

2 - Style and Originality

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[00:02] NA

Bones established its exceptional qualities
and outstanding production techniques.

[00:07] NA

Minami and his colleagues set themselves
apart from other anime production companies

[00:11] NA

by continuing to create original anime series.

[00:15] ANDO

Many people say they see Bones as a company
that produces a lot of original anime.

[00:23] NA

Unlike adaptations,
creating an original anime from nothing

[00:29] NA

is not only difficult, but risky, as well.

[00:33] MATSUKURA

For an anime production company,
producing an original anime is a dream.

[00:39] MATSUKURA

At the same time, it's very difficult.

[00:43] MATSUKURA

Planning is difficult.
Securing funding is difficult.

[00:46] NA

However, Bones trusted its
creators with everything,

[00:49] NA

including the direction,
composition, and screenplay,

[00:53] NA

leading to the creation of new and unique
series that revolutionized the robot genre.

[01:02] NA

Bones' success with original anime

was not limited to robots.

[01:07] NA

Shinichiro Watanabe, the acutely sensitive scriptwriter Keiko Nobumoto, and others

[01:13] NA

would challenge the limits of anime.

[01:16] WATANABE

There was a desire to create something brand new

[01:19] WATANABE

that wasn't a copy of an existing successful series.

[01:22] WATANABE

I loved that.

[01:25] OYABU

It takes a studio that provides a space to create freely.

[01:35] WATANABE

Bones is closer to Sunrise at its peak than current Sunrise itself.

[01:40] WATANABE

I'll probably get in trouble again for saying that.

[01:45] NA

Bones stuck to their style with TV series such as* *Wolf's Rain**,* *Space Dandy*,

[01:50] NA

and* *Carole & Tuesday* and feature films such as *Sword of the Stranger**.

[01:57] MINAMI

For the directors, scriptwriters, production staff, and producers,

[02:03] MINAMI

creating something new for an original anime is the expectation.

[02:09] KAWASAKI

I think that's rooted in Bones' history.

[02:17] ANDO

For me personally, every time I work on an original series

[02:21] ANDO

it feels like a fresh experience.

[02:25] MINAMI

Producing an original series is appealing for the creators.

[02:32] MINAMI

It also entertains the audience

with new surprises.

[02:39] NA

The creative studio's foray began with a story about a boy named Hiwou.

[03:25] NA

In 1998, the newly-established Bones followed production on* Cowboy Bebop*

[03:33] NA

with their first original series* Hiwou War Chronicles*.

[03:39] MINAMI

It was the Hiwou War Chronicles TV series.

[03:44] MINAMI

We were just starting out and had no money,

[03:48] MINAMI

but right out the gate, we produced an original series that wasn't sci-fi but had robots.

[03:57] NARRATION

Created by Sho Aikawa and directed by Tetsuro Amino,

[04:03] NARRATION

the series began airing in 1999.

[04:07] NARRATION

Set during the Meiji period, the protagonist Hiwou and his friends

[04:12] NARRATION

controlled a giant clockwork doll against their enemies in this adventure series.

[04:20] NARRATION

It was a challenging setting for a recently-established anime studio.

[04:27] MINAMI

The schedule and budget situation were brutal.

[04:35] MINAMI

Our small company put together a studio.

[04:40] MINAMI

We received a lot of help from Sunrise, but it was still difficult to produce.

[04:51] MINAMI

The budget was really tight.

[04:55] ISHIKAWA

The difficulty of producing an original series

[04:59] ISHIKAWA

will remain the same in past, present, and future.

[05:06] ISHIKAWA

It's hard to make a hit.

[05:10] ISHIKAWA

An original series doesn't have the recognition of an adaptation or a sequel.

[05:20] ISHIKAWA

Gaining recognition is as difficult now as it was in the past.

[05:32] NA

Bones moved away from robot series for a while

[05:35] NA

to break new ground with original anime.

[05:39] NA

Wolf's Rain follows the story of wolves surviving in human forms in a desolate future.

[05:47] NA

Its creator Keiko Nobumoto wrote scripts for numerous series, including Cowboy Bebop.

[05:54] NA

Wolf's Rain poetically depicts the search for paradise amidst an apocalyptic outlook.

[06:01] MINAMI

A story about wolves seeking paradise sounds like it would be hopeful.

[06:07] SASAKI

Or active.

[06:08] MINAMI

But it's not like that at all.

[06:12] SASAKI

It's a paradise shrouded in sadness, which is unusual.

[06:15] SASAKI

Normally a paradise is joyful and hopeful.

