

Mongrel Media
Presents

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

A FILM BY KORE-EDA HIROKAZU

WITH FUKUYAMA MASAHARU, ONO MACHIKO
MAKI YOKO and LÍLY FRANKY

FILM FESTIVALS

2013 FESTIVAL DE CANNES – JURY PRIZE WINNER
2013 TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
2013 SAN SEBASTIAN FILM FESTIVAL – AUDIENCE AWARD WINNER
2013 NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL
2013 VANCOUVER FILM FESTIVAL – PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD WINNER
2013 CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
2013 BFI LONDON FILM FESTIVAL
2013 AFI FEST

120 MIN / JAPAN / COLOUR / 2012 / JAPANESE WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

Distribution



1028 Queen Street West
Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M6J 1H6
Tel: 416-516-9775 Fax: 416-516-0651
E-mail: info@mongrelmedia.com
www.mongrelmedia.com

Publicity

Bonne Smith
Star PR
Tel: 416-488-4436
Fax: 416-488-8438
E-mail: starpr@sympatico.ca

High res stills may be downloaded from <http://www.mongrelmedia.com/press.html>

SYNOPSIS

Would you choose your natural son, or the son you believed was yours after spending 6 years together? Kore-eda Hirokazu, the globally acclaimed director of "Nobody Knows", "Still Walking" and "I Wish", returns to the big screen with another family - a family thrown into torment after a phone call from the hospital where the son was born...

Ryota has earned everything he has by his hard work, and believes nothing can stop him from pursuing his perfect life as a winner. Then one day, he and his wife, Midori, get an unexpected phone call from the hospital. Their 6-year-old son, Keita, is not 'their' son - the hospital gave them the wrong baby.

Ryota is forced to make a life-changing decision, to choose between 'nature' and 'nurture.' Seeing Midori's devotion to Keita even after learning his origin, and communicating with the rough yet caring family that has raised his natural son for the last six years, Ryota also starts to question himself: has he really been a 'father' all these years... The moving story of a man who finally faces himself when he encounters an unexpected wall for the first time in his life.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

At what point does a father truly become a father?

Being one myself, this is a compelling and unanswered question I have. When my daughter was born five years ago, my wife appeared to transform instantly into a mother. While I imagine that not all women go through such metamorphoses, looking at my wife nursing my child with my being a father yet to sink in, I felt happy at the arrival of a newborn baby, but also somewhat estranged.

Five years later, I often find myself being told by friends that my daughter looks so much like me as we walk through the park. Comparing facial features like our eyes and mouths, I do feel my DNA has left a mark on her.

Is it, then, the realization of shared blood that makes a man into a father? Or is it the time father and child spend together? Could it be that my tenuous acceptance of myself as a father comes from not having spent enough time with my child? Is it blood or is it time? I began to think that this personal quandary could be the theme of a movie.

That was the beginning of this film "Like Father, Like Son".

All of my quandaries and questions and, indeed, regrets - this is the first time I have poured these emotions so candidly into the protagonist of a film.

The film is now completed and done. But as for the protagonist and me - our questions remain.

Q & A WITH DIRECTOR KORE-EDA HIROKAZU

What was the start of making this film?

It started with the idea of making a film with Fukuyama Masaharu. I mulled over a number of plots, but my desire to have him play a father was really the beginning.

Why did you choose switched babies as the theme of the film?

I have a 5-year-old child, just like the protagonist in the story, and through making this film I wanted to think about what blood connections really mean, an idea very close to me.

In order to make the film interesting and compelling to the audience, I placed the protagonist in the situation of being a victim of switched babies.

Is there any real life case which inspired you to create the story?

I researched some baby mix-up incidents that occurred around Japan during the baby boomer era in the 1960s, but the story is original.

Your films often touch on paternity. What do being a father - and fatherhood itself - mean to you?

I really don't have an answer right now.

My father passed away 10 years ago, and I became a father myself five years back. As my position in the family tree has changed, I believe my idea on fatherhood has changed as well. I will probably continue to look at fatherhood in my coming films until I figure it out.

This is the first time you have worked with Fukuyama Masaharu. How was it?

It was a very enjoyable experience. Though this was probably a new type of movie and role for him, he did an excellent job expressing a weakness and coldness in the character, and his subsequent personal growth.

Tell us about the growth that the main character Ryota undergoes.

In fact I'm not sure if we can describe the changes Ryota undergoes as growth or maturity. I honestly don't know. But what I can say is that becoming a father is not something you do on your own - your child makes a father out of you. I believe the character comes to realize this.

Tell us about the other three leading cast members.

