



*Presents*

**Russia's Official Submission for Best Foreign Film  
89<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards – Shortlisted**

# PARADISE

*(RAY)*

A film by Andrei Konchalovsky

*"A somber and ambitious tale of love and loss set during Europe's most hellish mid-century days."- Neil Young, **The Hollywood Reporter***



**Russia, Germany / 2016 / Drama / Russian, German, French and Yiddish with English Subtitles  
132 min / 2.40: 1 / 5.1 and 2.0**

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Assets:

Official US Trailer: TBD

Downloadable hi-res images:

<http://www.filmmovement.com/filmcatalog/index.asp?MerchandiseID=561>

## **SYNOPSIS**

PARADISE tells the compelling story of three individuals, Olga, Jules and Helmut, whose paths cross amidst the devastation of war. Olga, a Russian aristocratic immigrant and member of the French Resistance, is arrested by Nazi police for hiding Jewish children during a surprise raid. As her punishment, she is sent to jail where she meets Jules, a French-Nazi collaborator who is assigned to investigate her case. Jules grows fond of Olga and offers to go light on her punishment in exchange for sexual favors. Although Olga agrees, and will do whatever it takes to avoid harsh persecution, her hope for freedom quickly fades when events take an unexpected turn. Shipped to a concentration camp, Olga is forced into a life of hell. To her surprise, she crosses paths with high-ranking German SS officer Helmut, who once fell madly in love with her and still harbors feelings. They re-kindle their old flame and embark on a twisted and destructive relationship. Helmut resolves to rescue Olga and offers her an escape that she no longer thought possible. Yet as time passes, and the Nazi defeat looms, Olga's notion of PARADISE is irrevocably changed.

## **SHORT SYNOPSIS**

PARADISE tells the story of three individuals and the fateful decisions they make, forced by a totality of conviction. Olga (Julia Vysotskaya) is a beautiful Russian aristocratic émigré and member of the French Resistance; Jules (Philippe Duquesne) is a French-Nazi collaborator who is assigned to investigate her case; and Helmut (Christian Clauss) is a high-ranking, yet naïve German SS officer who once fell madly in love with Olga and meets her again when she is shipped to a concentration camp. While they recount their stories, the film flashes back to the end of World War II and the days when their destinies crossed.

## **LOGLINE**

Set during WWII, the stunningly-shot feature looks at the Holocaust from the perspective of three characters – Olga, Jules and Helmut – whose paths cross amidst the devastation of war.



## DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

### ANDREI KONCHALOVSKY – Director, Screenwriter, Producer



Andrei Konchalovsky has enjoyed equally distinguished directing careers for both the stage and screen. His best-known film credits range from international pictures such as *UNCLE VANYA*, based on the Chekhov play of the same name and regarded as one of the best Russian films ever made, and *HOUSE OF FOOLS*, a Russian-French co-production about an asylum along the Russian-Chechnya border, to such popular English language fare as *MARIA'S LOVERS*, *DUET FOR ONE*, *SHY PEOPLE* and *RUNAWAY TRAIN*, which received three Academy Award nominations. He has earned acclaim for such

landmark television epics as “*The Odyssey*,” for which he won an Emmy Award as best director, and “*Lion in Winter*,” which received a Golden Globe Award for Costume, as well as multiple Emmy Awards and nominations.

Born in Moscow, Konchalovsky studied music in his youth, becoming a skilled pianist, before enrolling in the cinema program at VGIK - the major state film school, where he studied under Mikhail Romm. His debut feature film, *THE FIRST TEACHER*, based on the book by Chingis Aitmatov, concerned post-1917 southern Russia. His subsequent films include *THE STORY OF ASYA KLYACHINA*, which was held back from release until 1988 because of government censorship, and received the Russian academy award for best picture, *A NEST OF GENTRY*, *ROMANCE FOR LOVERS*, and *SIBIRIADE*, a realistic portrayal of the lives of the people of Siberia which earned international acclaim and brought him to the attention of American and European producers. This led him to such mainstream Hollywood projects as *TANGO & CASH* and *HOMER & EDDIE*.

For the stage, Konchalovsky has directed numerous opera and theatrical production across Europe and the US, including “*King Lear*” in Poland, “*Miss Julie*” and Chekhov’s “*The Seagull*” in Russia, “*War and Peace*” at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and “*Queen of Spades*” and “*Eugene Onegin*” at La Scala in Italy, the latter of which was also staged in Paris.

