

みな殺しの
霊歌

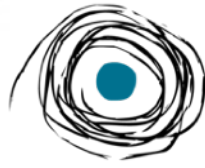
A FILM BY TAI KATO

I, THE EXECUTIONER

"ONE OF
JAPAN'S MOST
DISTURBING
ANATOMIES OF A
SERIAL KILLER"
-TIME OUT

A TAI KATO FILM I, THE EXECUTIONER
STARRING MANDATO SATO CHIEKO BAISHO SANAÉ NAKAHARA
KIN SUGAI YOSHIKO SAWA OH RANFAN YUKI KAWAMURA
STORY BY TADASHI HIROMI WRITTEN BY HARUHIKO MINURA TAI KATO YOJI YAMADA
DIRECTED BY TAI KATO

FILM MOVEMENT CLASSICS SHOCHIKU



FILM MOVEMENT®
CLASSICS

presents

I, THE EXECUTIONER みな殺しの 霊歌

a film by TAI KATO

HIGH DEFINITION DIGITAL TRANSFER

**“One of Japanese cinema’s most disturbing
dissections of the serial killer...
a shattering story often hailed as Kato’s finest movie.”**
–Make Mine Criterion

Japan | 1968 | Japanese with English subtitles
Action / Crime / Drama | 90 minutes | 2.40:1 | Mono

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SYNOPSIS

As the police investigate a sudden rash of brutal murders whose victims are all women the unscrupulous killer's murky motivations remain hauntingly elusive. A labyrinthine character study slowly unfolds implying that the targets of these unspeakable acts may be culpable in their own shocking demise.

Although director Tai Kato worked mostly on genre films within the studio system, his distinctly bold and somber style proved him a maverick auteur with *I, The Executioner*, one of his most incendiary masterpieces.

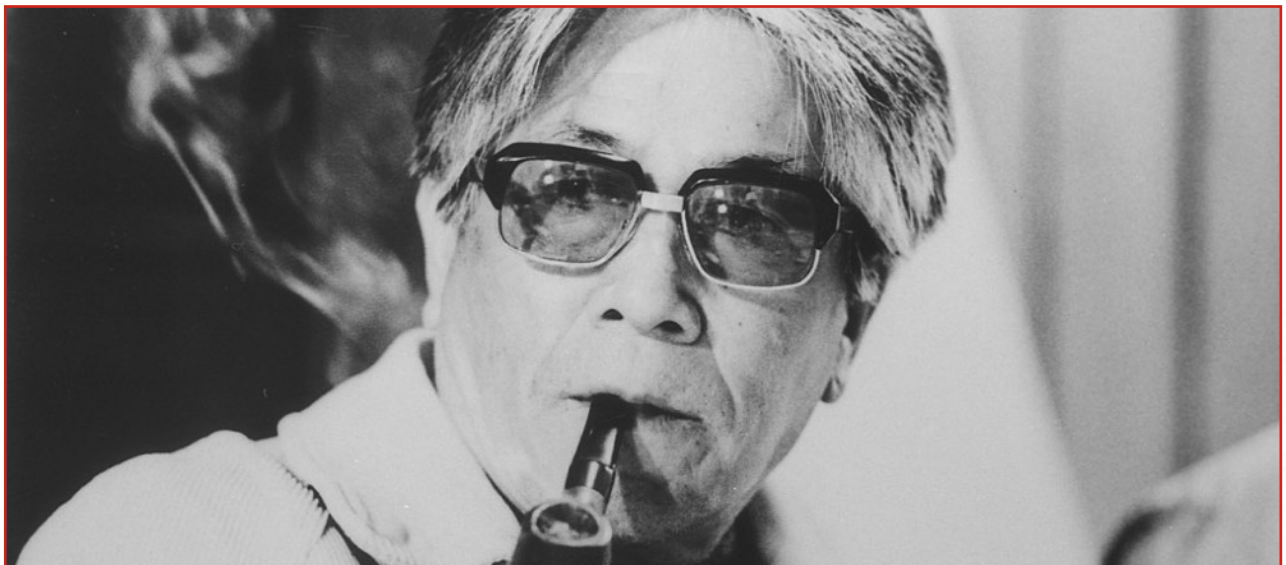
Kato matches the film's bleak narrative themes to its innovative aesthetics, "with blown out negatives, extreme close-ups, and deep focus mixed with his characteristic low angle composition to add to the sense of noirish dread which paints the modern city as an inescapable hellscape" (*Windows on Worlds*).



ABOUT TAI KATO

In the 1960s Toei Studio was Yakuza Central and Tai Kato was the chief exponent and innovator of this popular genre. American audiences equate the yakuza with the contemporary gangster, but the classic yakuza setting is more akin to the western, with swordplay more than gunplay, silk not seersucker, and honor not anarchy in the teeming gambling underworld. This allowed Tai Kato to indulge his passion for historical drama, as well as for startling realism and audacious camerawork. It also shows us yakuza's roots in the samurai (*chambara*) film, in which Toei specialized. Kato contributed to the *chambara* revival after the Occupation ban on this genre's "feudal values" was lifted. The evolution from samurai to yakuza was effected by a societal change-when swords were outlawed (in 1868), only outlaws had swords. Ergo, the outlaw hero, for whom duty (*giri*) and humanity (*ninjo*) were frequently in conflict. In the low-budget quickies that were in demand during the second Golden Age of Japanese cinema, constraint was the mother of invention and personal style for Kato. Not only did he favor "the natural beauty of the face" over makeup, and gesture over genre codes, he created what some call a cinema of excess: one-shot sequences of extraordinary lyricism and power, flat wide-angle framing, and his most famous trait, the low-angle shot which breaks up the scene and sometimes the body into its components. All in all, closer to Sergio Leone than to Ozu. Koshi Ueno wrote of Kato's "desire to look at things which are difficult to see from a normal viewing position. His desire to look is also a desire to show."

From Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive retrospective "Blossoms and Swords: The Films of Tai Kato"



CAST

Tadashi Kawashima
Haruko
Keiko
Misa Mouri
Misao
Takako Yasuda
Kyoko Tominaga

Makoto Sato
Chieko Basho
Sanae Nakahara
Kin Sugai
Yoshiko Sawa
Oh Ranfan
Yuki Kawamura

CREW

Directed by
Story by
Written by

Tai Kato
Tadashi Hiromi
Haruhiko Mimura
Tai Kate
Yoji Yamada



ABOUT FILM MOVEMENT

Founded in 2002, Film Movement is a North American distributor of award-winning independent and foreign films based in New York City. It has released more than 300 feature films culled from prestigious film festivals worldwide including the Oscar-nominated films *Theeb* (2016) and *Corpus Christi* (2020). Film Movement's theatrical releases include American independent films, documentaries, and foreign-language arthouse titles. Its catalog includes works by directors such as Ryusuke Hamaguchi, Lee Isaac Chung, Hirokazu Kore-eda, Maren Ade, Jessica Hausner, Ciro Guerra, Bertrand Bonello and Mélanie Laurent.

In 2015, Film Movement launched its reissue label Film Movement Classics, featuring new restorations released theatrically as well as on digital platforms, Blu-ray and DVD, including films by such noted directors as Ang Lee, Chen Kaige, Luchino Visconti, Stanley Kwan, Peter Greenaway, Bille August, Marleen Gorris, Takeshi Kitano, Arturo Ripstein, King Hu, Lee Chang Dong, Hideo Gosha and Sergio Corbucci.

For more information, please visit www.filmmovement.com.

