



Registered Charity: 1156478. Patron: Jim Broadbent

Friday May 6th, 2016: 7.30pm

Tangerines

(Estonia/Georgia 2013. Cert 15)

dir: Zaza Urushadze

starring: Lembit Ulfsak, Elmo Nüganen

sponsor: Dr. Ann Mallett

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While *Tangerines* opens with a brief onscreen text describing the 1992 civil war between ethnic Georgians and Russian-supported Abkhaz separatists that sent most local Estonian settlers fleeing back home, the first images we see in the film are of 'Grandapa' Ivo (Estonian acting legend Lembit Ulfsak) sawing wood in his workshop to make boxes. His profession as a carpenter is enough to bring to mind the coffin maker who figures predominantly in Kurosawa Akira's *Yojimbo* (1961) and Sergio Leone's re-imagining *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964), both set - like *Tangerines* - in middle-of-nowhere villages riven by conflict. Yet the old man's crates are being built neither to house corpses nor, as the Chechen mercenary Ahmed (Giorgi Nikashidze) suspects, to contain bombs, but for a more civilised purpose: to transport the tangerines that Margus (Elmo Nüganen), the village's only other remaining inhabitant, hopes to pick before heading back to Estonia. Far from setting the village's opposed forces against one another like the-man-with-no-name protagonists of Kurosawa's and Leone's films, Ivo is a peacemaker, taking under one roof both Ahmed and the Georgian volunteer fighter Nika (Mikhail Meshki) after both are injured in a skirmish. There, he will gradually teach these two sworn enemies lessons in civics and humanity, even as the realities of war close in on the village's idyll.

"Cinema is a big fraud", Ivo declares to Margus and local doctor Juhan (Ralvo Trass), explaining why the military van they have just seen rolloving over an incline did not explode like it would in the movies. Through these words Georgian writer-director Zaza Urushadze (*Three Houses*, *The Guardian*) positions *Tangerines* outside the typical conventions of war movies - although the film is, with its exploration of cross-cultural hostilities without a single domestic setting - somewhat reminiscent of Aleksandr V Rogozhkin's *The Cuckoo* (2012). Spectacle is mostly kept to the periphery or the horizon, leaving Urushadze to focus on the mindset - and the grimly universal aftermath - of internecine strife. We learn that in his former life Nika was an actor ("They almost don't make films over here any more", he complains with unintended reflexivity. "No money"), and here too, everyone is playing a role: the recovering Ahmed dresses in his host's civilian clothes; when the militia arrives, Nika must pretend to be a mute Abkhaz soldier (under Ivo's direction). Another Abkhaz militia will mistake Ahmed for a Georgian, and find himself under fire from both him and Nika. Meanwhile Ivo, in this no-man's land for old men, has stopped seeing his guests in terms of sides, and hangs around (where others, including his surviving family, have left), to honour the dead.

With shots typically framed to show Ivo between Ahmed and Nika, *Tangerines* is a plea for reconciliation and understanding in



a world of belligerent opposition. Ivo's woodworking may eventually turn to coffin making (as in *Yojimbo*) but his is the kind of carpentry associated with the character and moral teachings of Jesus. This Estonian-Georgian co-production is a bitter-sweet non-epic that finds just the right balance between hope and despair.

Credits

Ivo	Lembit Ulfsak	Director	Zaza Urushadze
Ahmed	Giorgi Nikashidze	Screenplay	Zaza Urushadze
Margus	Elmo Nüganen	DoP	Rein Kotov
Nika	Mikhail Meshki	Editor	Alexander Kuranov
Dr. Juhan	Ralvo Trass	Production Design	Tea Telia
		Music	Niaz Diasmidze
		Sound design	Harmo Kallaste
		Costume	Simon Matchabeli

Estonia/Georgia 2013. mins

Another view

It has been a long, patient wait for the UK release of Georgian director Zaza Urushadze's Oscar-nominated Tangerines but it has been worth it. Set in 1992 during the war between Georgia and Abkhaz separatists, it unfolds in a small village in which simple acts of individual kindness illuminate the great folly of conflict.

As others have fled a country torn apart by civil war, Estonian immigrant farmers Ivo (a wise, weary Lembit Ulfsak) and his neighbour Margus (Elmo Nüganen) have remained in their village to harvest one last tangerine crop. When a fight breaks out in front of their home, they give shelter to Chechen mercenary Ahmed (Giorgi Nakashidze) who appears to be the lone survivor. Later, they discover that gravely wounded Georgian soldier Nika (Mikheil Meskhi) is still alive and he is also given shelter. When an individual is in pain and distress, the instinct is to offer help but their actions bring the wider feud right under their own roof. Ivo sets the rules of their confinement and gradually these sworn enemies start to find some common understanding.

