

STEKKI DAIYO! PRODUCTIONS

presents

KARY CAWLEY

MASAKO TAKAGI

BRIAN J. SINGER

PAUL GERSOWITZ

A FILM BY TED MILLS

nowhere land

Stekki Daiyo! Productions

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SYNOPSIS

Number One (Kary Cawley) works on a distant asteroid on the lowest rung of a three man satellite data processing mission. His coworker, Number Two (Brian J. Singer), is a brownnose, and his boss, Number Three (Paul Gersowitz) is a grumpy old bully. One day our hero begins to receive signals from another world, from a woman! Females being outlawed in this part of the galaxy, this is exciting stuff. In a vision, he meets her (Masako Takagi) and our dubious tale of desire, duty, and radio waves begins...

FORMAT

"nowhereland" was shot in Super 8 and transferred to Beta-SP. It is available for screening in Beta-SP or DV formats.

RUNNING TIME

32 minutes.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Writer-director Ted Mills was inspired to create “nowhereland” after engaging in one of his favorite activities: driving around at night in Santa Barbara. “High up in the hills are radio transmitters which you can sometimes see at night. To me they feel so far off, so mysterious, enough to make me feel it’s a different planet altogether. What would life be like on that planet, I wonder?” Being obsessed with radio waves and hallucinatory visions, Mills crafted the rough story of “nowhereland” over several weeks. “It was also a challenge to write a story that would suit my camera, a brand new Super 8 with no sync sound. Could I tell a story with no dialog, only music and sound effects?”

Dru Sturdivan, who had worked with Mills on a previous local film, came on during the casting procedure and wound up producing. “I wanted to do all I could for the project,” said Sturdivan, “And I knew Ted had the commitment to see the film through all the way to completion.”

Kary Cawley was cast after Stekki Daiyo! Productions’ Los Angeles audition. “Kary is a natural,” said the director. “He grasped the concept of what we were doing immediately, which turned out to be hard for some when they heard there were no lines to read. Not only did he ‘get it,’ but he exceeded my expectations. It was a done deal.”

Likewise for the casting of Masako Takagi and Brian J. Singer. Both actors auditioned the same day as Cawley and were cast almost immediately. “Masako had that mysterious aura about her when she walked in, so I knew we were halfway there. And Brian...well, he made us laugh more than anyone else, and he has to be the comic foil in the film.”

Paul Gersowitz joined the cast a few days before production started, and unlike the others, comes from a history of Santa Barbara theater. “We took a chance with Paul,” said the producer, “casting him days before shooting his first scene, but I had seen him work before and knew he could embody all that was scary about Number Three.”

First-time director Mills found the shoot relatively free of hassles and smooth. “We were hunkered down in a hotel basement on and off for a couple of months with some very long days of shooting. Plus, we lost nine rolls of film to bad exposure and had to reshoot everything. Even so, it was a pleasure to come and create ‘nowhereland’. The actors eased into their roles, eventually

making suggestions that led to new, unscripted scenes being shot. It was a terrific air of creativity. In a way, 'nowhereland' is my gift to them for doing such a great job."

Principal photography began on "nowhereland" in October of 1997 at the Carrillo Hotel, Santa Barbara, using a former ballroom as a sound stage. Several hallways and empty rooms adjacent to the basement made perfect underground interior locations, while the main control room was built in the middle of the dance floor.

The film's old radio and electronic equipment -- central to the look and feel of "nowhereland" -- came by way of Justin Blaise, a local resident who collects old technology. Art director Dave LaDelfa arranged the equipment and hooked the working parts up to the mains, while also designing the many Orwellian posters that dot the room. His brother Darren LaDelfa designed the sets, devising a way to quickly 'fly' a wall away, allowing the camera to move in wherever it needed to be. The special three-tiered bunk beds that the three workers sleep in were also designed by LaDelfa.

Mills used the outside of the hotel as well. To match an exterior zoom shot, the crew constructed a recreation of the building's outside wall, using actual windows borrowed from the hotel.

A final scene where two of the workers are trapped in the control room, up to their necks in paper, nearly destroyed the set. "We had five people standing on ladders above the set, throwing paper," said Mills, "and Brian (Singer, Number Two) and Paul (Gersowitz, Number Three) throttling each other below. Several times Brian lost his balance and the whole set threatened to come down like a pack of cards. It was hours and hours of chaos."

