

MAKING MOVIES & SOUL FOOD

PRESENT

# GERI'S WISH

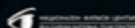
A FILM BY TONISLAV HRISTOV



WRITTEN BY TONISLAV HRISTOV  
DIRECTED BY ALEXANDER STANSHEV  
EDITED BY VESELIN ZOGRAFOV  
PRODUCTION DESIGNER PETAR DUNDAROV  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS ALEXANDER STANSHEV · TODOR G. TODOROV  
PRODUCED BY KAARLE AHO · ANDREA STANOEVA · KAI NORDBERG  
COSTUME DESIGNER CATBOOCS  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MAKING MOVIES · SOUL FOOD



SOULFOOD







# GERI's WISH

**A Documentary Film by Tonislav Hristov**

**Countries of Production** Finland, Bulgaria

**Production year** 2024

**Duration** 81 min

**Language** Bulgarian

**Subtitles** English

**Directed, written and edited by** Tonislav Hristov

**DoP:** Alexander Stanishev

**Sound:** Veselin Zografov

**Music:** Petar Dundakov

**Producers** Kaarle Aho & Andrea Stanoeva  
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**World sales** CAT&Docs  
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## Logline

Geri, 18-year old Bulgarian girl living in an orphanage, is preparing for her high school's final exams and the prom while trying to understand her family's violent history.

## Short Synopsis

Geri, 18, is a Bulgarian girl living in an orphanage in the city of Vratza. She's a senior at a local high school. She's dreaming of entering university. The final exams are approaching, and this has even bigger meaning for her than to many others, because after the graduation she is obliged to move out from the orphanage.

Geri starts to go through her past with her stepbrother; the domestic violence behind the breakup of the family. She would love to know why her mother abandoned her and why she was not given to a foster family, but had to grow up at the orphanage. She hesitates should she invite the mother to her prom. Geri also had a boyfriend who wanted her to quit the school and emigrate to Germany. He returns for the prom.

The prom night is wonderful, full of hope and joy, but there are new twists of fate looming around the corner. Can Geri overcome her past, or will she repeat the family's old mistakes in a different form?







## Director's Statement

Next to my home in the city of Vratza, Bulgaria, there is an orphanage. When I was little we used to play a lot with the kids from the institution, but with time I never kept contact with any of them. From that time, I remembered that they were talking about a few things that bothered them all:

After they turned 18, they would have had to leave the orphanage. And they had no idea where to go, and no one to help them with moving on with their lives. And more importantly, I remember that none of them ever got adopted. When I got my first camera as a film student in Finland 15 years ago, I went back to Bulgaria to film the kids in the orphanage for one day. I didn't ask any questions. I just filmed them.

But these questions never left me.

Now 15 years later, I'm a father of two children. I want them to study, go to university, and have a job and decent lives. And now as a father, the question of what happens to parentless children is bothering me even more.

I wanted to find answers to these questions: why these kids are not being adopted, what happens to them after they are out of the institution, does anyone keep in touch with them, does anyone care about them? I knew that for boys it might had been easier to find a job because there was a lot of construction work available in the city. But what happened to girls was a mystery to me.

Making the documentary "Geri's Wish", gave me the answers to these questions. But some of these answers raised even bigger questions, and now I feel it is the time to talk about them and do our best to change the system!





## Director

Tonislav Hristov (b. 1978) is a filmmaker born in Bulgaria, based in Finland and Bulgaria. He has directed 7 feature length documentary films that have been screened in numerous festivals around the world, including Sundance, Berlinale, IDFA, HotDocs, Shanghai, Tribeca, Thessaloniki, Karlovy Var etc. His documentary The Good Postman (IDFA 2016, Sundance 2017) was nominated for the European Film Awards in 2017. Magic Life of V premiered in Sundance and Berlinale 2019. His latest documentary The Last Seagull has been screened in 2023 in Thessaloniki Documentary IFF, CPH:Dox, DOK.fest Munich, DocAviv, Millenium Docs Against Gravity etc.

His debut feature film The Good Driver was selected as the best Bulgarian feature film at Sofia IFF in 2023 and won three Bulgarian National Film Awards. It has also been screened among other festivals at Thessaloniki IFF 2022, Gothenburg IFF 2023 and it won two awards in Los Angeles South-Eastern European Film Festival 2023. It is having cinema distribution in Finland, Sweden and Bulgaria.

## Directors filmography

2023: The Last Seagull (77 min) - documentary  
2022: "The Good Driver" (100 min) – feature film  
2019: "The Magic Life of V" (87 min) - documentary  
2016: "The Good Postman" (82min) - documentary  
2015: "Once Upon a Dream – A Journey to the Last Spaghetti Western" (60min) - documentary  
2014: "Love & Engineering" (85min) - documentary  
2013: "Soul Food Stories" (70min) - documentary  
2011: "Rules of Single life" (78min) - documnetary  
2008: "Family fortune" (52min) – documentary





## Production Company

MAKING MOVIES established 1996, is a production company based in Helsinki, and owned by producers Kai Nordberg and Kaarle Aho. It has produced 16 feature films and more than 50 documentaries, shorts and TV-dramas. Its feature films have been nominated for the Golden Globes and shortlisted for Oscars (The Fencer 2016 by Klaus Härö). They have won a Nordic Film Prize (for the best Nordic feature film; Little Wing 2017 by Selma Vilhunen), nine Jussi-prizes (Finnish Academy Awards), a Venla-prize (the best Finnish TV-drama) and two Ketu-prizes (for the best Finnish short film). The films by Making Movies have been screened in A-festivals such as Berlinale, Sundance, Toronto, Venice, South by Southwest, Tribeca, IDFA and HotDocs.

The last two feature films by Making Movies are My Sailor, My Love by Klaus Härö and The Good Driver by Tonislav Hristov. My Sailor, My Love premiered in Toronto IFF 2022 and was in autumn 2022 one of the most watched films in Finnish cinemas. It was selected at Dublin IFF in 2023 as the best Irish film. The Good Driver (2022) by Tonislav Hristov was awarded at the Sofia IFF 2023 as the best Bulgarian feature film.

The documentaries produced by Making Movies include many award winning films like Happiness, (Sundance 2014) and A Decent Factory (IDFA 2004) by Thomas Balmés, In the Dark (2004) by Sergey Dvortsevov, The Last Seagull (Thessaloniki 2023, CPH:dox 2023 ) The Magic Life of V (Sundance 2019, Berlinale 2019) and The Good Postman (IDFA 2016, Sundance 2017, nominated for the European Film Award 2017) by Tonislav Hristov, and as a co-producer The Look of Silence (Oscar nominated for the best feature documentary 2016) by Joshua Oppenheimer and Innocence (Venice 2022) by Guy Davidi.





**PRODUCTION**

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