

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2012 - ČAK, Birkirkara

# The Island

*Ostrov (original title)*

112 minutes - Drama - 23 ta' Novembru 2006 (Kazakhstan)

*Somewhere in Northern Russia in a small Russian Orthodox monastery lives an unusual man whose bizarre conduct confuses his fellow monks, while others who visit the island believe that the man has the power to heal, exorcise demons and foretell the future.*

**Director:** Pavel Lungin

**Writer:** Dimitri Sobolev

**Original Music:** Vladimir Martynov

## Actors

<b>Pyotr Mamonov</b>	... Father Anatoly
<b>Viktor Sukhorukov</b>	... Father Filaret
<b>Dmitriy Dyuzhev</b>	... Father Iov
<b>Yuriy Kuznetsov</b>	... Tikhon
<b>Viktoriya Isakova</b>	... Nastya
<b>Nina Usatova</b>	... Widow
<b>Yana Esipovich</b>	... Girl
<b>Olga Demidova</b>	... Woman with child
<b>Timofey Tribuntsev</b>	... Young Anatoly
<b>Aleksei Zelensky</b>	... Young Tikhon
<b>Grigori Stepunov</b>	... Child (as Grisha epunov)
<b>Sergey Burunov</b>	... Adjutant
<b>B. Aleksandrov</b>	... German
<b>B. Pantyukhin</b>	... German
<b>S. Gorozhanin</b>	... German



## The story

During World War II, the sailor **Anatoly** and his captain, Tikhon, are captured by the Nazis when they board their barge and tugboat which is carrying a shipment of coal. The Nazi officer leading the raid offers **Anatoly** the choice to shoot Tikhon and stay alive which **Anatoly** reluctantly takes, and Tikhon falls overboard. The Nazis blow up the ship but **Anatoly** did not die. He was found by Russian Orthodox monks on the shore the next morning. He survives and becomes a stoker at the monastery but is perpetually overcome with guilt.



Thirty years pass. **Anatoly** now has the gift of healing and the ability to gain information about objects, persons, locations or physical event through special means other than the known human senses. But the other monks do not really understand him. People come to see **Anatoly** for cures and guidance, but even now, he remains in a perpetual state of repentance. He often gets in a boat and goes to an uninhabited island where he prays for mercy and forgiveness. Until the end of the film preserve for us a good surprise that put **Anatoly's** soul in peace. Then he starts preparing himself to finally meet the Lord Jesus Christ.

The film is located in the city of Kem, in Karelia, on the shores of the White Sea, in Kazakhstan.

## Considerations

With breathtaking cinematography showing the cool blues and whites of the Northern Russian landscape, this Russian award-winning movie is a story of redemption: the redemption of the man, and the redemption of those who visit this man. He is now **Father Anatoly**, one of the monks. But he lives in the boiler-room, stoking the fire, sleeping on the mounds of coal in this shack, while the other monks have more "luxurious" cells for their accomodation.

**Anatoly** lives an austere life. He gathers coal for their fire. He plays jokes and pranks on his fellow monks. And he is totally committed to God. He wanders the island praying aloud, reciting Scripture from the Psalms and the Gospels. His lonely life is focused on God. Even his fellow monks consider him odd and generally unlikeable.

Lay people, however, consider him something of a miracle worker, a modern-day prophet, who



can perform miracles and exorcise demons. They come to this island seeking out this "holy man." This, in itself, is one of the reasons why he is disliked. Though he does not seek out this "fame," he treats these visitors with a severe compassion, one part gracious and merciful the other part brusque and harsh. He does not want them to know him, so plays little games to make them think he is merely a lowly servant. Yet, he helps them, he heals them, he casts out their demons.

**Anatoly** has a genuine connection with his God. Yet, he constantly prays for forgiveness for the sinner that he is. He is in no doubt about his condition. His past has burdened him. He cannot run from it. He experiences the joy in the simple act of walking in the snow, yet he feels a desperate need to be released from guilt. His spirituality is schizophrenic in this regard: joy and guilt married together in the same head.



*The Island* is a superb film of faith lived out. He illustrates a number of gospel stories, and gives a picture of what a prophet of God could have looked (and lived) like. In one unforgettable scene, the prayer of **Anatoly** is juxtaposed and contrasted with the prayers of the other monks. While they offer "normal" prayers, **Anatoly** cries out in desperation to God for forgiveness as a sinner. It is reminiscent of the parable of the tax collector and Pharisee who went to the temple to pray (Luke 18:9-14). Indeed, many of the monks are like the Pharisees, living out lives of outward religion not inward relationship. (How often do we who claim to be followers of Jesus actually live more like Pharisees?)

