

CONTEMPORARY
CLASSICS OF
KOREAN CINEMA

USC 한국 영화제

featuring

Chihwaseon **취화선**

and personal appearance by

IM KWON-TAEK

presented by

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
SCHOOL OF CINEMA-TELEVISION
KOREAN STUDIES INSTITUTE of the
COLLEGE OF LETTERS, ARTS, AND SCIENCES
and
THE KOREAN FILM COMMISSION



It is an honor to offer my greetings on behalf of one of our country's most prominent directors, Mr. Im Kwon-Taek, as well as those from the Korean-American and Korean communities in Los Angeles. We proudly support the screening of the acclaimed film, Chihwaseon.

Recently, Korean cinema has been recognized as Asia's most vibrant motion picture market, producing films that are both critically acclaimed as well as commercially successful. Due to this influx of new talent into filmmaking coupled with international appreciation, Korean films have lately become the heart and soul of our culture. Furthermore, this film, Chihwaseon, which was inspired by the life of a painter named Ohwon Jang Seung-up, endearingly captures the history and natural beauty of Korea through the brilliant vision of veteran filmmaker, Im Kwon-Taek.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to the University of Southern California School of Social Work, School of Cinema-Television, the Korean Studies Institute of the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences, and the Korean Film Commission, and to thank those individuals who have worked so diligently to make this film festival possible: Dean Marilyn Flynn, Dean Elizabeth Daley, Professor David James, Dr. Richard Drobnick, Professor Gordon Berger, Dr. Marlene Wagner, Dr. Daein Kang and Mr. Dustin Yu. Finally, I would like to thank the Director, Im Kwon-Taek, for being present here in America again, this time for the screening of his film, Chihwaseon.

Sung, Jung Kyung

Consul General

Consulate General of the Republic of Korea

너무나 잘 알려진 우리 한국의 임권택 감독을 비롯하여 이 자리에 함께 하신 여러분에게 환영의 말씀을 드리게 된 것을 영광으로 생각합니다. 그리고 오늘 "취화선"을 관람하게 된 것은 더 없는 기쁨이 아닐 수 없습니다.

근래 한국은 아시아의 가장 활발한 영화산업시장임과 동시에 영화제작산업의 전성기를 맞이하고 있으며 이제 각종 영화제를 통해 국제적으로도 우리작품의 우수성을 인정받고 있습니다.

오늘밤 우리가 보게될 영화 "취화선"은 임권택 감독의 놀라운 예술적 시각으로 한국 조선시대 천재화가 오원 장승업의 인생을 한국 역사와 자연의 아름다움과 함께 그려낸 작품입니다.

이번 행사를 위해 수고하신 USC 대학 사회복지학과, 영화 텔레비전학과, 한국학연구소 및 한국영화위원회등의 모든 분들에게 감사드리고 특별히 한국영화 사랑과 홍보에 노력하시는 Marilyn Flynn 학장, Elizabeth Daley 학장, David James 교수, Richard Drobnick 박사, Gordon Berger 교수, Marlene Wagner 박사, 강대인 박사, Dustin Yu씨에게 감사를 표하고 싶습니다.

끝으로 영화 "취화선"의 상영회에 몸소 참석해주신 임권택 감독님께 다시 한번 감사의 말씀을 드립니다.

주라성총영사

성 정 경

CONTEMPORARY
CLASSICS OF
KOREAN CINEMA

USC 한국 영화제

Curated and Organized by David E. James
Han Ju Kwak and Nam Lee

With Special Thanks to Dr. Daein Kang

presented by

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
SCHOOL OF CINEMA-TELEVISION
KOREAN STUDIES INSTITUTE of the
COLLEGE OF LETTERS, ARTS, AND SCIENCES
and
THE KOREAN FILM COMMISSION



WELCOME FROM
PROVOST LLOYD
ARMSTRONG

It is a great honor to welcome Im Kwon-Taek as a Provost's Distinguished Visitor to the University of Southern California. The University is especially honored to host a festival of contemporary Korean cinema and to provide west coast cinema fans with an opportunity to view Director Im's highly acclaimed film, Chihwasoon, for which he recently received the Feature Film Jury Award for Best Director at the Cannes Film Festival.

