

**Donald Ranvaud** Hon DLitt  
**Oration by Emeritus Professor John King**

For a lifetime's work dedicated to the dissemination of film cultures, as a scholar, critic, film producer and environmental campaigner, we are proud to recognise the achievements of Mr Donald Ranvaud.

If you were at Warwick in the mid to late 1970s and had even a passing interest in the movies, it was inevitable that Don Ranvaud would put you to work, especially on the magazine *Framework*, which he had founded in 1975 with Warwick honorary graduand, the late Sheila Whitaker. "There is a Chilean filmmaker at the London Film Festival, go and interview him or her...There is an important article in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, translate it." Or be asked to assemble an issue, on the kitchen table at Don's house in Leamington, when, in that distant world before PCs, someone would be typing text on a typewriter, another would be cutting out film stills and someone else would be gluing it all together. Despite, or perhaps because, of its artisan origins, *Framework* always punched above its weight as an international film journal. A graduate of English and Comparative Literature, Don spent several years teaching comparative literature at Warwick – where he worked across English, Italian, French, Spanish and Portuguese – and a decade in the Film Studies Department at the University of East Anglia.

But perhaps heeding the advice of his lifelong mentor and friend, the director Bernardo Bertolucci, who declared in a book edited by Don that, 'the school for cinema is the cinema', he became increasingly involved in film production. In the late 1980s he co-founded the European Script Fund within the EC, supporting hundreds of projects, and worked as media adviser to the Italian Presidency of the Council on Ministers. The early nineties took him to Hong Kong and China where he produced two films by the director Chen Kaige, *Life on a String* and the remarkable *Farewell my Concubine*, which won the Palme D'Or at Cannes in 1993, and received two Oscar nominations. Always restlessly seeking out new talents across the world, he then focused on Brazil where he supported many emerging directors including Walter Salles and Fernando Meirelles.

If you have seen one Brazilian film, it is probably *City of God*, set in the Rio *favelas*, which received four Oscar nominations. Don later co-produced Meirelles first 'Hollywood' production, *The Constant Gardener*, another multi award-winning film that included an Oscar for Rachel Weisz. He could have stayed in this world of high budget international productions. Instead he helped set up independent companies such as the Wild Bunch and established his own production and distribution company, Buena Onda (literally 'good wave' or more colloquially, 'good vibe', a name given to the 'new' cinemas in Latin America in the early 2000s) which has supported dozens of aspirant filmmakers across the Americas. I did a rough count. To date he has produced over 50 features and documentaries. He established a film school in Bolivia and has been involved in indigenous filmmaking across the world.

In recent years he has become a creative director in the World Bank climate initiative, Connect4Climate, establishing the branches Film4Climate and Sport4Climate. Film4Climate is working with studios and companies across the world in an attempt to reduce the industry's carbon footprint by over 30% and to raise awareness of climate issues. It also hosts competitions for young filmmakers and is involved in a variety of educational projects with the active support of the world's leading directors and actors: Bernardo Bertolucci, Wim Wenders, Bob Rafelson, Fernando Meirelles, James Cameron, Leonardo DiCaprio, Mark Ruffalo, Daryl Hannah and many more.

Donald Ranvaud's work chimes with the University's commitment to internationalism and to building bridges across cultures. He is a shining example of what a Warwick arts graduate can achieve in making the world a better, a more inclusive, place. Muy buena onda.

Mr Vice Chancellor, in the name of the Senate, I present for admission to the Degree of Doctor of Letters, *honoris causa*, Mr Donald Ranvaud.