

AN AUTUMN AFTERNOON

(*Sanma no aji*)

Directed by Yasujiro Ozu

Japan, 1962, 112 mins, Cert PG

With Chishu Ryu, Shima Iwashita, Keiji Sada, Mariko Okada

New 2K restoration



**Opening on 16 May 2014 at BFI Southbank
and selected cinemas nationwide**

17/3/14 – Now ravishingly restored by Shochiku Studios, Japan's National Film Centre and the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, ***An Autumn Afternoon*** is the final work of Japanese master filmmaker Yasujiro Ozu (1903 – 1963). One of the greatest last films in all of cinema history, it is released by the BFI in cinemas nationwide on 16 May.

While the film's original Japanese title (which translates as 'The Taste of Mackerel') is less obviously elegiac than its English one, Ozu's masterpiece is truly autumnal, charting the inevitable eclipse of older generations by irreverent youth. Revisiting the storyline of his earlier *Late Spring* (1949), Ozu collaborates once more with his regular screenwriter Kogo Noda and casts the familiar face of Chishu Ryu in the role of Hirayama, an elderly widower worried about the unmarried daughter who keeps house for him. Counselling on all sides to marry her off before it is too late, Hirayama plays matchmaker and reluctantly prepares to bid his old life farewell.

The themes throughout are familiar from much of the director's greatest work: everyday life with all its ups and downs – at home, at work, in local bars, with family, with old friends. These are ordinary people whose stories may not have big melodramatic moments, but whose concerns – loneliness, ageing parents, family responsibility – resonate deeply with us all. Ozu skilfully balances humour – there are even jokes about virility pills for one of the older men to keep his new young wife happy – with a poignant awareness of life's limitations and transience.

The film also offers a fascinating insight into wider society, as post-war Japan grapples with modern consumerism and new moral codes, and young and old face changes to centuries of tradition.

An Autumn Afternoon is one of just six films that Ozu made in colour which he employed to great effect. The spectacular use of primary colours within an otherwise muted palette is striking, often enlivened by meticulous placing of objects in the frame: a red lantern in a street scene (he is particularly fond of splashes of bright red), a bright blue bucket on the floor, and emerald green rice bowls on the dining table.

In the 2012 Sight & Sound Greatest Films of All Time, Directors' Top Ten poll, Ozu's *Tokyo Story* (1953) was voted No. 1. Contemporary directors who cite him as an inspiration include Wim Wenders, Paul Schrader, Claire Denis, Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Aki Kaurismaki and Jim Jarmusch. The re-release of *An Autumn Afternoon* brings to the big screen a film that will move audiences with its sheer humanity while entrancing them with the beauty of its visual design.

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- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences