



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
COMPETITION
2023 OFFICIAL SELECTION

a film by **WIM WENDERS**

PERFECT DAYS





SYNOPSIS

Hirayama seems utterly content with his simple life as a cleaner of toilets in Tokyo. Outside of his very structured everyday routine he enjoys his passion for music and for books. And he loves trees and takes photos of them. A series of unexpected encounters gradually reveal more of his past. A deeply moving and poetic reflection on finding beauty in the everyday world around us.

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Wim Wenders (born 1945) came to international prominence as one of the pioneers of German Cinema during the 1970's and is now considered one of the most important figures in contemporary film. In addition to his many prize-winning feature films, his work as a scriptwriter, director, producer, photographer and author also encompasses an abundance of innovative documentary films.

His career as a filmmaker began in 1967 when Wenders enrolled at the newly founded University of Television and Film Munich (HFF Munich). Parallel to his studies, he also worked as a film critic for a number of years. Upon graduating from the academy in 1971, he founded, together with fifteen other directors and authors, the Filmverlag der Autoren, a film distribution company for German auteur films, which organized the production, rights administration and distribution of their own independent films.



After “The Goalie’s Anxiety at the Penalty Kick” (1971), his first feature length film after his graduation film, “Summer in the City”, Wenders turned to shooting his road movie trilogy, “Alice in the Cities” (1973), “Wrong Move” (1975) and “Kings of the Road” (1976), in which his protagonists try to come to terms with their rootlessness in post-war Germany. His international breakthrough came with “The American Friend” (1977), an adaptation of a Patricia Highsmith novel. Since then, Wenders has continued to work both in Europe and the USA as well as in Latin America and Asia and has been honored with countless awards at festivals around the world, including the Golden Lion at the international Film Festival in Venice for “The State of Things” (1982); the Golden Palm at the Cannes

Festival and the BAFTA Film Award for “Paris, Texas” (1984); the Director’s Prize in Cannes for “Wings of Desire” (1987); or the Silver Bear for “The Million Dollar Hotel” (2000) at the Berlin International Film Festival. His documentary films “Buena Vista Social Club” (1999), “Pina” (2011), and “The Salt of the Earth” (2014) have all been nominated for an Oscar.

In 2015, Wenders received the Honorary Golden Bear for his lifetime achievement at the Berlin International Film Festival. In 2022, he was awarded the Praemium Imperiale, also known as the “Nobel Prize for the Arts”, by the Japan Arts Association. Among other honorary titles and positions, he has been a member of the Akademie der Künste and the European Film Academy in Berlin of which

he was the President from 1996 to 2020. He taught as a professor at the University of Fine Arts in Hamburg until 2017. Wim Wenders is a member of the order Pour le Mérite.

In 2012, together with his wife Donata, Wim Wenders established the Wim Wenders Stiftung, a non-profit foundation based in his native city of Düsseldorf. The WWS is archiving, restoring and presenting the cinematic, photographic, artistic and literary work of Wim Wenders and makes it permanently accessible to a worldwide public. At the same time, the foundation supports young talents in the field of innovative storytelling, especially through the Wim Wenders Stipendium, a grant awarded together with the Film- und Medienstiftung NRW.

DIRECTOR’S FILMOGRAPHY

1971 The Goalie’s Anxiety at the Penalty Kick
1973 Alice in the Cities
1975 Wrong Move
1976 Kings of the Road
1977 The American Friend
1982 The State of Things
1984 Paris, Texas
1985 Tokyo-Ga

1987 Wings of Desire
1993 Faraway, So Close!
1994 Until the End of the World - Dir. Cut
1997 The End of Violence
1999 Buena Vista Social Club
2000 The Million Dollar Hotel
2004 Land of Plenty
2005 Don’t Come Knocking

2011 PINA
2014 The Salt of the Earth
2016 The Beautiful Days of Aranjuez
2018 Pope Francis - A MAN OF HIS WORD
2023 Anselm
2023 PERFECT DAYS



COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR

PERFECT DAYS marks your return to Japan after several decades. How did it come about and what's its story, in a nutshell?

