



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
COMPETITION
2022 OFFICIAL SELECTION

ALENA
MIKHAILOVA
AND
ODIN LUND
BIRON

TCHAIKOVSKY'S WIFE

A FILM BY
KIRILL SEREBRENNIKOV

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SYNOPSIS

The film tells the story of Pyotr Tchaikovsky's marriage, one of the key points in his biography. His decision to change his life by getting married to put an end to rumors caused a serious mental crisis. When he subsequently made up his mind to separate from his wife, it devastated the young woman and ultimately drove her crazy.



INTERVIEW WITH KIRILL SEREBRENNIKOV

How did you find this story, and what made you want to tell it?

I've been interested in Tchaikovsky for a long time. In my view, he's kind of a UFO: everybody knows of him, but nobody knows anything about him. There's a two-volume book [Tchaikovsky: The Quest For the Inner Man] by Yale professor Alexander Poznansky that made a big impression on me. I'm very grateful to him for writing the book, which is a day-by-day account of Tchaikovsky's life. The book made things clearer and more understandable to me. Then I read Valeri Sokolov's book on Antonina Tchaikovsky [Antonina Tchaikovskaya : Historia zabytoj zhizni]. Both were part of my initial research on Tchaikovsky, which took place quite some time ago. I wrote a first draft of the screenplay that sat in a drawer for a long time, waiting to see the light, and finally the circumstances were right.

What got you interested in Antonina?

There's an interesting way to examine something or someone great that involves looking at the reflection they give off, rather than by looking directly at them. There's a very famous play by Mikhail Bulgakov, "Alexander Pushkin," which is about Pushkin, but Pushkin himself never appears in the play. It's an example of how interesting it is to see what can be said about someone without their presence. That lens offers a lot of possibilities.

What documents did you have access to?

I didn't need to look for other documents, because those books contain everything necessary to understand the two protagonists. Of course I didn't limit myself to those two books — I read everything I could about her, but not much has been preserved other than her memoirs and a few letters. I felt that her life was all the more interesting by dint of the fact that she's often seen as some kind of idiot who couldn't appreciate Tchaikovsky's talent, someone who didn't deserve to be his partner. That made me wonder whether she really was the idiot she's been made out to be. It made me want to dig deeper and learn more. That maybe there was something else going on; maybe she wanted to express her personality in a different way. Because next to such a huge sun, it'd be impossible not to get burned. So I had a lot of questions.

So, between the famous composer and his wife, it is the person in the shadows you're putting the spotlight on.

His life is its own entity, one that would demand more research, and this isn't a film about him. It's a film about her, about a woman. It's more than just a life's story: it's an investigation into her personality, into her nature, into the very essence of this complicated, traumatized life that borders on torture.

Did you take any liberties with the facts of her life?

A few, but they're all very small. I changed her personality a little and had her do certain things that she didn't do in real life. But like any film, you're forced to condense a certain number of events into a given allotment of time. However, what she says about Jews, for instance, comes straight from her letters. Actually, nearly all the lines in the film are true. I wanted my film to hew as closely as possible to the true story — like her relationship with her lawyer, or the ambience within her family, or the children she had, whom she left at an orphanage, where they died.

As viewers, we identify with Antonina, or, at the very least, we feel a lot of empathy for her. Did you intend to make the viewer feel her blindness, her thirst for the absolute, and her insanity?

I wanted to make a psychological thriller, because her relationship to her husband changes quite profoundly. Her fate is a horrible one. As unbelievable as it sounds, she winds up in a terrible, traumatic situation. It almost feels like a genre film at times, but at its heart, it is a film about love. I wanted to make a movie about a different kind of love story.

Can this impossible love be seen as a metaphor for an artist who is so completely devoted to their art that they have no room for another person?

I don't want to answer that question, because I want to let the audience come to their own interpretations. But that is something to think about.

Homosexuality is — almost — never directly alluded to in the film, and yet it's there on screen several times. Is that to point out the hypocrisy of a ruling class with respect to one of its national heroes, or is it meant to show that, even if homosexuality isn't out in the open, it's still there, and quite real?

