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Ran, Kurosawa, Akira, 1985



SERGE SILBERMAN and
KATSUMI FUKUKAWA Present
AN AKIRA KUROSAWA FILM
"RAN"

An **ORION** Release
CLASSICS

RAN

Cast

Lord Hidetora Ichimonji.....TATSUYA NAKADAI
Taro, Hidetora's eldest son (yellow army).....AKIRA TERAO
Jiro, Hidetora's second son (red army).....JINPACHI NEZU
Saburo, Hidetora's youngest son (blue army).....DAISUKE RYU
Lady Kaede, Taro's wife.....MIEKO HARADA
Lady Sue', Jiro's wife.....YOSHIKO MIYAZAKI
Tango, Hidetora's retainer.....MASAYUKI YUI
Ikoma, Hidetora's retainer.....KAZUO KATO
Kyoami, the Fool.....PETER
Fujimaki, Saburo's father-in-law (white army)....HITOSHI UEKI
Ayabe, a rival lord (black army).....JUN TAZAKI
Ogura, Taro's retainer.....NORIO MATSUI
Kurogane, Jiro's chief retainer.....HISASHI IKAWA
Shirane, Jiro's retainer.....KENJI KODAMA
Naganuma, Jiro's retainer.....TOSHIYA ITO
Hatakeyama, Saburo's retainer.....TAKESHI KATO
Tsurumaru, Lady Sue's brother.....TAKESHI NOMURA

RAN

Technical Credits

Director.....AKIRA KUROSAWA
Screenplay.....AKIRA KUROSAWA
 HIDEO OGUNI
 MASATO IDE
Production Managers.....TERUYO NOGAMI
 SEIKICHI IIZUMI
 SATORU IZEKI
 TAKASHI OHASHI
Production Coordinator.....HISAO KUROSAWA
Director Counselor.....INOSHIRO HONDA
Directors of Photography.....TAKAO SAITO
 MASAHARU UEDA
 with the collaboration of ASAKAZU NAKAI
Production Designers.....YOSHIRO MURAKI
 SHINOBU MURAKI
Sound Recorders.....FUMIO YANOBUCHI
 SHOTARO YOSHIDA
Costume Designer.....EMI WADA
Music.....TORU TAKEMITSU
Music Performed By.....SAPPORO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Musical Conductor.....HIROYUKI IWAKI
Executive Producer.....KATSUMI FURUKAWA
General Production Manager.....ULLY PICKARDT
Producers.....SERGE SILBERMAN
 MASATO HARA

A SERGE SILBERMAN PRODUCTION for GREENWICH FILM PRODUCTION/
HERALD ACE INC./NIPPON HERALD FILMS INC.

35mm/Color

Running time: 160 minutes

RAN was shot on locations in Japan at Himeji Castle, Kumamoto
Castle, Nagoya Castle and in the cities of Gotemba, Kokonoe,
Aso and Shonai.

RAN is a French-Japanese co-production.

Synopsis

Their horses' hooves thundering across the plains, the GREAT LORD HIDEORA leads his sons and retainers on a boar hunt. As they rest on a verdant hilltop, Hidetora surveys the mountains and valleys stretching before them, finally consolidated under his supremacy after many years of civil wars. Neighboring lords FUJIMAKI and AYABE have both come to offer their daughters as brides for SABURO, Hidetora's youngest son. But Hidetora has a proclamation of his own: at the age of seventy, with his lands secure, he wishes to abdicate and live out his life in peace. He will retain his title and his retinue of warriors and concubines, but TARO, his eldest son, will rule. JIRO, his second son, and Saburo will take command of the Second and Third Castles but are expected to obey and support their elder brother. Hidetora himself will grant his seat at the First Castle to Taro and his wife, LADY KAEDE, retiring with his retinue to First Castle's outworks and visiting each of his sons in turn.

To illustrate his demand for family unity, Hidetora demonstrates that a single arrow is easily broken but that three arrows held together are strong. Taro and Jiro pledge their obedience, but Saburo defiantly breaks the arrows against his knee; a domain won in ruthless warfare cannot be held together on the promise of filial loyalty. Enraged, Hidetora banishes Saburo, and when Hidetora's retainer TANGO defends the youngest son, he is banished as well.

As Saburo and Tango ride away, Fujimaki approaches them and restates the offer of his daughter's hand. Saburo accepts the haven of his future father-in-law's castle, but Tango declares that he will watch over Hidetora from the safety of a disguise.

Taro and Lady Kaede install their household in First Castle, and Kaede goads her husband into humbling Hidetora: should not the standard of the Great Lord rest with Taro in the castle keep, rather than with Hidetora in the outworks? Should Kaede's retinue not pass in front of Hidetora's? Tension mounts when KYOAMI, Lord Hidetora's Fool, composes a mocking rhyme about Taro; one of Taro's guards threatens Kyoami and is killed by an arrow. Hidetora himself holds the bow in the tower window. Kyoami, a prankish kyogen actor, is always at the Great Lord's side, entertaining and infuriating his master with wittily disrespectful -- but always honest -- songs, rhymes and barbs.

Invited to a "family celebration," Hidetora is shocked to find himself alone with Taro and Kaede and seated, subserviently, below them. Taro presents him with a written pledge that he will obey Taro's rule and demands that his father sign in blood. Hidetora is outraged, but IKOMA, his advisor, smoothly convinces him to sign. Hidetora storms out, furiously proclaiming that he will leave First Castle and go to his second son. Kaede thanks the treacherous Ikoma for his pre-arranged help, and reveals that First Castle once belonged to her own family. A captive bride, her father and brothers were killed and her mother took her own life when Hidetora seized their castle.

At Second Castle, Jiro has already received a message from Taro alerting him to Hidetora's impending arrival. Jiro's retainers urge him to use the rift to advance his own ambitions. When Hidetora arrives, his retinue is kept waiting outside the gate as the Great Lord is admitted. Hidetora seeks out his daughter-in-law LADY SUÉ; like Kaede, Sué is a captive bride whose family was killed and routed in a war with Hidetora, but she has chosen to banish hate and vengeance from her heart, seeking consolation in the worship of the compassionate Amida Buddha. Though outwardly welcoming, Jiro insists that he must obey his elder brother's command to refuse hospitality to Hidetora's contingent, and Hidetora angrily departs, vowing never to see his second son again.

Stranded beneath a glaring sun in the rocky desert beyond the castle, Hidetora and his retinue face hunger and thirst when the faithful Tango appears in his disguise as a peasant. Hidetora refuses to accept the food Tango has brought and, learning that the nearby villagers have fled with their supplies, orders his men to burn the villages in retribution. Tango exhorts his master to spare them: it is Taro who is responsible, having issued an order that anyone helping Hidetora faces death. Tango urges Hidetora to join the still-faithful Saburo at Fujimaki's castle, but Hidetora is ashamed to face his wrongly-exiled son.

