

CFIRELEASING

THE FENCER



THE FENCER
(MEIKKAILIJA)

Director: Klaus Härö | 2015 | Finland | 99 Min
Estonian & Russian with English Subtitles

Booking Inquiries

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SHORT SYNOPSIS

Based on a true story, a young man with a secret past is in hiding as a teacher in a small Estonian village where he organizes a fencing club that affects the lives of the local children in profound ways.

SYNOPSIS

A young man, Endel Nelis, arrives in Haapsalu, Estonia, in the early 1950s. Having left Leningrad to escape the secret police, he finds work as a teacher and founds a sports club for his students. Endel becomes a father figure to his students and starts teaching them his great passion - fencing, which causes a conflict with the school's principal. Envious, the principal starts investigating Endel's background...

Endel learns to love the children and looks after them; most are orphans as a result of the Russian occupation. Fencing becomes a form of self-expression for the children and Endel becomes a role model. The children want to participate in a national fencing tournament in Leningrad, and Endel must make a choice: risk everything to take the children to Leningrad or put his safety first and disappoint them.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Reading Anna Heinämaa's script was a wonderfully surreal experience. The story begins with a quiet man teaching fencing to children – a promise of a good story. The script captivated me, and I kept waiting for the story to flatten, never imagining that it could hold that level of fascination. But the story kept its grip on me till the very end. It's a story with everything a good film needs and a good number of challenges for a director. With all the elements a director could want, a wish entered my mind: Could I get to direct this film?

This exceptional story was a great foundation for the production and attracted the interest of financiers. The entire crew gave their all, working long days because the story had meaning for each and every one of them.

Stories about encounters between children and adults have always interested me. Almost all of us can remember an adult whose presence or words at the right time in our childhood have inspired or given us the crucial nudge in the right direction, helping us to realize a dream or pursue a dream job. I had teachers who encouraged me to make films, and I don't think I'd be a director without them.

The core theme of *THE FENCER* is the role of adults in children's lives, how adults see children and their interests, and how adults steer children in the right direction. It's a question that fascinates and puzzles: how do people become who they are?

I want to tell stories that tell the truth about life.

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Klaus Härö

KLAUS HÄRÖ

THE FENCER is Klaus Härö's fifth feature film. Härö is one of the most internationally praised Finnish directors, and his films have been festival hits as well as audience and critic favorites both in Finland and Sweden.

Härö grew up in Porvoo, Finland, and loved films as a little boy. His love for them turned into a passion in his early teens and in 1999, Härö graduated with a master's degree in directing and screenwriting from the Department of Film, TV and Scenography at the University of Art and Design Helsinki.

Klaus Härö received the Ingmar Bergman Award at the 2004 Guldbagge Gala, the Swedish equivalent of the Oscars. This was the first time the award had been given to a non-Swedish director. Härö then received a letter from Bergman himself in which the Swedish film legend thanked the young man for his excellent work in film.

PRAISE FOR *THE FENCER*

“Suffused with gorgeous cinematography, the sharp-sweet drama is Finland’s foreign Oscar entry and a pleasure to watch.”

– Kate Muir, *The Times of London*

“Well-acted, smoothly crafted.”

– Justin Chang, *Variety*

“An affecting portrait of a decent man who risks his life to uphold a bond of trust with his students.”

– Marilyn Ferdinand, *Chicago Reader*

Golden Globe Awards

Best Foreign Language Film, Nominee 2016

Academy Awards

Best Foreign Language Film, Official Selection 2016

Jussi Awards

Best Picture, Winner 2016



CAST & CREW

Endel	Märt Avandi
Kadri	Ursula Ratasepp
Marta	Liisa Koppel
Jaan's Grandfather	Lembit Ulfsak
Director	Klaus Härö
Script	Anna Heinämaa
Cinematography	Tuomo Hutri
Music	Gert Wilden Jr
Production Designer	Jaagup Roomet
Costume Designer	Tiina Kaukanen
Editors	Tambert Tasuja, Ueli Christen
Producers	Kai Nordberg Kaarle Aho
Co-Producer (Estonia)	Ivo Felt
Co-Producer (Germany)	Jörg Bundschuh
Duration	99 min
	Making Movies, Finland ©2015



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Website: <http://www.cafilm.org/thefencer/>

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/212139273>

High-Res Stills: <http://bit.ly/2qTwDVf>

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