At USC, we have become extensively engaged in international education and research. By hosting this Festival of contemporary Korean cinema, the University is building closer relationships with communities in Southern California that have strong ties to countries in the Pacific Rim, such as Korea, and at the same time, we are fostering interdisciplinary relationships among our Schools of Social Work and Cinema-Television, and the College of Letters, Arts and Sciences.

Through such academic units as the multi-disciplinary Korean Studies Institute and the Korean Heritage Library, for example, USC has taken the lead internationally in bringing together the worlds of academic scholarship and community interests in new and exciting ways.

USC has attracted more international students over the years than any other American university. Currently, sixteen percent of USC students represent over 115 countries; of countries with the largest percentages of international students, South Korea has twelve percent.

It is with great pride that we recognize Director Im Kwon-taek for his cinematic accomplishments and welcome all of you to USC's "Contemporary Classics of Korean Cinema" Film Festival."

Sincerely,

Lloyd Armstrong, Jr.

*Provost and Senior Vice President, Academic Affairs
University of Southern California*

On behalf of the USC School of Social Work, it is a great pleasure to welcome you to the University of Southern California and to "Classics of Contemporary Korean Cinema."

The USC School of Social Work is committed to the advancement of leadership, human rights and social welfare in the Asian Pacific region and we are proud to be a sponsor of this festival along with our colleagues in the USC School of Cinema-Television and the Korean Studies Institute of the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences.

We are especially grateful for the generous support of the Korean Film Commission which has provided us with these important films of contemporary Korean cinema. We also thank Provost Lloyd Armstrong whose vision created the Provost's Distinguished Visitor Program which has allowed us to bring Im Kwon-Taek to USC.

The School would also like to offer special thanks to all of those who have worked so diligently to make this festival so successful, in particular, Professor David E. James, School of Cinema-Television, Professor Gordon Berger, Director of the East Asian Studies Center, Ms. Joy Kim, Curator, Korean Heritage Library, Dr. Daein Kang, School of Social Work, Dr. Marlene Wagner, and Ms. Hillary Kubn, Office of Development, School of Social Work.

Marilyn Flynn

Dean of the School of Social Work

It is again my privilege to welcome you to the School of Cinema-Television for this, our third festival of Korean Cinema. On this occasion, when some of the best of recent films will be presented, we are especially pleased to be working with our colleagues from quite different parts of our university, the School of Social Work and the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences, in particular the Korean Studies Institute. As is so often the case, the cinema brings us together, bridging the differences in our separate academic missions, as indeed in this festival it bridges the distance between America and Asia.

We are honored that our series of festivals of Korean cinema has contributed to the recognition it now enjoys as one of the most vital young cinemas in the world. But this occasion is especially gratifying for us since it allows us again to welcome director Im Kwon-Taek, brought back to our campus by the Korean Studies Institute as a Provost's Distinguished Visitor. Our school was among the first of foreign institutions to recognize Im's remarkable achievements, and in 1996 we greeted him with one of the earliest retrospectives of his work and with a scholarly conference devoted to it. And so we were all delighted this Spring to discover that he had at last received the Award for Best Director at the Cannes Film Festival for Chihwaseon. We confidently anticipate similar success for the other Korean filmmakers whose work we will enjoy this weekend.

Elizabeth M. Daley

*Steven J. Ross/ Time Warner Professor and Dean of the School of Cinema-Television
Executive Director, Annenberg Center for Communication*

WELCOME FROM
DEAN MARILYN
FLYNN

WELCOME FROM
DEAN
ELIZABETH M.
DALEY

In 1996, University of Southern California School of Cinema-Television was honored to host a retrospective of twelve of Im Kwon-Taek's most important films and an accompanying scholarly conference about them. The event was co-sponsored by USC's Korean Studies Institute and by the Korea Foundation and the Korean Cultural Center of Los Angeles. The festival culminated with Director Im's visit to Los Angeles and to the university, where he was presented with a life-time achievement award by Arthur Hillier, director of *Love Story* and then President of the Academy of Motion Pictures. The proceedings of the conference, together with other essays have been published in David E. James and Kyung Hyun Kim, eds., *Im Kwon-Taek: The Making Of a Korean National Cinema* (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 2002).