Early in his career he used a double surname and was credited as Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky. Later he adopted his mother's maiden name to distinguish himself from his younger brother, Nikita Mikhalkov, himself an accomplished director. Indeed, his entire family is artistic: his great-grandfather, grandfather and mother are celebrated poets, and his father is a noted playwright.

2010 marked the release of Andrei Konchalovsky’s much-anticipated cinematic adaptation of the traditional fairytale, *THE NUTCRACKER IN 3D*. This musical CGI-spectacular featured Elle Fanning in the role of little Mary, as well as Nathan Lane, Richard E. Grant and John Turturro in the principal roles. Lyrics were provided by Academy Award® winner Sir Tim Rice. In the same year, Konchalovsky also appeared as himself in *HITLER IN HOLLYWOOD*, a bio-doc about Micheline Presle which evolves into a thrilling investigation of the long hidden truth behind European cinema. This mockumentary thriller uncovers Hollywood's unsuspected plot against the European motion picture industry. The film won the FIPRESCI Prize at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival and picked up a Crystal Globe nomination in July, 2010.

In 2012, Konchalovsky wrote, directed and produced BATTLE FOR UKRAINE, which provided an in-depth analysis of how Ukraine to this day struggles to escape from the close embrace of its former big brother, Russia. This extensive study lasted for almost three years and involved an array of Ukrainian, Russian and American historians, politicians and journalists, as well as the ex-President of Poland, Aleksander Kwasniewski; the ex-President of Slovakia, Rudolf Schuster; the ex-President of Georgia, Eduard Shevardnadze; the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations Kofi Annan; the ex-Prime Minister of Russia, Viktor Chernomyrdin; and the businessman, Boris Berezovsky.

2013 saw Konchalovsky co-produce a story previously untold on film. Filmmaker Margy Kinmonth invited HRH the Prince of Wales to make a journey through history to celebrate the artistic gene in his family and reveal an extraordinary treasure trove of work by royal hands past and present, many of whom were accomplished artists. Set against the spectacular landscapes of the Royal Estates and containing insights into works by members of The Royal Family down the centuries and The Prince of Wales's own watercolors, ROYAL PAINTBOX explores a colorful palette of intimate family memory and observation.

THE POSTMAN'S WHITE NIGHTS was Konchalovsky's most recent film before PARADISE, winning the coveted Silver Lion for Best Director at the Venice International Film Festival in 2014. The film is based on the true story of Aleksey Tryaptisyn, a real life postman based in a remote Russian village surrounding the Kenozero Lake. Irina Ermolova stars as Irina, the postman's beloved, with Timur Bondarenko, of the Moscow Theatre studio starring as her son, Timur (Timka.)

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

History is full of great tragedies, most of which remain in our minds as ancient misdeeds that couldn't possibly be replicated in the present day. One of the most terrifying moments of our generation's history was the rise of the Nazi party and the extermination of millions of Jews and others who did not fit into the Nazi ideal of a 'perfect' German 'PARADISE'. These atrocities exposed the depths of mankind's capabilities for evil and although these events happened in the past, the same kind of radical and hateful thinking is apparent today and threatening the lives and safety of many around the world.

PARADISE reflects on a twentieth century filled with great illusions buried in ruins, the dangers of hateful rhetoric and the need for mankind to use the power of love to triumph over evil.

***"That which has happened is a warning. It must be continually remembered. It was possible for this to happen, and it remains possible for it to happen again at any minute. Only in knowledge can it be prevented. The danger here is in the unwillingness to know, the urge to forget, and the disbelief that all of this actually happened..."***

The words of German philosopher Karl Jaspers are tied strongly to the central theme of PARADISE, which urges us not to forget the truths of history, no matter how horrifying or inconvenient, so that we do not repeat them. – *Andrei Konchalovsky*

