

Mantaray Film presents



the Most Beautiful Boy in the World

a film by Kristina Lindström & Kristian Petri

A MANTARAY FILM PRODUCTION PRODUCER STINA GARDELL DIRECTORS KRISTINA LINDSTRÖM AND KRISTIAN PETRI EDITORS HANNA LEJONQVIST DINO JONSÄTER MUSIC ANNA VON HAUSSWOLFF FILIP LEYMAN
DOP ERIK VALLSTEN SOUND DESIGN BRIAN DYRBY KRISTOFFER SALTING PRODUCED BY MANTARAY FILM IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH SVT JONAS GARDELL PRODUKTION FILMINVESTERING I ÖREBRO
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE SWEDISH FILM INSTITUTE CREATIVE EUROPE PROGRAMME OF THE EUROPEAN UNION NORDISK FILM & TV FOND





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Kristina Lindström
& Kristian Petri

2021 - Sweden - Documentary - 2.39:1 - 1h 34min

US + CANADA DISTRIBUTOR

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CREW

Directors	Kristina Lindström & Kristian Petri
DoP	Erik Vallsten
Editors	Hanna Lejonqvist & Dino Jonsäter
Producer	Stina Gardell
Music	Anna von Hausswolff & Filip Leyman
Sound Design	Brian Dyrby & Kristoffer Salting

A co production with	SVT ZDF/ARTE JONAS GARDELL PRODUKTION FiÖ
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Supported by	The Swedish Film Institute Nordisk Film & TV Fond Creative Europe Media
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Languages	English, Swedish, French, Japanese, Italian
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“His face recalled the noblest moment of Greek sculpture-pale, with a sweet reserve, with clustering honey-colored ringlets, the brow and nose descending in one line, the winning mouth, the expression of pure and godlike serenity. Yet with all this chaste perfection of form it was of such unique personal charm that the observer thought he had never seen, either in nature or art, anything so utterly happy and consummate.”

*Description of the young character Tadzio in
Thomas Mann’s novel, Death in Venice.*

