

Andrei Zvyagintsev's 'Loveless' to Compete for Oscar Against 'Mathilde'

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Director Andrei Zvyagintsev at the premiere of his film Nelyubov [Loveless] **Alexander Shcherbak/TASS**

Russian director Andrei Zvyagintsev's "Loveless" is in the running to be Russia's entry for the Best Foreign Language Film at the upcoming Academy Awards, the film's producer told the [Interfax](#) news agency.

"We are sure we have a shot at [winning] an Oscar," Alexander Rodyansky, the producer of Zvyagintsev's last three movies, was cited as saying.

"Loveless" has received high praise and it was previously awarded the Cannes 2017 Jury Prize. The film focuses on a domestic quarrel but, like Zvyagintsev's previous film "Leviathan," has political overtones.

That film, about a man's battle against corruption in Russia, was also a nominee for the 87th Academy Awards. Although it was partly state-funded, Russian Culture Minister Vladimir Medinsky publicly slammed the film for its dark subject matter and supposed lack of patriotism.

This time, “Loveless” was filmed without financial support from the government.

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“[Medinsky] still recalls ‘Leviathan’ so often and with such ‘warmth’ that I didn’t want to cause him any trouble again,” producer Rodyansky told The Moscow Times. “We wanted to let [Zvyagintsev] make the movie he wanted to make. It’s a matter of principle for me.”

“Loveless” will compete against Alexei Uchitel’s historical drama “Mathilde,” a film about the last Russian Tsar's love affair with a ballerina. Long before it was released, the film was targeted by faith groups and officials who consider its portrayal of Nicholas II offensive.

Rodyansky told Interfax he thought that “Loveless” has a better chance at winning the coveted Oscar.

“This isn’t about picking the best Russian film, because that’s a very subjective matter,” he said, “it’s about picking a film that is capable of winning over the members of the Academy.”

The 90th Academy Awards will be held on March 4, 2018.

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