



## ***Beyond the Infinite Two Minutes***

Original Title: Droste no hatede bokura (ドロステのはてで僕ら)

**EUROPE KIKAKU & Aki Asakura**

**Original Story, Screenplay: Makoto Ueda**  
**Director, Cinematography, Editing: Junta Yamaguchi**

2020/Japan/70 mins/HD/DCP/Color/5.1ch

Original language: Japanese

Release date in Japan: June 5th, 2020

<http://www.europe-kikaku.com/droste>

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## Introduction

EUROPE KIKAKU, specializing in themes about time and science fiction, has created a truly definitive time-sci-fi movie!

EUROPE KIKAKU is a popular theatrical troupe that attracts 15,000 people to their performances each year. In addition to stage plays, the troupe is engaged in content production in many fields, such as scriptwriting for films and television series, event production, variety show production, radio programs, and mobile app development, unbound by the theater framework. In 2020, EUROPE KIKAKU finished its first-ever original feature-length film, *Beyond the Infinite Two Minutes*. The film was shot at a cafe in Nijo, Kyoto, which is the troupe's home ground.

The original story and screenplay are written by Makoto Ueda, the founder and the director of EUROPE KIKAKU. Behind the megaphone is EUROPE KIKAKU's film director, Junta Yamaguchi. Most of the cast consists of members from EUROPE KIKAKU, and the heroin is played by the young talented actress Aki Asakura known for her work in *The Tale of the Princess Kaguya*, *SUMMER BLOOMS*, *Whistleblower*, and *Masked Ward*. This is the first collaboration between EUROPE KIKAKU and Aki Asakura.

In addition to not using any physical compositing, time travel is visualized by shooting long takes throughout the entire film. It is 70 continuous minutes of miraculous moments with the group's unity overcoming what some may consider to be impossible challenges!

## Synopsis

Kato, the owner of Cafe Phalam in front of Kyoto's Nijo Station, goes back to his apartment above the cafe after finishing up work for the day. When he is about to play his guitar, Kato himself suddenly appears on his TV screen and begins speaking.

"I'm the future me. Two minutes in the future."

The TV in Kato's room and the TV in the cafe below are somehow connected with a time difference of two minutes. Confused, Kato goes to the TV in the cafe as told by the two-minutes-into-the-future version of himself, and begins talking to himself in the past. The cafe staff and regular customers enjoy the phenomenon. Discovering the existence of the "Time TV," they face the monitors toward each other eager to learn about what lies in the distant future. Furthermore, Kato's crush Megumi from the barbershop next door and the yakuza with an office in the same building, become involved as well, as the "time echo" accelerates the fiasco... Then a mysterious duo pays a visit. The future strikes back. The shackles of continuity tighten...until they go *Beyond the Infinite Two Minutes*.



### < Howling >

*Beyond the Infinite Two Minutes* is based on the self-produced short film, *Howling* (2013), directed by Makoto Ueda. *Howling* captured a man at the mercy of a science fiction phenomena for an entire 11-minute take, where two TV's produced a "time-echo." In an era of CG, everything was shot analog-style without using any compositing. The shooting technique of long takes to visualize time travel has gathered attention. Some thought this shooting method was only viable for short films and not feature films, as using this method for feature films was thought to be ill-advised. However, Ueda was committed to rebooting the innovative short film, *Howling*, for the theater troupe's first original full-length film and thus began the production of *Beyond the Infinite Two Minutes*.

### < The Droste Effect >

Composition in which the person in the picture is holding a picture of himself, and the person in the picture also has a picture of himself...like an infinity mirror.

## Cast

### Kazunori Tosa as Kato, The Cafe Owner

Born November 7th, 1977 in Hiroshima Prefecture. Tosa joined EUROPE KIKAKU in 2004 from their 16th performance. Since then, he has appeared in almost all of EUROPE KIKAKU's plays and has worked on several plays, television dramas, and films outside of EUROPE KIKAKU. Tosa played the leading role following the short film *Howling* (Director: Makoto Ueda), which inspired *Beyond the Infinite Two Minutes*. Major appearances include the film *BAKUMAN* and NHK's taiga drama series - famous year-long period drama 'IDATEN'.

