



HOPPELES

HOPE IS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
UN CERTAIN REGARD
2023 OFFICIAL SELECTION

INTERNATIONAL PRESS KIT

HOPPELES

FILM INFO

T I T L E HOPELESS
D I R E C T O R KIM Chang-hoon
C A S T HONG Xa-bin (Yeon-gyu)
SONG Joong-ki (Chi-geon)
KIM Hyoung-seo (Hayan)
P R E S E N T E D B Y Plus M Entertainment
P R O D U C T I O N Sanai Pictures
C O - P R O D U C T I O N HighZium Studio, Plus M Entertainment
S T A R T O F P R O D U C T I O N September 13, 2022
E N D O F P R O D U C T I O N December 12, 2022

LOG LINE

Although in his 17 years of life he has never once gotten what he wanted, he still struggles to grasp onto hope.

SYNOPSIS

FOR US, THERE ARE THINGS WE JUST HAVE TO DO.

A town with no future, and no hope.
Seventeen-year old Yeon-gyu (HONG Xa-bin) was born in this place, and has never been to anywhere else.

While enduring the repeated violence inflicted by his stepfather, he saves up money in the lone hope of moving to the Netherlands with his mother.

Chi-geon (SONG Joong-ki), born and raised in this town, is now a mid-level boss in a criminal organization.
Having learned early in life that this world is hell, he gets by in his own way.

One day Yeon-gyu gets into a fight to protect his stepsister Hayan (KIM Hyoung-seo). Unable to raise the settlement money, Yeon-gyu is helped by Chi-geon, and in that way Yeon-gyu comes to start a new life as a member of Chi-geon's gang. Although scared and awkward, Yeon-gyu gradually adjusts with the help of Chi-geon who is like an older brother to him. Having earned Chi-geon's trust while fighting to survive in the gang, Yeon-gyu begins to fall into more and more dangerous circumstances.

IN ORDER TO ESCAPE FROM HELL,
THEY BECOME A PART OF IT.



ABOUT
MOVIE

01

IN ORDER TO ESCAPE THEIR HELLISH REALITY,
THESE TWO MEN MUST BECOME A PART OF THAT HELL.
A BROMANCE WITH EXPLOSIVE TENSION AND INTENSE EMOTION.

The film **HOPELESS** depicts two men who, in order to escape the hellish reality that surrounds them, must become a part of that hell themselves. With the unpredictable course of their relationship, the film achieves a strained tension and a unique cinematic sensibility.

Having been abandoned by his birth father at a young age, Yeon-gyu endures a difficult life with his violent stepfather and his mother who is plagued by hardship, but he refuses to give up his dream of saving up money and moving with his mother to the Netherlands. The cold gang boss Chi-geon, by contrast, has learned about the cruelties of life from a young age, and believes that there are some things that one simply has to do. These two men have different personalities and face different circumstances, but they recognize the similar scars and burdens that each of them bear. Chi-geon, who has had to make use of his scars in order to survive in this world, teaches Yeon-gyu his own method of surviving, and as the two men draw closer, the audience will feel a deep empathy and sadness for these two wounded people. However as time passes and Yeon-gyu becomes more reckless, Chi-geon who is anxiously observing him feels a complex mix of emotions, and the film's increasing tension pulls the audience along an unpredictable path. The story of these two men, who try to escape their precarious reality by making increasingly dangerous choices, will captivate the audience with a never-before-seen intense emotion, deep immersiveness and lingering resonance.



ABOUT
MOVIE

02

THE SURPRISING INTENSITY OF NEWCOMER HONG XA-BIN'S GAZE
THE INTENSE TRANSFORMATION OF GLOBAL STAR SONG JOONG-KI
THE DARING CHALLENGE OF K-POP'S FAMOUS BIBI(KIM HYOUNG-SEO)
THE BOLD DIRECTION OF KIM CHANG-HOON, A NEW DIRECTOR TO WATCH

FEEL THE BURNING ENERGY OF YOUTH ON THE BIG SCREEN!

The film **HOPELESS** features an intense bromance between talented newcomer **HONG Xa-bin** and global star **SONG Joong-ki**, plus a daring move into acting by one of Korea's most iconic singers, making for an onscreen acting synergy that you won't be able to tear your eyes from.

