

Title: **Stars' Caravan, The**

Rating: ★★☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆ (10/10)

Year: **2000**

MPAA Rating: **NR**

Voting : **10.00** (1 votes)

Reviewed by: **Vadim Rizov**

Director: **Arto Halonen**

Writer: **Arto Halonen, Marja Pensala**

Genre: **Documentary**

Runtime: **58 m**

Incredibly formal, *The Stars' Caravan* is a documentary masterpiece, a made-for-Czech-TV work that, in less than an hour, has more thoughts than most films have in 2. Forced to be concise, Arto Halonen pulls off a symmetrical (literally: a bird takes off at the beginning of the film and lands at the end) coup, interviewing old Soviet footage, footage of contemporary Krgyzstan stuck in the mire of a post-Soviet economy, re-enactments of a Kirgiz folk legend, and a chronological structure timed to coincide with a hostage-taking situation reported over Kirgiz TVs. Some call it confusing; for the attentive viewer, it reaps large rewards.

In olden days, the Soviet Union paid projectionists to go through the far-out sections of the Union, projecting Soviet film for the unwashed masses. Now the money for that is gone, but one man still perseveres, and in the towns the effort to show film, be it on crappy small TVs and defective VCRs or on a 35mm projector, goes on. As expected, Halonen spins out the decline of cinema in Krgyzstan to mirror the overall economic decline of the country, and throws in the expected potshots at global culture. But if what he shows isn't surprising, the density of his editing and visuals is, and he uncovers many truths about the collapse's (non-)effects on Krgyzstan. Ambitious, concise, stunning - a truly foolproof work that's damnably entertaining to boot (who knew that viewing fare in Krgyzstan consisted of *Anaconda* and the 1969 motorcycle gang flick *Satan's Sadists*?).

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