Yes. Actually, the whole story, deep down, is about hypocrisy. It's about social hypocrisy, first of all, about the impossible freedom of being oneself. But we see everything that happens through her eyes, and all we know about him is what she knows. It was important to me that it be that way.

What has changed in Russia between this era and the present day with respect to the way homosexuality is experienced or lived?

I must say that in that day and age, there was an even greater discrimination than that against homosexuals: discrimination against women. Society was hypocritical on the issue of homosexuality, but it was an issue that was kept quiet. In

certain instances, it was even tolerated, particularly when members of the ruling class were gay, such as the Grand Duke Sergei Romanov, or the poet K.R. [Grand Duke Konstantin Konstantinovich], as long as they were at the top of hierarchy of power. But discrimination against women at that time was terrible. Hence my interest in this violence that is masked by so-called decorum.

It's amazing to see the degree to which you adapt your mise en scène for each subject and each film, but also the way in which your style is always recognizable. Can you tell us a little more about how your staging and direction process, both ahead of shooting and on the set?

A lot of that work is done up front. There's a lot of prep work, especially for the long sequence shots -- I get asked about those a lot. All of that is calculated, constructed, and studied before shooting starts. The technique required by those shots is particularly complex and demands a lot of work. Certain shots require multiple takes, but for some, it's technically impossible to do many takes, so sometimes I've had to be content with just three.



Clearly, your work for cinema, theater, and even opera, engage with each other and nourish one another, but do you distinguish between them? In other words, do you approach them in different ways?

All those works nourish each other, and they all have something in common: me. Furthermore, each of them serves as a kind of time capsule, a reflection of how I am and how I'm living at a particular moment in time. At another moment, the next day, I might be different. I like to think that each of them is like a Polaroid, a snapshot of ourselves and of what we're engaging with. On the other hand, I do prepare differently depending on whether I'm getting ready to make a film, a play, or an opera. That's my Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde side.

Dance and theater are present in the film. As a theater and opera director, were these elements that you wanted to bring to the film?

That whole era is actually quite theatrical: people would get dressed up and go out. They'd put on these costumes that were required by society, they'd put on the masks they were expected to wear, and they'd play the roles society imposed on them. Life was truly a kind of stage production, where people's behavior was like a role. It was a very beautiful era. This is my first time shooting a film that takes place in the 19th century, and I enjoyed it so much that I'd love to do it again several times!

What are the particular visual references that guided your film? The resemblance between certain shots in the film and paintings is striking. In particular, Vermeer, the master of light, comes to mind. How did you manage to create that light? To what extent were you influenced by painting when you imagined these scenes?

That's such a big question that we could have an entire conversation just on that. Clearly, I was very much influenced by painting, and that shows up in the film. At that time, Russia was part of Europe — and this is why I made European painting part of the film.

In this film, as well as in your film *The Student*, religion also plays a big role. The Bible is cited twice at length, but there are also the scenes with the pagan rituals to ward off bad luck that verge on witchcraft.

It was important for me to show that Antonina's "idol" is Tchaikovsky. Once that's established, everything starts to overlap. But the God that's most important to her is him. Hence the fact that this whole religion grows up around him, of which she is the first devotee. It's really quite particular. It was important to me to show that at some point, the religious icon turns into a black square and that the God she had always prayed to and implored to marry her to Tchaikovsky had faded to the point of ceding His place to Tchaikovsky.

Your two lead actors are unknown. Did you know them beforehand, or how did you find them?

For Antonina's character, we had a huge casting call. I saw all the young Russian actresses, because I wanted someone very young, but also someone very professional. We shot the film according to the narrative structure. This was one of those rare projects where the actress has to go through what the heroine goes through, step by step. So we shot the scenes in chronological order in order to bring Aliona Mikhaïlova, the lead actress, into the emotional state her character experiences for each scene. We have a longer version of the film that I hope to release someday, and that has some deleted scenes. Aliona is a rising star in Russian cinema; she's not a theater actress. On the other hand, Odin Biron has always been an actor with the Gogol Center, where I directed for a long time. We've done shows together. I knew he was a great artist, and at some point I realized that he really looked like Tchaikovsky in his thirties. So when we did our first tests, I had no doubt about what he was going to do. Odin is American, but he studied theater in Moscow at the Moscow Art Theater, and then started doing theater work in Russia, because he couldn't find a theater in the US that suited him. So he's been living and acting in Russia for a long time. Actually, he's also in the play I'll be doing in Avignon this summer. He's a consummate artist and he's also a very good

singer. His Russian is flawless, so I didn't need to overdub his dialogue, and the slight accent he has worked perfectly for the time period the film takes place in, because the way people spoke back then was often a bit strange, and so we decided to leave it in.

