

Hamburg, 08. August 2020

JFFH – Japan-Filmfest Hamburg

19. August – 02. September 2020

[www.jffh.de](http://www.jffh.de)



## Breaking Free – From Japan with Love

### The 21st Japan-Filmfest Hamburg as an Online Festival

- **A first for us: Streaming over 70 films on our partner website Videociety**
- **Extended to two weeks, from the 19<sup>th</sup> of August to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September 2020**
- **A range of video content about the festival and informative interviews with Japanese filmmakers**

*HAMBURG | After much thought, and taking into consideration the health of our guests and viewers, Nihon Media has decided that Japan Filmfest Hamburg cannot take place this year as a traditional film festival. But worry not, JFFH will instead be held with all its usual flair as a purely online event. Partnering with Videociety, we will be streaming 50 current films from Japan to fans around the world. In order to ensure our line-up can be enjoyed to the fullest, JFFH has been extended to a full two weeks, and will take place from the 19<sup>th</sup> of August to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September. To accompany our line-up, we will also be showing free, daily video content as part of the film festival as well interviews with Japanese filmmakers.*

It has been a difficult few months while the JFFH team have considered a way to organise the filmfest this year with the restrictions placed on the art scene. In the end, after taking into consideration the health of our guests and viewers, Nihon Media decided that Japan Filmfest Hamburg cannot be held this year in its usual form as a traditional film festival. However, this unusual situation also provided the opportunity to completely rethink the festival, as well as to open it to a worldwide audience, leading to the decision to hold JFFH 2020 as a purely online event for the first time. *Under the motto 'Breaking Free – From Japan with Love',* we will be releasing JFFH from its shackles and broadcasting Japanese cinema around the world. For 14 days, fans of Japanese films all over Germany and abroad will have the chance to enjoy the newest Japanese films from the comfort of their own homes. For the first time, in close collaboration with our partner **Videociety**, we will be streaming our entire programme of over 70 films, consisting of around 40 film blocks and varying from vivid anime and ambitious short films to rich arthouse experiences and genre-defining blockbusters. Our online ticket

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will cost 5 euro per block, and can be purchased in near future from our festival website, [www.jffh.de](http://www.jffh.de). A large portion of ticket sales will go directly to the Japanese filmmakers, many of whom are facing hardships due to the corona crisis. The purchase of a ticket therefore not only helps support the festival, but also the filmmakers who make it possible.

Japan-Filmfest Hamburg will additionally be releasing free videos daily on our youtube channel ([j.mp/jffh-youtube](https://www.youtube.com/jmp/jffh-youtube)) about the film festival and Japanese cinema that our team has produced in advance exclusively for this event. And if that weren't enough: bound by our tradition as a festival for the audience, we will be releasing live interviews that connect our German viewers with filmmakers in Japan as a special feature for our festival.

While the 21<sup>st</sup> JFFH is in many ways new ground for our team, not everything has changed. 2020 will also see **Nihon Media e. V.** distribute various prizes to the best films and filmmakers of the festival-year (<https://jffh.de/festival/preisverleihung.html>). These include the **jury prize** for the best independent production, the **special prize** for the best genre production, as well as the **prize for exceptional artistic performance**. Viewers can also vote on the **audience prize** from home, and have a direct effect on which submission earns the privilege of being named the best film of the festival.

Our 2020 film programme features 70 current productions, from full-length feature films to experimental short films, including many German, European, and international premieres. There's something for everybody in the line-up. Most of the films are shown in the original Japanese language with English subtitles.

One special highlight of our programme is the gangster-ballad originally planned as the opening film for the 21<sup>st</sup> JFFH, **Paradise Next** (2018) from director and film composer **Yoshihiro Hanno** (*FLOWERS OF SHANGHAI*). An atmospheric road-movie about the travels of three lost souls living on the edges of society, Hanno has created, in no small part due to immersive camerawork and a thickly atmospheric soundtrack, a thought-provoking masterpiece (<https://youtu.be/ZBh33Fv6aoA>). Enriched by the main theme of the soundtrack from music legend **Ryuichi Sakamoto** (*FURYO – MERRY CHRISTMAS, MR. LAWRENCE, THE LAST EMPEROR*), **Paradise Next** is the perfect start to a brilliant festival week.