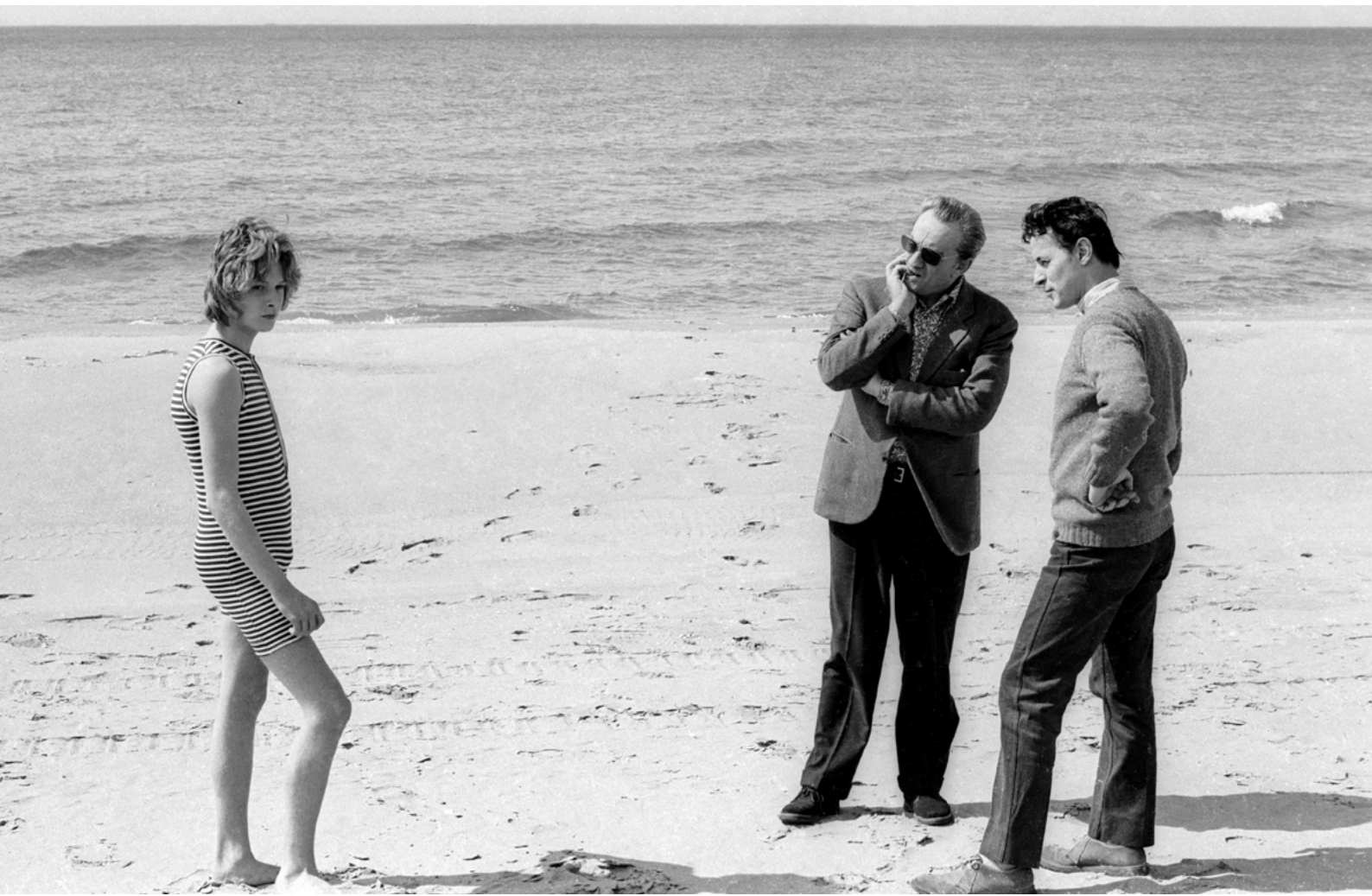


TAGLINE

*Fifty years after the premiere of *Death in Venice*, Björn Andrésen, the former teen star who once embodied legendary character Tadzio in Visconti's masterpiece, takes us on a remarkable journey of personal memories, cinema history, stardust and tragedy in what could be Björn's last attempt to finally get his life back on track.*

SYNOPSIS

In 1970, filmmaker Luchino Visconti travelled throughout Europe looking for the perfect boy to personify absolute beauty in his adaptation for the screen of Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*. In Stockholm, he discovered Björn Andrésen, a shy 15-year-old teenager whom he brought to international fame overnight and led to spend a short but intense part of his turbulent youth between the Lido in Venice, London, the Cannes Film Festival and the so distant Japan. Fifty years after the premiere of *Death in Venice*, Björn takes us on a remarkable journey made of personal memories, cinema history, stardust and tragic events in what could be Björn's last attempt for him to finally get his life back on track.



DIRECTORS' NOTE OF INTENTION

by Kristina Lindström and Kristian Petri

"The boy was exquisitely beautiful. He is fragile. And that is beautiful... on film. You have to be very careful with such children."

- **Margareta Krantz**, Swedish casting director for *Death in Venice*.

"The Most Beautiful Boy in the World" is a story about obsession with beauty, about desire and sacrifice, about a boy whose life was changed forever when the film director Luchino Visconti declared him to be the, "World's most beautiful boy."

Who was this boy and what happened to him? This is the story of a film that destroyed someone's life. It is also a story of family secrets, of searching for the truth.

We filmed *The Most Beautiful Boy in the World* during five years in Stockholm, Copenhagen, Paris, Budapest, Venice, and Tokyo, following in Björn's footsteps. We searched together with him to learn the truth about his mother's death and his father's identity by reaching into the archives and interviews with close family.

We searched for people who had crossed his path over the decades. It was naturally difficult to find some of them after 50 years, but miraculously many of them were available and willing to talk on camera. The rich archive material which we found throughout the process was also a big source of joy.

