



Press release

NHK Teams Up with Kurosawa Kiyoshi on 8K Epic Drama “Wife of a Spy”



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Tokyo, June 6, 2020 — This month, NHK’s 8K channel (the first in the world) will premiere an 8K drama by one of Japan’s most outstanding filmmakers, Kurosawa Kiyoshi.

Wife of a Spy (114 minutes) is the first 8K production from Kurosawa, who has earned a global reputation for movies such as *Tokyo Sonata* (2008), which won the Jury Prize in the Un Certain Regard section at the 2008 Cannes Film Festival; *Journey to the Shore* (2014), which won the prize for best direction in the Un Certain Regard section at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival; and *Before We Vanish* (2018). Kurosawa co-scripted it with Hamaguchi Ryusuke, whose earlier work includes *Happy Hour* (2015) and *Asako I & II* (2018) (selected to compete for the Palme d’Or at the 2018 Cannes Film Festival), and Nohara Tadashi.

The story is set in the Japanese city of Kobe in 1940, just before Japan was caught up in World War Two. It centers on a wife who stays true to her own convictions amid the tides of war. Her husband, a trader, brings a woman back to Japan when he returns from Manchuria. When the woman dies, the wife learns her husband’s secrets and takes an astonishing course of action. The protagonist and her husband are played by two of Japan’s most popular actors, Aoi Yu and Takahashi Issei.

Kurosawa Kiyoshi said of his first 8K drama: “Figuring out how to combine the abstractness of a past era with the real physical presence of people in front of the camera was a huge initial challenge, but the results were great. The two leading actors poured themselves into their roles and gave a very realistic sense of the era. Everyone on the production team did a great job of supporting the cast. And the 8K images are rich and almost magical. They instantly transport viewers back to Japan in the 1940s. So everything came together in the best possible way. I’ve had a long career, but I’ve never had this kind of good fortune.”

Filming for *Wife of a Spy* team began last October. It was already finished when shooting of major TV dramas in Japan was halted by the coronavirus pandemic. The team was able to continue with 8K HDR, 22.2ch postproduction while paying the utmost attention to safety. Channel controller Ochiai Jun said: “The experience we’ve gained by exploring the possibilities of 8K dramas together with one of the world’s top creators is tremendously valuable. We hope to keep collaborating with the movie community as much as possible. These are challenging times for the creative industry and for our viewers. High-quality entertainment is more necessary than ever. For a public service media organization, providing it is an important part of our core mission.” *Wife of a Spy* follows *The Sniffer* (2018), *An Artist of the Floating World* (2019), and *A Stranger in Shanghai* (2019) as the NHK 8K channel’s fourth drama.

Japan’s major TV broadcasters began broadcasting in ultra-high definition on satellite channels on December 1, 2018. The country’s only public broadcaster, NHK, launched 4K and 8K channels. NHK’s 8K channel operates for 12 hours (from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.) every day. Its content encompasses drama, music, documentaries, culture, and travel.

About NHK - NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) is Japan’s sole public broadcaster. Funded by fees from Japanese households, it has a reputation for impartial, high-quality programming. Through its six nationwide TV channels and three radio channels, NHK reaches about 50 million households. Besides being a broadcaster, NHK produces a vast array of high-quality programs covering news, documentaries, children’s and educational programs, music, entertainment, culture, animation and drama. Known as the pioneer of HD, NHK now actively produces programs in 4K and 8K. www.nhk.or.jp/corporateinfo/