

Homesick Blues



TRT 15:04 – USA/Japan – 2005
NTSC DV – color – 4:3 pillar box 16:9 – stereo
Japanese & English w/ English subtitles

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Logline

18-year-old Hiroko spends her final days in Osaka, Japan before running away to Chicago, hell-bent on becoming a blues singer.

Synopsis

18-year-old Hiroko is driven by her passion for the blues, a passion incomprehensible to her protective single mother or her oblivious convenience store co-workers in Osaka. Desperate for the intensity of feeling the music promises, Hiroko sets out alone in the night for Chicago, hell-bent on becoming a blues singer.

Director's Statement

Four Chicago filmmakers including Japanese native Junko Kajino traveled to Osaka, Japan, hometown of Japanese pop singer and lead actress Zoey, collaborating with an Osaka cast and crew to create this story of crossing cultural boundaries.

Homesick Blues is about the magnetic attraction that art can have on someone from another culture, an attraction that can make that person feel closer to the artist, who lives a very different life in another country and speaks a different language, than she does to her own family and friends.

Homesick Blues explores the mutability of identity in a world where national, racial and ethnic divisions are increasingly complicated, where old cultures collide with each other every day and their impact creates new cultures, forms and expressions. *Homesick Blues* is about the consuming need for self-transformation that can take over one's life and become more important than success, community or even love.





Ed M. Koziarski & Junko Kajino
Writer/Director/Producers

Junko and Ed have worked together in key production positions on a number of independent features, documentaries, short films, PSAs, and music and instructional videos.

Born in the mountain village of Ina in central Japan, Junko came to the U.S. ten years ago to study journalism and film. A Chicago native, Ed was a police reporter and a staff member of Chicago's public access station CAN TV. The two met on a film set in Ohio in 1997 and began a creative partnership that has continued ever since. They married in 2001.

Ed wrote and directed *A Fool's Gambit* (Gambit Productions, 1998), a political fable about a sex scandal that brings down the decadent regime of a tiny kingdom.

Junko was production designer and Ed was production manager of Brigid Maher's *Adrift in the Heartland* (Tiny Leaps Productions, 2001), a drama about a Palestinian woman struggling with the isolation and culture shock of her new life in America.

Junko was production manager of Scott Cozzolino's *Dead Letters* (Eye of the Chicken Films, 2002), a dark comedy about two brothers crossing the country in search of their long-lost mother.

Junko was production manager and Ed was 1st Assistant Director of Anthony Collamati and Darren McDonald's *The Acedia Thing* (Exus Films, 2003), an ensemble romantic comedy about a group of young friends trying to make sense of work and love.

Ed and Junko co-produced Noel Olken's *Slave* (Waitergonebad Productions, 2004), an exposé about an Eastern European woman lured into sexual slavery in Chicago.

Ed was Line Producer and Junko was production manager of Malik Bader's *Grand Theft* (Bader Brothers Pictures, 2005), a cinema vérité-style exploration of the life of a successful burglar looking for a way out of the business.

Junko and Ed are developing two feature films as co-writer/director/producers, one a continuation

of their short *Homesick Blues*, the other a character-driven psychological thriller, *Untitled Okinawa Project*. The *Homesick Blues* feature screenplay was a selection of the IFP Market, and the film has been awarded the Panavision New Filmmakers grant.

The *Homesick Blues* short has been selected to screen in the Chicago International Film Festival, the Hawaii Independent Film Festival and New York International Independent Film and Video Festival.



Zoey
Lead Actress (Hiroko)

Making her film debut in the lead role of Hiroko is 21-year-old Japanese pop singer Zoey.

A Kobe native, Zoey was already gaining notoriety on the university festival circuit when she was discovered at age 16 by star-maker Michael Martin, a key player in the debuts of both Christina Aguilera and all-time top-selling Japanese singer Hikaru Utada.

Martin brought Zoey to England for musical training, where her singles “Iyana Yatsu” and “You Make Me Feel” reached #2 and #3 respectively on the London Club Chart in 2002.

