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Seneca International, Ltd. presents

Yojimbo

a new film by AKIRA KUROSAWA

Starring Toshiro Mifune, "Best Actor," Venice Film Festival

see other side



YOJIMBO

**Produced by TOHO CO., LTD. in association
with KUROSAWA PRODUCTIONS.
Directed by: AKIRA KUROSAWA
Screenplay by: RYUZO KIKUSHIMA, AKIRA KUROSAWA
Executive Producers: RYUZO KIKUSHIMA, TOMOYUKI TANAKA
Director of Photography: KAZUO MIYAGAWA
Music Composed by: MASARU SATO**

TOHOSCOPE: 110 MINUTES

CAST

Sanjuro: TOSHIRO MIFUNE
Gonji: EIJIRO TONO
Seibei: SEIZABURO KAWAZU
Orin, his wife: ISUZU YAMADA
Yoichiro, their son: HIROSHI TACHIKAWA
Ushi-Tora: KYU SAZANKA
Ino, his younger brother: DAISUKE KATO
Nosuke, his youngest brother: TATSUYA NAKADAI
Sukasa, the silk merchant: KAMATARI FUJIWARA
Kuemon, the saké brewer: TAKASHI SHIMURA
Hansuke: IKIO SAWAMURA
Coffin Maker: ATSUSHI WATANABE
Kohei: YOSHIO TSUCHIYA
Nui, his wife: YOKO TSUKASA

"Rousing, good story,
told with vigor
and visual excitement."
VARIETY

"...this is Kurosawa's most commanding
film; visually faultless and highly
sophisticated in its satire on
violence and human weakness."
SIGHT AND SOUND

"...one of the greatest
outdoor action motion pictures
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THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

Distributed by SENECA INTERNATIONAL, LTD. New York City

YOJIMBO

SYNOPSIS

The decline of the Tokugawa Dynasty in mid-19th Century Japan breeds violence and gangsterism in the midst of a growing prosperity. Into this situation of social chaos comes Sanjuro (TOSHIRO MIFUNE), a samurai whose services are now for hire to the highest bidder. An idle toss of a twig determines his path -- a road leading to a town torn by rival factions struggling for its control.

Upon his arrival in the seemingly deserted town, Sanjuro is welcomed by Hansuke (IKIO SAWAMURA), a police officer who serves more as a referee between the two forces than as a representative of law and order. He offers, for a price, to recommend Sanjuro as a bodyguard (Yojimbo) to one of the local bosses.

Sanjuro, quick with his sword but deliberate in his actions, retires to the local inn, the only place in town not closed against the destruction wrought by the warring groups. The innkeeper, Gonji (EIJIRO TONO) provides the samurai with food and lodgings, while outlining to the interested Sanjuro the cause for the town's present state: the gambling concession for the annual Silk Fair, formerly controlled by one gang, has been splintered by a disagreement between the principals, Seibei (SEIZABURO KAWAZU) and Ushi-Tora (KYU SAZANKA). Seibei's faction is composed of his wife, Orin (ISUZU YAMADA), his son, Yoichiro (HIROSHI TACHIKAWA), his backer, Sukasa, the silk merchant (KAMATARI FUJIWARA) and a band of hired

henchmen. Seibei's rival, Ushi-Tora, had been his lieutenant until the gang chief named his only son his successor. Ushi-Tora's support comes from his two brothers, the slow-witted Ino (DAISUKE KATO), the hot-tempered Nosuke (TATSUYA NAKADAI) and the wealthy sake¹ brewer, Kuemon (TAKASHI SHIMURA).

Sanjuro comments to the innkeeper that the town would be the better for the destruction of both factions and seeks employment, for the moment, with Seibei. To prove his prowess to his potential employer, Sanjuro challenges several members of the opposition and proceeds to cut them down in short order. Impressed with this bravura display, Seibei is eager to have him as an ally and, after much haggling about fees, meets Sanjuro's exorbitant demands. Made bold by this new acquisition to his staff, Seibei determines to battle with Ushi-Tora's men, confident at last of settling the drawn-out conflict.

