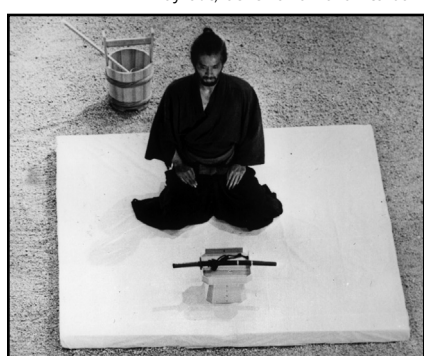


FILM FORUM

SUMMER SAMURAI CONTINUES

SEPTEMBER 4/5/6 SUN/MON/TUE

HARAKIRI 切腹 NEW 35MM PRINT! (1962, MASAKI KOYABASHI) "Nothing unusual happened today" — li clan record book. At an Edo clan mansion, ronin Tatsuya Nakadai, so penniless that ritual suicide is the only honorable way out, asks for a haven to commit his seppuku, and three named samurai as his seconds. But as retainer Rentaro Mikuni fills in the time while they wait by telling, in flashback, of the horrific outcome of a recent similar request, each of the seconds calls in "sick" — and Nakadai begins his own story. For aficionados who may find the swordplay strange, note that the actors used real swords. The eerie score was recorded in advance by the great Toru Takemitsu, a frequent Kobayashi collaborator. "Played with something like demonic self-possession by Nakadai... The pace is calculated to extract every ounce of suspense." — Vernon Young, "The director's finest film." — Donald Richie, Cannes Festival Special Jury Prize. 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30



advance by the great Toru Takemitsu, a frequent Kobayashi collaborator. "Played with something like demonic self-possession by Nakadai... The pace is calculated to extract every ounce of suspense." — Vernon Young, "The director's finest film." — Donald Richie, Cannes Festival Special Jury Prize. 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30

SEPTEMBER 7 WED (2 FILMS FOR 1 ADMISSION)

SAMURAI ASSASSIN 侍 (1965, KIYACHI OKAMOTO) 1860: and while "snow seldom falls in March," it's coming down hard as progressive regent Naosuke li starts his heavily-guarded daily procession, even as fanatical anti-shogunate samurai move in for their attack. A four-force in dynamic framing for the wide screen, this is director Okamoto's masterpiece, with its stunning mass fight showdown made up of 300 separate shots, filmed — as planned! — in just two days: see The Sword of Doom, Sept. 9 & 10. (Okamoto claimed that this pace kept the energy up and nobody had time to fall out of character.) Kibiki actor Koshiro Matsumoto plays li while Toshiro Mifune's fictional character is arguably his most complex non-Kurosawa portrait. A brutal personalization of the end of an era, this is a powerful and punishing tragedy of near-Greek inevitability. 1:00, 5:10, 9:10



advance by the great Toru Takemitsu, a frequent Kobayashi collaborator. "Played with something like demonic self-possession by Nakadai... The pace is calculated to extract every ounce of suspense." — Vernon Young, "The director's finest film." — Donald Richie, Cannes Festival Special Jury Prize. 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30

ZATOICHI THE FUGITIVE 座頭市凶状旅 (1963, TOKUZU TAMAKI) On a pilgrimage of repentance to the mother of a man he was forced to kill, Shintaro Katsu's Zatoichi, a blind, seemingly bumbling masseur, finds himself caught in a morass of scheming among three gang bosses — one ambitious, one reluctant, and one forcibly retired but looking to get back in the game: a gold-hungry wandering master swordsman, an old flame, and Japan's real Robin Hood figure Chuji Kunisada, even as the bounty on his head skyrockets from 10 ryo to 300. But when there's one killing too many, it's time for our hero to break out that cane sword. Number four in the legendary action/comedy series. 3:20, 7:30



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SEPTEMBER 8 THU

THRONE OF BLOOD 蜘蛛巣城 (1957, AKIRA KUROSAWA) ... or Castle of the Spider's Web, the literal translation of the kanji title above. Macbeth transformed into a medieval Japanese legend, as General Toshiro Mifune, with Minoru Chiaki's "Banquo" at his side, gallops through a seemingly endless forest to his encounter with a single witch, then, as dense fog lifts, finds himself before a looming castle. With the legendary Isuzu Yamada as his Lady, this is a partnership of titans. Mifune's takeover after the murder, and the castle's fier invasion are powerful and fascinating additions to the text in this heavily Non-influenced adaptation. How-the-do-it department: except for the last hit, there is no camera trickery in the famous final scene. Real archers fired real arrows from just off camera range. "Who wouldn't be scared?" remarked Mifune when complimented on his acting. 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:40

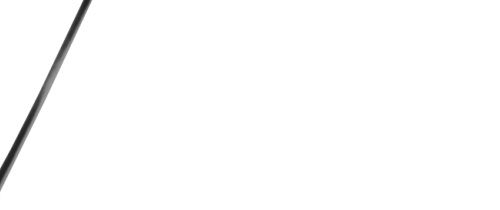


SEPTEMBER 9/10 FRI/SAT

THE SWORD OF DOOM 大菩薩峠 NEW 35MM PRINT! (1966, KIYACHI OKAMOTO) Against the background of the Meiji Restoration — with plenty of actual historical characters getting ruthlessly debunked — evil fictional character Tatsuya Nakadai carves his way to an incredible climax, going berserk in a burning building filled with enemies. (The final battle once again contains 300 camera setups, shot in a stupefying two days). A classic among aficionados, this is the ultimate in action, boasting as it does three of director Okamoto's superbly staged one-on-one sword fights (one, at night as snow softly falls amid the carnage, with guest star Toshiro Mifune). Since 1935, at least the third filming of a never-ending bestseller published episodically from 1913 to 1941, with only a third used for this version. The final freeze frame was to lead to part II of a planned but unmade trilogy. 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30

SEPTEMBER 11/12 SUN/MON

BANDITS VS. SAMURAI SQUADRON 雲霧仁左衛門 NEW 35MM PRINT! (1978, HIDEO GOSHA) Under the titles dark-clad figures ride in classic big caper style, and from then on it's nonstop plotting, hairbreadth escapes, and breathtaking mass swordfights, including a nighttime struggle on a torchlit beach, as enigmatic bandit chieftain Tatsuya Nakadai uses elaborate con games and robberies to finance a desperate revenge plot — while relentless shogunate policeman Shogoro Ichikawa calls on double crosses of his own to stop him. But even as the already breathless pace steps up, 360 degree plot twists inject nerve-shredding tension until a final, biting ironic shock. A big budget grafting of Sting-style chicness onto the samurai tradition, this was also the triumphant return to the genre for Gosha, director of Goyokin (see Sept. 15) — and probably the top samurai film of the 70s. 1:30, 4:30, 7:30



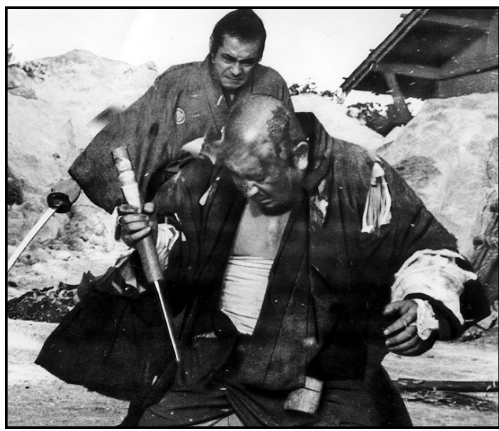
SEPTEMBER 13/14 TUE/WED

SAMURAI SAGA 或る剣豪の生涯 NEW 35MM PRINT! (1959, HOSOE INAGAKI) Toshiro Mifune's 17th century samurai responds to jibes about his enlarged proboscis with witty haiku and slashing swordplay, then plays ghost writer for tongue-tied Akira Takarada's courting of Yoko Tsukasa, even though he secretly loves her himself. Sound familiar? Of course, it's Edmond Rostand's Cyrano de Bergerac, and, long a staple of the Japanese stage, the French neo-classical verse drama fits quite neatly into samurai modes. And it's a unique experience for Mifune fans to see him take on a legendary role of world theater. Not surprisingly he is superb, alternately hilarious and moving, most notably in the last scene as the leaves fall. And his nose, in contrast to the Pinocchio-like proboscis normally favored, is the best yet, both physically believable, and, well, kind of ugly — as called for in the text. 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:40



