

**PRESS RELEASE**

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Contact:

Jake Anderson

808-792-1577 x 3

pr@hiff.org

Hawaii International Film Festival

## **HAWAII INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL PRESENTED BY HALEKULANI PUTS A SPOTLIGHT ON JAPAN**

### **Long Standing Section Sponsored by Hawaiian Airlines Includes Veteran Festival Directors and Newcomers**

**(Honolulu, HI) - Tuesday, October 11, 2011** - The Hawaiian islands closest Eastern neighbor, Japan, brings ten films to the 31st Hawaii International Film Festival (HIFF) presented by Halekulani for SPOTLIGHT ON JAPAN presented by Hawaiian Airlines. Japan has always had a strong offering of fine films for the Festival and this year brings more of the best International, U.S., and World Premieres.

This section is part of the ASIAN SHOWCASE, which focuses on Eastern nations that have distinguishing films to represent their country of origin. SPOTLIGHT ON JAPAN presented by Hawaiian Airlines brings these ten films to Hawai'i for the very first time. Featured films in this section are:

- CANNONBALL WEDLOCK
- CHRONICLES OF MY MOTHER
- ECLAIR
- INTO THE WHITE NIGHT
- KAASAN, MOM'S LIFE
- MILOCORZE: A LOVE STORY
- NINJA KIDS!!!
- RINGING IN THEIR EARS
- RYUJIN MABUYER
- SABI SABI: QUIRKY GUYS & GALS

Earlier this year Japan was hit by an earthquake followed by a tsunami that wiped out many villages and areas including Miyagi, which is where the film ECLAIR was shot. Making its International Premiere at HIFF, ECLAIR follows a pastry loving young boy constantly bouncing between homes. This film is a lasting memory of many places in Miyagi but is also a reminder that there is still joy to be found.

Making a comeback this year to HIFF is Director Masato Harada with the United States Premiere of his film CHRONICLES OF MY MOTHER. The story of a son's strange relationship with his mother, the film is based off a biographical novel by

Yasushi Inoue. Kosaku, played by Koji Yakusho, is abandoned at a very young age and struggles to piece together the fragments of memories and recollections to reveal the truth about his past.

Another HIFF veteran joins the Hawaii International Film Festival presented by Halekulani this year in Shunichiro Miki with THE WARPED FOREST. This World Premiere film looks to transport the audience into a out of this world state of mind and test the boundaries of reality with eerie looks into the forest of Director Miki's dreams.

Wedding bells will be appearing at this year's festival in the North American premiere of CANNONBALL WEDLOCK. Finding a soul mate is never easy but the film's main character Chie takes a different approach by narrowing it down to one of her current selection of five beaus.

Landing in U.S. theatres for the first time is KAASAN, MOM'S LIFE directed by Shotaro Kobayashi. Emphasizing the power of love and the importance of family, the film stars Kyoko Koizumi as Reiko, a mother who struggles to balance work and a family that is slowly being torn apart by an alcoholic husband, played by Masatoshi Nagase. The film is based off of the award-winning manga with the same name.

Four films also making their U.S. premieres to the Festival this year are NINJA KIDS, the kid friendly story that follows Rantaro as he enters his first year of ninja school; RYUJIN MABUYER: THE MOVIE, a superhero film about a stage actor who summons the soul of RYUJIN MABUYER to fight an evil organization from taking over Okinawa; SABI SABI SABI: QUIRKY GUYS & GALS, a laugh out loud collection of four short films about some very peculiar people; and THE WIFE OF GEGEGE NYOUBOU, a film based off of the autobiography of Nunoe Mura and her marriage to famed manga author Shigeru Mizuki.

Hawai'i premieres include INTO THE WHITE NIGHT, a detective story that spans over the course of 20 years; MILOCROZ: A LOVE STORY, a mind-bending anthology of love stories by out-there Director Takayuki Yamada; and RINGING IN THEIR EARS, the latest film from Yu Irie about the week leading up to an underground band's first big concert.

