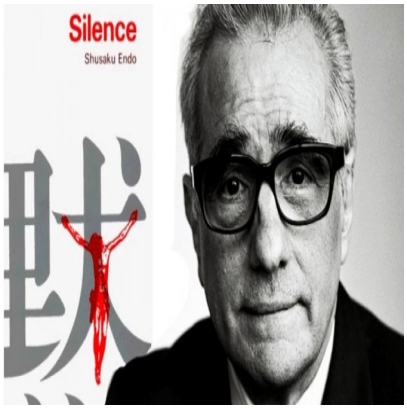

Japanese cast of Scorseseâ??s Silence speak of masterwork for the ages

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

By Kenta Kato

Japanese stars heap praise on American auteurâ??s direction in his searching adaptation of Shusaku Endoâ??s novel about religious persecution.

â??God is silence. You have to go into your soul and search for the answer by yourself.â?•

Thus Yosuke Kubozuka meditated on Martin Scorseseâ??s new film, Silence, at the Foreign Correspondentsâ?? Club of Japan (FCCJ) on January 12.

Scorseseâ??s long-awaited project â?? based on the acclaimed Japanese novel by Shusaku Endo, a story of religious prosecution in 17th-century Japan, where Christianity was prohibited â?? has finally been realized. Karen Severns, the FCCJâ??s film programmer, praised Scorseseâ??s film as â??a slow-burn masterwork, with a message that has contemporary resonance, reverberating across the centuries.â?•

The FCCJ screened the movie back in its home country in partnership with Kadokawa Corporation, then hosted a discussion with three of its Japanese stars â?? Kubozuka, Tadanobu Asano and Issey Ogata.

Ogata, who plays the grand inquisitor, Inoue Masashige, said of Scorseseâ??s direction:



Japanese Actor Issey Ogata plays the Grand Inquisitor, Inoue Masashige, in Martin Scorceseâ??s *Silence.* (Photo via zimbio.com)

â??He never really instructs you to act in a certain way, but lets you bring what you have to the table. He never ever said anything negative about what I have to provide for him. In that way, it is really inspiring for actors and leads to many other ideas.â?•



Yosuke Kubozuka (AsianWiki)

According to Kubozuka, â??Scorsese is the king on set. Just being there makes acting so much easier. He is like

a mirror that makes me look like twice or three times bigger, and you can kind of think of yourself as a wonderful actor.â?•

Ogata, who tried to read Endoâ??s novel when he was younger but couldnâ??t finish, said Scorsese had developed his character beyond what was is laid out in the book. â??Scorsese made so much effort to build the character of Inoueâ?¦ by using imagination as much as possible. That gave me a lot of room to act in free style.â?•

The director himself has said: â??The conflicts that occur â?? the persecution of religious minorities, the testing of faith â?? are timeless.â?• The film takes place in the insular Japan of the 17th Century, but its themes and characters reverberate across the ages.

Asano, who plays a translator involved in prosecuting Portuguese Jesuits, noted:



Tadanobu Asano
(AsianWiki)

â??I empathized with the character that I played, and I donâ??t see him as a vicious figure. He was probably a Christian himself but no longer able to carry on his faith. That led him to the line of work he is in.â?•

One of the most unforgettable characters in Silence is Kichijiro, an indecorous character who succumbs easily to the pressure applied by his prosecutors, who force Christians to trample on a â??fumieâ??, a

crudely carved image of Christ. According to Kubozuka, Kichijiro â??is depicted as a weak, ugly, cunning, and dirty character. But he does commit fumie over and over again, which makes me wonder if he is really weak or actually strong. He is kind of two sides of the same coin.â?•

The film hints at the fragile morality that exists in the heart of all mankind. â??When I went to the United States on 5 January, I asked this question about whether Americans would step on the picture of Jesus Christ in this day,â?• claims Kubozuka, â??And a lot of people said, â??I guess everybody would.â?? So, by having this character Kichijiro, this story becomes something that is relevant to this modern age.â?•

Silence has been well-received by critics all over the world. Already, Ogata has been named runner-up in the Best Supporting Actor category by the Los Angeles Film Critics Association. Asked about the growing Oscar buzz, Asano jokes: â??If it were not nominated, I suspect God would say something that he should not have said.â?•

(Source: atimes.com)

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Date Created
January 17, 2017
Author
hollywoodglee