*Interview done in Russian and translated
into French by Joël Chapron
April 29, 2022*





PRODUCTION NOTES

Alyona Mikhailova (Antonina Tchaikovskaya):

«I was in Mexico when I first heard about this project. A makeup artist I knew asked me to send her my photo. And I'd just cut off my dreadlocks, I was practically bald, thin, tick-bitten. So when she saw my picture, she wrote something like «Sorry, it's a nineteenth-century story.» Of course, missing out on such a cool role made me sad, but then I thought that it was the way it should be. And then, when I had already returned to Russia, I was suddenly invited to audition. They'd already tried everyone there, I was the last one. And a day later I got approved. But at first I didn't understand how to play this part at all. But, as a rule, I always say yes to roles that I am at first really confused about and have no idea of what to do about them or how to tackle them. Because it's boring when everything is clear.»

Odin Lund Biron (Pyotr Tchaikovsky):

«I have been working with Kirill Serebrennikov for almost nine years, participating mainly in his theatrical productions, performances and projects. And suddenly he offered me this role. It was amazing! But it was scary to start, because I had to play a man who really existed, and who is part of Russia's cultural heritage. But I'm not Russian, after all, and I understood that I would have to do something about my accent. And it was also obvious to me that his music was what I should start with.»

Philip Avdeev (Anatoly and Modest Tchaikovsky):

«When Mr. Serebrennikov offered me to play Anatoly and Modest Tchaikovsky, of course, it immediately resonated in me: I was always interested in playing two twin brothers at once and find out how it works in film-making in general. I can't say that I felt some kind of burden of responsibility for having to embody real people on the screen. I rather took it as some kind of a fascinating professional journey. It was very interesting for me to dive into this story, to explore the characters, because on the one hand they are almost identical, but at the same time they are radically different. And, of course, it was fascinating to read their letters to Tchaikovsky, as well as his letters to them. These letters are amazing. They feel very contemporary, they touch on all the problems that we are facing now, they are full of the same emotions and doubts. People don't change at all. They might have been using slightly different vocabulary and a slightly more complicated grammar. But deep inside, everything is the same.»

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Odin Lund Biron (Pyotr Tchaikovsky):

«While getting ready for the role, I was reading Pyotr Ilyich’s personal letters: there is a whole collection of his letters to his brothers and to Antonina. And there is also «Pyotr Tchaikovsky. A Life», a two-volume book by Alexander Poznansky is perhaps the best biography of Pyotr Ilyich. And the little-known book «Antonina Tchaikovskaya: The Story of a Forgotten Life», in which the author described the composer’s wife in detail. I kept all these books at my fingertips throughout my work on the project. And, of course, I listened to Tchaikovsky’s music, I tried to discover his personality in his music. I avoided listening to Tchaikovsky’s greatest works, his operas or ballets, such as Swan Lake or Eugene Onegin... What I listened to was his chamber music and his concerts. And I think it reveals a lot more about the real Pyotr Ilyich, there is something very sincere in this music.»

Alyona Mikhailova (Antonina Tchaikovskaya):

«I read Antonina’s letters to Tchaikovsky, her diary, the notes from the asylum where she had been for the last twenty years of her life. I listened to Tchaikovsky’s music every day, it was the only thing I listened to. I just played his works on my phone, one after another. I also had to learn how to play the piano. So I took classes with Andrei Polyakov at the Gogol Center. Now Andrei and I are friends. The preparation period lasted about six to eight weeks. That was when I

was spending almost all my time at home, I stopped seeing my friends, I shut myself off from the world. This trip to Mexico I’d made before taking on the project had changed my perception of the world and some of my beliefs. When I came back to Moscow, I felt as if I had been «reset». And this hollow that had appeared in me could be filled with something. In this case, what filled it up was the role of Antonina. Some interesting changes were happening to me, and they were fascinating to observe. Whenever I came up to a mirror, I looked into it and was not sure if it was myself I was seeing there. This was something that had never happened to me before.»