**Film Synopses: (All Screening Times Subject to Change)**

**CANNONBALL WEDLOCK**

KONZEN TOKKYUU

North American Premiere

Spotlight on Japan

Saturday, October 15 | 11:45 AM | Regal Dole

Sunday, October 23 | 2:30 PM | Regal Dole

Japan 2011 | Japanese with English subtitles | 107M

**DIRECTOR:** Koji Maeda

**CAST:** Kenta Hamano, Anna Ishibashi, Ryo Kase, Anne Watanabe, Yuriko Yoshitaka

Chie (Yuriko Yoshitaka), a 24-year-old office lady who is not passively waiting for Mr. Right to come along. Instead, aiming to maximize her pleasure on this planet, she juggles five guys, hanging out with whomever strikes her fancy or fulfills certain needs. When her best friend gets married, she makes up her mind to cut her list of boyfriends to one, but who will she pick?

**Sponsored by:** Hawaiian Airlines, NGN, The Japan Foundation

### **CHRONICLES OF MY MOTHER**

WAGA HAHA NO KI

United States Premiere

Spotlight on Japan

Saturday, October 22 | 9:00 PM | Regal Dole

Sunday, October 23 | 12:00 PM | Regal Dole

Japan 2011 | Japanese with English subtitles | 119M

**DIRECTOR:** Masato Harada, Aoi Miyazaki

**CAST:** Kilin Kiki, Koji Yakusho

From director Masato Harada (JUBAKU: SPELLBOUND) comes a story of a son's estranged relationship with his aging mother. As his mother's memories begin to slowly slip away her troubled past begins to surface. Kosaku (Koji Yakusho of 13 ASSASSINS) must come to terms with his feelings of abandonment as he pieces together the truth behind his mother's pain.

**Sponsored by:** Hawaiian Airlines, NGN, The Japan Foundation, Center for Japanese Studies University of Hawaii at Manoa

### **ECLAIR**

ECLAIR-OKASHIHOROKI

International Premiere

Spotlight on Japan

Saturday, October 15 | 5:45 PM | Regal Dole

Wednesday, October 19 | 4:15 PM | Regal Dole

Japan 2011 | Japanese with English subtitles | 105M

**DIRECTOR:** Akio Kondo

**CAST:** Ryuzo Hayashi, Ayumi Ishida, Hajime Yoshii

This moving drama depicts the life of an amiable young boy Akio and the difficult lives of people from the war. With unforgettable beautiful shots of Miyagi-which is now destroyed due to a dire earthquake that struck Japan on March 2011- as well as a flawless

performance by Hajime Yoshii, the film ECLAIR offers a mind-blowing on screen experience.

**Sponsored by:** Hawaiian Airlines, NGN, The Japan Foundation

**INTO THE WHITE NIGHT**

BYAKUYAKO

Hawaii Premiere

Spotlight On Japan

Saturday, October 22 | 8:00 PM | Regal Dole  
Japan 2010 | Japanese with English subtitles | 149M

**DIRECTOR:** Yoshihiro Fukagawa

**CAST:** Eiichiro Funakoshi, Maki Horikita, Kengo Kora, Tetsushi Tanaka, Keiko Toda

A pawnshop owner is killed in a ruined building. Though no crucial evidence is found, the case is closed when the suspect commits suicide. But detective Sasagaki is not convinced. Yukiho, the beautiful daughter of the suspect and Ryouji, the son of the victim with sad eyes-somehow they linger in his head. Later, mysterious incidents happen one after another around grown-up Yukiho and Ryouji, and their surprising connection comes to light.

**Sponsored by:** Hawaiian Airlines, NGN, The Japan Foundation

**KAASAN, MOM'S LIFE**

United States Premiere

Spotlight on Japan

Saturday, October 15 | 1:15 PM | Regal Dole  
Tuesday, October 18 | 4:15 PM | Regal Dole  
Japan 2011 | Japanese with English subtitles | 114M

**DIRECTOR:** Shotaro Kobayashi

**CAST:** Kyoko Koizumi, Maiyu Konishi, Masatoshi Nagase, Yusuke Shibe

This touching film, based on the award-winning manga with the same name, tells the autobiographical story of manga artist Reiko Saibara. Reiko has two children aged 4 and 6, and in addition to being a somewhat single parent, she manages to juggle a full-time job drawing manga. But when her alcoholic husband, war journalist Yutaka Kamoshida suddenly returns, he threatens to tear apart the family and break her bright spirit.