IM KWON-TAEK

Director Im Kwon-Taek has achieved an extraordinary position in Korean cinema. Having made more than one hundred films over four decades, he is a towering, magisterial presence while, as a bona-fide auteur, he has garnered numerous accolades and prizes from all over the world. His life's work in cinema has been an unswerving endeavor to dedicate his own grace and aesthetic sensitivity to the recreation in cinema of the spirit of Korean cultural traditions and to save them from oblivion.

In both its themes and style, Im's work is invariably and unmistakably tied to the elusive social reality of his nation as it has experienced a turbulent transition from traditional to modern society. In its quest to capture the Korean people's collective experience, in films like *Mandala* (1981), *Sopyonje* (1993), and *Chihwaseon* (2002), his cinema has wandered throughout the remote mountains and plains of the Korean peninsula. With *The Genealogy* (1978), *Surrogate Mother* (1986), *Adada* (1988), and *Fly High Run Far: Kaebyok* (1991) Im revisited the tattered, traumatic past; and in *Gilsottum* (1985), *Ticket* (1986), *Come, Come, Come Upward* (1989), *Sopyonje*, and *The Taebaek Mountains* (1994), he embarked on the tortuous journey that leads to the shadows of modernity. His oeuvre as a whole has woven a grand epic tapestry of the bitter history of the Korean people in the modern era.

Im's cinema never dreams of transcendence; it is always rooted in reality. Even in such artistically ambitious films as *Chunhyang* (2000) and *Chihwaseon*, social reality sneaks in and renders the text impure. In embracing and consoling the wounds of the national past, however, Im finds the usefulness of the impurity and shabbiness that stem from the tribulations of the Korean people. This is why, even though he makes serious art films, Im has been beloved by Koreans.

Born in 1936 in Cholla province, Im Kwon-Taek had an ill-fated childhood. Persecuted for the Leftist elements in his family background, in his teens and without a decent education,



he worked as a general hand in the impoverished film studios of the time. Im started his directing career in 1962 as a commercially-oriented mainstream director, but made a dramatic turn to serious films in the late 1970s. Thereafter he made films that deeply engage the difficulties entailed in the conflicts among modernization, tradition, and ideology in Korea.

Chihwaseon

취화선

Im's newest film *Chihwaseon* tells a story of Jang Seung-up, a prominent painter in late nineteenth century Chosun. Born to a humble family in 1843, Jang proves to have a remarkable natural talent as well as being a colorful individual. Despite social discrimination and misunderstanding, he succeeds in finding his own way of painting, earning the nickname "chihwaseon," which means "drunken master of painting." Adorned with the sublime beauty of traditional Korean painting, the film was honored with the Best Director Award at Cannes in 2002.



2002

(120 mins.)

Director

Im Kwon-Taek

Producer

Lee Tae-won

Screenplay

Im Kwon-Taek

Kim Yong-ok

Cinematography

Jeong Il-sung

Cast

Choi Min-sik

Ahn Sung-ki

Yu Ho-jeong



Schedule

Friday November 1

Lucas 108

- | | | |
|--------|---|--------|
| 7 p.m. | Christmas in August
8월의 크리스마스
(Hur Jin-ho, 1998, 96 min) | Page 7 |
| 9 p.m. | Waikiki Brothers
와이키키 브라더스
(Im Soon-rye, 2001, 109 min) | Page 8 |

Saturday November 2

Norris Cinema Theater

- | | | |
|-----------|--|---------|
| 6 p.m. | Virgin Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors
오! 수정
(Hong Sang-su, 2000, 126 min) | Page 9 |
| 8.30 p.m. | The Flower Island
꽃섬
(Song Il-gon, 2001, 115 min) | Page 10 |