WW: The film came as a surprise letter early last year. "Would you be interested in shooting a series of short fictional films in Tokyo, maybe 4 or 5 of them, about 15 to 20 minutes each? These films would all deal with an amazing public social project, involve the work of great architects and we would ensure you could develop the scripts yourself and get the best possible cast. And we'd guarantee you have total artistic freedom." That sounded interesting, to say the least. For years already, I was longing to go back to Japan and had real attacks of homesickness for Tokyo.

So, I read on: the subject would involve public toilets and the hope was to find a character through whom one could understand the essence of a Japanese welcoming culture, in which toilets play a whole different role than in our own Western vision of "sanitation". For us, indeed,

toilets are not part of our culture, on the contrary, they are the incarnation of its absence. In Japan, they are small sanctuaries of peace and dignity.

I liked the photos I saw of those marvels of architectures. They rather looked like temples of sanitation than toilets. I liked the idea of "art" linked to them. And I certainly liked to see them in a fictional context. I always feel that "places" are better protected in stories than in a non-fictional context. But I didn't like the idea of a series of short films. That is not my language. Instead of shooting 4 times 4 days, I answered, why wouldn't we shoot a real film in these 17 days. What can you do with 4 short films, anyway. Imagine you had a long feature film instead! The answer was: we love your idea! But can it be done? I wrote back: Yes! If we reduce our story to fewer locations and to one leading part. But first I'd have to come and see for myself. I cannot imagine a story without knowing the places for it. And I am in the middle of a shoot. I can give you a week in May and then we can possibly do it in October, when I would have a window in postproduction from that other film. (Which was ANSELM, in its second year already and in the editing room. All shooting for it was done.)

I ended up traveling to Tokyo in May for 10 days. I was

able to meet my dream cast for the possible role to be written, Koji Yakusho. (Whom I'd seen in a dozen of movies and always admired.) I saw these places, all of them located in Shibuya that I love. These toilets were too beautiful to be true. But they weren't what this film was going to be about. This could only become a movie if we managed to create a unique caretaker, a truly believable, real character. His story alone would matter, and only if his life was worth watching, he could carry the film, and those places, and all the ideas attached to them, like the acute sense of "the common good" in Japan, the mutual respect for "the city" and "each other" that make public life in Japan so different to our world. I couldn't possibly write this on my own. But I had a great sparring partner and co-writer in Takuma Takasaki. We dug deep to find our man ...

The film describes in an almost poetic way the beauty of the everyday through the story of a man who lives a modest but very content life in Tokyo.

Yes, all of that is true. But it all came out of Hirayama. That's what we decided to call this man who slowly took shape in front of our inner eyes. I imagined a man who had a privileged and rich past and who had fallen deeply.

And who then had an epiphany one day, when his life was at its lowest point, watching the reflection of leaves created by the sun that was miraculously shining into the hellhole he was waking up in. The Japanese language has a special name for these fugitive apparitions that sometimes appear out of nowhere: "komorebi": the dance of leaves in the wind, falling like a shadow play onto a wall in front of you, created by a light source out there in the universe, the sun.

Such an apparition saved Hirayama and he chose to live another life, one of simplicity and modesty. And he became the cleaner who he is in our story. Dedicated, content with the few things he has, among them his old photo camera (with which he only takes pictures of trees and komorebis), his pocket books and his old cassette recorder with the collection of cassette tapes he saved from his younger days. His choice of music also informed us about our title, when Hirayama (on the script already) one day listens to "Perfect Day" by Lou Reed.

Hirayama's routine became the backbone of our script. The beauty of such a regular rhythm of "always the same" pattern of days is that you start seeing all the little things that are not the same and change every time. The fact is that if you indeed learn to entirely live in the HERE AND NOW, there is no more routine, there's only a never-ending chain of unique events, of unique encounters and unique moments. Hirayama takes us into this realm of bliss and contentment. And as the film sees the world through his eyes, we also see all the people he encounters with the same openness and generosity: his lazy co-worker Takashi and his girlfriend Aya, a homeless man living in a park where Hirayama works every day, his niece Niko who seeks refuge at her uncle's place, "mama", the owner of a modest little restaurant where Hirayama goes on his free days, her ex-husband and many others.

