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FILM TITLE:

Ikiru

(To Live)

Programme: Dialogues: Talking With Pictures

Director: Akira Kurosawa

Country: Japan

Year: 1952

Time: 140 minutes

Film Types: Black and White/35 mm

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SCREENING TIMES:

Thursday, September 11 03:15 PM CUMBERLAND 2

Production Company: Toho Company Ltd.

Producer: Sojiro Motoki

Screenplay: Hideo Oguni, Shinobu Hashimoto, Akira Kurosawa

Cinematography: Asaichi Nakai

Editor: Hideo Oguni, Akira Kurosawa

Production Designer: So Matsuyama

Music: Fumio Hayasaka

Principal Cast: Takashi Shimura, Miki Odagiri, Kyoko Seki, Kamatari Jujiwara, Minosuke Yamada, Makoto Koberi, Kumeko Urabe, Yoshi Minami, Yunosuke Ito

"I saw Akira Kurosawa's *Ikiru* only once in my life, and that was more than twenty years ago. I was still an actress, not even a director, but I immediately knew that I would never forget this film – the first and final image of the main character are forever implanted in my mind.

"The first shot is a black-and-white x-ray of a man we don't know. A voice tells us first that this man has cancer, and second, that he is unaware of his fatal disease. Within seconds, we are in an intriguing situation: we don't know the man, and he doesn't know that he is going to die.

"Only after this strange opening do we see him in his day-to-day life – sitting behind a desk in an office, staring at a pile of meaningless papers. Instantly, we know that he is a low-level bureaucrat with no passion for life.

"When the man first learns that his life is almost over, he suddenly begins to question its meaning. At first, he tries to live in the 'expected' way, searching only for pleasure and amusement. By the end, he helps to build a children's playground. This brings me to the second moment which has remained in my mind all these years: just before his death, he is sitting in the darkness, it is snowing – snow as the symbol of winter and death, and white as a symbol of innocence. He is alone on a swing, slowly rocking back and forth, and singing. He is a very old child, but in a certain way, happy, as if, in his death, he is returning to the innocence and serenity of his childhood. Coming from the darkness of our mother's womb, and going back into darkness. An unforgettably sad and peaceful image.

"Now, of course, you would expect the film to end. But in another surprising twist, it goes on for almost twenty minutes after he dies! We meet people who knew him, and they share their memories about the man. But many of these people clearly did not know him well while he was alive. As we listen to them,



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we have the odd feeling that perhaps no one knew this man better than the audience who has been watching the film.

"I am looking forward to seeing the film again, together with the public."
— Margarethe von Trotta



Margarethe von Trotta was born in Berlin. In addition to directing, her acclaimed career has included acting roles in films by Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Volker Schlöndorff (with whom she co-directed her first feature, *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum*, in 1975). Her film *Marianne and Julianne* (81) won both the Golden Lion and FIPRESCI awards at the Venice film festival. Her other features include *The Second Awakening of Christa Klages* (77), *Sisters, or The Balance of Happiness* (79), *Sheer Madness* (83), *Rosa Luxemburg* (86), *The African Woman* (90), *The Long Silence* (93), *The Promise* (94) and *Rosenstrasse* (03).

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SCREENING TIMES

Thursday, September 11 8:15 PM CUMBERLAND

Production Company: Toko Company Ltd.

Producers: Sojiro Motoki

Screenplay: Hideto Oguni, Shin-ichi Hashimoto, Akira Kurosawa

Cinematography: Asachi Nakai

Editor: Hideto Oguni, Akira Kurosawa

Production Designer: Sojiro Motoki

Music: Fumio Hayasaka

Principal Cast: Takashi Shimura, Miki Odagiri, Kyoko Seki, Kamekura

Artists: Minoru Yoneda, Makoto Kuroki, Kameko Ueno, Yuzo Kawanishi, Yumiko Ito

"I saw Akira Kurosawa's *Ikiru* only once in my life, and that was more than twenty years ago. I was still an actress, not even a director, but I immediately knew that I would never forget this film — the first and final image of the great change for the director implanted in my mind.

"The first shot is a black-and-white x-ray of a man; we don't know if a voice tells us first that this man has cancer, and second, that he is unaware of his final destiny. Within seconds, we are in an intriguing situation; we don't know the man, and he doesn't know that he is going to die.

"Only after this strange opening do we see him in his day-to-day life — sitting behind a desk in an office, staring at a pile of meaningless papers. Instantly, we know that he is a low-level bureaucrat with no passion for his

"When our man first learns that his life is almost over, he suddenly begins to question his attitude. At first, he tries to live in the 'expected' way, searching only for pleasure and amusement. By the end, he helps to build a children's playground. This brings us to the second sequence, which has remained in my mind all these years. Just before his death, he is sitting in the darkness. It is growing — snow as the symbol of winter and death, and white as a symbol of innocence. He is alone in a room, slowly rocking back and forth, and singing. He is a very old child, but in a certain way, happy — as if, in his death, he is returning to the innocence and security of his childhood. Coming from the darkness of our mother's womb, and going back into darkness. An unforgettable sad and peaceful image.

"Now, of course, you would expect the film to end. But in another surprising twist, it goes on for almost twenty minutes after he dies! We meet people who knew him, and they share their memories about the man. But many of these people clearly did not know him well while he was alive. As we listen to them,