

= On Your Mark =

Ghibli Experimental Theater On Your Mark ( ??????? On Your Mark , Jiburi Jikkengekij? On Yua M?ku ) is an animated music video created by Studio Ghibli for the song " On Your Mark " by the Japanese rock duo Chage & Aska . The song was released in 1994 as part of the single " Heart " . In 1995 , Hayao Miyazaki wrote and directed the short film for the song as a side @-@ project after having writer 's block with Princess Mononoke . The anime music video is non @-@ linear , providing multiple reiterations and alternate scenes to depict the events . The music video added sound effects to the audio track , but contains no dialogue . Miyazaki purposely misinterpreted the lyrics to present his vision of a world where the surface becomes inhospitable and humans live in an underground city . He made the video cryptic to evoke creative interpretations among viewers .

The music video follows two policemen who raid a religious cult and find an angelic being only to have her taken away and confined to a laboratory . Haunted by the fate of the " angel " , the two men formulate a plan and break into the laboratory . Fleeing in an armored truck the three plummet into an abyss after trying to force past a police aircraft along a narrow suspended roadway . After a montage of the previous scenes , the armored truck suddenly rockets into an apartment complex , allowing their escape . The three escape to the surface , ignoring the radiation and danger signs , emerging near an encased nuclear reactor . The two men set the " angel " free and she flies off into the sky .

The music video was well @-@ received and praised for its animation and attention to detail . It premiered as a short before Studio Ghibli 's Whisper of the Heart and has since been released on Laserdisc and DVD as part of All Things Ghibli Special Short Short . It has not been released outside Japan .

= = Synopsis = =

The video begins with shots of a vacant village , overgrown with weeds , and the concrete sarcophagus of a covered @-@ over nuclear reactor in the background . As the music begins , the scene changes to a sci @-@ fi @-@ style nighttime military @-@ style police raid on a cult . Futuristic flying troop transports crash through the windows of a tower topped by gigantic neon @-@ lit eyes and occupied by armed defenders . The policemen exchange gunfire and grenades with cultists whose hoods depict an enormous eye . The victorious police begin to sort through the bodies of the cultists , two policemen find what appears to be a girl , lying unconscious , with large feathered wings on her back .

The scene changes again , now to bright daylight and blue sky . Two men are driving an old Alfa Romeo Giulietta Spider passo corto down an empty road . As one of the men helps the girl up , she spreads her wings and he holds her hands while she gains confidence . With a nudge she is airborne , but she seems hesitant and afraid as he lets go .

The scene changes back to the discovery of the girl in the tower and the identity of the two men are revealed to be the same from the previous sequence . The two men carefully carry her out and offer her something to drink , and are encouraged when she sips . A team of scientists wearing radiation suits arrive and quickly take the girl away after placing her into a container .

The two men are haunted by the fate the girl will suffer and formulate a plan to rescue her . They break into the laboratory and free her from confinement , but the lab 's alarms are triggered . The three escape in an armored truck and drive along a narrow suspended roadway over what appears to be a domed city built in a crater . Police hovercrafts are in pursuit , and one of them comes very low to the roadway to block the fugitives ' truck . The roadway collapses when the protagonists try to force their way through , sending the truck plummeting . The winged girl refuses to let go of the hands of her rescuers , and the three of them fall into the abyss .

A brief montage of previous shots follows : the discovery of the girl , the girl flying through a blue sky , the two men rescuing the girl from the laboratory and stealing the truck , the truck plummeting amidst the wreckage of the roadway . But this time , inexplicably , the truck fires stabilizing thrusters and makes a short flight into the side of an apartment building . After their escape , the three are

seen in an old Alfa Romeo Giulietta Spider passo corto racing through a dark tunnel underneath signs which bear radiation symbols and read ( in kanji ) " Beware Of Sunlight " and " Survival Not Guaranteed " , then finally they emerge into daylight . They drive past nuclear cooling towers and a sign which reads " Extreme Danger " and continue down the road .

One of the men helps the girl up , she spreads her wings and gives them a grateful smile ; he kisses her hand , and the other winks in farewell . Soon , she is gone drifting upward into the sky . Briefly , a major urban cityscape is seen beyond the trees . From a bird 's @-@ eye view , we see the shape of the car veering off the road and slowing to a stop in the grass .

= = Production = =

The production of the music video began because Miyazaki was suffering from writer 's block on Princess Mononoke and needed another project to distract him . Miyazaki wrote and directed the music video for " On Your Mark " , although the song was previously released in 1994 as part of the single " Heart " . Despite the popularity of the work , Toshio Suzuki told Helen McCarthy , the British author of numerous anime reference books , that Studio Ghibli had not given " 100 percent " focus to the music video .

In the production of the music video , Miyazaki experimented with using computer animation to supplement traditional hand drawn cell @-@ animation . At the time Studio Ghibli did not have its own computer department and the work was outsourced to CG Production Company Links , under supervision of Hideki Nakano . Techniques learned in the experimentation for On Your Mark were later adopted for the creation of Princess Mononoke . Animation director was Masashi And? . Long time Miyazaki collaborator Michiyo Yasuda was in charge of colour selection . Backgrounds were created by Kazuo Oga . Y?ji Takeshige made his debut as Art Director . There is no dialogue in the music video and the two policemen are loosely modeled after Chage and Aska .

