



ANIME

The Girl Who Leapt through Time

Every sci-fi fan knows that time-travel is never easy. Douglas Adams, the author of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, compared history to badly plastered wallpaper; push one bubble down and another one pops up somewhere else. In the 1993 film *Groundhog Day*, Bill Murray's antihero is trapped in an endlessly repeating day. He tries seducing the character played by Andie MacDowell, courting her over and over again to correct every *faux pas* and get her into bed. He gets his face slapped umpteen times, but it's only once he gives up trying that he gets the girl.

Mamoru Hosoda's charming anime film *The Girl Who Leapt through Time* inverts this sequence in what may be a deliberate homage. The protagonists are a teen boy and girl who have an easy, jocular friendship. One drowsy evening, the boy gives the girl a lift on his bicycle and, out of the blue, asks if they might date. The girl is horribly embarrassed. Because she's a time-traveller, she resets the scene again and again, trying to steer the conversation away from the dreadful subject. But the boy keeps asking her out, and her trans-temporal meddling only spoils their friendship.

It's a funny, poignant scene, even though desperately shy youngsters are two-a-penny in Japanese cartoons and comics in which halting romances play out at epic length. However, *The Girl Who Leapt through Time* has much more to say than most, blending witty comedy, can-do optimism, wistful yearning, romantic obsession (one character crosses time just to see a painting) and traumatic tragedy (but with time-travel there's always the chance of a reset). In Japan the film was a minor sleeper hit, attracting young and old viewers and causing a buzz among cartoon fans. If the films of Studio Ghibli parallel those by Disney or Pixar, then *The Girl Who Leapt through Time* feels akin to Brad Bird's poorly-marketed *The Iron Giant* (1999).

Hosoda's film had the advantage of being based on a familiar story, which first appeared as a magazine serial for teenagers in 1965. Like *Doctor Who*, it was revamped for successive generations, including a popular live-action film (*The Little Girl Who Conquered Time*, 1983). The anime is a sequel to the original story, though it's designed so that newcomers shouldn't notice. The extrovert, outspoken heroine, Makoto, is the niece of the first time-traveller, who shows up as a wise big-sister figure and is gently amused when Makoto babbles about her experiences.

The original story was an early work by the now-feted author Yasutaka Tsutsui, whose later book *Paprika* was turned into a superb 2006 anime by Satoshi Kon. However, *The Girl Who Leapt through Time* seems to take notes from another Kon fantasy, *Millennium Actress* (2001), which was also made by the animation studio Mad House. Both idolise girls who run (rather as Miyazaki idolises girls who fly), and Hosoda's film culminates in a vivid scene in which Makoto races against the film's moving 'camera', battling her way heroically from one side of the frame to the other. While some of the animation seems broad and rough by Disney standards (especially the

exaggerated shots of Makoto laughing), the hand-drawn motion is emphatically energised.

Makoto's running illustrates the moral of 'Time waits for no one' (written prominently in English on a blackboard), as the girl learns to embrace the future with confidence and hope. However, Hosoda cannily has it both ways, sometimes slowing the school scenes down into romanticised reveries and returning again to Makoto's baseball practices with her friends, letting us share her illusion that such things never change. Like much anime, *The Girl Who Leapt through Time* treats high school as Lewis Carroll treated childhood, 'Ever drifting down the dream / Linger in the golden gleam.'

Andrew Osmond, *Sight & Sound*, October 2008

It's all too tempting to draw comparisons between the work of Japanese animation director Mamoru Hosoda and the Studio Ghibli productions of Hayao Miyazaki. The two filmmakers share similar interests in family ties, childhood and the mundane trials of coming of age – all of which they depict unfolding within exquisitely realised fantasy worlds.

But the comparison does them both a disservice. Hosoda was certainly influenced at one time by Miyazaki (he was originally down to direct *Howl's Moving Castle*), yet he has a very distinct voice of his own, his personal experiences heavily channelled into each and every work.

