

Mrs Rita Wilson  
Mr Tom Hanks

Sofia, the 26th of March 2020

LETTER TO AMERICA

**Dear Rita Wilson and Tom Hanks,**

Recently it came to the attention of the world, that you are under domestic treatment after being diagnosed with coronavirus COVID-19. The pandemic swept over planet Earth and didn't miss Bulgaria. Life and especially culture are now paralyzed. Including the film industry and film festivals. We organize the Sofia International Film Festival, one of the major cultural events in Bulgaria and had to postpone it three days before the scheduled opening. The same happened with many other much bigger cultural and sports events such as the Cannes Film Festival and the Tokyo Olympics.

A few days ago I received an e-mail from Maria Kaufman, daughter of esteemed Bulgarian folklorist Nikolay Kaufman, and co-founder, together with her mother, of the ethnomusic Kaufman Project.

In her e-mail Maria writes:

*„One of our singers, Mariana Pavlova won the Guinness Record for deepest female voice on the Planet Earth last year. She is a singer from the Rhodopa Mountain like her famous mother Hristina Lyutova. I read in the last days that Rita Wilson (who's father is a Bulgarian from the Rhodopa Mountain) is looking for music to listen at home during her insulation. Is there a way to send her our song "Rodopska Legenda?"*

I was deeply moved by this e-mail. It reminded me of a wonderful Bulgarian film made at the dawn of the 21st century called "Letter to America". The film tells the story of an unpublished writer, living in Sofia. One day he finds out that his friend, a theatre director who emigrated to the USA in the 90s, survived a severe car accident and doctors are fighting for his life. He then remembers an old Bulgarian folk song, that the director's grandmother knew, that had the power of bringing the dead back to life. The writer goes to the mountain to look for the song that can heal and save his friend.

In those days of isolation, we would like to share with you:

\* The film [Letter to America](#), written and directed by Igljka Trifonov;

\* The song from the film, [Pusta Mladost](#), performed especially for you by Mariana Pavlova.

\* The song [The Legend of the Rhodopa Mountain](#), that the creators of the Kaufman Project, Maria Kaufman and prof. Dimitrina Kaufman, share with you with a [personal message](#);

\* You can find information on the film, as well as the Kaufman Project, in the [imaginary diary of the 24<sup>th</sup> Sofia Film Festival](#), that tells the story of a festival to be.

We wish you quick recovery, so that you can soon again give joy to America and the world with your creativity.

I would like to use this opportunity to invite you to the opening of the postponed Sofia International Film Festival, where we could listen **together** to the song “Pusta Mladost”, performed by Bulgaria’s most famous singers. Someday in 2020.

Best wishes:

**Stefan Kitanov**

Director of Sofia International Film Festival