A messenger arrives with the news that Third Castle has surrendered to Taro's men. Hidetora's advisor Ikoma, secretly the agent of Taro and Kaede, declares that Saburo and Fujimaki are plotting to take over the domain; instead of seeking refuge with Saburo, Hidetora should go to Third Castle and seize it from Taro's men. Kyoami, the Fool, speaks out in support of Tango's faith in Saburo and he, too, is banished. Tango and Kyoami ride off together as Hidetora and his retinue head for Third Castle.

Arriving at Third Castle, Hidetora's entourage finds it abandoned and takes possession. But the empty castle is merely a trap, and Hidetora and his retinue awake to find themselves under vicious attack by the combined forces of Taro (yellow banners) and Jiro (red banners). As his warriors are slaughtered and his concubines fall on each other's daggers in suicide, Hidetora watches paralyzed by shock, horror and the realization that Saburo had accurately predicted his downfall. Outside, Taro is felled by a bullet in the back, shot by KUROGANE, one of Jiro's retainers.

As the castle burns around him Hidetora searches wildly for his sword in order to commit seppuku, but his anguish turns to madness when he finds his scabbard empty. The invading warriors fall silent as Hidetora lurches out and descends the flaming castle's steps. The armies part to allow the fallen Lord to stagger through the castle gates, and Jiro, overcome by the sight of his father's plight, is restrained by his retainer KUROGANE.

The stricken Hidetora disappears into the thick mist, while nearby, Tango and Kyoami have seen the smoke rising from the castle and hurry to discover the fate of their master. A fierce typhoon whips up across the barren countryside, and Tango and Kyoami find the unconscious Hidetora exposed to wind and rain. They carry him to a shack, whose mysterious blind inhabitant reluctantly admits them; when Tango recognizes the design of the fabric wrapped around the shivering Lord, the shack's owner admits that he is not a peasant woman but in fact TSURUMARU, Lady Sue's younger brother. When Hidetora killed his family and burned their castle, Tsurumaru, then a young boy, was set to wander the countryside, his eyes gouged out by Hidetora himself. The revelation shocks Hidetora back to coherence, but lucidity brings only despair as he comes face to face with his own ruin and the living reminder of his former brutality.

Returning to First Castle after the destruction of Hidetora's forces, Jiro ceremonially presents the widowed Lady Kaede with Taro's warrior topknot, alleging that he died in battle with their father's men. But Kaede chastises both Jiro, for so quickly assuming Taro's badges of rank, and Ogura, Taro's chief retainer, for surrendering his master's armor to Jiro. In self-humbling apology, Jiro strips off the armor, but nonetheless hastens to assume his place in First Castle's central chamber. Summoning Ogura and Ikoma, Jiro presents them with gifts in thanks for their help but banishes them from his domain -- men who would so easily betray their masters are certain to betray again.

As the disbelieving traitors are forced from the chamber, Lady Kaede arrives to confront her brother-in-law. She knows that Hidetora has gone insane and does not hide her satisfaction at the fall of her family's destroyer, but bluntly declares that Jiro, too, must be pleased with his quick rise to power. Suddenly leaping upon the startled Jiro, she presses his own dagger to his throat and draws a thread of blood, accusing him of murdering her husband. Jiro fearfully confesses that Kurogane did the deed, and Kaede, still brandishing the dagger, furiously refuses to leave the castle of her childhood for the shaved head of a widow's retreat in a convent. Hysterically slashing the sleeve of her robe, Kaede threatens to tear the domain apart if Jiro defies her -- she must remain mistress of First Castle. Advancing again on the cowering Jiro, Kaede suddenly kisses him, forcing him down with her to the floor. In the wake of their embrace, Kaede, feigning a lover's simper, insists that she is no longer a sister-in-law and will not be just a concubine; she must be Jiro's wife. Jiro's offer to divorce Lady Sué does not appease her. Lady Sué must die.

Hidetora, Tango and Kyoami, meanwhile, have wandered onto the crumbling remains of a destroyed castle. Hidetora has once again lapsed into staring madness, and when Tango sees from the ramparts the approach of the two exiled traitors, Ogura and Ikoma, he gallops down and attacks them in a fury of retribution for Hidetora's ruin. The dying Ikoma warns him that Jiro has killed Taro and has only spared Hidetora because of his lunacy. Since Hidetora refuses to be taken to Saburo, Tango sets off to bring the faithful son to his father's aid.

Jiro has cravenly acceded to Kaede's demand for the head of Lady Sué and Kurogane is ordered to carry out the murder. When Kaede later unwraps the package Kurogane places before her, however, she finds a stone statue of a fox -- the very evil spirit, Kurogane warns Jiro, that is abroad in the land, often taking the form of a treacherous woman.

Alerted by Tango to his father's plight, Saburo organizes a troop of his men (who carry blue banners) and sends a message to Jiro: they have come to retrieve Hidetora, and will withdraw in peace if allowed to do so. But Fujimaki, fearing for his son-in-law, positions his white-bannered army on an opposite hilltop. Realizing the strength massed against him, Jiro must decide whether to allow Saburo to retrieve Hidetora or to engage Saburo in warfare and run the risk of a rout by Fujimaki. Lady Kaede sets the icy plan for Jiro: Saburo will lead them to Hidetora and both must be killed.

Lady Sue, warned by Kurogane that Kaede plots her murder, has fled Second Castle and rejoined her brother Tsurumaru. Before leaving their homeland, they stop to pray at the remains of their family's castle, Azusa, the very ruins where Hidetora and Kyoami are sheltering. When the mad Hidetora sees Sue and her blind brother among the ruins, he believes he has entered Hell and flees into the countryside, pursued by Kyoami.

Knowing that a confrontation with Jiro is at hand, Ayabe, the neighboring lord who had earlier sought to marry his daughter to Saburo, has massed his own black-bannered army on a ridge overlooking the field where Saburo awaits Jiro's decision. Though a message arrives telling Saburo that he is free to retrieve Hidetora, Saburo is convinced that Jiro's intentions are evil and decides to wait until nightfall to find his father. A scout discovers Kyoami, who admits that Hidetora is lost, and now unable to wait until dark, Saburo, Tango and Kyoami head for the Azusa Plain. Noticing the arrival of Ayabe's army and the sudden movement of Saburo's men, Jiro sends a party to follow Saburo, offering a reward to the man who kills him. Kurogane, knowing that the combined forces of Fujimaki, Ayabe and Saburo will crush Jiro, desperately tries to dissuade him from igniting the battle but resigns himself to following his master.

On the Azusa Plain, Kyoami shouts that he has found Hidetora. The old man, not recognizing Saburo, begs not to be pulled from his grave, but when Saburo calls him "Father" the memory of his wrong to Saburo comes flooding back. Hidetora begs forgiveness, and father and son are tearfully reunited.