Odin Lund Biron (Pyotr Tchaikovsky):

«In terms of appearance, I basically look like Pyotr Ilyich. And my face was a lot of help for the makeup artists, while their work, in turn, helped me to get into character, to feel as if I were Pyotr Ilyich. I had my own beard. I’d never had such a huge beard in my life before. (Laughs.) But I liked it, I even kept it for a while.»

Philip Avdeev (Anatoly and Modest Tchaikovsky):

«Kirill Semenovich and our makeup artist Masha Tutukina showed us the portraits of Anatoly and Modest, and we kept looking for ways to avoid their looking too theatrical or vulgar. They could have made me look more like their portraits, but my face is different, I don’t look like Modest and Anatoly, so the things that we could do would look a little pretentious on my face. So we had to make the makeup look organic on my face, and at the same time to make me look like both brothers, which was an intricate combination, resembling a Rubik’s cube. The costumes were also thoroughly thought out. Anatoly was wearing a more formal suit, and I tried to give him a classic posture to emphasize that he was very conservative. While Modest was a freedom lover, and his costumes were more frivolous, so to say. Another detail: Anatoly had ordinary heavy boots. And I asked the costume designers to make heeled shoes for Modest. This made my gait totally different. The heels were tapped, so I made clicking noises with every step I made. *(Laughs.)*».

Alyona Mikhailova (Antonina Tchaikovskaya):

«All my dresses were incredible works of art. But I felt very uncomfortable in them. The corsets are so tight that they almost don’t let you breathe. And on top of that, it was 30 degrees, we were shooting in a pavilion with kerosene lamps all around, and a lot of people in the room. Sometimes I just started to feel dizzy. So I asked to buy an oxygen tank so that I could use it just in case. We could meet halfway and slightly loosen the corset, which we did it every now and then. Yet still, I wanted to emphasize how fragile, subtle and feminine Antonina had been, so I wanted to live the moments when I had to bear myself accordingly, wasn’t supposed to cross my legs or put my elbows on the table. And in some scenes, this stiffness was even helpful: when I needed to be focused or to get angry, all this discomfort could be aimed at it. But in general, for a person who lives in the XXI century, all those skirts and buttons are a real torture. Although later on, I got the hang of buttoning and unbuttoning them very quickly.»

ABOUT THE ROLE



Alyona Mikhailova (Antonina Tchaikovskaya):

«Most of the film was shot in chronological order, which is extremely rare. Odin and I caught a glimpse of each other on the first shift, and then for ten days I was filming alone, I mean, there were crowd scenes, but Odin was not there. And I used those ten days to hype myself up so much, I fell so in love with the image that I'd come up with for myself that when Odin came to the set, I was radiant. I literally blushed with embarrassment. And this is how I launched the vibe I needed in order to show Antonina's infatuation with Tchaikovsky. I felt it in a very powerful way.»

Philip Avdeev (Anatoly and Modest Tchaikovsky):

«Odin and I have known each other for a long time, we were at theater school together, then I played his grandma in «Save the Orchid» at the Gogol Center, and here I was playing his brothers. And even though we have known each other for many years, but it was at Tchaikovsky's Wife that we made real friends, almost family. We exchanged materials, letters of our characters, and talked a lot. It was so cool to work together.»

Odin Lund Biron (Pyotr Tchaikovsky):

«Alyona was a perfect partner on the set, we got along like a house on fire. We both tried to feel our heroes on a metaphysical level, and we started every day on set whispering to each other, «Hey, are they here? Yes, they seem to be here by our side.» It might sound stupid, but on the other hand, it helps a lot when you and your partner create a special space and summon those ghosts. And the reason for that is great love for them. We both grew to love our characters very much and treated them very tenderly. Kirill Serebrennikov saw that Alyona and I had gotten along, he could feel that some mental tendons were already growing between us, so he gave us the opportunity to hang out and make friends, which is very important. But sometimes Kirill had to remind us that Tchaikovsky and Antonina had never been such good friends, that a lot of things about her infuriated him, and that hearing her voice for him was like listening to bad music. This is the kind of congenial tip Kirill gave me.»

