

For Immediate Release: March 12, 2025

[Cal Performances Press Room](#)



Photos from Story Boldly's *Defining Courage* are available for download from the Cal Performances [Press Room](#). A video with excerpts from Story Boldly's *Defining Courage* performance at the Kennedy Center can be found on [Vimeo](#).

**CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS  
A FEATURED PERFORMANCE OF THIS SEASON'S  
*ILLUMINATIONS: "FRACTURED HISTORY" SERIES***

**STORY BOLDLY'S *DEFINING COURAGE*  
AN IMMERSIVE LIVE EVENT  
FRIDAY, APRIL 4 AT ZELLERBACH HALL**

**Creator David Ono participates in a post-performance panel discussion  
with UC Berkeley faculty and scholars, free to all ticket holders**

**Berkeley, CA, March 12, 2025**—Cal Performances at UC Berkeley presents *Defining Courage*, a unique theatrical experience that combines documentary film, live music, and eyewitness interviews to commemorate the struggles and sacrifices of the Nisei soldiers of World War II. Taking place on Friday, April 4 at 8pm at Zellerbach Hall, *Defining Courage* is a project of Story Boldly, a nonprofit initiative devoted to journalistic storytelling founded by Emmy Award-winning creator **David Ono**. Narrated by Ono, a news anchor at ABC-7 Los Angeles, *Defining Courage* features music by

composers **Enzo De Roza** and **Sheridan Seyfried** in performances by the gospel-pop group **Raise**, the **UC Berkeley Chamber Chorus**, and **Trio Barclay**. Multi-platinum songwriter and performer **Harold Payne** and six-time Grammy winner **Daniel Ho** make special appearances. *Defining Courage* is part of Cal Performances' *Illuminations*: "Fractured History" programming for the 2024–25 season.

Serving in segregated units during World War II, the Nisei soldiers were Americans of Japanese ancestry, among the war's most decorated soldiers who fought abroad as part of the 100th Infantry Battalion, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and the Military Intelligence Service. Largely unrecognized for their remarkable service, these veterans enlisted in the US military while many of their families were held in incarceration camps in the US; despite being identified and persecuted as "enemy aliens" within the US, the Nisei volunteered for combat. More about this history can be found on Cal Performances' [Beyond the Stage blog](#).

Ono describes the project as a work of historic reclamation: "They're truly some of America's greatest heroes ... [I was shocked at] how they just kind of faded back into the background, never to be adored, never to be thanked or congratulated."

He continues, "The goal was to create an unforgettable show that combines live music and narration with multimedia storytelling. It is the perfect way to keep this important story alive in the most memorable way."

*Defining Courage* is one of eight distinct *Illuminations*: "Fractured History" performances this season investigating collective memory and the complex evolution of historical narratives to consider what role the performing arts might play in restoring nuance to our understanding of the past, and how that understanding shapes our present and future. Visit [calperformances.org/illuminations-2024-25](https://calperformances.org/illuminations-2024-25) to learn more.

As part of *Illuminations*, a post-performance panel entitled *The Legacy of Nisei Soldiers, Storytelling, and the Fight for Justice* is planned in Zellerbach Hall directly following the performance. The discussion is moderated by [Michael Omi](#), professor emeritus of UC Berkeley's Department of Ethnic Studies, and brings together David Ono, creator of *Defining Courage*; [Alice Yang](#), chair of UC Santa Cruz's Department of History; [Don Tamaki](#), attorney and advocate for Japanese American reparations; and [Jovan Scott Lewis](#), professor and chair of UC Berkeley's Department of Geography. Together, the panelists will discuss how different forms of storytelling, including performance, journalism, and

legal advocacy, can correct this historical record and bring greater awareness to untold or misrepresented histories. The discussion is free and open to all ticket holders that evening.

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CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

## CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Friday, April 4, 8pm

Zellerbach Hall

*Theater*

[Story Boldly's \*Defining Courage\*](#)

**An Immersive Live Event**

### **Program:**

*Defining Courage* commemorates the struggles and sacrifices of the Nisei soldiers of World War II through cinematography, live music, eyewitness interviews, and storytelling. Serving in segregated units, these Americans of Japanese ancestry were among the war's most decorated soldiers, unsung heroes fighting for the US while many of their families were in incarceration camps back at home. Narrated by Emmy Award-winning creator **David Ono**, a news anchor at ABC-7 Los Angeles, *Defining Courage* features live music performed by gospel-pop group **Raise**, the **UC Berkeley Chamber Chorus**, and **Trio Barclay**, songwriter and performer **Harold Payne**, and six-time Grammy winner **Daniel Ho**. The performance is part of Cal Performances' [\*Illuminations: "Fractured History"\*](#) programming for the 2024–25 season.

A post-performance panel entitled *The Legacy of Nisei Soldiers, Storytelling, and the Fight for Justice* is moderated by [Michael Omi](#), professor emeritus of UC Berkeley's Department of Ethnic Studies, and brings together David Ono, creator of *Defining Courage*; [Alice Yang](#), chair of UC Santa Cruz's Department of History; [Don Tamaki](#), attorney and advocate for Japanese American reparations; and [Jovan Scott Lewis](#), professor and chair of UC Berkeley's Department of Geography. Together, the panel will discuss how different forms of storytelling, including performance, journalism, and legal advocacy, can correct this historical record and bring greater awareness to untold or misrepresented histories. The discussion is free and open to all ticket holders that evening.

**Tickets:** \$36–\$86 (prices subject to change). Tickets for all performances are available at [calperformances.org](#), by phone at (510) 642-9988, or in person at the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, Tuesday–Friday, 12–5:30pm and Saturday–Sunday, 1–5pm. There is a \$15 per order service charge on ticket purchases made by phone or online that are not part of a subscription package.

There is no fee for tickets purchased in person at the Zellerbach Hall Ticket Office unless they are part of a subscription. There is a \$20 service charge on all subscription orders.

UC Berkeley students can access exclusive discounts, including half-price tickets in all sections of the theater, and are also eligible to purchase a limited number of \$10 tickets for the best seats in the house for Story Boldly's *Defining Courage* through the [Golden Bear Circle](#) seating program beginning at 12pm on Friday, March 21. Information about all UC Berkeley student tickets and discounts is available at [calperformances.org/ucb-students](http://calperformances.org/ucb-students); information about other discounts can be found at [calperformances.org/discounts](http://calperformances.org/discounts).

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## **PRESS CONTACT**

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