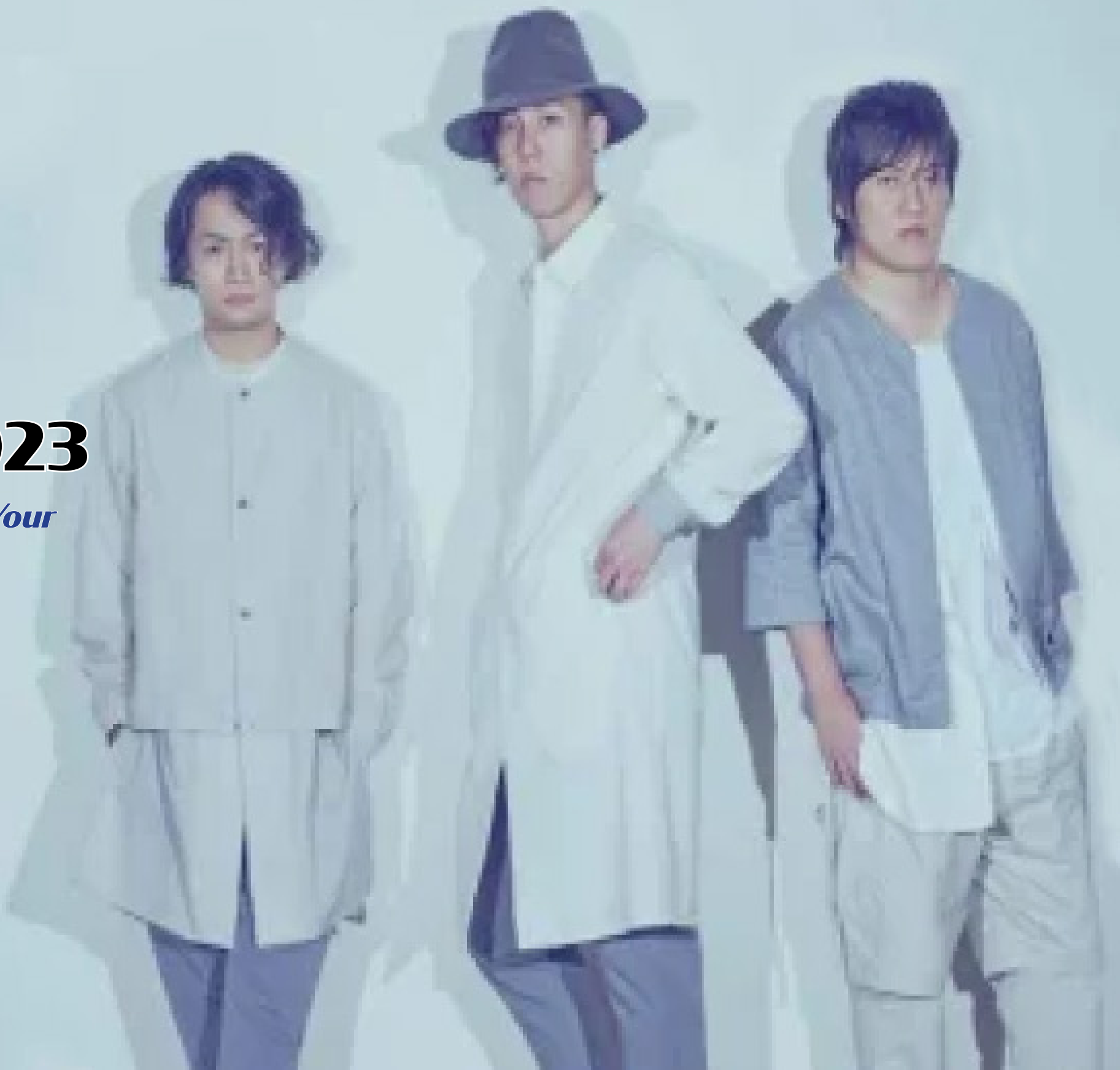


RADWIMPS

hits North America in 2023

Along with the song of the new movie of the director Your NameYour Name director's next movie.

Suzume, the highly anticipated latest animated feature film by director Makoto Shinkai, hit theaters in Japan on Nov. 11. The movie's music is by RADWIMPS, fronted by Yojiro Noda, marking the third time the hugely popular J-rock band collaborated with Shinkai on his movies following Your Name. from 2016 and Weathering With You from 2019. Suzume takes place in various ruins around Japan as a girl named Suzume goes on a journey to close the "Doors of Disasters." Noda sat down with Billboard Japan and shared the process of creating music for the project, which Shinkai notes that he's "confident that you'll feel the impact of what can be described as a musical experience in theaters."



I understand this project began around the spring of 2020. Did Mr. Shinkai ask you to work with him again? Yojiro Noda: It was the same with *Weathering With You*, but Mr. Shinkai would send me the screenplay beforehand without fanfare. Kind of like, "Here's what I have in mind for the next movie, please read it if you have the time." He never clearly says, "Please work with me again." He waits for me to send him something. Around the time when I first sent him my feedback, the world was going through a major pandemic crisis and the mood of society was like "now isn't the time for this," so we sort of stopped contacting each other for a while. But I was able to go to the studio, so I wrote some music and sent him several demos including the prototype of "Suzume" around August. "Suzume" is the only one that made it from that batch.