= = Analysis = =

The deliberately non @-@ linear , enigmatic and cryptic style of the music video was intended to stimulate the imaginations of its viewers and their interpretations of the music video . " Miyazaki offered an interpretation of the angel as " Hope " and to protect hope could paradoxically mean " to let it go where no @-@ one can touch it " . Dani Cavallaro , an author of books related to anime , reflected on this by proposing that hope retains its purity and authenticity when it is ephemeral , evanescent and elusive . Hope may cause exertion and possibly pain , but denying hope is to deny the feasibility or and vision it provides . Miyazaki said that in the music video 's setting , humans live in an underground city after the surface of the Earth has been contaminated with radiation , creating a sanctuary for nature . Miyazaki did not find this believable , though , as humanity would suffer on the surface instead . Miyazaki intentionally misinterpreted the lyrics to reflect upon the vision of a world filled with disease and radiation and people 's reactions to that world . Cryptically , he implied the two policemen might not be able to return to their old life , but offered no reason as to why .

Cavallaro noted that the lyrics of the song include " ryuukou no kaze " , which translates to " flu " and is also an idiom for " the flu of fashion . " The author further interpreted it as " I always feel the urge to make a fresh start " suggesting this could be the " bleak acceptance of the ideological and economic codes that mold our lives in accordance with the imperative of planned obsolescence , or as a hopeful embracing of the genuine prospects of renewal and change . " Cavallaro suggested that despite the feminine appearance of the " angel " , it could be of a " preternatural order " , making gender or sex distinctions irrelevant . Miyazaki referred to the angelic creature as " tori no hito " or " a bird 's person " which is the nickname of Nausicaä from his Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind manga and film . Cavallaro noted another visual correspondence to Only Yesterday with the oppressive urban environment and the freedom of open spaces .

During their April 1999 lecture series on manga , anime and the works of Miyazaki at the University of Dallas , Pamela Gossin , Professor of Arts and Humanities , and guest instructor Marc Hairston , research scientist in the William B. Hanson Center for Space Sciences , discussed On Your Mark in

their lecture , " In the Coda On Your Mark and Nausicaa , and drew parallels to the Nausicaä story , its titular character and its conclusion . Gossin and Hairston interpreted the release of the winged girl at the end of the video as Miyazaki setting free his character in a manner reminiscent of William Shakespeare 's symbolic liberation of his characters , through Prospero 's release of his servant Ariel in his play The Tempest . The final volume of the Nausicaä manga was released in January 1995 . Miyazaki started creating On Your Mark that same month .

McCarthy highlighted similarities to different works and real life found throughout the film , remarking that the opening city sequence could be an homage to Akira or Blade Runner and the attack on the religious cult could be a reflection of the Aum Shinrikyo movement . Nausicaa.net stated the production occurred prior to the police raid following the Sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway in March 1995 . McCarthy also noted that the film 's scientists ' decontamination gear look like the hero of Porco Rosso and the rescue scene is reminiscent of Princess Leia in Star Wars . The encased or " box " structure in the film is an homage to the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant which was entombed in concrete following the Chernobyl disaster .

Miyazaki scholar Seiji Kan? observed that the urban settings have a China Town style and resemble the cityscapes of Mamoru Oshii 's Ghost in the Shell animated film adaptation , in production at the time . While Miyazaki has been non @-@ committal about the nature of his winged entity in On your Mark , Kan? noted that the manga Seraphim : 266 @,@ 613 @,@ 336 Wings , an unfinished collaborative effort by Oshii and Satoshi Kon , with its Angel Disease theme , was still serialized in Animage at the time Miyazaki was creating On Your Mark in 1995 .

#### = = Reception = =

The music video was well received . Dr. Patrick Collins , a science writer called it , " the most perfect short science fantasy film I 've ever seen . " McCarter of EX Magazine praised the film 's attention to detail that brought the world to life . THEM anime praised the music video and went so far as to justify the purchase of Ghibli ga Ippai Special Short Short for this music video .

#### = = Releases = =

The music video was released theatrically with Whisper of the Heart on July 15 , 1995 . Chage & Aska also used the film in concerts . The first official screening took place at their fan club concert , held at the Makuhari Messe in Chiba , on June 29 , 1995 . Beginning July 5 , 1995 , the video was shown for the performance of the song during the Super Best 3 Mission Impossible tour . Featuring the same melody but different lyrics than On Your Mark , Castles in the Air was included on the English @-@ language album One Voice : The Songs of Chage & Aska . Because of popular demand , On Your Mark was re @-@ released separately in Japan on VHS and Laserdisc , on July 25 , 1997 . On November 15 , 2005 , the film was released on the All Things Ghibli Special Short Short DVD with the video set to play the original " On Your Mark " or " Castles in the Air " songs . After Aska ( Shigeaki Miyazaki ) of the musical duo Chage and Aska was arrested for drug possession , Walt Disney Studios Japan removed On Your Mark from the upcoming DVD / Blu @-@ ray box set containing Hayao Miyazaki 's works and ceased shipments of All Things Ghibli Special Short Short . On October 27 , 2014 , Studio Ghibli 's Toshio Suzuki announced on the company 's web page that they had re @-@ considered the situation and would be sending out Blu @-@ ray discs to purchasers of the Hayao Miyazaki box set , as long as they could provide proof of purchase .