As Jiro and Kurogane lead the red-bannered army in a charge at Saburo's blue troops, who have strategically retreated to the woods nearby, Ayabe's black troops remain motionless on one ridge and Fujimaki's white army stands motionless on another. Though Jiro's red soldiers far outnumber Saburo's blue, the latter cut down Jiro's men from the shelter of the trees. Suddenly a messenger rides up to Jiro: Ayabe is advancing on First Castle. The army still standing quietly on the ridge above is a decoy. In panic and confusion, Jiro's troops retreat to First Castle.

Heading for the safe haven of Fujimaki's castle, Hidetora rides behind Saburo on his horse. A shot rings out from Jiro's party of assassins. Saburo falls to the ground, dead. With an anguished cry, Hidetora prostrates himself on his son's body and collapses into death. While Kyoami curses God and Buddha, the grieving Tango admonishes him to save his curses for the folly of man himself, slaughtering and suffering while God and Buddha weep.

First Castle is the scene of chaos and carnage as Ayabe's army swarms through the gates. One of Jiro's samurai breaks through the confusion, bearing the wrapped head of Lady Sue'. Enraged by this last futile bloodshed, Kurogane bursts into the central chamber where Lady Kaede sits calmly. As she states her satisfaction with the destruction she has wrought, Kurogane decapitates her with a single blow. Jiro and Kurogane prepare to face death.

As the sun sets, a lone figure is seen on the stone parapets of the Azusa ruins. It is the blind Tsurumaru, feeling his way along with a cane. He reaches the edge with a start and a scroll falls from his hand. From the grass of the empty moat below, Lady Sue's depiction of the Amida Buddha gazes up.

RAN: A Decade in the Making

When asked to name his favorite film, for many years Akira Kurosawa invariably replied "the next one." For almost a decade, however, the answer has been **RAN**.

RAN is the Japanese master's twenty-seventh film, the culmination of an extraordinary career. In its epic scale, stylistic grandeur and tragic contemplation of human destiny, **RAN** brings together the great themes and spectacular images of the seventy-five-year-old director's life's work.

RAN, which translates as "chaos" or "turmoil," is Kurosawa's meditation on Shakespeare's "King Lear" crossed with the history of Japan's 16th-century Civil Wars and the legend of Mōri, a feudal warlord with three good sons. The tale of the three arrows, unbreakable when sheathed together, is Mōri's famous illustration of filial loyalty and family strength in unity. **RAN** grew out of the question Kurosawa posed himself: what if Mōri's sons had not been loyal? What if the three arrows were broken? The answer is **RAN**, "King Lear" imbued with Japanese history and philosophy and deeply personal echoes of Akira Kurosawa himself.

RAN has been Kurosawa's obsession for ten years. It has evolved from the film that Kurosawa feared would never be made to the most ambitious and expensive undertaking in Japanese film history (though by American standards, **RAN**'s cost of roughly 11.5 million dollars is modest, and the visual splendor achieved for the budget nearly unimaginable). **RAN**'s realization represents a collaboration between Kurosawa and another legendary veteran of thirty years of filmmaking, producer Serge Silberman, who had brought to the screen five of Luis Buñuel's great late films.

Silberman offered to produce **RAN** in 1982, after Kurosawa had unsuccessfully sought financing from Japanese and Western film companies for many years. **RAN**, only the fourth Kurosawa film produced since **RED BEARD** in 1965, was deemed too risky to justify its expense, its scale too intimidatingly lavish, and its director too well-known for costly perfectionism and disregard of budgetary constraints.

Kurosawa had not made a film with Japanese backing since 1970's **DODESKADEN**, a critical and commercial disappointment which came at a time of illness and depression for its director and increasing fiscal caution for the film industry worldwide. 1975's **DERSU UZALA**, which won that year's Academy Award for Best Foreign Film, marked a triumphant return for Kurosawa, but it was produced by the Soviet Union. And **RAN**'s predecessor, **KAGEMUSHA**,

found partial but critically important financing in 1980 from Twentieth Century-Fox only through the interventions of George Lucas and Francis Coppola, avowed devotees of Kurosawa's work.

During the frustrating years spent seeking investors for both **RAN** and the similarly-themed **KAGEMUSHA**, Kurosawa, who trained as an artist, developed and preserved his conceptions of imagery and plot by creating hundreds of vivid paintings and detailed storyboardings. Kurosawa has suggested that if **KAGEMUSHA** can be described as a depiction of worldly events seen by one individual, **RAN** would be human deeds as viewed from heaven. He now regards **KAGEMUSHA** as a sort of "dress rehearsal" for **RAN**, an attempt to work out themes and ideas and perhaps even to demonstrate the viability of a grand-scale period film. Interestingly, **RAN** is the director's eleventh film set, like **RASHOMON**, **SEVEN SAMURAI**, **THRONE OF BLOOD** and **HIDDEN FORTRESS**, in Japan's feudal past.

Though in the wake of **KAGEMUSHA**'s warm international reception (it won the 1980 Palme d'Or in Cannes), it was expected that production of the already long-awaited **RAN** would finally begin, financing remained elusive. As Kurosawa's plans for **RAN** became more and more costly -- the director has dryly referred to it as a "three-castle film" -- both Japanese and foreign investors decided the film was too great a gamble. Serge Silberman had already been approached by Gaumont to act as producer, and, now representing his own production company, Greenwich Films, he ventured to take the gamble himself. "I offered Kurosawa the same contract I had with Buñuel," Silberman recalls, "simply that we had to be in agreement about everything." Though Kurosawa had never before worked with a producer's close supervision, he and Silberman agreed to agree: "They call me the Emperor," Kurosawa reportedly said to Silberman, referring to his reputation for autocratic exactitude, "but with you I will not be the Emperor." For two years they shaped **RAN**'s scenario into a realistically planned and budgeted production aimed at a cost of ten million dollars. With a substantial investment contributed by Greenwich Films, Silberman was eventually able to obtain the rest of **RAN**'s cost from Herald Ace (the production arm of Japanese distribution company Nippon Herald) and Toho, Kurosawa's home studio for most of his career.

RAN is by far the most costly production of Serge Silberman's career as well, but the producer, who has said that he finds his greatest pleasure in making films that others have deemed "unmakeable," was sanguine about the financial risk which had daunted others for so long: "Whatever happens, I have the satisfaction that long after I die **RAN** will still survive."

RAN: The Production

RAN premiered at the First Tokyo International Film Festival in May 1985. The production had been a monumental endeavor, with numerous locations, hundreds of horses, extras and costumes, a meticulously crafted full-scale castle built -- and burned -- at the foot of Mount Fuji, and even a typhoon called into play. Nevertheless, the nine months of **RAN**'s filming proceeded surprisingly smoothly. Visitors to the set found an atmosphere of lively enthusiasm and remarkable precision and efficiency; even extras playing soldiers maintained an off-camera military bearing in accordance with their director's wish that they stay "in character."

