

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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JAPANESE FILMS SHOWCASED AT 2009 HAWAII INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

HONOLULU, HI (September 28, 2009) – Cinephiles ready to immerse themselves in Japanese culture have 30 films from Japanese or Japanese Diaspora filmmakers to choose from this year at the 2009 Hawaii International Film Festival (HIFF).

The impressive collection of films to be screened at the 11-day festival include the world premiere of *SIDEWAYS*, the Japanese remake of Alexander Payne's award-winning film, the North American premiere of *SNOW PRINCE* from the creative team of *DEPARTURES*, which won the audience award last year at HIFF and a 2009 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. Anime is back at HIFF with three premieres -- *MAI MAI MIRACLE*, *EVANGELION 2.0*, and *FIRST SQUAD*. The festival is also pleased to present *AIR DOLL* from director Kore-eda Hirokazu (award winning director of *STILL WALKING* and *NOBODY KNOWS*) and starring Korean starlet Bae Doona (*THE HOST*, *LINDA LINDA LINDA*, *TAKE CARE OF MY CAT*).

In addition, for film buffs, HIFF has programmed a special sidebar called *TRIBUTE TO MADAME KAWAKITA*, presenting four remastered 35mm prints of seminal Japanese classics from Akira Kurosawa, Seijun Suzuki, and Shohei Imamura. This tribute celebrates the late Kashiko Kawakita, the "Mother of Japanese cinema." Chuck Boller, HIFF's Executive Director says, "We are honored to celebrate Madame Kawakita's tireless work in the promotion of Japanese cinema to other cultures with the presentation of newly remastered film prints from the Kawakita Memorial Film Institute in Tokyo." Boller continues, "The best way to celebrate her work and the work of these cinema maestros is to not charge for these film screenings." The film screenings from the *TRIBUTE TO MADAME KAWAKITA* will be free of charge. Famed Japan scholar and film critic Donald Richie, who was also instrumental in the promotion of Japanese cinema for the past 50 years, will be presenting these fine works and conducting extended Q & A's after select film screenings from this sidebar.

Another special sidebar this year is *A SPOTLIGHT ON OKINAWA*, presenting three films that take place on this beautiful island. Two U.S. premieres, *COBALT BLUE* and *A MIDSUMMER OKINAWAN'S NIGHT DREAM*. The Festival also will present one of the most popular Okinawan films in recent memory, *NADA SOU SOU (TEARS FOR YOU)*.

Including the films from Japan, HIFF will be presenting films from the Japanese diaspora -- *WHITE ON RICE*, starring Japanese actor Hiroshi Watanabe and directed by David Boyle. Watanabe (*LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA*) gives a thoroughly entertaining performance as Jimmy in this fish-out-of-water comedy. Another title is *THE HARIYAMA BRIDGE*, directed by Aaron Woolfolk, which will have its U.S. premiere. Starring Ben Guillory, Saki Takaoka, Misa Shimizu, and Danny Glover, the film addresses the bond and conflict between father and son, along with the discrimination and prejudice that exists between people.

Over 170 films from 36 different countries will be featured at this year's festival. HIFF's 2009 program is being held at the Regal Dole Cannery Stadium 18 Cinemas from October 15–25. Tickets go on sale Friday, October 1st for HIFF Ohana members and Monday, October 5th to the public. General admission tickets are available for \$10 or \$9 for students, seniors, children and military. Tickets may be purchased in person at HIFF's box office at 650 Iwilei Road #101 across from Regal Dole Cannery Stadium 18 Cinemas or by phone at (808) 548-5905. The film guide is available now online at www.hiff.org. For more information please visit us at www.hiff.org.

FILM SYNOPSES (All screening times subject to change)

(MY HIFF: Indicates Other Films Viewers Might Like)

108

HYAKU HACHI

Spotlight on Japan

U.S. Premiere

Because of their limited talents on the field, Masato and Nobu are usually relegated to the baseball stands along with the rest of the fans, but during their senior year they make a pact to do their utmost to achieve a roster position. Offering an interesting insight into the unique high school baseball culture in Japan, 108 (HYAKU HACHI) at its core, is a reminder to all sports enthusiasts of why we play the game. This screening is sponsored by Nippon Golden Network and The Japan Foundation.

Japan2008 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 126M

Director:Yoshitaka Mori

Cast:Yoshiki Saito, Aoi Nakamura, Riki Takeuchi

25-Oct 3:15 PM Dole

MY HIFF: SNOW PRINCE / DEAR LEMON LIMA

**20TH CENTURY BOYS 1: BEGINNING OF THE END
20-SEIKI SHONEN: HONKAKU KAGAKU BOKEN EIGA**

Spotlight on Japan
Return Engagement

It all begins in 1969 when a young boy named Kenji and his friends write "The Book of Prophecy." Years later in 1997, a mysterious cult led by a man only known as Friend has emerged and has gained a strong influence over society. A series of catastrophic events begins to occur, mirroring the prophecies made up by the young Kenji. The only people who know about The Book are Kenji and his childhood friends. Who is Friend? Can Kenji and his friends save the world in time to see the 21st Century? This screening is sponsored by Nippon Golden Network and The Japan Foundation.

Japan2008 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 142M

Director:Yukihiko Tsutsumi

Cast:Hideaki Karasawa, Etsushi Toyokawa, Takako Tokiwa

25-Oct 1:15 PM Dole

MY HIFF: GOKUSEN / EVANGELION 2.0

**20TH CENTURY BOYS 2: THE LAST HOPE
20-SEIKI SHONEN: DAI 2 SHO - SAIGO NO KIBO**

Spotlight on Japan
Return Engagement

It is now 2015, and Friend rules a disturbing new world. The surviving secret base members have spent the last 15 years in hiding, and finding out the truth about Friend. They discover "The New Book of Prophecy," the sequel to "The Book of Prophecy." The sequel describes an event: "In 2015, at a church in Shinjuku, a savior will rise to uphold justice, but will be assassinated." Bleak events will happen once again, but Kanna (Kenji's 19 year-old niece) is unwavering in her vow to stop Friend. This screening is sponsored by Nippon Golden Network and The Japan Foundation.

Japan2009 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 140M

Director:Yukihiko Tsutsumi

Cast:Etsushi Toyokawa, Takako Tokiwa, Airi Taira

25-Oct 4:15 PM Dole

MY HIFF: FIRST SQUAD / REDLINE

**20TH CENTURY BOYS 3: REDEMPTION
20-SEIKI SHONEN: SAISHU-SHO - BOKURA NO HATA**

Spotlight on Japan

North American Premiere

It is now 2017, and after the spread of the deadly virus in Tokyo, a wall was built around the city and people's lives have been restricted. As World President, Friend tells everyone that on August 20, aliens will destroy mankind, and only those who believe in him will be saved. Kanna is now the leader of a group much more radical than her uncle's team, but both continue to fight against Friend until the bitter end. This screening is sponsored by Nippon Golden Network and The Japan Foundation.

Japan2009 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 150M

Director:Yukihiko Tsutsumi

Cast:Toshiaki Karasawa, Etsushi Toyokawa, Takako Tokiwa

24-Oct 6:00 PM Dole

25-Oct 7:00 PM Dole

MY HIFF: MAI MAI MIRACLE / 108

**AIR DOLL
KUKI NINGYO**

After Dark
U.S. Premiere

Adapted for the screen by director Kore-eda himself, the film tells the story of a life size AIR DOLL that develops a soul. On exploring the world around her, she soon falls in love with Junichi, a video store clerk. Just when everything seems perfect, an unexpected turn of events throws her fragile existence into turmoil. At the core, the film is a love story which explores the profound questions of human existence. Where do we find meaning in our own lives? What ultimately makes us human? This screening is sponsored by Giant Robot, Nippon Golden Network and The Japan Foundation.

Japan2009 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 125M

Director:Kore-eda Hirokazu

Cast:Arata, Bae Du-na, Sumiko Fuji, Mari Hoshino

24-Oct 10:00 PM Dole

25-Oct 12:00 PM Dole

MY HIFF: LOVE EXPOSURE / FACE

**APRIL BRIDE
YOMEI IKKAGETSU NO HANAYOME**

Spotlight on Japan
North American Premiere

Based on a touching true story, this emotional drama chronicles the romance between handsome salaryman Taro (Eita) and the spirited and endearing Chie (Nana Eikura). Even though Taro and Chie appear to be a perfect couple in love, not everything is perfect in their lives. A crisis in Chie's health brings the couple and their families closer together and teaches everyone to treat each day like the miracle it is. This screening is sponsored by Nippon Golden Network and The Japan Foundation.

