Foreword

I FIRST MET Marina Goldovskaya during the period of perestroika in the Soviet Union when I was part of a delegation of scholars sent to Moscow to negotiate formal cultural relations between our two countries in the field of film studies. Here was a filmmaker whose courageous documentary films on past abuses of power were hailed as nothing less than events of nationwide importance. She was a woman who had climbed to the top of her field in a male-dominated television industry, and a film artist who wrote scholarly books embodying the much-vaunted but seldom-achieved ideal of uniting theory and practice. And, most of all, I met a gracious, generous, and articulate individual whose commitments and humanistic sensibilities came from the heart. I knew then that I desperately wanted Marina to come to UCLA to build our documentary program, to teach our students, and especially to serve as a role model for what it means to be an engaged filmmaker. In retrospect I still cannot believe how profoundly lucky we are that this actually came to pass.

As a maker of documentary films, Marina embraces a unique mixture of seemingly contradictory characteristics that are in fact complementary. Others may praise her work for different reasons, but, personally, what I admire most is the dialectical tension between a humanistic sensibility that is intensely personal and a critical awareness that is broadly social. In *The House on Arbat Street* (1993), she manages to capture in their full integrity the beliefs and idiosyncratic personalities of a score of people who had lived in a large Moscow apartment building over a period of more than seventy-five years. But when integrated into the overall context of the film, these separate testimonies add up to a whole that is far greater than the sum of its parts—nothing less than a masterful summary of the history of the Soviet Union from its inception through its demise, with all of the tragic contradictions laid bare. *The Prince Is Back* (1999) is an intimate and sympathetic portrait of a blindly idealistic dreamer, restoring an abandoned ruin in the hope of reclaiming his pre-revo-

lutionary family identity. But true to Marina's dialectical agenda, the personal once again provides a window onto the social, in this instance a period of unrest and street demonstrations when disquieting uncertainty about the future results in an escapist nostalgia for an irretrievable past. *The Shattered Mirror* (1992) may be Marina's most unapologetically personal essay, focusing warmly on many of her dear friends, but what I took away from the film most of all was the vision of a woman with a movie camera braving danger in the streets of Moscow to record and, by her filmmaking, to protect Russia's fragile hold on newfound political rights. I do not believe it is a coincidence that Marina selected Peter Sellers as the subject of her most recent film—a wildly creative, boundary-breaking theater director for whom artistic, humanistic, and ideological objectives are inextricably intertwined.

These same intriguing complexities define Marina as a person as well. Warmly personable, considerate, and exceptionally loyal to her friends, students, and colleagues, she also displays an iron-willed commitment to honesty and the integrity of her work. Over the years, I have seen her anguish about whether or not a particular shot did justice to the motivations of a person or the complexity of an event. I have witnessed the intensity of her quest for an underlying narrative thread that would tie hundreds of hours of footage into a coherent story, but never at the sacrifice of truth.

I am proud to have known Marina Goldovskaya for more than a decade as friend, colleague, mentor, and film artist. *A Woman with A Movie Camera* will enable you to get to know her too. Her story is one worth telling.

Robert Rosen

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