Kurosawa assembled a cast and crew of long-time colleagues and familiar faces from the Japanese stage and screen. Tatsuya Nakadai, whose performance as Hidetora embodies both the grandeur of the Great Lord and the pathos of the madman in the storm, played under Kurosawa in **YOJIMBO**, **SANJURO**, **HIGH AND LOW**, and in the demanding double role of Lord and Shadow Warrior in **KAGEMUSHA**. Jinpachi Nezu, the traitorous second son Jiro, has won fame in media as disparate as avant-garde theater and popular television as well as film. Mieko Harada, the vicious Lady Kaede, is a well-known television and film actress whose roles have run from ingenue to prostitute. The most startling casting, however, was that of Shinnosuke Ikehata, far better known as "Peter," in the role of Hidetora's irreverent but deeply devoted Fool, Kyoami. Peter was trained in a dance tradition featuring both men and women in female roles, but his phenomenal popularity came as a transvestite pop singer on television. Kurosawa's daring casting of a pop personality known heretofore for his light-hearted frivolity paid off in Peter's volatile and multi-layered performance.

Kurosawa's crew hardly required assembling; most of the principals have worked with Kurosawa since the 50s. Hideo Oguni, Kurosawa's co-screenwriter along with Masato Ide, has collaborated on the writing of twelve films with the director, nearly every one since 1952's **IKIRU**. Masato Ide was a co-writer on **RED BEARD** and **KAGEMUSHA**. Yoshiro Muraki, who with his wife Shinobu Muraki undertook the art direction of **RAN**, has served as art director on every Kurosawa film (except **DERSU UZALA**) since **RECORD OF A LIVING BEING** in 1955. Music composer Toru Takemitsu has scored some eighty films, though **RAN** is only the composer's second project with Kurosawa (the first being **DODESKADEN** in 1970). Kurosawa's "right-arm" personal assistant Teruyo Nogami has worked with the director since acting as script-girl on **RASHOMON** in 1950, and "director counselor" Inoshiro Honda is also a long-time aide-de-camp (as well as director of the original **GODZILLA**).

Kurosawa employed three cameras simultaneously on **RAN**, each shooting from a different angle and using a different-size lens, his famous "multi-camera" method. Takao Saito, co-director of photography with Masharu Ueda, began working with Kurosawa in 1946 as an assistant cinematographer on **ONE WONDERFUL SUNDAY** and has worked on most of Kurosawa's films since. Asazuki Nakai, who also collaborated on **RAN**'s cinematography, is another Kurosawa veteran going back to 1946's **NO REGRETS FOR OUR YOUTH**.

While **RAN** marked a reunion of friends and colleagues, the production also saw the sadness of the deaths of Kurosawa's wife of forty years, Kiyo, and of sound engineer Fumio Yanoguchi and fight choreographer Ryu Kuze, both of whom had worked with Kurosawa for many years.

RAN's interiors were shot at Toho and in a new studio in Yokohama built by Kurosawa and his son Hisao for Kurosawa Productions; Kurosawa has said that the studio is a legacy for Japan's future filmmakers. But it is the magnificent location use of both natural splendors and man-made structures that is most striking in **RAN**. The mountains and plains of Hidetora's domain were captured at Mount Aso, an active volcano in the broad central plains of Kyushu, Japan's southern island, a beautiful and wild region of peaks and valleys, woods and fields. Weather plays a strong symbolic role in **RAN**, from the ominously massing thunderheads of the film's opening to the blood-red sunset of its close, with the central metaphor of the fierce typhoon which marks Hidetora's descent into madness. While ten days of snow, rain and fog held up the shooting of one of **RAN**'s most crucial moments, the burning of Third Castle, in the typhoon's case nature was kind; the storm arrived promptly in accordance with the shooting schedule.

Art directors Yoshiro and Shinobu Muraki were faced with re-creating period accuracy to Kurosawa's exacting standards while finding practical construction materials and methods. After much experimentation they came up with a mixture of plastic and cement for the "ancient" stone foundations, indistinguishable from granite at a distance of a few inches, and sufficiently impervious to melting and charring. The tall wooden body of the castle, darkly burnished to simulate age and weathering, was highly flammable plywood. The ramparts were built with diminishing scale to force a deeper perspective, and the castle gates were made larger than those of the period so that the soldiers on horseback would not have to bend down to pass through them. After a back-up take of Hidetora's harrowing descent down the castle's steps was shot using smokepots, the cast and crew held its collective breath for the one and only time the 1.6 million dollar castle would be put to the torch.

Flaming arrows struck and ignited the structure, Tatsuya Nakadai staggered through the smoke and flames down the castle steps, and the burning of Third Castle was successfully immortalized on film.

RAN's epic battle scenes also presented their special challenges. Roughly 1400 extras and 250 horses were marshalled for the production (reports in the Japanese press of some 15,000 horses and 120,000 extras are perhaps indicative of Kurosawa's mastery in using a detachment to suggest a full army). Fifty horses were flown in from ranches in Colorado and Montana to serve as the principal characters' mounts, with trainers and groomers overseeing their care. Extras recruited from local towns adopted their temporary roles as feudal warriors with dignified enthusiasm.

The costuming of characters from the Great Lord to the horses themselves occupied costume designer Emi Wada for three full years. She began by researching the 16th-century period, studying reproductions of the authentic costumes handed down to the families of great feudal clans. Since the style of **RAN** is strongly influenced by Noh drama, the grace and elegance of Noh costuming offered a model for Wada. Approximately 1400 costumes were created; every costume on screen was made for **RAN**. The craftsmen were the tailors of Noh and kyogen theater who live in Kyoto; weaving, dying and hand-embroidery took up to three months for some of the richest robes. The famous Japanese metal-worker Otodake supervised the making of armor, helmets, swords and equipage and even authentic stirrups for the horses' saddles. Though a concession was made to comfort and durability in clothing soldiers and extras in modern stretch denim (genuine-looking nonetheless), the main cast's garments were all made of natural linen and silk. Kurosawa himself set the dominant color motifs for each character: Hidetora in white and gold, his three sons in yellow, red and blue, and Lady Kaede and Lady Sue sharply contrasted by the former's scarlet and the latter's pastels and floral patterns.

Allusions to Noh tradition were also used in creating the characters' make-up. As the sovereign lord, Hidetora's fierce visage resembles the demon mask, "akijo," but in his decline into madness his deeply-lined face and red-rimmed eyes suggest "shiwajo," the mask of the sorrowing old-man-spirit who must wander the earth as a ghost to pay for his sins. Kaede, Sue and Tsurumaru also recall Noh figures representing specific themes such as vengeance or the search for enlightenment.

Another Japanese influence not immediately apparent to Western viewers is the underlying theme of "giri," the complex system of interpersonal obligations that is a fundamental concept of Japanese culture. The "chaos"

of **RAN**'s title can, in this sense, be thought of as the destruction of the bonds of duty uniting a son to his father, a brother to his brother, and a samurai to his lord.