SEPTEMBER 15 THU

ZATOICHI MEETS YOJIMBO 座頭市と用心棒 (1970, KIYACHI OKAMOTO) Irresistible Force Meets Immovable Object as Toshiro Mifune squares off with Shintaro Katsu's Zatoichi in the DUEL OF THE SUPER-STARS. Twentieth in the Zatoichi series boasts direction by Okamoto (his only episode in the series), and raucous comedy teamwork by the stars, ravishing widescreen color photography by the great Kazuo Miyagawa (Rashomon, Yojimbo), amid a typically complicated plot — crooked gang boss, crooked silk merchant, and Mysterious Stranger vying with our heroes for a cache of embezzled gold. So who does win the final duel between the invincible Mifune and the equally invincible Katsu? Our lips are sealed. 1:00, 5:30, 10:00



ZATOICHI MEETS YOJIMBO

GYOYOKIN 御用金 (1969, HIDEO GOSHA) "Swept away by the gods," an entire village disappears overnight; a Shogunate gold shipment (goyokin) sinks in a storm; and feudal retainer Tetsuro Tamba, faced with clan bankruptcy, decides he must take the ultimate step. But when a similar horror looms again, Tatsuya Nakadai, the one retainer who originally protested, must return from self-imposed exile as a carnival swordmaster to face both the extinction and the salvation of his clan amid a nighttime duel on a wintry beach lit by bonfire lights. With Nakadai reaching new heights of derring-do amid color location shooting on Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island, leading up to the final duel in yard-deep snowdrifts, this was a last peak in the genre even as it headed toward extinction. 3:10, 7:40



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SEPTEMBER 16-29 TWO WEEKS (NO 8:00 SHOW ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24)

MIKHAIL KALATOZOV'S



"AMAZING... ASTONISHING! ... One deliriously inventive shot after another... They're going to be carrying ravished film students out of the theaters on stretchers." — TERENCE RAFFERTY, THE NEW YORKER

NEW 35MM PRINT!

(1964) Havana, late 50s. Helicopter-borne, the camera swoops from a dark sea over a lush tropical island, its palm trees like white feathers against an almost equally dark sky; then, aboard a punt, goes through and under a village on stilts amid the wetlands. A band plays party music during a fashion show atop a skyscraper as the camera slides down to a rooftop swimming pool, and follows a dark-haired bikiniid beauty into and under the water. And that's just the beginning. Following a triumphant comeback with Cannes Palme d'Or winner The Cranes Are Flying, director Mikhail Kalatozov, along with legendary poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko, screenwriter Enrique Pineda Barnet and camerameister Sergei Urusevsky, came to Cuba to do for the 1959 revolution what Eisenstein had done for 1917's. And it seems that's just what the filmmakers succeeded in doing, as U.S. fatcats romance bargirls in an exotic nightclub; a farmer torches his cane crop against an all-encompassing sky; student revolutionaries lead massive crowds against cop firehoses; and, as bombs fall, a poor guajiro abandons his family to join a defiant revolution... all amid a riot of innovative photography, rapid fire cutting, screen-filling close-ups, hair-raising handheld tracking shots, crane shots, elevator shots, how-did-they-do-it shots... But the result displaced both the stylistically-uptight Soviet authorities and the Cuban moviegoing public, who groused No soy Cuba!, and the movie soon fell into obscurity. Flash-forward three decades later: following screenings at the Telluride and San Francisco film festivals, and with championing by Coppola and Scorsese, I Am Cuba at last received U.S. distribution and began a smash run at Film Forum on March 8, 1995. For this 10th anniversary of its rediscovery, here is the landmark film in a new print, with all new subtitles and with a new soundtrack eliminating that pesky overdund which once gave an unwelcome instant Russian translation of the Spanish dialogue. A MILESTONE FILMS RELEASE 2:45, 5:20, 8:00* *NO 8:00 SCREENING ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