Japan2009 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 129M

Director:Ryuichi Hiroki

Cast:Nana Eikura, Eita, Satomi Tezuka, Misako Yasuda, Akira Emoto

17-Oct 12:45 PM Dole

20-Oct 12:15 PM Dole

MY HIFF: JAPANESE WIFE / NADA SOU SOU

**THE BARE ESSENCE OF LIFE
URUTORA MIRAKURU RABU SUTORI**

PUMA EMERGING FILMMAKERS AWARD NOMINEE

U.S. Premiere

Yojin spends his days tending to his grandmother's vegetable garden. One day he meets Machiko, and his need for her to like him leads to unexpected consequences. The darling of new Japanese cinema, Satoko Yokohama confirms her talent and brilliant originality with BARE ESSENCE OF LIFE, a satisfying tale of rural eccentricity that combines black humor and fantasy with romanticism and drama. This screening is sponsored by Puma and Nippon Golden Network.

Japan2009 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 120M

Director:Satoko Yokohama

Cast:Kenichi Matsuyama, Kumiko Aso

18-Oct 2:00 PM Dole

20-Oct 12:30 PM Dole

BATTLE LEAGUE HORUMO

KAMOGAWA HORUMO

Spotlight on Japan

Hawaii Premiere

In Kyoto, there is the mysterious 1000 year-old tradition of the "Horumo" battle which is upheld by the four universities of the city. The battle is fought between 10 players from each team who each manipulate an army of 100 spirits (referred to as Oni) to fight their opponents. Each member goes through rigorous training to achieve fluency in the Oni language as well as learn the indefinable gestures that are required to complement it. Let the battles begin! This screening is sponsored by Nippon Golden Network and The Japan Foundation.

Japan2009 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 113M

Director:Katsuhide Motoki

Cast:Takayuki Yamada, Chiaki Kuriyama

19-Oct 10:00 PM Dole

21-Oct 4:30 PM Dole

MY HIFF: 20TH CENTURY BOYS / A MILLION

BLACK RAIN

KUROI AME

FREE PUBLIC SCREENING

A Tribute to Madame Kawakita

The title refers to the radioactive fallout which descended upon the ruined city of Hiroshima after the dropping of the first atomic bomb. Young bride-to-be Yoshiko Tanaka has the misfortune to be visiting Hiroshima on the day of the explosion, but incredibly, she is unhurt. Unfortunately, her townsmen have been profoundly affected by the "black rain;" over the next five years, the poison in their systems slowly but surely erodes their souls. Yoshiko's life is shattered as surely as if the bomb had disintegrated her upon impact. This screening is sponsored by NETPAC.

Japan1989 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 123M

Director:Shohei Imamura

Cast:Yoshiko Tanaka, Kazuo Kitamura, Etsuko Ichihara, Shoichi Ozawa

18-Oct 2:45 PM Dole

MY HIFF: HARIMAYA BRIDGE / THE WARRIOR AND THE WOLF

COBALT BLUE

GUNJO: AI GA SHIZUNDA UMI NO IRO

Spotlight on Okinawa

North American Premiere

Love and loss course through two generations on a remote island in Okinawa. A fatally ill Tokyo pianist, Yukiko Morishita (Misato Tanaka) comes to this small fishing community, falls in love with a fisherman (Kuranosuke Sasaki), and dies after giving birth to a daughter, Ryoko (Masami Nagasawa). After a tragic diving accident takes her lover and childhood friend, Kazuya (Shinji Rachi), Ryoko retreats into silent mourning until her father, community, and Daisuke (Seiji Fukushi) slowly bring her back. This screening is sponsored by WUB, Center for Japanese Studies and Nippon Golden Network.

Japan2009 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 119M

Director:Yosuke Nakagawa

Cast:Masami Nagasawa, Seiji Fukushi, Kuranosuke Sasaki

23-Oct 8:15 PM Dole

24-Oct 8:00 PM Dole

MY HIFF: NADA SOU SOU / MIDSUMMER OKINAWAN NIGHT'S DREAM

**DANCE SUBARU
SUBARU**

Spotlight on Japan

U.S. Premiere

Subaru is a naturally gifted ballerina who grew up in the shadow of her mother and brother's illness. Striving to be the best, she refines her dance skills through unconventional methods ranging from training in a cabaret to learning hip-hop. Subaru's ultimate challenge comes in the form of a prestigious competition where she learns that the road to becoming a professional dancer is filled with friends and rivals, happiness and sadness, as well as lessons learned. This screening is sponsored by Nippon Golden Network and The Japan Foundation.

