

PRESS KIT

## AIM AND MISSION OF THE STEP BY STEP FILM

Disabled bodies always have obstacles to find place in the life circulation. WHY??? Because the society has two different conceptions ; " Able-bodied " and " Disabled bodies". Unfortunately the able-bodied act as if they are helping the disabled people but these helps do not touch the soul , do not hug the disabled people and do not treat them equal just as human beings. High donations, free wheelchair supplies, remembering them only in special weeks...etc. That's not what the disabled people of the society deserve.

However the able-bodied ignore the fact that if a human being aims something success is inevitable. It does not matter if you are on the wheelchair or not. But unfortunately, in business life mostly in all sectors, the disabled people are not treated as equally as the able-bodied ones. Especially when it comes to the screen, because of the current public perceptions of actors and actresses in films, priority is mostly given to visual beauty. Even in films about disabled people the major roles are being played by beautiful and famous actors/actresses not talented disabled people. The message the film producers give is; " We want to shoot a film about the obstacles of disabled people's life we are concerned about you. But you stay away and just watch the film. You can be talented but the visual beauty and being famous is my priority

There are examples of films where disabled people had roles but not too many. Especially in long-length feature films there are no examples of having the whole key cast from the disabled people.

STEP BY STEP Film is the first Turkish Film in which all of the main characters are disabled bodies. In this film, major and minor roles are being played by, and many film crew roles filled by talented folks with physical disabilities. Our film include real life stories from the lives of four disabled persons. The film ends with a powerful display of art and dance, emphasizing the value of persons without regard to one's physical status. We want to Show that those with physical disabilities can also bring visual beauty and excitement to the screen. Some able-bodied actors/ actresses also had roles in our film That was our struggle to show the whole World that able-bodied and disabled bodies are equal and life should treat them equal.

This film was a great experience for all of us. All our disabled characters's performances in Step by Step was their first as major actors/actresses in the film sector. The same condition was valid for our director also. It is his first experience of a long-length feature film.

The shooting, post-production...etc. all the stages of our film were full of obstacles and we really struggled a lot

especially for rising the required budget. The aim of our film is not earning money , not achieving high profit , our target is to change the perception of the society . We found partners .Our main partner is İZDESK Sports Club,İZDESK is a non profit organization (NGO) of disabled people .Then contracts for cooperation have been signed by the City of Buca Municipality (Izmir) , Gaziemir Municipality (izmir) and the IZDESK Sports Club. In addition with these partners lots of volunteer people helped us , lots of companies made donations.

We deeply believe in our heart that this film will open the doors for disabled people and draw the attention on these people and abled bodies will start to question themselves about their approach and perception on the disabled people. May be we will be an example for other prodfucers , directors in the whole world and the number of films like ours will start to increase. We just declared the whole world that DISABLED PEOPLE ARE OUR REALITY WE CANNOT NEGLECT THEM.

#### SYNOPSIS

The film tells the stories of five disabled characters where all their lives intersect with each other by means of dance and music .At that point the old dancer called Sevket gather all these people. Gökhan whom was a very good dancer becomes physically disabled after a severe traffic accident and being aware of the fact that he will not be able to dance anymore ruined and changed all his life. After all these miserable events in his life , when he comes home after the hospital he learns that his mother and father are getting divorced and he has been dumped up by his girlfriend without an explanation only a short letter has been left . Gökhan is trying to rebuild his life but hard days started for him .Gökhan's sole supporter for getting his life back was his mother.She encourages him for continuing dance on wheelchair.

On the other hand , one day Şevket's son Tolga comes and tell his mother Zuhul and him that he will leave his four children to them and go abroad for working.This creates a big change in Şevket's life. Şevket finds out that Ayşen ;one of his grandchildren whom is blind is highly talented in music and he decides to help her. One day Şevket takes Ayşen to a very famous musician for getting his idea about Ayşen's talent but the musicians's approach was discouraging . But this does not stop Şevket, cause he believes in his grandchild. He decides Ayşen to study with her grandmother Zuhul whom was an artist and they start working together for

the conservatory examinations. Zuhale ve Şevket are very happy to spend time with their grandchildren. One night Şevket was so impressed by the touching scene of Gökhan while he was trying to dance by his wheelchair in the street and they meet each other and have a short conversation about dance and music. Gökhan was fully impressed by the approach of Şevket and then he makes a short research about Şevket and finds out that he was a very famous dancer and Gökhan finds Şevket again and wants him to be his dance teacher and work with him. Şevket accepts the offer only under the condition of Gökhan obeying the strict rules and performing full discipline. While all the things happen Gökhan's girlfriend whom he left after the accident comes back and they start to work on dance performance all together.

Can is physically disabled and as he has no hope of life he spends all his time by getting alcohol and gambling cards with his friends. He even tries to commit suicide and cannot do that either. His family is trying to do their best to make him hold on to life and for that reason his family insists on sending him to a therapy center for disabled people. Can accepts that offer and starts to attend to therapy sessions at that center. Can did not like the center firstly but then he starts to get along well with the other disabled people at that center. Positive changes start to occur in Can's life with these new people and relations and he starts to evaluate all his friends and life style and decides to change his life and join the real life back again. One day he meets Gökhan. Gökhan invites him to his dance performance. Can was highly affected by the dance performance of Gökhan and he meets Şevket over there and tells Şevket that he also wants to get involved in the dance group.

The other day Can was also a part of the dance group. Even Bora and Efe from Can's therapy center also join the dance group. While their dance practices go on, Gökhan and his girlfriend decide to get married. Ayşen enters to the music conservatory exam and she becomes the first.