[06:21] SASAKI

It's very much in Nobumoto's style,

[06:24] SASAKI

and that produced a chemical reaction with Ms. Kanno.

[06:30] NA

Despite its complex and revolutionary themes,

[06:35] NA

Bones placed their full trust in Nobumoto's screenplay

[06:38] NA

and Director Tensai Okamura's

abilities, leading to the creation

[06:43] NA

of a masterpiece full of
lyricism and originality.

[06:48] WATANABE

Nobumoto Keiko, a scriptwriter I frequently
worked with, passed away recently.

[06:57] WATANABE

A screening was held after her passing.

[07:02] WATANABE

The first three episodes of Wolf's Rain
were shown at the screening.

[07:10] WATANABE

I was amazed by the emotion
the scriptwriter put into Wolf's Rain.

[07:21] WATANABE

A lot of anime these days are adaptations,

[07:27] WATANABE

and I don't think you can say
the scriptwriter and director

[07:30] WATANABE

pour their souls into adaptations.

[07:34] SPEAKER

But the scriptwriter poured
her soul into Wolf's Rain,

[07:41] SPEAKER

and I think that's incredible.

[07:46] NA

In 2014, Shinichiro Watanabe
and Keiko Nobumoto

[07:51] NA

presented Minami with an innovative proposal:
a laid-back and unbelievable space adventure

[07:57] NA

about Dandy, an alien hunter,
and his eccentric crew.

[08:05] DANDY

The name's Dandy. Space Dandy.

[08:09] MINAMI

In some ways, Director Watanabe
and I wanted to create

[08:12] MINAMI

something counter to current culture.

[08:14] MINAMI

We wanted to make something
completely different

[08:18] MINAMI

from what current anime and the industry were expressing that was still animation.

[08:28] DANDY

Go with the flow.

[08:31] DANDY

That's me, baby.

[08:34] WATANABE

We were unhappy with the anime industry and the anime being produced at the time.

[08:47] AKANE

In the early 2000s, a lot of companies were producing bishojo anime for core fans,

[09:03] AKANE

but Mr. Minami never engaged with those.

[09:08] DANDY

You really wanna know? That's K-E-T-S-U.

[09:13] DANDY

That's right. It's butts.

[09:16] WATANABE

Creators were told to create works that would sell, so they did.

[09:26] WATANABE

But chasing success by copying successful series isn't good.

[09:34] WATANABE

We wanted to produce works that would allow creators to create more freely.

[09:39] WATANABE

Mr. Minami was also unhappy about that,

[09:43] WATANABE

and we shared a desire to break out of that thinking

[09:47] WATANABE

and create the situation we have now.

[09:50] WATANABE

If I told another studio

I wanted to create freely,

[09:54] WATANABE

I doubt anyone else would've let me do it.

[09:58] MINAMI

In that way, Space Dandy was created in the freest place in the industry.

[10:06] NA

Bones began challenging the limits of anime production once again.

[10:10] NA

They expanded the boundaries of the genre

[10:14] NA

*through the wild adventures
of Dandy and his friends.*

[10:17] WATANABE

*The desire to create a more creative,
free, and anarchical series came first.*

[10:26] WATANABE

*Producing a comedy
was our excuse to do that.*

[10:29] WATANABE

*Some of the episodes have
no comedic elements at all,*

[10:33] WATANABE

*but we could include them for the
simple reason that it was a comedy.*

[10:41] ITO

*I assume it was Mr. Minami
and Director Watanabe's decision,*

[10:47] ITO

but I remember them saying they wanted

[10:50] ITO

*to make a serious effort
to create something stupid.*

[10:53] ITO

At first, I wasn't sure what they meant.

[10:59] ITO

*It's certainly a comedy, but there are
a lot of other elements, as well.*

[11:07] WATANABE

It's an avant-garde or experimental series.

[11:13] WATANABE

*Normally it would be difficult
to air episodes with that content.*

[11:22] WATANABE

It's very surreal.

[11:24] WATANABE

*Truly amazing films should express things
that can't be put into words.*

[11:32] WATANABE

*I feel we were able to effectively
incorporate that into entertainment.*

[11:40] DANDY

Dandy...

[11:44] NA

*Bones and Watanabe's deep relationship
created a series in a new genre once again.*

[11:50] NA

In 2019, for Bones' 20th anniversary

and the 10th anniversary of *FlyingDog*,

[11:56] NA

Bones announced *Carole & Tuesday*,

[11:58] NA

a music-themed series
celebrating these milestones.

[12:03] NA

*Cowboy Bebop**, *Samurai Champloo**,
and* *Space Dandy**.

[12:08] NA

Music plays an important role in
all of Shinichiro Watanabe's works.

