

# Autobiographical speeches bear witness to prejudice

Personal tales of prejudice cap a three-week workshop brought to campus by APASU

By Arlene Juan  
For the Emerald

Nine students expressed their concerns surrounding the issue of discrimination toward minority groups and explored intimate details of their lives through dramatic autobiographical pieces Sunday in "My Own Story," the final product of a three-week intensive student workshop.

"I commend their courage for bringing to light the most important issues that choke the minority community today," said Jeanne Ebu, a junior pre-business administration major and audience member.

Critically acclaimed director and actor Alex Luu returned to the University for a second year from Los Angeles to coordinate the special student show, which was held in the Ben Linder Room. He performed last year, and the Asian/Pacific American Student Union and others wanted to bring him back this year for students to work with him.

Luu said his goal for the student workshops and the final event was to "liberate the human spirit, especially for the Asian community whose identity has been underrepresented and forgotten."

Each of the nine performers composed his or her story and Luu helped them shape the delivery techniques. They revealed their thoughts, emotions, political beliefs, struggles and triumphs. With only photographs as props and using limited auxiliary sounds, the performers expressed their private pain and anger.

"This presentation is meant to entertain the audience but also to leave a mark on their conscience and make them aware of the reality surrounding them," Luu said Friday.

Daniel Duong, a Vietnamese American, began the program by

describing the discrimination he has experienced in a community dominated by Caucasians.

"We are all supposedly made equal under the eyes of God," he said. "That's not true in America ... In my own home country I am an alien because of my slanted eyes and brown skin."

Duong cited the dating pool on campus as an example of this discrimination.

"Girls overlook my potential to be boyfriend material because white people have generalized Asian males to have a small penis and to be less manly," he said. "If we are all equal, I have yet to see it."

Noelle Miller, a Korean American, illustrated the stereotypical attitudes she encountered from some Americans.

"English is the only language I know, and yet white people speak to me with a slow and simplified speech as if I don't understand a word," she said.

The experiences these students face were not limited to America. Christie Cruz presented a story of her life as a Filipino-Japanese American growing up in what she said was a racist environment in Japan.

"Filipinos were seen as trash; the women as whores, nannies or maids," said Cruz. "Japanese men would walk up to me saying, 'five thousand yen, five thousand yen' assuming I would give them easy sex because I was Filipino. I was only fourteen."

Throughout the presentations the audience laughed and cried, and during a question-and-answer period after the show they praised the performers.

"I hope there are more opportunities like this available to the campus's growing yet silent community," Ebu said. "I would love to see Alex come back again every year."

Participants in the performance said the experience was enriching.

"I think the most valuable gift this opportunity gave us was the

chance to say whatever we wanted without being judged," said Phuc Nguyen, a Vietnamese American performer. "Some of the things we said tonight may have been offensive to others, but we expressed what was inside and told our story."

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