

Greetings by Ambassador Kobayashi  
at the Opening of the Japanese Film Festival 2018  
Hannah Playhouse, 12 Cambridge Terrace  
14:20, Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October

Kia ora, and good afternoon everyone.

Thank you very much for attending the Japanese Film Festival 2018. I am very pleased to be here with you today, waiting for the opening film of this Japanese Film Festival, Yoko the Cherry Blossom. As the new Ambassador of Japan to New Zealand, I arrived on the 7<sup>th</sup> of this month after my service in Iran. I sincerely hope that I could contribute to strengthen even more, the already strong relationship between Japan and New Zealand. I believe that cultural events, this festival is one of those, are very important for deepening such a friendly relationship.

This year's Japanese Film Festival is made up of 6 films, spanning across multiple genres. They contain so many impressive elements for everyone. All of the films are shown in Japanese, but with English subtitles, so everyone can enjoy them. Even better: all of the films are free!

I would like to express my most sincere appreciation to the Hannah Playhouse staff for hosting this festival in this beautiful theatre, and for their contributions to not only this weekend, but also in the preparation and lead-up. I would also like to thank you all who are present here, for being part of this Film Festival. Without your ardent support and interest in Japanese culture, we would not have the chance to hold this event.

For your information, the bi-annual Wellington Japan Festival will be held next month on the 24<sup>th</sup>, and I hope to see many of you there again.

In the coming years, so many international events will be held in Japan, such as next year's Rugby World Cup, the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo in 2020, followed by the World Masters' Games in Kansai, in 2021. With so many reasons to visit Japan, I sincerely hope you will experience our culture not only here, but also in Japan in the near future.

Now, for the time being however, please sit back, relax, and enjoy the film!

Thank you.