



# BEFORE WE VANISH

A KIYOSHI KUROSAWA FILM

## STARRING

Masami Nagasawa, Ryuhei Matsuda, Mahiro Takasugi, Yuri Tsunematsu, Hiroki Hasegawa

Runtime: 129 Minutes

Cinemascope- Color- Sound 7.1

Rating: Not Rated

Japan (English Subtitles)

Distributor: Super LTD

Theatrical Release Date: February 2, 2018

## FESTIVALS

OFFICIAL SELECTION Cannes Film Festival 2017

OFFICIAL SELECTION New York Film Festival 2017

OFFICIAL SELECTION Beyond Fest 2017

OFFICIAL SELECTION Fantastic Fest 2017

OFFICIAL SELECTION Chicago International Film Festival

OFFICIAL SELECTION San Diego Asian Film Festival

## PUBLICITY

Ted Geoghegan | [tedgeoghegan@gmail.com](mailto:tedgeoghegan@gmail.com)

## Super LTD

Darcy Heusel | Dan O'Meara

[darcy@neonrated.com](mailto:darcy@neonrated.com) | [dan.omeara@neonrated.com](mailto:dan.omeara@neonrated.com)

## **SYNOPSIS**

In his twentieth film, acclaimed horror director Kiyoshi Kurosawa reinvents the alien movie as a unique and profoundly human tale of love and mystery. Three aliens travel to Earth on a reconnaissance mission in preparation for a mass invasion. Having taken possession of human bodies, the visitors rob the hosts of their essence – good, evil, property, family, belonging – leaving only hollow shells, which are all but unrecognizable to their loved ones. Equally hilarious, thrilling, and profound, *BEFORE WE VANISH* reminds audiences of the continued strength of one of Japanese cinema's most unique auteurs – and the value of the human spirit.

### **INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR KIYOSHI KUROSAWA (Translated from Japanese)**

#### **WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO TURN “BEFORE WE VANISH”, A WELL-KNOWN THEATRE PLAY IN JAPAN, INTO YOUR NEXT FILM?**

This film is a largely faithful adaptation of Tomohiro Maekawa's play. I wanted to stick to the setting of the play as closely as possible. In other words, it's set in a place with a U.S. military base nearby.

I've adapted a few novels up until now, but this was my first time making a film based on a play written for the stage. Not to mention, in a way, that the play's premise in a way parodies alien invasion science fiction films from the 1950s. For this film, we attempted to take that premise and shift its setting to modern-day Japan, which was a process that required a very complex and delicate balance. Then again, I enjoyed it too, because the science fiction genre is one I'd very much wanted to try for many years.

#### **DO YOU SEE ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN THE MOOD UNDERLYING THE CLASSIC SCI-FI YOU MENTION AND OUR PRESENT DAY?**

The 1950s, when films of this genre were popular, were part of the so-called Cold War era, and I hear that people's lives were underlaid with anxiety, that casual, everyday unease could have links to imminent global war. In addition, a lot of media addressed this danger head-on, and at the same time, entertainment that laughed it off in fiction and eased everyday concerns, even just a little, was also significant. I can't accurately judge how much danger our world is in at this moment. However, in recent years, I've often felt a kind of extraordinary unease in my everyday life. It arises partly from a gut feeling that the world has arrived at a particularly dangerous juncture. That sensation unmistakably corresponds with my latest film in some way.

**WERE THERE SPECIFIC REFERENCES FOR THE FILM, INCLUDING ANY PARTICULAR POLITICAL SUBTEXT?**

There have been countless entries in this genre through the years, so I decided to refrain from using any specific works as references. Nevertheless, after completing this film, I felt there was something John Carpenter-esque about the scenes between Sakurai and Amano, although I'm not sure why that is. More than that, as I said earlier, this genre is fundamentally connected somehow to the global crises of the times, so I had to be very careful to avoid making some kind of misguided statement. I have never intentionally included a political message in my films, not once. However, I think that a filmmaker's political stance tends to show through in his or her own work, even if that wasn't the intention.

**THERE'S ALSO SOMETHING CLASSIC ABOUT THE TONE AND FEELING THAT THE MUSIC BRINGS TO THE FILM.**

My request to composer Yusuke Hayashi was: "I want the kind of music that sticks with you forever after one listen" and the soundtrack is the product of his painstaking hard work. For reference, I had him listen to Ennio Morricone's work from the 1970s.

