

Golden Girls Film presents



# KinderJ

Three children are standing behind the title. On the left, a boy with curly hair plays a ukulele. In the center, a boy in a green sweater plays a small red drum with sticks. On the right, a girl in a white dress with brown polka dots dances while holding a stick. White musical notes are drawn around them.

„Empathetic and funny“  
(KLEINE ZEITUNG)

„Refreshing... delightful“  
(PROFIL)

A film by the Riahi Brothers

GOLDEN GIRLS FILM PRESENTS "KINDERJ" A FILM BY THE RIAHI BROTHERS D.O.P. MARIO MINICHMAYR & RIAHI BROTHERS ADDITIONAL CAMERA MATTHIAS SMYCKA KLEMENS HUFNAGL GEORG GEUTEBRÜCK DOMINIK SPRITZENDORFER COLOR GRADING RAPHAEL BARTH DANIEL PAZDERKA SOUND CLAUS BENISCHKE HJALTI BAGER-JONATHANSSON GREGOR RASEK EDITING DAVID ARNO SCHWAIGER SOUND DESIGN ATANAS TCHOLAKOV SOUND MIX MARTIN LÖCKER DRAMATIC ADVISOR MICHAEL SEEBER TITLE ANIMATION & POSTER ARMAN T. RIAHI DAVID SCHWAIGER CORNELIA BRIZSAK POSTER PHOTOGRAPHY KATARINA BALGAVY EXECUTIVE PRODUCER RAPHAEL BARTH ARASH T. RIAHI PRODUCER ARASH T. RIAHI & KARIN C. BERGER WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY RIAHI BROTHERS

[facebook.com/kinders.film](http://facebook.com/kinders.film)



A film by the Riahi Brothers

A | 2016 | 95 min | OV with engl. subtitles

**Austrian Cinema Release: November 11th 2016**

**Audience Award  
DIAGONALE 2016, Austria**

<http://www.kinders-film.com>

**PRODUCTION COMPANY**

Golden Girls Filmproduktion & Filmservices GmbH  
Seidengasse 15 / 3 / 20  
A – 1070 Vienna  
Austria  
Tel: + 43 18105636  
Mail: office@goldengirls.at  
www.goldengirls.at

## **LOGLINE**

KINDERS is a touching film about the power of music. It shows new ways of inspiring adolescent creativity. A push for a new education policy.

## **SHORT - SYNOPSIS**

KINDERS is a touching film about hidden potential, creativity, integration, the power of music and the possible future of our society. A musical world that is opener and richer than the world the children came from, a world where they learn to trust themselves. It gives them access to a day-to-day life in which they are heard and seen and their needs are respected. Through the music project ((superar)), in the long-term project we learn from Arash and Arman T. Riahi what really goes on in our children's lives - their worries, joys and desires for their lives.

A mature film about children - empathetic, merciless, inspiring...

## **LONG – SYNOPSIS**

In KINDERS we accompany children and adolescents with various backgrounds throughout their difficult, confusing and funny day-to-day life and get to know their perspectives and stances. The central theme is the edgy musical education program ((superar)) founded by Caritas, Wiener Konzerthaus and the Vienna Boys' Choir in which the children are transformed from "invisible" outsiders into self-confident young people and learn to express their hidden potential through the power of music. The children themselves realise how their daily lives visibly change as a result of the discussions that accompany the music training.

The film shows how full of obstacles and dramatic yet also how exhilarating and inspiring the path is that the children travel over the course of their education. By singing together and learning to play a musical instrument, the lives of these socially disadvantaged young people also take on an extremely surprising, vibrant and creative dimension. It is not the "functionality" but rather the unfurling of talents and their use that should be the focal point of our lives.