What is it about Japan and its culture that holds such fascination for you, and specifically what elements of Japanese culture are prevalent for you in this film?

"Service" has a whole different connotation in Japan than in our world. At the end of the shoot I met a famous

American photographer who couldn't believe I had made a film about a man who cleaned toilets. "That's the story of my life!" he said. "When I came as a young man to Japan to learn martial arts, the famous teacher I went to said to me: 'If you work in public toilets for half a year, cleaning them every day, then you can come back and see me. That's what I did. I got up every day at 6am to clean toilets, in one of the poorest districts of Tokyo. The teacher followed that from a distance and took me up as a student afterwards. But up to this day, I still do it for a week, every year.'" (The man is now in his sixties and has never returned to America.) Anyway, that is just an example. There are other stories of heads of big companies who gained the respect of their workers only after they arrived at work before them and cleaned the common toilets. This is not "inferior" work. It is rather some form of spiritual attitude, a gesture of equality and modesty.

And then you only have to live shortly in America to understand the importance of "The Common Good". Once during a long stay in Japan, when I was working there on the dream sequences of "Until the End of the World" I received the visit of an American friend who had never been to Japan before. It was winter time and many people ran around with masks. (30 years before the pandemic.) "Why are they all so scared to catch a bug?" my friend asked me. I told him: "No, not at all. They have a cold already, and they wear masks to protect the others." He looked at me in disbelief. "No, you're kidding!" They were not, that is a common attitude.

You have a long association with Tokyo and Japan. Tokyo itself plays an important role in PERFECT DAYS, because you had the extraordinary chance to shoot in places where it is usually not allowed to shoot. How was the experience of shooting in Tokyo? And how has Tokyo changed since Tokyo-Ga?

WW: I loved Tokyo the first time I ever wandered around there and got lost. That was already in the late seventies. It was a time of sheer wonder. I'd walk around for hours, not knowing where I was in this huge city, then just step onto any subway and find my hotel destination again. Every day I went into another area. I was amazed by the seemingly chaotic structure of the city where you

would find old blocks with ancient wooden houses next to skyscrapers and busy intersections, where you'd walk under these science-fiction double- and triple decker freeways and find the most peaceful living areas and mazes of tiny streets right next to them. I was fascinated by all the future I could see shaping up. Then, I had always seen the United States as the place to encounter the future. Here in Japan I found another version of the future, one that suited me really well.

And then, of course, I was informed through the films of Yasujiro Ozu (who is still my declared master, even if I only got to see his work when I was already a young filmmaker with several films under his belt.) He had given us an almost seismographic account of the changing Japanese culture from the twenties to the early sixties when he died. "Tokyo-Ga" I made in 82 on his traces, trying to see how Tokyo had already changed since he last shot there 20 years earlier.

You are famous for integrating music into your films in a very special way. Now in PERFECT DAYS you have come up with a very special music concept.

It seemed wrong to conceive of a "score" for this simple everyday life. But as Hirayama listens to his cassettes of music from the sixties through to the eighties mostly, his musical taste gave us a soundtrack of his life, from the Velvet Underground, Otis Redding, Patti Smith, the Kinks or Lou Reed to others, also to Japanese music from that period.

You dedicate the film to the maestro Ozu. What elements of his work have had the most influence on you?

WW: Mostly the feeling that permeates his films that every thing and every person is unique, that every moment is happening only once, that the everyday stories are the only eternal stories.



MAIN CAST BIOGRAPHY

Koji Yakusho

Actor, born 1956.

Koji Yakusho is an acclaimed Japanese actor and one of Asia's most successful and internationally recognized performers.

