

**Mongrel Media**

Presents

# NORWEGIAN WOOD



**A Film by Anh Hung Tran  
(133 min., Japan, 2011)**

**Language: Japanese with English Subtitles**

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## SYNOPSIS

Published in 1987 and since translated into 33 languages, NORWEGIAN WOOD is a story of loss and heartbreak in a time of global instability. Haruki Murakami's bestselling novel is brought to the screen by Tran Anh Hung (Golden Lion winner for CYCLO and Academy Award nominee for THE SCENT OF GREEN PAPAYA) and features Japanese rising star Kenichi Matsuyama (DEATH NOTE, DETROIT METAL CITY) and Oscar nominee Rinko Kikuchi (BABEL) alongside newcomer Kiko Mizuhara.

Tokyo, the late 1960s...Students around the world are uniting to overthrow the establishment and Toru Watanabe's personal life is similarly in tumult. At heart, he is deeply devoted to his first love, Naoko, a beautiful and introspective young woman. But their complex bond has been forged by the tragic death of their best friend years before. Watanabe lives with the influence of death everywhere. That is, until Midori, a girl who is everything that Naoko is not – outgoing, vivacious, supremely self-confident – marches into his life and Watanabe must choose between his past and his future.

## ABOUT THE NOVEL

A nostalgic story of loss and sexuality, NORWEGIAN WOOD's protagonist Watanabe looks back on his days as a freshman university student living in Tokyo. Through his reminiscences, we see him develop relationships with two very different women — the beautiful yet emotionally troubled Naoko, and the outgoing, lively Midori. The novel is set in Tokyo during the late 1960s, a time when Japanese students, like those of many other nations, were protesting against the established order. While it serves as the backdrop against which the events of the novel unfold, Murakami emphasizes that NORWEGIAN WOOD is purely a love story.

*"This is a love story. I know this is a very stale way to call it, but I can't think of any other appropriate words,"* says Murakami in the postscript of the first edition of NORWEGIAN WOOD.

The upwards of 10 million copies sold in Japan is a testament to how popular the novel is with Japanese readers, while the 2.6 million copies sold overseas is indicative of its international appeal. To date, NORWEGIAN WOOD has been published in 36 countries and translated in 33 languages, including English, Icelandic, Arabian, Italian, Estonian, Dutch, Cataluna, Greek, Croatian, Swedish, Spanish, Slovene, Serb, Czech, Danish, German, Turkish, Norwegian, Hungarian, French, Hebrew, Polish, Portuguese, Latvian, Lithuanian, Rumanian, Russian, Chinese (Simplified, Chinese (Traditional), Korean, Thai, Indonesian and Vietnamese.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

"To me, NORWEGIAN WOOD is at its heart, a story about many of the various things in life that everyone has to pass through, such as the unfilled desire of youth, radical protests, the choice of life or death, the process of growing up, and so on. The original novel is so powerful and sensitive; it has a chaos of violence and elegance, and is filled with sensuality and poetry. It contains a wide variety of themes that lend themselves to a film adaptation. I believe that my instinct to adapt this work into a film will lead to another due recognition of how wonderful and abundant the original novel was."

*-- Tran Anh Hung*

## INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR - TRAN ANH HUNG

### **How did you encounter the book and what was the process of developing the film?**

I read the French edition, several years after it was published in Japan. I was immediately captivated and wanted to film it. But because I couldn't get positive responses to my proposal, I had almost given up when producer Shinji Ogawa contacted me. He and I began thorough discussions about the direction of the film adaptation. When we met Haruki Murakami, he asked us to show him the first draft of the screenplay. I finished the first draft and showed it to Haruki, who gave me many notes, including additional dialogue not included in his original book. I wrote the second draft based on his notes and after that, I was free to revise the screenplay as I wanted. I believe Haruki felt I had grasped the essence of his book and we were able to finish the film.

### **What about the book captivated you?**

*Norwegian Wood* is a fantastic novel that brilliantly portrays the radical inner lives of youth, through the character's personal experiences. The book depicts young people, seeking to define their lives and accepting the consequences as they fall in love and honestly confront their emotions. As Haruki himself has said, this leads the characters into dangerous territory. Yet, it was this aching yearning of youth that intrigued me. Another factor is the sensuality. Because everything is structured around the sexual lives of the characters, I knew that visually, I would need to strike the right balance for the audience to experience the sex as more than simple pleasure, without descending into vulgarity.

