

METHOD FILMS PRESENTS

a Matthew Metcalfe Production

of a Short Film by Jesse Warn

LITTLE SAMURAI

Starring

DEAN O'GORMAN

(Young Hercules, When Love Comes Along)

&

JURI INAHARA

(Memory & Desire)

Written & Directed by Jesse Warn

Produced by Matthew Metcalfe

Director of Photography, Aaron Morton

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## The Story.

*A story of love, destiny and ... sushi.*

### LITTLE SAMURAI

The story of LITTLE SAMURAI is a celebration of a Japanese style of humor dating back to the 1800's. Pioneered by a group known as the Gesaku Writers, an outrageous, comic-strip style of literature became prevalent in Japan during this time. One of it's trade marks was the elaborate weaving of "kabuki" plots - simple, well known themes such as family conflict, star crossed lovers and miscommunication, all brought together in a didactic finale' in which "virtue is rewarded and vice punished".

Not unlike Shakespearean Comedy in it's intentions - Gesaku humor was often much bawdier and at it's worst, downright crude. At it's best however, the comic writings took on a fable, or fairy tale like quality that had the ability to amuse as well as inform.

Thus, by borrowing from this Gesaku tradition and placing it within a contemporary New Zealand setting, LITTLE SAMURAI has endeavored to create an exciting hybrid. In it's broadest sense the story, is that of a modern fairy tale, where good ultimately overcomes the obstacles in it's path, but only after a few lessons have been learned along the way by the main protagonists. With this in mind the characters of the film should be thought of as representative, caricatures serving to amuse and enlighten.

It is the "fairy tale" quality of the story that has pervaded all aspects of the finished production. Shot on 35mm Kodak T-Vision, an emphasis has been placed on "the look". Bright Christmas-like colours have been used where appropriate, to transmit the festive and chaotic mood of the film, while production design has emphasised the cohabitation of old and new, contemporary and ancient, east and west.

In terms of narrative translation to the screen, the story's success hinges on the audiences participation in, and acceptance of, the magical, pre-destined quality that weaves it's way through the plot. To this end, the camera work has been an active ingredient. Rather than "fly on the wall" style photography, LITTLE SAMURAI's narrative is punctuated by deliberate camera work - drawing us into the unfolding saga, a co-conspirator if you will, in the proceedings.

Ultimately, LITTLE SAMURAI is a feel-good, fairy tale story, of love, destiny and ... sushi.

## Production Notes

### LITTLE SAMURAI

LITTLE SAMURAI is the third film from writer/director Jesse Warn and producer Matthew Metcalfe. The pair first began working together some three years ago on their first production, 9 ACROSS, a low budget prison thriller, and have since completed a number of music videos together, as well as a second short film entitled HER ILIAD.

Despite having created two films on an ultra low budget, LITTLE SAMURAI was always going to need a little bit more if it was going to be the story, rich in production design and value that the filmmakers had always envisioned that it would be. To this end it was submitted to the New Zealand Film Commission for production financing through the Short Film Fund, whereby it was given the green light for filming to begin in October of 1998.

Casting of a film with so many Japanese characters was always going to be a problem. However, the full extent of how difficult this would be did not become apparent until the search for the lead characters Keiko and Yoshi began. The search seemed beyond help, until the filmmakers called in acclaimed casting director Liz Mullane (THE FRIGHTENERS, LORD OF THE RINGS) to aid them in their cause. After searching all of New Zealand and most of Australia, Liz was able to present a short list of actors for all parts, providing the filmmakers with a level of choice which ultimately lead to a cast that performed at every level. The lead role of Tony had been written especially with YOUNG HERCULES star Dean O'Gorman in mind. To this end when it was confirmed that Dean was available, production was pulled forward to enable Dean to shoot during the shows mid-season hiatus.

Upon completion of the films first cut, the filmmakers realised that they had something special on their hands and that it would be music that would give the film the magical feel that had been envisioned from the beginning. For this reason, director Jesse Warn, called upon acclaimed advertising scorer, Darren Poole of the Alt Design Group. Upon hearing his treatment of the score, both the director and producer knew that they were on to a winner. The final musical touches when then added by local all girl pop band, Mary, which gave the film a popular and accessible melody to bring the two lovers, Tony and Keiko together with at the end.