Odin Lund Biron (Pyotr Tchaikovsky):

«I love Philip very much. He is a very sensitive and reverential actor. He played Modest, the brother Pyotr Ilyich had loved dearly, the one who had been the closest to him among all of his siblings. And that's how we were on set, almost like real brothers. To Kirill's credit, he knows how to cast actors so as to forge amazing creative relationships immediately, with the chemistry between the actors emphasizing what is happening on the screen.»

Philip Avdeev (Anatoly and Modest Tchaikovsky):

«I felt Alyona disliked me, because during the filming I didn't hang out with her that much, I preferred to keep my distance. I don't know if she had been aware of it, but she was so deep in her image, in her own world that I didn't want to intrude, I tried to be as detached as possible. And it helped us in our work. And after the shooting, I felt as if we both had exhaled and begun to hang out, and now we are good.»

Alyona Mikhailova (Antonina Tchaikovskaya):

«I remember when Katya Ermishina, who played Antonina's sister, arrived, I immediately had the feeling that she was my sister. I have no idea of how Kirill chose the actors, or of how he arranged everything, but it was amazing that I already feel a sense of kinship to someone I hadn't even had the chance to speak to. And I had a very interesting story with Philip Avdeev. In real life, I think he is a great guy. But then I got into character so much that I felt genuine hatred for him. His characters had also played an important role in the separation of Antonina and Tchaikovsky, and it also somehow turned out to be painful for me. I had never felt anything of the kind for any other person in the movie. It was so surprising to watch it happen to me, I have no idea where it all comes from. It's some kind of magic.»

ABOUT THE PEERS

Alyona Mikhailova (Antonina Tchaikovskaya):

«Working with Kirill was an amazing experience. I guess he didn't even need words to convey what he wanted. Kirill is a real magician or wizard. Not only did he put up such an amazing team and launched this vibe, but he had to keep it at a high level during the entire shooting so that people would not lose interest, so that nothing would fall apart, so that everyone would be engaged in this process. And his attitude is literally contagious, you can't even think of anything else. I've never lived this before, it was new to me. And the most difficult scene for me was probably the one where I had to fall backwards. I'm afraid of heights, although it wasn't so high there, just a couple of flights. But every time they took me upstairs, I was so scared that I was trembling and weeping. The stuntmen kept shouting, «Alyona, don't be afraid, try it, you'll like it.» I tried it twenty times, for there were about as many takes, but I didn't like it.»

Philip Avdeev (Anatoly and Modest Tchaikovsky):

«For me, it was really hard when we ask Tchaikovsky's wife to sign a document with a notary. There were a lot of actors involved, not extras, but real talents: seven men and Alyona. It took us quite a while to rehearse it, we planned the mise en scene, played verbal ping-pong. It was a very emotional scene for everyone. And besides, Modest was smoking a cigar all this time. And at the end of the shift, so much nicotine made me really sick. At some point, everything felt as if it were a dopey hallucination.»

Odin Lund Biron (Pyotr Tchaikovsky):

«We had a lot of memorable scenes. But the wedding scene is the one that springs to my mind immediately. It was a long frame for almost thirty minutes: we entered the church, went through all the rituals, spoke all our lines, and walked around the temple. I was getting ready for this day, because the wedding was a fateful moment in Tchaikovsky's life. And when I found myself in this space, I realized that my level of emotions was just off the scale. It got triggered by the smell of incense, the candles flickering, the priest's voice. And I said to myself: just live this moment, don't restrict yourself. It was truly amazing. I'd never experienced anything of the kind before: it was very beautiful and very powerful.»

