



FILM: **DREAMS**

FDG RATING: 3.3 ☺☺☺○○

Film Discussion Group (FDG) Scale is 1-5 (5 is best)

Karen Shakhnazarov/Alexander Borodyansky: *directors/writers*

Oleg Basilashvili: *actor, Count Prizorov*

Amaliya Mordvinova: *actress, Countess Masha*

DATE: November 17, 2024

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **DREAMS**

The 1993 Russian film, *Dreams*, is a critical satirical look at post Soviet Russia as seen through the dreams of 19th century young countess, Masha. Each night in deep sleep she sees herself as a lowly dish washer in a dirty Moscow eatery in 1993. She is repeatedly chased by a randy co-worker at the eatery (the man looks exactly like the accountant for the Count/Countess). Masha Stepanova has a pensioner husband, who takes nude photos of her and then sells these photos which leads to the president of Russia asking Masha to seduce Western money men into making high-risk loans to Russia. He appoints her minister of the economy. Other outrageous scenarios include a stint as a backup singer for a cheesy rock act; and competing topless in a “Best Bust” variety spectacular.

In Masha's dream state, the country is in economic and moral decay. Masha's husband, Count Prizorov, (a high-ranking Tsarist official), naturally is skeptical and alarmed about her vision of the future but after being able to enter her dream, he becomes terrified about the nation's future depraved state, poverty, rampant crime, lack of spirituality, and warns the Tsar and cabinet, proposing shocking preventive socialist actions which they vehemently reject.

The ending is ambivalent, offering the possibility that Masha is really the dishwasher and her life as a Countess is a dream.

One discussion participant observed that it is a comparison of two historical periods in Russia and noted that although such extreme characters are a little cartoonish, the film is an excellent parody and captured reality. It was fun to see the same characters in very different roles in the two time periods.

The visuals were luscious as were the costumes was another comment. Almost all of us enjoyed the film, appreciated the uniqueness of the story and the way it was told.

A favorite scene is when the Countess, inspired by the sexual proclivity in her dreams, creates a scandal by dressing in a mini-skirt for a royal ball.

Entertaining, colorful, fun, and meaningful, *Dreams* invoked a score of 3.3 on our scale of 1 to 5. (5 is the best.)



See you at the movies!

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