



Seniors' Matinee

Tuner

Tuner

Director: Daniel Roher

©: Tuner Film US LLC

an English Breakfast production

in association with: Elevation Pictures

Presented by: Black Bear

Executive Producers: Mary Anne Waterhouse, Robert Ramsey, Noah Segal, Christina Piovesan, Courtney L. Cuniff, John Friedberg, Andrew Golov

Produced by: JoAnne Sellar, Lila Yacoub, Teddy Schwarzman, Michael Heimler

Co-producer: André Coutu

Unit Production Manager: Christopher J. Danton

Production Accountant: Sarah J. Feddern

Location Manager: Tristan Plant

Post-production Supervisor: Danielle Dmytraszko

1st Assistant Director: Simon Board

CASTING BY: Debra Zane, Dylan Jury

WRITTEN BY: Daniel Roher, Robert Ramsey

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Lowell A. Meyer

A CAMERA/STEADICAM OPERATOR:

Angelo Colavecchia

B CAMERA OPERATOR: Jan Belina

STILL PHOTOGRAPHER: Alan Markfield

VISUAL EFFECTS BY: Rocket Science

SPECIAL EFFECTS CO-ORDINATOR:

Special Effects Company

EDITED BY: Greg O'Bryant

PRODUCTION DESIGNER: Peter Cosco

ART DIRECTOR: Andrea Kristof

SET DECORATOR: Andrew Hill

COSTUME DESIGNER: Sarah Millman

DEPARTMENT HEAD MAKE-UP: Candice Ornstein

DEPARTMENT HEAD HAIR: Leanne Morrison-Freed

MAIN TITLE DESIGN: John Moran

DI COLOURIST: Brett Trider

ORIGINAL SCORE BY: Will Bates

ON SCREEN MUSIC COMPOSED BY: Marius de Vries

MUSIC SUPERVISOR: Steve Gizicki

SOUND DESIGNER: Johnnie Burn

PRODUCTION SOUND MIXER: Bryan Day

RE-RECORDING MIXER: Johnnie Burn

SUPERVISING SOUND EDITOR: Johnnie Burn

STUNT CO-ORDINATOR: Alison Reid

INTIMACY CO-ORDINATOR: Burcu Emeç

PIANO TUNING CONSULTANT: Peter White

PICTURE FINISHING PROVIDED BY: Picture Shop

CAST:

Leo Woodall (*Niki White*)

Havana Rose Liu (*Ruthie*)

Lior Raz (*Uri*)

Tovah Feldshuh (*Marla*)

Gil Cohen (*Yoni*)

Nissan Sakira (*Benny*)

Jean Yoon (*Dr Madeline Richards*)

Jean Reno (*Marius Maissner*)

Dustin Hoffman (*Henry Horowitz, Harry*)

Alisen Richmond-Peck (*mansion homeowner*)

Ellyn Jameson (*Ellyn*)

Tim Blair (*studio manager*)

Nicola Correia-Damude (*brownstone homeowner*)

Amy Lee (*event planner*)

David Reale (*Travis Conway*)

Gumbo (*Stacey*)

Graham Knox (*security guard*)

Alexandra Verma (*cashier*)

Bridget Lisbeth Gaines (*Judy in Ruthie's orchestra*)

Ari Cohen Mann (*Ari in Ruthie's orchestra*)

Jonnie 'Dunfoundead' Park (*Sung*)

Rek Lee (*Jinwoo*)

C.S. Lee (*Yong*)

Earl 'Bubba' McLean (*Mr Douglas*)

Herbie Hancock (*himself*)

Leo Woodall impresses as a shy piano tuner whose perfect pitch and hearing prove invaluable to a group of thieves. Niki (another superb turn by *White Lotus* and *One Day* star Woodall), a piano tuner, lives with hyperacusis – an increased sensitivity to sound. Meanwhile, Harry, Niki's boss and mentor, is losing his hearing. When Harry is locked out of his safe, Niki discovers a new talent that will both transform and threaten his sedate, quietly uneventful life. The narrative feature debut of Oscar-winner Daniel Roher (*Navalny*) is an enjoyable, wonderfully understated crime caper with a swirl of romance. Boasting outstanding sound design, kinetic editing and a screenplay that balances smart plot twists with richly drawn characterisation, *Tuner* balances the thriller edge of Michael Mann's *Thief* with the sonic fascination of *Whiplash*, hitting all the right keys for a great time at the movies.

Kimberley Sheehan, Lead Programmer

SPOILER WARNING The following notes give away some of the plot.

