

STAFF PICK

A SILENT VOICE

ANIMATED FILM BY NAOKO YAMADA

In *A Silent Voice*, the anime adaptation of a manga series by the same name, high school student Shoya Ishida is in a self-destructive spiral of guilt over his bullying of a former classmate, Shoko Nishimiya, who is deaf. Nishimiya, when first introduced to Ishida in elementary school, communicates via writing in her notebook, but Ishida and his pals shun Nishimiya by mocking her voice in the few moments she does speak and by throwing her hearing aids out the window. Later, Ishida is haunted by his mistakes and is separated from his former friends in high school, their faces now covered by giant "X"s in his mind as he cannot bear to make eye contact. To make amends, Ishida picks up sign language and seeks out Nishimiya to show he has changed, and the two grow closer in their sweet shared moments. But Ishida's own guilt and his spurned

friendships are not so quickly overcome, and Nishimiya herself feels implicated in Ishida's torment, leading to a thrilling climatic scene as unsettled anxieties, shame, and fear return from their shared past.

The story and characters are touching and relatable, and the animation style and music capture the atmosphere perfectly of young students trying to figure out their lives without being light-hearted or too dark. The characters' mature discussions such as on the nature of friendship (one speculates that "friendship exists beyond words and logic"), as well as on social ostracism, self-transformation, and love, expand the film's audience beyond the intended young adult group and provide an enjoyable watch for everyone.

— Daniel, Library Staff
December, 2020

ABOUT DIRECTOR

Naoko Yamada (山田 尚子) is a Japanese animator, television and film director. Working at Kyoto Animation, she directed the *K-On!* and *Tamako Market* anime series, and the anime film *A Silent Voice*. Yamada was born in Gunma Prefecture. As a child she enjoyed drawing images from the *Patlabor* and *Dragonball* anime series.

— from imdb.com



Title: A Silent Voice

Director: Naoko Yamada

Publisher: Shout Factory
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Run-time: 130 min.

Original manga by
Yoshitoki Oima

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Original Japanese:
Koe no katachi 聲の形