## **ACTORS' BIOGRAPHIES**

### **JULIA VYSOTSKAYA / 'Olga'**

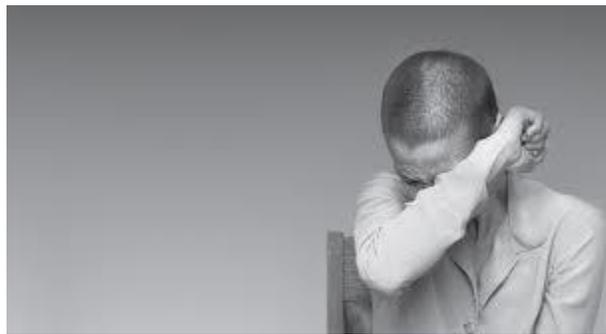
Julia Vysotskaya was born in Novocherkassk, Russia in 1973. She graduated from the Belarusian State Academy of Arts in 1995. As a student, she worked at the Belarusian National Theatre, Janka Kupala, as well as the Belarusian Television and Radio Company as a presenter of the entertainment show "Abibok." In 1998, Julia graduated from the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. Growing up, Julia always wanted to be an actress and, although she never took formal drama classes in school, she refused to let that stop her from pursuing her dream. Determined not to have a back-up plan, she applied and was accepted in to drama schools in Minsk and London. Now fluent in English, French, Russian and Italian, Julia has perfected her craft with a number of lead roles onstage and onscreen, for which she has been praised by critics for delivering powerful and emotional performances. Onstage, Julia has taken on some of the most iconic lead roles in Russian playwright Anton Chekhov's theatrical cannon for the Mossovet State Academic Theatre in Moscow including 'Nina Zarechnaya' in "The Seagull" in 2004; 'Sonya' in the 2009 production of "Uncle Vanya;" 'Masha' in "Three Sisters" in 2012; and most recently, 'Madame Ranevskaya' in "The Cherry Orchard" in 2016. Her other stage work includes 'Antigone' in Venice Olympic Theatre's production of "Oedipus at Colonus" in 2014; the title role in the 2005 production of August Strindberg's 1888 play, "Miss Julie", at Moscow's Na Maloy Bronnoy; and 'Mrs. Smith' in "The Bald Soprano" by Eugène Ionesco in 1993 at the Belarusian National Theatre. In 1995, Julia starred as 'Alison' in "Look Back in Anger" by John Osborne at the Belarusian National Theatre, winning the Best Actress award. That same year, she also played the lead character, 'Mona', in "Nameless Star", also at the Belarusian National Theatre. Onscreen, Julia has won critical acclaim for feature roles in films directed by award-winning Russian film director, Andrei Konchalovsky. In 2003, she took on the role of 'Alais' in "The Lion in Winter," a remake of the 1968 film of the same name. The film follows King Henry II as he gets ready to choose his successor to the throne amidst the vocal objections and scheming of his family. For her role in the 2002 film HOUSE OF FOOLS where she played 'Zhanna', a young psychiatric patient in a hospital near the Russian-Chechnya border, she won the Best Actress Award at the 2003 Long Live Russian Cinema Festival. In 2007, Julia played the lead role, 'Galya' in GLOSS and was awarded Best Female Performance at the 2008 MTV Russia Movie Awards.

### **CHRISTIAN CLAUSS / 'Helmut'**

Born in Frankenberg, Germany in 1984, Christian Clauss graduated with a degree in drama from the University of Music and Theatre Leipzig in 2011. Upon graduating, he became a full-time company member at Dresden State Theatre, a world-renowned theatre company in Germany. His onstage credits with the company include a diverse range of lead roles such as 'Bassanio' in "The Merchant of Venice" in 2011, 'Henry Foster' in "A Brave New World" in 2014 and 'Le Beau' in the company's 2015 production of "As You Like It." In 2012, he played 'Jacob Reckless' in "Reckless", a play adapted from the first book in the 2010 best-selling sci-fi series of the same name by Cornelia Funke and Lionel Wigram. Most recently, he appeared in the roles 'Klara' and 'Therese' in Dresden State Theatre's 2015 retelling of Franz Kafka's "Amerika" (also known as "The Man Who Disappeared"). His onscreen credits include a lead role in the short film AUTOBAHN, directed by Julia Tielke in 2013 and a role in the 2015 short film DER PAPAGEI, directed by Andreas Raichert. He has also appeared in the popular German television program "Hamburg Dockland." 'Helmut' in PARADISE is Clauss' first lead role in a feature film.

## **PHILIPPE DUQUESNE / 'Jules'**

Philippe Duquesne first became famous in the '90s as one of the charter members of the Deschiens Collective, a group of comedians including François Morel, Yolande Moreau, Olivier Saladin and Bruno Lochet. He is also a classically trained actor and has performed at some of the most prestigious French theatres, such as the Theatre National de la Colline, the Odeon, or Chaillot. His roles in cinema range from arthouse films of Jean Becker, Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Stéphane Brizé, to popular French comedies.