[12:15] NA

Carole & Tuesday, which began
with an invitation from Shiro Sasaki,

[12:20] NA

was a series about music, so it was only
natural that Watanabe would be involved.

[12:26] MINAMI

It was proposed that we make
a series about music.

[12:29] MINAMI

Unlike existing music anime,
we thought it would be interesting

[12:34] MINAMI

to produce something
that would create music.

[12:42] WATANABE

We talked about how to make the series
approachable to first-time watchers

[12:48] WATANABE

and settled on a story about two girls
who start making music after they meet.

[13:06] NA

In the world of* *Carole & Tuesday**,
art is created by advanced AI technology,

[13:13] NA

and people simply enjoy their creations.

[13:15] NA

Two girls meet and begin to change
the world with the music they create.

[13:21] NA

With its modern and forward-looking themes,

[13:25] NA

the series took a hard look
at how we engage with creativity.

[13:30] SASAKI

During college, I really liked
American music from the late 60s.

[13:37] SASAKI

At the time, young people were
fighting or protesting with music.

[13:45] CATHERINE

Your determination to fight with
only your music made you unique.

[13:53] CATHERINE

It's been a while since I last listened
to music made without AI.

[13:57] CATHERINE

I look forward to hearing your next work.

[13:59] NA

The series was directed by Motonobu Hori.

[14:02] NA

The concert that serves
as the climax of the series

[14:05] NA

features musicians performing a variety
of genres with varied musical expressions.

[14:09] NA

Innovative images and
a broad range of direction

[14:12] NA

were necessary to breathe life
into the scenes and story.

[14:18] HORI

We were working off of
Mr. Kubonouchi's character designs,

[14:22] HORI

which were actually pretty
difficult to animate.

[14:27] HORI

Animating those characters performing
was pretty difficult in an of itself,

[14:38] HORI

and animating that as part of
a series was a challenge, as well.

[14:42] HORI

Also, Watanabe-san's musical taste
is incredibly refined.

[14:49] HORI

He always chooses whatever's
cutting edge at the time,

[14:54] HORI

so matching that was a challenge, as well.

[15:00] SKIP

Not bad. Only 52 takes with Tobe.

[15:06] HORI

We left the vocalists' movements up to the animators.

[15:12] HORI

For example, the movements of a hip hop rapper or an R&B singer

[15:21] HORI

are influenced by their musical culture.

[15:28] HORI

No one had captured that yet,

[15:34] HORI

so we did our best to express that with animation.

[15:40] WATANABE

There's no action.

[15:42] WATANABE

Almost all of Bones' works had been action up until that point,

[15:50] WATANABE

so I think it was challenging for Bones.

[15:55] MINAMI

The scale was enormous.

[15:57] MINAMI

Some of the artists involved were internationally renowned artists.

[16:08] MINAMI

We were aiming to create something unachievable at a normal scale.

[16:18] NA

*Carole & Tuesday**, *Wolf's Rain**, *Space Dandy**, *RahXephon*, and *Hiwou War Chronicles**

[16:25] NA

all have an underlying Bones-like quality,

[16:29] NA

but it's difficult to succinctly describe what that is.

[16:33] NA

Creativity, originality, risk taking, and freedom all fit the bill.

[16:41] NA

Creativity and freedom can be found throughout their 2007 film *Sword of the Stranger*,

[16:51] NA

the story of an orphan named Kotaro who is rescued by Nanashi,

[16:55] NA

a warrior who has sworn to never fight again.

[16:58] NA

A sense of nihilism hangs about
this jidaigeki-inspired chanbara film.

[17:03] NA

The brutal and bloody battles of the Sengoku
period demonstrate the horrors of war.

[17:10] NA

Sword of the Stranger,
directed by Masahiro Ando,

[17:13] NA

drew international attention
for the quality of its story and action

[17:19] NA

and for pushing the limits
of animation technology.

[17:22] WATANABE

Stranger's action scenes are
really well made. I was impressed.

[17:30] ANDO

I'd watched jidaigeki since I was a child.

[17:34] ANDO

I liked them all individually, but there were
also certain elements within them I liked

[17:43] ANDO

that had stayed with me.

[17:57] AMANO

Preserving the original ideas of the
creators at the center of a project,

[18:07] AMANO

such as the directors, the scriptwriters,
and the designers, is essential.

[18:15] AMANO

Otherwise you lose sight of what's important,

[18:19] AMANO

since you're writing the story
throughout production.

[18:22] AMANO

It's important to pause
and carefully consider

[18:25] AMANO

the ideas the initial creators came up with.

