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## HARMONIUM

(FUCHI NI TATSU)

A film by Kôji Fukada

*"Lures viewers in, but lingers long after." – Screen Daily*



Japan, France / 2016 / Drama / Japanese with English Subtitles  
118 min / 1.66:1 / Stereo and 5.1 Surround Sound

**Un Certain Regard Jury Prize – 2016 Cannes Film Festival**

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### ASSETS

Official US Trailer: TBD

Downloadable hi-res images:

<http://www.filmmovement.com/filmcatalog/index.asp?MerchandiseID=524>

## SELECT PRESS FOR HARMONIUM

“This nuclear family story is actually a nuclear explosion, played out in extreme, minutely observed slow-motion.” –Jessica Kiang, *The Playlist*

“A quietly combustible tale of punishment and crime...Cycles of guilt, blame and vindictiveness are replayed in scenes of scorching emotional power, which elicit gut-wrenching performances from Tsutsui and Furutachi.” – Maggie Lee, *Variety*

“*HARMONIUM* is probably the most surprising work that we have seen at this stage of Un Certain Regard...Fukada criticizes a culture of silence and repression through powerful motifs (musical, spatial, gestural) that confront his characters with the combustion of long-buried secrets.” – Mathieu Macheret, *Le Monde*

“The highly competent cast makes a remarkable switch from exhibiting their comic foibles to barely coping with what’s left of their lives after tragedy strikes.” – Deborah Young, *The Hollywood Reporter*

“I was consistently taken aback but the audacity of his decisions, both narratively and formally.” – Blake Williams, *Filmmaker Magazine*

“A deserving winner of the Jury Prize in the Un Certain Regard sidebar at this year’s Cannes Film Festival, Koji Fukada’s meticulous slow-burn thriller is an impressive feat of screenwriting, directing, and acting....Not many filmmakers would be able to pull off Fukada’s bolder cinematic conceits (a symbolic use of the color red, an unexpected leap-forward in time, an abrupt and daringly ambiguous ending) but every such decision seems pressed to the service of illustrating a karmic cycle of crime, punishment, and redemption that feels firmly rooted in believable character psychology and a realistic social milieu. This haunting film is one of the great Japanese exports of recent years.”- Michael Groversmith, *White City Cinema*

"The film delivers thriller-like shocks as it delves deep into the nature of guilt and evil. Mariko Tsutsui is a revelation as a woman in the throes of both passion and regret."- Mark Schilling, *Japan Times*

“It’s seldom a good sign in the movies when a friend from the past suddenly resurfaces after a years-long absence. So begins Koji Fukada’s return-of-the-repressed family drama, which takes a power drill to your nerves and emotions without ever misplacing its sense of compassion.”- Justin Chang, *LA Times*

“[*HARMONIUM*] was a chilling depiction of how a wrongdoing will always come back and destroy peace in a middle class life...” - Anita Chatterjee, *First Post*

## SYNOPSIS

With his highly perceptive attention to character, director Kôji Fukada creates an explosive family drama with *HARMONIUM* (*FUCHI NI TATSU*). Intended as a companion piece to the black comedy *HOSPITALITÉ*, *HARMONIUM* returns to the domestic sphere as it captures the collapse of a seemingly ordinary Japanese family. Life for Toshio (Kanji Furutachi), his wife Akie (Mariko Tsutsui) and their young daughter Hotaru (Momone Shinokawa) carries on as usual until he hires the mysterious Mr. Yasaka (Tadanobu Asano from *THOR*), an old acquaintance dressed in white who has just been released from prison. *HARMONIUM*, also starring Taiga from *SWEET BEAN* as Takashi, captivated critics and audiences alike during the 69<sup>th</sup> Cannes Film Festival, where it won the Un Certain Regard Jury Prize.

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

Toshio hires Yasaka in his workshop. This old acquaintance, who has just been released from prison, begins to meddle in Toshio's family life.

## LOGLINE

An old acquaintance, recently released from prison, begins to meddle in the life of a factory owner.