The base for everything has been trust and Björn's courage and wish to tell his story.

We believe in interesting questions more than in simple answers. This is not an easy story. We hope it is gripping. We hope that Björn will come forward as the complex and interesting person that he is. This is a story with many layers, a box within a box within a box.

This film lets us listen to the boy's own story. He, who was made into an image by others, an icon, a fantasy, which took over his young life.

2021 marks 50 years since the world premiere of *Death in Venice* when the film director Luchino Visconti proclaimed Björn Andrésén as "The world's most beautiful boy". The Boy is back!



PRODUCER'S NOTE OF INTENTION

by Stina Gardell

The Most Beautiful Boy in the World is, at its core, a film about objectification and the effects it can have on an individual.

Beauty is admired and can open many doors, but the world's obsession with someone's appearance can tear that person apart on the inside.

As the native American tale goes: "For every photo taken, a little bit of one's soul is taken away."

The Most Beautiful Boy in the World is the untold story of a fascinating life about a boy who becomes a star at a very young age, and how that came to influence the rest of his life. Fifteen-year-old Björn Andrésen seduced both men and women with his role in *Death in Venice*, and he forever became a gay icon.

"He sees me as a piece of meat on a plate," was Björn's own words about the director Luchino Visconti. How does it affect someone to be viewed as an object? Where does the sense of self go?

Few child stars manage to live up to the expectations of their early exposure, which the public never forgets.

Today, 50 years later, Björn Andrésen still lives in the shadow of his fifteen-year-old self. For many years



he continued to make a career in the limelight—in film, as a model, and as a musician. Björn continued to be drawn to the world that broke him. Is there something in his nature that wants to be recognized?

As a producer, there were several reasons why I fell for this story.

Björn's life story is fascinating, he has a rich life behind him with many depths and global moments. It takes us to 1970's Italy, to the world of Japanese advertising and to the old bohemian Paris. Everything has been archived and we had access to the material.

We meet Björn today in the film, but we also find him in the archives.

Björn's motivation to regain his self-respect is the core of this film. It is a process of discovery, where he goes back into the past in order to regain something that has been lost. It was interesting to me that this story about beauty and objectification is about a man. To explore this topic, which is often centered around women, from a different gender perspective felt right.

CREATIVE TEAM

Stina Gardell (producer) founded Mantaray Film in 2005 and has since then produced 25 documentaries with theatrical release and co-produced 9 international documentaries. She has received a number of prestigious film awards. Her film, *Ingrid Bergman In her Own Words* premiered in Cannes 2015 and received a *Golden Eye Special Mention*. She was awarded *Best Documentary* at Prix Italia for *The Nun* (2007) and for *He Thinks He's The Best* (2012). Gardell has several films in production with a release of 2021; *Joyce Carol Oats - 68 years of writing*, *Passion*, and *The Choir*.



Kristina Lindström (director) is a filmmaker, journalist, and author. She has directed highly acclaimed documentaries including *Astrid Lindgren* (2014), *Palme* (with Maud Nycander, 2012) which was awarded with two Guldbagge Awards, *Wonderboy* (2003), *The Era - Punk in three parts* (2017) and *Silence* (with Kristian Petri, 2020). Among Lindström's work as an author, her trilogy about Swedish history from a young girl's perspective has become a long lived national success. Lindström has served as Head of Cultural and Factual Programming at public service broadcaster SVT where she has developed some of the channels most acclaimed program formats and documentaries. Among others, Lindström has been awarded the *Linné Prize*, *Kristallen*, *Stockholm's Culture Prize*, and the *Ikaros Award*.