### **What was your greatest challenge in writing the screenplay?**

The novel begins with a plane landing at Hamburg Airport. The story is told in a nostalgic voice, looking back at the past, but I wanted to recreate the raw painfulness of fresh wounds. That's why I wrote the screenplay in the present tense. That was the hardest decision to make.

### **Did you plan from the beginning to cast Japanese actors and film in Japan?**

It was never an option for me to work with anyone other than Japanese actors or shoot outside Japan, because I love the uniquely Japanese culture and sensibility palpable in the novel. Of course, it was a challenge to direct actors speaking Japanese, but my producer, Ogawa, provided invaluable support.

### **What were your casting criteria?**

For me, casting is always about the personality of the actor. Especially for someone who has never acted before, what is critical is how much the actor fits the worldview of the film and how suitable the actor is to the character. The next step is to discern how much acting potential the actor has.

### **Why did you cast Matsuyama Kenichi for the role of Watanabe?**

When I first saw his photograph, frankly, I wasn't sure. But I did sense something unique in him so I decided to meet him. The instant I met him, I knew no one else could play Watanabe. This was because of his personality, as I mentioned before. He is able to express his whole personality through sheer presence. A truly wonderful actor.

### **What about Rinko Kikuchi, who plays Naoko?**

I had seen her in BABEL and didn't think she was appropriate for the role but she really wanted to audition. When I saw her audition video, I instantly knew she was the one. When I met her for the first time, she gave the impression of a delicate young woman. When I learned later that she had slipped away from filming as a maniacal murderer in MAP OF THE SOUNDS OF TOKYO and had transformed herself into a girlish presence to meet me, this only confirmed my respect for her as an actress.

### **Why did you cast Kiko Mizuhara as Midori?**

I had a hard time casting Midori and met many actresses in the audition process, but she instantly captivated me. What people feel seeing her is a sense of absolute warmth. Because warmth is such an essential aspect of Midori, I cast her for the part.

### **How did you overcome language and other cultural barriers shooting in Japan?**

Even though I don't speak the language, it's obvious whether an actor is inhabiting the role in any given scene. I asked the actors to try multiple takes until I was satisfied with their performance. In the most challenging scenes, I asked my producer, Ogawa, his opinion of their intonation before deciding whether to shoot another take. It's actually a great deal of fun to film a movie in a language you don't understand. The dialogue sounds just like music that grows increasingly mysterious and fetishistic.

**What was your greatest challenge in scouting locations?**

When I scouted locations, I wasn't looking to recreate scenes from the novel. Instead, I wanted to find places where I could shoot gorgeous images. Because of that, the grassland so pivotal to the novel had to be outstandingly beautiful and that proved difficult. In the novel, Watanabe first visits the grassland in autumn; but because in the location we chose, the grasses grow too tall for the actors to walk through, we needed to adapt the season to when that landscape looked most beautiful.

**Why did you ask Lee Ping-bin to be your cinematographer?**

Because his images are so sensual. In a film where sensuality is one of the major themes, this was essential. The level of his artistry is very high, which allows me to create wonderful images. However, I didn't want the images in this film to be overly beautiful, so we filmed in HD. What I wanted was the kind of beauty appropriate to this film, not beautiful images for their own sake. Shooting in digital, I was able to capture the texture of human skin. HD was also essential to capture its beauty and softness.

**Why did you ask Jonny Greenwood to score the film?**

My reason was simple. When I saw *THERE WILL BE BLOOD*, which he scored, I thought it was wonderful. His music is both modern and classical at the same time and I am captivated by that singular harmony. I also experience a rich musicality from his music. His musical phrases are not simple or easy to memorize. Instead they echo the expansive spiritual world with a sound that feels as though it will keep growing and expanding. The characters in this film often find themselves in complex psychological states, involving deep pain and profound dilemmas. I wanted the music to have the depth to express their psychological states. He is a musician capable of naturally melting into the world of this story. I was privileged to work with him.

**All of your films to date share the theme of “beauty within suffering.” In this film, were you also trying to discover beauty within the pain of mourning?**

It's true that I believe it's possible to discover elements of beauty in the midst of suffering. One of the major themes of art is to portray how beauty and suffering co-exist and that is true of this film. One character's mourning triggers much suffering. My goal was to portray that as intensely as possible, in a style that rendered the intensity beautiful. This is because beauty settles deeply into the human psyche and endures. I want my audience to encounter that beauty.