In its interweaving of Japanese tradition and philosophy, Shakespearean tragedy, and universal themes of the human condition, **RAN** is the summation of a lifetime's experience, the work of a cinematic master at the height of his creative powers.

AKIRA KUROSAWA

(Director)

Akira Kurosawa's closest colleagues address him and speak of him as "sensei," a respectful and affectionate term meaning "teacher" or "master." Kurosawa is unquestionably the greatest living master of Japanese cinema and an artist whose film legacy has made him a mentor to filmmakers throughout the world. At the age of seventy-five, with **RAN**, the culmination of his life's work, fully realized, Kurosawa stands as a figure larger-than-life, with a personal history of brilliant achievement won through tenacious and sometimes painfully difficult adherence to his creative and philosophic goals.

Akira Kurosawa was born in Tokyo on March 23, 1910, the youngest of seven children. His father, a teacher and retired military man, was descended from a noted samurai clan. After a classical education, he studied painting at the Proletarian Art Research Institute and became fascinated with film and literature, particularly Russian novels of the 19th century. Despite encouraging acceptance into several important group painting shows, Kurosawa found that financial security as a painter was a near-impossibility (he has nevertheless continued to paint throughout his life, making hundreds of drawings and paintings, for example, in preparation for **KAGEMUSHA** and **RAN**). In 1936 he answered an ad which led to work as an assistant director under Kajiro Yamamoto at Toho Studio; "Yama-San" provided a rigorous but exceptionally creative apprenticeship during which Kurosawa honed his craft and learned scenario-writing (he has written or co-written all of his films). Kurosawa would remain at Toho for twenty-four years.

In 1943 Kurosawa directed his first film, **SANSHIRO SUGATA**, a judo saga whose success prompted the making of a sequel (the only Kurosawa project ever undertaken begrudgingly). An action film already displaying strong technical virtuosity, **SANSHIRO SUGATA** also shows an early preoccupation with the choices and struggles, the moral dilemma, of the individual attempting to define and live up to a personal code. This individualistic humanism set within an engrossing entertainment would become a hallmark of Kurosawa's films to come.

Although propaganda concerns and material shortages made creative freedom difficult during the wartime years, Kurosawa continued to aim for a more personal expression in his films. His 1944 **THE MOST BEAUTIFUL** featured actress Yoko Yaguchi, who married Kurosawa shortly after the film was made (Mrs. Kurosawa, whose real name was Kiyo Kato, died recently during the making of **RAN**). The post-war years brought a new latitude in addressing contemporary social problems, and with 1948's

DRUNKEN ANGEL, an evocative drama set in a tough gangster milieu, Kurosawa began his fruitful collaboration with a then-unknown young actor, Toshiro Mifune, who would star in sixteen Kurosawa films.

It was the phenomenal and unexpected international acclaim for RASHOMON, however, which propelled Kurosawa to worldwide fame and introduced Western audiences to a sophisticated Japanese film industry; RASHOMON, starring Mifune, won the 1951 Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival and the 1951 Academy Award for Best Foreign Film and has virtually contributed a new phrase -- "Rashomon situation" -- to the English language.

The 1950s and early 60s were prolific and highly successful years for Kurosawa, who had the unprecedented (and never equalled) freedom in the Japanese film industry to make whatever films he chose; his large and devoted Japanese audience, seconded by continued overseas admiration, guaranteed the profitability of Kurosawa's films. He continued to experiment with cinematic form and dramatic shading, moving back and forth from period to contemporary settings with equal assurance, perfecting a trademark style using multiple cameras and dynamic montage. Two of his greatest films, IKIRU (1952) and SEVEN SAMURAI (1954) illuminate Kurosawa's concern with individual moral choices at work among both modern-day bureaucrats and 16th-century warriors. Kurosawa also focused on transposing Western themes to a distinctly Japanese context and sensibility in films such as THE IDIOT (1951) based on the Dostoevsky novel; THE LOWER DEPTHS (1957) taken from Gorky; THRONE OF BLOOD (1957), a "Macbeth" filtered through stylized Noh drama; and HIGH AND LOW (1963), adapted from the surprising source of an Ed McBain detective thriller.

In 1960 Kurosawa left Toho to inaugurate his own production company with THE BAD SLEEP WELL, a study of corporate corruption, followed by YOJIMBO (1961), SANJURO (1962) and RED BEARD (1965), using vivid action, historical settings and, in the first two, cynical, anarchic humor to mirror contemporary restlessness and social ills. (The genesis of the Italian "spaghetti Western" is directly traceable to YOJIMBO, remade by Sergio Leone in 1964 as A FISTFUL OF DOLLARS starring Clint Eastwood; likewise SEVEN SAMURAI was remade as THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN, directed by John Sturges in 1961, RASHOMON inspired Martin Ritt's 1964 THE OUTRAGE, and George Lucas has identified HIDDEN FORTRESS's pair of comic peasants as the forerunners of STAR WARS' robot duo R2D2 and C3PO.)

The 60s in Japan, however, were a time of both increasing critical alienation from the kind of analysis of the human condition that Kurosawa championed and of financial retrenchment in the Japanese film industry; though generally profitable and, by American standards, moderately budgeted, Kurosawa's films were consistently among the most expensive in Japanese cinema owing to their often sweeping scale

and the director's dogged insistence upon technical perfection and historical accuracy down to the finest details.

It became increasingly difficult for Kurosawa to locate adequate financing for his films in Japan. The paradox of Kurosawa's career is that while he is Japan's best-known director, acclaimed throughout the world and a major influence on cinema styles, he has not always been able to rely on the respect of critics and younger film directors in Japan. He has frequently been labeled "too Western" -- perhaps an inevitable price paid for his following in the West -- and has lamented his failure to find the apprentice to whom he could pass on his lore as Yama-San once inspired him. Kurosawa has been called a "prophet without disciples" in his own country.

In 1968 Kurosawa agreed to direct the Japanese side of *TORA! TORA! TORA!*, a Twentieth Century-Fox production telling the story of Pearl Harbor from both Japanese and American perspectives. Cross-cultural communication and financial and artistic control problems led to his resignation only days into filming.

The adverse publicity surrounding the *TORA! TORA! TORA!* incident and a disappointing reception for his subsequent *DODESKADEN* (1970) proved damaging to Kurosawa's career and morale, and a period of ill health and depression ensued. In 1975 he accepted an offer from the U.S.S.R. to film a project of his choice on Soviet soil; *DER SU UZALA*, shot in Siberia over two years of extreme conditions of heat and cold (the aftermath of frostbite still plagues the director), was the triumphant result, winning the 1975 Academy Award for Best Foreign Film and restoring Kurosawa's vigor and authority.

