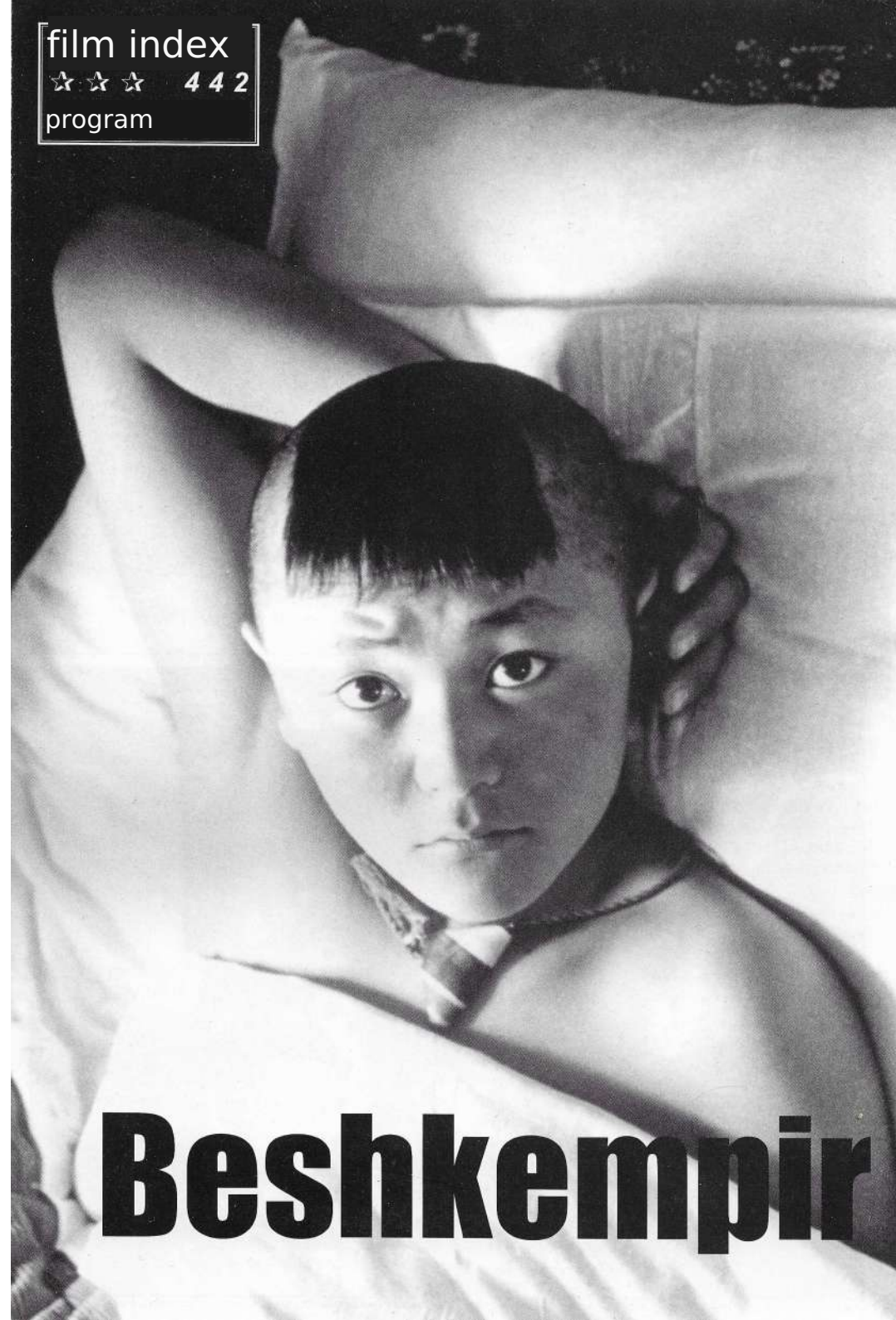


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program



Beshkempir



Beshkempir

Cast

Beshkempir Mirlan Abdykalykow

with

Albina Imaschewa, Adyr Abdylkasymow, Bakyt Dshylkytschiew, Mirlan Tschynkodshiew, Taalaj Mederow