## INTERVIEW WITH KENICHI MATSUYAMA

**NORWEGIAN WOOD is a monumental work in contemporary literature, as well as a nostalgic tale of sexuality and loss, told from the point of view of Watanabe. When you heard about the book's adaptation, what were your thoughts? How did you feel when you found out you were cast in the film?**

People from around the world have tried and failed for decades to adapt this story into a visual work of art. I am very honored to have been cast as the main character for such a project. The director, Tran Anh Hung, gave me direction so it was not so difficult. Watanabe is a character who chooses his words carefully, so I did make a conscious effort in that sense.

**Watanabe is torn between his past and his future. He is unable to tear himself away from his first love, Naoko, while desperately seeking to start his future with Midori. Was it difficult to portray the relationships between two such female characters? Furthermore, Watanabe experiences more than one death of a loved one. You could say he is overwhelmed by loss. How emotionally involved do you become with the role of Watanabe?**

I was especially weighed down by the aspect of Watanabe that was pulled in two opposite directions; life and death. In my scenes with the character of Naoko, there was such a discrepancy between what I was saying and what my character was feeling, it was agonizing. In my scenes with the character of Midori, I could feel Watanabe's heart fill with joy being with her. Prior to shooting, the director had told me that I would experience an immense love in the three months to follow.

**How was your experience working with Tran Anh Hung? Did you find anything different from your past work with other directors?**

He is somebody who is aware of all the possibilities. He doesn't decide on something like the characters' wardrobes based simply on impressions. Instead, he looks for all kinds of directions, and he takes on camerawork, acting, stills, sound, all in the same manner. He's really a great director.

**With Tran Anh Hung at the helm, breathing new life into NORWEGIAN WOOD, do you think the world will now rediscover the story with a new point of view?**

Without a doubt. This is a new *Norwegian Wood*. I firmly believe that it has turned into something people around the world will truly enjoy.

INTERVIEW WITH RINKO KIKUCHI

**What was your reaction when you heard about the adaptation of NORWEGIAN WOOD? How did you feel when you found out you were cast in the film? Were you familiar with the character of Naoko before you were cast for the role?**

I was very happy when I was cast, and couldn't wait to play Naoko. I wanted the part so much, I had begged to audition for it.

My first encounter with Murakami's work was *Norwegian Wood*. I was 18, close in age to the character of Naoko. In my teens, I was drawn to things that were fragile and dangerous, yet beautiful, so Naoko left the strongest impression on me. I lived with an impalpable uncertainty towards the world, and perhaps that led me to be drawn more and more to her, leaving a continued impression on me even as an adult.

Which is why even more so, if there were aspects of Naoko's feelings that I could not grasp in my teens which I might now understand on a deeper level through playing the character, and to think that it could possibly grow inside of me, I had to have the opportunity to play her. At the audition, I had the chance to read the lines from one of the especially memorable scenes from the novel, when Naoko talks to Watanabe about the well. I remember at the time, feeling fulfilled with that alone.

Once I've played a role, I find that the character starts to grow inside me. As I grow to understand the person more fully, I discover emotions I have never even felt before, and the excitement I feel then is absolutely amazing.

I'm sure you can readily imagine how exciting it is to play a character one had read and loved since their teens.

**Naoko is a very difficult role to play. She is traumatized with the death of her first love, and living with that changes her life forever. How did you perceive Naoko's character? Were you conscious of the character in the novel?**

Of course, I couldn't help but be conscious of the novel. I had read it before, and there were many helpful clues in the book. It is read by a wide audience. I naturally felt the responsibility that came with playing the role. But we all have different ideas of Naoko. That is why out of respect for the novel and those that love the novel, it was important that I take on the role with integrity, and the only way I could do so was to play Naoko as I perceived her to be, to the best of my ability. For that purpose, I had to create extremely powerful emotions deep in my heart, so powerful that Naoko would penetrate through me. A sense of loss so strong, that it would overflow the

harder I tried to control it. I first spent the time on such vital aspects, letting it seep through me. Naoko had her own very, very small room within herself, to which she never let anybody dare knock on the door; to which even she could not find an exit. I believe that when she lost Kizuki, she unintentionally closed every door possible, for good. In that sense, I tried to be mindful of a certain level of detachment from society when playing the role.

**How do you personally perceive the nature of Naoko and Watanabe's relationship, and Naoko and Kizuki's relationship?**

In life, when there is a strong impact or pressure applied, the person that is with you at the time becomes your sole companion because they share the same experience. Like a war comrade that fought together with you. It would take more than words to explain what happened. It's as if there is a big river, and Naoko and Watanabe were companions that were together on the same side of the river. The current is so strong that one would need to put in extreme effort in order to cross to the other side. I think Watanabe was able to make it across because of his encounter with Midori. Naoko could not cross without Watanabe, but eventually, she strays even farther inland, away from the riverbank. But he was likely the only person to even give her the hope that together, it would be possible to cross that river. This is strictly my personal understanding.

