

FUNERAL MARCH



Outline / Summary

In Hirano's work of historical fiction on a grand scale, we see the genius Polish composer Frédéric Chopin come to fame in Paris at the height of the Romantic period in the nineteenth century. With his elegant melodies and languorous demeanor, he instantly becomes the toast of Parisian high society. Though subject to intense scrutiny from members of the female nobility, it is the author George Sand who captures his heart. But it is an aloof artist, the Romantic painter Ferdinand Delacroix, to whom he turns to soothe his excessively nervous disposition. Later, after a falling-out with Sand, Chopin returns to Paris, his friendship with Delacroix, a giant figure in the founding of modern art, remaining an important thread in the fabric of Chopin's life until his death from tuberculosis at the age of 39.

Agent comments

Keiichiro Hirano has designated his first three novels, beginning with his Akutagawa Award-winning debut *Nisshoku [Eclipse]*, as his Three Romanticist Works. *Funeral March*, the third of the three, arose out of Hirano's ambition to capture the spirit of the age through a kind of deconstructed Romanticism in the style of Beaudelaire. The resulting voluminous work took three and a half years to complete, stretching to 2500 manuscript pages or around a million Japanese characters (some 500,000 words). Hirano, still not yet 30 and hailing from an archipelago in the Far East rather than a European nation, received acclaim from both Japanese and French scholars, surprised at the meticulous historical research and extensive knowledge that went into the novel. Its prose is distinguished by its sensitive psychological portraits, refined artistic expression, and depth of thought. As a post-Akutagawa Award work for Hirano, *Funeral March* consolidated his reputation in Japan with its masterful portrayal of the anguish and creative delight of these three exponents of Western European art—Chopin, Delacroix and Sand—who lived at this turning point in history against the backdrop of Parisian society.

Book Information

Genre | Literary fiction Originally published in Japan by | SHINCHOSHA Publishing Co., Ltd.

Number of volumes; page count | Paperback edition: two parts comprising a total of four volumes: Part One, vol. 1–2; Part Two, vol. 3–4. Approx. 1600 pp. in total.

First publication | Shincho magazine, over two issues: October 2000 and April 2001

Book editions | Hardback: August 1, 2002 Paperback: July 28 and August 28, 2005

Sample translation | French version available



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Keiichiro
Hirano

Hirano was born in 1975. In 1999 at the tender age of 23, while still studying at Kyoto University, he was awarded the Akutagawa Prize, Japan's most prestigious literary award, for the work *Nisshoku [Eclipse]*, first published in the literary magazine Shincho. His novel became a bestseller, selling 400,000 copies, and he was hailed as the new Yukio Mishima. To date he has published 15 works, many award-winning, across a wide range of genres and each with its own style. In 2004, he spent a year in Paris as a Cultural Ambassador for the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs. Recognizing his extensive knowledge of fine art and music as well as literature, France made him a Chevalier des Artes et des Lettres in 2014.

His elegant, pellucid prose fashions stories that are multilayered in their portrayal of current social issues yet plotted as compelling page-turners. Hirano focuses squarely on the lifestyles and identities of modern-day people, bringing to his novels in equal measure an acute critique of society and a profound literaryness.

The many films and drama series based on Hirano's works have been nominated for awards both within and outside Japan. He has secured his place among Japan's most recognized contemporary novelists, with not only best-sellers across the board but also a seat on the committee deciding the annual Akutagawa Award that he himself won so early in his career.

Now transcending national borders, Hirano has been translated numerous times. So far two of his novels have appeared in English translation, beginning with *A MAN* in 2020 and followed by *At the End of the Matinee* in 2021. *A MAN* alone has received over 3,500 online reviews with a high average score of 4.2 out of five, and seen good sales. Translations of his works have also been published in French via Actes Sud Editions, and in German via Suhrkamp Verlag, among other languages.

Official site



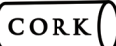
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Agent profile



One of the few literary agencies in Japan representing both novelists and manga artists, with a client list spanning novelists such as Keiichiro Hirano and mangaka including Moyoco Anno, Chuya Koyama (Space Brothers), and Norifusa Mita (Dragon Zakura). CORK provides a suite of services including book production and unified rights management.