

NEW JAPANESE CINEMA

Opening Night Film

DEPARTURES

Yojiro Takita, Japan, 131 min.

Co-Presented with the Embassy of Japan and the Japan Foundation.



Academy Award® Winner, Best Foreign Film Unemployed musician Daigo interviews for a position "working in departures". It is not in international travel as he had assumed, but as an assistant in a niche morticians company.

The pay is good so he reluctantly takes the job. Never melodramatic or lurid, *Departures* is light, mischievous and beguiling, a firm yet affectionate affirmation of life in the face of mortality.

April 16, 7:00 PM, Harman Center, \$45.00

ACHILLES AND THE TORTOISE

Takeshi Kitano, Japan, 119 min.

Achilles and the Tortoise is Takeshi Kitano's newest reflection on art and life. It follows the absurd and star-crossed life of Machisu, a man with no talent, but dreams of becoming famous. Sophisticated and original, *Achilles and the Tortoise* also features a rich procession of paintings by Kitano.

April 21, 8:30 PM, Regal Gallery Place
 April 25, 9:30 PM, Regal Gallery Place



KABEI

Yoji Yamada, Japan, 133 min.



After her professor husband is arrested for the "thought crime" of opposing Japan's China invasion, a Tokyo wife struggles against financial and political pressures. *Kabei* must raise two daughters and the circumstances deteriorate after Japan attacks Pearl Harbor.

April 23, 8:30 PM, Avalon Theatre
 April 24, 9:00 PM, Avalon Theatre

MEGANE

Naoko Ogigami, Japan, 106 min.

Co-Presented with the Embassy of Japan



When Taeko first vacations in the Okinawa islands, the locals seem odd. They all wear eyeglasses ("megane" in Japanese) and lack the Japanese urbanite's sense of personal space. Gradually, she comes to realize that the locals aren't so strange—or, if they are, that their strangeness is rather appealing.

April 19, 5:15 PM, E Street Cinema
 April 20, 6:30 PM, E Street Cinema



TOKYO SONATA

Kiyoshi Kurosawa, Japan, 119 min.



Director Kiyoshi Kurosawa has earned a considerable reputation for his stylish films, which usually fall into the horror genre. Here, the foreboding is all the more real as it is propelled by current events—the everyday effects of a shrinking economy. A businessman who runs a tight ship at home with his wife and two sons is laid off. For a while, he continues dressing and leaving for the office every day—but his "office" is a park. His plight contrasts with scenes at home, where one son threatens to join the army and the other signs up for piano lessons against his father's wishes. The young son is actually something of a prodigy, and his talent may offer the family hope. Of course, just when the story seems to be settling into predictability, Kurosawa tosses curve balls our way for a very rewarding experience.

April 23, 8:45 PM, Regal Gallery Place
 April 25, 7:00 PM, Regal Gallery Place

THE WITCH OF THE WEST IS DEAD

Shunichi Nagasaki, Japan, 115 min.



Featuring a touching performance by Sachi Parker (daughter of Shirley MacLaine), this warm and winning film about a special summer shared by a wise grandmother (who claims to a witch) and her teen granddaughter was a popular hit in Japan.

April 22, 6:30 PM, Avalon Theatre
 April 24, 6:30 PM, Avalon Theatre