

# Japanese films highlighted at Portland's Northwest Film Center

The Northwest Film Center is again featuring its Japanese Currents film series, which showcases a collection of Japanese cinema, from April 6 through 28. For the 11th year, the film center is screening Nipponese films ranging from anime to *jidaigeki*, documentary to comedy. Featured works include:

### Parks

April 6, 7:00pm

Produced to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Inokashira Park in Tokyo, director Natsuki Seta's *Parks* tells the story of three young friends who discover a reel-to-reel tape containing a fragment of a love song written and recorded in the 1960s by family members. Inspired by the hidden story from the past, they try to finish the song in time for the music festival celebrating the park's centennial. (2017, 118 minutes)

### Neko Ninja

April 7, 4:30pm

From the director of *Neko Samurai* and its sequel *Neko Samurai: A Tropical Adventure*, comes *Neko Ninja*. Takeshi Watanabe's film follows a skilled ninja who battles rival warriors alongside a cat, whom he believes is his ninja father. (2017, 95 minutes)

### Before We Vanish

April 7, 7:00pm

In Kiyoshi Kurosawa's *Before We Vanish*, a trio of extraterrestrials that have assumed human forms rob the minds of Earthlings of the basic concepts of life on Earth, paving the way for an invasion from beyond. The only thing standing in their way are a journalist who's trying to fashion a story out of it all and a woman whose husband has been possessed by one of the aliens. (2017, 129 minutes)

### Our House

April 13, 8:00pm

Yui Kiyohara's feature debut, *Our House*, was also her thesis film at the Tokyo University of the Arts, where she studied under Kiyoshi Kurosawa. *Our House* is a shape-shifting film thick with atmosphere, false starts, and surreal touches that explores the inner lives of four women who share the same house at the same time, but don't know it. (2017, 80 minutes)

### Mary and the Witch's Flower

April 14, 1:00pm

From Studio Ponoc, the animation collective featuring several principal artists from the recently shuttered Studio Ghibli, *Mary and the Witch's Flower* presents a young girl's discovery of an enchanted broom.



**NIPPONESE FILMS.** Director Hiromasa Yonebayashi's *Mary and the Witch's Flower* screens Saturday, April 14 as part of the Northwest Film Center's Japanese Currents film series. The showcase begins April 6 and ends April 28. (Photo courtesy of the Northwest Film Center)

Director Hiromasa Yonebayashi then transports the girl into a world of magic and adventure, leading to the further revelation of a mystifying flower whose seeds grant her powers. (2017, 102 minutes)

### Woman in the Dunes

April 14, 4:00pm

Director Hiroshi Teshigahara's *Woman in the Dunes* tells the story of a young entomologist who finds himself trapped in a sand-drenched pit where he is at first encouraged to stay the night (and then forced to live and work) with a strange widow who lives in a shack being swallowed up by sand. (1964, 123 minutes)

### Tokyo Idols

April 14, 7:00pm

With a compassionate but nonetheless critical frame, director Kyoko Miyake turns her lens on the world of the pop idols of Tokyo, where school-aged girls vie for the attentions and adoration of their dedicated fan base — mostly much older men — while pursuing dreams of becoming singers, dancers, and performers. (2017, 90 minutes)

### Suffering of Ninko

April 20, 7:00pm

One of Nikkatsu studio's recent Roman Porno revival productions was made by director Norihiro Niwatsukino. *Suffering of Ninko* focuses on a Buddhist monk living during the Edo period whose vows of chastity are constantly tested due to his mere presence whipping up sexual desire in those around him. Meanwhile, in the forest, a woman who is irresistible to men leaves a trail of victims behind her. (2016, 70 minutes)

### Teiichi: Battle of Supreme High

April 21, 4:30pm

In Akira Nagai's *Teiichi: Battle of Supreme High*, Teiichi Akaba enters

a boys-only high school with an aim to triumph over every one of his classmates to become class president — and eventually ascend to the position of prime minister. Teiichi is confident of his path, but when he finally meets his rival classmates, he's surprised. (2017, 118 minutes)

### The Third Murder

April 21, 7:00pm

Hirokazu Kore-Eda's *The Third Murder* follows a star attorney who agrees to defend a man accused of murder after a fatal holdup. The accused has a long criminal record and narrowly escaped the death sentence for a different murder 30 years prior. His client has already confessed to the new murder, but while delving deeper into the case, the attorney begins to doubt his client. (2017, 125 minutes)

### Antiporno

April 27, 7:00pm

Director Sion Sono's *Antiporno* is a drama about Japan's oldest major movie studio, which asks a batch of venerable filmmakers to revive its high-brow soft-core Roman Porno series. (2016, 76 minutes)

### Kagemusha

April 28, 7:00pm

Master director Akira Kurosawa's *Kagemusha* tells the story of a dying warlord during the Sengoku period who wants to hold power even after his death and employs a petty thief who happens to be his doppelgänger, but confusion reigns as competing warlords seek advantage to control vast swaths of Japanese society. (1980, 180 minutes)

All films in the series are screened at the Northwest Film Center's Whitsell Auditorium, located at 1219 S.W. Park Avenue in Portland. To learn more, call (503) 221-1156 or visit <www.nwfilm.org>.

## Hayao Miyazaki series featured during April at the Hollywood Theatre

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Another of Miyazaki's films, *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, centers on a princess who uses her ability to communicate with a gigantic crustacean to save her people from annihilation in a post-apocalyptic future. (1984, 116 minutes)

### Howl's Moving Castle

April 14, 2:00pm &

April 15, 7:00pm

In a world where modern warfare and fantasy collide, a teenage girl is transformed into an elderly woman in *Howl's Moving Castle*, and it's up to a mysterious wizard who occupies a mobile castle to save her. The two

eventually become involved in a dangerous war of sorcery. (2004, 119 minutes)

### Kiki's Delivery Service

April 14, 7:00pm &

April 15, 2:00pm

*Kiki's Delivery Service* follows a resourceful young witch who uses her broom to create a delivery service, only to lose her gift of flight when her self-confidence wanes. (1989, 97 minutes)

### Castle in the Sky

April 27, 7:00pm &

April 28, 7:00pm

*Castle in the Sky*, an adventure film, focuses on a young girl who falls from the heavens and into the arms of a boy. The two then join forces to

search for a floating island in the sky. (1986, 124 minutes)

### My Neighbor Totoro

April 28, 4:30pm &

April 29, 2:00pm

*My Neighbor Totoro* tells the tale of two young sisters who discover a magical world of spirits and other friendly creatures when they move into a new house near a vast forest. The film was heralded for its positive message and lack of villains and frightening images. (1988, 86 minutes)

The Hollywood Theatre is located at 4122 N.E. Sandy Boulevard in Portland. To learn more, call (503) 281-4215 or visit <www.hollywoodtheatre.org>.

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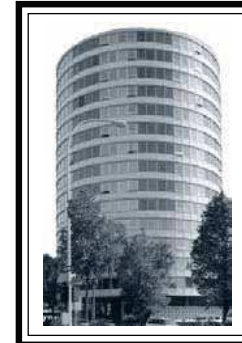
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