



See You at Jackson's Cinema House!

MAEBASHI CITY COORDINATOR FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (CIR)
JACKSON BANNISTER'S ACTIVITY REPORT


MAY 2026

Maebashi Cinema House, a mini-theater in Maebashi City. Jackson, a film-loving CIR, watches one hand-picked recommendation from the theater manager and brings you a review.
Movies transcend borders! See you at the cinema!



MAY'S MOVIE

Hamnet

2025 USA/UK 

Jackson Bannister



I work as a Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) in Maebashi City, Gunma Prefecture, engaging in activities to deepen mutual cultural understanding between Japanese and non-Japanese residents.

Films are another family

~Discover new cinema in Maebashi—connecting films, people, and the community.~

In order to foster bonds within the local community through film, we decided to open Maebashi Cinema House.

Although small, our theater shares a wide variety of films from the heart of Maebashi. Our program spans a wide range of genres, including high-quality independent and mini-theater films that rarely receive screenings, hit titles that have completed their runs at multiplex cinemas, family-friendly films that parents and children can enjoy together, and classic masterpieces from the past. Through this selection, we hope audiences will discover new films.

This is the kind of "Cinema House" we aspire to build.



MISSION

Hamnet

*A quiet and beautiful story
woven from love and loss.*

For this month's movie review, I had the chance to see Hamnet, which is currently playing at Maebashi Cinema House!

Hamnet is a 2025 historical drama based on the novel of the same name. Set in late 16th-century England, it centers on the family of one of the country's most historically significant figures—though the identity of that figure is revealed gradually throughout the film. More perceptive viewers (or those familiar with the title) may figure it out much earlier. That said, I am unsure how familiar Japanese audiences will be with this period of English history or the people involved, so they may not get quite as much out of it as audiences from the English-speaking world.

This film feels like a return to form for director **Chloé Zhao**, whose big-budget Marvel film *Eternals* left many general audiences bored and dissatisfied, while fans of Zhao missed the smaller-scale independent films that originally brought her recognition. *Hamnet* is a slow-moving and methodical drama through and through. There are no large action set pieces; instead, the film relies on emotionally resonant performances, subtle storytelling, and superb cinematography. Those looking for a more action-packed experience may not find what they are looking for here.

Despite its independent-film sensibilities, *Hamnet* has an impressive pedigree behind it. The screenplay was co-written by the author of the source material, **Maggie O'Farrell**, and the film is backed by major producers such as Steven Spielberg and Sam Mendes. Zhao has also assembled an extremely talented cast, led by **Paul Mescal** and **Jessie Buckley**.

Much of the film rests on the performances of these two actors, and they carry the emotional weight of its two-hour runtime exceptionally well. However, special mention must also go to the child actor portraying the titular Hamnet, whose performance displays an impressive emotional range and ultimately becomes the emotional core of the story.

On a more technical level, the film relies heavily on natural lighting in its cinematography. This is the work of cinematographer **Łukasz Żal**, who previously worked on acclaimed films such as *The Zone of Interest* and *Loving Vincent*. Anyone familiar with Robert Eggers' *The Witch* will recognize a similar visual style. Combined with highly realistic set design that avoids the overused trope of portraying all medieval people as filthy and miserable, the film creates an immersive depiction of 16th-century England.

Without venturing too deeply into spoiler territory, this is an incredibly raw and emotional film. The latter half contains several genuinely soul-crushing moments that many viewers will likely relate to—or at least deeply sympathize with. At its core, the film explores themes of loss and the ways people process grief through artistic expression. These ideas culminate in the film's final scene, which I found to be one of the most beautiful sequences I have seen in a film this year.

I believe *Hamnet* will come to be regarded as one of Chloé Zhao's stronger works, as well as the film that helped win back many fans after the disappointment surrounding *Eternals*.

Overall, *Hamnet* is a beautifully shot and emotionally devastating film, featuring a compelling script and outstanding performances that may very well leave viewers emotionally wrecked by the time the credits roll.

MAEBASHI CINEMA HOUSE
OPENING AND CLOSING TIMES CHANGE
DEPENDING ON MOVIE SCREENING TIMES

CLOSED-SUN. AND TUE.

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