Other highlights include the historical drama **A TOWN AND A TALL CHIMNEY** (2019) from Katsuya Matsumura (<https://youtu.be/dSON5UpULVE>) based on a novel by Jiro Nitta and with performances by Dai Watanabe and acting legend Tatsuya Nakadai (*THE HUMAN CONDITION, HARAKIRI, KAGEMUSHA, RAN*), the dark coming of age masterpiece **FORGIVEN CHILDREN** (2020) from Eisuke Naito (<https://youtu.be/vcLg3SR7TaM>), the grim yakuza thriller **UNFINISHED** (2020) (<https://youtu.be/HUr--awMI2c>) from the directors Yûki Kobayashi, Kiyoto Naruse, Yûgo Sakamoto and Yoshihiro Nishimura

(Tokyo Gore Police, Kodoku Meatball Machine), and **ROAR GO ON** (2019) from Ryo Katayama (<https://youtu.be/lRpIIsBQxAA>).

Japanese anime are especially loved by our fans, and for good reason. That's why we're showing, alongside a series of anime short films, the visually breathtaking ocean drama **CHILDREN OF THE SEA** (2019) from Ayumu Watanabe ([https://youtu.be/7WL\\_4mwpZ0I](https://youtu.be/7WL_4mwpZ0I)) as well as the witty teenage sci-fi grotesque **CENCOROLL CONNECT** (2019) from Uki Atsuya (<https://youtu.be/c9iZ8KVdj7A>), the surreal fantasy drama **PENGUIN HIGHWAY** (<https://youtu.be/Pra0bUW5vV4>) by Hiroyasu Ishida and the touching fantasy love drama **RIDE YOUR WAVE** (<https://youtu.be/vVxRAq48BZE>) by Masaaki Yuasa, four current standouts in the area of animated films.

2020 is also a year not to be missed for friends of Japanese genre mainstays. With a film following the tongue-in-cheek tradition of Japanese Kaiju films, **ATTACK OF THE GIANT TEACHER** (2019) from Yoshikazu Ishii (<https://youtu.be/HujbOYGlzrk>), the splatter-grotesque produced by Hiro Kunado, **GHOST MASTER** (2019) from Paul Young (<https://youtu.be/-25EVH59X6Q>), and the new atmospherically directed horror-drama **MIMICRY FREAKS** (2019) by cult-classic director Shugo Fujii (<https://youtu.be/BhXiPDkKBaM>), we can show the current gems of genre cinema. Due to their great success, we will also be showing **KODOKU MEATBALL MACHINE** (2017) from Yoshihiro Nishimura und **MEATBALL MACHINE** (2005) from Yūdai Yamaguchi und Yunichi Yamamoto, two modern classics of Japanese splatterfilms that made an impact at the 2017 FGGH. This is a second chance for anyone who missed these showstoppers in the past.

The team from Nihon Media e. V. are especially excited to be able to present their wider audience with authentic Japanese cinema in the comfort of their own home this year. While in the past regulars of the film festival have been limited to the Hamburg area, with only a few dedicated fans being able to afford to travel to Hamburg from abroad and experience all that the festival experience has to offer, this year we can offer our film programme to Japanese film fans all over Germany as well as a wider world audience. Please come and celebrate the creative energy and staggering variety of Japanese cinema with us, especially in a time where cultural experiences are so difficult to come by. From Japan and Hamburg with love!

Information about Japan-Filmfest Hamburg on the internet:

[www.facebook.com/japan.filmfest.hamburg](http://www.facebook.com/japan.filmfest.hamburg) (JFFH Facebook page)

[www.jffh.de](http://www.jffh.de) (Website)

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[j.mp/jffh-youtube](https://www.youtube.com/jffh) (YouTube channel with trailers & impressions)

[www.flickr.com/jffh](https://www.flickr.com/photos/jffh/) (Flickr page of JFFH with photos of previous years)

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