

FILM a 'toTal deLight'

CAROLINE YACOE

The local Marshallese community in Honolulu turned out in force to see and enjoy Jack Niedenthal and Suzanne Chutaró's "The Sound of Crickets at Night."

This unique story involves Wodejabato, an ancient deity from Bikini Atoll, portrayed in full strength by

Alson Kelen, (tattoos, grass skirt and all). An American drifter, played by script writer and co-producer Niedenthal, interacts with Kali, her family and the local Marshallese community. Salome Fakatou plays Kali, the young daughter of a displaced Bikini family in conflict, for which she won the Achievement

in Acting Award in the Guam International Film Festival. Beautiful local music (including the sound of crickets), skilled photography and a great supporting cast, including Karen Earnshaw as a "yachtie," makes this film a total delight while addressing serious issues of life in the Marshall Islands today.



Salome Fakatou proudly points to the sign announcing the showing of the movie *The Sound of Crickets at Night* at the Dole Cannery cinema complex in Honolulu.

RMI on the BIG screen

A trio of pale-skinned Ejit pigs, each about 15 feet tall with noses a foot across, are snuffling towards you. Then a 30-foot tall tattooed Alson Kelen stares sternly in your direction while, later, huge waves peel onto a soft beach at Bikini Atoll.

Hundreds upon hundreds of Marshallese leaned back in their soft purple armchairs and stared up at these enormous, vivid, representative illustrations of RMI as they chuckled, sniffled, and belly-laughed their way through Anikien Jidjid ilo Bon (*The Sound of Crickets at Night*) at this month's Hawaii International Film Festival (HIFF).

Wednesday (Hawaii time) a 300-seat cinema at the Regal Dole Cannery Stadium 18 was the venue for the first of two showings of Jack Niedenthal and Suzanne Chutaró's fourth film. The sensation of watching their homeland being displayed on such a huge screen in high definition was clearly a stirring moment for the many Marshallese families and friends of the Marshalls attending the film's Hawaiian premiere.

But this was just a mere secondary feeling to the kaleidoscopic emotions they experienced while watching Niedenthal's modern version of a Bikini legend that revolves around the mystical powers of the ancient deity Wodejabato.

HIFF is the third and most prestigious of the film festivals to have shown *The*

Sound of Crickets at Night, following New York's Moon-dance festival and the Guam International Film Festival.

At first, it wasn't certain that there would be a big crowd for the premiere, but as the scheduled time of 7:15pm rolled closer and then passed more and more Marshallese crept into the theater, most clutching cups of popcorn so gigantic they matched the magnification of the images on the big screen.

Moments after the final credits of the 79-minute film slipped from the black screen, Niedenthal was invited by a HIFF staffer to answer questions about the movie. These ranged from whether or not any of the actors had been professionally trained to questions about the diet of people on Majuro.

The film's young star, Salome Fakatou, attended the second showing of the movie on Friday afternoon at 4:30pm. Dressed in a beautiful Marshallese-style long purple dress, Salome stood quietly next to Niedenthal for this Q&A session. As the questions wound down, Niedenthal bent over and asked the 10-year-old if she would like to say something to the big crowd which reached up into the back of the theater. Salome reached for the mike and said in a strong, clear voice...

"Thank you all for coming to see the movie." She paused and then added. "And that's all I have to say."



Hundreds of Marshallese turned out to watch *The Sound of Crickets at Night* at the Hawaii International Film Festival last week.

Photos: Karen Earnshaw

SUDOKU

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8		6	7	5			
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4	1			8		6	3
	6	9				8	
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LAST WEEK'S ANSWER

3	7	4	2	1	6	8	5	9
6	8	2	9	4	5	1	3	7
1	5	9	7	8	3	2	4	6
4	6	7	3	2	1	5	9	8
2	9	8	4	5	7	6	1	3
5	1	3	6	9	8	7	2	4
8	3	5	1	6	9	4	7	2
7	2	1	8	3	4	9	6	5
9	4	6	5	7	2	3	8	1