Sunday November 3

Norris Cinema Theater

- | | | |
|--------|---|---------|
| 2 p.m. | The Foul King
반칙왕
(Kim Ji-woon, 2000, 111 min) | Page 11 |
| 7 p.m. | Chihwaseon
취화선
(Im Kwon-Taek, 2002, 120 min) | Page 5 |

PERSONAL APPEARANCE BY
IM KWON-TAEK

Christmas in August

8월의 크리스마스

With his new approach to melodrama, Hur Jin-ho (b. 1963) is considered the most promising of directors who have revived and reinvented the long tradition of melodrama in Korean cinema. In his two films, *Christmas in August* (1998) and *One Fine Spring Day* (2002), love stories are blended into quiet, yet powerful examinations of everyday life and feelings. Hur worked as an assistant director and co-writer for Park Kwang-su, one of Korea's most politically conscious filmmakers, on his *A Single Spark* (1995); but in his own films, he concentrates more on individuals and their relationships to convey how feelings come and go, and how they change over time.

Winner of Best Film Prize at the 1998 Korean Film Awards, *Christmas in August* centers on Jeong-won, a thirty-something photographer who runs a shabby studio in Seoul.

Everything seems peaceful except that he is approaching death with a terminal illness. He accepts his fate gracefully until he meets Darim, a lively meter-girl who photographs parking-violators, and falls in love with her. Director Hur ignores any hint of tears or pretension as he weaves his heart-breaking story into a quiet observation of life and death. Hur first came up with the idea of "living with death" after seeing the smiling photo of a famous Korean pop singer on the altar at his funeral. The irony of the photo inspired the film's underlying premise that life of a dying person might not be all pain and misery. (Incidentally, the film is dedicated to the memory of the legendary cinematographer Yoo Young-kil, who passed away after film's completion.)



1998

96min.

Director

Hur Jin-ho

Producer

Cha Seung-jae

Screenplay

Oh Seung-uk
Shin Dong-hwan
Hur Jin-ho

Cinematography

Yoo Young-kil

Cast

Han Suk-kyu
Shim Eun-ha

2001

109min.

Director

Im Soon-rye

Producer

Lee Eun

Screenplay

Im Soon-rye

Cinematography

Choi Ji-yeol

Cast

Lee Eol

Oh Ji-hye

Ryu Seung-beom

Waikiki Brothers

와이키키 브라더스

After earning an MA in film studies at the University of Paris, Im Soon-rye (b.1961) stepped into the Korean film industry as an assistant director in 1994. A chance to make a low-budget feature film came early when her first short film, *Walk in the Rain*, won the Grand Prize at Seoul Short Film Festival in the same year.



With *Three Friends* (1996), Im became the first Korean woman feature film director to gain great respect in local and international film circles. Defying common notions about women filmmakers, she continues to make realistic films about men, especially those beautiful losers who are powerless in society's grip.

Like *Three Friends*, *Waikiki Brothers* shows Im's concern with society's outsiders. Whereas *Three Friends* focused on three men in their early twenties, *Waikiki Brothers* follows its protagonist, Seong-woo, the leader of an obscure music band. From his high school days in the 1980s through to the present, the film vividly portrays his youthful dream gradually turning into a middle-age defeat. The story begins when Seong-woo's band is forced to move down to his old hometown where he meets his high school band members again. They expect him to be happy since he is the only person doing what they all dreamed of. But music is no longer his hope, only a means of scraping by. To achieve authenticity, Im carried out an extensive research on actual third-rate music bands and cast unknown stage actors. More than thirty popular songs are used to represent the rapid changes in Korean society.



와이키키 브라더스

Virgin Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors

오! 수정

Despite his short filmography, Hong Sang-su (b. 1961) has established himself as an art-house name in his own right. With a background in experimental cinema that allows him radically to subvert conventional cinematic language, Hong has made an unprecedented contribution to the narrative possibilities of Korean film. His four completed features, ranging from *The Day a Pig Fell Into the Well* (1996) to *The Turning Gate* (2002), all have been acclaimed for their innovative, nuanced, and even “deconstructive” mode of narration that, curiously enough, still captures the (post)modernity of South Korea with unusual incisiveness.