In 2005 he co-starred in *"Memoirs of a Geisha"*, which was nominated for 6 Academy Awards. In the following year, he co-starred in *"Babel"*, a film that was honoured by the Cannes Film Festival and earned various awards, including the Golden Globes and the Academy Awards. Along with his international success, Yakusho has starred in a wide array of films in his home country where his diverse acting range has garnered him high praise, including *"The Eel"* (1997) and *"Eureka"* (2001). More recently, he was awarded Best Leading Actor at the Chicago International Film Festival for his magnetic performance in *"Under the Open Sky"* (2020).

Tokio Emoto

Actor, born 1989.

Tokio Emoto made his protagonist debut in Jam Films S *"Suberidai"* (released in 2005) after a successful audition. He appeared in numerous films released in 2008, including *"Ain't No Tomorrows"*, and in the same year received The 2nd Matsumoto Cinema Select Award for Best Actor for his performance. He continues to be featured in wide genres such as theatrical stages, films and TV series.

Arisa Nakano

Model and actress, born 2005.

Arisa Nakano made her model debut in Japanese fashion magazine *"Ginza"*. She has since been featured in various fashion magazines, ads and shows. This film will be her first work as an actress. Despite being in her teens, her distinctive aura is attracting a lot of attention within the industry.

Aoi Yamada

Dancer and artist, born 2000.

Aoi Yamada is known for her artistic dance routines, including her solo performance at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic closing ceremony and *"ROOT"*, performed at Yokohama Sogo Museum and Kumamoto City Museum of Contemporary Art as part of the Kodue Hibino Exhibition *"forest closet."* Theatrical performances include *"The Little Prince"* at KAAT, and Dumb Type *"2020"*. Yamada has also been featured in GUCCI's short film *"Kaguya"* and various music videos. She also appeared in short film *"Somewhere In The Snow"* (2021), Netflix series *"First Love"* (2022), and in *"FM999 999WOMEN'S SONGS"* (2021) as "Mirrorball woman".

Yumi Aso

Actress, born 1963.

After making her debut in 1983, Yumi Aso gained national attention as a host for a famous national TV show. She has since been active in a wide range of roles across various genres, including romance, historical dramas, sci-fi dramas, and even in comedy. She has starred in countless national hit films and TV series, including: *"Comic Magazine"*, *"Border Line"*, *"Don't Cry Mr. Ogre"*, *"Musashibo Benkei"*, *"Carnation"*, *"JIN"*, *"Never Let Me Go"*, *"NEO – Office Chuckles"*.

Sayuri Ishikawa

Enka singer and actress, born 1958.

In 1976 Sayuri Ishikawa's song *"Tsugaru Kaikyo Fuyugeshiki"* became a huge hit, winning her countless awards including the 19th Japan Record Awards and FNS Music Festival Grand Prix. The song also led to her first appearance on nationally popular annual TV show, NHK Kohaku Uta Gassen. She continued realizing smash hits and became one of Japan's most acclaimed Enka singers. In 2019 she was awarded the Purple Ribbon, a medal of honor, from the Japanese Government.

Tomokazu Miura

Actor, born 1952.

Tomokazu Miura's career started off by starring in a TV series in 1971. His notable works include *"The Izu Dancer"*, *"The Sound of the Waves"* and *"The Typhoon Club"*. He was also involved in co-writing *"MI/Other"*, which he played the main role, and received the FIPRESCI at the Cannes Film Festival. Since then, he has appeared in *"Always: Sunset on Third Street"* series, *"Outrage"* series, *"The Katsuragi Murder Case"*, *"Voices in the Wind"*, *"The Lines That Define Me"*, *"Small, Slow But Steady"*, and more. He is an irreplaceable actor and pillar within the Japanese film industry.

Min Tanaka

Dancer, born 1945.

Min Tanaka began his unique and distinctive dance activity in 1974 and has been actively performing to date. He made his international debut at the Louvre Festival d'Automne à Paris in 1978. He was awarded the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from France in 1990. In 2002, he made his film debut in Yoji Yamada's *"Twilight Samurai"*, in which he won the Japan Academy Prize's Newcomer of the Year Award and Best Supporting Actor Award. Subsequently, he has appeared in many films and moving images with his distinct presence. Min's life as a dancer was recently depicted as a documentary feature *"The Unnameable Dance"*, directed by Isshin Inudo in 2022. www.min-tanaka.com



SCRIPTWRITER BIOGRAPHY

Takuma Takasaki

Takuma Takasaki is one of Japan's leading Creative Directors, and he has also been active as a novelist in recent years.

