

Anime Weekend at BFI Southbank

with preview of From Up on Poppy Hill



From June 8 – 10 **BFI Southbank** will once again hold its biennial weekend showcasing the best in recent anime. Anime is comparatively new to Western audiences – although Japanese animation has existed since the turn of the 20th Century. It was only when films such as **Akira** (Katsuhiro Otomo, 1988) were released in the late 1980s that the western world sat up and took notice. The Anime weekend at **BFI Southbank** will be packed with hotly anticipated previews, high-profile Q&As and an eclectic mix of different genres and styles.

The weekend will open with a preview of the much anticipated **From Up on Poppy Hill** (2011), the latest offering from **Studio Ghibli**. Directed by Goro Miyazaki (son of studio founder and preeminent director Hayao), **From Up on Poppy Hill** is a timely tale set in rural Yokohama just before the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. A frequent misconception of anime is that it is invariably violent, or only for adults, but titles such as **A Letter to Momo** (2011) and **Oblivion Island** (2009) will appeal to audiences of all ages. Also screening will be **UK premieres** of **Full Metal Alchemist 2** (2011) (featuring a **Q&A** with special guests director **Kazuya Murata** and producer **Masahiko Minami**) and **The Princess and the Pilot** (2011). Also screening will be **Gintama: the Movie** (2010) and **Makoto Shinkai's** (*The Place Promised in Our Early Days*, 2004) latest film **Children Who Chase Lost Voices from Deep Below** (2011), which firmly moves him from ranking as an up and coming animator to an established director. Finally, as a closing treat, there will be an opportunity to watch one of the seminal films of the genre **Katsuhiro Otomo's Akira** (1988).

Screenings taking place in the Anime Weekend:

Preview: From Up on Poppy Hill / Kokuriko-zaka kara
Japan. 2011. Dir Goro Miyazaki. 91min. EST

Set in rural Yokohama just before the Tokyo Olympics in 1964, this coming-of-age tale from Studio Ghibli is a timely one. It introduces us to Umi and her student

friends, fighting to prevent their run-down school clubhouse being demolished to make way for a modern building and the spirit of 'progress' this seems to embrace. For those more familiar with Ghibli's recent outings, this will come as a surprise in that while it is beautifully animated, it isn't from the fantasy genre or geared towards families. It's instead a compelling, mature work, far closer to *Whisper of the Heart* than *Spirited Away* but with the drive and vision we have come to expect from this anime powerhouse.

Fri 8 June 18:00 NFT1

UK Premiere Preview + Q&A: Full Metal Alchemist 2 – The Sacred Star of Milos / Hagane no renkinjutsushi: Miroso no seinaru hoshi

Japan. 2011. Dir Kazuya Murata. 110min. Blu-ray. EST

The Elric brothers, Edward and Alphonse, join forces to chase Melvin Voyage, a dangerous criminal alchemist with dark powers at his disposal, who has broken out of prison and has a connection with a young exile with healing powers. The brothers, in hot pursuit, become trapped on a train under the control of a wolf chimera and are attacked by bat creatures with their sights on fresh prey. This latest film in the *Full Metal Alchemist* franchise is great for both newcomers to the genre and die-hard fans, with strong images and an impressive story that reveals a family tragedy which should have remained a secret.

We are delighted to welcome director Kazuya Murata and producer Masahiko Minami to take part in a Q&A after the screening.

Fri 8 June 20:00 NFT1

Oblivion Island / Hottarake no shima – Haruka to maho no kagami

Japan. 2009. Dir Shinsuke Sato. 93min. EST. Suitable for children 8+

Haruka believes that if she finds her late mother's hand mirror, this will be enough to connect her to happy past memories. A masked creature she encounters in a shrine takes her to a magical land to start her quest. *Oblivion Island* is where all the lost bits and pieces from our homes end up, including once-loved toys that have to deal with being passed over. The mysterious Baron has hundreds of mirrors and seems to have a fiendish plan in mind – might he have Haruka's precious heirloom? This CGI anime is beautifully designed and contains breathtaking and surreal moments that will appeal to all fantasy fans.

Sat 9 June 16:00 NFT2

Children who Chase Lost Voices from Deep Below / Hoshi o ou Kodomo

Japan. 2011. Dir Makoto Shinkai. 116min. Blu-ray. EST

Asuna spends much of her time outdoors. An encounter with a large, bear-like creature also brings her into contact with a brave young man with apparently superhuman powers. Shun is a warrior from Agartha, an underground land where the beasts guard the entrance to prevent 'topside' like Asuna from entering. Some believe that this world has properties that will bring people back from the dead and this puts them in danger from ruthless soldiers intent on gaining access. This thought-provoking film deals with the part in all of us that wishes we could have a last opportunity to say goodbye to someone we've lost.

Sat 9 June 18:30 NFT1

Gintama – The Movie / Gekijouban Gintama: Shin'yaku benizakura hen

Japan. 2010. Dir Shinji Takamatsu. 96min. EST

The hugely popular manga and anime TV series gets a big-screen re-boot as we travel back to Medieval Tokyo (or Edo as it was) in a parallel timeline when aliens have conquered mankind and traditional samurai stand side-by-side with space invaders and modern technology. The samurai may appear defeated but, with the

smell of rebellion at every corner, our intrepid and rather unlikely trio of heroes offer their services for hire as 'Odd Jobs Gin' and become embroiled in a hunt for a missing master-sword. An epic samurai sci-fi treat that perfectly illustrates why *Gintama* has gripped Japan for 20 years.

Sat 9 June 21:00 NFT1

A Letter to Momo / Momo e no Togami

Japan. 2011. Dir Hiroyuki Okiura. 120min. Suitable for children 10+.

Thirteen-year-old Momo is recovering from the death of her father and her mother's unexpected decision to move them out of the hustle and bustle of Tokyo and away to a remote island where she had lived as a child. Momo tries to piece together a message from her late father and discovers in the process a strange chain of events that culminates with the appearance of several imps, creatures not normally seen by human beings. Okiura's first film since 1999's *Jin-Roh* is a delightful 2D anime that isn't afraid to deal with big issues but does so with great fun and imaginative flair.

Sun 10 June 16:00 NFT1

The Princess and the Pilot / To Aru Hikushi e no Tsuioku

Japan. 2011. Dir Jun Shishido. 100min. EST

Crown Prince Carlo of Lavemme is set to marry Fana Del Moral, a beautiful girl from a noble family. The Del Moral home is bombed by the military of sworn enemies the Amatsuvians, who have been waging war with Lavemme for many years. With Fana in danger, a secret plan is hatched to send her on a perilous journey by air to the Royal Palace accompanied by ace pilot Charles Kareno, who comes from a poor family but is the best mercenary to be found. It's going to be a long, perilous journey and with only room for two in their plane, who knows how they'll get on. This original anime is made by Madhouse, the studio behind the work of Satoshi Kon and Mamoru Hosuda.

Sun 10 June 18:30 NFT1

Akira

Japan. 1988. Dir Katsuhiro Otomo. 125min. 15

Otomo's seminal anime, a striking, hyperkinetic adaptation of his own manga strip, almost single-handedly introduced the genre to audiences outside of Japan. In 2019, in a dazzling Neo-Tokyo, cyber-punk bikers cruise the Blade Runner-esque streets and do battle with military scientists and a telekinetic child. Impeccably detailed with fluid, jaw-dropping action and a breathless pace, *Akira* remains a stunning achievement. What better way to sign off a run of classic anime of the future than with perhaps the greatest anime of them all?

Sun 10 June 20:45 NFT1

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NOTES TO EDITORS

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***** PICTURE DESK *****

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