



From the mind of  
**MASAOKI YUASA,**  
Director of **TATAMI GALAXY,**  
**MIND GAME** and **LU OVER THE WALL**

# THE NIGHT IS SHORT, WALK ON GIRL

A FILM BY MASAOKI YUASA  
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## SYNOPSIS

From the visionary mind of director Masaaki Yuasa (*Mind Game*, Adventure Time's "Food Chain") comes *The Night is Short, Walk on Girl*, a comedy about one epic night in Kyoto. As a group of teens go out for a night on the town, a sophomore known only as "The Girl with Black Hair" experiences a series of surreal encounters with the local nightlife... all the while unaware of the romantic longings of Senpai, a fellow student who has been creating increasingly fantastic and contrived reasons to run into her, in an effort to win her heart.



# THE NIGHT IS SHORT, WALK ON GIRL

## TECHNICAL CREW

*Director:* Masaaki Yuasa

*Original Story:* Tomihiko Morimi

*Animation Producer:* Eunyoung Choi

*Producers:* Noriko Ozaki, Junnosuke Ito

*Executive Producers:* Kenji Shimizu, Keiji Ota,  
Masaaki Yuasa, Daiji Horiuchi, Akihiro Arai

*Chief Producer:* Koji Yamamoto

*Animation Production Studio:* Science SARU

*Original Character Designer:* Yusuke Nakamura

*Script:* Makoto Ueda

*Character Designer/Animation Director:* Nobutake Ito

*Animation Director:* Takayuki Hamada, Tomohisa Shimoyama

*Art Director:* Shinichi Uehara, Hiroshi Ohno

*Flash Animation:*

Juan Manuel Laguna

Abel Gongora

*Color Coordinator:*

Lucille Briand

*Director of Photography:* Batiste Perron

*Sound Director:* Eriko Kimura

*Music:* Michiru Oshima

*Featured Song:* Shinichi SakuraiRihaku

## CAST

*Senpai:* Gen Hoshino

*The Girl with Black Hair:* Kana Hanazawa

*Director of School Festival Operations:* Hiroshi Kamiya

*Don Underwear:* Ryuji Akiyama

*Master Higuchi:* Kazuya Nakai

*Ms. Hanuki:* Yuko Kaida

*The God of Old-book Markets:* Hiroyuki Yoshino





DIRECTOR **MASAAKI YUASA**

## I wanted to create a feeling of the girl growing into adulthood

**After the TV series *The Tatami Galaxy* (2010) which was created by the same staff as *The Night is Short, Walk on Girl*, how was this project carried out?**

**MASAAKI YUASA:** Tomihoko Morimi received a proposition to turn *The Night Is Short, Walk On Girl* into a film a long time ago, when I was not a part of it. But it didn't happen then. Following the success of *The Tatami Galaxy* (2010), I was told that I may be subsequently asked to work on *The Night Is Short, Walk On Girl*. So, I actually began preparatory work, such as adding a taste of *The Night Is Short, Walk On Girl* to the DVD bonus content of *The Tatami Galaxy*. However, the project still ended up in smoke after all. The plan for *The Night is Short, Walk On Girl* came and went several times afterwards, and emerged again while I was creating *Lu Over The Wall* (2018). Because I had started working on it and left it unfinished, and felt like I would be the right person to take it on, if it was possible for the project to come to fruition, I wanted to work with the same staff as *The Tatami Galaxy*. So, we began the production by arranging to gradually and efficiently shift the staff members who finished with *Lu Over the Wall* on to *The Night Is Short, Walk On Girl*.

**In the process of the production, I assume that you started with building the scenario. What did you communicate with Makoto Ueda, the script writer?**

**MY:** The original story takes place through the four seasons, however as the title is *The Night is Short, Walk On Girl*, I thought that it would be more fitting if the story happened in one night. So, I discussed with Mr. Ueda about how to turn the story into one night, and how to place the four seasons in what balance, etc. We have both grown very much since we were working on *The Tatami Galaxy*, so we have come to a greater of understanding of what each other likes. It was like, "I guess Ueda-san would go like this, so then I should go this way." I think it went smoother than the last time.

**Since it takes place overnight, there are many night scenes in the film.**

**MY:** Yes, there are. I kept in mind to make the scenes not too dark as much as possible when in production. I also wanted to portray the night as dream-like. This is the story of a girl who joyfully takes at face value what she observes seeing people drinking and their relationships, so I wanted to create a feeling of the girl growing into adulthood, in other words, a fantasy for grown-ups. Kids should better go to bed, as it's a movie about nightlife for adults (laugh)! But it's not too graphic at all, as it's depicted with a pop-art feeling. That is one of the great parts of Morimi-san. I think the character Johnny is also extraordinary (laugh)! I must call it the Morimi Magic. I was very impressed by his way of creating scene settings.

