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TUESDAY, APRIL 13

THE FILMS OF KENJI MIZOGUCHI

Presented in Association with the Japan Film Library Council.

THE STORY OF THE LAST CHRYSANTHEMUMS (ZANGIKU MONOGATARI) 7:00, 9:35

The first of Mizoguchi's three films dealing with actors. Unfortunately its successors—**NANIWA ONNA** (1940) and the **LIFE OF AN ACTOR** (1941)—do not survive. **THE STORY OF THE LAST CHRYSANTHEMUMS** is ostensibly the biography of the Kabuki actor Kikunosuke Okoe: according to Donald Richie and Joseph Anderson, "It was essentially a sentimental tragedy distinguished by its rare insight into the Kabuki world with its traditions and interrelationships, including the heroine's sacrifice so that the hero can become great." Mizoguchi chose the subject of his trilogy—the theatre—and its period setting—the Meiji Era (1868-1912)—in order to avoid the real life subjects of the present, which in 1939 meant Japanese imperialism, militarism, the war. Mizoguchi was to make many films set in the Meiji Era. In the 1950s he remarked of its fascination for him: "Let us say that a man like me is always tempted by the climate of beauty in this era. What is more, I was then in deep sympathy with the popular spirit of revolt which permeated the works of Izumi." In this great film, Mizoguchi first adopted his one shot/one scene approach to period mise-en-scene: apparently he would often spend an entire day to get just one shot. In fact, Mizoguchi later stated: "It is often told how I insisted on obtaining minute accessories for these films with such rigorous precision that I insisted for one entire day on obtaining one little lamp. The story is true, and it is in this manner that I directed the Meiji series."

Directed by Kenji Mizoguchi. Screenplay by Yoshikata Yoda, based on a story by Muramatsu Shofu. With Shotaro Hanayagi, Kokuchi Takata. (1939, 148 mins, 35mm, English titles, Print Courtesy of Macmillan Audio Brandon Films)

Note: There will be a \$.25 surcharge on all tickets to cover the extra costs of obtaining a 35mm print.