[18:30] ANDO

Little by little, I described the ideas
I had for the film to the designers,

[18:41] ANDO

which they turned into art.

[18:44] ANDO

I wanted to create something
manga-like rather than realistic.

[18:51] ANDO

I wanted elements of reality
without becoming realistic.

[18:54] ANDO

Manga-like, but not too manga-like.

[19:01] ANDO

Together we searched for the answer

[19:05] ANDO

by comparing the images in my head
and the art they drew.

[19:21] ANDO

It was less that I wanted
Mr. Sato's jidaigeki music

[19:24] ANDO

and more that I was a fan
of his music in general.

[19:28] ANDO

I was curious to know what kind of music
Mr. Sato would compose for a jidaigeki.

[19:36] SATO

During the fight scenes,
I kept the music stoic.

[19:43] SATO

Percussion only, for example.

[19:46] SATO

Rather than having the music
speak too much, I kept it stoic.

[19:55] SATO

On the other hand, I composed heartfelt
music for Nanashi and Kotaro's scenes.

[20:04] NANASHI

If you stand over there, you'll catch a cold.

[20:10] SATO

I wanted to expand the breadth
of the animation and setting

[20:18] SATO

by using instruments used in Arabic
and African music for a Japanese jidaigeki.

[20:28] SPEAKER

If the foundation of music is solid,
you can try all kinds of things

[20:33] SPEAKER

and create even more interesting music.

[20:37] SPEAKER

That foundation is Bones.

[20:39] SPEAKER

The quality of the animation
and how interesting the script is.

[20:46] SPEAKER

When those are solid, it's easy
to compose music for them.

[20:50] SPEAKER

You'll create something interesting
no matter what you do.

[20:53] NA

Under Masahiko Minami's leadership,

[20:55] NA

Bones demonstrates its strength when the
right team is put together for a project.

[20:59] NA

For a studio like Bones that is
constantly working on something,

[21:03] NA

it means staff move from one project
to the next without interruption.

[21:09] MINAMI

Being a producer comes down to whether
or not you can imagine the completed product.

[21:19] MINAMI

Whether it's music, effects,
or sound direction,

[21:26] MINAMI

when creating a show, we think about
how who is assigned to what work

[21:32] MINAMI

will lead to what the final product looks like.

[21:36] MINAMI

It's an interpersonal relationship.

[21:39] MINAMI

We value the way many people are involved
in the creation of a single product.

[21:48] KATSUMATA

Mangaka sometimes create by
themselves, but an original anime

[21:54] KATSUMATA

is the product of the combination of
multiple creators' or staff members' skills.

[22:03] AKANE

The best thing about Bones
is their skilled animators.

[22:12] AKANE

They've gathered some
of the best animators in Japan,

[22:17] AKANE

and it was Mr. Minami
who brought them together.

[22:21] AKANE

He has an exceptional eye for art.

[22:25] AKANE

He saw the work of new artists

[22:27] AKANE

and found artists with potential
at a relatively early stage.

[22:35] TAKEDA

He's exceptional at identifying star talent.

[22:40] TAKEDA

Not only that, but he knows what to combine
to create the right chemical reaction

[22:51] TAKEDA

to improve their talents even more.

[22:54] NATSUME

I wouldn't call it Minamism,
but there's a unified will.

[23:00] NATSUME

You can really see it in Bones' work.

[23:03] NATSUME

Mr. Minami puts a lot of effort
into Bones' original series in particular.

[23:11] NATSUME

He faces directors and writers
directly when working with them,

[23:17] NATSUME

which is how they create works
with such presence and solid bones.

[23:25] NA

Creating original anime is difficult,
but it is worthwhile.

[23:31] NA

The satisfaction of creating beautiful
high-level works pushes creators forward.

[23:38] NA

That feeling forms the skeleton of
bones which Minami builds on top of.

[23:44] MINAMI

It's literally bones, a collection of bones.

[23:51] MINAMI

We broke away from Sunrise

and started as a very small company.

[24:02] MINAMI

We were starting from the bones
and building up the flesh on top of that.

[24:11] MINAMI

In Japanese, there are
a lot of expressions about bones,

[24:16] MINAMI

like "he's got a strong backbone"
or "love me until I'm only bones."

[24:22] MINAMI

That's why we're bones.

[24:25] NA

Their creative and original anime
are undoubtedly the foundation of bones,

[24:31] NA

but the strengths they cultivated
producing original anime

[24:35] NA

became the source of their success
with manga adaptations

[24:40] NA

that are mainstream in Japanese animation,
such as* *My Hero Academia* and *Mob Psycho 100**.

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