Seibei's wife, Orin, exhibiting a more practical attitude, suggests that following the victory Sanjuro will bring, he should be killed so as not to collect his fee. The samurai, still more practical, takes the precaution of listening in to the conversation. Just as the battle is to begin, he disengages himself from partisanship and mounts the watchtower to gleefully observe the mock heroics of the gangsters in dual retreat.

Both sides are saved from embarrassment by the surprise ap-

pearance of an Inspector General, and immediately they erect a facade of calm.

Taking advantage of the temporary truce, Sanjuro returns to the inn to formulate his plans for ending the absurd internecine war. Holding court at the inn, Sanjuro is approached by representatives of both headmen, Ino and Orin, but remains uncommitted to either while enjoying their hospitality.

Sanjuro's position as the deciding factor in the balance of power is altered by the return of Ushi-Tora's youngest brother, Nosuke, who brings with him a symbol of Western progress - a revolver.

In an effort to divert the attentions of the Inspector General, Ushi-Tora conveniently arranges to have an official in a neighboring town murdered by two henchmen. Sanjuro captures the assassins upon their return from the mission and immediately sells them to Seibei, who is aware that public knowledge of this plot can lead to Ushi-Tora's downfall.

Sanjuro continues in his highly effective tradition of playing both ends against the middle and now goes to Ushi-Tora to sell him the information that his hired killers have been taken by Seibei.

Ushi-Tora devises a plan to regain possession of the men by kidnapping Yoichiro, Seibei's only son, and offers him in

exchange for the men. The situation takes a sudden turn-about when the two men are shot by the impetuous Nosuke while Yoichiro remains imprisoned by Ushi-Tora.

A desperate Seibei kidnaps Nui (YOKO TSUKASA), the current mistress of Ushi-Tora's backer, the sake¹ brewer. Nui is actually the wife of a young farmer, Kohei (YOSHIO TSUCHIYA), who was forced to give her up in payment of a gambling debt.

Sukasa and Kuemon, backers of the opposing forces, reach an agreement on the exchange of their respective hostages, and the young wife is returned to the sake¹ brewer. That night Sanjuro single-handedly attacks the guards who imprison Nui, and helps the family to escape.

Ushi-Tora, believing that Seibei has undertaken this action, leads a violent attack upon Sukasa's house, setting fire to his supply of silk. In retaliation, Seibei attacks the house of Kuemon, breaking open his casks of sake¹.

Later that night Nui and her family return to thank the samurai for their freedom, but this well-intentioned gesture leads Nosuke to discover Sanjuro's part in the mass murder of Ushi-Tora's men.

Nosuke takes it upon himself to capture and torture Sanjuro. In a super-human feat, the badly injured Sanjuro manages to escape to the home of the innkeeper, whom he instructs to

tell Ushi-Tora that he has rejoined Seibei's forces.

Ushi-Tora, prodded into action by this news, effects a surprise attack upon Seibei. He sets fire to his home and kills Seibei, his wife and son.

Sanjuro's strength regained, with no small help from the innkeeper and the cooper (ATSUSHI WATANABE), he returns to the ravaged town. He challenges the last vestige of resistance in the person of Nosuke, equipped with pistol. The samurai's sword proves more than a match for Nosuke's gun. Surveying the total destruction caused by the absurd death struggle, Sanjuro remarks to the sole survivors, the innkeeper and the cooper: "Now it will be quiet in this town."

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FILMOGRAPHY: AKIRA KUROSAWA

1961 - YOJIMBO
1960 - THE BAD SLEEP WELL*
1958 - HIDDEN FORTRESS
1957 - THE LOWER DEPTHS
1957 - THRONE OF BLOOD
1955 - I LIVE IN FEAR*
1954 - SEVEN SAMURAI
1952 - IKIRU
1951 - THE IDIOT*
1950 - RASHOMON
1950 - SCANDAL*
1949 - SILENT DUEL*
1949 - STRAY DOG*
1948 - DRUNKEN ANGEL
1946 - NO REGRETS FOR MY YOUTH*
1946 - THOSE WHO MAKE TOMORROW*
1946 - WONDERFUL SUNDAY*
1945 - THE MEN WHO TREAD ON THE TIGER'S TAIL
1944 - JUDO SAGA - A SEQUEL*
1943 - MOST BEAUTIFULLY*
1942 - JUDO SAGA*

* As yet unreleased in the United States

KUROSAWA'S REPERTORY APPROACH

Not unlike other noted directors (D. W. Griffith, Orson Welles, John Ford, and Ingmar Bergman, to name a few) Akira Kurosawa uses a repertory company approach in selecting actors for roles in his films.