**The play within the play, "The Obstinate King," is a musical adaptation in the movie, but it's not in the original.**

**MY:** As I felt that the Autumn section was the most challenging to animate, I initially didn't want to work on it. I wanted to shorten the Autumn part to about



one minute and move onto the Winter part (laugh)! But I heard that the Autumn part was very popular among fans of the original, so I thought that I shouldn't get rid of it. So, I had the idea of making "The Obstinate King" into a musical. That is the advantage of animation – that anything is possible. I also thought that it is strange to have a play within a play, because it was odd that the character I drew is both acting as the character I imagined, and within that world, also is acting as another character. So, I decided to adapt the play in the play as a musical to depict it without it being strange.

**Both "Watashi" (the protagonist) in "The Tatami Galaxy" and "Senpai," in this movie are students in Kyoto. What do you feel are the differences between them?**

**MY:** I think they are connected for some reason, basically. The main characters in Morimi-san's first three books, including his debut work "Taiyou No Tou" (Tower of the Sun) have similarities. I don't know whether it is a projection of himself or imaginary characters. But I can say that the male characters are getting acclimated to romance, and have become more flexible since "Taiyou No Tou." Those characters begin to take actions, though they still occasionally make excuses for their inaction. So, I think "Senpai" in *The Night is Short, Walk On Girl*, is less obstinate and softer than "Watashi" in *The Tatami Galaxy*.

**I've heard that you aspired to have Gen Hoshino for the role of "Senpai." Which part of Hoshino-san you were attracted to?**

**MY:** There are many people who create a public persona for themselves, but I found that Hoshino-san acted like himself when I saw him in music and talk shows on TV. I think it's a truly courageous thing to do in this modern age, for him to speak honestly about how he feels. On top of that, he is a very talented person, though he is seemingly ordinary. He is not definitely a "go-man-go!" type of person, but I thought that his personality of being able to speak his mind would suit the role of "Senpai." Nevertheless, I wasn't completely confident that he would fit the role at first – it's usual that I am anxious about voice actors until it is time for practice recordings. Hoshino-san was trying to fit himself to the character of "Senpai" at the beginning, but gradually Hoshino-san's own character began to come through. I got the impression that the character he created is very Hoshino-san-ish, but still "Senpai." I was confident that he was the perfect one, and I was relieved and assured in the end. I am so glad that Hoshino-san acted in the role.

**By contrast, what is your impression of the black-haired girl?**

**MY:** When I read the original, I had a warmer and softer image for her than Akashi-san in *The Tatami Galaxy*, but I came to think that the girl is similar to Akashi-san as production progressed. Unlike Akashi-san, the girl sometimes pours out her true thoughts, and I tried to remember if Akashi-san also had that tendency. I think there is less warm and soft image in *The Girl With Black Hair*'s character, and her strength, steadiness and reliability are brought to the fore in this movie in comparison with the original. However, it is the character that she has by nature.

The Girl With Black Hair is cool. We, unlike her, are not able to say "I believe I'll win." to a master drinker in general. When I heard Kana Hanazawa's voice, "it's perfect" I said, and she got the role immediately. Before the main dubbing, we asked her to record only the title for the trailer. It was exactly the voice of the girl.



**Is there anything you changed for Master Higuchi and Hanuki-san, who also appeared in *The Tatami Galaxy*, for this movie?**

**MY:** First of all, Higuchi-san's character was quite strong from *The Tatami Galaxy*, so I was worried about the change of actors from Keiji Fujiwara to Kazuya Nakai. We felt bad that we had to ask Nakai-san to create an updated Higuchi-san a lot. Eventually, the performance became the character of Higuchi-san in Nakai-san's own way and fell into place. I guess he experienced the most hardships among the voice actors of this film. Now, I think his voice fits right in with the role when I see the movie. There is no particular change on Hanuki-san, as she is the same as usual. I don't believe Yuko Kaida had many difficulties.