**How was your experience working with Tran Anh Hung on NORWEGIAN WOOD? The scene in which Naoko explains to Watanabe why she didn't have sex with Kizuki is visually and verbally truly impressive. It's a very long, traveling take. How did you prepare for the scene? To portray an emotionally climactic scene in this manner was bold and intriguing. Would you agree?**

First and foremost, I had faith in the director and the entire crew. So many crew members worked to prepare the scene, laying down a very, very long track, and we had to shoot the scene traveling on unstable marshland. All this at magic hour, which only lasts 30 minutes a day.

Feeling such dedication and the trust they had in me and Kenichi enabled me to put all of that aside and just focus. I knew that as long as I was relaxed and focused, everything would be okay, and by then, Naoko had grown inside me, so it's really gratifying to know that we ended up with something good. In that scene, the flow of emotions was beyond what I could have imagined. That was possible because of the long track. Because the shots were not broken down into pieces, the emotional flow became uncontrollable. I can't explain it very well, but when you achieve desirable results from something unexpected, it seems like the most natural and right thing, and I think the director knew that scene needed to be shot the way it was done.

**Starring in films like BABEL, THE BROTHERS BLOOM, MAP OF THE SOUNDS OF TOKYO and SHANGHAI, you are presently the most globally sought after Japanese actress. The novel being a worldwide bestseller, now with Tran Anh Hung at the helm, has the film breathed new life into NORWEGIAN WOOD, and do you think the world will now rediscover the story with a new point of view?**

I strongly hope so. In my mind, any new endeavors are worthy of recognition. In this day and age, there is a considerable amount of risk that comes with attempting something new. To understand those risks and still take on this task is a courageous thing to do, and I'm happy to have been part of such a film. I am thankful to those who gave me this opportunity – the director and the producers – and I truly hope that this film will go on to be loved by audiences all over the world.

#### INTERVIEW WITH KIKO MIZUHARA

**How did you feel when you heard that NORWEGIAN WOOD was going to be adapted to film? How about when you were cast in the movie? Did you know who Midori was prior to being cast?**

I was familiar with the book before I was given the opportunity to audition for the part, but I had never read it, so I envisioned myself playing the role as I read the book. When I found out I had been cast, I was really happy, and at the same time, somewhat anxious about the challenges I would face. But I decided that I would have faith in the director and just do it.

**What is your perception of the character of Midori? Do you feel that she is the opposite of who Naoko is? Did you think about Midori's character from the book while acting?**

I think Midori is the light in this story. Of course, I tried to incorporate the character from the book in my own way, but prior to shooting, I had sat down with the director several times to discuss the character. As a result, I think the character turned out to be Midori filtered through the director's eyes.

**How was Tran Anh Hung's directing? Did his guidance inspire you to play Midori as a stronger character?**

This was my first acting experience and my first experience working on a feature film, so we had several rehearsals beforehand, and held many discussions. On set, I was so tense, but he offered a lot of guidance by asking me for specific ways to express an emotion, and movements of the smallest detail, which gradually helped to build my confidence.

**What did you think of the film? When Midori first appears in the story, it's a very powerful and charming scene. Would you agree that the wardrobe, music, set design, all of these things seem to contribute to Midori's character?**

The film is truly beautiful. To see myself in the film made me so happy. The music, the wardrobe, the colors, to see all of that come together was a moving experience, and I was completely drawn into the movie.

**The story is based on a novel with a global following, but now with Tran Anh Hung at the helm, new life has been breathed into NORWEGIAN WOOD. Do you think the world will now rediscover the story with a new point of view?**

Yes. There are passionate fans of *Norwegian Wood* around the world, who must each have their own version of NORWEGIAN WOOD. Still, Tran Anh Hung's *Norwegian Wood* is something that is breathtakingly beautiful, and his unique style of portraying luscious images will, in a good way, change the image you had going in to the film.

## BIOGRAPHIES – CREW

### **Director/Writer: TRAN Anh Hung**

Tran Anh Hung was born in Seno, in ex-Kingdom Of Laos on December 23<sup>rd</sup> 1962. In 1975, he exiled to France with his family, where he attended film school. His directorial debut *THE SCENT OF GREEN PAPAYA* (1992) won him a reputation internationally by winning Camera d'Or at the 46th Cannes Film Festival and the Best First Film Award at the 19th Cesar Awards. The film was also nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. His second film, *CYCLO* (1995) won the Golden Lion Award for the Best Film at the 52nd Venice Film Festival. His other films include *THE VERTICAL RAY OF THE SUN* (2000) and *I COME WITH THE RAIN* (2009). *NORWEGIAN WOOD* is his most recent feature.

