

ZATOICHI

The Blind Swordsman

Bursting at the seams with vibrant characters, disarming humour, and startling swordplay, these adventures of *Zatoichi* represent Japanese action cinema at its crowd-pleasing best.

The Tale of Zatoichi

Friday, 19 January 2018 at 8:00pm

Kenji Misumi | Japan 1962 | 96 min | Japanese with English subtitles

The epic saga of *Zatoichi* opens. As tensions mount between rival *yakuza* clans, one boss hires a formidable but ailing *ronin* as his clan's muscle — while the other employs a humble, moral, blind masseur named Ichi. With its lightning-fast swordplay, sleight-of-hand dice games, and codes of honour upheld and betrayed, this first chapter sets the stage for all the *Zatoichi* adventures to come. And Shintaro Katsu brings author Kan Shimozawa's blind swordsman vividly to life, making the character excitingly, indelibly his own.

Zatoichi And the Chest of Gold

Friday, 26 January 2018 at 8:00pm

Kazuo Ikehiro | Japan 1964 | 82 min | Japanese with English subtitles

Zatoichi tries to retrieve a chest of gold containing the taxes that a poor town's folk had to pay to corrupt government officials. Supported by the legendary outlaw Chuji Kunisada (Shogo Shimada), he tries to help the villagers. However, the mission seems doomed to failure when he encounters a cruel *ronin* (Tomisaburo Wakayama) who plans to kill Zatoichi. One of the most beautiful looking of the *Zatoichi* films, it also convinces in terms of action.

Zatoichi's Pilgrimage

Friday, 2 February 2018 at 8:00pm

Kazuo Ikehiro | Japan 1966 | 82 min | Japanese with English subtitles

Troubled by his violent past, Zatoichi begins a journey to a series of shrines for a dose of cleansing spirituality. But as always, trouble isn't far behind, and the blind swordsman soon finds himself defending a widow from the self-interest of ruthless thugs and despicable townfolk. Written by Kaneto Shindo (*Onibaba*), it is a scathing attack on the upper classes and those who wield power, both in the criminal underworld and in everyday society.