## SELECTED PRESS COMMENTS

*“‘Kinders’, a film currently in cinemas, shows how those who are excluded and powerless find their voices. Are you also angry about how things are? Then watch this!”*

Sibylle Hamann, DIE PRESSE

*“Making music together brings hidden potential to the surface and creates community where a feeling of isolation rules.”*

heute mittag, ORF

*“The Riahi brothers spent almost four years with the children before and while filming. They walk amongst them invisibly and interact with them as equals. [...]”*

Synchron – Das Filmmagazin, Ö1

*“The children’s sincerity is awe-inspiring and speaks in favour of the filmmakers’ empathy. Cameraman Mario Minchmayr also deserves his due praise here; he knows how to equally capture facial expressions and group dynamics.”*

Susanne Veil, WIENER ZEITUNG

*“The Riahi brothers get astonishingly close to the little protagonists who often analyse their life situations with words that are as much touching as wise: the film doesn’t tell about them; rather they tell the film.”*

DER FALTER

*“In the end, the kids are on stage. Their parents pull out their mobile phones. Many of them are sitting in a concert hall for the first time. And there is that integration that is often spoken of in the nation of immigrants, happening as if it’s nothing.”*

Edith Meinhard, PROFIL

*“Kinders” is a wonderful documentary about children from Vienna and the healing and restorative power of music.*

*IDEAL FOR: all music lovers and film fans that love stories full of positive energy.“*

Gunther Baumann, FILMCLICKS.AT

*“After 90 minutes with these children you no longer fear for the future of our society.”*

TIROLER TAGESZEITUNG

*“In family scenes that at times have a touching effect, at the music camp and during choir and orchestra rehearsal, you witness how the children open themselves to the camera and the world. “*

Ute Baumhackl, KLEINE ZEITUNG

## DIRECTOR'S – STATEMENT

KINDERS is a film project that has fascinated us from the very beginning. After our previous (film) work with children and adolescents, the opportunity to work with them for a year over the course of a special musical education program at their school seemed very promising. As chance would have it, the general secretary of Caritas Vienna, Werner Binnenstein-Bachstein, drew our attention to the project ((superar)).

In our eyes, as documentary filmmakers our task is not to document the work of the Superar association. Our interests lie much more in the area of tension between the children's creative possibilities for expression, their school and their social environment. Observant yet also open in terms of a new, fresh narrative style, particularly inspired by the children's perspective, we would like to accompany them on their path to self-actualization, to turn their feelings into something noticeable and tangible for the audience.

The road that the young people travelled during filming safely led them to unimagined highs and lows, ultimately transporting them to new worlds in which a rich abundance of chances and opportunities are open to them in a way that was entirely inaccessible to them before. The road is full of touching, exciting, and exhilarating moments that we capture in this film.

In KINDERS, we show the power and potential of music as well as the development and self-actualization of the children as they are supported and encouraged in their day-to-day lives.



## **KINDERS – A film by the Riahi Brothers**

A | 2016 | 95 min | OV with engl. subtitles

### **CREDITS**

Screenplay and Directors: The Riahi Brothers (Arash and Arman T. Riahi)

Cinematography: Mario Minichmayr, Riahi Brothers

Additional Camera: Matthias Smycka, Klemens Hufnagl, Georg Geutebrück,  
Dominik Spritzendorfer

Sound: Claus Benischke, Hjalti Bager-Jonathansson

Editing: David Arno Schwaiger

Sounddesign: Atanas Tcholakov

Producers: Arash T. Riahi & Karin C. Berger  
Sabine Gruber

### **TECHNICAL DETAILS**

Original language: German, Bosnian, English, Turkish

Subtitles: German, English

Shooting format: HD

Screening format: DCP

Aspect ratio: 1:2,39

Pictures/sec: 24

Colour: Colour

Sound format: Dolby Digital 5.1

Production country: Austria

Shooting locations: Austria (Vienna), Bosnia-Herzegovina (Srebrenica),  
Turkey (Istanbul)

With the support of





## CV / FILMOGRAPHY – DIRECTORS

### ARASH T. RIAHI

Born 1972 in Iran, lives since 1982 in Vienna. Writer, director & producer. Studied Film and the Arts, has been working for the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation ORF, since 1995 on a freelance basis. Founded the film production company "Golden Girls Filmproduktion" ([www.goldengirls.at](http://www.goldengirls.at)) in 1997. Has written, directed and produced several award-winning documentaries, shorts, experimental films, music videos and commercials. His films "The Souvenirs of Mr. X", "Exile Family Movie", "For a moment, freedom" „Mississippi“ und the crossmedia - project „Everyday Rebellion“ (The Riahi Brothers) have won more than 70 international awards. His first feature film "For a moment, freedom" was the Austrian candidate for the Academy Awards 2010.