Tangerines has been beautifully photographed by Rein Kotov – from the green landscapes to the candlelit glow of treacly interiors that adds to the melancholy air. This is a film that mines the profoundest truths from the simplest of stories and underlines the sheer absurdity of the situation. It is a thoughtful morality tale, handled with delicacy and precision. It also contains moments of great joy and hope as it reflects the way heightened emotions can shift from hatred to hilarity in a heartbeat. Given everything that has been happening across Europe, it couldn't be a more timely or poignant film.

Alan Hunter (The List)

Programme news

The following films (in alphabetical order) have been selected (subject to confirmation) for our 2016-17 season.

Attila Marcel (France 2014)	Men and Chicken (Denmark 2015)
Bande à Part (France 1964)	Mustang (Turkey/France/Qatar/Germany 2015)
The Brand New Testament (Belgium/France/Luxembourg 2015)	Our Little Sister (Japan 2015)
The Commune (Denmark 2016)	The Pearl Button (Chile 2015)
Dheepan (France 2015)	Rams (Iceland 2015)
Embrace of the Serpent (Colombia/Argentina/Venezuela 2015)	Sherpa (Australia/UK 2015)
Grandma (USA, 2015).	Son of Saul (Hungary 2015)
Little Men (USA/Greece 2016)	Tale of Tales (UK/France/Italy 2015)
The Lobster (UK 2015)	Tangerine (USA 2015)
Love and Friendship (USA 2016)	Truman (Argentina/Spain 2015)
Maggie's Plan (USA 2016)	Victoria (Germany 2015)
	A War (Denmark 2015)

As in previous years, 3 additional films will be chosen from those released during the summer and autumn. Dates for the season are as follows:

Sept: 16, 23	Nov: 4, 11, 18, 25	Mar: 3, 10, 17, 24, 31
Oct: 14, 21, 28	Jan: 6, 13, 20, 27	Apr: 7, 21, 28
	Feb: 3, 17, 24	May: 5, 12

If you are interested in sponsoring any of these films, please let a committee member know. Rates are

- 1 film - £50
- 2 films - £90
- 3 films - £120.

Additional films can be sponsored at £30 per title.

We aim to release the final programme in print & online in June.

On The Record

In keeping with the summer seasons of recent years, we have organised a short programme of 6 music documentaries between June 10th and June 22nd. Details of the films are below.

Muscle Shoals (USA 2013. 111 mins. Cert PG). showing on June 10 at The Venue (7.30pm)

A film that pays tribute to the prestigious recording studios in a small Alabama town, featuring the likes of Aretha Franklin and

Percy Sledge.

The Possibilities are Endless (UK 2014. 83 mins. Cert 12a): showing on June 12 at The Collection (2pm)

Recovering from a stroke, Former Orange Juice front man Edwyn Collins reflects on his childhood and the positive power of music.

Marley (UK/USA 2012. 142 mins. Cert 15): showing on June 15 at The EMMTEC (7pm)

In Kevin MacDonald's much-praised documentary, the music of the legendary Bob Marley is extensively showcased and the important themes of his life eloquently portrayed.

Mistaken for Strangers (USA 2014. 75 mins. Cert 15): showing on June 17 at The EMMTEC (7pm)

Tom Berninger chronicles his time spent on the road as a member of the tour crew for The National, the rock and roll band fronted by his brother, Matt.

20 Feet from Stardom (USA 2013. 89 mins. Cert 12): showing on June 19 at The Collection (2pm)

In this documentary, the spotlight is turned from the stars onto their talented but unheralded backing singers.

Orion: The Man who would be King (UK/USA. 2015. 86 mins. Cert 12a): showing on June 22 at The EMMTEC (7pm)

The bizarre story of Jimmy Ellis, aka Orion, a masked singer who impersonated Elvis in the years following the star's death

NB: The film will be introduced by the director Jeanie Finlay and will be followed by a Q & A.

Tickets for each film will be available on the door. They are also on sale at our film tonight and on May 13th and May 27th, to members or anyone attending as a guest: cost - £4 (LFS members and all concessions), £5 (non members)

Our next screening - Friday May 13th, 7.30pm Jauja (Argentina/Denmark 2014. Cert 15)

Viggo Mortensen stars in this poetic, metaphysical western that further enhances director Lisandro Alonso's reputation as a unique, visionary director.

Mortensen (who co-produced and co-composed the film's score) plays Captain Dinesen, a Danish soldier assigned to Argentina's Patagonia region in 1882. The army have been trying to rid the jungle region of its indigenous inhabitants, and Dinesen arrives with his daughter, Ingeborg, charged with a surveying project of the soon to be 'civilised' land. When she elopes, he follows, embarking on a journey through a vast and unforgiving land, where he has to confront demons of an existential nature the further he travels from home.

"There is no doubting that Alonso has created a remarkable piece of cinema" (Jennie Kermodé, Eye for Film)