Star of the Kurosawa stable is Toshiro Mifune, whose international reputation rests primarily upon his performances in films directed by Kurosawa, a 1948 production entitled DRUNKEN ANGEL serving as their first collaboration. With the exception of that first film, Mifune has been granted leading roles in the director's RASHOMON, THE IDIOT, SEVEN SAMURAI, I LIVE IN FEAR, THRONE OF BLOOD, THE LOWER DEPTHS, HIDDEN FORTRESS, THE BAD SLEEP WELL, and YOJIMBO.

Second to Mifune in Kurosawa's stock company, Takashi Shimura has played feature roles in RASHOMON, SEVEN SAMURAI, I LIVE IN FEAR, THRONE OF BLOOD, and YOJIMBO. He was also the star of DRUNKEN ANGEL and IKIRU.

On the distaff side, Isuzu Yamada appears with consistency in the Kurosawa films. Featured in THE LOWER DEPTHS and in YOJIMBO, she also portrayed Lady Macbeth in Kurosawa's adaptation of the Shakespearian classic.

Kurosawa tends, also, to make use of the same players for bit parts, foremost amongst them Atsushi Watanabe, one of Japan's

leading comedians, who organized and appeared in the frenetic dance-scene finale of THE LOWER DEPTHS, and who plays the comic cooper in YOJIMBO.

In true repertory fashion, a player in the Kurosawa troupe may have a large role in one film and be relegated to a bit part in the next, as is the case with Kamatari Fujiwara, who had insignificant assignments in THE LOWER DEPTHS and HIDDEN FORTRESS, but in YOJIMBO emerges as the silk merchant.

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BRIEF NOTES: ON THE DIRECTOR

Akira Kurosawa, one of the world's leading directors, acquired his international reputation with RASHOMON, which won the Grand Prix at the 1951 Venice Film Festival and an Academy Award as the Best Foreign Language Film of 1953.

The first Japanese director to be "discovered" abroad, the 52-year-old Kurosawa is recognized as the most Western of the Eastern filmmakers.

Though he is most known for his films set in traditional Japanese backgrounds, Kurosawa has not hesitated to grapple with problems relating to the modern world: trade unionism (THOSE WHO MAKE TOMORROW), bureaucracy (IKIRU), atomophobia (I LIVE IN FEAR), business corruption (THE BAD SLEEP WELL), academic freedom (NO REGRETS FOR MY YOUTH) and freedom of the press (SCANDAL).

YOJIMBO, although set in 19th Century Japan, stands as the director's personal comment upon the morals, justice and violence of the 20th Century.

ON THE STAR

Toshiro Mifune, at 42 years of age, ranks as Japan's leading dramatic actor. While his reputation in his own country is based upon performances elicited by various Japanese directors, his international fame rests primarily upon his work in the

award-winning films of Kurosawa.

Recipient of a Venice Film Festival Best Actor Award for his leading role in YOJIMBO, Mifune has most recently been seen as the star of the Mexican film, ANIMAS TRUJANO (released in the United States as THE IMPORTANT MAN). It was his first role in a "foreign" film.

Again teamed with Kurosawa in an adventure film, currently in production, HIGH AND LOW, the versatile actor is now being sought by leading directors throughout the world.

ON THE DISTRIBUTOR

Seneca International, Ltd. was formed this year by the motion picture production company, Seneca Productions, to distribute both foreign and domestic films. The company is located at:
21 West 46th Street, New York City, (36) New York - -
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