## **Credits**

### **CAST**

<b>Yasaka</b>	Tadanobu Asano
<b>Akie</b>	Mariko Tsutsui
<b>Toshio</b>	Kanji Furutachi
<b>Takashi</b>	Taiga
<b>Hotaru (young)</b>	Momone Shinokawa
<b>Hotaru (adult)</b>	Kana Mahiro

### **CREW**

<b>Directed by</b>	Kôji Fukada
<b>Screenplay</b>	Kôji Fukada
<b>Producers</b>	Masa Sawada Hiroshi Niimura
<b>Cinematography</b>	Kenichi Negishi
<b>Lighting</b>	Thomas Takamura
<b>Production design</b>	Kensuke Suzuki
<b>Editing</b>	Kôji Fukada
<b>Assistant Director</b>	Saku Yamato
<b>Line Producer</b>	Tsuyoshi Toyama
<b>Music</b>	Hiroyuki Onogawa
<b>Sound</b>	Junji Yoshikata
<b>Sound re-recording mixer</b>	Olivier Goinard
<b>Costumes</b>	Keiko Murashima

## BIOGRAPHY - Kôji Fukada, Director

Likened to French auteurs Eric Rohmer, Robert Bresson and acclaimed Japanese director Nagisa Oshima, Kôji Fukada is a filmmaker known for his technical precision and study of human character. He was born in 1980 in Tokyo, Japan.

### Filmography

HARMONIUM (2016)  
SAYONARA (2015)  
AU REVOIR L'ÉTÉ / Hotori No Sakuko (2013)  
HOSPITALITÉ (2010)  
HUMAN COMEDY IN TOKYO (2008)  
LA GRENADIÈRE (short animated film) (2006)  
LA CHAISE (2004)



### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

"This film is linked to one of the previous films, *Hospitalité*, which came out in 2010. They're like two sides of the same coin.

Initially, *Hospitalité* was only supposed to be a pilot before shooting *HARMONIUM*. The tone of *Hospitalité* is that of a comedy, while *HARMONIUM* can be described as a tragedy. However, like a coin whose two sides complete each other, these two films present an identical, banal and extremely universal theme: family.

By nature, humans are living beings, all carrying a loneliness they are powerless to defeat. What I wish to describe here is a family in which each member becomes aware of this state but is obliged to live with other people, in spite of it all. This is inevitable.

I'm tired of all of these Japanese films idealizing family ties.

By continuing to relay this outdated and stereotypical image of an "ideal family", we deny the various other "family types" that actually exist. I wish to describe an "already-collapsed family" because looking at the collapse of a family as a tragedy is a way of idealizing what it could have been.

*HARMONIUM* asks the question of the familial system. It must shake things up, show that original loneliness, and bring out the bonds that nevertheless endure. I think my 21<sup>st</sup> century "family portrait" will question the spectator – in this society where people are beginning to realize that our conception of the family, which had protected us, while smothering us at the same time, was nothing more than an illusory construction."

## **INTERVIEW with Kôji Fukada**

### **The theme of family is at the center of HARMONIUM. What was your idea at the outset?**

For me, family is an absurdity. A human being – who is an individual entity – meets someone, starts a relationship, becomes a parent, has kids, and lives with people as if it were the most natural thing in the world. But, if you think about it, it's very strange. Why live with other people? Every population creates countries and believes in certain gods but, despite everything, they all end up fighting over some football score. Man lives in society by bringing people together that do not understand one another. The smallest version of this is a family. Tadanobu Asano plays Yasaka, an old friend of Toshio's, the head of the family. Yasaka turns out to be more and more frightening.

### **How did you come up with this character?**

Yasaka is an example of a certain violence that can irrationally develop in the world. I started thinking about this film in 2007. At first, I imagined that the arrival of a violent intruder might be the starting point for a couple's reflection on their relationship. Then I began asking myself what exactly violence was. Basically, violence is an inexplicable absurdity. Like with a natural disaster, where the causes are never a question of good or evil, criminals can never precisely explain the motives of their crime at the moment they commit it. I think we live in a certain mundane ambiguity, far from the concept of Good and Evil. I don't see Yasaka as a symbol of evil. He is neither good nor bad. I want to show that the good or evil in all of us is the result of our relationship to others.

### **How do you work with actors? Do you have a particular relationship to Kanji Furutachi, who plays the role of Toshio?**

Ultimately, I think an actor has a form of expression that is theirs and theirs alone. This expression is what interests me, and it's what I wish to highlight in my films. This is cinema's strength. I have worked regularly with Kanji Furutachi since a short film I made with him in 2008. He's a friend and I often talk to him about cinema and acting styles. I got a lot out of our discussions for this film, too. He's an exceptional actor who is always seeking to play his character as realistically as possible.

