

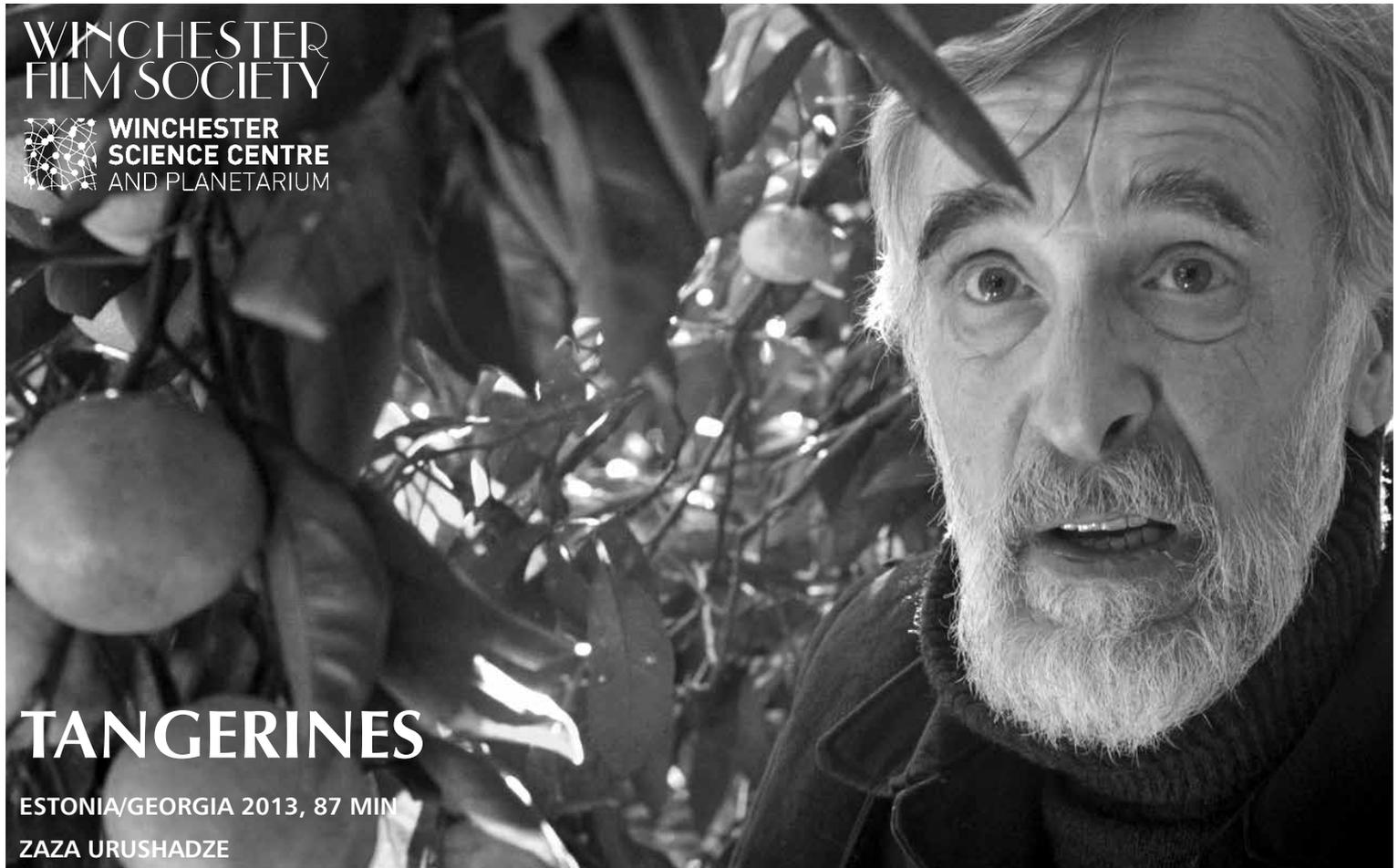
WINCHESTER
FILM SOCIETY

WINCHESTER
SCIENCE CENTRE
AND PLANETARIUM

TANGERINES

ESTONIA/GEORGIA 2013, 87 MIN

ZAZA URUSHADZE



Ivo, a taciturn grandfather with a straight back and a silver beard, makes wooden crates in his workshop. He hopes to make enough to contain the harvest from his neighbor Margus's tangerine grove. The two men are among the last Estonians remaining in the former Soviet Republic of Georgia during the 1992 war in the Abkhazia region.

That remote conflict — part of a flurry of ethnic and regional wars in the immediate post-Soviet era — is the setting of Zaza Urushadze's *Tangerines*, a humanist fable that was among this year's nominees for the best foreign-language film Oscar. The mountain valley where Ivo (Lembit Ulfsak) and Margus (Elmo Nüganen) live seems quiet enough, a place of rural rhythms and ancient routines. (Their families returned to Estonia when the fighting started). But the tranquillity is disrupted by a skirmish between Georgian soldiers and Chechen mercenaries fighting for the Russian-backed Abkhazian separatists.

There are two survivors, one from each side, both wounded and both reluctant beneficiaries of Ivo's hospitality. Ahmed (Giorgi Nakhashidze), the Chechen, has the milder injury and the hotter temper. He swears that he will kill Niko (Mikheil Meskhi),

the Georgian, as soon as he can, but promises Ivo that he won't do it under the old man's roof. A tense period of convalescence follows, during which Niko and Ahmed glare at each other over cups of tea, Margus frets about the state of his fruit and Ivo sternly tells everyone to calm down.

The audience, meanwhile, has time to meditate on the stupidity of war and the nature of honor. The film, beautifully shot and cleanly edited, has the economy of a short story, unfolding in a mood of slightly sentimental masculine stoicism. There are no women to be seen — a photograph of Ivo's granddaughter is the only female presence — and occasionally some more fighting men show up, to increase the tension and underscore the themes.

Tangerines is a modest film, sure of its proportions and clear about its intentions. The key to its effectiveness lies with the actors, in particular Mr. Ulfsak, who radiates wry, weary wisdom and Mr. Nakhashidze, who is as charismatic and menacing as a mastiff at rest. The friendship that develops between Ivo and Ahmed is touching and credible, and seems like a small mercy in the midst of cruelty and hatred.

A.O. Scott New York Times

WRITING CREDITS: Zaza Urushadze **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Rein Kotov **MUSIC:** Niaz Diasamidze

CAST: Ivo Lembit Ulfsak | Margus Elmo Nüganen | Ahmed Giorgi Nakhashidze | Niko Mikheil Meskhi

VOTING FOR *Catch Me Daddy* A29 | B18 | C7 | D2 | E10 | Rating 72.7% | Attendance ?75

Our next screening and the final film in this season | **Timbuktu** | Tuesday 10 May 2016. 8.00pm

"...a cry from the heart about bigotry, arrogance and violence..."