

# Unbroken Time

## Splendid Artifice

**RUSSIAN ARK:** Directed by Alexander Sokurov. Visual concept and principal image design, Alexander Sokurov. Written by Anatoly Nikiforov and Sokurov. Produced by Andrey Deryabin, Jens Meuer, Karsten Stoter. Cinematography, Tilman Buttner. Costumes, Lidiya Kriukova, Tamara Seferyan, Maria Grishanova. Composer, Sergey Yevtushenko. Choreographer, Galy Abaidulov. Production design, Yelena Zhukova, Natalia Kochergina. With Sergey Dreiden, Maria Kuznetsova, Leonid Mozgovoy, Mikhail Piotrovsky and David Giorgobiani. WellSpring Release, 2002. NR. 96 minutes.

This film has received a great deal of press, because it was shot in one take — one 96-minute long, uninterrupted shot on high-definition video — and later transferred to 35-mm film. Filmmaker Alexander Sokurov's achieves cinematic history. Famously, another Russian filmmaker who could make the same claim was Sergei Eisenstein, who developed a theory of montage he used with electrifying results in the rhythmic editing of *The Battleship Potemkin* (1925), with its Odessa Steps sequence.

Maybe, as I did, you read the first reviews of *Ark* when it opened at the New York Film Festival last September and have waited eight long months to see what the buzz is about. Or perhaps you've always wanted to visit St. Petersburg's treasury of European and Russian art and culture, the Hermitage, or maybe you're a student of Russia.

With all due respect to *Russian Ark's*

achievement, this single-take film is chock-full of Russian cultural and historical references, many of which are obscure. Like the references, inside these vast, stately buildings are luxuriously appointed rooms and galleries that are dark in places. History buffs and art lovers may be interested in the architecture, paintings, drawings and furnishings, but the figures from history who haunt the film are largely unidentifiable. I didn't recognize Peter the Great, but I did understand the plight of Catherine the Great, who needed to pee while meeting with a brood of little children — hers? — in the Winter Palace, the part of the buildings where the Russian rulers lived.

Unlike *Rivers and Tides*, a film so unpretentious it is easily accessible both to a general audience and satisfying to those who love art and artists, *Russian Ark* is frequently murky, if not incomprehensible. If you've seen Sokurov's previous films, this is said to be a logical follow-up. But I couldn't help asking myself these questions — Who are these costumed people? Why are they here? Who is the narrator? Why is he talking to this strange French man, who seems to dislike all things Russian? And what am I doing here?

As film experiments go, *Russian Ark* is a curiosity, a one-time indulgence in a new method for creating a feature film. It cer-



DANCERS AT THE LAST GREAT ROYAL BALL OF 1913.

ALEXANDER BELENKY, HERMITAGE BRIDGE STUDIO, 2001.

tainly makes me appreciate both the art and artifice of film editing. Great editors such as Walter Murch and Thelma Schoonmaker save even excellent directors from their worst instincts. I am a writer, and I know the value of a good editor.

Also, giving any director this much ownership of a film is folly. Imagine what could happen if directors such as *Titanic's* king-of-the-world, James Cameron, had decided to serenade us in real-time with every song from the orchestra's play-list of the doomed ship. With some self-absorbed directors who come to mind, the result might be a 90-minute tour of the house they were born in, or a walking tour of the urban neighborhood where they grew up. Celebrity friends could pop up, make quick cameo appearances and then fade back into the shoppers

at the bakery.

I appreciate thoughtful editing in film, my favorite example being *The English Patient*. That film's director, Anthony Minghella, said film editor Walter Murch "fundamentally revised the film's structure in the editing room."

The argument against montage seems to be that because real time can be altered in the editing process — compressed, expanded, sped-up, slowed-down, whatever — the audience loses the sense of the flow of time. Trust me, if this film does nothing else, it will make you aware of how long 96 minutes is.

*Russian Ark* opens at the Bijou this Friday. Many films are queued up, pushing at the door, so go early. Tell your friends it's never been done before. **EW**

## movie clips

### OPENING OR RETURNING:

**Asoka** (2001): Hindi action romance directed by Santosh Sivan. Plays at 7 pm on 5/30 in International Lounge, EMU, UO campus. Free. R.

