

Building Bridges creates voice

Performers embrace diversity through dance and poetry

By **KERRY WILSON**
The Daily Evergreen

An enthusiastic crowd packed into the CUB auditorium Wednesday night to watch performances, including poetry reading and dances, by students from different student associations on campus.

"Building Bridges x 4: The Tradition Continues," sponsored by the Association of Pacific and Asian Women (APAW), brought together pieces of different cultures for the evening of entertainment.

APAW's goal is to bring multiculturalism to Pullman and to heighten the awareness of the unique and diverse cultures of all students according to their mission statement.

"Building Bridges is different cultures getting to know each other and understanding different backgrounds," said Peter Katende, African Friendship Association member.

Building Bridges brings the multicultural associations together for the fourth year in a row.

Sawaing Lertrit, member of the Thai Student organization, performed a 50-year-old Thailand dance called Ramo Vong with friends.

"This shows people in our campus our culture and tradition," he said.

"The tradition is an event where statements are made — what they stand for, where they come from, where they are heading and statements of what is dear to their hearts," said Wai-Ming Wong, Building Bridges coordinator.

"Statements of what their identity is, not what others see them as."

"It is an event of sharing," Wong said.

Members from the Indian Students and Scholars Association performed a folk dance from Northern India, for which they took a month to prepare by watching videos and practicing the dance.

"This helps us get in touch with our culture," student Anshita Thakkar said. "It is nice to perform about where you're from."

"We all have a bond between other performers, to succeed in this country," student Aparna Vadlamani said.

Students in the African Friendship Association showed their support by reading poetry and by performing an Ethiopian dance. A GLBA member performed a drug show called the "The Drag." Four women from the YMCA read poetry including Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman?"

M.E.Ch.A and Mujeres Unidas performed a skit, "The Slumber Party," in which they danced to Aretha Franklin's "Respect."

Members in the audience were excited about the presentations.

"This represents the ethnic diversity for everybody to get a glimpse of different cultures," Laura DeVilbiss, audience member said.

APAW is a part of the Coalition for Women Students and the Asian Pacific American Student Center.



Veronica Mendez, Nancy Sanroyo, Claudia Niero and Jessica Sherburne of Sabor de la Raza dance to "Jesusita en Chihuahua (top).



Students represent the graceful movements of a bird in "Tinikling" and "Visin," by the Filipino American Students Association.

STAFF PHOTOS BY SHAWN MCCULLY

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