

Nostalgia [12A]

1983 Soviet Union/Italy 125 mins

UK re-released **31/7/2026**

Director **Andrei Tarkovsky**

Screenplay **Tonino Guerra; Andrei Tarkovsky**

Cinematography **Giuseppe Lanci**

Music **Gino Peguri**

Cast **Oleg Yankovsky** (Andrei); **Erland Josephson** (Domenico); **Domiziana Giordano** (Eugenia); **Patrizia Terreno** (Andrei's wife); **Laura De Marchi** (Chambermaid); **Delia Boccardo** (Domenico's wife); **Milena Vukotic** (civil servant)

Andrei Tarkovsky's 1983 film is a mysterious, imagist cine-poem about alienation and belonging, whose title means a yearning not simply for a lost time or lost place but for something, anything, else – with a profound anguished sense that the here-and-now of existence is unsatisfactory. The movie takes something from the poetry of the director's father Arseny Tarkovsky, which is quoted in the film. A distinguished Russian scholar is in Italy to research the life of the (fictional) Russian composer Pavel Sosnovsky who is supposed to have travelled there before being overwhelmed by homesick longing and returning to the motherland. His beautiful, flirtatious interpreter is reading Tarkovsky's poetry in an Italian translation, and the Russian coldly tells her to throw the book away: "Poetry is untranslatable, like the whole of art." Does he really mean that? This movie is itself, in a way, translated; it is set in Italy and co-written by Tarkovsky with the veteran Italian screenwriter Tonino Guerra, who worked with Fellini and Antonioni. Oleg Yankovskiy plays Andrei, the Russian who is in Italy to immerse himself spiritually in the places where Sosnovsky went. On arriving in the Tuscan spa town of Bagno Vignoni, frequented by Saint Catherine herself, he appears to be overcome by a kind of breakdown or emotional paralysis, unable to respond to his surroundings and engaged in a kind of silent inner dialogue with himself, plagued with epiphanic, monochrome dreams or memories of his family at home in Russia. His gloomy, grumpy reticence exasperates his

interpreter Eugenia (Domiziana Giordano), who is attracted to him and clearly wondering if something might happen.

Both Andrei and Eugenie are perplexed by the behaviour of a local homeless man and reputed “lunatic”; this is Domenico (Erland Josephson). Domenico is notorious locally for having imprisoned his wife and children in his house to protect them from what he was convinced was the imminent end of the world. Now he believes that if he can carry a lit candle across the town’s baths without it going out, humanity and the world can be saved.

Andrei is fascinated by Domenico and conflates the man’s terrified family with his own in his mind. Domenico’s existence is explained by Eugenie as a result of Italy closing its asylums, but he is surely an intensely Russian figure: the holy fool, the wanderer, the poor man who is also Christ.

In its third act, Tarkovsky’s movie removes from the bucolic peace of the countryside to the crowded and clamorous capital of Rome. But eventually Andrei returns to Bagno Vignoni, by which time the famous baths have dried out – is this the end of the world? – and begins the long, lugubrious process of trying to walk across them with a lit candle.

Like Tarkovsky’s subsequent film, *The Sacrifice*, this is a movie about the absence of God. Perhaps Domenico does not regard himself as in any way rebuked by how things turned out – perhaps his family staggered out of his house into a world which had indeed ended; a world in which God was no longer believed in. Like the waters of the baths, God has evaporated, drained away, leaving only the bulbous, dirty and ugly shapes of the walls and floor of the baths and the rickety steps. It is an unimprovably stark, sad film.

Peter Bradshaw, *The Guardian*, 22 July 2026 (abridged)

Coming soon....

Monday 31 August: ***Cactus Pears***

Monday 07 September: ***The Last Viking***

For details and more – visit our website

Scan to get a weekly
email about what’s next



www.buxtonfilm.org.uk



admin@buxtonfilm.org.uk



@buxtonfilm.bsky.social