For some time, Hosoda rather curiously stood in the middle as what has been described as a kind of polarisation of anime film – the work of Studio Ghibli being considered exceptional, everything else considered disposable. But his filmography proves that it's impossible to draw such a distinct line down the middle of an expansive medium.

Visually, Hosoda's aesthetic is defined by clean lines and the use of simple, single shades of colour. His emphasis on normalcy amid the chaos of his stories shows through in the very design of his characters. There's no outlandish hair colours or giant eyes.

Despite its supernatural concept, the narrative of his breakout film *The Girl Who Leapt through Time* is completely focused on the emotional journey of its main character, Makoto. In a more modern take on Yasutaka Tsutsui's book, Makoto finds herself with the power to (literally) leap back through time – a more active power than the time loop of the 1983 Nobuhiko Obayashi adaptation of the same story.

Her newfound power may be outlandish, but Hosoda keeps things grounded by focusing on the frivolous desires she uses it for: retaking exams, repeating karaoke for eight hours, saving face in front of her peers. All until she decides to use it to help her friends. That choice is something that Hosoda is very interested in, empathising with youthful self-centredness and feelings of isolation. The self-understanding required to better connect with others is a theme throughout his films.

Kambole Campbell, bfi.org.uk, 30 July 2020

THE GIRL WHO LEAPT THROUGH TIME

(TOKI O KAKERU SHÔJO)

Directed by: Mamoru Hosoda

©: Tokikake Film Partners

Production Company: Kadokawa Shoten

Tokikake Film Partners: Kadokawa Shoten, Kadokawa Herald Pictures, Happinet Pictures, Memory-Tech, Q-Tec, G.T. Entertainment, Kadokawa Anime Fund

International Sales: Kadokawa Eiga

Executive Producer: Tsuguhiko Kadokawa

Producers: Takashi Watanabe, Yuichiro Saito

Planning by: Masao Maruyama

Screenplay by: Satoko Okudera

Based on the short story by: Yasutaka Tsutsui

Director of Photography: Yoshihiro Tomita

Special Effects: Team Taniguchi, Ayumi Arahata, Keiko Itogawa, Kumiko Taniguchi

Animation Directors: Hiroyuki Aoyama, Chikai Kubota, Shinji Ishihama

Animation Production: Mad House

Key Animators: Aiko Wakatsuki, Akira Takata, Atsushi Sekiguchi, Ayako Hata, Chihiro Hayashi, Eriko Kubokawa, Hidehiko Sawada, Hideki Ito, Hideki Takahashi, Hideto Komori, Hiroshi Shimizu, Hisashi Mori, Hitoshi Ueda, Ichiro Uno, Junko Abe, Kanami Sekiguchi, Kanta Kamei, Katsuyoshi Nakatsuru, Kazuaki Imai, Kazuko Shibata, Keiichi Kondo, Keiko Shimizu, Keisuke Masunaga, Kenji Hachizaki, Kumiko Kawana, Kunihiko Sakurai, Mamoru Sasaki, Manabu Nakatake, Mayumi Kitamura, Michio Fukuda, Naoko Ikeuchi, Naoyuki Asano, Nobumasa Shinkawa, Nobuyuki Kitajima, Norihiro Naganuma, Norimoto Tokura, Noriyuki Matsutake, Rei Aoi, Ryoochimo Sawa, Ryouzuke Sawa, Shinya Hasegawa, Tadashi Matsuzaki, Tadashi Sakazaki, Takaaki Wada, Takaaki Yamashita, Takahiro Chiba, Takashi Kawaguchi, Takashi Mukouda, Takuo Noda, Tatsuzou Nishida, Tetsuo Hirakawa, Tetsuro Kaku, Tomotaka Shibayama, Toshiharu Sugie, Toshihiko Masuda, Tsugumi Ueno, Yasuhiro Nakura, Yasunori Miyazawa, Yoshiaki Toki, Yuko Yazaki, Yumi Masuda, Yuuji Shigekuni