**YOU'VE WORKED PROLIFICALLY IN BOTH FILM AND TV – HAS THIS BEEN A CHALLENGE FOR YOU AS A DIRECTOR?**

Since the 1980s in Japan, the differences between film and television have virtually disappeared. That is to say, cast and crew and directors became able to move back and forth freely between both mediums, and it's become difficult to find differences between them, in terms of either budget or quality. That has been spurred on by today's digitalization of moving image media and the shift to the Vista aspect ratio for televisions, to the point where it's safe to say that there is no longer any difference between films and television drama series. However, strangely enough, the film format still seems to be regarded as superior to that of tv drama. In other words, the ideal length for a story is 120 minutes, the ideal for television works is a film-like quality, and the ideal viewing environment is inevitably a screen in a large theater. It seems that myths such as these will persist for some time yet (or perhaps only for a few years). If that is the case, I want to make my own television work resemble films as closely as possible.

**IN THE FILM, PEOPLE HAVE THEIR HUMAN CONCEPTS OR VALUES TAKEN AWAY FROM THEM AND OFTEN SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES. ARE THERE CONCEPTS YOU THINK WE WOULD ACTUALLY BE BETTER OFF WITHOUT?**

That would have to be “war”.

**IS THE FILM’S CLIMAX INDICATIVE OF WHAT YOU THINK HUMANITY MUST DO TO SURVIVE INTO THE FUTURE?**

A climax involving a dramatic act of altruism and love by Narumi, one of the protagonists, was something I didn’t see coming at all. Rather, I thought the story would more likely end with a dramatic transformation experienced by Shinji, her husband. Essentially, in the end, he would transcend the differences between species, overturn the notion of an alien invader, and bravely choose a vulgar identity. To avert the threat of global war, it might be necessary for individuals to transform their values in a similar substantial way.

## **CREW BIOS**

### **Kiyoshi Kurosawa, Director**

Born in 1955 in Hyogo Prefecture. Began making 8mm films at university, and made his commercial feature film directorial debut in 1983 with “Kandagawa Wars”. Attracted international attention with “Cure” (1997), and went on to deliver other notable works including “License to Live” (1998), “Barren Illusion” (1999), and “Charisma” (1999). “Pulse” (2000) was awarded the FIPRESCI Prize in the Un Certain Regard section of the 2001 Cannes Film Festival. Subsequent films received acclaim at home and abroad, including “Bright Future” (2002), which was selected In Competition at Cannes in 2003, “Doppelganger” (2002), “Loft” (2005), and “Retribution” (2006), which screened at that year’s Venice Film Festival. “Tokyo Sonata” (2008) won the Jury Prize in Cannes’ Un Certain Regard section, and Best Film at the 2009 Asian Film Awards. His WOWOW miniseries “Penance” (2011) accomplished an unusual feat for a television production when it was screened out of competition at the 2012 Venice Film Festival, also travelling to many other festivals around the world. Recent works include “Real” (2013), “Seventh Code” (2013), which won Best Director at that year’s Rome Film Festival, “Journey to the Shore” (2014), winner of Best Director in Cannes’ Un Certain Regard section and the 33rd Kawakita Award in 2015, “Creepy” (2016), an official selection of that year’s Berlin International Film Festival, and “Daguerrotype” (2016), Kurosawa’s first overseas production, made with a French cast and crew. Recipient of the 2016 Tokyo International Film Festival’s Samurai Award.

