grosse Schlange. GDR, 1967. Directed by Richard Groschopp. In the USSR - from July 8, 1968: 36.8 million viewers.
11. Osceola. GDR-Yugoslavia-Bulgaria-Cuba, 1971. Directed by Konrad Petzold. In the USSR - since February 1973: 35.3 million viewers.
12. Ulzana. GDR-USSR-Romania, 1974. Directed by Gottfried Colditz. In the USSR - from December 13, 1976: 33.0 million viewers.
13. The Sons of Great Bear. GDR-Yugoslavia, 1965. Directed by Josef Mach. In the USSR - from January 2, 1967: 29.2 million viewers.
14. Blood Brothers. GDR, 1975. Directed by Werner W. Wallroth. In the USSR - from April 18, 1977: 28.7 million viewers.
15. Winnetou is Apache chief / Old Shatterhand. Germany-Yugoslavia-Italy-France, 1964. Directed by Hugo Fregonese. In the USSR - from November 24, 1969: 27.6 million viewers.
16. Golden Bullet / Quién sabe? Italy, 1967. Directed by Damiano Damiani. In the USSR - since September 1968: 26.4 million viewers.
17. Lieutenant Slade's Miscalculation / Potato Fritz. Germany, 1976. Director: Peter Chamonix. In the USSR - from July 3, 1978: 26.0 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.
18. Adventures on the shores of Ontario / The Deerslayer. France-Romania-FRG-Austria, 1969. Directed by Jean Dreville, Pierre Gaspard-Huit, Sergiu Nicolaescu. In the USSR - from June 23, 1972: 25.4 million viewers.
19. Prairie / La Prairie. Romania-France, 1968. Directors: Pierre Gaspard-Huit, Sergiu Nicolaescu. Release in the USSR – 1972: 25.0 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.
20. Trail of the Falcon / Spur des Falken. GDR-USSR, 1968. Directed by Gottfried Colditz. In the USSR - since March 23, 1970: 25.0 million viewers.
21. White Wolves / Weisse Wolfe. GDR-Yugoslavia, 1969. Directed by Konrad Petzold, Bosko Boskovic. In the USSR - since July 1970: 24.8 million viewers.
22. Lemonade Joe / Limonádový Joe aneb Konská opera. Czechoslovakia, 1964. Directed by Oldřich Lipský. In the USSR - since May 1965: 24.4 million viewers.
23. Deadly Mistake / Tödlicher Irrtum. GDR, 1969. Directed by Konrad Petzold. Release in the USSR – 1971: 23.9 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

* The data are given on average for one episode of the film (if the film is a multi-episode one). Sources: lists according to the Soviet film distribution in the monograph: Zhabsky, M.I. Sociocultural drama of cinema. Analytical Chronicle 1969-2005 Moscow: Canon +, Rehabilitation, 2009, Film statistics data of the USSR Goskino, cinematographic data from the RGALI archive; lists compiled by S. Kudryavtsev (kinanet.livejournal.com), site Kinopoisk, etc.

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The main film statistics data are verified according to the following sources:

Information on the number of viewers who watched feature films over 12 months of demonstration according to data on... Moscow: Goskino, Directorate of Cinematography and Film Distribution, 1965-1987: 1965, quarter 1: (since April 1, 1966), 1966, 1968, quarter 2: (since July 1, 1969), 1969, quarter 3: (since Oct. 1, 1970) 1969, quarter 4: (since January 1, 1971), 1970, quarter 2: (since July 1, 1971), 1970, quarter 3: (since 1 oct. 1971), 1970, quarter 4: (since Jan. 1, 1972), 1971, quarter 1: (since Apr. 1, 1972), 1971, quarter 2: (since July 1, 1972), 1971, quarter 3: (since Oct. 1, 1972), 1971, quarter 4: (since Jan. 1, 1973), 1972, quarter 1: (since Apr. 1, 1973), 1972, Q2: (since July 1, 1973), 1972, Q3: (since Oct. 1, 1973), 1972 , quarter 4: (since Jan. 1, 1974), 1973, quarter 1: (since Apr. 1, 1974), 1973, quarter 2: (since July 1, 1974)), 1973, quarter 3: (since Oct. 1, 1974), 1973, quarter 4: (since Jan. 1, 1975), 1974, quarter 1: (since April 1 .1975), 1974, q.2: (since July 1, 1975), 1974, q.3: (since Oct. 1, 1975), 1974, q.4: (since Jan 1, 1976), 1975, Q1: (since Apr 1, 1976), 1975, Q2: (since July 1, 1976), 1975, Q3: (since Oct. 1, 1976), 1975, q.4: (since Jan. 1, 1977), 1976, q.1: (since Apr. 1, 1977), 1976, q. .2: (since July 1, 1977), 1976, Q3: (since Oct. 1, 1977), 1976, Q4: (since Jan. 1, 1978), 1977, q.1: (since Apr. 1, 1978), 1977, q.2: (since July 1, 1978), 1977, q.3: (since Oct. 1, 1978) .), 1978, quarter 2: (since July 1, 1979), 1978, quarter 3: (since Oct. 1, 1979), 1978, quarter 4: (since Jan. 1 1980), 1979, Q.1: (since April 1, 1980), 1979, Q3: (since Oct. 1, 1980), 1979, Q.4: (since since 1 Jan.1981), 1980, q.1: (since July 1, 1981), 1980, q.2: (since Oct. 1, 1981), 1980, q.3: (since Jan. 1, 1982), 1980, quarter 4: (since Apr. 1, 1982), 1981, quarter 1: (since July 1, 1982), 1981, quarter 2: (since Oct. 1, 1982), 1981, q.3: (since Jan. 1, 1983), 1981, q.4: (since Apr. 1, 1983), 1982, q. .1: (since July 1, 1983), 1982, Q2: (since Oct. 1, 1983), 1983, Q1: (since July 1, 1984), 1983 , quarter 2: (since Oct. 1, 1984), 1983, quarter 3: (since Jan. 1, 1985), 1983, quarter 4: (since April 1, 1985 .), 1984, quarter 1: (since July 1, 1985), 1984, quarter 2: (since Oct. 1, 1985), 1984, quarter 3: (since Jan. 1 . 1986), 1984, quarter 4: (since April 1, 1986), 1985, quarter 1: (since July 1, 1986), 1985, quarter 2:(since Oct 1, 1986), 1985, Q3: (since Jan 1, 1986), 1985, Q4: (since Apr 1, 1987), 1986, quarter 1: (since July 1, 1987), 1986, quarter 2: (since Oct. 1, 1987), 1986, quarter 3: (since Jan. 1, 1987) , 1986, quarter 4: (since April 1, 1988), 1987, quarter 1: (since July 1, 1988), 1987, quarter 2: (since Oct. 1, 1988) g.), etc.

RGALI: f.2467, op.1, unit.151. Information about the number of spectators and the rental fee for the paintings, released in 1948-1949, f.2467 op.1 unit.177. Information about the number of spectators and the rental fee for the pictures produced in 1949-1950. f.2329 op.13 units.138. Information on the number of viewers who watched films released in 1960. Information on the number of viewers who watched feature films during 12 months of demonstration... 1965. Moscow: Directorate of Cinema and Film Distribution, 1966. Memo from the Head of the Department of People's Democracy V. Abramov to Khungarfilm No. 3558 dated June 11 about Hungarian films watched in 1961 in the USSR. F. 2918 op. 1 unit 110 p.144).

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