

## The Japan Foundation Announces New Free Online Streaming Program, JFF+ INDEPENDENT CINEMA introducing 12 Japanese independent films worldwide



**December 1st, 2022 Tokyo, Japan** - The Japan Foundation (JF) is pleased to announce our new **free online streaming program, JFF+ INDEPENDENT CINEMA**, featuring **twelve Japanese independent films**. Films are selected by the managers of Japanese independent theaters, so-called “**mini-theaters**” that have nurtured the diversity of Japanese cinema culture. The program runs for a six-month period **starting December 15, 2022 until June 15, 2023**. Streaming period is divided into two terms, with six films each in the first and second halves.

To spread the excellence of Japanese films to overseas audiences despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Japan Foundation has held an online streaming program, the Japanese Film Festival Online (JFF Online) since 2020. In the latest edition, the JFF Online 2022, 20 Japanese films were streamed free of charge to 25 countries and the program has received a great response, with 540,000 views by 320,000 viewers worldwide.

Our new program, the **JFF+ INDEPENDENT CINEMA**, focuses on Japanese independent films and to show the variety of Japanese film culture nurtured by the mini-theaters

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(independent theaters). The number of Japanese films produced is one of the highest in the world. In 2021, approximately 490 films were newly released to the public yet the pandemic. About 70% of these films are screened at more than 100 mini-theaters, small-scale movie theaters throughout Japan that are outside of the mainstream theater complex. Mini-theaters have held stronger ties to their local communities and contribute to sustain the Japanese independent film culture and its diversity.

Films were selected by the managers of **six mini-theaters**, those are **Forum Sendai** (Sendai City); **Takada Sekaikan** (Joetsu City); **Cinémathèque Takasaki** (Takasaki City); **Cinema Jack & Betty** (Yokohama City); **Ciné nouveau** (Osaka City); and **Cinema5** (Oita City). We are streaming 12 films that have graced the screens of mini-theaters in recent years, from films that highlight people's lifestyles and community issues against the backdrop of local climates and landscapes, to films that pursue new cinematic expressions (check the list of films below). To complement the program, we will also show interviews with directors, actors, and other creators who got involved with the films, and articles on the mini-theaters culture. We are delighted to introduce the current state of Japanese cinema to people overseas from many perspectives.

## **Outline of the program**

**Program title: JFF+ INDEPENDENT CINEMA**

**Organizer:** The Japan Foundation

**Supported** by Japan Community Cinema Center

**Program Period:** Dec 15, 2022 to June 15, 2023

**Number of films:** 12 Japanese films.

**Streaming Period** is divided in 2 terms.

- First term: December 15, 2022, 5:00pm (JST) to March 15, 2023 4:59pm (JST), and 6 films among the list will be streamed

- Second term: March 15, 2023, 5:00pm (JST) to June 15 2023, 5:00pm (JST) and the other 6 films will be streamed.

**Regions covered:** Almost all countries and regions except Japan.

**Subtitles:** English, Spanish for all 12 films and Japanese for 3 films.

**Price:** Free of charge

**Style:** Free online streaming. Email registration is required.

**URL:** <https://jff.jpff.go.jp/watch/independent-cinema/>

## **Film Lineup**

**First term - December 15, 2022 to March 15, 2023**

**Double Layered Town / Making a Song to Replace Our Positions** (2021), directed by **KOMORI Haruka + SEO Natsumi**

A documentary about a team of young people who record the memories of a town that was affected by a big earthquake

[Selected by Forum Sendai / Available worldwide except Japan]

**Dryads in a Snow Valley** (2016), directed by **KOBAYASHI Shigeru**

A documentary that observes the lives of people living in a mountainous region covered in snow

[Selected by Takada Sekaikan / Available worldwide except Japan]

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**Wonderwall : the Movie** (2020), directed by **MAEDA Yuki**

A comedy drama that depicts the conflict between students and their university over the continuation of a long-standing college dorm

[Selected by Cinémathèque Takasaki / Available worldwide except Japan]

**Somebody's Flowers** (2021), directed by **OKUDA Yusuke**

A humanistic drama that looks at the emotional recovery of those who have lost close relatives