This black and white film appears to be a simple story of *ménage à trois*. Su-jeong, a charming scriptwriter for a local cable TV, is close with a producer Young-su. But she accepts an offer from Jae-hoon, a rich friend of Young-su, to be his “lover” on condition that it is only when they go out for drinks. Jae-hoon pressures her to have sex with him, but she continues to put him off. Then, key scenes in their relationship are retold from a different point-of-view; these transformations in perspective generate subtle and profound insights into the inevitable distortion of memories that life entails.

2000

126 mins.

Director

Hong Sang-su

Producer

Ahn Byung-ju
Choi In-ki

Screenplay

Hong Sang-su

Cinematography

Choi Young-taek

Cast

Lee Eun-ju
Jung Bo-suk
Moon Sung-keun

오! 수정



2001

115 mins.

Director

Song Il-gon

Producer

Chang Yun-hyeon

Screenplay

Song Il-gon

Cinematography

Kim Myeong-jun

Cast

Seo Ju-hi

Lim Yu-jin

Kim Hye-na

The Flower Island

꽃섬

Song Il-gon (b.1971) belongs to a new generation of Korean directors who studied filmmaking in Eastern Europe. Wanting to distance himself from commercial filmmaking system, he went to Poland in 1995 to study at the Lodz Film School. While a student there, he received numerous short film awards including Grand Prize of the Jury for Best Short Film at Cannes with *Sopoong* (Picnic) in 1999. His debut feature, *The Flower Island*, was introduced in "Cinema of the Present" at Venice Film Festival 2001 and was noted for its powerful portrayal of three women healing each other's wounded souls.

Shot with a digital camera, *The Flower Island* contrasts the world of harsh reality with a fantasy world. It tells a story of three women embarking on a journey to a mythic island of eternal happiness. After abandoning her infant in a public toilet, 16 year-old Hye-na sets out to find her mother, but instead meets Ok-nam, who prostituted herself to buy a piano for her child. Then, in a snow-covered forest, they rescue Yu-jin, a musical singer who, losing her voice to cancer, tries to kill herself.

Inspired by a news article about teenage girls abandoning infants in public toilets, Song wrote the script in three days. Consciously going against the strong tradition of realism in Korean cinema, he interweaves documentary style shots with dream-like scenes to create a unique road-movie. Will the three women find the Flower Island?



The Foul King

반칙왕

Kim Ji-woon (b. 1964) worked for many years in the theater before he began his film career in 1997 when he won a screenplay competition. His directorial debut *The Quiet Family* (1998) was a surprise hit blending horror and comedy. Kim has shown a rare talent for telling stories about modern life with profound social implications in a comic but engaging way. His films are crafted as hybridization of genre films but they have pathos stemming from the knowledge that our lives are usually not what we want them to be. Kim is considered one of the best prospects for being a filmmaker capable of pioneering a "Koreanized" popular cinema.

In *The Foul King*, Dae-ho is an inept banker who is repeatedly abused by his manager because of his poor performance at work. Accidentally he takes up professional wrestling, hoping to find in the sport a space free of everyday frustrations and a means of escaping the bitter realities of his life. Every night Dae-ho not only transforms himself into a cheating wrestler, but also finds another self who can forget all the suffering of his merciless corporate environment. Outmoded professional wrestling is used as an access to a fantasy world, invoking nostalgia for lost innocence and masculinity. This extremely funny and at the same time sad film was a box-office hit in 2000.



2000

112 mins.

Director

Kim Ji-woon

Producer

Oh Jeong-wan

Screenplay

Kim Ji-woon

Cinematography

Hong Kyung-pyo

Cast

Song Kang-ho

Jang Jin-young

All film notes by Han Ju Kwak and Nam Lee

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