### **The tone of HARMONIUM is darker than your previous films, and closer to a psychological thriller.**

Portraying people is an exercise I would describe as being similar to peering over the edge of the abyss and observing its depths. And, in order to observe these depths, you need to get close to the edge, even if it means falling in. In other words, you need to come close to the dark side of the people's hearts without falling in. To do this, you need to be aware of just how far you can go. That's why, in this film, I hope to get as close to the brink as possible with the spectator. That's why the original title of this film in Japanese means "on the brink". At first, I didn't think I was making a happy film or a dark film. But, compared to my previous ones, this film is one step closer to the depths of the soul.

### **To what extent is this film realistic? Do you have any particular sources of inspiration?**

For me, naturalism and realism are two different things. Acting requires something natural, but natural acting doesn't lead to cinematic realism. Cinema aspires to a type of truth and realism that can take on many different forms. In their films, René Clair, Robert Bresson or the Dardenne Brothers, are all looking for different forms of realism. I feel very close to Rohmer's methods. He would talk to actors and then build a very precise script. With this script, the actors would develop an acting style that was entirely their own. Rohmer was a genius of story construction, and he'd use this very rigid script to then direct his actors. He doesn't explain character psychology, but allows us to imagine it with this precise structure, where actors must create their own space in every scene. I think this is how the actor gives the spectator the time to develop his/her own imagination. That's the secret of modern realism.

## **FESTIVALS AND AWARDS**

### WINNER:

Un Certain Regard Jury Prize – 2016 Cannes Film Festival

### OFFICIAL SELECTION:

2017 Asian Film Awards – Best film, Best actor, Best director

2016 Cannes International Film Festival

2016 Toronto International Film Festival

2016 Bogotá Independent Film Festival

2016 Melbourne International Film Festival

2016 Charlotte Film Festival

2016 Calgary International Film Festival

2016 Vancouver International Film Festival

2016 Montréal Festival du Nouveau Cinema

2016 Orcas Island Film Festival

2016 Chicago International Film Festival

2016 Philadelphia Film Festival

2016 Denver Film Festival

2016 Virginia Film Festival

2016 Hawaii International Film Festival

2016 San Diego Asian Film Festival

2016 St. Louis International Film Festival

2016 Rehoboth Beach Film Festival

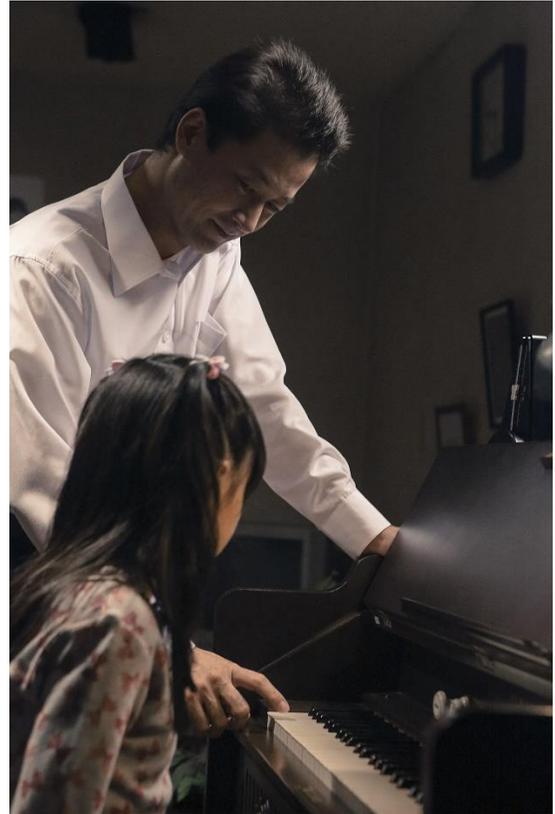
2016 Oregon State Film Festival

2016 AFI Fest

2016 Miami International Film Festival

2016 Palms Springs International Film Festival

2016 CAAM Festival



## **About Film Movement**

Celebrating its 15th year in 2017, Film Movement is a North American distributor of award-winning independent and foreign films based in New York City. Film Movement has released more than 250 feature films and shorts culled from prestigious film festivals worldwide, and last year it had its first Academy Award-nominated film, THEEB. Film Movement's theatrical distribution strategy has evolved to include promising American independent films, documentaries, and an even stronger slate of foreign art house titles. In 2015, Film Movement launched its reissue label Film Movement Classics, featuring new restorations released theatrically as well as on Blu-ray and DVD, including films by such noted directors as Eric Rohmer, Peter Greenaway, Bille August, Marleen Gorris, Takeshi Kitano and Ettore Scola. For more information, please visit [www.filmmovement.com](http://www.filmmovement.com).