**Basic**: War thriller stars Samuel L. Jackson as an elite commando officer who disappears on a mission and John Travolta as a rogue DEA agent. Also stars Connie Nielsen, Giovanni Ribisi, Taye Diggs; directed by John McTiernan. R. Movies 12.

**Brother** (Russia, 1997): Example of Russian New Wave, directed by Alexi Balabanov. A brother returns from the army to join his brother in the violent underworld of St. Petersburg. Plays at 7:15 on 6/4 in 115 Pacific, UO campus. Free.

**Finding Nemo**: Pixar (*Toy Story*) presents this computer-animated fantasy of two fish, Marlin and his son Nemo, who get separated in the Great Barrier Reef. Written and directed by Andrew Stanton (*A Bug's Life*), with voices by Albert Brooks, Ellen DeGeneres, Willem Dafoe, Geoffrey Rush, Allison Janney. G. Cinema World. Cinemark.

**Gangs of New York**: Martin Scorsese's bloody epic set in mid-1800s N.Y. stars Leonard DiCaprio and Daniel Day-Lewis as rival gang leaders. Co-stars Cameron Diaz, John C. Reilly and Jim Broadbent. One of 2002's great films, with many Academy Award nominations. Very highest recommendations. R. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

**Head of State**: Chris Rock directs, co-writes and stars in this tale of a D.C. alderman who runs for the presidency. Also stars Bernie Mac, Dylan Baker, Robin Givens, James Rebhorn. PG-13. Movies 12.

**Italian Job, The**: Mark Wahlberg leads a heist that's double-crossed by one of his crew. Charlize Theron plays a safecracker in this cool revenge movie. Also stars Edward Norton, Mos Def and Donald Sutherland. Highly recommended for its pure entertainment value. PG-13. Cinemark. Cinema World. **See review this issue.**

**Read My Lips**: Jacques Audiard directs Emmanuelle Devos and Vincent Cassel in this accomplished comic film noir. The first half is a workplace comedy, the last a crime thriller, and it all works. Highly recommended. NR. At 7:30 p, on 6/3 in 115 Pacific, UO campus. Free. **Online archives.**

**Russian Ark** (Russia, 2001): Cineastes who have heard about this film for

months now have the opportunity to enjoy Alexander Sokurov's cinematic achievement — one 96-minute, uninterrupted shot — a tour of the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, long the repository of Russian (and European) art and history. NR. Bijou. **See review this issue.**

**Seven Samurai** (Japan, 1954): Filmmaker Akira Kurosawa's fabulous action adventure is set in 16th century Japan and stars the excellent Toshiro Mifune and Takashi Shimura. A village hires professional warriors to protect itself from roving bandits. One of world cinema's great movies. At 7 pm on 6/4 in 180 PLC, UO campus. Free.

**Spun**: Eugene premiere of film co-written by former UO student Creighton Vero and former Eugene resident, William De Los Santos. Stars Jason Schwartzman, who plays a meth freak, and Mickey Rourke, who plays a meth dealer. Other stars include John Leguizamo, Mena Suvari, Patrick Fugit and more. NR. LateNite Bijou.

**Wrong Turn**: Jeremy Sisto, Eliza Dushku, Desmond Harrington and Emmanuelle Chriqui are trapped in the West Virginia wilderness and pursued by cannibalistic mountain men. Help! R. Cinema World. Cinemark.

**Films open the Friday following date of EW publication unless otherwise noted. See archived reviews at [www.eugeneweekly.com](http://www.eugeneweekly.com).**

### CONTINUING:

**Adaptation**: Director Spike Jonze and writer Charlie Kaufman blur boundaries between reality and fictional representation. Nicolas Cage plays Charlie Kaufman, stuck while writing a screenplay of Susan Orlean's book, *The Orchid Thief*. Meryl Streep gives a fabulous, comic turn as Orlean, and Chris Cooper's an avid orchid collector. 2002 Academy Award to Cooper. Very highest recommendations. R. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

**Bend It Like Beckham**: Soccer-crazy girls in London suburb drive their respective families crazy because they'd rather play soccer than think about marriage and shopping. Warm-hearted, generous film is likely to be a big hit. Get onboard early and enjoy! Highly recommended. PG-13. Bijou. **Online archives.**

**Bringing Down the House**: Domestic comedy starring Steve Martin and Queen Latifa is directed by Adam

Shankman. PG-13. Movies 12.

