



March 25, 2025

## THE 14<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL TORONTO JAPANESE FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES FIRST ROUND OF TITLES

**Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre's Kobayashi Hall  
6 Sakura Way, Toronto June 12 - 26, 2025**

**Multi-film passes and individual tickets go on sale starting May 7**

[www.torontojff.com](http://www.torontojff.com)

*The 2025 Toronto Japanese Film Festival honors the 80th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing, alongside a range of diverse films that explore the depths of Japanese filmmaking, from heartfelt dramas and captivating comedies to gripping thrillers and thought-provoking documentaries!*

**TORONTO (ON) – Tuesday, March 25, 2025**– The **Toronto Japanese Film Festival** (TorontoJFF), scheduled to take place from June 12th to 26th at the **Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre's Kobayashi Hall** will feature 25 films that highlight the multifaceted range of one of the world's largest film industries. This year's festival is particularly significant as it commemorates the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The festival includes several premiere screenings including the Canadian debut of the highly anticipated film [CELLS AT WORK!](#) (はたらく細胞), directed by Hideki Takeuchi, renowned for *Thermae Romae* and *Fly Me to Saitama* which open's the 14th annual festival.

One of this year's highlights is the director's cut of Susan Strickler's [THE VOW FROM HIROSHIMA](#) (ヒロシマへの誓い サロー節子とともに), an intimate portrayal of Setsuko Thurlow, a courageous survivor of the bombing whose decades-long activism culminates in her presence on the Nobel Prize stage. Following the screening, Ms. Thurlow will participate in a panel discussion, offering invaluable insights into her life and the profound impact of her experiences.

"We wanted to include Setsuko Thurlow in this year's festival as a poignant reminder of a significant chapter in both Japanese and world history," says **James Heron, TorontoJFF Director and Programmer**. "This festival is the premier conduit in North America for audiences to engage with

Japan's rich filmmaking traditions a responsibility which is reflected in our diverse lineup that features films that celebrate compelling stories reflecting themes of resilience, love, and our shared human experience."

Kickstarting the festival is Hideki Takeuchi's [CELLS AT WORK!](#) (はたらく細胞), a vibrant live-action movie humorously depicts the inner workings of the human body through the lives of 37 trillion cells, centering on a female red blood cell (Mei Nagano) and a male white blood cell (Takeru Satoh) who bravely defend their human host against pathogens, with Director Takeuchi present to introduce the film, promising an unforgettable opening night.

North American and Canadian Premieres include Fumihiro Sori's [HAKKENDEN: FICTION AND REALITY](#) 「八犬伝」 featuring a cast of some of Japan's finest actors lead by Koji Yakusho (Perfect Days) in a tale combining the struggles of an Edo era artist and his family with the dizzyingly huge battle fantasies of his imagination; Yu Irie's thrilling samurai swashbuckler [SAMURAI FURY: MUROMACHI OUTSIDERS](#) 「室町無頼」; Shogo Kusano's [AIMITAGAI](#) 「アイミタガイ」 a gentle rumination on the chain reactions of fate; Akiko Ohku's [SHE TAUGHT ME SERENDIPITY](#) 「今日の空が一番好き、とまだ言えない僕は」 a striking magic realist romance built around a shocking twist; and Daihachi Yoshida's intimately surreal character study [TEKI COMETH](#) 「敵」 winner of the Tokyo International Film Festival's Best Film, Director and Actor. Director Ohku will visit the festival to present the North American premiere of her film.

For anime buffs there is the North American premiere of Yuurei Sakuragi's [GIVE IT ALL](#) 「がんばっていきまっしょい」, the exciting and heartfelt story of a high school girl's rowing team nominated for the Japanese Academy Award for Best Animated Feature.

Also making North American premieres are Ayuko Tsukahara's box-office ruling thriller [LAST MILE](#) 「ラストマイル」 nominated for Japanese academy Awards for Best Film, Director and Actress; and the gorgeous environmental fable [RIVER RETURNS](#) 「光る川」 with writer/director Masakazu Kaneko in attendance; and Yuji Kakizaki's [SEPPUKU: THE SUN GOES DOWN](#) 「陽が落ちる」 a powerful tale of a devoted samurai husband and wife's final day as they await the moment of his court-ordered ritual suicide. Director Kakizaki and cast members Yuka Takeshima, Masayuki Deai and Yuka Sasada will be travel to Japan for the screening. Mark Gill powerfully chronicles the turbulent life and brilliant work of photographer Masahisa Fukase in [RAVENS](#) 「レイブンズ」 with *Shogun* star Tadanobu Asano in the lead role. The samurai wield both swords and *go* pieces in Kazuya Shiraishi's taut and thoughtful [BUSHIDO \[GOBANGIRI\]](#) 「碁盤斬り」, one of 2024's best films and winner of the Black Dragon Award at the Udine Far East Film Festival.

The festival leavens the more serious entries with *One Cut of the Dead* director Shinichiro Ueda's [ANGRY SQUAD: CIVIL SERVANTS AND SEVEN SWINDLERS](#) 「アングリースクワッド 公務員と7人の詐欺師」; Nobuhiko Yamashita's giddy yakuza comedy [LET'S GO KARAOKE!](#) 「カラオケ行こ!」 and the witty and uplifting [90 YEARS OLD - SO WHAT?](#) 「九十歳。何がめでたい」 from Tetsu Maeda.

You would not imagine the tsunami-ravaged Tohoku seaside during the first days of the pandemic, as the natural setting for a heartwarming, laugh-out-load rom-com but director Yoshiyuki Kishi

delivers optimism, quirky humour and a lot of fishing in [SUNSET SUNRISE](#) 「サンセット・サンライズ」 featuring an all-star cast led by Masaki Suo and Mao Inoue.

In addition to film screenings, the festival offers numerous opportunities for attendees to immerse themselves in Japanese culture through music and dance performances, art exhibitions, martial arts classes, and a variety of authentic Japanese food and sake.

Multi-film passes and individual tickets for all TorontoJFF screenings will go on sale starting May 7. For more information and to stay updated on the festival lineup, please visit [www.torontojff.com](http://www.torontojff.com).

### **ABOUT THE TORONTO JAPANESE FILM FESTIVAL**

The Toronto Japanese Film Festival (TorontoJFF) is proudly presented by the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre (JCCC) and has established itself as one of the largest film events of its kind globally. Held annually at the JCCC's Kobayashi Hall, the festival is recognized by the Japanese film industry as a vital conduit for showcasing Japanese cinema to international audiences. Dedicated to promoting cultural exchange and appreciation, the TorontoJFF features a diverse lineup of films that reflect the rich tapestry of Japanese storytelling, ranging from contemporary works to timeless classics. Through film screenings, panel discussions, and cultural events, the festival aims to foster a deeper understanding of Japanese culture and its cinematic contributions that celebrate the artistry of Japanese filmmakers and the vibrant cultural heritage of the Japanese Canadian community. For more information, [www.torontojff.com](http://www.torontojff.com).

**Media requiring festival accreditation, interviews, artwork, screeners or more information, please contact:**

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