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Another postwar world provides the backdrop for two current imports, *MacArthur's Children*, an anecdotal child's-eye-view of the American occupation by Japanese director Masahiro Shinoda, and *Silver City*, a drama of Polish DPs in deepest Australia, written and directed by Sophia Turkiewicz.

Although the former belongs to an international genre with particular resonance in defeated Axis nations (it was invented in Italy, elaborated on in Hungary and Germany), it seems more American than "universal." This is particularly odd in that Shinoda has given the film

autobiographical overtones. "I was deeply impressed by something I heard from General MacArthur," he recently told *American Film*. "When [MacArthur] came to Japan, he announced that the cultural level of the Japanese was that of a 12 year old. Since I was already 15, it pained me greatly.... That statement may have been the first inspiration for [*MacArthur's Children*]. The boys in this movie are 12 years old."

Using "In the Mood" as its leitmotif, *MacArthur's Children* is something like *The Summer of '42* mixed with elements of *The Bad News Bears*; the children cope with the trauma of defeat by forming a baseball team and playing a climactic game against a bunch of affable GIs. Far more touching than this adaptation, however, is their detailed knowledge of battleships and war theaters or the scene where their lissome teacher leads the class through their textbooks, deleting key references to the recent imperial past.

Shinoda, whose *Demon Pond* was released here in 1982, is a graduate of the same "Ofuna New Wave" as Nagisa Oshima, but as coyly sentimental and fundamentally apolitical as *MacArthur's Children* is, it's no *Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence*. At once brash and insipid, the film is prettily composed and so cute it makes your teeth ache. Anticipating in its way the spirit of Bitburg, *MacArthur's Children* manages to crassly flatter victors and vanquished alike. The atomic bomb gets only oblique mention, while maximum tears are milked from

MACARTHUR'S CHILDREN. Directed by Masahiro Shinoda. Written by Takeshi Tamura from the novel *Setouchi Shonen Yakyu Dan* by Yu Aku. Produced by You-No-Kai and Masato Hara. Released by Orion Classics. At Cinema Studio.

5.28.85 voice