#### *Director's Filmography:*

- 2010    NORWEGIAN WOOD**  
In Competition, Venice International Film Festival
- 2009    I COME WITH THE RAIN**
- 2000    THE VERTICAL RAY OF THE SUN**  
Cannes Film Festival (Un Certain Regard)
- 1995    CYCLO**  
Winner, Golden Lion, Venice International Film Festival  
Winner, Grand Prix, Flanders International Film Festival
- 1993    THE SCENT OF GREEN PAPAYA**  
Winner, Camera d'Or, Cannes Film Festival  
Winner, Best First Film, Cesar Awards  
Nominee, Academy Award® for the Best Foreign Language Film

### **Producer: Shinji OGAWA**

Born in Mie Prefecture in 1963. In 1987, Ogawa joined Asmik, where he produced home video and gaming software, prior to his move to foreign film distribution and promotions in 1996. In 1998, upon the merger of Asmik and Ace Pictures, he moved on to his current career in feature film production. That following year, he produced his first feature *RING 0: BIRTHDAY* (Norio Tsuruta, 2000). His 2002 film *PING PONG* (Fumihiko Sori, 2002) won the Japan Academy Prize for Best Pictures of the Year and eight other prizes. Other notable works by Ogawa include *JOSEE, TIGER AND THE FISH* (Isshin Inudo, 2003), *OTAKUS IN LOVE* (Suzuki Matsuo, 2004), *HONEY & CLOVER* (Masahiro Takada, 2006), *A GENTLE BREEZE IN THE VILLAGE* (Nobuhiro Yamashita, 2007) and *GU GU THE CAT* (Isshin Inudo, 2008).

**Original Novel Author: Haruki MURAKAMI**

Born in Kyoto, Japan, in 1949, Murakami grew up in Kobe and graduated from Waseda University in Tokyo. After college, Murakami owned a small jazz bar in Tokyo for seven years. His first novel, "Hear the Wind Sing" (1979), won him the Gunzou Literature Prize for budding writers. It was in 1987 that he published "Norwegian Wood", which went on to become the book that gained him a domestic and global following. In the early 1990's, Murakami spent four years teaching at Princeton, where he authored "The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle" (1994, 1995), for which he won the Yomiuri Literary Prize. The most recent of his many honors are the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award (Ireland, 2006), the Franz Kafka Prize (Czech, 2006) and the Jerusalem Prize for the Freedom of the Individual in Society (Israel, 2009). Murakami has also translated several works by American authors into Japanese, including titles by F. Scott Fitzgerald, Raymond Carver, John Irving, Raymond Chandler and others. His work has been translated into more than forty languages. His latest novel, "1Q84" Books 1 and 2 (2009) and Book 3 (2010) have topped bestseller lists in Japan and are expected to be released worldwide. Other works by Murakami include "Pinball, 1973" (1980), "A Wild Sheep Chase" (1982), "Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World" (1985), "Dance Dance Dance" (1988), "South of the Border, West of the Sun" (1992), "The Elephant Vanishes" (1993), "Underground" (1997), "The Place that Was Promised" (1998), "Sputnik Sweetheart" (1999), "After the Quake" (2000), "Kafka on the Shore" (2002), "After Dark" (2004), "Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman" (2006) and "What I Talk about When I Talk about Running" (2007).

**Music Score: Jonny GREENWOOD**

Born November 5th 1971, Jonny Greenwood joined Radiohead while still at school. He studied music and psychology at Oxford Polytechnic but left when Radiohead signed to Parlophone Records. The band released their debut album "Pablo Honey" in 1993 featuring the worldwide hit single "Creep," which director Tran Anh Hung used for his film CYCLO (1995). They then released "The Bends" (1995), "OK Computer" (1997) and "Kid A" (2000), which won a Grammy for Best Alternative Album and was ranked number one album of the decade by Rolling Stone magazine in 2009. Their other albums include "Amnesiac" (2001), "Hail to the Thief" (2003) and "In Rainbows" (2007), which entered the UK Album Chart and the U.S. Billboard 200 at number one, and again won a Grammy Award for Best Alternative Album. In addition to his work with Radiohead, Jonny is seen as a significant creative force within the music industry and has achieved a great reputation as a composer. In 2004, he became BBC Radio 3's Composer in Residence. Jonny also composed the score for Paul Thomas Anderson's film, THERE WILL BE BLOOD (2007) and won the award for Best Film Score in the Evening Standard British Film Awards, and the Ivor Novello Award for Best Original Film Score. It was also nominated for a Grammy in the category of Best Score Soundtrack Album.