#### <Filmography>

2018 *Punksamurai Slash Down* (Director: Gakuryu Ishii)  
2015 *BAKUMAN*. (Director: Hitoshi One)  
2015 *Our Huff and Puff Journey* (Director: Daigo Matsui)  
2012 *Key Of Life* (Director: Kenji Uchida)  
2009 *Go Find A Psychic!* (Director: Katsuyuki Motohiro)



### Aki Asakura as Megumi, The Barber Next Door

Born September 23rd, 1991 in Fukuoka and raised in Kanagawa Prefecture. Asakura had her screen debut in 2008 with *Double Trouble* directed by Joji Matsuoka. She has appeared in a wide array of works, including films, television dramas, theater, and commercials. *In His Chart, A Story of Yonosuke*, and *Whistleblower* are some films, to name a few. In the Studio Ghibli animated film, *The Tale of The Princess Kaguya*, Asakura voices of the main character, Princess Kaguya. The film *SUMMER BLOOMS*, which she starred in, was the first Japanese film in history to receive two awards at the 2017 Moscow International Film Festival. Major television appearances include NHK's drama series 'TEPPAN', NHK's taiga drama series 'Naotora: The Lady Warlord', TV drama 'Downtown Rocket', and 'Grandmaison TOKYO'. *Beyond the Infinite Two Minutes* is Asakura's first collaboration with EUROPE KIKAKU.

## Staff

### Junta Yamaguchi/ Director, Cinematography and Editor

Born in 1987 in Osaka. Junta Yamaguchi joined EUROPE KIKAKU in 2005. He has worked as a director for short films, dramas, commercials, and documentaries. *Beyond the Infinite Two Minutes* is his first feature film.



### Makoto Ueda/ Original Story and Screenplay

Makoto Ueda, born in Kyoto in 1979, launched EUROPE KIKAKU in 1998. While in charge of screenwriting and direction for all performances, he specializes in science fiction comedy. Besides being involved in the planning and structure for television and radio programs, Ueda also writes screenplays for films. In 2017, he won the 61st Kishida Prize for Drama for the play, 'Kiteketsukarubeki Shinsekai'.



#### <Filmography>

##### Screenplay

2020 *Project Dreams - How to Build Mazinger Z's Hangar* (Director: Tsutomu Hanabusa)  
2018 *Penguin Highway* (Director: Hiroyasu Ishida)  
- 2018 Fantasia International Film Festival, Satoshi Kon Award  
2017 *Night is Short, Walk on Girl* (Director: Masaaki Yuasa)  
- 2017 Ottawa International Animation Festival, Grand Prize for Best Animated Feature  
- 2018 Japan Academy Film Prize for Best Animated Feature Film  
2010 *Tatami Galaxy* (TV animation)  
- 2010 JAPAN MEDIA ARTS FESTIVAL Animation Division Grand Prize

##### Original Story and Screenplay

2009 *Go Find a Psychic!* (Director: Katsuyuki Motohiro)  
2005 *Summer Time Machine Blues* (Director: Katsuyuki Motohiro)



## EUROPE KIKAKU Profile

EUROPE KIKAKU is a theatrical troupe formed in 1988. Based in Kyoto, EUROPE KIKAKU has consistently produced comedy. The ensemble cast of characters has a knack for lively comedy that restlessly engages in conversations that take place in sci-fi and fantasy worlds or tricky areas reminiscent of video games. In recent years, EUROPE KIKAKU has been on a quest for a rare type of “inventive comedy” with unique theatre structure, large-scale gimmicks, and ideas rooted in inventiveness that nobody else can imagine.

In addition to theater, the troupe is engaged in content production in various fields, including events, variety program production, radio programs, and mobile app development. Members have directed short films, produced screening events and film festivals. They worked with director Katsuyuki Motohiro to turn stage works such as *Summer Time Machine Blues* (2005), and *Go Find A Psychic!* (2009) into films as EUROPE KIKAKU continues to cultivate unique fields in the world of cinema.

*Beyond the Infinite Two Minutes* is the first long-awaited feature-length film that EUROPE KIKAKU has released to the world.



## Makoto Ueda's Comment (Original Story and Screenplay)

For me, when I'm asked, "What do you want to shoot?", the answer is, first of all, the devices and structure that are associated with drama and scenery. Furthermore, since I'm in a troupe, I'd like to do long takes with the actors as if they're on stage. I think it's good to utilize these strengths that we have, to produce original works in order to compete in the cinema world.