Crew

Director	Aktan Abdykalykow
Screenplay	Aktan Abdykalykow, Avtandil Adykulow, Marat Sarulu
Cinematography	Almasan Kydyraliew
Editing	Tilek Mabetowa
Music	Nurlan Nyschanow
Sound	Bakyt Nijazaliew, Gauhar Sydykowa
Production Design	Emil Tilekow
Producers	Irizbaj Alybaew, Tshedomir Kolar, Frederique Dumas-Zajdela, Marc Baschet

Kyrgyzstan/France 1998 35 mm, color and black & white, duration 81 minutes

Distribution: Stadtkino (AT)

The Childhood of Art Serge Kaganski on BESHKEMPIR

Aktan Abdykalykow films the everyday life of a remote village in Kyrgyzstan, staging his own childhood memories. Beshkempir, wonderfully balanced between formal mastery and eyewitness account of a powerful reality, returns to the simplicity and virtues of an original cinema. Beshkempir is not told in a classic sequence of events, but rather as a series of one-acts and successive time blocks. 'I make films without a theme,' the director explains. 'They may belong to a cinematic genre that could be called athematic. When you write a script, you try to stick to a traditional line; but the feelings only arise during filming. I like a living cinema that is in constant change; in other words, I do not try to illustrate a script with images, even if I stick to a minimal dramaturgical line. Editing is also an essential stage. To use an analogy: it is as if you are threading pearls onto a string. Strung together, these pearls eventually form a necklace, even if each pearl is different.'

The film is structured around a series of such mutually contradictory and complementary 'pearls': the old and the young, the agility of lively boys and the rigidity of old ritual gestures, the centrifugal desire of a child who does not want to escape his family but instead tries to fully integrate, his longing to belong to the community... All this is manifested in a recurring motif (the earth) and through Abdykalykow's direction. The earth is omnipresent, culturally and metaphysically (the prayers from the first scene - the depiction of a community rooted in its practices) as much as materially.

(the dung balls; the children who play in the mud or shape a woman's body out of clay). Nevertheless, the film avoids ethnographic chores.

Beyond the themes and context of the story, the filmmaker's gaze is astonishing. Abdykalykow found the ideal balance between spontaneous recording and aesthetic composition: Beshkempir is both visually and acoustically accomplished and never stifles the life and presence of what is filmed. One of the mysteries of this black-and-white film is the occasional color sequences, which cannot be explained by time jumps or dream passages.



Inhalt

Beshkempir is the name of a Kirghiz village boy who, as the plot unfolds, learns that he is an adopted child. The name means "Five elderly women," it is a reflection of a ritual that is depicted in the film's opening sequence: a long rug pieced together from colorful cloth scraps on which the women sit, pray, and consecrate the found child to the earth. According to Kirghiz custom, each piece of the rug represents the memory of a deceased relative. Beshkempir is at the peak of early puberty. The film shows everyday life in a peasant village of Central Asia. One sees grandmothers who recite ritual heathen prayers, fathers who work in the fields, children who explore the world, cause mischief, and visit a traveling cinema under the open sky. Beshkempir experiences his first sexual stirrings and falls in love with a pretty girl. When Beshkempir learns that he is an adopted child, his friends turn away from him, and the death of a family member ultimately creates another drastic change in his life.

Aktan Abdykalykow on BESHKEMPIR

"The rites are very traditional, but I did not aim for anything archaic. These traditions are still alive, they belong to the everyday life of today's farmers. It may seem exotic in some aspects, but I set my story in a small village, and in such places one strives to preserve rites and traditions. It seems to me that this is true for all peoples. I never thought to film all of this for a Western audience, that much is certain. The spheres that the grandmothers knead are made from cow dung, and they are later used for heating. I wanted this image of grandmothers turning dung into something good and useful. Only the grandmothers manage to secure the beginning of family histories."

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