The newcomer **HONG Xa-bin**, who displayed solid acting skills and a unique look in the award winning short films *Vacation* and *Save Me*, shows the full range of his acting abilities in the role of **Yeon-gyu**, a 17-year old boy who has nobody to turn to. Unsteady like a dangerously hurtling motorcycle that might fall at any moment, **HONG Xa-bin's** **Yeon-gyu** perfectly expresses the terrified gaze of a teenage boy as well as the venomous determination of someone who must trample on others in order to survive. **SONG Joong-ki**, fresh off three mega international hits in the Netflix film *Space Sweepers* and the TV series *Vincenzo* and *Reborn Rich*, undergoes an intense acting transformation that makes it difficult for one to recall his earlier sophisticated and gentle image. With his hard-to-read expression, deeper voice and a newly intense gaze, **SONG Joong-ki** imparts to the character of **Chi-geon**, who carries a psychological wound much more fearsome than the scars to his ear, a charm completely different to that of the previous characters he played. Having been taken in by the screenplay, **SONG** agreed to star in this film for no fee, and audiences will be able to feel his deep connection to this story through his brilliant performance.

The role of **Hayan**, who one day comes to join **Yeon-gyu's** family as his stepsister, is played by K-Contents icon singer/actress **KIM Hyoung-seo (BIBI)**, who brings a strong presence to the role. With a mature charm so unlike that of a new actress, she brings a fierce intensity to the role of **Hayan**, who acts tough on the outside but feels a strong sympathy for **Yeon-gyu**.

At last, the arrival of director **KIM Chang-hoon** who wrote the screenplay for **HOPELESS** and developed it over a long period of time has come like a burst of rain to the Korean film industry which has long thirsted for a new director with fearsome talent. Combining the acting ensemble of young performers not afraid to take on a new challenge and a director filled with ambition, **HOPELESS** is a vibrant film that will overwhelm the screen and open a new chapter for Korean cinema.



O&A WITH DIRECTOR

• **What inspired you to begin working on this film?**

I've always wanted to make a film about crime. In considering what it is about crime films that has captivated me so much, I've come to know that it's not crime itself, but rather the repercussions of crime that intrigue me more. From the time I realized that, the idea for this film has taken shape little by little.

• **Please describe your working method and the atmosphere on set. Anecdotes are welcome.**

As everything was new to me, there were definitely many hardships that I had to encounter. Some were trivial, while some were quite enormous. But thanks to the many professional and thankful crew members that always had my back on set, I was able to overcome the many obstacles that stood in front of me. We worked amazingly well within our hectic schedule as one, and thanks to the crew's efforts and diverse valuable know-hows I was able to complete the film.

• **Please share a few words about your actors.**

HONG Xa-bin, SONG Joong-ki, KIM Hyoung-seo (BIBI) and all the other cast members took these characters, which previously only existed in the screenplay, and turned them into something much more vivid and outstanding. They always contributed great opinions, sometimes in matters that I hadn't even considered. I consider myself extremely lucky, and I'm tremendously grateful to my actors for their dedication.