He works as teacher and media-coach on a freelance basis. (ORF, SAE, College Vienna, Scottish Filminstitute, Goethe Institute Dublin, EDN) Since 2010 work as a script advisor for Sources 2 and Nipkow. Teaching nonfictional storytelling and financing since 2012.

#### Director (Selection):

- Kinders (2016/Cinema Documentary/95 min.)
- Everyday Rebellion (2013/Cinema Documentary/110 min.)
- That has been bothering me the whole time (2013/short/10 min.)
- This Human World (2013/short/2 min.)
- Everything will not be fine (2012/Cinema Documentary/94 min.)

- For a Moment Freedom (2008/Cinema Documentary/110 min.)
- Exile Family Movie (2006/Cinema Documentary/94 min.)
- Mississippi (2005/ Experimental short/6 Min.)
- The Souvenirs of Mr. X (2004/Cinema Documentary/98 min.)
- Eclipsa-Nam ce face-Soll die Welt doch untergehen (1999/Cinema Documentary/74 min.)
- Reformel (1999/Experimental short/11 min.)
- The Impossibility (1999/short/9 min.)
- Bits and Peaces (1995/Experimental short/4,5 min.)
- Der Junge und die seltsame Wirklichkeit (1992/short/9 min.)

## **ARMAN T. RIAHI**

Arman T. Riahi was born in Iran and grew up in Vienna, Austria, where he did his first short films as a teenager. He studied media technologies and worked as a screen- and graphic designer in London & Vienna.

In 2005, he started his TV-work as director of the infamous TV-Shows “Sendung ohne Namen” and “Sunshine Airlines” for the ORF (Austrian Broadcasting Corporation). In the same year, his short film “Elektronikschrott” (11min.) won the nation wide short film award “Shorts On Screen”. In 2006, Arman was invited to the Berlinale Talent Campus as director/screenwriter. Since 2005 Riahi works as an independant director and author for several movie production companies in Vienna.

### **Director (Selection):**

- The Migrumpies (2017/Feature film, Comedy, 95min), Director, co-author with Aleksandar Petrovic & Faris Rahoma (finished)
- Kinders (2016/Cinema Documentary, 90min), co-author and -director with Arash T. Riahi), Cinema Release November 2016
- Neue Wiener (2015/Fictional Internet series, 10\*10min, Director, co-author with Aleksandar Petrovic, Faris Rahoma & Senad Halilbasic)
- Everyday Rebellion (2013/Cinema Documentary, 52/110min, co-author and -director with Arash T. Riahi), CPH:DOX 2013 Politiken Audience Award, Cinema for Peace Award, IDFA Panorama, Biennale 2013 BEN Best Transmedia Project, ARTE Pixel Pitch Prize 2012 Best Cross-Media Project & over 50 international festivals; most successful Austrian festival movie 2014
- START-Grant of BMUKK with the Feature film project „Der Lehrer“, project assistance by Karl Markovics
- Africa Race (2012/13/5x52min, Documentary, Terra Mater/Servus TV, Script & Director) 2012 – now development of the feature film scripts „Die Endzeitlosen“ & „The Migrumpies“
- Schwarzkopf (2011/ Cinema Documentary, 90min, Script & Director) Diagonale 2011 Audience Award; Special Jury Mention Award @ Docudays Beirut Int'l Documentary Film Festival; opening movie Sarajevo Film Festival and other festivals (Zürich FF, Exile FF, Hofer Filmtage, One World Human Rights FF etc.)

## INTERVIEW

### In our performance-oriented world, we take on the passionate part!

Interview with Arash and Arman T. Riahi by Ines Kratzmüller

#### I.K. Could you briefly outline the film's genesis?

**Arash:** It came from Werner Binnenstein-Bachstein (Caritas Austria), we met him at the premiere of one of our films. He was one of the founders of ((superar)). He closely followed the development of the project ((superar)) is modelled after - El sistema in Venezuela - and decided to start the project in Europe with Caritas, the Wiener Konzerthaus and the Vienna Boys' Choir. I told my brother Arman about it, and he was immediately excited about making the film together.