**Because the production of this movie was held at the same time as *Lu Over the Wall*, I could imagine that there must be a lot of difficulties and challenges you experienced. What was difficult the most during the production?**

**MY:** This happens every time: while my staff is working very hard, I don't have much of a difficult time. I enjoy my work, as each department produces such excellent works throughout the production. I was able to work with Ueda-san and Yusuke Nakamura (character design) smoother than the last time, we were able to make good music, and the dubbing session was fun. So to speak, the most challenging part was pressure from getting those elements together. We have an amazing original story, and Gen Hoshino. These are all conditions for an interesting work, and perhaps, there are no real problems. So, I would like to share my joy I felt during the production with you.



ORIGINAL AUTHOR **TOMIHIKO MORIMI**

**It seems like novels would be fresher and more interesting written in a haphazard way.**

The animation *The Tatami Galaxy*, created by the same staff of this movie, was the first time my novel was put to film, so I was a little nervous, but I enjoyed watching it very much. Each episode is dense, and Ueda-san's thought-out calculation, and the director Yuasa's explosive style, were mixed perfectly in the piece. And I thought that the image from the novel "The Tatami Galaxy" was updated by Yusuke Nakamura's drawing. "The Tatami Galaxy" was my second novel, and although it wasn't as popular at the time it was published, because of it being turned into the anime *The Tatami Galaxy*, its "status" greatly increased. "The Tatami Galaxy" novel was always second in popularity to the novel version of "Night is Short, Walk on Girl," which occupies the spotlight, but it seemed like the original novel "The Tatami Galaxy" suddenly became majestic.

When I was talking with my former editor, I had the idea of "Alice in Wonderland" however in Kiyamichi, Kyoto – as well as the words "night is short, walk on girl" combined together, which came to be the first chapter of the original novel "Night is Short, Walk on Girl," on which this movie is based. That was the only thing I had in the beginning, and after that, I haphazardly wrote further episodes one by one. I still remember that when I was thinking about how the climax should be in the second chapter, "Abyssal Fishes," I consulted my colleague on the commuter train in the morning, who suggested, "How about an endurance contest of eating hotpot?" So, I applied the idea into my novel. Can you see how slapdash it was created? However, making novels is like working quickly with perishable food – where stories are fresher and more interesting if they are written in a more slapdash way.



We were not sure if Gen Hoshino would play the part of “Senpai,” and I’m thankful to Hoshino-san for accepting the role. Shintaro Asanuma showed his unbelievably impassioned performance as the protagonist in the animation *The Tatami Galaxy*. We use the same images and characters from *The Tatami Galaxy* anime in *The Night is Short, Walk On Girl* film, but it’s not the same perspective. I think the story of *The Night is Short, Walk On Girl* is in a different world from *The Tatami Galaxy*. For this reason, Hoshino-san could play the role of “Senpai” in his own way, and was confident that it was going to be formative for *The Night is Short, Walk On Girl*. Also, establishing the world of this movie was dependent on the success of creating the character The Girl With Black Hair. She is positive, true to herself, dignified and intelligent, but she is reckless, unsteady, and thinks she is pathetic. And yet, there is no negative vibe from her. That is the image of the girl. If audiences think of her character as “It can’t be helped because she is the way she is,” we won. I thought Kana Hanazawa’s performance as The Girl With Black Hair was wonderful. In combination with the visual created by Nakamura-san, it is more than perfect without question.

When I wrote the first chapter of the original, I wanted Master Higuchi and Hanuki-san to appear as the reliable “guides” for the girl because I thought that the girl was too pure and honest to venture into the streets. They are very useful supporting characters. I think it is okay to reuse the characters I created in the past if they can continue to play the same kind of roles. It’s recycling. If they appear in a different piece, its world is also different, so it’s not going to be “exactly the same person.” That’s why I don’t care about consistency much.

My impression of the director Yuasa is that he is the one to carry out “things that would be impossible if not in animation” to the very limit. I think the director Yuasa’s image exploded in the movie *The Night is Short, Walk On Girl*, as well as in *The Tatami Galaxy*. As a novelist, I strongly sympathize with his attitude. When I first saw the complete movie, Yuasa-san’s explosion of style only increased as it proceeded to the latter half of the movie. I was thrown off and stunned, even though I am the original author. At first I thought it was a truly enigmatic work. But when I watched it again, I gradually felt even better about it. The more you watch, the more addicting it becomes to the audience. You’ll want to watch it many times. So, my impression of the movie has shifted from thinking of it as an “enigmatic piece” to a “masterpiece.”



## TOMIHIKO MORIMI

Born in 1979 in Nara, Japan.

Graduated from Kyoto University Agriculture Department, earned a bachelor degree and a master degree.

