

LOVELESS

Director **Andrey Zvyagintsev** Rus/ Fr/Ger 2017 127mins

Cast: Boris - Alexey Rozin : Zhenya -Mariana Spivak: Alyosha- Matvey Novikov

What some critics said:

Loveless is black but it's brilliant, too - The Guardian

As a social observer, Mr. Zvyagintsev takes no prisoners. As an artist, he has few peers. - Wall Street Journal

Come for the near-endless rows that convincingly carry the venom of a collapsed, resentful marriage; stay for the extended critique of Russia's contemporary spiritual vacancy .-Empire

A film with a brutally informative adjective for a title. It's something which applies to the toxic, failed relationship which is at the heart of the drama, but also to everything around the unhappy man and woman, to the very air that they breathe. Modern aspirational Russia seems in this film to be grasping, unforgiving, a spiritual wasteland of materialism and selfie narcissism, like a distant planet which has lost the means to support life. It is a stark, mysterious, painful film in the high European tradition of Bergman, Antonioni and Haneke. Since it first appeared at Cannes in 2017 and was released here, modern Russia has hardly been out of the headlines... There are passionate, engaged, dissenting voices within Russia. Zvyagintsev is one of them.- Peter Bradshaw

WON 19 INTERNATIONAL AWARDS including Jury prize at Cannes / Best Film at London Film Festival

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS "The state doesn't want to remember that it's the role of the artist to be in the opposition. Otherwise how do the people in power see their true face. In ancient times, kings would have clowns and jesters in court every day. They were there to entertain the king but they were the only people who were able to tell him the truth. The intelligent, wise king knows that the jesters are needed. The foolish, insecure king does not." Zvyagintsev gives a rueful smile. "You ask me if I'm a dissident. When really I think, I'm more like a clown." *Loveless*, was made without state support,

assembled with European cash. "I'm outside the system. My producer finds the money -that makes me a very happy film-maker."

Boris and Zhenya are tellingly described by Zvyagintsev as "an average middle-class couple...devoid of any real self-awareness or doubt".

NOTES

"Andrey Zvyagintsev makes heavyweight political dramas that move smoothly, hit hard and leave colourful bruises. His subject is a broken system, a lawless land, and so he fills his stories with scheming politicians and downtrodden victims. ..In his homeland, predictably, the authorities have taken great umbrage at this. Having ardently championed him in the past, they recoiled from his 2014 film *Leviathan* an instant after they had anointed it as the nation's Academy Awards nominee.... 'Loveless', a police procedural of sorts widens its net until it catches a whole nation, from the rich, painted divas snapping selfies in the restaurants to the vast derelict sports centre on the outskirts of town. Alexey Rozin and Mariana Spivak play Boris and Zhenya, a warring Muscovite couple on the brink of divorce, "I've never loved anyone," Boris explains at one point. "Only my mum when I was little – and she's such an idiot." But there is the matter of their son, Alyosha (Matvey Novikov) a shy and unhappy 12-year-old boy ... They got married too soon after an unexpected pregnancy... This is a film which confronts us with the most unthinkable of crises and perhaps also challenges the eternal piety and complacency of family life, that having children is a moral verity and duty which is somehow its own reward, which elevates by its very nature and goes beyond the requirement to show and to give love. But the cultivation of love needs the right conditions, the right soil in which to grow, and the Russia of Zvyagintsev's film looks barren... Loveless's brilliance and passion are compelling- " Peter Bradshaw*****

Cinematographer Mikhail Krichman used a realistic style during filming in and around Moscow. The last scene of the movie is set in February 2015 just after the Olympic Games in Sochi.

MUSIC

Silouan's Song and other music specially composed for the film by Arvo Pärt
Sleepwalking performed by Bring Me The Horizon