• **What did you learn during the course of making this film?**

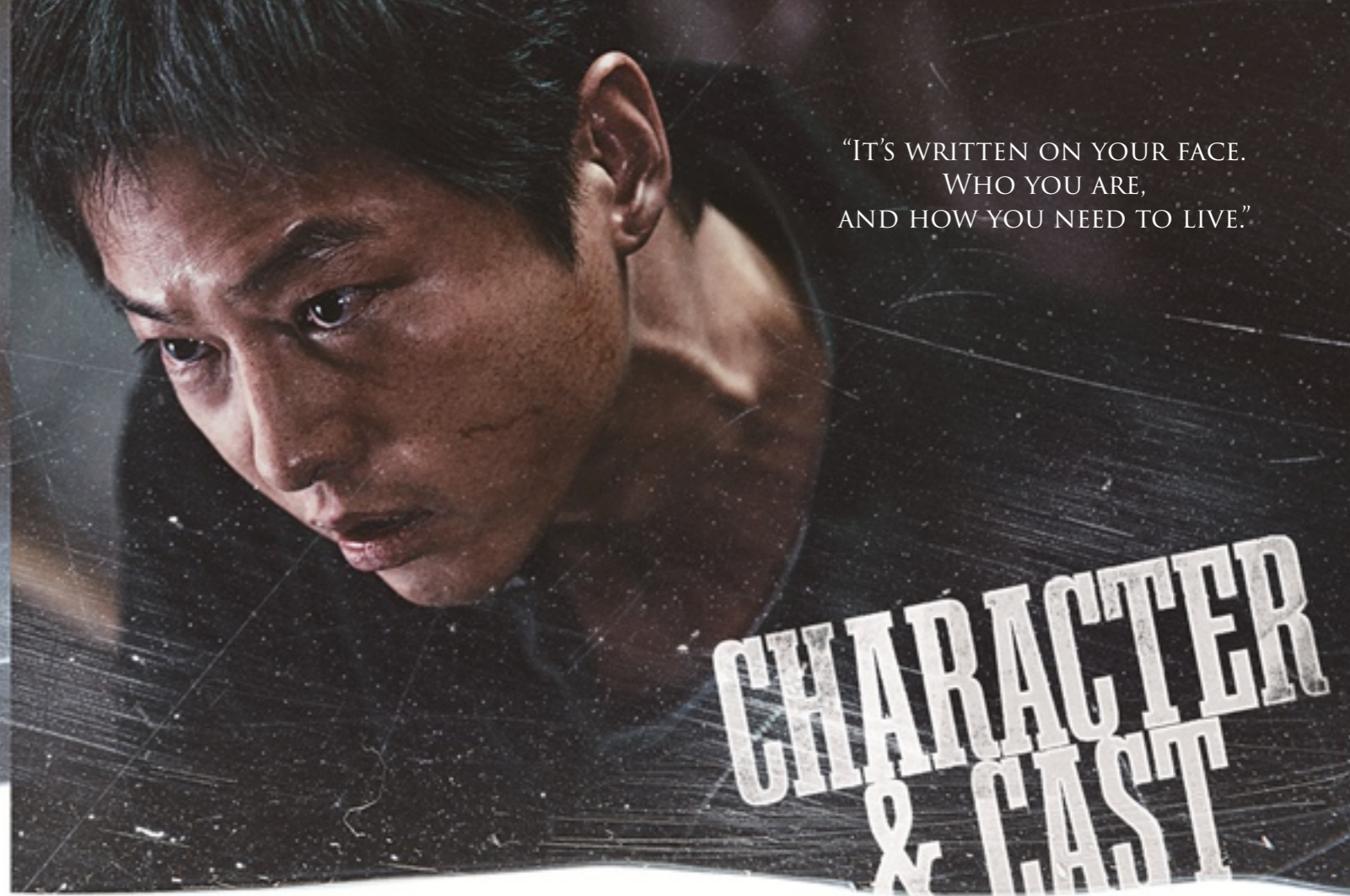
I learned that a film gathers strength and grows on its own like an organism. I learned to trust my actors and crew, and I learned how special and gratifying this whole process of filmmaking is.

• **What would you like people to remember from your film?**

I made this film in the hopes that however much we may be pushed into darkness by some situation or environment, we might remember the dim light that perseveres within us.



“THERE’S SOMEWHERE I WANT TO GO.
THEY SAY EVERYONE LIVES THE SAME THERE,
AND IT’S QUIET.”



“IT’S WRITTEN ON YOUR FACE.
WHO YOU ARE,
AND HOW YOU NEED TO LIVE.”

A teenager who hopes to escape his hellish reality, **Yeon-gyu**

Having grown accustomed to poverty, Yeon-gyu passes the days working a part-time job. His only source of hope amidst the habitual domestic violence he suffers is to raise enough money to take himself and his mother to the Netherlands. However in this dark reality where nothing goes as he plans, there is only one option available to the traumatized Yeon-gyu. He visits the gang boss Chi-geon who is the only one to have reached out a hand to him.

CAST | **HONG Xa-bin**

The up-and-coming actor HONG Xa-bin, who left a big impression and won critical praise for his performances in the short films Vacation and Save Me, displays the full range of his talent in HOPELESS. Playing the 17-year old boy Yeon-gyu who chooses a dangerous path in order to escape his hellish reality, HONG Xa-bin expresses both the subtle, complex inner life of his character as well as his explosive emotions. Of his experience shooting HOPELESS, HONG Xa-bin says, “There was not a single day of wasted filming, and everyone showed intense concentration while shooting.” Audiences in 2023 will discover an exciting new acting talent.