Alyona Mikhailova (Antonina Tchaikovskaya):

«There were a lot of long shots. This is also the first time for me. When they told me for the first time that we would combine several scenes into one, I didn't believe it: each scene was more complicated than the previous one. And in the end it turned out that it was an amazing format to play. You absorb so many different emotions that at some point it feels like real life, and you no longer understand whether the heroine is in reality or this is some world in her head. This is a very cool experience!»

ABOUT THE SHOOTING

Philip Avdeev (Anatoly and Modest Tchaikovsky):

«This is my first historical project related to the 19th-century costume and aesthetics in general. And it always seemed to me that it is almost impossible to shoot something really believable, and make sure that the actors could be natural and spontaneous on the set. And this was my first experience of having to destroy it inside yourself, and understand that they were humans, just like we are today. They were real people who also broke the rules, neglected etiquette, caused discomfort to others, got tired of uncomfortable clothes. So I have no more stereotypes of historical cinema anymore. And it was very interesting.»

Alyona Mikhailova (Antonina Tchaikovskaya):

«I am incredibly happy to have had such an experience, because all the previous roles that I'd played had been fictional characters. And I'd never played a real person. But this is a completely different vibe and level of immersion. And when the time came for me to part with the character, I had a feeling as if my soul had become one lifetime older, and my brain had not yet had time to process what had happened. So it took me a while to combine all this in my mind and soul, digest and recycle it.»

Odin Lund Biron (Pyotr Tchaikovsky) :

«It was the first time I was entrusted with a big movie role, where I had to build a character's storyline from the very beginning to the end. This is a complex creative arch. And that's what I want to do in a movie. It was a marvelous experience, a wonderful role. I felt a huge responsibility when telling the story of a great man, realizing that many people in the audience would know more about Tchaikovsky than I do. But it was very interesting to look at Tchaikovsky from the point of view of his wife instead of portraying him as a protagonist. I wanted to tell Antonina's story, because almost no one knows anything about her and about her life, which was very difficult. And, of course, the story of Pyotr Ilyich, who was a much simpler and more interesting person than we all used to think. He wasn't a monument or a bas-relief, he was a living person.»

ABOUT THE IMPORTANT THINGS

«My film about the wife of Tchaikovsky unveils the story of the world famous composer’s private life. For decades, the private and intimate life of the composer was either the subject of rumours, or taboo, intentionally hidden from those who took an interest in his story and background. In Soviet times, all the “wrongful” and “unethical” letters and diaries of the com-poser were held by the authorities and censored. Because of this, Soviet propaganda created the image of the “great Russian composer”, without a single human quality and trait to him. This image of only the “high” and, in the life and music of Tchaikovsky and the complete lack of the “low” still exists in modern Russian society to this day. The rest of the world has a rather limited, scandalous impression of the homosexual composer which, as in any half-truth, is full of rumors, vulgarity and questionable assumptions. The music of Tchaikovsky is, of course, not always necessarily related to his sexuality. But, to understand and appreciate it fully, it is very important to understand the life of Pyotr Ilyich. “Tchaikovsky’s Wife” tells the story of a crucial episode in Pyotr Ilyich’s biography – his marriage to Antonina Ivanovna Milyukova. The decision to get married in order to put an end to the rumors and change his life was eventually the cause of a major internal crisis and depression for Tchaikovsky, and his separation with his wife Antonina practically destroyed her and, ultimately, drove her insane. This story is based on documents, diaries and correspondences, the few that remain. All of this only became possible after the publication of Yale University

professor Alexander Poznansky, who made a significant effort to restore from archives the daily life of Tchaikovsky. The film portrays events in the lives of Tchaikovsky and Milyukova starting in 1877, when the composer was 37 years old and his wife was 28, right up until Pyotr Ilyich’s death in 1893. The film unfolds from the point of view of Antonina, and the audience follows her path to discovering the great Tchaikovsky and his world. As the story takes place in late 19th Century Russia and at the height of the Russian Empire, it is important to note that women had very little freedom and rights. In order to file for divorce, official permission or a court order had to be obtained, and it was no simple task.»

DIRECTOR’S NOTE

Born in Duluth, MN, USA on the shores of Lake Superior, at the age of twenty Odin traveled to Russia to train at the Moscow Art Theater School-Studio (MXAT) for three months and ended up staying in Moscow for fifteen years. Graduated from MXAT with honors in 2009, one of only two Americans and a handful of foreigners to have ever graduated from the traditional (Russian-language) acting program.

