

East meets west

ASA hosts 12th annual *Journey Into Asia*

by Ethan Wang

With a headset on and the curtain rope in one hand, Emery Chen signals for the performers to come onto stage. As the performers begin to dance to the music, Chen enjoys a rare moment to sit back and relax.

"I didn't get to watch much of the show," said Chen, who served as co-coordinator of Journey Into Asia, the Asian Students Association's annual cultural show. "I had to run around backstage, directing performers, checking sound and lighting"

In its 12th year, Journey Into Asia has been the major event of the year for ASA, showcasing Asian culture and food through a variety of performances, including signing, dancing and even acrobatics.

"This year's theme was based on the movie 'West Side Story,' which is a Romeo and Juliet type of story," Chen said.

ASA changed "West" to "East" to play on the contrast between Asian Americans and traditional Asians.

Jenny Kim and Kelli Clancy were charged with the task of decorating the Great Hall to incorporate the "East Side Story" theme.

"We were trying to do a mix of modern and traditional where one half would be modern with graffiti and urban designs and the other half would be traditional with markets like you would find in China or Korea," Kim said.

The night began with an Asian buffet, featuring food from China, Korea, Japan, India and Thailand.

After the dinner portion, the show portion began, kicked off with the traditional Chinese Lion Dance, which is said to bring good luck to the show.

Then Bhangra Elite, the South Asian dance team, performed, resulting in loud cheers and applause from the audience. Bhangra was followed by a traditional Korean drum band. Then the Vietnamese Students Association performed a traditional Vietnamese dance about childhood love.

Following VSA was the dance team Tamasha, which mixed old and new by fusing bhangra and hip-hop sounds and moves. Keeping the East Side Story theme in tact, the Hmong Students Association of Carolina added theatrics to the show by performing a comedic play comparing Hmong culture with American culture and showing how these two cultures have evolved over time.

Next up was a performance by four Filipino students



New arts director Emil Kang has a lot in store for the newly renovated Memorial Hall, set to open in the fall.

who danced the Tinikling, the Philippine national dance involving two people elegantly dancing with each other as they dodge bamboo sticks threatening to hit their feet.

Greg Chang performed a rap solo, while Charles Pak and Ruthie Kim sang a Korean duet.

One of the highlights of the night was the fashion show, a traditional Journey performance. The show began with a slow tempo featuring models dressed in traditional Asian attire. For the second half, models came out with more modern clothing, such as mini skirts and tank tops for the girls and jeans and striped, button-down dress shirts for the guys.

Kamikazi, UNC's multi-cultural hip-hop dance team, was the final student performance of the night. Their 12-minute performance was one of the biggest highlights of the night. It played on the East Side Story theme, featuring a guys versus girls dance-off, similar to the movie *You Got Served*. Kamikazi's fast-paced dance routine mixed with break dancing stunts resulted in a standing ovation.

The Red Panda Acrobats, the special guest performer of the night, closed out the show. Their performance featured martial arts, a Mongolian contortionist who wowed the crowd with her body-twisting stunts, and a Chinese "chef" who masterfully balanced spinning plates on narrow poles.

"A lot of people told me that it was the best show they've seen yet," Chen said. "I'm glad because I saw a lot of problems in the past that I wanted to fix."