We were involved with the project from the very start, even when it was given its name, but right from the beginning it was clear that we didn't want to make a promotional film for Superar; what we wanted to make was a documentary about children who participate in this program.

For us, we got into the project through music, and in no time at all it grew on us. It automatically became homage to this idea, an idea built on musical elements.

#### You mentioned the project El Sistema in Venezuela; can you briefly talk about that?

**Arash:** The project was founded in 1976 by José Antonio Abreu, and his goal was to take children from poorer social classes, from favelas, and to teach them how to play musical instruments in order to give their lives perspective. Today, the project accompanies more than 500,000 children, which is also why it is called El Sistema.

These days neighbouring countries also participate, and the children tour around the entire world with choirs and orchestras.

The system came to Europe - El Sistema Europe - and has a different name in each of the 27 countries it's in. What's also fascinating is that a project came to Europe from a newly industrialising country, and we can learn and profit from that.

#### How is Superar structured? Who can participate in Superar?

**Arman:** Superar was founded by Caritas, the Wiener Konzerthaus and the Vienna Boys' Choir. The musical director of the boys' choir is also Superar's musical director. They work together to develop a curriculum that can be used with the choir directors and orchestra directors in schools, with a separate curriculum for each grade. Many children often have a difficult past, were born into socially disadvantaged circumstances or have a migration background.

Arash: At Superar there is no selection, no admission test, no casting. Each kid can participate and is free to develop their musical abilities in ways that differ from other students. Also, no one is made the focal point or given preference; the children distinguish themselves through their commitment. The nice thing about it is that you can read the principle of success right on the kids' faces. Sometimes a kid might not do so well in school but is successful in the choir and has a wonderful voice and musicality, and from this success the kid gains self-confidence, which then boosts his or her self-confidence in difficult school subjects. I like that the main focus is not on assessment, but that the entire person is experienced. Maybe the kid can't concentrate in class because of problems at home, and thanks to the music this kid has the ability to forget their problems, at least for a little while.

**Arman:** It's also not about the kids improving in school - at most, that is an effect. For us it was also not at all about school performance, but rather how the artistic and musical upbringing influences the children's lives and opens doors to them that they previously couldn't open, giving them a way out of their former lives. Even if they can't escape that life, the music transforms them into self-assured individuals who are no longer so shattered by the experiences that fate has dealt them. A beautiful effect that sprouts from the music.

**How did you choose the main protagonists, I also imagine that this had to be done very sensitively so that the fragile social fabric wasn't destroyed?**

**Arman:** Since 2011 we've sat in on and filmed the various Superar classes and normal classes as well as at the "Singen macht Schule" singing camp in the summer.

Over time the children have come out of their shells and enthusiastically participated in class, or at times didn't even participate at all, showed an interest in us, behaviour patterns that were inspirational for our narrative style and dramaturgy, and children who put themselves in the spotlight. However, we also had to face the difficult decision to take children out of the film that we really loved and whose stories we absolutely wanted to tell because the storyline can only support a certain number of characters. Still, we pushed it to the limit.

**Arash:** We also tried to bring the various nationalities into the story because that also defines Superar's structure - it is international, and the children of this generation are growing up with a very different style of naturalness.

For me, it was important to show that the children are a reflection of our society and that they have the same problems on a small scale that adults have and also need to learn to solve them, just like us. Problems in the family, lovesickness, religious questions, problems at "work", that's what I observed and was also able to take away a lot for myself.

They discuss seriously and listen with interest - sometimes one wishes adults would discuss problems the same way. They learn how to articulate their feelings and to respond to one another. If you start there, maybe it's easier to find solutions for the future.

**What was it like for you to film the children? How do you set the stage for such a group of children?**

**Arman:** When I point a camera at a group of people, something happens and I create an artificial situation, but it is an extract from reality of what one experiences. Everyone reacts to the camera. But children quickly forget that it's there. I put a violin in the kid's hand that he already plays every day, it's not staged. Putting the children in front of the forest, we had that idea while interacting with the children, when one of them said, "what you call out into the forest also comes back!" So we let the kids call out into the woods. Everyone decided on their own what they wanted to call out, maybe even to get an answer to their own questions. Of course, there were kids who opened up easily, the children who were caught between two stools are naturally more secretive, more exciting and need a different type of gentleness and more time to feel engaged.