Kristian Petri (director) is a filmmaker, writer, and culture journalist with a distinctly personal voice that transcends genre and form. Petri's two shorts, "Once Upon a Time" and "The Crack", were selected for the Semaine de la Critique competition in Cannes in 1991 and 1992. His first feature film *Between Summers* (1995) was awarded with a Guldbagge Award and nominated for a Golden Globe and to best film at European Film Awards. It was also selected for the prestigious Quinzaine des Realisateurs in Cannes. Many of his films, including *The Well* (2005), *Details* (2003), and *Tokyo Noise* (2002) have been critically celebrated and have been nominated for and received a number of national and international awards. His latest film is *L136* (2018) about the dramatic production of Ingmar Bergman's mythical film: *Winter Light*.

Erik Vallsten is a cinematographer who has been working with documentaries, drama and television since the early 2000s. Two documentaries that he shot, *Detained* (2015) and *Martha and Niki* (2016) won the *Guldbagge for Best Documentary*, in addition to a number of other awards. Recently Vallsten filmed a comedy series with the iconic Swedish humor group, *Grotesco*, the fiction feature *A Hustler's Diary* and the IDFA-winner *The Deminer* (2018).

Hanna Lejonqvist has been a film editor since 2002. She has twice been awarded the *Guldbagge for Best Editing* for the documentaries *The Black Power Mixtape 1967-1975* (2011) and for *PALME* (2012). Notably, this prize takes both documentary and fiction films into consideration. In addition, *Lejonqvist* won the *World Cinema Documentary Editing Award at Sundance* for *The Black Power Mixtape 1967-1975* and she was an editing consultant on the *Academy Award-winning* documentary *Searching for Sugarman* (2012). *Lejonqvist* also edited *Astrid* (2014) and *Bergman – a year, a life* (2018).



Dino Jonsäter (film editor) was born and raised in Stockholm. He has edited a large number of TV series, commercials, documentaries and feature films. The collaboration with director Tomas Alfredson, who began with *Let the Right One In* (2008), resulted in a *BAFTA nomination for Best Editing by Alfredson's Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (2011). In 2018, he won a *Guldbaggen for Best Editing by Peter Grönlund's Goliath* (2018).

Anna von Hausswolff (composer) is an internationally acclaimed Swedish singer, pianist, artist and songwriter. With organ and her expressive voice as her main weapon, she has established herself as one of the most uncompromising Swedish artist active today. She has released several albums and in 2018 she sang at the Nobel party. According to the Swedish Daily news, Anna von Hausswolff does not long for legends, she creates them and composes the hidden powers of the human soul with the doomsday drone and guitar claims.

MANTARAY FILM

Mantaray Film is a Stockholm-based documentary production company founded by Stina Gardell in 2005. We produce complex, character-driven films based on strong visual language and unique access, with the goal of film festivals, cinema and television. We are active co-producers of international films and since 2011 we also run our own distribution. We have invested in the accounts of women, both in front of and behind the camera and is today one of the foremost documentary production companies in Europe.

Filmography - a selection:

Ninosca - The woman and the emigrant's song (2020) Director Peter Torbiörnsson

Awarded IDF Westlake - Best documentary of the year

Official International Selection at the Guanajuato International Film Festival

Josefin & Florin (2019) Directors Ellen Fiske, Joanna Karlberg

Guldbagge award for best Editing, Awarded PRIX Europa in the TV IRIS category

Silvana (2017) Directors Mika Gustafson, Olivia Kastebring, Christina Tsiobanelis

Guldbaggen award for Best Documentary

Ingrid Bergman In Her Own Words (2015) Director Stig Björkman

Golden Eye Special Mention at Cannes Filmfestival, Most Popular International Documentary,

Vancouver International Film Festival, Audience Award, Astoria International Film Festival

He Thinks He's The Best (2011) Director Maria Kuhlberg

Best Documentary at Prix Italia, Ikaros Prize and Kristallen Best Documentary

I'm My Own Dolly Parton (2010) Director Jessika Nettelbladt

The Photographer in Riga (2009) Director Maud Nycander

The Nun (2006) Director Maud Nycander

Guldbagge award for Best Documentary, Prix Italia Best TV Documentary.

www.mantarayfilm.se



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