

Speech

Presented by HE Mr YAMAGAMI Shingo
Ambassador of Japan to Australia

On the occasion of the ANU Film Group screening of
Wheel of Fortune and Fantasy
at ANU – Thursday 15th September 2022

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening and thank you all for coming to the screening of the Japanese film, *Wheel of Fortune and Fantasy*.

I am sure you are excited to see tonight's film, but please allow me to say a few words.

First of all, I would like to thank ANU Film Group, particularly Mr Brett Yeats for screening a Japanese film tonight.

Finally Japan's turn has come!

I believe we have many film buffs in the audience and of course, I am one of them.

To tell you the truth, when I was a university student, I spent more time in Shibuya watching movies than the time spent on campus.

And even during my postgraduate studies in New York, I often went to this small theatre in Greenwich Village to immerse myself in the world of film.

Particularly memorable ones were those in *The Godfather* trilogy.

I watched *The Godfather* parts 1, 2, and 3 all in one day!

This taught me more about life in America than actually attending lectures at Columbia University!

I probably shouldn't be saying this here at the national university...

Tonight's film is by acclaimed Japanese director, HAMAGUCHI Ryusuke.

His film, *Drive My Car* won the Oscar for Best International Feature at the Academy Awards early this year.

I am not sure if you have seen the film but gee, it was long... nearly three hours!

Don't get me wrong though... I really did enjoy it!

And if you haven't seen it, then I strongly recommend you to do so because – and if I may namedrop here – I actually went to the same high school as the lead actor, NISHIJIMA Hidetoshi!

I should add though that this was 10 years apart!

Tonight's film is a multi-tale drama depicting the different situations of three characters going about their ordinary lives.

And the relationships between these characters are changed by chance.

Taking a mysterious turn that could happen in real life.

In a world that lies between reality and fantasy, HAMAGUCHI delves deep into human emotions, which are sometimes wicked, self-harming and even destructive.

He asked his actors to refrain from learning their lines prior to rehearsals so that he could create something very real.

Some may think of just how unusually long the scenes are, but I hope you savour the depth of the conversations.

But don't worry, this movie only goes for 2 hours!

Despite the backdrop being set in Japan, you may notice these human emotions and interactions on screen are universal in the human experience.

So please sit back, relax and enjoy the wonderful world of HAMAGUCHI.

Thank you.