**Director of Photography: Mark LEE Ping Bin**

Born in Taiwan in 1954, Lee started his career in the film industry in 1977 as an assistant to cinematographers. He has since worked on numerous feature films, and is a regular winner of Taiwan's Golden Horse Awards. Lee is especially known for his collaborations with Hou Hsiao-Hsien for such films as *IN THE HANDS OF A PUPPET MASTER* (Hou, 1993), *FLOWERS OF SHANGHAI* (1998) and *IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE* (2000) directed by Wong Kar Wai, which won him the Technical Grand Prize at Cannes Film Festival. Of his numerous works as Director of Photography are *THE VERTICAL RAY OF THE SUN* (2000) by Tran Anh Hung, *SPRINGTIME IN A SMALL TOWN* (2002) by Tian Zhuang-Zhuang, *SPRING SNOW* (2005) by Yukisada Isao, *THE SUN ALSO RISES* (2007) by Jiang Wen and *AIR DOLL* (2009) by Hirokazu Koreeda.

**Production Designer/Costume Designer: Yen Khe LUGUERN**

Born in Danang, Vietnam, Yen Khe Luguern left Vietnam at the age of one, to move to France with her parents in 1974 towards the end of the Vietnam War. She studied Interior Design and Architecture at the Ecole Camondo in Paris. During that time, she also joined a course in theatre studies, where she met director Tran Anh Hung in a casting session for his debut short film. Luguern has played the lead actress in all of Tran's films, the exception being *NORWEGIAN WOOD*, in which she assumed the role of Costume and Production Designer. Her contributions in such areas, in conjunction to her career as a thespian actress, were first cultivated during her studies at Ecole Camondo, and later flourished through her role as an advisor to Tran Anh Hung on his films such as *THE SCENT OF GREEN PAPAYA* (1992) and *CYCLO* (1995).

**Production Designer: Norifumi ATAKA**

Born 1971, Ataka started out as an Assistant Art Director while attending Tokyo Zokei University. His first project as a production designer was on the feature film *SASAYAKI* (Akihiko Shiota, 1999). *PICKPOCKET* (Kazuo Kuroki, 2000), his first encounter with production designer Takeo Kimura, one of the most highly regarded production designers in the Japanese film industry, led to a series of projects where the two worked side by side, with Kimura serving as production design advisor on the films *PISTOL OPERA* (Seijun Suzuki, 2001), *PRINCESS RACCOON* (Seijun Suzuki, 2004) and *THE YOUTH OF KAMIYA ETSUKO* (Kazuo Kuroki, 2006).

Ataka also established a name for himself in the Japanese film industry for works on features of various genres, such as *RETRIBUTION* by Kiyoshi Kurosawa (2006), *DON'T LAUGH AT MY ROMANCE* (Nami Iguchi, 2007), *DETROIT METAL CITY* (Toshio Lee, 2008), *SHUTTER* (Masayuki Ochiai, 2008) and *THE CHEF OF SOUTH POLAR* (Shuichi Okita, 2009).

**Lighting Director: Yuki NAKAMURA**

Nakamura started his career as a lighting technician for Mifune Production, and Enya Production among others. His last work as a chief assistant was on the 1989 film, VIOLENT COP directed by Takeshi Kitano. His work with director Shunji Iwai on LETTERS OF LOVE (1995) won him the Special Prize from the Lighting Designers & Engineers Association of Japan. In 2004, he achieved the Best Lighting Award at the Japanese Academy Awards for his work on Isao Yukisada's CRYING OUT LOVE, IN THE CENTER OF THE WORLD (2004). Nakamura has previously worked with Mark Lee Ping Bin on SPRING SNOW (Yukisada, 2005). His work continues to span from feature films to commercials and music videos.

**Editor: Mario BATTISTEL**

Battistel graduated from a French university with a degree in modern literature, followed by postgraduate studies in cinema at Sorbonne University in Paris. He has taught French literature for several years. As an editor, Battistel has worked on numerous collaborations in video installations, documentaries and commercials with artists such as Jean-Baptiste Mondino, Jonas Akerlund, Sarah Moon, Peter Lindbergh, Jean Paul Goude, Tarsem, Sean Ellis, Taryn Simon as well as Tran Anh Hung's VERTICAL RAY OF THE SUN (2000), I COME WITH THE RAIN (2009) and NORWEGIAN WOOD.