**Sponsored by:** Hawaiian Airlines, NGN, The Japan Foundation

**MILOCORZE: A LOVE STORY**

Hawaii Premiere

## Spotlight on Japan

Friday, October 14 | 9:45 PM | Regal Dole  
Japan 2011 | Japanese with English subtitles | 90M

**DIRECTOR:** Yoshimasa Ishimasa

**CAST:** Maiko , Anna Ishibashi, Seijun Suzuki, Takayuki Yamada

Takayuki Yamada rises to the challenge to play all the male protagonists in this four-story film that will confuse and delight you. Ovreneli Vreneligare becomes obsessed with Milocrorze after meeting her in a park. Besson Kumagai is a radio DJ host who is brash and obnoxious. Tamon time travels to become a one-eyed Ronin and rescue his beloved Yuri. And the film ends with a revisit of the grown up Ovreneli Vreneligare who encounters Milocrorze again.

**Sponsored by:** Hawaiian Airlines, NGN, The Japan Foundation

### **NINJA KIDS!!!**

NINTAMA RANTARO  
United States Premiere  
Spotlight on Japan

Saturday, October 15 | 10:30 AM | Regal Dole  
Japan 2011 | Japanese with English subtitles | 100M

**DIRECTOR:** Takashi Miike

**CAST:** Mikijiro Hira, Fuuta Kimura, Hiroki Matsukata, Shido Nakamura, Susumu Terajima

Veteran director Takashi Miike offers fun for the whole family with NINJA KIDS!!! This children-friendly feature follows the adventures of young Rantaro as he enters his first year of ninja school. Unlike a normal 1st grader, Rantaro must learn skills such as throwing stars and digging secret pitfalls! But, when assassins are sent to take out two local hair stylists, Rantaro and his schoolmates must risk their lives to win a dangerous race into enemy territory!

**Sponsored by:** Hawaiian Airlines, NGN, The Japan Foundation

### **RINGING IN THEIR EARS**

ROCK'N ROLL HA NARIYAMANAI  
Hawaii Premiere  
Spotlight On Japan

Friday, October 21 | 9:30 PM | Regal Dole  
Sunday, October 23 | 5:45 PM | Regal Dole  
Japan 2011 | Japanese with English subtitles | 89M

**DIRECTOR:** Yu Irie

**CAST:** Kurumi Morishita, Fumi Nikaido, Mikito Tsurugi

One week until the biggest concert yet by rock band Shinsei Kamattechan. High schooler Michiko is torn between her dream of becoming a professional chess player and fitting in with her peers. Meanwhile, single mother Kaori works as an office cleaner, and as an erotic dancer. And her young son is obsessed with watching Shinsei Kamattechan on his laptop, which gets him into trouble at his kindergarten. Can they all discover a way to live life on their terms?

**Sponsored by:** Hawaiian Airlines, NGN, The Japan Foundation

**RYUJIN MABUYER**

United States Premiere  
Spotlight On Japan

Sunday, October 16 | 11:30 AM | Regal Dole  
Saturday, October 22 | 10:45 AM | Regal Dole  
Japan 2011 | Japanese with English subtitles | 90M

**DIRECTOR:** Tomoki Sano  
**CAST:** Shintaro Yamada

Ryujin Mabuyer comes from Nirai Kanai and fights with Majimun, a vicious corps that plots to break the peace of Okinawa!! The Majimun soldiers led by Habu-devil terrify the people in Okinawa in order to get nine Mabui stones of Okinawan legend. Will Uruma, who transforms into Ryujin Mabuyer, be able to protect the Mabui stones?