Zoey signed to Columbia Records Japan in 2003, the flagship artist in the company’s initiative to expand its youth market. Columbia released Zoey’s first two singles in 2003, including a Japanese-language cover of Björk’s “Venus as a Boy.” Her self-titled debut album was released in 2004.

Zoey performs regularly on Japanese TV, radio and onstage. She has recorded and performed with artists including Gwen Stefani and Peabo Bryson.

Shun Kikuta
Musical Director

A leading Chicago blues guitarist, Shun's searing style and consummate professionalism have made him one of the most in-demand musicians in the blues scene.

Shun has performed and recorded with the greatest living blues legends, including B.B. King, Buddy Guy, Koko Taylor, Otis Rush, Son Seals, Johnny and Shemekiah Copeland, and countless others.

Shun has recorded and produced numerous blues records, as well as a series of popular blues instructional videos. Shun regularly tours the world with his own bands and as part of premiere blues lineups.

A Tokyo native, Shun graduated from the Berklee College of Music and has been based in Chicago for the past dozen years.



Credits

introducing Zoey as Hiroko
Produced, Written and Directed by Junko Kajino & Ed M Koziarski
Story by Junko Kajino & Ed M Koziarski and Chris Boscardin
Photographed and Edited by Stephen Combs
Music – Shun Kikuta
Sound Design – Mark Messing
Location Sound – Benjamin Steger
Production Design, Costumes & Makeup – Naomi Ooyama
Production Manager – Nobuko Fukui
Assistant Director/B Camera Operator – TOYOKI

CAST

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Hiroko | Zoey |
| Okaasan | Michiyo Ishimoto |
| Fumi | Tatsufumi Horikawa |
| Ishihara | Toshiyuki Kimura |
| Manager | Hideyuki Mashimo |
| Cashier | Maki Nishihara |
| Store Announcer | Yuko Kajino |
| Sailor | Med Lomaci |
| Young Hiroko | Honomi Mine |
| Praying Man | Kunio Ueshima |
| Praying Woman | Tomoko Ueshima |
| Customers | Shohei Douman |
| | Rie Hirayama |
| | Kenji Ishikawa |
| | Sakae Oguro |
| | Tomi Uzuhashi |

CREW

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Camera Assistant/ Additional Operator | Tatsuya Kanno |
| Design/Costume/ Makeup Assistant | Emi Hikita |
| Grip/Electric | Shoji Omatsu |
| | Chiharu Shimogaki |
| | Ayumi Kido |
| | Testsuji Fujita |
| | Yusuke Urakata |
| | Hideyuki Mashimo |
| Boom Operator | Kouichi Ozaki |
| Post-Production Sound | Maestro-Matic |
| Post Sound Mixer | Adam Frick |
| Storyboard Artist | Steven Leach |
| Graphics & Web | Rachel Benoit |

Do I Move You?
by Nina Simone, performed by Zoey, Shun
Kikuta and Wabi

Homesick Blues Theme
by Shun Kikuta
performed by Shun Kikuta and Wabi

Production equipment supplied by
Sanwa Cine Equipment
Sanwa Pro Light
Shasen Japan Institute of Photography &
Film

Under The Stars & It's My Thing
written and performed by Shun Kikuta

MyDo!
clips courtesy Studio Crank-In

Hiroko's wardrobe provided by
grandir
be loved lip
Pauline Bleu

Special Thanks

Studio Crank-In
Shasen
Akira Sabata
Osaka Artpolis Council
Issay Yamamoto
Hayato Fujitate
Ieyasu Kimura
Osaka Film Council
Akira Higashino
Satoshi Ohno
Eigajuku
Hidehiro Ito
Sayaka Kametani
Circle K – Hirano Nishi 1 Chome
Makoto Nonaka

Yoshiaki Yamamoto
Suzuyo Yamamoto
Kinno-Waraji
Kenji Tanaka
Yasuyuki Yoshida
Kiyomaro Kawano
Sachiyo Ueshima
Atsushi Kitani
Masato Jonishi
Smile Home
Shigeharu Shima
Yuriko Tsuchiya
Ed & Rita Koziarski
Yuko Kajino
Yoshie Kajino

Filmed on location in Osaka, Japan
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