**BIOGRAPHIES - CAST****Kenichi MATSUYAMA**

Born in 1985 in Aomori, Japan. Matsuyama launched his career as a model upon being singled out for the Grand Prix among 16,572 contestants in the Hori-pro men's talent audition in 2001, which was followed by his 2003 feature film debut in Kiyoshi Kurosawa's BRIGHT FUTURE. Producer Haruki Kadokawa cast him for a role in YAMATO (Junya Sato, 2005), for which Matsuyama was awarded the Best New Actor award at the Japan Academy Awards, Hochi Film Award and Yokohama Film Festival among other noted domestic film awards. His comical portrayal of a harmless folk singer/songwriter by day, havoc-wreaking death metal band vocal by night in DETROIT METAL CITY (Toshio Lee, 2008) won him a nomination for Best Actor at the 2009 Asian Film Awards. He has taken on a wide range of roles in films such as L CHANGE THE WORLD (Hideo Nakata, 2008), DON'T LAUGH AT MY ROMANCE (Nami Iguchi, 2007) and BARE ESSENCE OF LIFE (Satoko Yokoyama, 2009). He is consistently busy playing lead roles in feature films and television dramas, with upcoming roles in the live action sci-fi feature film GANTZ Parts 1 and 2 (Shinsuke Sato) and MY BACK PAGES (Nobuhiro Yamashita) both set to release in 2011.

**Rinko KIKUCHI**

Born in Kanagawa in 1981. Kikuchi's acting debut was in Kaneto Shindo's feature film, *WILL TO LIVE* (1999). Her role of a deaf high school girl in the 2006 film *BABEL*, directed by Alejandro González Iñárritu, attained worldwide acclaim after a Best Supporting Actress nomination at the 78<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards, a first for a Japanese actress in 50 years. She also won nominations for Best Supporting Actress at the Golden Globes and Screen Actors Guild Awards, and was named *Vogue* Woman of the Year 2006. Since then, Kikuchi has worked with directors and actors around the globe, including Isabel Coixet (*MAP OF THE SOUNDS OF TOKYO* 2009), *THE BROTHERS BLOOM* (2008), with Adrien Brody, Mark Ruffalo and Rachael Weisz, and with director Mikael Håfström (*SHANGHAI*, 2010). She also lent her voice to *THE SKY CRAWLERS* (Mamoru Oshii, 2008), the animated feature film which was nominated for the Golden Lion at the 65<sup>th</sup> Venice Film Festival.

**Kiko MIZUHARA**

Born in 1990 in Texas, United States of America, and raised in Kobe. Mizuhara debuted as a model in "Seventeen" magazine at 13, subsequent to being crowned Miss Seventeen 2003. By 2007 she had moved on to "ViVi" magazine, where she had tenure at the time she was discovered for the role of Midori. Her regular appearances on the catwalk at Tokyo Girls Collection, a biannual fashion extravaganza that draws crowds of 30,000 screaming fans, have elevated Mizuhara to celebrity status among Japanese fashionistas. With her first acting endeavor, Mizuhara garnered widespread attention at the time of the cast announcement for *NORWEGIAN WOOD*.

**Reika KIRISHIMA**

Born in 1972, and raised in Niigata, Japan. Starting her career off as a model, Kirishima now works in commercials, television dramas and feature films. Her first starring role was in *A STRANGER OF MINE* (Kenji Uchida, 2005), which went on to win the Young Critics Award for Best Feature at the 2005 Cannes Film Festival. Kirishima was also cast by director Barbet Schroeder in *INJU: THE BEAST IN THE SHADOW* (2008).

**Kengo KORA**

Born in 1987, Kumamoto, Japan, Kora made his acting debut in "Gokusen 2," (2005) the television series known to feature budding male stars. Since then, his career has been more feature-film-centric, and in a mere four years since his silver screen debut, he has worked with respected directors including the late Kon Ichikawa (*THE INUGAMIS*, 2006) Shinji Aoyama (*SAD VACATION*, 2007), Yukio Ninagawa (*SNAKES AND EARRINGS*, 2008) and SABU (*KANIKOSEN*, 2009) to name a few. In 2010 alone, he will have co-starred in six films including *A CROWD OF THREE* (Tatsushi Omori), *BOX!* (Toshio Lee) and *SOLANIN* (Takahiro Miki).

**Eriko HATSUNE**

Born 1982 in Tokyo, Japan, Hatsune debuted as an actress in the 1999 TV drama, "Labryinth." In the past, she has been cast in roles in horror or suspense films like SPIRAL (2000), OSHIKIRI (2000) and APARTMENT 1303 (2007). In addition to working in film and TV, she is an active actor in theatre, most recently playing the lead actress in the production "Neck" (2010).