After four months shooting and reshooting, the filmmakers wrapped five days before the building was demolished. "Maybe we should have hung around for that wrecking ball," jokes Mills, "We could have had that action-adventure finale." The crew then moved to shoot exteriors in the Las Padres National Forest, at the summit of Santa Barbara's Camino Cielo, a road that runs west-east along the mountain range. The rather alien-looking environment doubled well as a far-off planet, and the numerous satellite dishes that quietly nestle on the hillside fit in perfectly with the vision of "nowhereland".

With schedules clashing, as they often can do when working for free, photography continued well into 1998, with pick-up shots gathered around Santa Barbara, including UCSB's Ellison Hall (for the Big Cheese scene), the Banana Bungalow Youth Hostel, Brooks Institute's sound stage (for the finale), and the apartments of the director and producer. After a rough cut, Mills shot an entirely new roll of film for one purpose: to scratch the film in the style of experimental filmmaker Stan Brackage for use near the end. "The ending, of which I'm giving nothing away," said Mills, "needed a raw kind of shock for the viewer. I slaved away over a lightbox, inhaling all sorts of fumes from the chemicals needed to eat away film emulsion. But the end result was worth it."

Post-production commenced in July of 1998 and lasted over two years. The total budget, not including promotion, came out at around \$20,000. "nowhereland" now exists as a deliriously strange sci-fi love story, with a look and a feel like no other.

ABOUT THE ACTORS

KARY CAWLEY (Number One) hails from Wichita, Kansas. After graduating from Wichita State with a degree in advertising, Kary moved to New York to pursue acting. After working on the very first independent film he ever auditioned for, "Straight to the Heart," Kary realized he wanted to work in film, and so moved to Los Angeles. "nowhereland" is his first starring role. In his spare time, he enjoys a good game of darts down at the local tavern.

BRIAN J. SINGER (Number Two) is originally from Utica, New York. He started acting in 1992 at the Palm Beach Studio Theater in Florida, where he was noted for his role as Ellard Simms in "The Foreigner." He moved to Los Angeles in 1996, and in between roles, works as a freelance news editor and photographer, for which he recently won two Emmy awards. "nowhereland" is his first big film project in California. In his spare time he enjoys hiking, traveling, and running.

PAUL GERSOWITZ (Number Three) began his acting career at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York. He then moved west and received a BA in Theater from UC Irvine. He was a member of the South Coast Repertory Theater in Newport Beach, as well as working at the PCPA for a year. In Santa Barbara, he has appeared at the Ensemble Theater, and had roles in such plays as "Romeo and Juliet," "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "The Kentucky Cycle," "The Dresser," and "Arsenic and Old Lace." Paul also was a stand-up comic for three years, and has since been in fifteen productions at the Circle Bar B Ranch, the latest of which is "Speed the Plow."

MASAKO TAKAGI (Woman From Another World) was originally born in Tokyo, Japan and raised in different countries such as South Africa and Thailand. She has a BA in English Literature and studied acting in Tokyo, New York, and Los Angeles. She featured in several plays in Tokyo. After moving to Los Angeles, she has appeared in various modeling ads, most recently in the LA Times. In her spare time, she studies English and plays tennis.

MATTHEW LANFORD (The Big Cheese) is a self-employed businessman, born and raised in California. In his spare time he enjoys spending time with his girlfriend of four years and smoking fine cigars. Most of the time you can find him hard at work helping customers at his busy local store, Santa Barbara Cigar and Tobacco. "nowhereland" is his first film appearance.

MAC JAMES (Lackey One) was born in Huntington Beach and moved to Santa Barbara at the spry old age of one. He is currently working on several music projects and plans to study abroad. Since acting in "nowhereland", he is considering returning to acting, which he studied in high school. In his spare time he studies the martial art of Shaolin, and likes a nice pint of Guinness, if you're buying.

DANIEL JAMES (Lackey Two) is a locally born native Santa Barbaran, and the younger brother of Mac James. He is currently attending Santa Barbara High School, participating in their A Cappella choir and Madrigals. In his spare time he reaps the benefits of working out every day.

ABOUT THE CREW

TED MILLS (Director, Writer, Editor, Co-Producer) returned in 1996 from two and a half years in Japan teaching English, having decided he wasn't getting any younger, and knew he had to return to filmmaking, his first love. After a year of working on other people's independent films, he decided to film his own. At first, he worked with Gary Tseng and Dave LaDelfa on a short experimental video, "Universal Leader," which went on to show at various festivals, including the traveling Euro Underground fest, the Seattle Underground Film Festival, and Transmissions 002. Before Japan, Ted was a cast member and writer for the radio show "Off the Air" along with Dave LaDelfa and Scott Easley. He is currently writing arts reviews and articles for the *Santa Barbara Independent*

DRU STURDIVAN (Producer, Casting) studied Television and Film at Pasadena City College. He then went on to work on several independent features in Los Angeles, including "Guyver II: Dark Hero" and "The Sandcastle." After moving to Santa Barbara, he started casting several local independent shorts. Because of his energy, his organization, and his connections, Dru soon became the ideal candidate for the producer of "nowhereland."

