



## Hush!

### Ryosuke Hashiguchi

JAPAN, 2001

135 minutes ■ Colour/35mm  
 Production Company: **Siglo, Ltd.**  
 Producer: **Tetsujiro Yamagami**  
 Screenplay: **Ryosuke Hashiguchi**  
 Cinematographer: **Shogo Ueno**  
 Editor: **Ryosuke Hashiguchi**  
 Production Designer: **Fumio Ogawa**  
 Sound: **Yoshiteru Takahashi**  
 Music: **Bobby McFerrin**  
 Principal Cast: **Seiichi Tanabe,**  
**Kazuya Takahashi, Reiko Kataoka**

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Madonna's nonsense notwithstanding, *Hush!* may be the first genuine film I have seen about gay guys having babies with straight women. It's also hysterically funny, deeply moving and reveals unexpectedly intimate truths about contemporary Japanese culture. And, perhaps most importantly, it gently forces us to reconceptualize our ideas about the family and how we may wish to rethink that so-called institution for the future.

Director Ryosuke Hashiguchi has an unusually graceful touch. Both his study of a young, disillusioned hustler in *A Touch of Fever* and his masterful teenage-love-triangle film, *Like Grains of Sand*, convey disarmingly honest and subtly rendered accounts of average people dealing with seemingly insurmountable emotional questions.

So too in *Hush!* Naoya is a sweet-natured but self-involved gay man, with an amusingly over-supportive mother and a wacky job in a pet store. Outside his favourite gay bar, he meets Katsuihiro, an attractive, quiet, closeted scientist. They begin a relationship that feels limited – until one of their arguments is overheard in a noodle shop by Asako, a not entirely balanced young woman extricating herself from a relationship with a dopey skate punk.

In Katsuihiro, she sees the perfect father for her child and asks if he will be her sperm donor. Naoya initially opposes the idea, but as they negotiate this life-changing adventure, Asako starts to win Naoya over in a

lovely series of scenes. Meanwhile, Katsuihiro returns home and begins to open up to his family. Everything goes haywire upon his return, reminding us to treasure life and never to fear its challenges or the compromises they might engender.

This ability to handle tough emotions and multiple characters in a celebratory style confirms Hashiguchi as one of Japan's important young filmmakers.

■ **Noah Cowan**

**Ryosuke Hashiguchi** was born in 1962 in Nagasaki, Japan. He studied film at Osaka Arts University and left to begin directing videos and television programmes. Feature filmography: *The Secret of Last Night* (89), *A Touch of Fever* (92), *Like Grains of Sand* (95) and *Hush!* (01).

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