**Tetsuji TAMAYAMA**

Born in Kyoto, Japan in 1980. Modeling by the time he was in high school, his acting debut was in the 1999 TV drama, "Naomi." Since then, while he has been busy working in television, he is also known to be passionate about the silver screen. His first lead role was in GYAKKYO NINE (Eiichiro Hasumi) in 2005, followed by main roles in major studio features such as NANA (Kentao Otani, 2005), THE GLORIOUS TEAM BATISTA (Yoshihiro Nakamura, 2008) and HAGETAKA: THE MOVIE (Keiji Ohtomo, 2009) as well as more independent films such as KAFOO: WAITING FOR HAPPINESS (Yu Nakai, 2009), ELEVATOR TO THE GALLOWS (Akira Ogata, 2010) and SEASIDE MOTEL (Kentaro Moriya, 2010).

**THE PRODUCTION****Asmik Ace Entertainment, Inc.**

Asmik Ace Entertainment, Inc. was established in 1985. Since the big success of the production of the original RINGU, Asmik Ace Entertainment, Inc. has been a leading independent Japanese production/distribution company and has been entertaining audiences throughout the world. Its recent domestic theatrical lineup has included TRANSPORTER 3 (Olivier Megaton, 2008), VICKY CRISTINA BARCELONA (Woody Allen, 2008), SAYONARA ITSUKA (John H. Lee, 2009), THE XEXTRAODINARY ADVENTURES OF ADELE BLANC-SEC Luc Besson, 2010) and SAW 3D (Kevin Greutert, 2010). Its recent productions include SAKURAN (Mika Ninagawa, 2006), THE HANDSOME SUIT (Tsutomu Hanabusa, 2008), THE SHOCK LABYRINTH: EXTREME (Takashi Shimizu, 2009) and TETSUO THE BULLET MAN (Shinya Tsukamoto, 2009).

**Fuji Television Network, Inc.**

Fuji Television Network, Inc., one of Japan's top-rating national network channels, is also a leading feature film production company which constantly sends several domestic films to the annual top 10 box office list in Japan. Its recent productions include AMALFI: REWARDS OF THE GODDESS (Hiroshi Nishitani, 2009) and NODAME CANTABILE: THE MOVIE 1 (Hideki Takeuchi, 2009) and THE MOVIE 2 (Yasuhiro Kawamura and Hideki Takeuchi, 2010). The latest installment of the BAYSIDE SHAKEDOWN franchise (the second film grossed US\$173.5M and has remained the highest grossing live action film in Japan), BAYSIDE SHAKEDOWN THREE: SET THE GUYS LOOSE (Katsuyuki Motohiro, 2010) opened number one to box offices in July 2010.

## CREW LIST

*Written & Directed by*  
*Based on the Novel by*

*Executive Producers*

*Producer*

*Associate Producers*

*Co-Executive Producers*

*Music Score by*

*Director of Photography*

*Production Designer &*

*Costume Designer*

*Production Designer*

*Lighting Director*

*Sound Mixer*

*Editor*

*Production Company*

**TRAN Anh Hung**

**Haruki MURAKAMI**

**"Norwegian Wood" Published by Kodansha**

**Masao TESHIMA**

**Chihiro KAMEYAMA**

**Shinji OGAWA**

**Kaoru MATSUZAKI**

**Joe IKEDA**

**Michael J. WERNER**

**Wouter BARENDRECHT**

**Jonny GREENWOOD**

**Mark LEE Ping Bin**

**Yen Khe LUGUERN**

**Norifumi ATAKA**

**Yuki NAKAMURA**

**Tomoharu URATA**

**Mario BATTISTEL**

**Asmik Ace Entertainment**

**Fuji Television Network**

## CAST LIST

**Kenichi MATSUYAMA**

*as Watanabe*

**Rinko KIKUCHI**

*as Naoko*

**Kiko MIZUHARA**

*as Midori*

**Reika KIRISHIMA**

*as Reiko Ishida*

**Kengo KORA**

*as Kizuki*

**Eriko HATSUNE**

*as Hatsumi*

**Tetsuji TAMAYAMA**

*as Nagasawa*

## TECHNICAL DETAILS

Gauge

133 minutes, 35MM & DCP, Color

Aspect Ratio

1:2.39

Genre

Romantic Drama

Sound

Dolby Digital

Language

Japanese

Year of Production

2010

Country of Production

Japan