



MEDIA RELEASE

JFF PLUS UNVEILS POWERFUL PROGRAM OF FREE CINEMATIC GEMS

From tales of time travel to enchanting animated adventures and a geisha-inspired musical comedy, the **Japanese Film Festival** returns from **4 – 13 December** with **JFF Plus: Online Festival**, a free streamed Festival featuring the very best in Japanese cinema.

The 2020 Festival, presented by The Japan Foundation Sydney, will screen over 25 films including features, documentaries, as well as stop motion and animated shorts for audiences across Australia and New Zealand to enjoy online.

“We’re thrilled to bring the very best in Japanese cinema to audiences across the trans-Tasman in 2020!” said **Japanese Film Festival Director, Yurika Sugie**. “This year’s program showcases a diverse selection of films traversing award-winning contemporary works and familiar favourites from Japan’s most celebrated auteurs.”

“From iconic past JFF favourites to incredible new discoveries, JFF Plus presents a rich cross section of Japanese cinema that viewers can enjoy from the comfort of their own homes,” said **Japanese Film Festival Programmer, Susan Bui**.

The program showcases an array of award-winning films including Tokyo International Film Festival Audience Award winner ***Tremble All You Want***, a quirky rom-com about a young woman who must choose between her childhood crush or settle for her imperfect boyfriend; Shanghai International Film Festival Best Screenplay winner ***Key of Life***, an ingeniously scripted deadpan comedy that sees a struggling actor and an amnesic hit man exchange identities; and the prestigious cinema magazine *Kinema Junpo*’s Best Ten listed ***One Night***, a torrid drama by director Kazuya Shiraishi where a family reunites fifteen years after a dramatic incident threw their lives into chaos.

Devotees of Japanese culture can look forward to favourites from JFFs gone by, such as ***Railways*** (JFF 2011), a heart-warming film about a grief-stricken man who finds solace in his childhood dream of becoming a train conductor; nostalgic drama ***A Story of Yonosuke*** (JFF 2013), which interweaves two timelines to paint a rich portrait of one man’s life story from his 1987 college days to present; and



Lady Maiko (JFF 2014), a musical comedy that interweaves elements of Broadway and geisha culture to explore a young girl's aspirations of becoming a maiko (apprentice geisha).

Enchanting animated adventures abound in *Sumikkogurashi: Good to be in the Corner*, which chronicles San-X's beloved Sumikkogurashi characters as they embark on an unexpected journey into a magical pop-up book; and *Tokyo Marble Chocolate*, an anime confection in which a miniature donkey acts as a catalyst for two lovers to confront their inner emotions.

Fans of inspiring documentaries will enjoy Hong Kong International Film Festival Best Documentary Winner *Peace*, a visual essay-style observational film that offers a glimpse into the daily lives of people and cats in Okayama city; *Tora-san in Goto*, shot over 22 years, chronicling the lives of a large family of udon noodle makers in the Nagasaki Prefecture; and *Tsukiji Wonderland*, a seafood odyssey focusing on the world-famous Tsukiji fish markets in Tokyo.

Additional program highlights include: *Café Funiculi Funicula*, a fantasy-infused tale about a mystical coffee shop which allows patrons to time travel; *Ecotherapy Getaway Holiday*, a captivating dramedy in which seven elderly women become lost in mountainous terrain during a wilderness tour gone awry; teen music romance *Our 30-Minute Sessions*, about a dead musician who attempts to reunite his old band and communicate with his former girlfriend when he is brought back to life in the body of a college student who plays his old recordings; *Stolen Identity*, a surreal thriller exploring the story of a woman who becomes the target of a serial killer; and *The Flavour of Green Tea Over Rice*, legendary director Yasujiro Ozu's blissfully warm 1952 Japanese classic, about a middle aged couple who find common ground over a shared meal.

The program also comprises nine animated shorts from two powerhouse creators, legendary studio **Production I.G.** and award-winning stop motion animator **Takeshi Yashiro**. Highlights include Production I.G.'s 2013 Fantasia International Film Festival Best Animated Short Film winner *Kick-Heart* and Takeshi Yashiro's 2016 Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia, Japan Competition Best Short Award winning *Moon of a Sleepless Night*.

For more information visit watch.jff.jp/go.jp.

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MEDIA CONTACT: Original Spin P: +61 2 8065 7363

Matt Fraser matt@originalspin.com.au M: +61 401 326 007

Alex Clampett alex@originalspin.com.au M: +61 411 046 734

EDITOR'S NOTES

ABOUT JFF

The Japanese Film Festival (JFF) in Australia is an annual film festival that has been presented by The Japan Foundation, Sydney since 1997. In 2019, JFF was held in 58 cities across 12 countries, reaching an audience of over 170,000 people.

2020 marks the 24th year of JFF Australia, which spans three programs: Classics, offering rare 35 and 16mm film screenings for free, Satellite, which tours a hand-picked selection of films across Australia, and JFF Plus: Online Festival, a brand-new online program for 2020 streaming free films in 20 countries, including Australia and New Zealand.

ABOUT THE JAPAN FOUNDATION, SYDNEY

The Japan Foundation, Sydney is the Australian arm of the Japan Foundation, which was established by the Japanese government to promote cultural and intellectual exchange between Japan and other nations. It runs a diverse range of programs and events, including exhibitions, talk events, grant programs and Japanese language courses for all levels from beginner to advanced. The Japan Foundation was established in 1972 with a global network of 25 offices in 24 countries. The Australian office was founded in 1978.