Awarded the Golden Leaf for his MXAT performance of Hamlet (three years after beginning his studies of the Russian language), Odin immediately began working at Moscow’s Satyricon Theater as a troupe actor. Two years of work at the Satyricon was followed by a five-year run as beloved intern Phil Richards on Russia’s most popular sitcom «Interns».

In 2013, an unexpected invitation from renowned director Kirill Serebrennikov («The Student», «Leto», «Petrov’s Flu») to play the lead role of Pavel Ivanovich Chichikov in his staging of Nikolai Gogol’s «Dead Souls» lead to eight prolific years as a troupe actor at Russia’s acclaimed avant-garde theater, Gogol Center, brought about more than fifteen premieres, two Golden Mask nominations for best actor and participation in multiple international festivals, including two residencies at Festival d’Avignon («Dead Souls» 2016, «Outside» 2019).

In July 2022 Serebrennikov’s «The Black Monk» (Thalia Theater, Hamburg) will open the 2022 Festival d’Avignon’s official program at the Palais de Papes. On May 18th, 2022 Odin will debut in his first lead role in a feature film at the 2022 Festival de Cannes in Serebrennikov’s film «Tchaikovsky’s Wife».

In March of 2022 Odin left Moscow permanently due to Russia’s aggression in Ukraine. Berlin-based since 2022.



FILMOGRAPHY

- 2022 · Tchaikovsky’s Wife
- 2019 · Hamlet
- 2018 · VMayakovsky
- 2017 · The Age of Pioneers
- 2017 · Matilda
- 2017 · Demon of the Revolution

Odin LUND BIRON – TCHAIKOVSKY

FILMOGRAPHY

- Tchaikovsky’ Wife · 2022
- Dorm (film) · 2021
- Secret of family life · 2021
- Officially beautiful · 2021
- Chicks · 2020
- Love them all · 2019

Alyona MIKHAILOVA – ANTONINA

Born on October 11, 1995 in Perm. As a child, Alyona Mikhailova actively engaged in sports — gymnastics, rowing, athletics, football, basketball, but had to give up her sports career due to injury. When there was no choice left, after graduating from school, Alyona decided to enroll in the Perm State Institute of Culture in the specialty «theater and cinema actress» (Tatiana Zharkova’s workshop). After successfully graduating from the institute, she moved to Moscow, where her film career began.

Born in 1969. Graduated from Rostov University. Started working as a stage director at the Rostov-on-Don theatres in 1994.

Has worked in Moscow since 2000. His debut was a production of «Plasticine», a play by Sigarev, on the stage of the Center of Dramaturgy and Directing.

Author of numerous productions at the Moscow Arts Theatre named after Chekhov, Pushkin Theatre, Sovremennik theatre, Theatre of Oleg Tabakov, National theatre of Latvia, Deutsches Theater Berlin, Thalia Theater in Hamburg.

He has staged operas at the Saint-Petersburg Mariinski theatre, Bolshoi theatre in Moscow, Berlin Komische Oper, Stuttgart opera, Zurich Opera House, Staatsoper Hamburg, Wiener Staatsoper, Bayerische Staatsoper.

He has also staged ballets at the Bolshoi theatre in Moscow and took on the role of director, designer and author of libretto: «A Hero of Our Time» (2015), «Nureyev» (2018).

He has had a vast experience with film and television. Among his works are «Playing the Victim», «Bed scenes», «Yuriyev day», «Short circuit» (or «Shrimp's kiss»), «Betrayal», «The student», «Leto», «After “Leto”» («After Summer»), «Petrov's Flu».

Has been one of the artistic directors of the festival-school Territory since 2006.

FILMOGRAPHY

2022 · Tchaikovsky's Wife
2021 · Petrov's Flu
2018 · Leto
2016 · The Student
2012 · Adultery
2009 · Short Circuit (or Shrimp's Kiss)
2008 · Yuri's Day
2006 · Playing the Victim
2003 · Bed Scenes

Kirill SEREBRENNIKOV – **DIRECTOR**



Founder and artistic director of the project «Platform» (2011-2014).