## **SELECT PRESS FOR PARADISE**

"Konchalovsky's robust, absorbing Holocaust drama is built on such unlikely junctures of grace and despair." – Guy Lodge, *Variety*

"Persuasively acted, elegantly shot in black and white and altogether a handsome prestige period production..." – Jonathan Romney, *Screen Daily*

"It's revolutionarily prophetic."- E. Nina Rothe, *The Huffington Post*

"The beautiful black and white cinematography of Alexander Simonov and the meticulous and careful framing of the shots makes PARADISE visually sumptuous." – John Bleasdale, *CineVue*

"A curiously styled hybrid of docu-confessionals interspersed with a myriad of non-linear flashbacks to crank up a triptych-inspired narrative about three intersecting people moving from Nazi occupied France to the hellish barracks of a squalid concentration camp....well-crafted and unforgettable." - Nicholas Bell, *IonCinema*

"There is little doubt that it is a must-see this year for anyone interested in contemporary cinema." - Alexander Nechayev, *Russia Beyond the Headlines*

"Artistic, informative and transcendent, PARADISE, permeates more than one metaphysical level. Highly recommended." – Larry Gleeson, *Hollywood Glee*

## CREDITS

### CAST

<b>Olga</b>	Julia Vysotskaya
<b>Jules</b>	Philippe Duquesne
<b>Agnes</b>	Isabelle Habiague
<b>Émile</b>	Pyotr Mikhalkov
<b>Thérèse</b>	Valérie Zaccomer
<b>Théo</b>	Pierre Nisse
<b>Helmut</b>	Christian Clauß
<b>Heinrich Himmler</b>	Victor Sukhorukov
<b>Krause</b>	Peter Kurth
<b>Rosa</b>	Vera Voronkova
<b>Janek</b>	Jacob Manevich
<b>Vogel</b>	Jakob Diehl
<b>Shulmann</b>	Jean-Denis Römer

### CREW

<b>Director</b>	Andrei Konchalovsky
<b>Script</b>	Andrei Konchalovsky Elena Kiseleva
<b>Casting</b>	Uwe Bünker Elina Ternyaeva Constance Demontoy
<b>Director of Photography</b>	Alexander Simonov
<b>Production Designers</b>	Irina Ochina Josef Sanktjohanser
<b>Costumes</b>	Dmitry Andreev Vladimir Nikiforov
<b>Make Up</b>	Galina Ponomareva Elena Dmitrienko
<b>Editors</b>	Ekaterina Vesheva Sergei Taraskin Sergei Shustitsky
<b>Composer</b>	Polina Volynkina
<b>Sound Director</b>	Benjamin Rosenkind
<b>Re-Recording Mixer</b>	Thomas Lüdemann
<b>Post-Production Supervisor</b>	Maxim Chernyaev
<b>Technical Director</b>	Olesya Gidrat
<b>Executive Producer</b>	Alisher Usmanov
<b>Associate Producers</b>	Alexander Brovarets Andrei Konchalovsky
<b>Producers</b>	Florian Deyle

## **SELECTED FESTIVALS AND AWARDS**

89<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards, Official Russian Submission – Short-listed, Best Foreign Language Film  
2016 Venice Film Festival – Silver Lion for Best Director  
2016 Venice Film Festival – Nominated for Golden Lion – Best Film  
2016 Chicago International Film Festival – Best Feature  
2016 Stockholm Film Festival  
2016 Gijon International Film Festival – AISGE Award for Best Actress: Julia Vysotskaya,  
Award for Best Director of Photography, Young Award Best Feature Film Jury  
2016 Mar del Plata International Film Festival – Silver Astor Award for the Best screenplay  
2017 Palm Springs International Film Festival  
2017 Russia's Nika Film Awards- Five nominations including those for the best film and the best director  
2017 Seattle International Film Festival



## **ABOUT FILM MOVEMENT**

Celebrating its 15th year, Film Movement is a North American distributor of award-winning independent and foreign films based in New York City. Film Movement has released more than 250 feature films and shorts culled from prestigious film festivals worldwide, and last year it had its first Academy Award-nominated film, Naji Abu Nowar's THEEB. Film Movement's theatrical distribution strategy has evolved to include promising American independent films, documentaries, and an even stronger slate of foreign art house titles. Its catalog includes titles by directors such as Hirokazu Kore-eda, Maren Ade, Jessica Hausner, Andrei Konchalovsky, Andrzej Wajda, Diane Kurys, Ciro Guerra and Melanie Laurent. In 2015, Film Movement launched its reissue label Film Movement Classics, featuring new restorations released theatrically as well as on Blu-ray and DVD, including films by such noted directors as Eric Rohmer, Peter Greenaway, Bille August, Marleen Gorris, Takeshi Kitano, Arturo Ripstein, and Ettore Scola. For more information, please visit