In the movies, stethoscopes are used as often for safe-cracking as they are for medical purposes, which is to say that it is hard to write an original crime story. With his first fiction feature, Daniel Roher has pulled it off. *Tuner*, co-written with Robert Ramsey, is a beautifully constructed film about beautifully constructed things: pianos, watches, concertos – and safes. Leo Woodall plays Niki, a young piano tuner in business with the octogenarian Harry Horowitz (Dustin Hoffman), who has a client list, managed by his wife Marla (Tovah Feldshuh), but no longer plays an active role. A gifted pianist in childhood, Niki has a hearing condition that is mostly a curse but partly a blessing: his hearing is too sensitive, which is useful for tuning pianos, and which also means that, when confronted with a tempting safe, he can make do without a stethoscope.

The film begins with an extended comic montage sequence which establishes that very few people care about piano tuning: all of Harry's clients, scattered around New York (though it might as well be Toronto, where *Tuner* was actually shot), are rich, and most are tasteless. They see pianos as ornaments and tuners as handymen who might be repurposed for any given domestic task. Niki's relations with musicians, in the person of concert pianist and aspiring composer Ruthie (Havana Rose Liu), are more fraught and more interesting: there the resentment is mutual, she needing him to do her job, he coveting her job. As in a *film noir*, this background of frustration – the put-upon solo operator serving dumb money – becomes meaningful and less comic when Harry falls ill and Niki needs to pay his medical bills (perhaps justifying the US setting after all). Suddenly the offer of safe-cracking work coming from a dodgy security firm run by Uri (Lior Raz) seems attractive.

If the set-up of an outwardly decent man driven to crime by circumstance and hidden demons is *noir-ish*, Roher's style is not. *Tuner* is stylishly shot, but is really distinguished by Greg Bryant's editing and the film's complex soundtrack, with sound design credited to Max Behrens, previously credited on *The Zone of Interest* (2023). As well as the music, which includes Will Bates's part-jazz, part-electronic score, Marius de Vries's piano compositions for Ruthie, and some vintage tracks by Harry's in-film friend Herbie Hancock, the soundtrack is frequently tuned into Niki's way of hearing, deliberately suppressed except

Abanoub Andraous (*nurse*)
Ty Kostyk (*orderly*)
Dorren Lee (*Maissner assistant*)
USA-Canada 2025©
107 mins
Digital

A Black Bear release

Regular Programme

Restored: UK Premiere of 4K Restoration:

Till We Meet Again

Thu 4 Jun 18:30

Silent Cinema: Film Society 38 + intro by BFI National Archive curator Bryony Dixon and guests
Sun 7 Jun 14:45

Projecting the Archive: Latin Quarter (aka

Frenzy) + intro by Jason Morell, actor and son of

Joan Greenwood

Tue 9 Jun 18:10

Woman with a Movie Camera: Grace of My Heart

+ intro by Grace Barber-Plentie, BFI Festivals

Film Programmer

Fri 12 Jun 18:15

Experimenta: Experimental Cinema Structures, Systems and Strategies + writer and artist Simon

Payne in conversation with BFI National Archive

curator William Fowler

Thu 18 Jun 18:10

Seniors' Free Matinee: A Dry White Season

+ intro

Mon 22 Jun 14:00

Relaxed Screening: How to Marry a Millionaire

+ intro and discussion

Mon 29 Jun 18:30

when working or when others in the criminal fraternity decide to punish him, which with some inevitability they do more than once. Niki's need for silence when working enables the film to show how noisy 'silence' can be.

What is definitely un-*noir*-ish and contemporary is the central relationship between Niki and Ruthie, two zillennials who have met and have some level of attraction for one another, but who have to be practically forced to talk on second meeting, by Harry, and who even then can barely converse. Eventually they find a way; but unlike any *noir* couple, neither has any burning need to be with the other, which poses a problem for the film, in that its structure, 'well-made' in a way that would be recognisable to a Victorian playgoer or 1940s cinemagoer, is practically designed to produce a resounding ending, whether happy (they end up together) or not (one dies or goes to prison). Everything else about the story is neatly resolved, but the relationship between this pair cannot or will not be: Ruthie half-recoils from the word 'boyfriend', so what are they?

Tuner has a way of commenting on this: tuners, says Niki, don't like 'the P-word' – perfect – since if even one note sounds that way, it is only one of 88, to be played in combination with others, and the struggle to create harmony from chaos can never attain perfection. In the film's crucial and most discordant scene, Ruthie practices her own composition for a performance that could make her career, while a distracted Niki contemplates having to do the proverbial 'one last job' for Uri, after one that went violently wrong. When Ruthie asks for his opinion, he initiates a row that culminates in him saying he was a better pianist than she ever was – finally his resentment, born of envy, comes into the open, a far from perfect state of affairs. Roher provides a satisfyingly unsatisfying, perfectly imperfect ending, with a great flourish that draws attention to this loose end that can't be tied.

Henry K. Miller, *Sight and Sound*, June 2026

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