WILLIAM ROLAND (Director of Photography) was born in Minnesota, but grew up in San Diego. After a stint in television, William enrolled in Brooks Institute in 1996 to devote himself to film photography. Now an upper division student, he has shot around six shorts for various directors. "nowhereland" is his first non-realist film. He spends his spare time, when he has it, with his wife.

ART SRITHONGKUL (2nd Director of Photography) comes to us from Bangkok, Thailand, where he was once the International Junior Champion tennis player at the 1990 Australian Open. He enrolled in Brooks Institute in 1996, and has completed three projects so far. Art was A.C. on "nowhereland" on the first day of the shoot, then disappeared for a while, only to return as William Roland's replacement when commitments clashed. Art's style matches William's seamlessly while still retaining a look that is all his.

JEFF KAISER (Music and Sound Design) is a Ventura-based trumpet player and composer residing in Ventura, California. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Music Composition from Westmont College and a Master of Music in Choral and Orchestral Conducting from Azusa Pacific University. He has performed with Eugene Chadbourne, The Michael Vlatkovich Brass Trio, Brad Dutz, The Motor Totemist Guild, Headless Household, The Vinny Golia Large Ensemble, Dan Plonsey and the Human Behavior Orchestra, and others. He has five solo CDs out, a majority of them on his pfMentum label (www.pfmentum.com). The title work of his CD Ganz Andere was included in the opening concert of the 1999 National Conference of the Society for Electro-Acoustic Music in the U.S., held at San Jose State University. "Templum-Tempus" also on Ganz Andere, was a runner-up in the PALMARES du 26e Concours International de Musique Electroacoustique, Bourges, France - 1999. "nowhereland" is his first film score in many a year.

nowhereland

CAST

Number One	Kary Cawley
Number Two	Brian J. Singer
Number Three	Paul Gersowitz
Woman from Another World	Masako Takagi
The Big Cheese	Matthew Lanford
Lackey One	Mac James
Lackey Two	Daniel James

CREW

Directed, written, edited, and co-produced by	Ted Mills
Produced by	Dru Sturdivan
Directors of Photography	William Roland Art Srithongkul
Music by	Jeff Kaiser
Assistant Editor	Kyle Ruddick
Costume design by	Zanne Sturdivan
Casting by	Dru Sturdivan for Dominion Productions

Set Design

Darren LaDelfa

Art Design

Dave LaDelfa

Art Department Production Assistants

Luis Caesar Alamilla

Ben Bosman

Stacy Bret

Michelle Chubarov

Dan Horn

Todd Hugin

Akiko Izumitani

Ian Kerch

Gilbert Luna

Chriss Massey

Javier Ortega

Abel Reyes

Heather Scoussas

Assistant camera and lighting

Jurgen Gottschalk

Madison Belanger

John Harvatine

Bernardo Nabuco

Blake Scripts

Natt

Grip

Dan Horn

STAND-INS

Mark Diraison

Jessica Huang

Kyle Ruddick

Dru Sturdivan

Catering

Pauline's Home Cookin'

Foley and sound mix

Caroline Goudsmit/BBC Bristol

Soundtrack available on

pfMENTUM

Titles by

Scott Easley

Film by

Kodak

Processing and telecine transfer

Super 8 Sound, Burbank

Post-production house

IHP Productions, Goleta, CA

Thanks to
The Carrillo Hotel and its staff
Alice Parsons
Brooks Institute Motion Picture School
UCSB Film Studies Department
Scavenge
Dwayne & Dolores Sturdivan
Teresa Steppe
Justin Blaise
Shirley Wilson
City of Santa Barbara Public Works Dept.
Channel City Lumber
Banana Bungalow Youth Hostel
Richard Corum
Jon Crow

Filmed in Santa Barbara, CA, 1997-1999

any similarities between this work of fiction and any persons living or dead or boston terriers is purely coincidental, and quite an amazing coincidence at that, one that would surely make one question preconceived notions of predetermination and man's place in a godless universe or some such rubbishy thing.

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