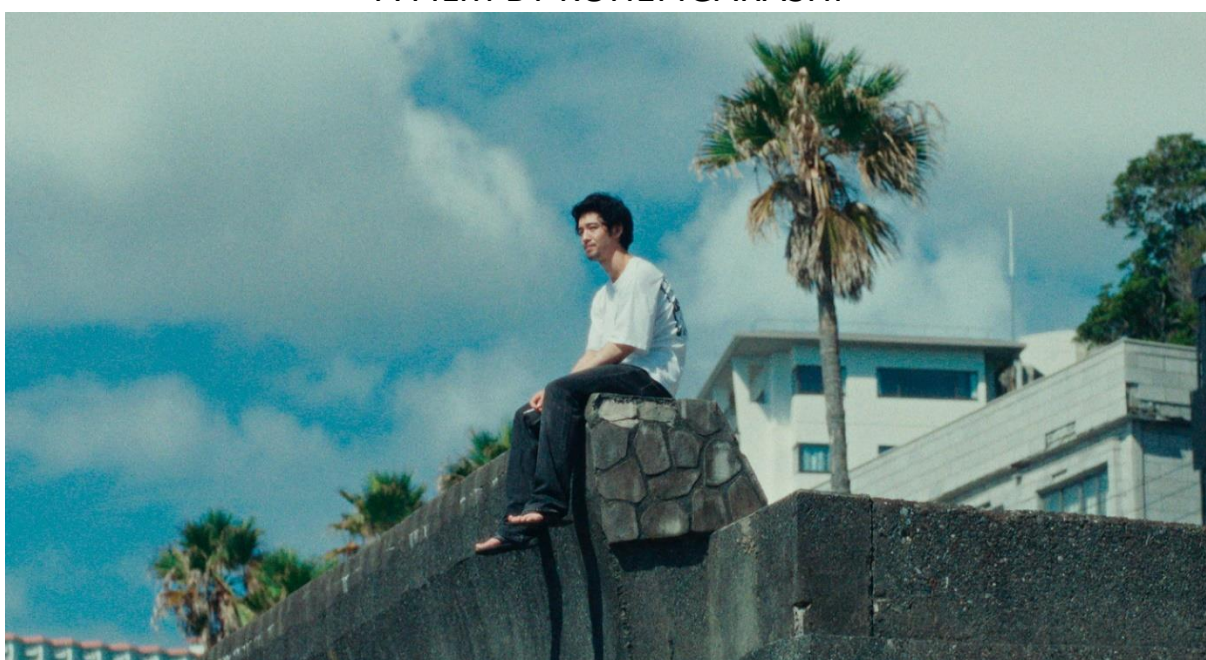


MLD FILMS & NOBO LLC present



SUPER HAPPY FOREVER

A FILM BY KOHEI IGARASHI



FRANCE, JAPAN - 2024 – 94 min

INTERNATIONAL SALES

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SCREENING

Wednesday, August 28th - Sala Perla - around 17:00

Official screening

Thursday, September 5th - Sala Corinto - around 22:00

Additional screening

SYNOPSIS

Accompanied by his friend Miyata, Sano returns to Izu, a seaside resort in Japan where five years before he fell in love with his wife Nagi.

DIRECTOR'S INTERVIEW

How did the film come about?

In 2018, during the winter when we released *The Night I Swam*, I received an email from Hiroki Sano and Yoshinori Miyata saying, "We'd like to make a film where we play our own characters." I didn't know them at the time, but I was immediately interested. We met for the first time in 2019. I first asked them to write a plot and submit it to me, and then we started talking based on that material. The content of these exchanges is what forms the foundations of *Super Happy Forever*. Then Covid came along and for a while it was impossible to envisage anything. We keep working together. I would ask Sano and Miyata, for example, to tell me about their day-to-day lives and their recent experiences. Something else happened to me: in 2021, I lost a friend from high school. He was in his thirties, loved surfing and was in good health, but one morning he died suddenly. I was deeply shocked. I found it hard to accept, or maybe I didn't really know what or how to think about his death. That's the feeling I tried to express in the film.

The story takes place in 2018 and 2023, with the Covid parenthesis in between, like an ellipsis...

Yes, indeed. What happened during that period changed things profoundly, and yet once Covid was over, life returned to 'normal'. Covid is now part of our history. This kind of thing interests me because it makes myself uncomfortable. At the same time, one of the things I noticed after Covid was that a lot of young people started to visit tourist attractions that were thought to have been abandoned, or old resort towns that are now in decline. This is particularly true of Atami where we filmed, a coastal town on the Izu peninsula south of Tokyo, which I discovered while writing the script.

