

# STILL THE DRUMS IS A WINNING FILM

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After viewing various early rough cuts over the past year, I enjoyed the great privilege of attending the world premiere of *"Still the Drums"*, held in Los Angeles on August 1<sup>st</sup>. It was a good thing I arrived early, because the premiere was sold out! Every seat was filled, and there were even a few viewers standing along the walls.

Prior to the film beginning, there was much talking and socializing going on among the theatre-goers. But once the film began – with a very captivating opening – the theatre fell completely silent. During the many compelling action and drama scenes, one could hear a pin drop as the audience watched, clearly spellbound with what they were hearing and seeing. I alternately laughed, held my breath, and sorrowfully moaned as I rode the roller coaster of emotions in the story. I found my heart pounding with intensity during many of the scenes, with my eyes transfixed on the screen. The incredibly powerful performances bring the viewer right into the scenes with the characters. The character development and relationships are all superb! The casting was excellent, making it easy for the viewer to relate in a very personal sense to the distinct personalities of each individual character. The four young boys, cast as each of the characters as children, did a great job of taking the viewer back in time to show their forming personalities. The youngsters were portrayed by Brett Lee Alexander ("Jacky"), Jacob Ochsner ("Tom"), Keegan Michael ("Mike") and Adam Kolkin ("Al"). Their performances reminded viewers of the joyful childhood innocence in all of us, and made the audience chuckle cheerfully as they played out the parts of kids meeting in a clubhouse and pretending to be soldiers.

A pivotal later scene, showing three of the four friends in action in Viet Nam, captivated viewers with an edgy tension and performances that brought many audience members to the edge of their seats. Aaron Houle as "Jacky" will simply blow you away in his role as the missing hero. Jason Shepard as "Al" filled viewers' hearts with sadness as he performed the part of a soldier caught in an unbearable situation. Wesley Edberg as "Tom" was fabulously engaging with his portrayal of a soldier profoundly troubled by the completely unexpected situation in which he could find no way out.

The on-screen drama then explodes with mesmerizing intensity as three of the four friends, now much older, meet to remember old times - times of great happiness and times of old troubles. Talbot Perry Simons as "Tom" makes a riveting performance as he navigates the conversation through moments of great levity, terribly sad memories, and the revealing horrors of his memories. Richard Fulvio as "Al" is extraordinarily powerful as he recounts his painful, yet unforgettable, recollections of the war experience. And Bobby Figaro as "Mike" gives a gripping performance as he rides a roller coaster of revelations made to him by his two dearest friends - revelations which he clearly could never have imagined in his worst nightmares.

I don't want to spoil the anticipation for you, so I won't give away too many details. But I'm sure you'll be as pleased as I was with the final result. To my mind, the very best films are those that tell a good story and keep the viewer engaged from beginning to end, without resorting to gratuitous scenes or gimmicks. Well that's what we have in *Still the Drums* – great storytelling. Raise a toast in honor of all those involved in making what I believe to be a deeply moving and memorable film and one of the best motion pictures about veterans ever made! It's a winning film in every category, story, acting, directing, music, and photography and one of the most gripping and dramatic movies I've ever seen! I highly recommend it to everyone – I promise, you'll be glad you experienced it! ...Rae Lyon