Filmography

Film **<Nobody’s Lover>**(2022) **<Tune In for Love>**(2019) **<Save Me>**(short, 2017) **<Vacation>**(short, 2017) **<Take Off 2>**(2016)

Television **[Duty After School]**(2023) **[Chiri-san]**(2021) **[The School Nurse Files]**(2020)

A mid-level gang boss living in a harsh reality, **Chi-geon**

Chi-geon lives in a hellish world according to his own methods. Traces of the life he has lived can be seen in his torn ear and in the scars on his body. From the moment they first met, Chi-geon recognizes the reality in which Yeon-gyu lives. Although he did not wish for it to happen, in the end he brings Yeon-gyu into his organization, recognizing the similar irreversible scars that they both have.


CAST | **SONG Joong-ki**

Having proved himself to be a top actor in the film Space Sweepers and the TV series Vincenzo and Reborn Rich, SONG Joong-ki’s new selection HOPELESS features a SONG Joong-ki that you have never seen before. He completely transforms himself in the difficult role of Chi-geon, from his physical presence to his facial expressions and the tone of his voice, in order to subtly express in the inner and outer sides of his character. Of his decision to appear in HOPELESS, he said, “I believed this was a project that the Korean film industry definitely needed to make, and I’m thankful to have had the opportunity to take part in it.”

Filmography

Film **<Space Sweepers>**(2021) **< Battleship Island>**(2017) **<Werewolf Boy>**(2012) **<Penny Pinchers>**(2011) **<Hearty Paws 2 >**(2010) **<The Case of the Itaewon Suicide>**(2009) **<Five Senses of Eros>**(2009) **<A Frozen Flower>**(2008)

Television **[Reborn Rich]**(2022) **[Vincenzo]**(2021) **[Arthdal Chronicles]**(2019) **[Descendants of the Sun]**(2016) **[The Innocent Man]**(2012) **[Deep-Rooted Tree]**(2011) **[Sungkyunkwan Scandal]**(2010) **[Obstetrics and Gynecology Doctors]**(2010) **[Will It Snow for Christmas?]**(2009~2010) **[Triple]**(2009) **[My Precious You]**(2008~2009)



“WHY IS EVERYONE
SO SET ON TRYING TO DOMINATE
YEON-GYU?”

CHARACTER & CAST

Yeon-gyu’s younger sister, who tries not to be shaken by her harsh reality, **Hayan**

Hayan becomes a family member to Yeon-gyu when her father remarries. She feels anguished over Yeon-gyu, who always shakes in fear from the indiscriminate violence of her father. Although she doesn’t show it on the outside, Hayan cares more about Yeon-gyu than anyone else and becomes his only protective shield. When one day Yeon-gyu begins acting and dressing differently, she starts to feel worried.

CAST | **KIM Hyoung-seo (BIBI)**

The singer/actress KIM Hyoung-seo (BIBI) displays an irreplaceable presence and intense energy that carried her through a highly competitive audition to be cast in the role of Hayan. Portraying Hayan as a bold yet hard-hearted character who tries to protect Yeon-gyu, KIM Hyoung-seo’s acting will leave a strong impression on viewers. She says, “Hayan is a person who thinks of Yeon-gyu to the very end, without losing her upright character. HOPELESS is a film in which I could take another step on the path to becoming an adult.”

Filmography

Film <Whispering Corridors 6: The Humming>(2021)



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Director | **KIM Chang-hoon**

With his debut feature HOPELESS, director KIM Chang-hoon has given impressive depth to the story of Yeon-gyu who tries to escape from his harsh reality, and the mid-level gang boss Chi-geon who feels sympathy for Yeon-gyu. KIM Chang-hoon has created a tense, unpredictable noir drama that portrays a highly realistic but extreme reality with a meticulous portrayal of struggling characters. Having been invited to the Cannes Film Festival with his debut film, director KIM Chang-hoon is drawing attention from film fans as a new talent to watch.