How did the casting go?

As soon as I met Sano and Miyata, I knew I could get along with them as people. As for the role of Nagi, I studied a number of profiles, but in the end it was Miyata who recommended Naoru Yamamoto,

whom he had met at an audition. I'd also seen *Cat Escaped* by Rikiya Imaizumi, in which she played the lead role, and I was very taken by her performance. I sent her the script and we met. She's a really charming person as a human being, with a mixture of innocence and independence. For the role of An, I was looking for a Vietnamese woman who had never acted in a film before. I conducted a number of interviews and at last we found Hoang Nhu Quynh through a Vietnamese restaurant! When I met her for the first time, she immediately gave me the impression of a cheerful person with a wonderful smile.

I've heard that, on set, you regularly seek the opinions of different members of your team...

There are a lot of people around me who work in the film industry in technical roles, but who also make films. I like being able to exchange ideas across the boundaries of each department, so I simply called everyone I wanted to work with. There were always about twenty people on set. Enough to be able to do what we needed to do, but still with a small team size to encourage good communication between people.

The film is set in a seaside resort on the Izu peninsula. How did you choose your sets?

When we were looking for the main set of the hotel, we had to combine the interiors, the layout of the rooms, the corridors, the lobby, and what you could see outside, from the hotel. In the end, we decided to shoot in three different establishments. For the other sets, it was difficult to find everything in the same place, so we created a fictitious tourist town by combining different locations on the Izu peninsula, such as the beach, the pier, the town centre, etc.

How did you go about editing the film and post-production?

Initially, I worked with the editor Keiko Ohkawa, who put aside the script and edited a first version of the film based on what she saw in the rushes. I then continued on my own, ending up with an edit of around 120 minutes. I had found the shape of the film, but this version contained too many elements. I felt I had to reduce it to a simpler, stronger form. Damien Manivel, one of the French producers and co-director of my previous film, came to give me a hand. We watched the film together, with the editor, and discussed how to clean it up. Post-production then took place in France: colour-grading, sound editing, sound effects, mixing, etc. We worked on the sound in great detail with editor Agathe Poche and mixer Simon Apostolou. The sound atmospheres in the first and second parts are very different. In the first part, for example, I used distant mechanical sounds to create the sensation of a large deserted hotel. I constantly tried to convey the elusive nature of the story and the characters' sense of discomfort through sound. Working in France, I was very surprised by the difference in the way we perceive everyday sounds in our two countries. This led to long discussions about the choice of insect sounds for night scenes or the sound a door makes when it closes! When colour-grading, my first idea was to subtly change the colour of the image between the first and second parts of the film, in a barely perceptible way. But colourist Yov Moor told me that it wasn't necessary and that, even if I didn't do it, the audience would have the impression that the colours had changed. That's was perfectly true!

The music also plays a narrative role. How did you come up with it?

For *Beyond the Sea*, we were having a drink in a pub near my house when the song came on. I thought it would be great to make a film with that song, even though the script wasn't written yet. From there, I thought of a story set by the sea, which reminded me of the death of a childhood friend who used to surf. Bobby Darin's rendition of *Beyond the Sea* is world famous. It was the perfect song for this film, in the sense that it transcends time and space and is eternal. But I also had the intuition that the film had to have an original score and as the song *Beyond the Sea* appears many times in different forms, I wanted a score with a different texture. During the editing, the structure of the film led me towards a score that would emphasise a certain form of repetition, that Daigo Sakuragi composed.

Why did you choose the title Super Happy Forever?

First and foremost, I wanted a simple, happy title. And it's also a "prayer". I think everyone wants to be happy and wants to always be happy, even me and everyone else, even those who believe in dubious seminars in the midst of life's constant difficulties and disappointments. The film looks like a sad story if you look at it in a single timeline. But if you don't look at time linearly, the happy moments aren't lost forever. I hope that the audience will leave the film with this impression.



DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

五十嵐耕平 Kohei Igarashi

Born in 1983 in Shizuoka Prefecture, he directed his first feature film *Yorai Fuyu no Koe* (2008) while studying at Zokei University in Tokyo, which won the Korean Critics' Prize at Cinema Digital Seoul 2008. His second feature film *Breathless* (2014), final work at the Graduate School of Cinema and New Media at the Tokyo University of the Arts, competes at the 67th Locarno International Film Festival in the Concorso Cineasti del Presente. *The Night I Swam* (*Takara, La Nuit ou j'ai nagé*, 2017), co-directed with French filmmaker Damien Manivel, is presented in the Orizzonti section of the 74th Venice International Film Festival, as well as in numerous festivals around of the world. In 2023, he presented the short film *Two of Us* at the San Sebastian Film Festival, a sort of prequel to his last feature film *Super Happy Forever*.

PRODUCER'S BIOGRAPHY

MLD Films

MLD Films was founded in 2009 on the initiative of director Damien Manivel to produce his own films. In 2015, producer Martin Bertier joined the company to supervise production and open up to new authors. MLD Films produced the six feature films by Damien Manivel – including the latest *The Island*, released in April 2024 – as well as two short films by Atsushi Hirai, *Retour à Toyama* and *Oyu*, presented respectively at the 2020 Locarno Festival and at the 2023 the Directors' Fortnight.

NOBO LLC

“Hold Your Breath Like a Lover” (Locarno International Film Festival Competition 2014), directed by Kohei Igarashi and produced by Makoto Oki, was created as a graduation film for the Graduate School of Film and New Media at Tokyo University of the Arts, they both joined forces to successfully distribute the film in Japan. The logical next step was to create their own production company, NOBO, to develop ambitious projects both in Japan and abroad. “The Night I Swam” (Venice International Film Festival Competition 2017) is the first co-production by NOBO.

CAST

佐野弘樹 Hiroki Sano (Sano)

Born on December 8, 1993 in Yamanashi prefecture in Japan, he participated to the series *Followers* produced by Netflix (2020) and *Maiagegae!* produced by NHK (2022) as well as several feature films: *Burnt Stone* and *Raindrops* (2022) by Yuya Kushida where he plays the main role, *Machida-kun no Sekai* (2019) by Yuya Ishii, *Hama no Asahi no Liar Dotto to* (2021) by Yuki Tanada, *Tocka* (2022) by Yoshitaka Kamata, *Love ni Inazuma* (23) by Yuya Ishii, among others.

宮田佳典 Yoshinori Miyata (Miyata)

Born on September 22, 1986 in Osaka, Miyata joined the Kakiguikaku theater company in 2017. At the same time, he began working for cinema and television: *Ah, Wilderness Part Two* by Yoshiyuki Kishi, *Miyamoto kara kimi e* (2018) and the series *Manpuku* produced by NHK (2018). Recently, he played the lead role in *Cactus and the Sea Floor* (2022) by Kaede Fujimoto, and starred in *Tokyo Vice Season 2* (2023) by Wowow and *Evil Doesn't Exist* (2023) by Ryusuke Hamaguchi.

山本奈衣瑠 Nairu Yamamoto (Nagi)

Born on November 12, 1993 in Tokyo, she began her career as a model before trying her hand at acting from 2019. The role she played in *Cat Escaped* (2021) by Rikiya Imaizumi held attention. In recent years, she starred in *Running for Runners* (2023) by Jun Sosui, *Koko de no hanashi* by Ryoma Kosasa and *Yoru no manimani* by Teppei Isobe.

ホアン・ヌ・クイン Hoang Nh Quynh (An)

Born on August 27, 1999 in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, she arrived in Japan in 2019 as part of her studies. She worked as a caregiver, while occasionally lending her voice to the dubbing of Vietnamese films. *Super Happy Forever* is her first experience as an actress.

CREW

Director:	Kohei Igarashi
Producers:	Makoto Oki, Yusaku Emoto,
Coproducers:	Martin Bertier, Damien Manivel
Executive Producers:	Kohei Igarashi, Kenshi Otaka, Misaki Kawamura, Satoshi Takata, Go Kitahara, Takashi Omatsu
Screenplay:	Kohei Igarashi, Koichi Kubodera
Cinematographer:	Wataru Takahashi
Editing:	Keiko Okawa, Kohei Igarashi, Damien Manivel
Original Music:	Daigo Sakuragi
Sound:	Gen Takahashi (Sound Recorder), Agathe Poche (Editing), Simon Apostolou (Mix)
Production Design:	Masato Nunobe
Costumes:	Kento Asai
Colorist:	Yov Moor
Coproduced by:	MLD FILMS (France) NOBO LLC (Japan)
International sales:	Bac Films