



A FILM BY KLAUS HÄRÖ

THE FENCER

CFIRELEASING

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 at- ten, 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 lm 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?

- 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 Guld-bagge 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



A person in a dark coat and hat stands in a courtyard, holding a large sack on the ground. The background shows traditional wooden architecture.

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

Production Company

Making Movies, Finland ©2015



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, Nominee 2016

Jussi Awards

Best Picture, Winner 2016

Best Cinematography, Winner 2016

A group of young girls in white fencing gear, holding epees, in a fencing studio. The girls are in a line, looking forward with concentration. The background is a warm, wooden wall.

CFIRELEASING

THE FENCER

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

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

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

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