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# Miracle of Communication

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This year's Festival is going to be a killer for our interpreters. Among the 212 films we are presenting, many are screened twice — that means 251 screenings. We are expecting almost 200 guests, mostly filmmakers. Which means, aside from the Chris Marker retrospective, most of the screenings will be accompanied by talks or Q&As. Every time the lights go on, cinemas will be filled with bustling voices speaking about film. In addition, this year's program is full of symposiums and debates. Our new program "Yamagata Rough Cut!" introduces discussions around film projects still in production, and the "Yamagata Film Criticism Workshop" offers a brush up for journalists writing about cinema. And at the end of the day, Komian Club. What a multitude of conversations!

Our wonderful interpreters will speak in Japanese, English, Korean, Thai, Russian, Spanish, French, and Vietnamese, to bridge communication — the unpredictable exchanges between audience

and filmmaker. It's a miracle we are able to converse with each other, thanks to our language staff. A round of applause to them!

YIDFF 2013's closing film is a biography of Robert Flaherty, whose name crowns the Festival's grand prize. When he filmed the classic *Man of Aran*, Flaherty encountered many people on the Aran Islands (off the west coast of Ireland) sharing his surname. The father of modern documentary was Irish in lineage! And don't we know that the Irish are known for being talkative, inquisitive, and having a sense of humor?!

And so I welcome you to this year's Yamagata Film Festival, a year promising to be especially chatty and lively. The joy of being at Yamagata is the live experience of encountering non-scripted unexpected confrontations. To sandwich between the somewhat formal opening and closing ceremonies, I invite you to join us in creating a delicious concoction of daily surprises and discoveries in our discussions and encounters.