

## **Roads to Koktebel**

A film by Boris Khlebnikov and Alexei Popogrebsky

Russia - 2003 – 105 minutes - 35mm - color - 1:66 - Dolby Digital

### **Festivals**

Moscow Film Festival 2003  
Toronto International Film Festival 2003  
Karlovy Vary Film Festival 2003  
Festival of Russian Cinema Vyborg 2003

### **Prizes**

Grand Jury Prize Silver St George, Moscow Moscow Film Festival 2003  
FIPRESCI Special Prize, Moscow Film Festival 2003  
Philip Morris Prize, Karlovy Vary Film Festival 2003  
Special Prize, Vyborg Film Festival 2003

### **SYNOPSIS:**

After his wife's death and the loss of his job, an aerodynamics engineer sets off from Moscow with his 11 year old son for his sister's house in Koktebel by the Black Sea. With no money or means of transport, they drift through the expansive and mesmeric landscapes of Russia at the mercy of chance. The father is content to meander as he tries to rebuild his self-respect, piece together his broken life and win back the trust of his son. Meanwhile, the boy impatiently dreams of reaching the coastal resort to start a new life of emancipation and gliders flying in the wind.

They come across many hurdles but the last encounter is with a beautiful young doctor who tends to the father's wounds. Since she is single and lonely they begin to fall for each other. The son sees her as an intrusion on the only loving relationship in his life sets off to complete the journey by himself... A simple plot, gracefully composed with stunning lyrical visuals, spaced-out dreamy shots and a loving eye for natural beauty recalls vintage Terrence Malick.

### **Cast**

|              |                     |
|--------------|---------------------|
| Boy          | Gleb Puskepalis     |
| Father       | Igor Chernevich     |
| Dacha Owner  | Vladimir Kucherenko |
| Doctor       | Agrippina Steklova  |
| Truck Driver | Alexander Ilyin     |
| Trackman     | Evgeniy Sytyi       |

### **Crew**

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Written and Directed by | Boris Khlebnikov and Alexei Popogrebsky |
| Produced By             | Roman Borisevich                        |
| Director of Photography | Shandor Berkeshi R.G.C.                 |
| Production Designer     | Gennadiy Popov                          |
| Costume Designer        | Svetlana Mikhailova                     |
| Sound                   | Evgeniya Pototskaya                     |
| Editing                 | Ivan Lebedev                            |
| Music                   | <i>Children's Songs</i> by Chick Corea  |

“Surprisingly self assured and confident for first-time directors... One of the nicest surprises at Moscow Film Festival... Remarkably sensitive, a variation on Truffaut’s *400 Blows*?”  
*Screen International*

“Something exceptional... a real find... a road movie with a difference”  
Derek Malcom, *The Guardian*

“Gracefully composed and moving, yet never maudlin...”  
*Variety*

#### Directors

**Boris Khlebnikov.** Born in 1972. Graduated from Film Theory Department of Russian Film Institute (VGIK)  
Writer and Director:

*Mimokhod*, 1997: Documentary; 16 mm b/w; 21 min.; (with Alexei Popogrebnsky).  
*Tricky Frog*, 2000: short fiction film; 35 mm color.; 20 min

**Alexei Popogrebnsky.** Born in 1972. Graduated from Psychology Department of Moscow State University  
Filmography:

Writer and Director: *Mimokhod*, 1997: Documentary; 16 mm b/w; 21 min. (with Boris Khlebnikov);  
Editor: *Tricky Frog*, 2000: short fiction film; 35 mm color.; 20 min.

#### Principal actors

**Igor Chernevich.** Actor of the Maly Dramaticheskyy Theatre - Theater of Europe, St. Petersburg (Artistic Director Lev Dodin). Acted in *Nicotine* (Russia, 1993. Dir. Evgeniy Ivanov). *BolsheVita* (1996, Hungary. Dir. Ibolya Fekete), *Vad* (Hungary, 1996. Dir. Sandor Sara), *Dukh* (Russia, 1998. Dir. Evgeniy Ivanov); *Szerencse lányai* (Poland, 1998. Dir. Marta Meszaros), *Knockout* (Sweden, 2000. Dir. Agneta Fagerström-Olsson).

**Gleb Puskepalis** is a son of the theatre actor and director Sergei Puskepalis. Gleb plays parts in two productions at the Pyotr Fomenko Theatre Workshop in Moscow.

**Vladimir Kucherenko** became an actor at the age of 60. Prior to *Koktebel*, he has acted in 3 stage productions, and one short film.

#### PRODUCTION NOTES:

*Roads to Koktebel* was first conceived in 1995. First draft was completed in 1998. In May of 2000, writers/directors Khlebnikov and Popogrebnsky and director of photography Berkeshi set off on an expedition along the route of the protagonists from Moscow to the eponymous town at the Crimean Peninsula in order to gather additional material and search for locations. Covering 4,000 km of country roads and sleeping in a tent, they took pictures of landscapes and people of rural Russia and Ukraine. Two more expeditions followed in 2001 and 2002.

In 2001 Khlebnikov and Popogrebnsky sent their script to the European PitchPoint, an international script competition organized by ScripHouse Agency and the European Film Academy. *Roads to Koktebel* was one of the 10 scripts selected out of a total 120, and the writers were invited to present it at the 2001 Berlin Film Festival.

Same year, producer Roman Borisevich submitted *Roads to Koktebel* to the Russian Ministry of Culture. The project passed the selection committee and received state funding.

*Roads to Koktebel* was shot in October and November 2002 entirely on location in three rural regions of Russia and two regions of Ukraine.