

Theater group presents contemporary Asian issues

Jamie Pope
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

Here and Now, a southern California theater group made up of actors of Asian descent, portrayed Asian-American life during a performance Saturday night at South Eugene High School.

The group presented various aspects of Asian life in the United States through a series of vignette-type stories. The stories dealt with contemporary issues in Asian-American culture. One of the issues dealt with violence and hate crimes within the Asian communities.

"Many of the hate crimes committed in the Asian community are often committed by Asians," said John Myasaki, director of Here and Now. "One reason for this is because there are bad feelings among Asians because their countries have traditionally been at war with each other."

Myasaki said this has made it difficult to have unity among Asian people. He believes much of the friction among Asians is starting to dissipate.

The group was founded in 1989 by a frustrated Myasaki and some friends. Myasaki, who is a Japanese American, said the reason for the frustration is that there are not many Asians performing on stage.

I think Asians are seen as the last race...We were the last minority group to receive respect, recognition and political power.

— JOHN MYASAKI
director of Here and Now

"Many people believe that drama is made up of weird white and black people," Myasaki said. "This is not true."

He also said Asians are not recognized for their talents.

"I think Asians are seen as the last race," he said. "We were the last minority group to receive respect, recognition and political power."

Despite this, Myasaki said the main focus of Here and Now is to entertain the public.

"I think we're trying to put things out there — to entertain," he said. "We don't want try to dispel stereotypes about Asians because we will just create new stereotypes."

"Our main focus is to show. Educating people is secondary. However, if someone learns something new that's great."

He said he believes Asian-Americans are stereotyped by the



Here and Now, a theater group from Southern California, performed at South Eugene High School Saturday night. The group tries to convey the struggles Asian Americans face in contemporary American society.

media. "The media presents a lot of stereotypes about Asians," he said. "We are often seen as the enemy. Stereotypes are difficult to come up against. We can only deal with them."

Myasaki said all of the material performed by the group is original.

"Our material comes in two ways," he said. "Either someone writes a piece, or we all bounce ideas off each other."

He said that everything said on stage is personal. For example, one story was about a young man who was in college. The boy wanted to become a music major. However, the boy's par-

ents were opposed to this and his father told the boy not change his major to music. The story ended with the boy leaving his home in tears.

Myasaki said such stories don't apply only to Asian-Americans.

"Different people come to see our shows," Myasaki said. "Every culture has many stories to tell."



■ CORRECTION

Michele Helou was incorrectly paraphrased in an article that ran in Friday's paper (ODE, May 5) about the elimination of an e-mail user group in the School of Architecture and Allied Arts.

Her official quote should have been, "The fact that alternate forms of communication media are available, does not excuse censorship." The Emerald regrets the error.

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Awards honor dedication to Chicano community

Natasha Shepard
Oregon Daily Emerald

University students were honored for their leadership in the Eugene Chicano community at an awards banquet Friday sponsored by the Chicano/Mexicano Hispanic and Latino Educators (CHALE) and MEChA.

The nine students recognized were chosen mainly for their commitment to the community, pursuing an education and being community leaders, said CHALE member Marshall Saucedo.

"The awards program is to recognize excellence among Chicano and Latino students in Eugene," Saucedo said.

University students and recent graduates Jose Luis Balderas, Norma Cavazos-Roque, Tomas Flores, Melania Hoskinson, Jaime McNicholas, Maria Mendoza, German Nieto Maquehue, Carmen Rubio and Rick Vasquez were recognized in the University category.

In addition to University students, awards were given to outstanding members of the Eugene Public Schools program, the High School Equivalency Program, Lane Community College and MEChA.

Each program was responsible

for nominating their own candidates and may have had slightly different criteria, Saucedo said.

"The University focused on students that have demonstrated outstanding leadership," he said.

The ceremony was also meant to recognize the students' families and reinforce a more positive image of the Chicano/Latino community in Eugene, Saucedo said.

"Too often we see negative portrayals of the Chicano community," he said. "We're saying that there are excellent students. Here are some of the best and the brightest in Eugene."

The awards ceremony included entertainment by the Ballet Folklórico Estudiantil, German Nieto Maquehue and the Lane Community College Latin Rithm.

Adaljiza Sosa Riddell of the University of California at Davis was the keynote speaker at the ceremony.

Riddell chaired the Chicano Studies Program at the University of California at Davis for 10 years and established the Chicana/Latina Research Center in 1990.

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