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SERGEI PARAJANOV'S LEGACY: A VITAL COMPONENT OF UKRAINIAN FILM INDUSTRY

Sergei Parajanov, a Ukrainian and Armenian film director, screenwriter, and composer, described himself as an Armenian born in Tbilisi who was imprisoned in Russia for his Ukrainian nationalism. He was born on January 9, 1924 to an Armenian family. Parajanov was a pioneer of Ukrainian poetic cinema and also introduced the genre of collage in Ukrainian fine art through his conceptualism-based works. These pieces were only recognized and exhibited after his death as they were considered underground during his lifetime. He is best known for directing the film *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*, which was based on Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi's novel of the same name.

According to the list of the 100 best films in Ukrainian cinema history, *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* holds the top spot. Additionally, Harvard University has included it as a required viewing for students pursuing advanced degrees in film studies.

Sergei Parajanov's art was shaped by the folklore and memories of his childhood in Tbilisi. Despite spending over five years in prison, the oppressive conditions did not hinder his creative output. Despite facing opposition from Soviet authorities who attempted to impede his filmmaking, he persevered and produced all of his films.

However, whenever he was released from prison or a courtroom, Sergei Parajanov would gather his friends in his home, no matter where that home was: Kyiv, Moscow, or Tbilisi. If he couldn't make a movie, he wrote one, collecting dozens of unrealized scripts. The film was shot in the villages of Verkhovyna district, Ivano-Frankivsk region.

In these picturesque places, Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi actually wrote the

story of the same name. The filming took place on location almost around the clock, and on rare weekends, Parajanov and the crew attended real weddings and even funerals to better study and portray the life of the Hutsuls. Because of this, the director refused to stay in a hotel and settled in the house of ordinary villagers.

«I offended the group by studying churches, going to baptisms and funerals. Everything you see on the screen was real. No one can cry the way Hutsuls cry. It was a year of life lived near the hearth, near the source of inspiration. This is an extraordinary land that needs to be known and studied in all its charm», Sergei Parajanov later shared.

During the film's premiere, Sergei Parajanov told us how much *Shadows...* had to «survive». First of all, the cold: Marichka's wedding to Ivan was filmed in October, but the story takes place in summer. The actors not only wore light clothes, but also got wet in the «rain» – cold water from the sprinklers. The crew also took off their clothes as a sign of solidarity.

We also had a hard time with the shots in the church. We filmed in the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Kryvorivnia. It was so beautifully and richly decorated that the film officials who accepted the film called the scenes religious propaganda. Parajanov was forced to reshoot them in a fake church built at the Dovzhenko Film Studio.

I highly recommend watching this movie as it is the cornerstone of Ukrainian cinema, recognized globally. Even three decades after the artist's passing, we continue to honor their contribution and innovation, striving to promote authentic filmmaking every day.

In conclusion, Sergei Parajanov's artistic legacy continues to inspire and influence Ukrainian cinema and fine arts. Despite facing numerous obstacles, he persevered in creating unique and authentic works of art that reflect the rich cultural heritage of Ukraine and the Caucasus. *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*, his most renowned film, remains a masterpiece of Ukrainian poetic cinema and an important cultural landmark that deserves to be celebrated and remembered.

As we continue to honor Parajanov's contributions, we also strive to promote and support authentic and innovative filmmaking in Ukraine and beyond.

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