Şevket meanwhile completes the practices and all the physically disabled dancers were ready for the performance night. The physically disabled dancers perform great at the dance Show and Ayşen accompanies them as a pianist. All the struggle of these disabled people tells that, the disabled people just want to live in an accessible world where disabled and able bodies are being treated as just human beings. The story is giving the message of "Being able or disabled, if you want something nothing will stop you. We are all equal, JUST HUMAN BEINGS....."

## MAJOR ACTRESSES / ACTORS

## HALDUN DORMEN

The well-known theatre, film, and TV actor, writer, and director Haldun Dormen was born in 1928 in Mersin. He attended Galatasaray High School and Robert College in Istanbul then studied in the Theater Department at Yale University in the USA. He continued his career there, then returned to Istanbul to start the "Küçük Sahne" theatre which was directed by Muhsin Ertuğrul. He has won many national and international awards, including three Golden Orange awards for best screenplay, best script, and best comedy film. He has written 11 dramas for the theatre and continues to teach in the drama section of the State Theatres of Turkey. In 1988, Turkey's Ministry of Culture granted him the title "State Artist of the Republic of Turkey".

## Yüksel Ünal

Yüksel Ünal was born in Germany in 1974. While a child, he began training in theatre and film through a variety of courses and performances. Because of his active career in the field that he loved, he never found time to complete a formal education program in theatre. He gained his fame as an accomplished film actor at a young age. In addition to acting in films, he also performs as a stand-up comedian. He recently started a project called SIBERCAN which aims to protect children from the dangers of cyber technology and inappropriate internet usage.

## Asuman Dabak

The well-known actress and voice-over artist Asuman Dabak was born in Akhisar in 1970. She began her career in the Bahçelievler City Theatre in Istanbul. As a young actress, she also took on many roles as a voice-over artist. While not having a formal education in theatre, she has advanced her career through successful roles in both television and on stage. More recently, in 2006, she established her own theatre company, the Asuman Dabak Theatre.

## M. Sefa Öztürk

Sefa was born in Kocaeli in 1980. He graduated from the Classical Ballet Department of Istanbul University's

Conservatory. A severe car accident in 2006 did not dampen his enthusiasm for dancing. Although wheelchair-bound, he has continued his dancing career and works in the Istanbul City Theatre. He has performed in many wheelchair dance projects. His role in Step by Step is his first as a film actor.

Can Filiz

Can was born in Berlin in 1982. He has been wheelchair-bound since a severe car accident in 2002. His performance in Step by Step was his first as a major actor in the film sector.

Ümran Sevinç

Ümran was born in Izmir in 1991. Although born blind, she was the top student when entering the Turkish Music Department of Ege University. She graduated as their top student, and is an accomplished musician on the piano, guitar, violin, and lute. Her performance in Step by Step is her first role as a professional actress.

Bora Acar Zöngür

Bora was born in Izmir in 1990. After finishing school in İzmir State Conservatory ,Department of Opera and Ballet,he started to work as a ballet dancer in the same Conservatory of Opera and Ballet. A severe car accident in 2014 left him paralyzed. His love for theatre continued though. He works as the Public Relation Manager of the State Opera and Ballet in İzmir. His performance in Step by Step is his first role as a professional actor.

Can Ayan

Can was born in Izmir in 1997. He is an active young man who has Down Syndrome. Since 2013, he has been a swimmer at Altay Sports Club in Izmir. He was a fashion model for the 2014-2015 collection of Mısırlı Textile Company's catalogue. As an amateur photographer, he has had many individual photograph exhibitions. His performance in Step by Step is his first role as a professional actor.

## PRODUCER

## PELİN UZUN

Pelin was born in Izmir in 1984 and obtained at her diploma in sales administration from the Department of Business and Administration of Adnan Menderes University. She is married and the mother of two children. She serves the movie industry as a film producer through her company, Pelin Uzun-Toprak Film. Her most recent production was the 2015 film, "Adım Adım ( STEP BY STEP ) " .

## DIRECTOR

## SİNAN UZUN

Sinan was born in Ankara in 1984. In 2003, he graduated with a degree from Dokuz Eylül University's Department of Business and Administration. He trained in photography at the Izmir Academy of Photography. In 2006, he began working as the technical supervisor for a local radio station, and then became the director of Izmir's Channel 35 radio station. In 2008, he was promoted to director at Channel 35 Television. Two years later he started working as an assistant director on projects in Istanbul, then returned to serve as a o director at Channel 35 from 2011-2014. Then, until the spring of 2015, he worked at Balıkesir TV 100 as General Director. During his professional career, he has directed many TV commercials, short films, documentaries, TV shows, talk shows, and live sports programs. In 2015, Step by Step was his first full-length feature film that he wrote and directed. He is married and has two children.

## THOUGHTS FROM THE DIRECTOR, SINAN UZUN

Step by Step is a story based on the true life experiences of a former ballet dancer who becomes paraplegic after an accident, and another young man who won't accept his being wheelchair bound .

This film's theme revolves around physically disabled individuals overcoming many barriers in their daily lives to achieve their dreams, love life, and be successful. In today's world, many with physical disabilities are isolated from society. I'm fortunate to be able to work in an environment where actors and actresses with a variety of physical disabilities are performing at the highest professional level. And I am not surprised... after all, a main purpose of Turkish cinema throughout its history has been to inform society in general, and to remove barriers between all types of people in particular.

I wrote this script in an epic and ironic fashion as a debt to modern society. Its style reflects the essence of Turkish

drama and includes images of Izmir's historical and tourist attractions. Step by Step shows us the suffering, not just the problems, of those with physical disabilities. It's a film about being successful, not about being stifled by the many barriers encountered in daily life.