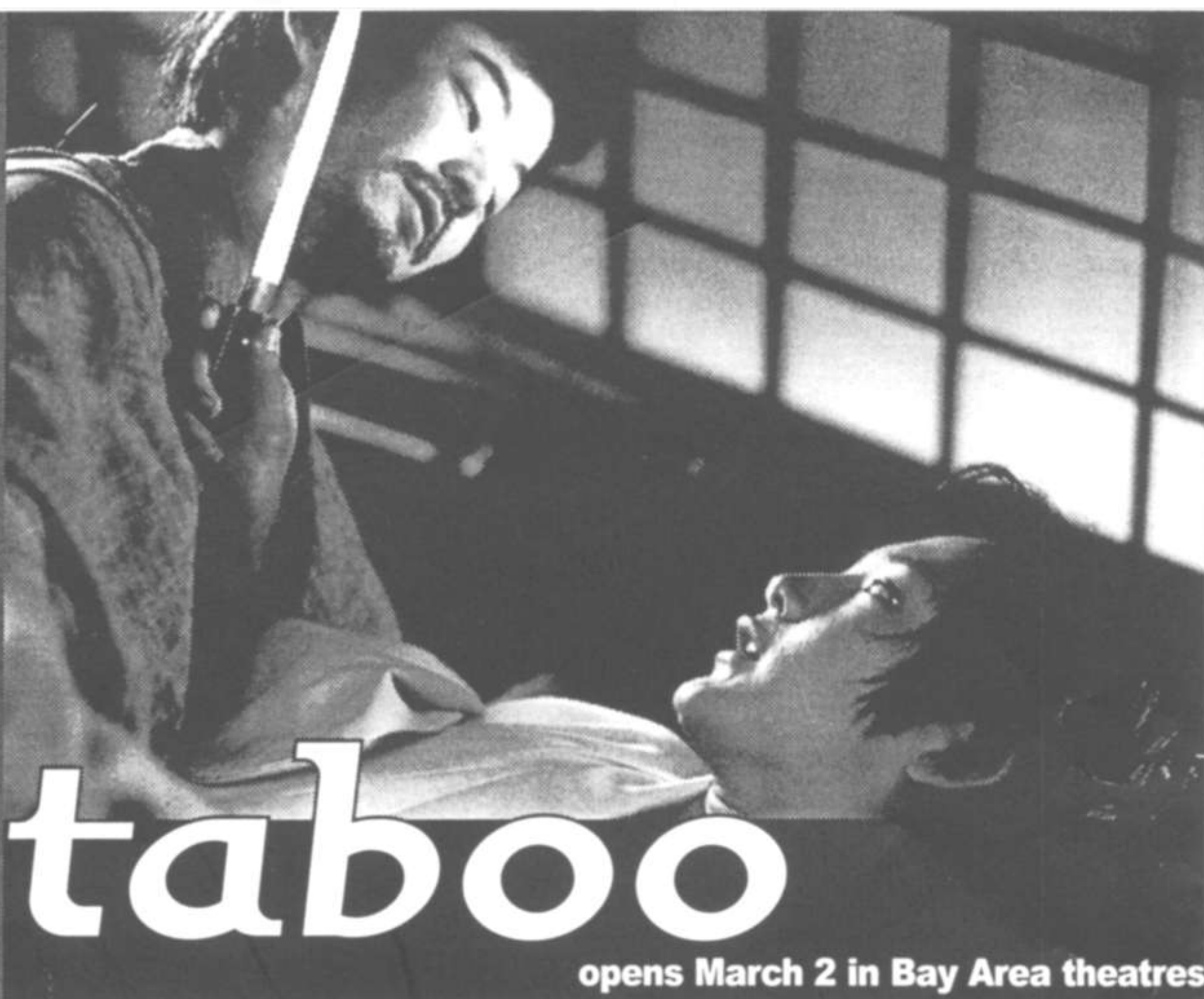


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Acclaimed Japanese filmmaker Nagisa Oshima's TABOO, starring Beat Takeshi, Shinji Takeda, Shinji Takeda, Tadanobu Asano, and Yoichi Sai, opens March 2 at the Castro Theatre in San Francisco, and March 9 at the UC Theatre in Berkeley and the Rafael Theatre in San Rafael. TABOO, a New Yorker Films release, runs 100 minutes, is in Japanese with English subtitles and is not yet rated by the MPAA.

In 1863, the Shinsengumi, a courageous and cunning militia consisting primarily of peasant stock and sons of poor merchant families, is created to guard the shogun. Its job: protection; its goal: honor. Two years later at the temple Nishi-Hoganji, the Shinsengumi is choosing new recruits and hoping to swell its numbers to two hundred samurai. Commander Isami Kondo (Yoichi Sai/ director of THE MOSQUITO ON THE TENTH FLOOR) and Lieutenant Toshizo Hijakata (Beat Takeshi/ SONATINE) are supervising the recruiting process. Out of all the men present, only two are chosen: Hyozo Tashiro (Tadanobu Asano/BATAASHI KINGYO), a samurai from the Kurume clan and Sozaburo Kano (Ryuhei Matsuda), a handsome but inexperienced young man. Tashiro is immediately smitten with Kano, whose good looks are quite bewitching. As the fascination with the pup samurai begins to spread among all the men, the militia suddenly finds itself prey to rumors and jealousies.

In 1959, Nagisa Oshima directed his first feature, TOWN OF LOVE AND HOPE. Over the next four decades, Oshima helmed numerous acclaimed, award-winning or controversial films like IN THE REALM OF THE SENSES and MERRY CHRISTMAS MR. LAWRENCE. TABOO, his latest effort, is based on the novel by popular Japanese author Ryotaro Shiba.

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