

Kolya Burlyayev

Titles: 5 Sources: 1 Stills: 2

Born: Nikolai Burlyayev; U.S.S.R; August 3rd 1946

Gaunt, vaguely elfin creature of impressive sobriety and – despite certain contrivances of the scripting – touching fragility as the central figure of Tarkovsky's "**IVANOVO DETSTVO**". Ivan is one of the cinema's rare portrayals of the boy soldier: a hardened, wily veteran of 12, consumed with a burning hatred of Germans and a distrust of those who would seek control over him. His fleeting expressions of warmth reveal a boy's emotions, his disturbing dreams are a child's dreams, but he lives in a man's world, and fights to retain his place in the firing line – "Only useless people can rest in wartime" he says. Ivan's war is on two fronts: against the Nazis who murdered his family, and against the adults who would pack him off to school.



Brilliant, but wilful and exhausting to handle – Tarkovsky's verdict on him as the



"IVANOVO DETSTVO" – back from a sorty behind enemy lines, Ivan literally leaps into the arms of the officer sent to debrief him. His commander wants to spare him further exposure to danger, but Ivan will have none of that. Civilian life is senseless in the midst of war.

Source: *The Moving Picture Boy*

The Moving Picture Boy entry:

"Nikolai Burlyayev was one of the screen's most remarkable child actors. His best part, unquestionably, was as the hero of Andrei Tarkovski's early film **"IVAN'S CHILDHOOD"** – a twelve-year old orphan who sees his mother and sister gunned down by Germans, and finds a meaning in life by infiltrating enemy lines as a spy during World War Two.

The frail Ivan is no shrinking violet: returning from an assignment, he demands to be put in immediate touch with headquarters, and throws an impressive tantrum when lower ranks try to head him off. Only when his friend the captain arrives to confirm Ivan's star status does the boy relax at all. Burlyayev, skinny, brooding and old before his time, is wonderful in these scenes, allowing the child in him to peep only occasionally through the grim mask of revenge.

He's less well suited to the pseudo-idyllic flashback scenes of sun, sand and rolling apples.

Tarkovski used him again in **"ANDREI RUBLOFF"** (66), as the youth who casts the bell – Nikolai's personality was just as intransigent – and Tarkovski reported that though brilliant, he was also wilful and exhausting to handle. Then he was in **"OT NECHEGO DELAT"** (70), and had leads in **"STIHOVE"** (Bulgaria 70), **"LEGENDA"** (Poland 71) and **"PROVERKA NA DOROGAKH"** (71) before playing Dostoyevski's gambler in **"IGROK"** (72). He played in and directed one episode of **"POSHEKHON"** (75), graduating in the same year from the state faculty of film direction.

After some time out of films he reappeared as the hero of **"VOYENNO-POLEVOI ROMAN"** (84), and two years later directed himself in the title role of **"LERMONTOV"**.

FILMOGRAPHY

<i>Year</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Role</i>
61	15	SUD SUMASHCHESCHIKH ("Judgment of the Mad")	
61		MALCHIK I GOLUB ("The Boy and the Dove")	in title role ?
62	16	IVANOVO DETSTVO ("Ivan's Childhood" / "My Name is Ivan")	in title role (±12)
62		BEZ STRAKHA I UPRYOKA ("Without Fear or Reproach")	
62		V STUPLENIYE ("A Beginning") with <i>Borya Tokaryoff</i>	
63	17	STROGAYA IGRA ("Rough Game")	
66	20	ANDREI RUBLOFF	