Ono Machiko plays the wife, and in the first half of the film, her obedience to her husband makes you think of the so-called traditional Japanese wife. But in the second half, a feeling of loathing helps her find strength as a mother, a shift in acting that Machiko handled admirably.

As the other family, Lily Franky and Maki Yoko give performances that depict a lifestyle wholly different from the protagonist's in every way possible. Their persuasive performance makes the fragility of Ryota's success in life much more apparent.

The children in your last film, "I Wish", were more energetic and lively, whereas the kids in this film are more cool and reserved. What did you aim for in directing the children in "Like Father, Like Son"?

In particular, I wanted there to be a contrast of character between the two children. The goal was to bring out their individual personalities in the film. Because the children are six, I wanted them to express confusion, rather than sadness, towards their situation.

What did you intend to convey through this film, and did you achieve it?

I don't know that I can look down on it from above like that yet. Through making this film, I myself relived what the protagonist went through: worrying, making decisions, and having regrets. I hope this will be an opportunity for me and the audience to think about what kind of possibilities these families can have from making the decision to exchange their kids or choose their blood.

**FUKUYAMA MASAHARU
(NONOMIYA RYOTA)**

Born 1969 in Nagasaki, Japan. Having made his debut as a singer-songwriter in 1990, Fukuyama has played active roles in a variety of artistic fields, including music and acting.

In 2000, he had a huge success with his single "Sakurazaka", which sold over two million copies in Japan. He continued to make hit songs, and with the sales of his 27th single - "Kazoku ni narou yo / Fighting Pose" - in 2011, he became the all time best-selling male solo singer in Japan.

Fukuyama's acting career reached its benchmark with the TV series "Galileo" (2007) and its movie adaptation "Suspect X" (2008), which grossed some 5 billion JPY. He starred in the 2010 NHK historical drama series "Ryomaden - The Legend" as Sakamoto Ryoma, one of the most popular figures in Japanese history. Highly praised for his performance, he received the Galaxy Individual Award. The sequel to the "Galileo" series was released in 2013, followed by the release of its movie adaptation "Midsummer Formula" this summer.

**ONO MACHIKO
(NONOMIYA MIDORI)**

Born 1981 in Nara, Japan. In 1997, Ono made her feature film debut in "Suzaku", directed by Kawase Naomi. The film went on to win the Camera d'Or Award at the 50th Cannes International Film Festival, and Ono herself received Best Actress awards at the Singapore International Film Festival and Takasaki Film Festival, among others.

In 2007, she teamed up again with Kawase for "The Mourning Forest", which won the Grand Prix at Cannes. Her lead performance in the NHK TV series "Carnation" (2011-12), based on the life of Koshino Ayako - mother of three world-acclaimed fashion designers, the Koshino sisters - firmly established her as one of Japan's leading actresses.

Further credits include "Climber's High" (2008), "Rail Truck" (2010) and "The Castle of Crossed Destinies" (2012), as well as the TV series "Goldfish" (2009) and "The Best Divorce" (2013), among others. Upcoming films include "Detective in the Bar 2", directed by Hashimoto Hajime, and Mizuta Nobuo's "Shazai no Osama."

**MAKI YOKO
(SAIKI YUKARI)**

Born in Chiba, Japan. Maki made her feature film debut in "Drug" (2001), directed by Sugawara Hiroshi. Her first leading role was in "Veronika Decides to Die" (2006), based on the novel by Paulo Coelho. In the same year, she received the New Actress Award at the 30th Yamaji Fumiko Awards for her role in Nishikawa Miwa's "Sway", which premiered at Directors' Fortnight, Cannes, in 2006. In 2010, she gave an excellent performance in the NHK historical drama "Ryomaden - The Legend" as the wife of Sakamoto Ryoma, played by Fukuyama Masaharu. More recent credits include the popular TV drama series "Man of Destiny" (2012) and the feature film "Black Dawn" (2012).

This year she has appeared in the TV series "The Best Divorce" and the feature films "Before the Vigil" directed by Yukisada Isao, and "Sue, Mai & Sawa: Righting the Girl Ship", directed by Minorikawa Osamu. Her latest starring project, "The Ravine of Goodbye", directed by Omori Tatsushi, was released this summer.

**LILY FRANKY
(SAIKI YUDAI)**

Born 1963 in Fukuoka, Japan. Since graduating from Musashino Art University, Lily Franky has worked widely in various fields, including literature, photography, songwriting and acting, along with illustration and design. In 2006, he received the top Honya Taisho award for his first novel "Tokyo Tower: Mom & Me, and Sometimes Dad", which sold more than 2 million copies and was adapted as a TV film, TV series, feature film and stage play. In addition, his children's book "Oden-kun" became an animated series, its popularity transcending age and gender.

