

Konchalovsky's "Paradise" Short-Listed for Oscar Nomination

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Philippe Duquesne, Yuliya Vysotskaya and Christian Clauss in a scene from "Paradise." **Courtesy of Andrei Konchalovsky Studios**

Andrei Konchalovsky's "Paradise" has been included in the so-called shortlist of nine foreign language films to compete for next year's Oscar award.

The acclaimed director's film is the Russia's official entry in the U.S. Academy of Motion Pictures and Sciences' annual ritual of bestowing the golden statuette to noteworthy pictures, which will be presented in April.

"Paradise," one of 85 films entered in the competition, will be competing with motion pictures from Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Iran, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

This represents another significant honor for director Konchalovsky, whose work was recognized earlier this year at the Venice film festival. American film buffs' familiarity with the Russian auteur puts him in an enviable position in the Oscar race.

"The response to the movie has been quite overwhelming and humbling," the director said, adding, "The historical subject matter is extraordinarily important today given the worldwide political climate and certain factions that are trying to deny the very existence of the holocaust."

The story of "Paradise" centers around three main characters — Olga, a beautiful aristocratic Russian emigre and member of the French resistance; Jules, a corrupt French police collaborator; and Helmut, an idealistic and staunch supporter of Nazism, who is a high-ranking German SS officer.

The director says all of his characters are very different people whose paths cross under extreme circumstances against the backdrop of the World War II.

In reacting to the motion picture community's response to his film, Konchalovsky said that he is "very happy as I found that our efforts to preserve the memory of those who vanished in concentration camps will not be lost."

Distributors of "Paradise" have been aggressively promoting the film — holding special screenings, placing ads in the entertainment trade publications and hosting receptions.

The shortlisted nine foreign films eventually will be reduced to five nominees to compete for the 89th annual Oscar award.

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