### **Tomohiro Maekawa, Original Author**

Playwright and theatre director. Born in 1974 in Kashiwazaki, Niigata Prefecture. Established Ikiume Theater Company in 2003, for which he writes and produces. Depicts otherworldly phenomena lurking adjacent to everyday life through the supernatural lens of science fiction and horror-tinged works such as “Before We Vanish”, “Taiyo”, “Kansu Domino”, “Player”, “Henrin”, and “Kemono no Hashira”, as well as his short story collection “Toshokan-teki Jinsei”. Also wrote and directed the Super Kabuki II production “Sora wo Kizamu Mono: Wakaki Busshi no Monogatari” (2014), featuring Ennosuke Ichikawa IV, and the Toru Nakamura-starring “Kikkai: Koizumi Yakumo Kara Kiita Hanashi” (2009), “Gendai Nogaku-shu VI: Kikkai Sono Ni” (2011), and “Tono Monogatari: Kikkai Sono San” (2016). Revised “Taiyo” as “Taiyo 2068” in collaboration with world-renowned director Yukio Ninagawa, starring “Twisted Justice” actor Go Ayano. Winner of numerous theatrical accolades, including Yomiuri Theater Awards (Grand Prize, Best Direction, and Best Play), a Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology Award for Art for Best Newcomer, a Kinokuniya Theater Prize, a Yomiuri Literature Award for Best Theater Script, and a Tsuruya Nanboku Drama Award. Also wrote the original stories for Jinsei Kataoka’s manga “Livingstone” and Kei Kobayashi’s picture book “Kurai Tokoro Kara Yatte Kuru.” His plays “Before We Vanish” and “Taiyo” have been novelized, and the latter has also been adapted for the big screen as Yu Irie’s film “The Sun” (2016), for which Maekawa also co-wrote the screenplay.

### **Sachiko Tanaka, Co-Screenwriter**

Won the 33rd Kido Prize for her original screenplay “Natsu no Tabi” (2007). “Before We Vanish” is her third collaboration with Kiyoshi Kurosawa as co-writer, after “Tokyo Sonata” (2008, with Kurosawa and Max Mannix) and “Real” (2014, with Kurosawa). Other works as a screenwriter include Ryuichi Hiroki’s “The Lightning Tree” (2010, with Masato Kato), Natsuki Seta’s “A Liar and a Broken Girl” (2011, with Seta), Takahisa Zeze’s “Life Back Then” (2011, with Zeze), Takeshi Furusawa’s “Another” (2012, with Furusawa), Osamu Minorikawa’s “Sue, Mai and Sawa: Righting the Girl Ship” (2013), and Takehiko Shinjo’s “Beyond the Memories” (2013, with Satomi Oshima).

### **Yusuke Hayashi, Original Music**

Studied musical composition under Yutaka Takahashi, Atsutada Odaka, and Hinoharu Matsumoto. Began composing music for films due to the influence of his father, cinematographer Junichiro Hayashi. Nominated for Best Music at the 36th Japan Academy Prize for Yasuo Furuhata’s “Dearest” (2012). “Before We Vanish” is his fourth collaboration with Kiyoshi Kurosawa; previously he scored “Doppelganger” (2003), WOWOW television miniseries “Penance” (2012), and “Seventh Code” (2014). Other soundtrack credits include Tadafumi Ito’s “By Rule of Crow’s Thumb” (2012), Yu Irie’s “The Sun” (2016), Teruyoshi Uchimura’s “Gold Medal Man” (2016, with Uchimura and Rie & Party Monster), Takeshi Furusawa’s “ReLIFE” (2017), and Mari Asato’s “Hyouka” (2017).

### **Akiko Ashizawa, Cinematography**

Gained experience as an assistant cinematographer after graduating from university, then struck out on her own in 1982. “Before We Vanish” marks her eighth collaboration with Kiyoshi Kurosawa, following “Loft” (2006), “Retribution” (2007), “Tokyo Sonata” (2008), WOWOW television miniseries “Penance” (2012), “Real” (2013), “Journey to the Shore” (2015), and “Creepy” (2016). Won awards for her work on Masato Harada’s “Chronicle of My Mother” (2012) at the 67th Mainichi Film Concours and the 36th Japan Academy Prize. Received the 66th Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology Award for Art for Artistic Excellence in Film and the 40<sup>th</sup> Yamaji Fumiko Film Award in 2016.