I have been writing film scripts for other people's projects before, but finally, since this is our own project, I chose a method that I couldn't use elsewhere.

I genuinely believe we were able to complete this project because it was this troupe. They listened to all my unreasonable requests, so it was easy to experiment. If I had to write this for anybody else, I wouldn't have written such an experimental script. While it could've been smoother to film, I feel it wouldn't have been a new breakthrough movie. Everyone understood that, so I think they were prepared for the grueling task and worked with me on this project until the end. That's something I take pride in.

## Takahiro Otsuki/ Producer

Representative of two cinemas, Shimokitazawa Tollywood and Pole-Pole Higashi-Nakano. Born in 1967 and finished Columbia College Chicago Film/Video department. In 1999, he founded the cinema specializing in short films, Tollywood and found out and screened many new directors such as Makoto Shinkai, Yoshihiro Fukagawa and Keisuke Yoshida. He started film producing in 2004 and has distributed many titles including award winning foreign animations.

### <Selected Filmography>

#### Produce

2005 *Goggles* (Director: Tsuyoshi Sakurai) / 2011 *Ring in Their Ears* (Director: Yu Irie)

2013 *Tale of a Butcher Shop* (Director: Aya Hanabusa/ Documentary)

- Official selection 2013 Pusan International Film Festival / Official selection 2013 Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival

2015 *Take your time - Arayashiki* (Director: Seiichi Motohashi/ Documentary) / 2018 *UTOPIA* (Director: Shunta Ito)

#### Distribution

2012 *Approved for Adoption* (Director: Jung, Laurent Boileau/ Animation)

- 2013 JAPAN MEDIA ARTS FESTIVAL Animation Division Grand Prize

## Producer's Comment

Tollywood and the Shimokitazawa Film Festival are both based in Shimokitazawa, a neighborhood known for its theater scene in Tokyo. We have teamed up with the popular theatrical troupe, EUROPE KIKAKU, to make their first original feature-length film. I believe this collaboration was an opportunity to create diverse expressions, in a rare case with no so-called "film production professionals" involved. Instead, a theatrical troupe and community-based cinema/event producer came together to build a new relationship as creator and distributor. I'm happy that this film, which is neither like watching a play in a cinema or watching a film based on a play, overcomes various barriers such as the difference between films and plays, domestic versus overseas, and more.

## Production Company Profile Tollywood

Tollywood is a theater which opened its doors in 1999, in Shimokitazawa, Tokyo. Known for having first shown Makoto Shinkai's directorial debut, *Voices of a Distant Star* (2002), Tollywood also has been producing and distributing movies since its establishment.

## Credit

### Cast

Kazunari Tosa  
Riko Fujitani  
Gota Ishida  
Masashi Suwa  
Yoshifumi Sakai  
Haruki Nakagawa  
Takashi Sumita  
Munenori Nagano  
Chikara Honda

Aki Asakura

### Staff

Original Story, Screenplay: Makoto Ueda  
Director, Cinematography, Editing: Junta Yamaguchi  
Theme Song: Volleyboys "Title Call" (opening title song)  
Music: Koji Takimoto  
Assistant Director: Masao Nabeshima  
Sound Recording: Koko Hirakawa  
Production Designer: Madoka Goto  
Costume: Atsuko Kiyokawa  
Makeup: Mika Yamada, Taeko Matsumura, Yui Hirosawa  
Music Recording and Mixing: Yoshihisa Omata  
Sound Assistant: Masaya Kuranuki  
Sound Assistant: Kouhei Tsutsumi  
Digital Artist: Naoki Takaoka  
Filming Assistants: Masahiro Kuroki, Kohei Morooka  
Production Assistants: Ayumi Nakata, Hiroki Matsuu  
Art Cooperation: HIGHTIDE  
Filming Cooperation: Cafe Phalam, Hair Salon Nakahashi  
Publicity: Mariko Hirai, Saki Tamura (Shimokitazawa Film Festival)  
Art Direction: Keitaro Terasawa  
Stills: Tadayuki Uemura  
Official Website Design: Sakiko Utaka  
Making-of film: Keita Fukae, Tetsuya Kobayashi  
Special Thanks: Kazuyuki Jingushi  
Producer: Takahiro Otsuki, Kazuchika Yoshida

Production: Tollywood, EUROPE KIKAKU

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