

# *Linda Linda Linda*

*Linda Linda Linda*, 2005, Japan

## Film Overview



A movie about a high school girl rock group that recruits a Korean exchange student as the lead singer just days before a battle of the bands sounds like silly fun -- and "Linda Linda Linda" is -- but it is also an extremely well-written, emotionally complex coming-of-age tale that has a John Hughesian respect for teenage angst. The band, consisting of drummer Kyoko (Aki Maeda, the female survivor in "Battle Royale"), bassist Nozomi (Shiori Sekine) and keyboardist Kei (Yu Kashii), decides it will perfect the title song, popularized by the 1980s pop group the Blue Hearts. Rejected by several girls it approaches, the band drafts Son (Bae), who can barely speak a word of Japanese, let alone sing it. When word gets around, Son is the object of desire (one admirer recites poetry, which she can't understand), but the shy newcomer will have none of it. Instead, the girls bond. They eat together, practice long hours (they look like they're really playing

instruments), nap a little and take time to enjoy a bank of clouds sliding past the treetops -- there are many quiet and introspective scenes, as well as awkward humor. The girls balance classes, boys and one another's idiosyncrasies on their way to, if not rock 'n' roll success, then at least hard-won maturity and inner strength. --G. Allen Johnson, *San Francisco Chronicle*

The director, Nobuhiro Yamashita, has also directed such films as *A Gentle Breeze in the Village*, for which he won a Hochi Award for Best Director.

## Culture Notes

- **Culture Festivals (Bunkasai):** The festival in which Son and her bandmates participate is no rare occurrence in Japan; in fact, "culture fests" or similar activities are a standard part of Japanese schooling, from nursery school to university level. These culture festivals allow students an opportunity to show off what they are learning and what kind of extra-curricular activities they are participating in and offer people who might be interested in attending the school later an opportunity to investigate the school's atmosphere. Of course, they are also loved for being extremely fun events during which classrooms are transformed through student effort into cafes, displays, or even haunted houses. --*Adapted from Wikipedia*
- **Confessions of Love (kokuhaku):** Confessions of love, like the ones Son receives haplessly in *Linda Linda Linda*, are huge events in the lives of Japanese students. They challenge themselves to express their feelings honestly and live without having to regret doing nothing later in life. There are even set times that one is expected to perform these confessions; in addition to culture festivals, Valentine's Day and Christmas are popular times for it. --*Linda Linda Linda DVD commentary*