[Selected by Cinema Jack & Betty / Available worldwide except Japan]

**hottamaru • days** (2015), directed by **YOSHIGAI Nao**

A fantastical and beautiful visual poem about joyful spirits who reside in a house

[Selected by Ciné nouveau / Available Worldwide, except Japan]

**Leaving on the 15th Spring** (2013), directed by **YOSHIDA Yasuhiro**

A coming-of-age drama about the emotional journey of a young girl who leaves the beautiful and isolated island that she is from

[Selected by Cinema5 / Available worldwide except Japan and China]

Second term - December 15, 2022 to March 15, 2023

**On the Edge of Their Seats** (2020), directed by **JOJO Hideo**

A coming-of-age drama about young people who cheer for their high school baseball team playing in a stadium

[Selected by Forum Sendai / Available worldwide except Japan]

**Shiver** (2021), directed by **TOYODA Toshiaki**

A music film that shows off the astonishing performance of a world famous taiko troupe

[Selected by Takada Sekaikan / Available worldwide except Japan, Austria, Switzerland, and Germany]

**Drive into Night** (2022), directed by **SAKO Dai**

A surprising humanistic drama that questions the meaning of happiness through the strange fate of one man who caused an accident

[Selected by Cinémathèque Takasaki / Available worldwide except Japan]

**What Can You Do about It** (2019), directed by **TSUBOTA Yoshifumi**

A heartfelt documentary about the interactions between a film director and his uncle who has low-level autism

[Selected by Cinema Jack & Betty / Available worldwide except Japan]

**In the Distance** (2022), directed by **KATO Saki**

A warm and unique story of two women who live under one roof and the strange happenings around them

[Selected by Ciné nouveau / Available worldwide except Japan]

**A Little Girl's Dream** (2014), directed by **TOKITA Yoshiaki**

A miraculous documentary that follows a girl in elementary school who dreams of becoming a vet and the 26 years that follow to make her dream come true

[Selected by Cinema5 / Available worldwide except Japan]

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### **JFF+ Independent Cinema programmers from mini-theaters**

The managers of the following six mini-theaters located throughout Japan, have selected twelve films to offer an attractive lineup for movie fans around the world.

- NAGASAWA Ryo, programar of Forum Cinema Network and HASHIMURA Sayumi, manager of **Forum Sendai** (Sendai City)
- UENO Michinari, manager of **Takada Sekaikan** (Joetsu City)
- SHIO Mutsuko, manager of **Cinémathèque Takasaki** (Takasaki City)
- KAJIWARA Toshiyuki, manager of **Cinema Jack & Betty** (Yokohama City)
- YAMASAKI Noriko, manager of **Ciné nouveau** (Osaka City)
- TAI Hajime, manager of **Cinema5** (Oita City)

### **Japanese Film Festival (JFF)**

The JAPANESE FILM FESTIVAL is a project organized by the Japan Foundation to promote Japanese films around the world. With a slogan of "Japanese Films Anywhere, Anytime," the program was launched in 2016 for 10 ASEAN countries and Australia. Since then, we expanded its network to include China, Russia, India, and many more countries. We continue to promote the appeal of Japanese films to the world.

### **JFF+ (Japanese Film Festival Plus)**

The JFF+ is a website operated by the JF to promote Japanese films to the worldwide audiences. It consists of three sections: Read, which features news and special columns on Japanese films; Watch, which offers online streaming of Japanese films online; and Join, which provides information on the events related to the Japanese Film Festival (JFF) that the Japan Foundation organizes around the world.

**JFF+ website:** <https://jff.jp.go.jp/>

### **Follow JFF+ on SNS**

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### **Japan Foundation (JF)**

The Japan Foundation was established in 1972 as a special legal entity supervised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2003, it was reorganized as an incorporated administrative agency to cultivate friendship and ties between Japan and the world. The Japan Foundation creates global opportunities to foster friendship, trust, and mutual understanding through culture, language, and dialogue through its 25 offices in 24 countries.

**URL:** <https://www.jp.go.jp/e/index.html>

### **Press images**

An image and a logo are available from the link below.

**URL:** [press images](#)

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