The idea for *RAN* began taking shape in Kurosawa's imagination, but the epic magnitude of the scenario discouraged both Japanese and Western investors. Frustrated by the stalemate on *RAN*, Kurosawa conceived the similarly-themed *KAGEMUSHA* and sought to find financing while creating hundreds of vibrant paintings and detailed storyboardings of both films; the paintings preserved his conceptions of imagery and dramatic climaxes at a time when Kurosawa was unsure if either film would ever be made. Through the intervention of avowed Kurosawa devotees George Lucas and Francis Ford Coppola, Twentieth Century-Fox eventually completed the financing for *KAGEMUSHA*, which won the Palme d'Or at Cannes in 1980. Kurosawa regards *KAGEMUSHA* as a "dry run" for the more richly conceived, more deeply personal *RAN*.

Akira Kurosawa's "Something Like An Autobiography" was published in 1982. The book covers Kurosawa's life only through *RASHOMON*: "RASHOMON became the gateway for my entry into the international film world, and yet as an autobiographer

it is impossible for me to pass through the Rashomon Gate and on to the rest of my life.... I think that to learn what became of me after RASHOMON the most reasonable procedure would be to look for me in the characters in the films I made after RASHOMON.... There is nothing that says more about its creator than the work itself."

FILMOGRAPHY

1943 - SANSHIRO SUGATA
1944 - THE MOST BEAUTIFUL
1945 - SANSHIRO SUGATA, PART II
1945 - THE MEN WHO TREAD ON THE TIGER'S TAIL
1946 - NO REGRETS FOR OUR YOUTH
1947 - ONE WONDERFUL SUNDAY
1948 - DRUNKEN ANGEL
1949 - THE QUIET DUEL
1949 - STRAY DOG
1950 - SCANDAL
1950 - RASHOMON
1951 - THE IDIOT
1952 - IKIRU (also known as TO LIVE)
1954 - SEVEN SAMURAI
1955 - RECORD OF A LIVING BEING (also known as I LIVE IN FEAR)
1957 - THRONE OF BLOOD
1957 - THE LOWER DEPTHS
1958 - THE HIDDEN FORTRESS
1960 - THE BAD SLEEP WELL
1961 - YOJIMBO
1962 - SANJURO
1963 - HIGH AND LOW
1965 - RED BEARD
1970 - DODESKADEN
1975 - DERSU UZALA
1980 - KAGEMUSHA
1985 - RAN

SERGE SILBERMAN

(Producer)

In producer Serge Silberman, Akira Kurosawa's **RAN** found an intrepid and dedicated supporter. Silberman contributed not only the financial resources of his Greenwich Films production company, but brought to bear thirty years' experience in shepherding the difficult production through financing, filming and release.

Few current-day producers take as broad an interpretation of the term as Serge Silberman. His role as a producer extends far beyond what he calls "a hand signing checks" to that of a true collaborator, with the vision to take risks, assume responsibilities and make hard decisions in bringing a film he cares deeply about to fruition.

"A film is not made in an office, but in a meeting of the minds, an understanding with the director that goes on at all times, day and night, with real passion and that streak of craziness without which the cinema has never been able to exist. I am not a movie-making factory. In thirty years of production I have made less than twenty films. I never rush things. Patience is a thing you have when you know what you want." This approach has resulted in a string of impressive credits, including five of director Luis Buñuel's most renowned late films.

Serge Silberman was born in Lodz in Poland and studied in Milan and Liege in Belgium. In 1945, at the age of 28, Silberman settled in Paris, becoming involved for the first time in film production. By 1949 he was an executive with Victoria Films (which had produced such prewar classics as Marcel Carné's 1938 **QUAI DES BRUMES**), and with Play-Art Films, which distributed foreign films in France. In 1955 Silberman launched Play-Art into production with Jean-Pierre Melville's now-classic gangster film **BOB LE FLAMBEUR** and Juan-Antonio Bardem's **CALLE MAYOR (GRAND'RUE)**. Victoria and Play-Art merged into Cine-Alliance, with Mr. Silberman as Co-Chairman and Producer, and in 1960 he approached director Jacques Becker, who was having difficulty finding backing for his tense prison drama **LE TROU (THE HOLE)**. Silberman produced it and, like **BOB LE FLAMBEUR**, **LE TROU** became a classic and a favorite with the young directors of the New Wave. Robert Siodmak's **L'AFFAIRE NINA B** and Christian-Jaque's **MADAME SANS-GENE** followed in 1960 and 61.

In 1963 Silberman met Luis Buñuel, who had greatly admired the claustrophobic intensity of **LE TROU**. They agreed to make **DIARY OF A CHAMBERMAID**, and a rewarding collaboration and close friendship was formed, ending only with Buñuel's death in 1983. "We had a contract that was very clear. Freedom for everybody. If I didn't like what he did or we didn't arrive at an agreement, we were free not to do it. Everything would be done with complete agreement." Silberman was able to re-create

this meeting-of-minds approach with Kurosawa on **RAN**.

DIARY OF A CHAMBERMAID was the first Buñuel film to be presented as a commercial, rather than strictly "art-house" film, and though all of Silberman's subsequent Buñuel productions -- including **THE MILKY WAY** (1968), **THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE** (1972), **PHANTOM OF LIBERTY** (1973) and **THAT OBSCURE OBJECT OF DESIRE** (1976) -- entailed some financial risk, Silberman undertook them in the same spirit and they were indeed among the most widely seen and commercially successful of Buñuel's career.

In 1966, Greenwich Films, Mr. Silberman's own production company, came into being with **ADIEU L'AMI** (**FAREWELL, FRIEND**) directed by Jean Herman and starring Alain Delon and Charles Bronson. Under the Greenwich banner Silberman has produced or co-produced 12 films, including the Buñuel productions and Jean-Jacques Beineix's **DIVA**, co-produced in 1980 with Mrs. Irene Silberman's company Galaxie Films. **DIVA** won critical acclaim and commercial success in France and abroad.

In 1982 Silberman served as Executive Producer on James Toback's **EXPOSED**, starring Nastassja Kinski and Rudolf Nureyev. Silberman's involvement with **RAN**, beginning in 1982, came after an automobile accident in 1978 had kept him bedridden for three years. Undaunted by the accident or the three years of **RAN** production, Silberman is currently involved in pre-production on several major projects, including Nagisa Oshima's **MAX MY LOVE**, due to be shot in Paris before the end of 1985. He also plans to make **THE TUNNEL**, a World War II drama based on a novel by Andre Lacaze.