In 2003, debut with “*Taiyou No Tou (Tower of the Sun)*”, and he won the 15th Japan Fantasy Novel Award. In 2007, “*Yoru Wa Mijikashi Arukeyo Otome*” received the 20th Yamamoto Shugoro Prize. In 2010, “*Penguin Highway*” received the 31st Japan SF Grand Prize. In 2014, he won the Kyoto Book Grand Prix by “*Seinaru Namakemono No Bouken (Adventure of Sacred Lazy Person)*”. He also wrote “*Kitsune No Hanashi (Story of Fox)*”, “*Yojouhan Shinwa Taikei*”, “*Uchouten Kazoku (The Eccentric Family)*” series, “*Koibumi No Gijutu (Love Letter Technique)*”, “*Yakou (Going at Night)*” and more.

### “Yojouhan Shinwa Taikei”

(Kadokawa Bunko)

Bestseller novel sold over 1.3 million copies in total published by Kadokawa Shoten in 2006. It received the 20th Yamamoto Shugoro Prize, and it got the second place of Honya Taisho (Bookstore Award) in 2007. It’s a fantasy-ic young love story set in Kyoto, and one of the most popular works of Toshihiko Morimi among his fans. This book has been selected as the first place in “The Books Chosen By College Students” by Kadokawa Bunko almost every year. Morimi himself and his fans call the novel as “Hakoiri Musume” and have been treasured it, and this time, long-awaited filmization has been finally realized for the first time.

### “Yoru Wa Mijikashi Arukeyo Otome”

(Kadokawa Bunko)

Published by Ota Publishing Company in 2004, then published in paperback by Kadokawa Shoten in 2008. The story is about the main character “Watashi” whose college life is changing by the film circle he decided to join when he entered the college, depicted in a parallel world. This novel made into TV animation in 2010 by the same main staff of this movie (*The Night Is Short, Walk On Girl*): Masaaki Yuasa/director, Makoto Ueda/screenplay, Yusuke Nakamura/original character design. All eleven episodes were broadcasted by noitaminA, a part of FUJI Television Network system from April through July in the same year (2010).



## SCREENPLAY **MAKOTO UEDA**

When *The Tatami Galaxy* was made into an anime series, I had a hard time because there were too many lines per episode. While I was writing the first episode, no matter how much I wrote, I was repeatedly told that I could add more lines. So, the final script ended up with the equal amount of lines to a one-hour length TV drama. But I am still told by many that they watched it when they were students, and I feel rewarded. When I discovered that the same main staff of *The Tatami Galaxy* were working on *The Night is Short, Walk On Girl*, I thought, “Oh, finally.” However, this was not the first time a plan to animate *The Night is Short, Walk On Girl* came and went, so while I was writing the script, I had to keep telling myself that it was really happening this time. When I found that the project was going to be launched, I was very relieved!

*The Night is Short, Walk On Girl* is a very hyper, decadent, lively, and tumultuous story. There are so many people and places in the story, that I think this is an evil piece, because it disappoints us when some of those people and places are left out when in the film! I didn’t get any particular request from Morimi-sensei, but when I wrote the narration for the girl with black hair as “I’m an uncultured person who doesn’t have much skills, like a rice cooker,” Morimi-sensei’s reply was “I don’t think the girl would scorn rice cookers like this.” I was startled, and revised the line to say, “I’m as uncultured person who is more boring than a rice cooker,” to bring it closer to the original intent.

The process of scriptwriting followed this kind of exchange with director Yuasa: I wrote the basic plot using initial images from director Yuasa, who then edited and returned it to me, and I then wrote dialogue based on his edits, followed by additional touches to those lines from director Yuasa.

It was fun, but we are both stubborn, so there were many back and forth modifications between us! During this process, the element I focused on the most was director Yuasa’s statement that “This is the throughout four seasons, but I would like to make it into one night.” He wanted to create a nonstop one-night movie. So, I tried not to stop the momen-



## MAKOTO UEDA

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Born in 1979 in Kyoto.

Playwright, director, (script & composition) writer.