Japan2009 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 105M

Director:Chi-Ngai Lee

Cast:Yuta Hiraoka, Ara, Toshio Kakei, Ken Maeda

21-Oct 8:45 PM Dole

23-Oct 9:00 PM Dole

MY HIFF: QUICK QUICK SLOW SLOW / HONOKAA BOY

**EVANGELION: 2.0 YOU CAN (NOT) ADVANCE
EVANGERION SHIN GEKIJOBAN: HA**

Asian Showcase

North American Premiere

After not seeing his father for more than eight years, Shinji Ikari receives a phone call, in which he is told to urgently come to the NERV Headquarters, an organization that deals with the destruction of the Angels through the use of giant mechs called Evas. Shinji's objective is to pilot the Eva Unit 01, while teaming up with the Eva Unit 00 pilot, Ayanami Rei. This screening is sponsored by DHL, The Japan Foundation and Nippon Golden Network.

Japan2009 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 108M

Director:Masayuki, Kazuya Tsurumaki

Cast:Megumi Hayashibara, Maaya Sakamoto, Megumi Ogata

24-Oct 9:45 PM Dole

25-Oct 8:45 PM Dole

MY HIFF: FIRST SQUAD / GOKUSEN

FLAVOR OF HAPPINESS

SHIAWASE NO KAORI

Spotlight on Japan
Hawaii Premiere

When Wan collapses with a minor stroke that leaves him unable to work, Takako begs him to take her on as an apprentice, so that his cooking will live on. Having no wife or heir, Wan agrees. He sees Takako not just as a successor but as a kindred spirit whose love for good food approaches his own. However, this is not the happy ending, but the start of grueling trials that test Takako's mettle and resolve. This screening is sponsored by Nippon Golden Network and The Japan Foundation.

Japan2008 | Japanese, Mandarin w/ English subtitles | 124M

Director:Mitsuhiro Mihara

Cast:Miki Nakatani, Tatsuya Fuji, Kei Tanaka

21-Oct 6:00 PM Dole

23-Oct 3:30 PM Dole

MY HIFF: NORIBEN / ANTIQUE

GOKUSEN THE MOVIE

Spotlight on Japan
North American Premiere

At first glance, Kumiko Yamaguchi seems like she can be easily intimidated, but much to everyone's surprise, she remains unfazed by her students' shenanigans. Her courage and discipline comes from being raised by a family who also happens to be a feared yakuza clan. With her strong sense of justice and her fierce brawling abilities, Kumiko follows her principles and upholds honor to solve the problems that trouble her students. This screening is sponsored by Nippon Golden Network and The Japan Foundation.

Japan2009 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 118M

Director:Toya Sato

Cast:Yukie Nakama, Mokomichi Hayami, Jingi Irie, Yuma Ishigaki

16-Oct 6:00 PM Dole

17-Oct 2:00 PM Dole

MY HIFF: 20TH CENTURY BOYS / DANCE SUBARU

HALF KENNETH

SHORT PROGRAM#1

Kenneth, a Japanese American during WWII, hatches a plan to escape from the internment camps and find his Caucasian mother. This screening is sponsored by Vitamin Water.

USA 2009 / Japanese w/ English subtitles / 22m

Director: Ken Ochiai

16-Oct 5:45 PM Dole

THE HARIMAYA BRIDGE

American Indies
U.S. Premiere

An American father travels to rural Japan to claim some important items belonging to his late son, from whom he was estranged. Taking place in Kochi, a rural part of Japan where traditional customs remain strong, he learns several significant secrets his son left behind. THE HARIMAYA BRIDGE is a strong human drama that addresses the bond and conflict between father and son, along with the discrimination and prejudice that exists between people.

Japan, South Korea, United States2009 | English, Japanese w/ English subtitles | 120M

Director:Aaron Woolfolk

Cast:Ben Guillory, Saki Takaoka, Misa Shimizu, Danny Glover

16-Oct 6:30 PM Dole

19-Oct 12:00 PM Dole

MY HIFF: TALENTIME / PRECIOUS

HONOKAA BOY HONOKAA BOI

Spotlight on Japan
Hawaii Premiere

Leo, a Japanese boy, travels to Hawaii with his girlfriend, but they get into an argument over trifles creating tensions in their relationship. Six months later, Leo is living in the small town of Honokaa and training as a projectionist at The People's Theater. One day, he falls in love with a local girl named Mariah, but this love causes some trouble. This screening is sponsored by Nippon Golden Network and The Japan Foundation.