SERGE SILBERMAN FILMOGRAPHY

1955 - BOB LE FLAMBEUR (Jean-Pierre Melville)
1955 - GRAND'RUE (CALLE MAYOR) (Juan-Antonio Bardem)
1960 - LE TROU (THE HOLE) (Jacques Becker)
1960 - L'AFFAIRE NINA B (Robert Siodmak)
1960/61 - L'OISEAU DE PARADIS (DRAGON SKY) (Marcel Camus)
1961 - MADAME SANS-GENE (Christian-Jaque)
1963 - DIARY OF A CHAMBERMAID (Luis Buñuel)
1965 - GALIA (Georges Lautner)
1967/68 - ADIEU L'AMI (FAREWELL, FRIEND) (Jean Herman)
1968 - THE MILKY WAY (Luis Buñuel)
1969/70 - LE PASSAGER DE LA PLUIE (RIDER ON THE RAIN) (Rene Clement)
1971 - LA COURSE DU LIEVRE A TRAVERS LES CHAMPS (HOPE TO DIE) (Rene Clement)
1972 - THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE (Luis Buñuel)
1973 - PHANTOM OF LIBERTY (Luis Buñuel)
1975 - LES MAL PARTIS (Jean-Baptiste Rossi)
1975 - A NOUS LES PETITES ANGLAISES (Michel Lang)
1976/77 - THAT OBSCURE OBJECT OF DESIRE (Luis Buñuel)
1978 - LE GRAND EMBOUTEILLAGE (BOTTLENECK or TRAFFIC JAM) (Luigi Comencini)
1980 - DIVA (Jean-Jacques Beineix)
1982/85 - **RAN** (Akira Kurosawa)
In Production: MAX MY LOVE (Nagisa Oshima)

TATSUYA NAKADAI
(Lord Hidetora)

Nakadai was born in Tokyo on December 13, 1932. After his father's death, he worked his way through high school, and during his last year there, saw a "shingeki" (modern drama) performance which inspired him to take up acting. Upon his graduation in 1952, Nakadai was accepted by the Haiyu-za (Actor's Theater) Training School, where he spent three years. Nakadai first attracted attention with his stage appearance in Ibsen's "Ghosts."

Nakadai's first film appearance was in 1954 in Akira Kurosawa's SEVEN SAMURAI, in which he had a non-speaking role as a masterless samurai passing in the street. His first important role, as a young seducer in Umeji Inoue's FIRE BIRD (1956), brought him immediate recognition and a series of roles in films by such distinguished directors as Mikio Naruse, Kon Ichikawa, Shiro Toyoda, Kihachi Okamoto, Hideo Gosha, Daisuke Ito, Masahiro Shinoda and Satsuo Yamamoto.

Nakadai's greatest roles, however, came out of his collaborations with Masaki Kobayashi and Akira Kurosawa. Under Kobayashi, he acted in the ten-hour-long HUMAN CONDITION (1961), the internationally praised period films HARAKIRI (1962) and REBELLION (1967) and the ghost story KWAIDAN (1964). Under Kurosawa's direction, Nakadai played opposite Toshiro Mifune in YOJIMBO (1961), SANJURO (1962), HIGH AND LOW (1963), and finally in the main double role of Lord and Shadow Warrior in KAGEMUSHA (1980).

All told, Nakadai has appeared in more than one hundred films, including a 1968 spaghetti Western, and has been awarded numerous prizes for his film roles and for stage performances in Shakespeare and European classics.

Nakadai was active with the Haiyu-za Theater until 1979, and has been seen often on Japanese television since the early 1970s. In 1975, Nakadai and his wife Tomoe Ryu, an ex-actress and writer for film, stage and television, founded an acting school which has already produced several recognized young actors and actresses, including Daisuke Ryu, who played the role of Nobunaga Oda in KAGEMUSHA and plays the role of Saburo, the third son, in RAN.

JINPACHI NEZU

(Jiro)

Born on December 1, 1947 in Yamanashi Prefecture, the son of a dentist, Nezu became interested in theater while still in high school, acting in a play which he wrote himself. After entering the French Language Department of Dokkyo University in Tokyo in 1966, in the midst of the student movement, Nezu read a book by an avant-garde theater director named Juro Kara. He quit the university in 1969 and joined Kara's theater group, Jokyo Gekijo (The Situation Theater). Through his appearances in Kara's productions, Nezu gradually established himself as a unique actor and became an important member of the avant-garde theater circle.

In 1975, Nezu began to appear on television, which brought him nationwide popularity. His first film appearance was in Kara's KOREAN SEA (1976). He left the Jokyo Gekijo in 1979, and before appearing in Kurosawa's KAGEMUSHA, played a main role in Eiichi Kudo's FIGHTS WITHOUT RULES: SEQUEL (1979). Nezu also appeared in A FAREWELL TO THE LAND (1982), which was shown in the 1983 New Directors/New Films series in New York, and was directed by Mitsuo Yanagimachi, whose HIMATSURI (FIRE FESTIVAL) is a selection of the 23rd New York Film Festival.

PETER

(Kyoami, the Fool)

Shinnosuke Ikehata was born in Osaka on August 8, 1952 into a family of Japanese traditional dancers. He adopted the persona of "Peter" after quitting high school in 1967. Peter made his film debut in avant-garde director Toshio Matsumoto's 1969 rendering of the Oedipus story set in a contemporary Japanese bar district, THE FUNERAL OF ROSES. As a singer and dancer, Peter has been a popular transvestite performer on television since 1969, and continues to play both male and female roles in film, on stage, and in traditional Japanese dance performances.

MIEKO HARADA
(Lady Kaede)

Harada was born on December 26, 1958 in Tokyo. Her father is a printer. While attending elementary school, she began to study ballet. In the seventh grade, she saw MELODY (1971), a British film starring Mark Lester, which so enchanted the young Harada that she determined to enter the film world. When Lester came to Japan in 1973 to appear in a Japanese film, Harada auditioned for the opposite role. Although she did not get the part, a television agent signed her to a contract, and she began to study singing and acting.

Harada made her screen debut in 1973 in the provocative youth film, LOVE IS IN GREEN WIND, winning immediate acclaim that led to several other films. In 1976, her roles as a young prostitute in Yasuzo Masumura's THE LULLABY OF THE EARTH, and as the lover of a boy who murders his parents in Kazuhiko Hasegawa's THE MURDERER OF YOUTH allowed Harada to monopolize all of the major acting awards of that year.

Harada continued to appear in films, including Kinji Fukasaku's SHOGUN'S ASSASSINS (1978), her first period film; Kudo's FIGHTS WITHOUT RULES: SEQUEL, opposite Jinpachi Nezu; Tatsumi Kumashiro's HELL (1980); and Satsuo Yamamoto's AH! NOMUGI PASS (1980). After graduating from a Tokyo public high school in 1978, Harada wrote, produced and starred in MR., MRS., MISS LONELY in 1980.

Harada has been active on television since 1975; on stage, she performed opposite actor Shintaro Katsu (the blind swordsman of ZATOICHI) in 1979, and in 1980, Katsu published a photography book about her, Katsu vs. Mieko.

HIDEO OGUNI
(Screenplay)

Oguni was born in 1904 in Aomori Prefecture, the northernmost area of Japan's main island of Honshu. He graduated from the theology department of the Tokyo Gakuin. Influenced by an idealistic movement in Japanese literature, he went to live in a commune on the southern island of Kyushu in 1919.