Although he is based in Kyoto, he represents the theater company “Europe Kikaku” which disseminates their works across the country, and he writes all the scripts and directs all the performances. Their major works are: “Summer Time Machine Blues” (film), “Magare! Spoon (Go Find A Psychic!)” (film), “26th Century Fox by Europe-Kikaku” (TV movie), “Uten Chushi Nine (NOTE: means Rainout Nine)” by Ogiyahagi, Kamomentaru and Europe-Kikaku” (TV situation comedy series), “Shibaura Browser” (play), “Showajima Walker” (play)

In 2014, he won the 32nd Kyoto Prefecture Cultural Award Encouragement Prize, and in 2017, he won the 61st Kishida Kunio Drama Award by the play “Kite Ketsukaru Beki Shinsekai (This New World that Had to Come)”.

tum, and to keep as much tension as possible. But, it was very tough to keep the time setting consistent! Since the girl’s night is too long, summer can’t wait and shows up early. Then the time of “Senpai” and other people are drawn into it. It was challenging for me to persuasively alter time that does not adhere to logic.

The character of “Senpai” is sort of fated to end up facing the dark sides or dregs of the wonderful things and people that the girl meets in the night. Especially in the Spring segment, I wrote him so he can’t catch up with her and is always embroiled in troubles. But he did great, because he caught up with her even under the adverse conditions of the Fall segment. On the other hand, I sense that the girl is the person who must be able to see the world as high-dimensional and bright. I cared about the world viewed by the girl while I was writing the script, but since I didn’t picture the girl’s looks and her behavior much, I was surprised by the scenes of the bipedal robot steps and the Sophist Dance!

Through *The Tatami Galaxy* and this project, I feel that director Yuasa is the kind of person who can keep running without coming up for air for incredibly longer distances than others, and I think he wants to keep running without oxygen as long as he can. Plus, I’m sure that he likes to put smartphones in a scene! When I watched the completed picture, I was very satisfied. This was the theatrical movie based on the past work done in *The Tatami Galaxy*, so we could have made it easier to understand and employed more innocuous ways, but we didn’t. With this movie, we took a full swing and creatively followed through throughout the entire project. I feel refreshed.

The steps of the girl are more powerful and speedy than we imagine, so the scenery that she walks through gets steadily distorted and twisted. It’s a tough path, so don’t be left behind, and please follow her with “Senpai.” The view of the dawn at the end is worth a rewarding treasure.



## YUSUKE NAKAMURA

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Born in 1978 in Hyogo. Illustrator.

Graduated from Osaka University of Arts Design Department.

He designed the CD cover for ASIAN KUNGFU GENERATION and Masashi Sada, and the book cover design of "Nazotoki Wa Dinner No Ato De (The After-Dinner Mystery)", "Yoru Wa Mijikasshi Arukeyo Otome", music textbooks, and many others. His art books "Blue" and "NOW" are sold 13 million copies as of now. His first manual book "Minna No Illustration Kyo-shitsu" and coloring book "COLOR ME" are also getting attention.

## ORIGINAL CHARACTER DESIGN

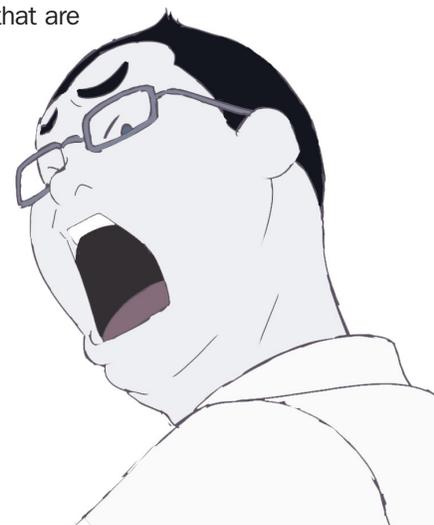
### YUSUKE NAKAMURA

Although I was reassured by the fact that the same staff from the anime *The Tatami Galaxy* would work on this movie, because of the differences in preparation time, quality, and target audience between TV and feature length animation, I still felt pressure at the start of the production. The characters in Morimi-san's work are not straightforward, and are hard to deal with, but they are all kind and affectionate. In short, they are the kind of people who make you think, "I want to be friends with them." They are all attractive and loveable characters, and this is what I focus on when I illustrate them.

The director Yuasa explained some of the differences from the original novel about the presence of each character, such as their personality, position, etc., however he never gave me general directions like "I want the face looks like this" or "Hair style should be like that" when designing the characters. It was same as when we worked on *The Tatami Galaxy*. I was flattered that he trusted me, and I was able to continue developing my ideas to greater limits, almost like blowing up a balloon to the limit of my lung capacity.

Director Yuasa is able to gather staff members who are usually not involved with animation, and the way he works with his staff is kind of like a father with his kids at the park – allowing his staff to play freely. Beyond that, he is able to organize the team as the director. I am always amazed by the final product of his works.

