

Document Citation

Title	Rhapsody in August
Author(s)	
Source	<i>New Yorker Films</i>
Date	1993
Type	distributor materials
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Hachigatsu no kyohshikyoku (Rhapsody in August), Kurosawa, Akira, 1991

RHAPSODY IN AUGUST

Directed by Akira Kurosawa

Cast: Sachiko Murase, Tomoko Ohtakara, Richard Gere.

Japan, 1992.
In Japanese with English subtitles.

98 mins. Color.

Rental: Apply.

New Release



Though better known for his historical epics and samurai sagas, Akira Kurosawa's work has always been distinguished by its strong engagement with contemporary social issues. ***Rhapsody in August*** is a powerful reflection on war and Nuclear Holocaust, all the more effective for the restraint and serene beauty of its presentation. The story is set in Nagasaki, site of the last use of the Bomb on human beings. Four teenage cousins visit their grandmother, a survivor of the blast, which took the life of her husband. The curious teenagers try to comprehend the awful event, which at first seems as mythical and remote as Grandmother's stories about ghosts and water-imps, and they search Nagasaki for nearly vanished traces of this equally haunted past. The movement toward healing and remembrance is extended when the family is visited by a Hawaiian relative (played with graceful self-deprecation by Richard Gere) who comes on a touchingly awkward mission of apology and respect. Kurosawa refuses to let the daunting subject matter over-inflate his film. The youthful protagonists impart a lively, down-to-earth tone, and the overall effect is more like poetry than pontification. ***Rhapsody in August*** is characterized by a haiku-like economy, based on carefully chosen images distilled for maximum impact and resonance: a twisted mass of playground equipment, a column of ants teeming over a rose, a terrifying eye that flashes out of a riven sky.

"The master is as vigorous and complex as ever ... it is photographed in the bright, clear colors of youth, has moments of ravishing beauty and concludes with an image of profound lyricism." – Vincent Canby, *The New York Times*.