Oguni entered Nikkatsu-Kyoto Studio in 1927, and later moved to its Tokyo Studio, while being trained as an assistant director. He also began writing screenplays, and in 1938, moved to Toho Studio. After directing two films based on his own screenplays in 1938, he decided to concentrate on screenwriting, and wrote Teinosuke Kinugasa's first post-war satire film, LORD OF A NIGHT (1946).

At the invitation of Kurosawa's screenwriting group, Oguni's first project with Kurosawa was IKIRU in 1952. He has since collaborated on all of Kurosawa's films except YOJIMBO, DERSU UZALA and KAGEMUSHA.

MASATO IDE
(Screenplay)

Ide was born in 1920 in Saga Prefecture on Kyushu. He graduated from the Tokyo Toshima Teacher Training School in 1941, and studied writing with the popular author Shin Hasegawa.

Ide began working at Shin-Toho Studio in 1948. In 1953, his novel, The Salt of the Earth, was nominated for a major Japanese literature prize. Around that time, Ide began to work as a screenwriter, and has since worked with many distinguished directors including Yoshitaro Nomura and Kei Kumai. For Kurosawa, Ide participated in the writing of RED BEARD (1965) and KAGEMUSHA (1980).

TAKAO SAITO
(Director of Photography)

Saito was born in Kyoto in 1929. He entered Toho Studio in 1946 as an assistant cameraman and worked on Kurosawa's ONE WONDERFUL SUNDAY under cinematographer Asakazu Nakai (who began working as Kurosawa's cinematographer in 1946 on NO REGRET FOR OUR YOUTH, and supervised the cinematography on **RAN**).

Saito continued working for Kurosawa as an assistant cameraman until 1962, when he was made director of photography for SANJURO. Since then, he has been co-cinematographer on all of Kurosawa's films except DERSU UZALA. Saito left Toho Studio in 1967 and joined Mifune Productions.

In **RAN**, Saito employed three cameras simultaneously, each shooting from a different angle and using a different-sized lens, this being the essence of Kurosawa's famous "multi-camera" method.

YOSHIRO AND SHINOBU MURAKI
(Art Directors)

Yoshiro Muraki was born in Tokyo in 1924 and graduated from the architecture department of Chiba university. He entered Toho Studio in 1946 as an assistant art director. There he met a co-worker named Shinobu whom he was to marry several years later.

Shinobu Muraki was born in Tokyo in 1923. Upon graduating from Tokyo Women's Art College, she entered Toho Studio. The Murakis were officially the assistants on Kurosawa's STRAY DOG (1949), but in fact were almost completely responsible for the difficult job of constructing many sets under time and budget pressure. Since their marriage shortly after this film was finished, the Murakis have only worked together twice on Kurosawa films, collaborating on DODESKADEN (1970) and **RAN**.

In 1952, Shinobu Muraki was promoted to art director, as was her husband the following year. Since RECORD OF A LIVING BEING (1955), Yoshiro Muraki has been the art director on all of Kurosawa's films except DERSU UZALA, while Shinobu Muraki has been art director of many successful films by other directors, especially Kon Ichikawa, for whom she did THE MAKIOKA SISTERS (1983). The Murakis left Toho Studio in 1970 to establish an independent company with other Toho alumni.

Having secured the use of Himeji and Kumamoto Castles as locations for **RAN**, the Murakis faced the challenge of building an authentic-looking castle which could be set afire for the climactic scene in which Lord Hidetora is attacked by the combined forces of his two elder sons. After a thorough study of the architecture of late 16th-century Japan, the Murakis experimented with a variety of materials and dimensions to achieve the proper pyrotechnical and visual effects, ultimately completing their remarkable construction in Gotemba near Mount Fuji over a period of three months at a cost of \$1.6 million.

EMI WADA

(Costume Designer)

Wada was born in Kyoto in 1937. She graduated from Kyoto Art College with a major in Western painting, and began working as a stage and costume designer in 1957, with credits ranging from plays, musicals and modern ballet to pantomime and television commercials.

Wada had collaborated with the Murakis on fashion shows in the past and through them was engaged to work on **RAN**. For this film, Wada studied over one hundred books on the costumes of the period. For the sake of authenticity, she collected clothes at antique stores and ordered clothes from traditional Noh and kyogen play costume producers. To re-create some materials, Wada stamped and dyed fabrics herself, pressing the entire film crew into service.

Wada confessed that her biggest challenge was the costume for Kyoami, the Fool, because she had to meet not only Kurosawa's usual extremely high standards, but also the director's very specific image of this costume. As Wada recalls, Kurosawa kept insisting that the costume be "more audacious, more sophisticated, but not too chic, and with the mood of Lear's Fool, too."

TORU TAKEMITSU

(Music)

One of Japan's most respected contemporary composers, Takemitsu was born in Tokyo in 1930 and grew up in Manchuria. His family returned to Japan after the war, and he began to study music with Yasuji Kiyose in 1948, joining the "New Composers" group of Kiyose and Yorinori Matsudaira two years later. In 1951, he founded the Jikken Kobo (Experimental Laboratory) with Kuniharu Akiyama, Joji Yusen and others. Gradually Takemitsu emerged as a leading avant-garde composer, winning domestic and international acclaim for his unique combinations of instruments in orchestras and chamber music groups.

A film fan since childhood, Takemitsu began writing film music as an assistant to Fumio Hayasaka (known for his music for Kurosawa and Mizoguchi) in the early 1950s. His first film score was for Ko Nakahira's youth film, CRAZED FRUIT (1956), which soon became a favorite of the French New Wave.

Takemitsu has been closely associated with the Japanese New Wave directors as well, including Nagisa Oshima (THE MAN WHO LEFT HIS WILL ON FILM, THE CEREMONY, and PHANTOM OF LOVE), Masahiro Shinoda (DRY LAKE, PALE FLOWER, ASSASSINATION, SILENCE and THE BALLAD OF ORIN) and Yoshishige Yoshida (ESCAPE FROM JAPAN).

Takemitsu has composed the music for some eighty films, including those by Mikio Naruse (TWO IN THE SHADOWS), Hiroshi Teshigahara (WOMAN IN THE DUNES) and Masaki Kobayashi (all of his films since HIRAKIRI to the most recent TOKYO TRIAL). For Kurosawa, Takemitsu composed the music for DODESKADEN in 1970. RAN represents Takemitsu's second collaboration with Kurosawa.

Takemitsu was invited to teach at Yale University in 1975 and in 1980 was awarded the Japanese Art Academy prize. The Japan Society of New York honored him in 1981 by presenting a retrospective of thirteen films of Takemitsu's own selection. He has travelled extensively in Europe, America and Asia for performances and lectures.

In Japan, Takemitsu is known not only as a composer, but as an author, having published several books, including a recent one on film criticism.