

Starz Int'l Film Festival

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'A story that needed to be told'

Joe Nguyen, staff writer
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DENVER - Lane Nishikawa's "Only the Brave" was a runaway hit during the opening days of the 28th Starz International Film Festival. The initial two showings sold out; a third was added and quickly sold out as well.

This film about World War II focuses on the heroic tale of the 100th/442nd, an all-Japanese-American regiment who fought for their country while their families were detained in internment camps back in the states.

"This was a story that needed to be told," actor Yuri Okumoto said.

This emotional recount of the regiment's rescue of the trapped 141st Regiment left scarcely a dry eye in the theater. Nishikawa masterfully blended the soldiers' heartwarming flashbacks with scenes of war which created a powerful emotional attachment to the characters. There are many storylines, but they all beautifully intertwine in the end. The film also showcased a number of notable Asian-American actors including Jason Scott Lee ("Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story"), Mark Dacascos ("Brotherhood of the Wolf") and Pat Morita ("The Karate Kid").



Lane Nishikawa (2nd from left) speaking at the JACL reception



(from l-r) Eric Hayashi, Yuji Okumoto and Jay Koiwai

Okumoto ("The Karate Kid, Part II") and producers Jay Koiwai and Eric Hayashi were in attendance for all three of the Q&A sessions. Nishikawa, who also plays the lead role, arrived from Hawaii for the third showing of the film. In Hawaii, he said he witnessed 2,000 people watching his film on a 40-foot by 30-foot screen with a "rock 'n' roll sound system."

Seats for the final showing were already filling up 45 minutes prior to the start of the movie. Among those in attendance were veterans from the war, many of whom served with the regiment. At the end of the movie, Nishikawa invited these men to the front where they received a standing ovation.

After the session, the filmmakers made their way to the penthouse of Tamai Towers at Sakura Square, on 19th Street and Larimer Street, where the Japanese American Citizens League held a tribute for the film.

Nishikawa said he plans to do one final edit and hopes his movie will be out in theaters by Spring 2006.

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