In 2012 graduated Serebrennikov's directing and acting class of the Moscow Arts School which became the foundation of the Seventh Studio.

Founder and Artistic Director of Gogol center (2012-2021).

Laureate to the Stanislavsky award (2005), Golden Mask award, Crystal Turandot, Tefi (2005), Benois de la Danse (for the ballet «Nureyev», 2018) main prize of the Rome festival (for the film «Playing the Victim», 2006) , award winner at the Locarno festival (for the film «Yuriyev day» 2008), Kinotavr, participant of the Venice Film Festival, Cannes film festival, The Europe Prize New Theatrical Realities, and many others.

In august 2018 Kirill Serebrennikov became the commander of the French Order of Arts and Letters.

TECHNICAL SHEET

DIRECTOR **KIRILL SEREBRENNIKOV**
WRITTEN BY **KIRILL SEREBRENNIKOV**
DOP **VLADISLAV OPELYANTS, R.G.C.**
PRODUCERS **ILYA STEWART, KIRILL SEREBRENNIKOV,**
MURAD OSMANN, PAVEL BURYA
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS **MIKE GOODRIDGE, ELIZAVETA CHALENKO**
COPRODUCERS **ILYA DZHINCHARADZE, CAROLE BARATON,**
PIERRE MAZARS, YOHANN COMTE, CELINE DORNIER,
FREDERIC FIORE, OLIVIER PÈRE, RÉMI BURAH, DAN
WECHSLER, JAMAL ZEINAL-ZADE, ANDREAS ROALD
PRODUCTION DESIGNER **VLADISLAV OGAY**
COSTUME DIRECTOR **DMITRIY ANDREEV**
MAKE-UP ARTIST **MARIA TUTUKINA**
SOUND DESIGNER **BORIS VOYT**
PRODUCTION **HYPE FILM (RUSSIA), KINOPRIME (RUSSIA),**
CHARADES PRODUCTIONS (FRANCE), LOGICAL PICTURES (FRANCE),
BORD CADRE (SWITZERLAND), ARTE FRANCE CINEMA (FRANCE)

CAST LIST

ANTONINA **ALYONA MIKHAILOVA**
TCHAIKOVSKY **ODIN LUND BIRON**
MODEST, TCHAIKOVSKY'S BROTHER **PHILIPP AYDEEV**
ANATOL, TCHAIKOVSKY'S BROTHER **PHILIPP AYDEEV**
LIZA, ANTONINA'S SISTER **EKATERINA ERMISHINA**
OLGA NIKANOROVNA, ANTONINA'S MOTHER **NATALIA PAYLENKOVA**
KOTEK, TCHAIKOVSKY'S STUDENT **NIKITA ELENEV**
BRANDUKOV, TCHAIKOVSKY'S STUDENT **ALEKSANDR GORCHILIN**
SASHA, TCHAIKOVSKY'S SISTER **VARYARA SHMYKOVA**
SHLYKOV, ANTONINA'S ATTORNEY **VLADIMIR MISHUKOV**
YURGENSON, TCHAIKOVSKY'S PUBLISHER **VIKTOR KHORINYAK**
RUBINSSTEIN, MUSICIAN **OXXXYMIRON**
MESCHERSKIY, PRINCE **ANDREY BURKOVSKIY**
ALYOSHA, TCHAIKOVSKY'S SERVANT **NIKITA PIROZHKOV**
BOCHECHKAROV, TCHAIKOVSKY'S MATE **GURGEN TSATURYAN**
KHOVOSTOVA, HOSTESS **NATALIA POLENOVA**
ALEXANDER, ANTONINA'S BROTHER **NIKITA LEBEDEV**
ANASTASIA, ALEXANDER'S WIFE **SOFIA REZNIK**
HOLY FOOL IN THE CHURCH PORCH **JULIA AUG**
COOK **IRINA RUDNITSKAYA**
UNDERTAKER **PETER AIDU**

TCHAIKOVSKY'S WIFE

A FILM BY
KIRILL SEREBRENNIKOV