What did you think when you first read the script? I found this one the most exciting (compared to the other two Shinkai collaborations). I love road movies and the way people change during their journeys, and I also have a thing for abandoned buildings, so there were a lot of elements I liked. But at that point I still didn't know how the story would end and I couldn't imagine what the "mimizu" (literally, "earthworm") that appears many times in the story would look like just from the words, so those unknowns also fueled the excitement because I wondered how they would play out. I remember telling Mr. Shinkai that I really looked forward to seeing the story.



“We needed a voice that felt like it resonated 100 years ago and would still do so 100 years from now.**”**

What parts of the screenplay inspired you? First, I wanted music that was different in flavor from the past two works. While this is a story about people living in the modern world, at the same time it's a story that focuses on villages and towns that have fallen into decline, and the activities, vitality, and liveliness of people who once thrived, so I also wanted a somewhat nostalgic sound. Kind of like a folk song-ish nuance from no particular country, or the sound of ethnic instruments.

Why did you decide to feature a female vocalist again for the theme song for this movie, like you did with Toko Miura (for *Weathering With You*)? Mr. Shinkai had told me that he wanted to use my voice for this one, so that was my intention when we started working on it, but once the arrangement was finalized, we both began to feel that a female voice would better define the impression of the track. So we spent about a year last year searching for a female vocalist. We didn't have anything specific in mind but did want a voice that would transcend current times. There were many people who simply had a good voice, or sang well, or had a voice that would sell in 2022. But we needed a voice that felt like it resonated 100 years ago and would still do so 100 years from now. A transparent voice with an endless clarity, like. At the same time, a voice with strength of will. While we were looking for something like that, we came across Toaka's voice and it just clicked. It was an almost immediate decision, including Mr. Shinkai.





I didn't have a rock band sound in mind at all. This is sort of like what I said about Toaka's voice, but rock is one of the musical genres that emerged in the last few decades, and (for this film) I knew I needed a kind of timeless resonance or series of sounds that someone could have been playing a hundred years ago and could still be playing a hundred years from now. There's a guitar sound at the end of "KANATA HALUKA," but I wanted the root of the song to be simpler, not a rock band sound, but a phrase that could be played with your index finger, or even by a kindergartener. Mr. Shinkai has said that while he always liked to make things

by himself, he tries to be conscious of the fact that he's making big movies, especially after *Your Name*. Do you also feel that opportunities like these tie-ins have broadened your horizons and changed the scale of your activities? There are moments when it's actually not very interesting to just do what you like, and I come up with more interesting things when I'm asked, "What can you do on this kind of theme?" Makoto Shinkai's works are the perfect example. Without that motivator, a song like "Zenzenzense" would never have been born, and the same goes for "Is There Still Anything That Love Can Do?" (*Weathering With You*) and "KANATA

HALUKA." I would never have come up with those words if it were only for myself and could never have maintained that kind of grit like, "I'm going to deliver this song at any cost." You tend to exert more strength when doing things for the people you care about. I'm really happy now that the film is completed at last. It's a work that has an overwhelming force. Some may like animated works and some may not like this style of movie, but it's really a magical film that will definitely take viewers to a single goal. It's Japanese entertainment at its best and I think that I'm fortunate to be able to see it in real time. I want to share this happy experience with you and hope that you'll savor it.

RADWIMPS' "KANATA HALUKA" is the other movie theme song. How did you come up with the idea of featuring two songs? Mr. Shinkai always said he wanted another song. I had to squeeze it out so hard it was like, "I can't come up with anything else!" I was also working on the movie score, so at the last minute I said, "I'll give it one more try. If it doesn't come out next time, let's just go with 'Suzume,'" and gave him "KANATA HALUKA" and one more track, I think. The other one was a really simple tune accompanied by an acoustic guitar. This movie discuss-

es so many themes like disasters, how to survive in the modern world, matters about parents and children, and history. But when I considered what I should sing about in the end, I wanted to sing about how it's a story about Suzume and Sota. They travel together, gradually building a relationship, and she ends up risking her life to save him. Everything that happens during their journey contains various themes, but Suzume doesn't care about them. She wants to see Sota and save him and wants to live in a world where he exists. During the two years that we were working on this film, I think Mr. Shinkai,

Mr. Genki Kawamura (producer), and I all sort of lost sight of that part, so I'm glad we were able to realize it by the time we finished.

Compared to your past two soundtracks, the rock band feel is much more subdued. Instead of the exuberant rock-meets-orchestra style of "Shukusai" (*Weathering With You*) and "Zenzenzense" (*Your Name*), the themes for this work feature beautiful piano melodies and delicate strings accompanied by Toaka's and your vocals.

RADWIMPS
North American Tour 2023

4.29 New York City / Palladium Times Square	4.24 Chicago / The Vic	4.18 Los Angeles / YouTube Theater
4.26 Toronto / Queen Elizabeth Theatre	4.22 Mexico City / Pabellón Oeste	4.16 San Jose / San Jose Civic