

Document Citation

Title	Princess Yang Kwei Fei
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Source	<i>Publisher name not available</i>
Date	
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Yôkihi (Princess Yang Kwei-Fei), Mizoguchi, Kenji, 1955



PRINCESS YANG KWEI FEI

Monday, April 16, 6:30 p.m., 9:00 p.m.

One of Mizoguchi's last films: a ravishingly beautiful experiment in the use of color and wide screen and a change of locale—to the glories and squalor of China in the T'ang dynasty.

"Princess Yang Kwei Fei is a love story that becomes a ghost story before it is over. It concerns the Emperor Huan Tsung, the last great power of the T'ang Dynasty, who falls in love and takes for his concubine one Yang Kwei Fei, a country girl, formerly a scullery maid in her cousin's house. Huan Tsung is an artist, a musician, and a doting lover, but not much of an emperor—and the government of China comes under the control of the girl's relatives, the evil clan of Yang. Eventually there is a military revolution. Rebels kill all the Yangs, including Kwei Fei, and Huan Tsung becomes the prisoner of his own son, ending his days in his chambers, worshipping at a statue of his beloved. As he dies, the voice of Kwei Fei is heard, calling him to join her in unending happiness. Slowly the camera turns toward a stone courtyard, empty, gray, without feature; until it is filled suddenly with the lovers' ghostly laughter—in what must be one of the most chillingly beautiful moments in all cinema."—Roger Greenspun, *New York Times* (1955. 91 mins. Color. Courtesy of New Yorker Films.)