**Sponsored by:** Hawaiian Airlines, NGN, The Japan Foundation

**SABI SABI: QUIRKY GUYS & GALS**

SABI OTOKO SABI ONNA  
United States Premiere  
Spotlight On Japan

Thursday, October 13 | 9:15 PM | Regal Dole  
Japan 2011 | Japanese with English subtitles | 90M

**DIRECTOR:** Yosuke Fujita, Masaya Kakehi, Tomoko Matsunashi, Mipo O, Gen Sekiguchi  
**CAST:** Yosiyosi Arakawa, Tenkyu Fukuda, Keisuke Horibe, Kyoko Koizumi, Aoi Nakamura

Fans of all things slightly offbeat, will love this comedy romp from Japan! Comprising four short films about some very peculiar people, this Omnibus film will have you laughing out loud! Starting with the short 'Cheer Girls', the anthology includes films 'Boy? Meets Girl', and 'Claim Night', and concludes with the farce 'House of Abandoned Business Men'.

**Sponsored by:** Hawaiian Airlines, NGN, The Japan Foundation

## **THE WARPED FOREST**

World Premiere  
Spotlight On Japan

Saturday, October 15 | 9:45 PM | Regal Dole  
Japan 2011 | Japanese with English subtitles | 82M

**DIRECTOR:** Shunichiro Miki

**CAST:** Rinko Kikuchi

A funny, eerie, and surprisingly poignant visit to a strange forest of dreams, where seemingly normal people go about their daily activities in a world hauntingly (and sometimes disgustingly) alien from our own. By turns weird, silly, and aching solemn, this is a unique and unforgettable vision. Directed by Shunichiro Miki (FUNKY FOREST: FIRST CONTACT, HIFF 2005).

**Sponsored by:** Hawaiian Airlines, NGN, The Japan Foundation

## **THE WIFE OF GEGEGE NYOUBOU**

GEGEGE NO NYOUBOU

United States Premiere

Spotlight On Japan

Thursday, October 20 | 5:30 PM | Regal Dole  
Friday, October 21 | 1:00 PM | Regal Dole  
Japan 2010 | Japanese with English subtitles | 119M

**DIRECTOR:** Takuji Suzuki

**CAST:** Kazue Fukiishi, Kankuro Kudo, Jun Murakami, Maki Sakai

Based on Nunoe Mura's autobiography of her marriage to famed manga author Shigeru Mizuki (creator of HAKABA NO KITARO), Wife of Gegege boasts wonderful performances from leads Kazue Fukiishi (13 ASSASSINS) and Kankuro Kudo (writer of Takashi Miike's ZEBRAMAN). Director Takuji Suzuki has crafted a beautiful film that examines the couple's day-to-day struggles with an effective mix of realism and fantasy.

**Sponsored by:** Hawaiian Airlines, NGN, The Japan Foundation

The 31st Hawaii International Film Festival presented by Halekulani will feature 216 films from 43 different countries and will be held at the Regal Dole Cannery Stadium 18 Theatres & IMAX from October 13-23. Tickets are on sale now to the general public and HIFF Ohana members. General admission tickets are available for \$12 or \$10 for students, seniors, children and military. Tickets may be purchased in person at the guest services desk at Regal Dole Cannery Stadium 18 Theatres & IMAX or by phone at (808) 447-0577.

**Hawaii International Film Festival:**

Established in 1981, the Hawaii International Film Festival is a non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of cultural exchange and media awareness in the Pacific Rim. HIFF is a premier international film event that has won the praise of governments, filmmakers, scholars, educators, programmers and film industry leaders across the globe. HIFF's programming has two particular mandates: to be a festival of record for emerging films from Asia and the Pacific, and to present the top festival films from around the world, annually screening films from over 45 countries. HIFF also presents content and panels in the fields of film and music, and mobile entertainment and gaming. These transmedia programs reflect HIFF's commitment to exhibiting innovative creative content coming from the Asia Pacific Rim. For more information visit [hiff.org](http://hiff.org).

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

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