I wish our audience to experience the joyful of *The Night is Short, Walk On Girl*, with the feeling as if they strayed into the unknown alleys in Kyoto that are not in the guide books.





VOICE ACTRESS FOR "THE BLACK-HAIRED GIRL"

## KANA HANAZAWA

I read the original novel "Night is Short, Walk on Girl" when I was in college. I was drawn to the story from the unique style of storytelling, and because the jokes and humorous moments coming out one after another make me laugh – I can read through the novels written by Morimi-sensei in the blink of an eye. That's why I think they are easy to read for anyone. I studied literature in college, and there were many people like the character Senpai around me. They were unreasonably meticulous and punctilious... for example, when planning events like a school festival, I would always ask them, "How much could you nitpick?" I am the type of person who usually says, "Whatever is fine," but I enjoyed talking with those kind of people very much. I felt the novel "Night is Short, Walk on Girl" was personal and near me, because I truly believed that indeed, there are people like Senpai that exist.

I was told both that I was selected for the role of the girl, and that the novel "Night is Short, Walk on Girl" was going to be animated at the same time, and I was surprised and very happy. "Night is Short, Walk on Girl" will be an animated film, it's directed by the director Yuasa, and I will act the girl... I thought it was so delightful. However, the girl is the existence who leads the story, and the story can't move on if she doesn't come across upon various things, so I thought it was a big responsibility.

While I was reading the original, I thought the girl was simpler, more innocent, softer, and unsteady. So, I initially portrayed my original image of her in rehearsal, but was told "I think it's too cheerful." It all made sense when I was told that "Since she had been hammered with the knowledge of Bushido (the spirit of Samurai), she could have a little more of an immovable attitude, and answer like a Samurai." I think the girl in the animation is a bit calmer than the original. But the girl in the motion picture does the Sophist Dance fearlessly, and her way of drinking alcohol is depicted dynamically, so her personality of



## KANA HANAZAWA

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Born on February 25, 1989 in Tokyo.

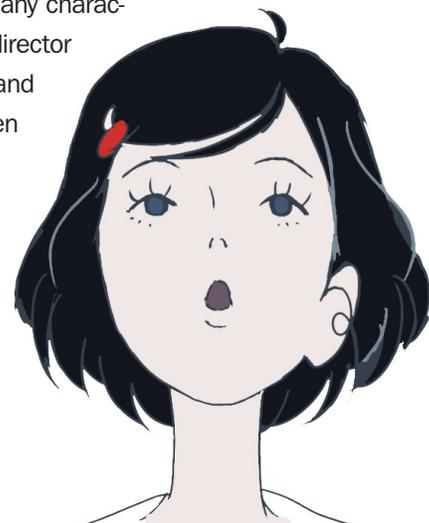
She started voice acting in 2003. She starred as heroine in TV animation “Durarara!!” (2010, the role of Anri Sonohara), “Nisekoi” (2014, the role of Kosaki Onodera), the movie “Kotonoha No Niwa (The Garden of Words)” (2013, the role of Yukari Yukino), “Psycho-Pass: The Movie” (2015, the role of Akane Tsunemori), and many more hit works, and gaining a reputation by her transparent voice. She won several awards including The Best Voice Actress at The Anime Grand Prix 2010 and The Best Actress at Newtype Anime Awards 2014-2015. She debuted as a singer in 2012 and released her 4th full-album “Opportunity” this year, started the national live concert tour from April. In 2015, she starred in the live-action movie “Kimi Ga Inakucha Dame Nanda” for the first time. She is active in wider range now.

simple, innocent, naturalness and spontaneity is shown throughout. For these reasons, I tried to portray the girl without fuzziness and unsteadiness. .

I thought Hoshino-san would be the perfect fit when I heard that he was going to play the role of Senpai. I had read the books, and I thought that he might be thinking about various matters, such as how to portray his complex past within his merry atmosphere. Personally, I thought that it would be a very interesting role to see how Hoshino-san’s personality would be reflected. Although Senpai was “somehow impossible to hate” to me, when I actually saw Senpai performed by Hoshino-san, I became to think of Senpai as even more adorable, and as a more beloved person than before. I think Senpai is very nice, as I can see his utmost effort through his perseverance chasing the girl.