I AM CUBA: THE SIBERIAN MAMMOTH (2004) So how did they pull off those eye-popping shots in I Am Cuba? Now Brazilian director Vicente Ferraz, using interviews with surviving cast and crew, combined with clips and behind-the-scenes archival footage, comes as close as possible to solving the film's many mysteries. "One good movie deserves another... As Ferraz contacts the various survivors, he brings news of the long delayed appreciation of their efforts, providing a gratifying emotional payoff." — Robert Keser. The documentary's subtitle derives from a vintage J. Hoberman bon mot in his original Village Voice review: "I Am Cuba is as unexpected a find as a Siberian woolly mammoth preserved beneath the sands of a coconut grove." A CINEMA TROPICAL RELEASE 1:00 ONLY (SEPARATE ADMISSION)

SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 6 ONE WEEK NEW 35MM PRINT! COMPLETE, UN-CUT VERSION!

SERGIO LEONE'S ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE WEST STARRING HENRY FONDA CHARLES BRONSON CLAUDIA CARDINALE JASON ROBARDS JR. (1968) Revenge-bent Charles Bronson stalks kid-blasting villain Henry Fonda (a far cry from his lovable lawman in Ford's My Darling Clementine) with the aid of good-bad man Jason Robards, as the railroad marches relentlessly westward through the land of hook-returned-earth mother Claudia Cardinale. From the beginning sequences, it's obvious we're in the realm of the grandiose: the legendary waiting-for-the-train opening sequence under the opening credits lasts ten minutes, accompanied only by an orchestration of natural sounds — wind, creaking windmill, crunching footsteps, etc. — with the final credit, "Directed by Sergio Leone," appearing as the train pulls into the station. And the succeeding massacre at the welcoming party — another ten minutes — is orchestrated to build up to the shock of Fonda's first close-up, Leone's "Jesus Christ! It's Henry Fonda!" moment (as the actor himself later described it). Fonda had originally turned down the part, but changed his mind after watching three quarters of the Eastwood trilogy; he later called Leone "the best director I've ever worked with in my life." Edited by a seemingly intermittent lawnmower soon after first release, this is the complete uncut version. Featuring spectacular cinematography by Tonino Delli Colli and what is generally considered Ennio Morricone's greatest film score — written before shooting began; Leone choreographed his actors' movements to the playback. Screenplay by Leone, Dario Argento and Bernardo Bertolucci. "The characters' compelling dance of death is made all the more riveting by Leone's stylish bravura." — Phil Hardy, The Western. "Leone calls it a 'ballet of the dead,' and it's also been called 'an opera in which the arias are not sung, they are stared.'" — Richard Schickel. A PARAMOUNT RELEASE 2:00, 5:30, 8:30

OCTOBER 7-13 ONE WEEK NEW 35MM PRINT!

"One of the few postwar European films that is both cerebral and resolutely sensual." — TIME OUT (LONDON) ROBERT BRESSON'S pickpocket (1959) Some men are above the law. "But how do they know who they are?" "They ask themselves." But if Martin Lussalle's Michel seems outstanding only for his arrogance and detachment, there are feelings and reasonings we only learn about by increments and accretion in a film that director Robert Bresson firmly declared not a thriller, even if it does chronicle a young man's rise and fall as a master pickpocket. If suspense was not unknown in the works of arguably the most austere of major directors (check out the prison break in A Man Escaped), little in his previous oeuvre could prepare us for what amounts to a tour-de-force action scene, a series of takings, passings, and disposals in the actual Gare de Lyon done with amazing sleight of hand, including a purse moved almost immediately through three sets of hands; a wallet taken, dropped in a passerby's pocket, then finally taken again; a wall let taken, plucked, then returned empty. (If the light-fingered "boosting" looks authentic, credit the singly-named Kassagi, a presumably reformed criminal master and the film's technical adviser, who also plays Michel's criminal mentor). This was Bresson's first completely original script (he eventually realized the unconscious inspiration from Dostoyevsky's Crime and Punishment, although he provides his own literary genesis in Michel's diary (or is it a statement?), which provides the narration. Analogies between Hollywood moviemaking and Bresson seldom come to mind, but if the prison conclusion seems familiar, Paul Schrader (whose early critical work Transcendental Cinema highlighted his deep respect for Bresson) has acknowledged that Pickpocket directly influenced his American Gigolo screenplay, as well as Taxi Driver's "Black-and-white images in the summer sun... of hands flexing uncontrollably, of eyes opaque to the camera's gaze... all part of a diary/flashback that is in the process of being 'written' by the thief himself in prison. Read it as an allegory on the insufficiency of human reason; as a tone poem on displaced desire." — Chris Auty, Time Out (London). A JANUS FILMS RELEASE 2:00, 3:40, 5:30, 7:00, 8:40, 10:15