He is currently the Growth Officer at Dentsu Inc. In 2002, he won international awards such as Cannes International Advertising Festival, One Show, NY ADC, and Adfest for the Advertising Council Japan commercial. In Japan, he has been named "Creator of the Year" twice.

He specializes in story-based commercials as well as building large campaigns. He has created a commercial for a movie distribution service featuring Robert De Niro, and a commercial with Richard Gere have become a big success.

He has also written numerous scripts for movies and TV dramas. His novel "Auto-Reverse" is currently being developed for a film adaptation. His picture book "Makuro" was published last year and won an award.

MAIN CAST

Koji Yakusho as Hirayama

Tokio Emoto as Takashi

Arisa Nakano as Niko

Aoi Yamada as Aya

Yumi Aso as Keiko

Sayuri Ishikawa as Mama

Tomokazu Miura as Tomoyama

Min Tanaka as Homeless

MAIN CREW

Director, Scriptwriter: Wim Wenders

Scriptwriter: Takuma Takasaki

Produced by: Koji Yanai

Executive producer: Koji Yakusho

Producers: Wim Wenders, Takuma Takasaki

Co-producers: Reiko Kunieda, Keiko Tominaga, Kota Yabana, Yasushi Okuwa

Line producer: Yusuke Kobayashi

Director of Photography: Franz Lustig

Editor: Toni Froschhammer

Dream sound design & re-recording mixer: Matthias Lempert

Dream installations: Donata Wenders

Dream installation editor: Clémentine Decremps

Production Designer: Towako Kuwajima

Costume Designer: Daisuke Iga

Hair & make-up artist: Katsuhiko Yuhmi

Casting Director: Masunobu Motokawa

Location Manager: Ko Takahashi

Post Production supervisor: Dominik Bollen

VFX Supervisor: Kalle Max Hofmann

Sound Designer: Frank Kruse

Composer: Patrick Watson

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Original title: PERFECT DAYS

International title: PERFECT DAYS

Duration: 123 min

Aspect Ratio: 1.33:1

Format: DCP

Sound: 5.1

Year: 2023

Original language: Japanese

Countries of production: Japan

Production Companies: MASTER MIND Ltd., Spoon Inc., Wenders Images GbR

INTERNATIONAL PRESS

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KOJI YANAI PRESENTS A MASTER MIND PRODUCTION IN COLLABORATION WITH SPOON AND WENDERS IMAGES "PERFECT DAYS" A FILM BY WIM WENDERS

starring **KOJI YAKUSHO** **TOKIO EMOTO** **ARISA NAKANO** **AOI YAMADA** **YUMI ASO** **SAYURI ISHIKAWA** and **TOMOKAZU MIURA** special guest **MIN TANAKA**

director of photography **FRANZ LUSTIG** editor **TONI FROSCHHAMMER** installation artist **DONATA WENDERS** installations edited by **CLÉMENTINE DECREMPS** installation sound design & re-recording mixer **MATTHIAS LEMPERT** post production supervisor **DOMINIK BOLLEN** vfx supervisor **KALLE MAX HOFMANN**
production designer **TOWAKO KUWAJIMA** casting director **MASUNOBU MOTOKAWA** location manager **KO TAKAHASHI** costume designer **DAISUKE IGA** hair & make-up artist **KATSUHIKO YUHMI** line producer **YUSUKE KOBAYASHI** co-producers **REIKO KUNIEDA** **KEIKO TOMINAGA** **KOTA YABANA** **YASUSHI OKUWA**
producers **WIM WENDERS** **TAKUMA TAKASAKI** executive producer **KOJI YAKUSHO** produced by **KOJI YANAI** written by **WIM WENDERS** **TAKUMA TAKASAKI** directed by **WIM WENDERS** © 2023 MASTER MIND Ltd.

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