I think the girl and Senpai have good chemistry. Senpai tends to think too much about everything, so if he is with someone who has similar thoughts, they must have a lot of heated arguments. Their fights must be furious! But the girl takes everything in positive way. I have a sense that a person like her could take Senpai somewhere very fun. The girl is the kind of person who could keep going to the ends of the earth, however I believe that Senpai is the kind of person who could manage to stop her. Because they are well-balanced in that point, I think their relationship would be fantastic.

I have liked this piece since the original, and I can’t imagine anything greater than the collaboration between Morimi-sensei and the director Yuasa. I would like audiences to see the movie many times, switching the character you focus on, because you could discover interesting stories more and more by highlighting any character while you’re watching this movie. I think the director Yuasa created that balance by being particular and concerning with every detail, so please enjoy even the small details on the big screen.





VOICE ACTOR FOR "SENPAI"

**GEN HOSHINO**

**Senpai always takes a very long way round,  
but he is battling with himself all the time.**

*Please share your impression of the original novel with us when you read it.*

**GEN HOSHINO:** My first encounter with Tomihiko Morimi's novel was when I found the book "Taiyou No Tou" by chance at a bookstore in my neighborhood. After that, I read the novels "The Tatami Galaxy" and "Night is Short, Walk on Girl" as well. Especially because "Night is Short, Walk on Girl" alternates between the girl's story and Senpai's story, and because there is a rhythm between the story being heavy and light, I was particularly interested in that novel.

*Do you have any favorite episodes and descriptions in the original novel?*

**GH:** I like the scene of the conference between a multitude of Senpai characters very much. I almost cry at this scene every time I read the original. I like the part of "the chairperson-like Senpai" talking to the passive-Senpai the most. Like the character of Senpai, I also have two different versions of myself inside of me, one that is the "coward" and one that is the "want-to-do-something" version. There are moments that they are at odds with each other, so because I can identify with the character of Senpai, I get very excited about that scene.

*I've heard that you are a fan of Mind Game from director Masaaki Yuasa. How did you feel when you received an offer from the director.*

**GH:** I still remember my shock at the abundance of imagination and creativity distinctive to animation when I watched the movie for the first time. It was a feeling that I hadn't experienced many times before. The two messages: "Don't give up" and "Live hard" in the original story of *Mind Game* were portrayed through the filter of animation. Those themes could be too rigid if written down as word, but I was very moved because the



themes were amplified through the power of animation. Since then, I have been following Yuasa-san's works. When I got an offer for *The Night is Short, Walk On Girl*, I was not able to make a decision for a while, since I was quite busy at that time, and the voice acting job looked tough. But after I received a letter from the director that said, "I'm confident that the movie will become interesting, if Hoshino-san would take the role of Senpai," I decided to accept the offer, as I wanted to believe the director and try my best for it.

#### **Have you seen *The Tatami Galaxy*?**

**GH:** Yes, I have. I assumed that "Watashi," the main character in *The Tatami Galaxy*, and the entire atmosphere, might be the same as the novel "Night is Short, Walk on Girl," but when I saw the film *The Night Is Short, Walk On Girl*, I felt that it was a different work. When I first began recording the Senpai's voice, I wondered if I should aim to replicate the monotonous tone of Shintaro Asanuma ("Watashi," *The Tatami Galaxy*). But the director said, "It doesn't have to be like that at all." And the direction I received from Eriko Kimura, the sound director, was to "Show emotion." I was told that "Senpai" and "Watashi" were totally different people. They explained that this world is a parallel world without "Watashi" and the heroine "Akashi-san" of *The Tatami Galaxy*, although the stage is set in the same place. Only then I understood why I felt that the work was different when I saw the picture for the first time. I was able to join the project knowing that this movie is not to reminisce in *The Tatami Galaxy*, that this is new movie.

#### **How did you take on the Senpai's character, who is timid with romance?**

**GH:** Senpai overthinks things, like how he does the "trying to pass by as often as possible" scheme, but I think his charm is that he is sincere to the girl he became fond of, and felt that she was his fate. He takes a very roundabout path, but I felt like he was battling with himself. There are quite a few romances between clouded people in reality, and they are apt to become a pity party for themselves. But this is the story of Senpai who is totally clouded in his actions, but his love for the girl is crystal-clear, so he starts taking action. I feel that he believes in this romance, and he has a purity which is rare in these days. I like it.

#### **It's been a while since you have done a voice role since "Saint Onisan (Saint Young Men)." How was the dubbing session?**

**GH:** I enjoyed it very much. All the voice actors were very busy, so we recorded one by one. The staff were very kind and supportive while I acted alone for three days. I felt like they created the character of Senpai with me. They allowed me to do any number of takes until I was satisfied, so I had kept screaming for six to seven hours sometimes! I was exhausted, but I was pleased to be able to have this opportunity.

