

Sinehan sa Summer: A Festival of Great Filipino Films in New York

By Marivir R. Montebon

IMELDA had a jump-packed audience on August 14 at the Philippine Consulate at the Fifth Avenue in Manhattan.

Not even the torrential rain that drenched New York that Thursday stopped the enthusiasm of Filipinos and Americans to watch the two-hour documentary about the glamorous and controversial Philippine First Lady and wife of the late president Ferdinand Marcos.

The 200 seats of the Kalayaan Hall at the Consulate was practically filled, and to delight of cultural officer Marivic Dimaculangan. "So far, the response of the Filipinos and their American friends as well as other nationalities is wonderful. I believe it is because of the high quality films we are re-introducing to them."

Imelda – Power, Myth, Illusion (Ramona Diaz - director and Jam Bonoan, Anne del Castillo, and Joji Ravina - producers) was the sixth of the ten featured films in the summer festival initiated by the Philippine Consulate General New York. Co-produced by Vince Nebrida for the Philippine Consulate summer film festival, it presented a balanced profile of the former First Lady. The voices of authority (friends, family, journalists, and government officials), and Imelda Romualdez Marcos herself, all put together to become a fair presentation of the loved and detested woman that she is.

"The documentary was very politically enlightening and enjoyable. You get to see the how

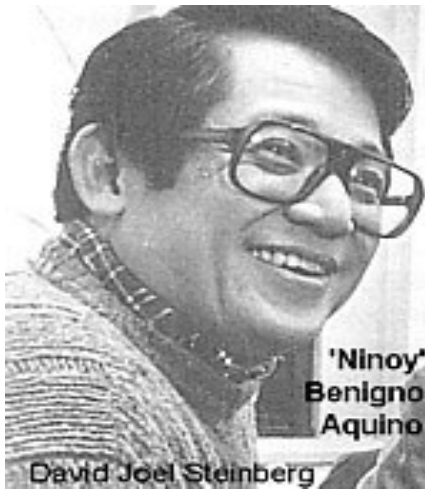
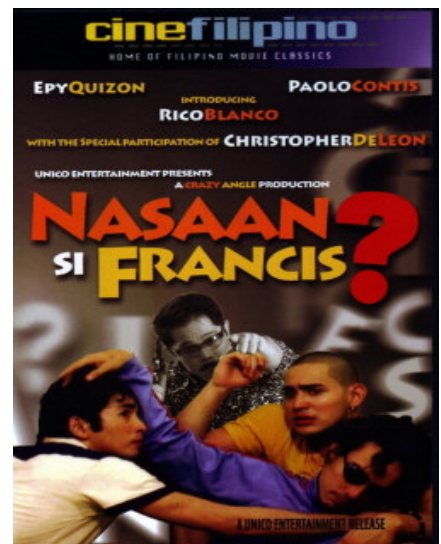
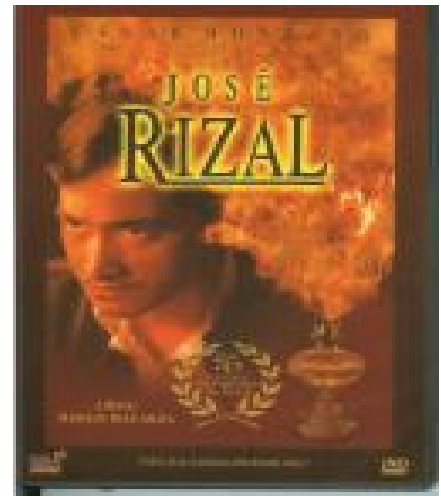
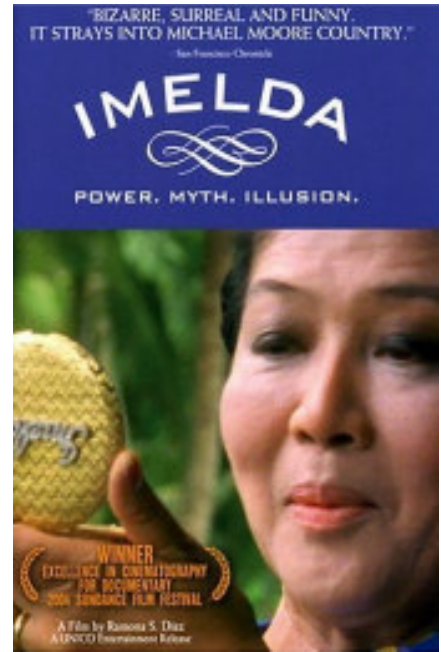
power duped Imelda into living an extravagant and supposedly generous life. Overall, she is a very interesting character," said Susan Pasco, a resident of Queens.

On August 21, 2008, the documentary *Laban: The Meaning of the EDSA Revolution* was shown in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the death of Benigno Aquino.

Produced by Sally Jo Bellosillo, *LABAN* brought together the personal accounts of the people who influenced the EDSA uprising, including former Presidents Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos, former First Lady Imelda Marcos, former Senator Gregorio Honasan, and Fr. James Reuter.

The main message of the documentary centered on how the Filipinos became instantaneously united in toppling the Marcoses in 1983, an incredible feat that has shown the world that one nation could change a leader if it wills it. But then only up to there. As former senator Honasan said in the film, "EDSA has become a bad habit," referring that it had been abused in two more uprisings that led to the ascension of incumbent president Gloria Arroyo and the attempt of deposed president Estrada to power.

The eight other films shown during the film festival were *Jose Rizal*, *Magnifico*, *Tatlo*, *Dalawa*, *Isa*, *Tawag ng Tanghalan*, *Nasaan si Francis*, *Maalaala Mo Kaya*, *Crying Ladies*, and *Rizal sa Dapitan*. #



Cocktails. The Philippine Consulate in New York tendered cocktails before the showing of *LABAN* on August 21, 2008 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the EDSA Uprising. In photo are: (L-R) Marie R. Montebon, MHC managing editor, Dr. Belen Sering, Bob Bajenting, Agrarian Reform Officer of Cebu, son Karl and wife Janet. In the 2nd photo, (L-R) Vice Consul Elena Maningat with Dr. Sering and Dual Citizenship Officer Emilie Blaza.