Editor: Shigeru Nishiyama

Art Direction by: Nizo Yamamoto

Character Design by: Yoshiyuki Sadamoto

Music by: Kiyoshi Yoshida

Theme Song by: Hanako Oku

Sound Recording: Yoshio Ohara

Sound Effects: Shizuo Kurahashi

English Subtitles by: Paul Bryden

Voice Cast:

Riisa Naka (*Makoto Konno*)

Takuya Ishida (*Chiaki Mamiya*)

Mitsutaka Itakura (*Kosuke Tsuda*)

Ayami Kakiuchi (*Yuri Hayakawa*)

Mitsuki Tanimura (*Kaho Fujitani*)

Yuki Sekido (*Miyuki Konno*)

Sachie Hara (*Kazuko Yoshiyama*)

Fumihiko Tachiki (*Fukushima-sensei*)

Kaitou (*Takayuki Sorita*)

Midori Andou (*mother*)

Moriko Uesugi (*Shihori Yokohari*)

Sekimi Nowake (*Sonoka Matsuoka*)

Utawaka Katsura (*father*)

Japan 2006©

98 mins

CONTEMPORARY ANIME AUTEURS

Your Name (Kimi no Na wa)

Sun 1 May 12:30, 18:00 (BFI IMAX)

The Girl Who Leapt through Time

(Toki o Kakeru Shôjo)

Sun 1 May 14:45; Sat 28 May 14:50

Weathering with You (Tenki no Ko)

Sun 1 May 15:15, 20:30 (BFI IMAX)

Tokyo Godfathers (Tôkyô Goddofâzâzu)

Sun 1 May 18:00; Sat 28 May 12:30

Perfect Blue (Pâfekuto Burû)

Mon 2 May 18:40; Sat 14 May 20:45

The Place Promised in our Early Days

(Kumo no Mukô, Yakusoku no Basho)

Tue 3 May 18:00; Sun 22 May 15:00

5 Centimeters per Second (Byôsoku 5 Senchimêtoru)

+ The Garden of Words (Kotonoha no Niwa)

Tue 3 May 20:45; Sat 21 May 17:50

Millennium Actress (Sennen Joyû)

Wed 4 May 20:55; Sat 7 May 11:50;

Mon 23 May 18:15 (BFI IMAX)

Summer Wars (Samâ Uôzu)

Sat 7 May 20:45; Sat 28 May 18:00

Paprika (Papurika)

Fri 13 May 20:40; Wed 18 May 20:45

Wolf Children (Ôkami kodomo no Ame to Yuki)

Sat 14 May 17:40; Sat 28 May 20:40

GamePad Event

Sun 1 May 12:00 – 18:30 Blue Room

Free admission for ticket holders to any anime screening on Sun 1 May

ANIME CLASSICS PART 1

Tekkonkinkreet (Tekkon kinkurîto)

Sun 1 May 12:10; Thu 5 May 20:50

The Tale of the Princess Kaguya (Kaguya-hime no Monogatari)

Tue 3 May 14:00; Tue 3 May 17:30 (all BFI IMAX)

Akira

Tue 3 May 20:30; Mon 23 May 15:00; Mon 23 May 20:30 (all BFI IMAX)

Lupin the 3rd: The Castle of Cagliostro (Kariosutoro no Shiro)

Wed 4 May 14:30; Tue 31 May 20:45

Fullmetal Alchemist the Movie: Conqueror of Shamballa

(Gekijô-ban Hagane no Renkinjutsushi: Shanbara o Yuku Mono)

Fri 6 May 21:00; Mon 9 May 20:40

Memories (Memorîzu)

Sun 15 May 12:00; Tue 24 May 20:40

Grave of the Fireflies (Hotaru no Haka)

Thu 19 May 18:00 + intro by Alex Dudok de Wit, author of BFI Film

Classics: Grave of the Fireflies; Fri 27 May 20:45

This season was co-programmed by writer and academic Hanako Miyata



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