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"THE BALLAD OF ORIN"

A FILM BY MASAHIRO SHINODA



Synopsis

Early spring, 1918. Orin, a blind itinerant singer, encounters a traveler, Heitaro, at a deserted shrine on the Japan Sea Coast. A kind man, he guides her from town to town, visiting shops to sing and chant stories.

Orin relates her story to him: At the age of four, she had been pledged to the goze (a sect of blind itinerant singers). In the late 19th century, these itinerant musicians evolved a highly ritualized way of life reminiscent of the codified lifestyles developed by geisha or samurai. Expected to remain chaste, Orin was banished from the group after succumbing to the advances of a man. Forced to travel alone, or with another single goze, Orin allows herself to submit to any man seeking to take advantage of her blind condition.

Heitaro is different. He neither demands sex from her nor allows her to be used by others. While Orin sings, Heitaro pours customers drinks and collects coins from them. He buys tools to make clogs, then a cart to carry their luggage. Travelling together they are taken for a couple. At a festival however, Heitaro is taken away by gangsters seeking to collect tariff from him. While he is away a salesman takes advantage of Orin in the forest. Heitaro returns; infuriated he kills the salesman and himself must flee the police. Orin is once again left to travel alone.

Heitaro is now a fugitive wanted by the police for murder and by the army for his previous desertion. When Orin arrives at a shrine in Wakasa

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Synopsis, continued

accompanied by another itinerant singer, her name is called from among the crowd. It is Heitaro. They resume travelling together. Orin is at last happy - until Heitaro is betrayed by some villagers and captured by the military. After being arrested and cruelly interrogated, Orin is crushed and alone. Freed, she returns to her one-time home - now deserted.

THE BALLAD OF ORIN will open November 9, 1979 at the Cinema Studio II in New York.

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Credits

Production by Hyogen-sha K. K.

Producers: Kiyoshi Iwashita
Seikichi Iizumi

Original Story: Tsutomu Minakami

Screenplay: Keiji Hasebe
Masahiro Shinoda

Lyrics: Keiji Hasebe

Director: Masahiro Shinoda

Photography: Kazuo Miyagawa

Art: Kiyoshi Awazu

Music: Toru Takemitsu

Sound: Hideo Nishizaki

Lighting: Takeji Sano

A Toho Co. Ltd. Release distributed through Kino International Corp.

CAST: Orin.....Shima Iwashita
Heitaro.....Yoshio Harada
Teruyo.....Tomoko Naraoka
Charcoal Maker.Shoji Tonoyama
Tsuketaro.....Toshiyuki Nishida
Hikosaburo.....Toru Abe

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