#### **How did you think when you listened to the voices of the other casts?**

**GH:** When I did the dubbing for my part, most of the other voices were already recorded. The voices of Hiroshi Kamiya and Ryuji Akiyama are wonderful and blended into the work, so I felt that I had to live in this world like they did and try my best. I was practicing by watching the material without the voice of Todo-san at the beginning, but when I heard the version with Kazuhiro Yamaji's voice, I was totally touched. I think my love of the role increased as additional voices were added. I felt that the character of Todo-san is sort of bothersome, and from only reading the script I couldn't find any lovable feature in that character, however when I saw the material with his voice, I came to love Todo-san! I realized anew that the power of a specific voice is amazing.



**What are your thoughts on your voice acting? And do you have any new thoughts on your voice through working on the voice of Senpai this time?**

**GH:** I started writing music when I was a junior high school student, and when I heard my voice recorded by a radio-cassette recorder objectively for the first time, I was shocked. “What?! What is this crumbly voice, as if my mouth is dry because of eating Baumkuchen?” I was disappointed! I thought it was impossible for me to sing, so I formed the instrumental band “SAKEROCK.” I didn’t like my voice for a long time, but I did some acting jobs and made a singing debut later, and I guess I got used to my voice in time as I had listened to my CDs and live DVDs. Most importantly, there are more people who like and enjoy my voice, so little by little I felt better about it, and now, I kind of like my voice! If people say that they like my voice, that’s alright. I gradually came to not to mind my voice. I think that we care too much about our own complexes, even though other people don’t care as much about it as we think they do.

**Do you have any roles and genres you would like to challenge in the future?**

**GH:** If there is anyone who would like me to do a role, and if there is a chance that I could challenge myself intensely like this time, I would like to do it again. In voice-related jobs, there were many cases where I got the OK from directors, or the session was done, but I still felt like, “I want to try a few more times. I’m not sure if it’s really okay...” But this time, the director and the sound director understood my feelings, so I enjoyed working on this project very much.

**Do you have a message to audiences who will see this movie in theaters.**

**GH:** The nightmare of Senpai, or I should say the nightmare inside his head that is pictured, is the climax of the film. I think the strength of the drawing and the power of animation in the section is more interesting if you watch it in a theater. I would like to watch it in the theater again soon. Please enjoy to your hearts’ content.



## GEN HOSHINO

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*Born on January 28, 1981 in Saitama.*

*He started his activities in music and acting since he was a student. In 2013, he starred in the movie “Hakoiri Musuko No Koi (Blindly In Love)” for the first time, and he won the 37th Japan Academy Prize Newcomer of the Year and many other film awards. The major TV drama series that he appeared are: “Kounodori (Dr. Storks)” (TBS), Taiga Drama (long-running historical drama series) “Sanada Maru” (NHK), “Nigeru Wa Haji Daga Yaku Ni Tatsu (The Full-Time Wife Escapist)” TBS, etc. The single “SUN” and the album “YELLOW DANCE” released in 2015 was a big hit, and he was qualified to appear on “NHK Kouhaku Utagassen (the annual singing contest between male and female popular singers on New Year’s Eve)” for the first time. In 2016, he released the theme song “Koi” of the TV drama series “Nigeru Wa Haji Daga Yaku Ni Tatsu (The Full-Time Wife Escapist)” aired on Tuesdays on TBS network group that he also appeared. Both the drama and song became an unprecedented smash hit, and it set many new records. He is the author of the books “Soshite Seikatsu Wa Tsuduku”, “Hataraku Otoko” “Inochi No Shasou Kara”, etc. He is successfully and widely active as actor, musician and author. This is his first solo leading animation movie as a voice actor.*



## ABOUT GKIDS

**GKIDS** is a distributor of award-winning feature animation for both adult and family audiences. The company has scored ten Best Animated Feature Academy Award® nominations – the most for an independent distributor – with these acclaimed films:

- *The Secret of Kells* (2010)
- *A Cat in Paris* (2012)
- *Chico & Rita* (2012)
- *Ernest & Celestine* (2014)
- *The Tale of The Princess Kaguya* (2015)
- *Song of the Sea* (2015)
- *Boy and the World* (2016)
- *When Marnie Was There* (2016)
- *My Life As A Zucchini* (2017)
- *The Breadwinner* (2018)

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