## **CAST BIOS**

### **Masami Nagasawa (Narumi Kase)**

Born on June 3, 1987 in Shizuoka Prefecture. Received her first starring film role in 2003 in “Robokon” for which she won a New Artist Award at the 27th Japan Academy Prize. Played the female lead in “Crying Out Love in the Center of the World” (2004), for which she won Best Supporting Actress at the 28th Japan Academy Prize. Her role in “Love Strikes!” in 2011 brought three awards, including the Rising Star Award at the 11th New York Asian Film Festival. Starred in the John Woo-directed Chinese production “The Crossing” in 2014. In 2015, she received a Best Supporting Actress nomination at the 39th Japan Academy Prize for her role in internationally renowned filmmaker Hirokazu Kore-eda’s “Our Little Sister”. She was also chosen as a rising star at the 20th Busan International Film Festival’s Casting Board, which recognizes promising young Asian movie stars. Took the starring role of Sally Bowles in a Japanese production of the musical “Cabaret” in 2017, and voiced the character of Ash (originally performed by Scarlet Johansson) in the Japanese dubbed version of the animated film “Sing”. Further credits include “Nada Sousou” (2006), “Gaku” (2011), “From Up on Poppy Hill” (2011), “Beyond the Memories” (2013), “Wood Job!” (2014), “I Am a Hero” (2016), “Your Name” (2016), “Good Morning Show” (2016), “Gold Medal Man” (2016), and “Tsuikoku” (2017). Will also appear in “Gintama”, set for release later in 2017.

### **Ryuhei Matsuda (Shinji Kase)**

Born in Tokyo on May 9, 1983. “Before We Vanish” marks his first appearance in a film by Kiyoshi Kurosawa. Made his acting debut in “Taboo” (1999), for which he won numerous awards for Best Newcomer, including at the Japan Academy Prize and Blue Ribbon Awards. Drew attention for his lead performance in “The Great Passage” (2013), which brought him a Best Actor award at the 37th Japan Academy Prize and several other accolades. Other major credits include “Blue Spring” (2002), “Otakus in Love” (2004), “Nana” (2005), “Nightmare Detective” (2007), “The Summit: A Chronicle Of Stones to Serenity” (2009), “Kanikosen” (2009), “Tada’s Do-It-All House” (2011), “Phone Call to the Bar” (2011), “A Chorus of Angels” (2012), “Detective in the Bar” (2013), “Tada’s Do-It-All House: Disconcerto” (2014), “A

Farewell to Jinu” (2015), “The Mohican Comes Home” (2016), “The Magnificent Nine” (2016), “My Uncle” (2016), and “The Tokyo Night Sky is Always the Densest Shade of Blue” (2017).

**Hiroki Hasegawa (Sakurai, The Journalist)**

Born in Tokyo in 1977. “Before We Vanish” marks his first appearance in a film by Kiyoshi Kurosawa. His credits span a wide range of prominent film, television, and theater productions. Won a Best Newcomer Award at the 35th Japan Academy Prize for his performance in “Second Virgin” (2011). Nominated for the 40th Japan Academy Prize’s Best Leading Actor Award for his role in Hideaki Anno’s “Shin Godzilla” (2016). Other notable credits include “Suzuki Sensei” (2013), “Why Don’t You Play in Hell?” (2013), “Lady Maiko” (2014), “Princess Jellyfish” (2014), “Attack on Titan” and “Attack on Titan: End of the World” (both 2015), “Love and Peace” (2015), “This Country’s Sky” (2015), “Mozu the Movie” (2015), “Sailor Suit and Machine Gun” (2016), and “Double Life” (2016).

**BEFORE WE VANISH / CREDITS**

Directed by  
Kiyoshi Kurosawa

Original play by  
Tomohiro Maekawa “Before We Vanish”  
aka “Sanpo Suru Shinryakusha”

Screenplay  
Sachiko Tanaka  
Kiyoshi Kurosawa

Original Music  
Yusuke Hayashi  
Production  
Yoshio Nakayama  
Masanari Nagayama  
Eiji Omura  
Tadashi Osumi  
Masaya Yabushita  
Yosuke Miyake  
Hideki Ohyagi

Miyuki Matsuda  
Yoshiki Sakurai

Executive Producers

Daisuke Kadoya  
Yoshinori Chiba  
Takehiko Aoki

Producers

Yuji Ishida  
Naoto Fujimura  
Yumi Arakawa  
Tomomi Takashima

Line Producer

Nobuhiro Iizuka

Associate Producer

Ryo Otaki

Presented by "Before We Vanish" Film Partners (Nippon  
Television/NIKKATSU/WOWOW/YOMIURI TELECASTING/PONY CANYON/NIPPON PLANNING  
CENTER /office saku/ Hirata Office)

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