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Asakusa Kid



Japan, 2002, 111 min

Director Shinozaki Makoto

Producers Mori Masayuki, Shigemura Hajima, Umemoto Mitsuru, Kataoka Hiroshi

Screenwriter Dankan

Cinematographer Takeuchi Katsumi

Editors Higuchi Yasuhito, Shinozaki Makoto

Cast Suidobashi Hakase, Tamabukuro Sujitaro, Ishikura Saburo, Fukaura Kanako, Inoue Harumi, Utsumi Keiko, Tsubuyaki Shiro, Dankan

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Shinozaki's Kitano connection is long-standing. In his days as a critic, he was one of the first in Japan to take 'Beat' Takeshi seriously as a director; he wrote sleeve-notes for the first boxed set of Kitano laserdiscs. In 1999 he followed the filming of *Kikujiro* and made his "official bootleg" *Jam Session*. And now he's filmed Kitano's memoir of his early days starting out in the strip-clubs and vaudeville theatres of Tokyo's Asakusa district in the 1960s. It's a modest production, made on a shoestring for Japanese cable TV, but it has gem-like qualities. It was scripted by Dankan (writer and star of *Ikinai* and a veteran member of the "Takeshi-gumi" group of comedians), who also puts in a guest appearance. As you'd expect from its movie-brat director, it's full of reminiscences of genre movies of the 60s, from *shitamachi* comedies to Kumashiro sex films.

A night sleeping on the streets persuades the young Takeshi (decently impersonated by Suidobashi Hakase) to swap his leather jacket for a sky-blue *happi* coat and start working as a janitor in a strip club. Many months later--months of practicing tap-dance, learning from his mentor Fukami, going out with a girl from the strip-club and picking up tips from anyone who has any--he steps out on the vaudeville stage in a spangly white suit as one half of The Two Beats. All this, and a cameo appearance by Terajima Susumu!

- Tony Rayns

Programme Code: ASAKU

Fri Sep 27, 3:00pm
Pacific Cinémathèque
\$6.50

Mon Oct 7, 9:30pm
Pacific Cinémathèque
\$8.50

Wed Oct 9, 1:30pm
Granville 7 Cinema 5
\$6.50

Selected Filmography

Nobody Home (short, 90), Okaeri (95), Jam Session: The Official Bootleg of 'Kikujiro' (99), Not Forgotten (00)

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