Japan2009 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 111M

Director:Atsushi Sanada

Cast:Masaki Okada, Chieko Baisho, Jun Hasegawa

21-Oct 12:15 PM Dole

22-Oct 11:30 AM Dole

MY HIFF: BARE ESSENCE OF LIFE / BEST OF TIMES

IKIRU (TO LIVE)

FREE PUBLIC SCREENING
A Tribute to Madame Kawakita

IKIRU details the existential struggle of one ordinary man in his desperate search for purpose. Upon learning he has terminal stomach cancer, a low-level government bureaucrat leaves his job of thirty years without a word to find meaning in the year he has left to live. He is completely alone in the world -- his wife is dead, his son is practically estranged, and his co-workers are little more than strangers. This screening is sponsored by NETPAC.

Japan1952 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 143M

Director:Akira Kurosawa

Cast:Takashi Shimura, Shinichi Himori, Haruo Tanaka

17-Oct 5:45 PM Dole

MY HIFF: RASHOMON / NECESSITIES OF LIFE

LOVE EXPOSURE AI NO MUKIDASHI

After Dark
Hawaii Premiere

Yu has no choice. His father, a Catholic priest, is urging him to confess, but in order to confess he must sin. So, Yu becomes a famous porno photographer, specializing in up-skirt photos. During one of his perverted excursions he meets and falls in love with schoolgirl Yoko. However, a

villainess named Aya intervenes. Soon, she's manipulating these two star-crossed lovers in the name of the cult for which she works, the Zero Church. A four-hour magnum opus from Sono Sion (SUICIDE CLUB). This screening is sponsored by Nippon Golden Network and The Japan Foundation.

Japan2009 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 237M

Director:Sion Sono

Cast:Takahiro Nishijima, Hikari Mitsushima, Sakura Ando

22-Oct 6:15 PM Dole

24-Oct 3:30 PM Dole

MY HIFF: VAMPIRE GIRL VS. FRANKENSTEIN GIRL / GOKUSEN

MAI MAI MIRACLE

Family Fest

North American Premiere

Shinko, a third grade elementary school student, loves to daydream about the world of one thousand years ago. Her fantasies travel far into the days of the Heian Period (year 794-1185). One day a girl called Kiiko transfers from Tokyo and joins Shinko's class where they become good friends. Before long, the two of them become engulfed in a strange incident of one thousand years ago. This screening is sponsored by Nippon Golden Network.

Japan2009 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 95M

Director:Sunao Katabuchi

Cast:Mayuko Fukuda, Ei Morisako, Manami Honjou

24-Oct 3:00 PM Dole

MY HIFF: SAVING LUNA / EVANGELION 2.0

**A MIDSUMMER'S OKINAWAN NIGHT DREAM
MANATSU NO YORU NO YUME**

Spotlight on Okinawa

North American Premiere

Mensore! (Welcome!) A beautiful tropical island in Okinawa is the backdrop to Shakespeare's comedic classic. The famous tale of supernatural fairies interfering in the lives of mortals gets an original cultural retelling, complete with sanshin playing spirits called Kijimun and a traditional shisa lion dance! The merriment begins when Yuriko (Yuki Shibamoto) flees to her rural Okinawan hometown to escape an unwanted boyfriend. Once there, Yuriko crosses paths with a Kijimun who changes her life forever. This screening is sponsored by WUB, Center for Japanese Studies and Nippon Golden Network.

Japan2009 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 105M

Director:Yuji Nakae

Cast:Yuki Shibamoto, Honami Kurashita, Tomi Taira, Susumu Taira

18-Oct 12:30 PM Dole

21-Oct 3:00 PM Dole

MY HIFF: COBALT BLUE / FACE

NADA SOU SOU (TEARS FOR YOU)

Spotlight on Okinawa

Hawaii Premiere

NADA SOU SOU tells the story of the Shingaki siblings - Yota and Kaoru. Left to fend for themselves at a very young age after their father abandons them, these two half-siblings have only each other. As vowed on their mother's deathbed, Yota is obligated to provide the best for Kaoru, and does so almost to the extreme. This screening is sponsored by WUB, Center for Japanese Studies and Nippon Golden Network.

