On Sunday February 24, 2013, JASSA and UTSA’s East Asia Institute co-hosted “Cast Me if You Can” public screening. More than 55 guests attended the event, including the director of the film, Atsushi Ogata. The screening began at 2:00 p.m. and was followed by a Q&A session with the director. To end the event, a small reception was held for all the guests.

The film follows Hiroshi, an actor living in the shadow of his famous playwright father, Kenta. Hiroshi has seemingly bad luck since he is constantly mistaken for someone else, while constantly being marginalized both at work and in his personal life. When Hiroshi finally has the role of his dreams in his reach, he is mistaken for a man having an affair with the wife of a member of parliament and is left feeling with little hope. After being stuck in rut, Hiroshi meets a beautiful, young, energetic actress by chance, falls in love with her and learns to rediscover himself.
After the film, there was a Q&A with Atsushi Ogata. The audience was very interested in learning Ogata’s inspiration for the film. Ogata explained that his film is semi-autobiographical in that he is often mistaken for other people, just as the main character Hiroshi is in the film. Ogata spoke of the Hollywood atmosphere in Japan and how challenging it is to make an independent film in Japan, since Japanese culture is accustomed to certain types of filmmaking. Ogata also talked of his desire to make a film that makes people feel good about their lives as well as his decision in including English subtitles. The audience agreed with his universal message of love about the film and they were interested to know what Ogata was currently working on.

One guest inquired about the English title of the film and was curious about the translation from Japanese. In Japan, the film is called Wakiyaku Monogatari, which translates to Story of a Supporting Actor. He felt that people internationally will not want to see the movie if he directly translated the title. “I remember it being a late night in the editing room. The movie was almost finished. However, the artists needed an English title to finish out the opening sequence,” Ogata reflected. “I panicked and said the first thing that popped into my mind, ‘Catch me if you can.’ With a minor change I sent it to production. I was happy with the title since its easy to remember and catchy. Plus, once its in your head, it’ll be hard to get out.”

Altogether, the film was an inspiration to the audience. After the discussion there was a small reception in which many people talked to Ogata, asked more questions about the film and took pictures with him. It was wonderful to have the director of the film at the event so that not only were people able to engage in conversation with him, they were also able to learn something new about Japanese culture from a different perspective. Eddie Cheon, a participant of the event, said “I really liked the film, I thought it was very funny and refreshing to watch.” Eager people lined up wanting to talk to Ogata, telling him how much they enjoyed his film and his presence at the event.