As a prophet, he acts as a mirror to the monks. In his actions, subtle and obvious, he helps them to see that they are still clutching to the trappings of this world. For the Father Superior, **Anatoly's** superior, it is only when a circumstance places him in intimate contact with **Anatoly** that his attachment to possessions is made evident to him.

Yet, as **Anatoly** brings social justice to his monkish community and they seek forgiveness from God and him, it is not until a surprising circumstance near the end brings felt forgiveness to **Anatoly** himself. In this respect, *The Island* points out that often it is harder to forgive ourselves than it is for God or others to forgive us. Even in repentance, we can carry unnecessary guilt if we do not let it go. When the Lord forgives us, based on the finished work of Jesus on the cross, we should forgive ourselves too. He has forgiven us all our sins, little or big. They are all paid for (Col. 2:13-14).

Let's learn to be like **Anatoly** in having a real and honest relationship with God. We can take to heart the model of a genuinely humble man who talked to God, often in Scripture, throughout the day, and was content with little, not striving to accumulate more than he needed. Truly, *The Island* offers a portrait of a man of faith.



## Director: Pavel Lungin

Pavel Semyonovich Lungin is a Russian film director of Jewish origin. He is sometimes credited as Pavel Loungine (as in the American release of *Tycoon*). He was born in July 12, 1949 in Moscow. Lungin is the son of a scriptwriter and philologist. He later attended Moscow State University from which he graduated in 1971. Lungin worked primarily as a scriptwriter until given the opportunity to direct "*Taxi Blues*" at age 40. Lungin was awarded the Best Director Prize at 1990 Cannes Film Festival for the film "*Taxi Blues*" starring Pyotr Mamonov. That same year he took up residence in France, while making films in and about

Russia with French producers. Two years later, his next film *Luna Park* would also compete at Cannes. In 2006 he directed a religious film "The Island" in Russian "Ostrov" which also starred Mamonov. The film - which has English subtitles - closed the 2006 Venice Film Festival and was praised by the Russian Orthodox Church leader Alexis II. Lungin was awarded the distinction People's Artist of Russia in 2008.

**Actor: Pyotr Nikolayevich Mamonov** born in 14 April 1951.

He is a Russian rock musician, songwriter and actor, former frontman of the Moscow band *Zvuki Mu*. Mamonov was one of the few rock musicians from former USSR who managed to achieve recognition abroad, through his collaboration with Brian Eno in the late 1980s. Around the same period he started acting in films, and over the next decade wrote, produced and acted in several one-man theatrical performances establishing himself as a cult figure in Russia. One of Mamonov's best-known film appearances is in the leading role in Pavel Lungin's 1990 *Taxi Blues*. His theatre creations include *Is There Life on Mars?*, an absurdist take on Anton Chekhov's *A Marriage Proposal*, and *Chocolate Pushkin*, which makes a comical reference to (but doesn't cite) the Russian national poet Alexander Pushkin. Piotr explains the name for the album as his own comparison to a popular DJ who calls himself "Black Elvis" and also describes the genre on this record as "lit-hop" (literature hip-hop). In the 1990s, Mamonov converted to Orthodox Christianity, left the capital, and settled in a village. He returned to play the lead role in Pavel Lungin's religious film "The Island", which closed the 2006 Venice Film Festival. His acting in the film was praised by Alexis II, Patriarch of Moscow, and won him a Best Actor Nika Award. In 2009 Pavel Lungin invited him again to appear in his new production entitled "Tsar". Mamonov plays the title hero, here, tsar Ivan the Terrible and creates with mastery a haunting character torn between passionate faith and cruelty in its name.



### Premijiet tal-film

2006 Best film in *Moscow Premiere festival*.

2007 Six awards at the fifth national Golden Eagle Awards - "Best film", "Best male support role" (Viktor Suhorukov), "Best male role" (Petr Mamonov), "Best director" (Pavel Lungin), "Best scenario" (Dmitry Sobolev), "Best operator work" (Andrei Zhegalov).

2007 Nika Awards for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Supporting Actor, etc.

### L-appuntament li jmiss!

Il-Ġimgħa 27 ta' Lulju 2012

### Il-film...

**THE HOURS** (2002) – Rating: 16+

Sala tal-Konferenzi ĊAK, Triq S. Sommier, Birkirkara  
@ 7.30pm

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