Japan2006 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 118M

Director:Nobuhiro Doi

Cast:Satoshi Tsumabuki, Masami Nagasawa, Kumiko Aso

24-Oct 10:15 AM Dole

25-Oct 11:00 AM Dole

MY HIFF: BEST OF TIMES / COBALT BLUE

NORIBEN - THE RECIPE FOR FORTUNE

Spotlight on Japan

North American Premiere

Based on the popular manga of the same name, Noriben tells the story of 31-year-old Nagai Komaki who divorces her aspiring, yet failing, novelist husband and moves back to her hometown with her young daughter, Non-chan. An old childhood flame, persistent ex-husband, and a reluctant culinary mentor begin to complicate matters, clouding Komaki's dreams of independence and financial stability. Packed with delicious visual imagery, this film is sure to please the senses. This screening is sponsored by Nippon Golden Network and The Japan Foundation.

Japan2009 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 107M

Director:Akira Ogata

Cast:Manami Konishi, Yoshinori Okada, Jun Murakami

19-Oct 6:00 PM Dole

23-Oct 12:30 PM Dole

MY HIFF: INGREDIENTS / FLAVOR OF HAPPINESS

RASHOMON

FREE PUBLIC SCREENING

A Tribute to Madame Kawakita

A priest and a woodcutter, each looking stricken, discuss the trial of a notorious bandit for rape and murder. As the retelling of the trial unfolds, the participants in the crime -- the bandit (Toshiro Mifune), the rape victim (Machiko Kyo), and the murdered man (Masayuki Mori) -- tell their plausible though completely contradictory versions of the story. This landmark film, directed by the legendary Akira Kurosawa, is a brilliant exploration of truth and human weakness. This screening is sponsored by NETPAC.

Japan1980 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 88M

Director:Akira Kurosawa

Cast:Toshiro Mifune, Machiko Kyo, Masayuki Mori

16-Oct 6:15 PM Dole

MY HIFF: STORM / INVISIBLE KILLER

SIDEWAYS

Gala Presentation

World Premiere

In a last-ditch effort to sow their wild oats, Michio (Fumiyo Kohinata) and Daisuke (Katsuhisa Namase) take off on a final road trip to California's wine country the week prior to Daisuke's wedding. When the men encounter two fascinating women (Kyoka Suzuki and Rinko Kikuchi), the duo is forced to re-examine their lives. SIDEWAYS is a delightful Japanese adaptation of its American counterpart. Plus, local boy, Jake Shimabukuro, composed music for the soundtrack. This screening is sponsored by Nippon Golden Network.

Japan2009 | Japanese, English w/ English subtitles | 123M

Director:Cellin Gluck

Cast:Fumiyo Kohinata, Katsuhisa Namase, Rinko Kikuchi

17-Oct 6:15 PM Dole

24-Oct 12:45 PM Dole

MY HIFF: BEST OF TIMES / INGREDIENTS

SNOW PRINCE

SNOW PRINCE: KINJIRARETA KOI NO MELODY

Spotlight on Japan

North American Premiere

Ten year-old Sota lives in poverty with his grandfather in a small, snowy village. Sayo, a girl from a wealthy family, has been his best friend ever since they were little, despite the difference of their family's social position. One night, Sota traverses down a snowy night path to Sayo's house only to find that her father's storage is on fire. The final outcome that awaits Sota is a gentle reminder that genuine happiness always exists in your heart. From the team that brought us DEPARTURES. This screening is sponsored by Nippon Golden Network and The Japan Foundation.

Japan2009 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 115M

Director:Joji Matsuoka

Cast:Shintaro Morimoto, Marino Kuwajima, Tadanobu Asano

20-Oct 6:45 PM Dole

24-Oct 7:15 PM Dole

MY HIFF: NECESSITIES OF LIFE / MAI MAI MIRACLE

SYMBOL

SHINBORU

After Dark

U.S. Premiere

Hitoshi Matsumoto (DAINIPPONJIN, HIFF 2007) is back with his second feature film SYMBOL, a mind-melting journey into the deepest realm of the imagination. A Japanese man wakes up alone in a brightly illuminated white room with no windows or doors. His absurd and hilarious attempts to escape the room releaserandom objects from the walls, creating a life-sized Mouse Trap game in which a rope, a toilet plunger and an earthenware jug full of sushi just might be the keys to his escape. This screening is sponsored by Nippon Golden Network.