## Production Team

### LITTLE SAMURAI

#### Matthew Metcalfe - **PRODUCER**

A graduate in Commerce from The University of Auckland, Matthew's life long love of movies has taken him from the business world to the film world. Since graduating Matthew has worked as an accountant for American Multinational, United Technologies Corporation, and then later as an in house writer/producer of corporate promotional literature. This later role would lead to a position with Auckland Advertising Agency, The Trinity Partnership. It was here that Matthew gained further experience in production, and in particular, the peculiar needs of the audience.

Soon after leaving Advertising to pursue a career in film, Matthew met writer, Jesse Warn. Immediately the pair found a mutual vision and bond with which they knew they could work. Matthew's first work as producer was with Jesse (Director) on the music video for rock band, SOMMERSET. This video went on to win Jesse the MaxTV Best Music Video Award at the 1996 Auckland Canned Film Festival. Matthew also produced Jesse's second music video for rock band THE APPLICATORS. This video gained extensive airtime on both MaxTV and MTV. The success of these video's lead to the production in January of 1998, of a music video for the band, EYE TV. Made in conjunction with New Zealand On Air and Virgin Records, the video has proved a great success and has gained extensive airtime. This video went on to win Best Music Video at the 1998 New Zealand Music Awards.

Matthew has also produced the short films 9 ACROSS and HER ILIAD, both of which were independantly financed. LITTLE SAMURAI represents the sixth collaboration between Matthew, Writer/Director, Jesse Warn and Cinematographer, Aaron Morton.

#### Jesse Warn - **DIRECTOR/WRITER**

Also a graduate of The University of Auckland, and a life long lover of films, Jesse has in the last few years gained an enormous amount of experience in screenwriting, and more recently in directing.

Jesse's early work included writing the pilot episode for a Mark Hadlow comedy series in development at the time, and then as script consultant on the screen adaptation of Barry Crump's WILD PORK AND WATERCRESS. Jesse's other script consultancy jobs have included the screenplays for, BONJOUR TIMOTHY and G'DAY MICHELLE.

Jesse's Directing credits include Music videos for SOMMERSET, winner of the Best Music Video Award at the 1996 Canned Film Festival, and THE APPLICATORS, the success of which had led to the highly successful EYE TV video, *Wish it all Away*. Jesse has recently completed his second film HER ILIAD, which was also written by him. His first film, 9 ACROSS, will be released nationally by R.E.P Film Distributors.

This is Jesse's sixth project with Producer, Matthew Metcalfe and represents another step in their joint ambition to make a feature film together.

# LITTLE SAMURAI

## Key Facts

Screen Ratio: 1: 1.85

Colour, Eastman Kodak

Shot using Arriflex Camera and Lenses.

Shot on 35mm

Print: 35mm, Dolby SR.

Length: 15 min.

## Cast

LITTLE SAMURAI.

### Starring

Tony	<b>Dean O'Gorman</b>
Keiko	<b>Juri Inahara</b>
Yoshi	<b>Massa Sakamoto</b>

### With

Miko	<b>Motoko Terada</b>
Jiro	<b>Daniel Sing</b>
Jones (Tony's friend)	<b>Derek Judge</b>
Papa San	<b>Hill Sakamoto</b>
Business Man # 1	<b>Kunio Yoshida</b>
Business man # 2	<b>Osamu Tamura</b>
Lucky Samurai	<b>Seiji Aramaki</b>
Masked Samurai	<b>Alan Stephenson</b>
Karaoke Singer	<b>Leonardo Dipa</b>

## Production Credits

LITTLE SAMURAI

Production Company	<b>Method Films Ltd</b>
Producer	<b>Matthew Metcalfe</b>
Director	<b>Jesse Warn</b>
Writer	<b>Jesse Warn</b>
Cinematography	<b>Aaron Morton</b>
Editing	<b>Steffan Coorey</b>
Casting Director	<b>Liz Mullane</b>
Original Score	<b>Darren Poole</b>