It is the style of the film and not a staging of the protagonists - for me it's the creative process I want to get into in a documentary. I want more than the presentation of reality - I want the interpretation of that reality. I want to show new possibilities in that reality.

**Arash:** It's a natural process with the kids: We entered the class as strangers, over time they accept you, and then you get to experience the children's performance. At some point we were just there and became friends. At the summer camp there was a tradition of hanging little letters on each other's doors, and at some point we also got some. A sign that we had been accepted into the children's circle. That also makes the work process easier, and the children trust you enough to open up.

Our struggle with the work, concentration on a topic, summarisation after years of work, when you can recognize hints and patterns in the most diverse situations and then present them, that is the form of a different reality. We didn't create staging for the children, they created it themselves.

**Arman:** We always work in collaboration with our protagonists, and through a slight incursion into their reality or daily life, something also changes in them. It might just be a picture of their reality. The children in our film are a representative status quo of the ethnic diversity in Austrian primary schools and they deal with that diversity differently compared to our generation. We witnessed the children having a discussion in which they said they were jealous of each other because some of

them spoke multiple languages. They don't have a problem with nationality, they don't know that animosity. A quote that I remember again and again, when a kid was asked if there were refugees in their class: "No, there's only children!" And that's exactly how they interact with one another. Being able to observe, capture and use their interactions is wonderful.

### **What were the children's expectations?**

**Arash:** The difficulty is that it's not a film for children, but rather a film about children and their world and their development over the course of a music program. It will be a few years before the children understand that and the meaning the program has for their development. They knew that we were filming a documentary about them and their daily life with music. They won't see the film until the premiere, but the handful of them that have seen the film were enthusiastic. They also know what it feels like to be in a film, thanks to their smartphones they are in constant contact with the medium and thus have a completely different approach, for them it's nothing extraordinary.

**Arman:** They're digital natives - for them, a film is a film.

### **How did you come up with the title 'KINDERS'?**

**Arash:** At first the film was called VORLAUT, which was also Superar's first name. But we didn't feel it fit our project.

KINDERS gets to the point with one word, and it's playful! KINDERN is grammatically incorrect, so it's obvious and suits us beautifully because of the differentness of it. Everyone gets what it's about.

### **What are your opinions of the current situation of the education system in Austria? Does the Superar model have a chance of being adopted by other schools?**

**Arman:** One needs to deal with each kid individually, to give each child the chance to pursue their talents and interests. You can see the influx with Superar. In the schools where it's offered, the classes are full and the children develop differently in terms of their social interactions through music and shared experiences. There needs to be a paradigm shift, and apparently it's still taking time.

The system or the so-called education policy hasn't been developed further for 50 years. From the very start, every child is thrown into a pot, and each one has to make it through the system. It shouldn't be about whether a kid fails a grade or just barely makes it to the next grade. Instead, each child's talent must be recognized and encouraged. Of course, there needs to be general education as well as increased individual education with talents and abilities in mind. That's my recommendation for an educational offensive, but for that we need solidarity between the government, city- and province-level school boards, teachers and trade unions.

**Arash:** In the most wonderful time of their lives, people are drilled. At school they should be able to live and experience their childhood. I think there needs to be a rethinking here. We shouldn't be drilled to function, but prepared for a free life. I found a nice example in the Icelandic school system: The school's goal is for the children to be happy and for their interests to be aroused, and they are number one in the PISA test, so apparently it works.

Of course, teaching isn't pure joy and you need endurance and good nerves, but giving children a deeper understanding of our world and preparing them for tomorrow can also be one of the most fulfilling occupations. You've got to pick the right people for that, people who are passionate about the job, and that starts in the school here! The main objective is what links us to Superar: doing things with passion! That's true for our entire lives. In our performance-oriented world, we want to take on the passionate part!



### ((superar))

In cooperation with Caritas, the Vienna Boys' Choir and the Wiener Konzerthaus, the ((superar)) association establishes a musical education system in Viennese schools, the goal of which is to awaken the hidden creative potential of socially disadvantaged children and adolescents and to work together with others to build a more socially just society.