



# THE SKY CRAWLERS Sukai kurora

Japan | 2008 | 122m | 15 tbc

**Director:** Mamoru Oshii

**Screenplay:** Chihiro Ito, Hiroshi Mori (novel)

**Cinematography:** Hisashi Ezura

**Original Music:** Kenji Kawai

**Leading Players:** Rinko Kikuchi, Ryo Kase, Shosuke Tanihara, Daisuke Hirakawa, Yoshiko Sakakibara, Bryce Hitchcock (voice cast)



*The Sky Crawlers* is based on a series of novels by Hiroshi Mori, and the film is directed by Mamoru Oshii, who became well known for directing the highly acclaimed anime *Ghost in the Shell*. As any fan of Oshii would know, his films are notorious for their slow, meditative pace and short bursts of action.

There are many scenes, for example, which show a character wistfully smoking a cigarette or idly staring out of a window, such images are gorgeously rendered down to the most minute detail by Oshii.

The film is about the absurdity and sacrificial futility of war highlighted by the expendable young fighter pilots in the skies. Oshii also wanted to create this film as a paean to youth “a work that should be made into a movie for young people now.”

The story is based around the main character Yuichi Kannami, who, at first, appears to be just a young boy who has become a fighter pilot in the war effort. He arrives at his base where he questions what happened to the pilot before him. However he receives no answers and his predecessor, for the most part, remains anonymous.

The film starts to evolve when we realise that Yuichi is not just a boy, he is a boy forever. Not just that, he is a clone, he is what is known as a “Kildren”. He is aware of this fact and does not appear interested in why he is in this situation. He believes it is not necessary to grow up when it is quite possible he will die tomorrow. The film becomes more sinister when it is revealed to the viewer that the wars these young pilots are fighting are not even real. They have been staged by the Government and the Media to increase faith amongst the public that all is well with the world.



what did you think of the film? please mark or tear your vote ▶

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- excellent A

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- B

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- fair C

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- D

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- poor E

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Although these wars are fictional some of the pilots still die. This would appear to be of no concern as more "Kildren" can be made and brought forward.

*The Sky Crawlers* has some truly remarkable animation and the art direction is superb, ably supported by Kenji Kawaii's (a long-time Oshii collaborator) soulful score. Due to the film's Peter Pan meets Orwellian Big Brother like story-line and stunning aerial combat action sequences, *The Sky Crawlers* has definitely put itself on the map as an anime to be taken seriously and not just by anime fans. As Dan Persons writes for *Cinefantastique* magazine, "*The Sky Crawlers* finds Oshii bringing all his strengths as humanistic storyteller and anime visionary to the fore. It's his best work since the original *Ghost in the Shell*, and proof positive of anime's unique ability to excite and enlighten."

**BFF Film Note by Jenifer Hardy**

**Tomorrow at Bath Film Festival 2009...**

Friday 20 November, 7.00pm | Chapel Arts | £6 / £4

**Afghan Star**

Havana Marking | UK, Afghanistan | 87m | 12A tbc | sub-titles

After decades of war and Taliban rule a new TV talent show is taking Afghanistan by storm. Winner of Best Director and the Audience Award at Sundance 2009, this timely and moving documentary follows four contestants (including two women) from the regional auditions to the final.

Director Havana Marking will be at the screening to take questions from the audience.

Friday 20 November, 9.30pm | Chapel Arts | £6 / £4

**Timecrimes**

Nacho Vigalondo | Spain | 2007 | 92m | 15 | sub-titles

The smartest time travel film since Shane Carruth's *Primer*, Nacho Vigalondo's debut collides the science fiction and slasher genres to perverse effect. The story of Héctor, a man caught unwittingly inside a temporal labyrinth, is a stunning feat of narrative architecture, with moments of candid horror. *Timecrimes* wields the conventions of its twin genres like the blades of sharp scissors, and asks: How can we control desire? Can guilt absolve us? And how are we to be the authors of our own lives?

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