



a Shunji Iwai Film

Love Letter

MIHO NAKAYAMA / ETSUSHI TOYOKAWA

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'LOVE LETTER' is the first feature-length film production by Shunji Iwai, already acclaimed for his work in every field of visual art: music video, commercials, TV drama, etc.

Born in 1963 in Sendai City, Iwai began his career in 1988. Since his first TV drama, 'MISHIRANU WAGAKO' (1991), was nominated for the Galaxy Award, all his TV dramas have become the subject of great critical and public interest.

In 1994, with his TV drama, 'IF-MOSHIMO' (1993/Fuji Television), he received the New Director of the Year Award from the Directors Guild of Japan.

This impressive achievement has heralded a new departure of the world of Japanese film.

Shunji Iwai's works create a warm visual world of nostalgia and fondness through the way he combines little glimpses of everyday life with insights into those things we unknowingly forget in the course of growing up, such as TV dramas: 'MARIA' (1992), 'GHOST SOUP' (1992/Fuji Television), 'FRIED DRAGON FISH' (1993/Fuji Television), 'LUNATIC LOVE' (1994/Fuji Television)

In the short film, 'UNDO' (1994/Fuji Television) (Received the NETPAC Award at the International Forum of the 1995 Berlin Film Festival) the troubles of a couple who are in love but cannot quit "bind together" are given a unique filmic realization through an obsession with tying up.

Concerning his new film, 'LOVE LETTER' (1995/Fuji Television), Shunji Iwai says "I wanted to try to make a film about love after the loved one has gone."

He both wrote the screenplay and directed the film. The audience is made to consider the question "I loved someone, why did that person love me?" The power of attraction of Iwai's meticulously constructed world lies in such an enigma of lost memories.

'Love Letter' Synopsis

Hiroko Watanabe (Miho Nakayama) lives in Kobe. Her fiance, Itsuki Fujii, was tragically killed in a mountaineering accident. One day Hiroko finds Itsuki's old school yearbook, from the time he lived in Otaru, Hokkaido. Hiroko finds an address in the yearbook. She writes a letter and sends it to that address. A letter sent to heaven?

Itsuki Fujii (also played by Miho Nakayama) lives in Otaru. She receives the letter a few days later: 'Dear Itsuki Fujii, How are you? I'm fine. Hiroko Watanabe.' She is a little disturbed by the letter, but decides to write back.

Hiroko is astonished when she receives a reply. She goes to discuss it with Shigeru Akiba (Etsushi Toyokawa). When Itsuki was alive, Shigeru and he were mountaineering partners. After Itsuki's death Shigeru thought very seriously of marrying Hiroko. But the memory of Itsuki was a barrier between them.

Soon Hiroko discovers that the reply came from her fiance's classmate and namesake, Itsuki Fujii, a woman. The two women begin a strange correspondence about him...



*Iwai possesses a directorial talent that is both technically assured and psychologically sensitive, youthfully bold and deeply aware of its cinematic predecessors.....
"Love Letter" announces the arrival of an important new filmmaker.*

— *The Japan Times* —

CAST

Hiroko Watanabe / Itsuki Fujii: **MIHO NAKAYAMA** Shigeru Akiba: **ETSUSHI TOYOKAWA** Itsuki's Mother: **BUNJAKU HAN** Itsuki's Grandfather: **KATSUYUKI SHINOHARA**
Itsuki Fujii (As a young girl): **MIKI SAKAI** Male Itsuki Fujii: **TAKASHI KASHIWABARA** Abekasu: **KEN MITSUISHI** Ms. Hamaguchi: **KUMI NAKAMURA** Sanae Oikawa: **RANRAN SUZUKI**
Librarian: **EMIKO OSADA** Girl in Akiba's Workshop: **KAORI OGURI** Yoshida: **TEPPEI WATARU**
Male Itsuki's Father: **KEIICHI SUZUKI** Kajoyaji: **SANSEI SHIOMI** Male Itsuki's Mother: **MARIKO KAGA**

STAFF

Chief Executive: **KOICHI MURAKAMI** Senior Executives: **HAJIME SHIGEMURA / JUICHI HORIGUCHI** Executive Producers: **CHIAKI MATSUSHITA / SHUJI ABE**
Producers: **JIRO KOMAKI / TOMOKI IKEDA / MASAHIKO NAGASAWA** Line Producer: **HIROYUKI KAMEI** Co-Producer: **TAKAAKI KABUTO** Associate Producer: **SHINYA KAWAI**
Written & Directed by: **SHUNJI IWAI** Cinematographer: **NOBORU SHINODA** Lighting Director: **YUKI NAKAMURA** Production Designer: **TERUMI HOSOISHI** Music: **REMEDIOS**

PRODUCTION & CONTACT

FUJI TELEVISION NETWORK, INC. MOTION PICTURE DIVISION 3-1, Kawada-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 162, Japan PHONE: 81-3-3225-8568 FAX: 81-3-3225-1594