As an actor, he won the Best New Artist Award at the Blue Ribbon Awards for his performance in the Toronto-premiered film "All Around Us" (2008) by Hashiguchi Ryosuke, and has appeared in many other movies and television series. He was also seen in the film "The Devil's Path" (2013), directed by Shiraishi Kazuya.

KORE-EDA HIROKAZU DIRECTOR

Born 1962 in Tokyo. After graduating from Waseda University in 1987, Kore-eda joined TV Man Union where he directed several prize-winning documentaries.

In 1995, his directorial debut "Maborosi", based on the novel by Miyamoto Teru, won the 52nd Venice International Film Festival's Golden Osella Prize. "After Life" (1999), distributed in over 30 countries, brought Kore-eda international acclaim. In 2001, "Distance" was selected In Competition at the Cannes Film Festival, and with his fourth feature "Nobody Knows" (2004), Yagira Yuya garnered much attention for becoming the youngest person to ever receive the Cannes International Film Festival's Best Actor Award. In 2006, "Hana", a film centered on vengeance, was Kore-eda's first attempt at a period piece. In 2008, the family drama "Still Walking", which reflected his own personal experiences, was received with great critical and public acclaim worldwide. In 2009, "Air Doll" received its world premiere in Un Certain Regard, at the 62nd Cannes International Film Festival, and was widely praised for marking a new frontier in its depiction of a sensual love fantasy. In 2011, "I Wish" won the Best Screenplay Award at the 59th San Sebastian International Film Festival.

Kore-eda has also produced films for young Japanese directors. "Kakuto," directed by Iseya Yusuke, premiered at the International Film Festival Rotterdam in 2003. "Wild Berries" (2003) was written and directed by Nishikawa Miwa, whose second feature, "Sway", premiered in Director's Fortnight at Cannes in 2006. "Ending Note: Death of a Japanese Salesman" (2011) by Sunada Mami, struck a deep emotional chord with audiences around the world.

FILMOGRAPHY

DIRECTOR

- 1991 HOWEVER... (Shikashi...) - TV documentary
- 1991 LESSONS FROM A CALF (Kougai ha Doko he Itta) - TV documentary
- 1994 AUGUST WITHOUT HIM (Kare no Inai Hachigatsu ga) - TV documentary
- 1995 MABOROSHI (Maboroshi no Hikari)
- 1996 WITHOUT MEMORY (Kioku ga Ushinawareta Toki) - TV documentary
- 1998 AFTER LIFE (Wonderful Life)
- 2001 DISTANCE (Distance)
- 2004 NOBODY KNOWS (Dare mo Shiranai)
- 2006 HANA (Hana yorimo Naho)
- 2008 STILL WALKING (Aruitemo Aruitemo)
- 2008 WISHING YOU'RE ALRIGHT – JOURNEY WITHOUT AN END BY COCCO
(Daijoubu de Aruyouni Cocco Owaranai Tabi)
- 2009 AIR DOLL (Kuuki Ningyo)
- 2010 THE DAYS AFTER (Nochi no Hi) - TV drama
- 2011 I WISH (Kiseki)
- 2012 GOING HOME (Going My Home) - TV series

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

- 2003 WILD BERRIES (Hebi Ichigo) directed by Nishikawa Miwa
- 2003 KAKUTO (Kakuto) directed by Iseya Yusuke
- 2009 BEAUTIFUL ISLANDS (Beautiful Islands) directed by Kana Tomoko
- 2011 ENDING NOTE: DEATH OF A JAPANESE SALESMAN directed by Sunada Mami
- 2012 THAT DAY - LIVING FUKUSHIMA (Anohi - Fukushima ha Ikitairu)
directed by Imanaka Kohei

CREDITS

CAST

NONOMIYA RYOTA FUKUYAMA MASA HARU
NOMIYA MIDORINO ONO MACHIKO
SAIKI YUKARI MAKI YOKO
SAIKI YUDAI LILY FRANKY

CREW

DIRECTED BY KORE-EDA HIROKAZU
WRITTEN BY KORE-EDA HIROKAZU
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY TAKIMOTO MIKIYA
EDITED BY KORE-EDA HIROKAZU
PRODUCTION DESIGNER MITSUMATSU KEIKO
SOUND BY TSURUMAKI YUTAKA
LIGHTING BY FUJII NORIKIYO
PRODUCTION BY FILM, INC.
CHIEF EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS KAMEYAMA CHIHIRO
HATANAKA TATSURO
TOM YODA
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS OGAWA YASUSHI
HARADA CHIAKI
ODAKE SATOMI
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER OSAWA MEGUMI
PRODUCERS MATSUZAKI KAORU
TAGUCHI HIJIRI