**Bruce Almighty**: Jim Carrey, Morgan Freeman and Jennifer Aniston star in this tale of a TV reporter, who has a really bad day, rages against God and receives more than he expected. PG-13. Cinema World. Cinemark.

**Cowboy Bebop**: Dubbed English version of animated tale of four Bebop bounty hunters on the trail of a terrorist in the Martian city of Alba City in 2071. R. Bijou. **Online archives.**

**Daddy Day Care**: Eddie Murphy and Jeff Garlin lose their jobs and can't afford day care for their sons, so they open their own facility. Comedy directed by Steve Carr also stars Anjelica Huston, Steve Zahn and Regina King. PG. Cinema World. Cinemark. PG.

**Down With Love**: Peyton Reed reinvents the look and feel of a 1962-era Doris Day, Rock Hudson musical with Renee Zellweger and Ewan McGregor. Also stars David Hyde Pierce, Tony Randall and Sarah Paulson. Entertaining froth. PG-13. Cinema World. Cinemark. **See review this issue.**

**Holes**: Adventures digging holes at Camp Green Lake for Stanley, who comes from a strange family that's been cursed for generations. Embarrassingly, Jon Voight, Sigourney Weaver and Tim Blake

Nelson co-star. PG. Cinema World. Cinemark. **Online archives.**

**How To Lose a Guy in 10 Days**: Magazine columnist Kate Hudson and ad agency professional Matthew McConaughey try to get the other to fall in love, but things go awry. High-energy romantic comedy. PG-13. Movies 12.

**In-Laws, The**: Andrew Fleming directs Michael Douglas and Albert Brooks as the reluctant fathers of the bride and groom. PG-13. Cinemark. Cinema World.

**Kangaroo Jack**: Taking mob money to Australia, two New York doofuses loose it to a kangaroo. Stars Jerry O'Connell, Anthony Anderson, Christopher Walken and Dyan Cannon. David McNally directs. PG. Movies 12.

**Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers**: Directed and re-imagined by Peter Jackson, part two of J.R.R. Tolkien's trilogy continues. New characters, a surprise return and great battles. Director Peter Jackson's second masterpiece. Very highest recommendations. 2002 Academy Awards for sound editing, visual effects. PG-13. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

**Matrix Reloaded**: Second chapter brings Neo (Keanu Reeve), Trinity (Laurence Fishburne) and Trinity (Carrie-Anne Moss) closer to solving

the enigma but also puts them in greater danger. Written and directed by Andy and Larry Wachowski, it also stars Hugo Weaving, Jada Pinkett Smith and Gloria Foster. R. Cinemark. Cinema World. **See review this issue.**

**Mighty Wind, A**: Christopher Guest's (*Best in Show*) pseudo-documentary narrative about a folk music reunion show of folk is one of his craftiest satirical offerings, critics say. Stars the usual suspects: Eugene Levy, Parker Posey, Bob Balaban. Harry Shearer, Michael McKean and Guest himself. PG-13. Cinemark. **Online archives.**

**Old School**: From *Road Trip*, Luke Wilson, Will Ferrell and Vince Vaughn try to recapture the fun of their college years by starting their own off-campus frat house. R. Movies 12.

**Phone Booth**: Colin Farrell, Kiefer Sutherland, Forest Whitaker, Katie Holmes and Radha Mitchell star in Joel Schumacher's thriller. R. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

**Rivers and Tides: Andy Goldsworthy Works with Time**: Splendid documentary by Thomas Riedelsheimer about famous Scottish sculptor Andy Goldsworthy. He makes site-specific art from found natural objects. Accessible to anyone who has ever been a child. A visual treat, it's the most beautiful film of the year. NR.

### Bijou. Online archives.

**Shanghai Knights**: Jackie Chan and Owen Wilson are out to settle a score in Victorian London in this comedy directed by David Dobkin. PG-13. Movies 12.

**Tears of the Sun**: Bruce Willis is a Navy SEAL sent to rescue a US citizen who runs a mission, but she (Monica Bellucci) won't leave her charges. Directed by Antoine Fuqua. R. Movies 12.