ABOUT
THE PRODUCTION COMPANY

SANAI PICTURES

Producer HAN Jae-duk, who participated in *Oldboy* (2003) as a line producer, produced *The Unjust* (2010), *Nameless Gangster* (2012) and *The Berlin File* (2012). In 2013, he founded Sanai Pictures with its first film, *New World* (2013). He is known to have made a clear mark in the crime action genre of Korea. Since then, he has produced eleven films: *Man in Love* (2014), *The Shameless* (2015), *The Tiger* (2015), *A Violent Prosecutor* (2016), *Asura* (2016), *The Sheriff in Town* (2017), *The Spy Gone North* (2018), *Money* (2019), *OK! Madam* (2020), and *Hunt* (2022). Following the production company's name that has the meaning "real man" in Korean, Han has displayed the world of men in various ways and produced quality work, proven by critical reviews as well as box office success. *The Shameless*, *The Spy Gone North* and *Hunt* have been selected and screened at the Cannes Film Festival and *A Violent Prosecutor* attracted over 9 million audience members in Korea alone.

HIGHZIUM STUDIO

HighZium Studio is a comprehensive entertainment company that encompasses the development and production of films and TV series as well as talent management.

The company is run jointly by CEO HWANG Ki-yong, who has produced various works that have enjoyed great success in Korea and the Asian market including *Start Up* (2020), *While You Were Sleeping* (2017), *My Father is Strange* (2017), *Pinocchio* (2014), *The Innocent Man* (2012), and *Deep-Rooted Tree* (2011), and CEO HAN Suk-won, who with the productions *Money Heist: Korea-Joint Economic Area* (2022), *The Sound of Magic* (2022), *Run On* (2020), and *Itaewon Class* (2020) has reached a worldwide audience through global platforms.

As HighZium Studio develops and produces a diverse slate of series, earning both popular and critical acclaim, the company has expanded its work to film production by participating production of *HOPELESS* and *My Name is Loh Kiwan*. Additionally, as a management company representing global stars such as SONG Joong-ki, LEE Jong-suk, KIM Ji-won, and others, HighZium has solidified its reputation and served as a leader of Korean popular culture.

PLUS M ENTERTAINMENT

Plus M Entertainment is a leading entertainment company, encompassing development, production, financing, distribution and international sales of films, TV series, and short form series. Founded in 2014 by Megabox, one of the biggest multiplex chains in Korea, the company is an affiliate of JoongAng Group, which includes JoongAng Ilbo, a major Korean daily newspaper, and cable channel JTBC.

The success of its theatrical slate has been driven by critically-acclaimed films such as *Hunt* (2022), *The Round-up* (2022), *Little Forest* (2018), *The Outlaws* (2017), *Anarchist from Colony* (2017) and *Dongju: The Portrait of a Poet* (2016). In addition, Plus M Entertainment has expanded into producing drama series such as *I Have Not Done My Best* which aired in 2022 and *Bulk (WT)* which is set to be produced in 2023.

In the fast-changing world of content production and distribution, the company is driving innovation in the Korean film industry by producing and distributing a wide range of content for various platforms.

CREDITS

PLUS M ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

SANAI PICTURES PRODUCTION

HIGHZIUM STUDIO & PLUS M ENTERTAINMENT CO-PRODUCTION

A **KIM CHANG HOON** FILM "HOPELESS"

Cast	HONG XA BIN, SONG JOONG KI, KIM HYOUNG SEO
Executive Producer	HONG JEONGIN
Producer	HAN JAE DUK
Co-Producer	HWANG KI-YONG, HONG JEONGIN
Directed by	KIM CHANG HOON
Screenplay by	KIM CHANG HOON
Director of Photography	LEE JAE WOO
Lighting by	LEE JAE GUN
Production Designer	LEE CHAE YOUNG, PARK IL HYUN
Stunt Choreography	HEO MYEONG HAENG, RYU SUNG CHUL
Editor	KIM SANG BUM
Music by	KANG NE NE
Sound by	SONG SEUNG HYUN
Supervising Sound Editor	KIM CHANG SEOP
Costume Designer	CHO SANG KYUNG, SHIN HYE JEONG
Make Up&Hair Designer	PARK SUN
Special Effects	JUNG DO AHN, CHO KYUNG KYU
Visual Effects	BAE SANG MIN
Colorist	PARK JIN HO

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HOPELESS

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