

**ACADEMY AWARD® ACCREDITED: SHORT SHORTS FILM FESTIVAL & ASIA 2021**

## **Smartphone Film Competition supported by Sony Opening Talk Show “Creators’ Junction 2021”**

**Welcomed Director Eiji Uchida and Song Writer Yoshiki Mizuno  
(Ikimonogakari)**

**was Held at Ginza Sony Park**



The Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia 2021 (SSFF & ASIA), one of Asia's biggest international short film festivals, commemorated the 1<sup>st</sup> Smartphone Competition, supported by Sony, by holding an online talk event; the "Creators' Junction 2021," at Ginza Sony Park on Saturday, June 12. The event designed to inspire the next generation of filmmakers was hosted by Tetsuya Bessho, SSFF & ASIA president.

Among the invited guests were the Japanese directors of the short films nominated in the competition. With the Ginza in the background, Mr. Nakadai, producer of Sony Group Inc., introduced that the SSFF & ASIA Official Competitions and the newly started Smartphone Film Competition, both supported by Sony, the aim is to bring excitement to the world with the power of creativity and technology which is the key concept & theme of Sony.

Next was a screening of "Stardust Children," directed by Eiji Uchida and based on a submitted story based on J-Pop Group Ikimonogakari's song "Kirakira ni Hikaru." Director Uchida shot the short film in full on a Sony Xperia™. After the screening, song writer Yoshiki Mizuno (Ikimonogakari), Director Eiji Uchida, and Tetsuya Bessho took to the stage and began the talk remarking on the setting of the worldwide online live event at the outdoor venue in the heart of the Ginza.

Mizuno said that through monogatary.com, over 1,400 short stories based on his song were submitted. "When the Coronavirus pandemic struck the world, I was surprised and moved that the music I made to express my feelings became the base of so many new stories, each with their own world". He went on to talk about the background behind the making of the film. Director Uchida also commented, "I was excited about the extraordinary process of having stories submitted based on a song, then making a film based on that story. I always have a song to listen to that suits the movie I'm making. So this project was a perfect fit for me."

On making the film, Mizuno told the audience, "Because the story of "Stardust Children" was a fantasy, my imagination began working overtime to picture a world as told in the story." Director Uchida commented, "Fantasy costs a lot of money to make and is especially difficult to make in Japan. I felt like this was a challenge from the songwriter." He also talked about the various innovative ways the film was shot using just a smartphone to create a fantasy world. Shooting with the Xperia™ attached to the actor's head, using slow motion functions, and even dropping the smartphone from the top of a cliff. Shooting with a smartphone brings out new ideas and possibilities, including making the soundtrack by recording and sampling at home. This new style of filmmaking expands possibilities by offering new creative challenges, new trends of how to view movies, make music, and new venues for screening films.



Mizuno explained that it took a week to create the music, two months to prepare, three days to shoot, and 1-2 days to edit. He explained that, "there have been collaborations between music and video, including songs for dramas, but I seem to hold something back. This time, the landscape of the story and the visual landscape, was clearly separated so we were able to bring them together with a good energy." Regarding the visual adaptation of the original story, Director Uchida explained that he was careful to express the difference between what's on the surface and the underlying theme, "while considering the difference between the worldviews of adults and that of children, he took care to respect the author's feelings towards children and for the future."

In a question from among the invited creators in the audience, the panel was asked what they thought of vertical videos, and Director Uchida, who also served as a juror in the Smartphone Film Competition replied that, "There were many vertical short films in this competition. Documentaries seem more real when viewed in a vertical format and I want to try it myself." Mizuno replied that, "I feel that many vertical videos are limited by the format and are shot on their smartphones. If we return to a blank slate, the vertical format may become more widespread."

In closing, each guest gave a message to the creators. Director Uchida said, "It's hard to get in the door in the film industry. Compared to abroad, there are very few places in Japan where you can have your film seen such as at film festivals. As a filmmaker, I was saved by film festivals here and overseas. For example, by connecting with SONY in an event like this, opportunities for filmmakers increase tenfold."

Yoshiki Mizuno closed by saying, "Both video and music have evolved. Listening to music with video has become common, and musicians are looking for someone to make videos. It makes me happy to meet creators from various fields that I don't usually come across. I would like to participate and support in various creative projects, including short films."



The talk event is now archived on Sony Xperia's YouTube channel.

- Archive link : <https://youtu.be/xI ukCOMvSQ>
- 『Stardust Children』 : <https://youtu.be/JWfM ArrTq8>
- 『Stardust Children』 Making of : [https://xperia.sony.jp/special/passions/voices/uchida\\_1.html](https://xperia.sony.jp/special/passions/voices/uchida_1.html)

Official material from this event available through the following URL.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ubmsykNhcRRonSVm4qkU41IDzGb6gcgI?usp=sharing>

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