

Kamisama no Puzzle - Accelerator goes Japanese movie

Accelerators have featured in some movies, Terminator 3, for example. But people outside of the physics world did not notice much. In this summer, cult director Takashi Miike will make the accelerator quite visible in his newest film "Kamisama no Puzzle" (God's Puzzle). Miike, who allegedly influenced Quentin Tarantino, is best known for his grotesque horror films including *Ichi the Killer*, *Audition*, *Gozu*, and *One Missed Call*. This time, fortunately, it is not his usual line; the movie is a sci-fi romantic comedy based on a prize-winning, bestselling novel by Shinji Kimoto. The story is about twin brothers, one a physics student and the other an aimless self-proclaimed rock musician. The latter agrees to attend physics class for his brother and is obliged to team up with a 17-year-old girl genius to unlock the secrets of the universe and to create one of their own, using an accelerator.

Miike, who confessed he did not understand a thing when he first read the plot, stated "I created a new character who has no idea about physics at all, who is not in Kimoto's original book, since a Director needs to have basic knowledge about the story for good interpretation of the story." The main character, Motokazu, gets confused when the story is transmitting complicated physics to the audience. This tactic is actually working well to explain science in the story. For example, Motokazu gives a talk about the four fundamental forces in front of 'real' physics students. It is easy to understand because he explains from non-scientific point of view using plain language. Miike also uses computer graphic effects, which greatly help the audience to understand the physics visually. "But I didn't try to make an educational movie," says Miike, "what I want to say is that there are so many things we don't know in this world. And trying to understand those mysteries can transform a classroom into the whole universe."



Filming crew at KEK.  
(Photo: Youhei Morita)

Miike looked for reality to describe an accelerator, so he chose KEK as a filming location. "You will see the KEKB accelerator in the movie," said Youhei Morita, KEK's public relation director and former ILC communicator. He took the filming crew on the tour at KEK and gave Miike some advice, such as jargon used in scientists' conversations. With Morita's advice, Miike named the electronics hut of the accelerator after KEKB's Belle detector. "At the climax scene, there are sparks going around the accelerator. I told the director it wouldn't happen that way, but I understand that movie needs some fun," Morita said. Miike also went to the synchrotron facility SPring-8 for filming a scene in the laboratory.

It will be interesting to know how Japanese audience sees the physics in this movie-will they transform the movie theatre into the universe? The film starts in theatres in Japan on 7 June.

Official website: <http://www.kami-puzzle.com/>.

-- Rika Takahashi