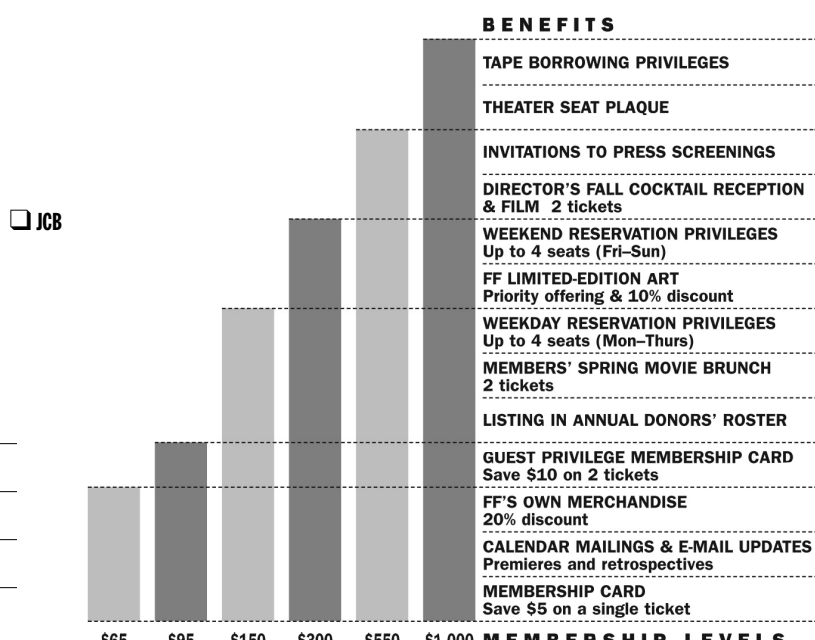
OCTOBER 14-20 ONE WEEK NEW 35MM PRINT!

Robert Bresson's MOUCHETTE "One of the All-Time 100 Best Movies" — TIME (2005) (1967) As eyes watch from the bushes, a hand sets up a simple trap that will strangle a bird. But as another bird is ensnared, another set of hands comes and frees them. Fourteen-year-old Mouchette (Nadine Nortier) doesn't say much — she won't even sing in school, though she does throw clods of dirt at classmates — as she cares for her ailing mother and baby brother, and as her father nightly trucks in smuggled booze to the local bar. But she watches as the gamekeeper and the poacher battle both professionally and personally — they're both sweet on the local barnmaid — even as the gamekeeper's wife can't be bothered with a reaction, a reaction that doesn't even seem expected. Not an idyllic existence, but then things can get worse. Adapted from a novel by Georges Bernanos, original author of Bresson's signature work, Diary of a Country Priest, this is both a sympathetic and a brutally un sentimental portrait, with, in the bumper cars sequence at the fair, the one moment of pure exuberance and delight in all of Bresson's work (curiously, it is his one addition to the novel). Tied with Buñuel's Belle de Jour in a critics' poll as the best French film of its year, Mouchette won the top awards at both Cannes and Venice. "Achieves an intense purity of a kind that few directors essay, let alone achieve. The simplicity is radical, not facile, and the result is an extraordinary spiritual meditation." — Tony Rayns, Time Out (London). "A faultless film... a fusion of realism and allegorical fable. Mouchette's isolation and intensity of her suffering is conveyed not only in the images but through Bresson's brilliantly orchestrated soundtrack." — Peter Morris, Sadou's Dictionary of Films. "One of the purest Bressons. Its effect as you watch it is beautifully unforgetting; as you recall it, brutally radiant." — Richard Corliss, Time (2005). A RIATO PICTURES RELEASE 1:00, 2:50, 4:40, 6:30, 8:20, 10:10

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