Japan2009 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 93M

Director:Hitoshi Matsumoto

Cast:Adriana Fricke, Hitoshi Matsumoto

20-Oct 9:15 PM Dole

24-Oct 3:45 PM Dole

MY HIFF: AIR DOLL / WHITE ON RICE

VAMPIRE GIRL VS FRANKENSTEIN GIRL

KYUKETSU SHOJO TAI SHOJO FURANKEN

After Dark

Hawaii Premiere

Monami is a centuries-old vampire with the appearance of young schoolgirl. Keiko is a former schoolgirl who has been transformed into a Frankenstein-type monster. When both decide to claim their high school's heartthrob, Jyugon, as her own, an epic battle ensues -- where blood is sprayed, limbs are severed, and everyone in their paths is annihilated. Meanwhile, Jyugon can only ponder why no one has bothered to ask him how he feels. This screening is sponsored by Nippon Golden Network.

Japan2009 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 85M

Director: Yoshihiro Nishimura, Naoyuki Tomomatsu

Cast: Yukie Kawamura, Eri Otaguro, Eihi Shiina

15-Oct 10:30 PM Dole

16-Oct 10:30 PM Dole

MY HIFF: AIR DOLL / GOKUSEN

WHITE ON RICE

American Immigrant Filmmakers on Profile

Hawaii Premiere

Jimmy, 40-years-old and divorced, shares a bunk bed with Bob, his 10-year-old nephew. He lives with his sister Aiko and her family. His brother-in-law, Tak, thinks he's a disaster. And although Jimmy may lack social grace, he is determined to find a new wife. His plan seems like it's all falling into place when Tak's beautiful niece Ramona moves in. But once Jimmy sets his sights on stealing her from his best friend Tim, he sees his intentions go hilariously awry. This screening is sponsored by The Vilcek Foundation.

United States 2009 | English, Japanese w/ English subtitles | 86M

Director: Dave Boyle

Producer: Duane Andersen, Dominic Fratto, Michael Lerman

Cast: Hiroshi Watanabe, Nae, Mio Takada, Lynn Chen, James Kyson Lee

19-Oct 7:30 PM Dole

20-Oct 9:30 PM Dole

MY HIFF: FRUITFLY / ETIENNE!

ZIGENURWEISEN

FREE PUBLIC SCREENING

A Tribute to Madame Kawakita

This tale features the relationship between a Japanese professor of German descent and Nakasago (Yoshio Harada), a former friend he runs into while on vacation. Nakasago has been charged with murdering a married woman who ran away with him. As the two former friends become more and more involved, the professor begins to get a glimpse of Nakasago's odd life, and undertones of witchcraft provide an eerie overlay to the fate of the missing woman. This screening is sponsored by NETPAC.

Japan1980 | Japanese w/ English subtitles | 144M

Director: Seijun Suzuki

Cast: Yoshio Harada, Naoko Otani, Toshiya Fujita

18-Oct 6:00 PM Dole

MY HIFF: PLACE OF ONE'S OWN / ACROSS THE RIVER

Festival Information

Established in 1981, the Hawaii International Film Festival is dedicated to the advancement of understanding and cultural exchange among the peoples of Asia, the Pacific and North America through the medium of film. HIFF is the premier international film event in the Pacific and has won the praise of governments, filmmakers, scholars, educators, programmers and film industry leaders throughout the world. For the discovery and exhibition of Asian and Pacific features, documentaries and short films in the nation, it is a primary source. The festival has premiered such movies as ONCE WERE WARRIORS, THE PIANO, SHINE, SHALL WE DANCE, Y TU MAMA TAMBIEN and CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON. Plus, DEPARTURES, a Japanese film, had its U.S. premiere at HIFF in 2008, won the HIFF Audience Award and then went on to win the 2009 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

HIFF's major sponsors include: Regal Entertainment Group, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Hawaii, Halekulani, Hawaii Tourism Authority and The VILCEK Foundation.

The 2009 Hawaii International Film Festival will be held October 15-25. Images of the films can be downloaded at <http://picasaweb.google.com/hiff2009images/2009FallFilmImages?authkey=Gv1sRgCOjSudrp5ob2iwE&feat=directlink>. For more information please visit our website at www.hiff.org.

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