



THE FENCER (‘Miekkailija’)

Spring
Season
2017

Release: 2015

Cert (UK): PG

Language: Estonian, Russian and Armenian with English Subtitles

Runtime: 1 hr 39 mins

Director: Klaus Härö

Writers: Anna Heinämaa

Cinematographer: Tuomo Hutri

Cast: Lembit Ulfsak, Märt Avandi, Kirill Käro



‘Endel, a champion fencer quietly on the run from the secret service in Leningrad, manages to get a post teaching at a provincial Estonian school. Before long, he’s developed a deep affection for his charges, mostly war orphans, and starts coaching them on foil control and legwork at an afterschool club. When several kids show promise and skill, Endel must decide whether to risk taking them to Leningrad for a competition’ – Leslie Felperin, Guardian.

Set in the 1950s in Estonia we probably cannot really appreciate the feeling of oppression that the Stalinist Soviets had over the country. Endel, hiding in plain sight in this small school, would not have been able to feel free and safe; all eyes were watching everyone’s move...

The actors are all Estonian; little known in this country but you will recognize Lembit Ulfsak who starred in ‘Tangerines’ (2013). The photography comes in for much praise from several critics – ‘The film looks beautiful, too, with bleak, undersaturated landscapes and simple, austere photography establishing a distinct sense of time and place’ – David Clack, Time Out.

The director Klaus Härö is from Finland. He is new to Keswick, but he has directed 5 films now and has picked up awards from festivals all around the world. 4 of his films were selected to represent his native country Finland in the Best Foreign Film Category at the Oscars. ‘The Fencer’ was nominated for the Golden Globes 2016.