**What a Girl Wants**: Teen Amanda Bynes is "trying to fit in, born to stand out." She wants a fairy tale relationship with her absent dad and is tired of living with her unconventional mom, played by Colin Firth and Kelly Preston. Oliver James plays her love interest. PG. Movies 12.

**X-Men 2**: The next link in the evolutionary chain? Directed by Bryan Singer, stars Patrick Stewart, Hugh Jackman, Ian McKellen, Halle Berry, Famke Janssen, James Marsden and more, lots more. PG-13. Cinemark.

### Bijou Art Cinemas (686-2458)

**Cinema World 8 (342-6536)**

**Cinemark 17 (746-5202)**

**Movies 12 (741-1231)**

## VIDEO CLIPS

### NEW RELEASES ON VIDEO

Releases subject to change. Available the Tuesday following date of EW publication, sometimes sooner. See archived movie reviews at [www.eugeneweekly.com](http://www.eugeneweekly.com)

**About Schmidt**: Jack Nicholson stars in Alexander Payne's (*Election*) film about a just-retired man who feels adrift. His only daughter, Jeannie (Hope Davis) is about to marry unwisely, and his wife of 42 years dies suddenly. He goes on the road to find himself. 2002 Academy Award nominations to Nicholson and Kathy Bates. R. Cinemark. **Online archives.**

**Animatrix**: Nine anime films directed by some of the great Japanese directors promises insider info on the Matrix, techno soundtrack, seven making-of features, interviews, etc.

**Bent** (1997): Sean Mathias' film about the pink triangle movement inside Nazi Germany follows Clive Owen, Lothaire Bluteau, Ian McKellen, and Mick Jagger in a brief role as a drag star. Music by Philip Glass. NC-17.

**Bitter Moon**: While traveling together on a cruise ship, a decadent writer (Peter Coyote) recounts to a stuffy young Brit (Hugh Grant) his sexually obsessive relationship with his new young wife. Roman Polanski directs this allegory on the course of relationships. R.

**Black Hawk Down Deluxe Edition**: Ridley Scott directs this true story based on the mission-gone-wrong of American special forces in Somalia, 1993. Stars Josh Hartnett, Ewan McGregor, Ron Eldard and Sam Shepard. AFI award for best picture; academy nods for Scott, cinematography, sound, editing. Highest recommendations. R. **Online archives.**

**Cry the Beloved Country**: Alan Paton's novel about South Africa alerted the rest of the world to what was going on there. Set on the eve of apartheid, a rural Zulu Christian minister (James Earl Jones) goes to Johannesburg to find

his missing son and instead finds a tragedy he shares with his neighbor, a wealthy landowner (Richard Harris). Excellent viewing. Directed by Darrell James Roodt. PG-13.

**Die Another Day**: Pierce Brosnan stars as James Bond on a mission that takes him to Iceland in this action adventure yarn directed by Lee Tamahori. Costars Halle Berry, John Cleese and Judi Dench. DVD 2-disc, loaded. PG-13.

**Empire Records Remix, The** (1985): Special fan's edition restores 16 minutes extra. Stars Anthony La Paglia, Maxwell Caulfield, Renee Zellweger and many others.

**Guru, The** (2000): Jimi Mistry stars as an immigrant dance instructor who learns how to make his ethnicity pay off in this Bollywood-like comedy directed by Daisy von Sherler Mayer. Also stars Heather Graham, Marisa Tomei, Christine Baranski and Michael McKean. Trailer looked like fun. R.

**Invincible** (2002): Werner Herzog directs Tim Roth as a magician in 1932 Berlin who mesmerizes the Nazi elite to become Hitler's minister of the occult. The NYTimes says Herzog accomplishes the "tricky feat of elevating a true story into a larger-than-life allegory." PG-13.

**South Park**: Complete second season, 18 episodes, 3 disc-set. Includes interviews with Matt Stone and Trey Parker. R.

**Unstrung Heroes**: Diane Keaton directs this bittersweet tale of a young boy who goes to live with his eccentric uncles after his mother becomes gravely ill. Starring Andie MacDowell, John Turturro and Michael Richards. Very highly recommended; a lovely film about growing up. PG.

**Next week: Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Frida, Giant (1956), Jungle Book 2, Old School, Once Upon a Time in America, The Right Stuff and Tears of the Sun.**