

US celebrates Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

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The White House started the ball rolling with a presidential proclamation.

"The vast diversity of languages, religions, and cultural traditions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders continues to strengthen the fabric of American society," the Proclamation read, "From the arrival of the first Asian American and Pacific Islander immigrants 150 years ago to those who arrive today, as well as those native to the Hawaiian Islands and to our Pacific Island territories, all possess the common purpose of the fulfilling the American dream and leading a life bound by the American ideals of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

President Barack Obama signed the proclamation Friday, May 1 and called "upon the people of the United States to learn more about the history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities."

"As the 111th Congress passes the 100-day mark of legislative business, I reflect on the contributions we have been able to give back to the AAPI community. In February, Congress passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to turn around our economy and create millions of jobs," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said in a statement. "Within this legislation, funds were allocated to compensate World War II Filipino War veterans, who were never officially recognized for their service more than 60 years ago in the Pacific Theater."

Pelosi said that she was happy to reflect on the accomplishments and influence of Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) across the nation.

"This long-awaited formal acknowledgment of brave veterans who fought along side American soldiers to defend American's cause during World War II. I have long advocated for and am thrilled to see it passed into law and signed by President Obama," Pelosi remarked.

In New York City, the A/PA Heritage Month is considered as the community's cherished spring-time ritual of renewal.

"Today, at the foothills of the United Nations, at the lush respite of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, we pay special attention to our rich Asian American traditions and celebrate our heritage, which represents our valued legacy from the past, a living record of how we live today, and what we can build now to pass on to future generations," officials of the CAPA said in a statement.

The annual heritage festival, which is now on its 30th year is one of the more famous public events in the city which promotes dialogue and engagement among the Asian American community and its treasured neighbors

In 1978, a joint congressional resolution established Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week. The first 10 days of May were chosen to coincide with two important milestones in Asian/Pacific American history: the arrival in the United States of the first Japanese immigrants (May 7, 1843) and contributions of Chinese workers to the building of the transcontinental railroad, completed on May

10, 1869.

In 1992, Congress expanded the observance to a monthlong celebration. According to a 1997 Office of Management and Budget directive, the Asian or Pacific Islander racial category was separated into two categories: one being Asian and the other Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.

Kick-off celebrations were also held in San Francisco at the Herbst Theatre and in Los Angeles, where Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa honored members of the APA community who have contributed to the growth of the city.

The Los Angeles ceremony featured an eclectic array of art, music and food, representing the Asian Pacific Islanders' diversity. Fil-Am actress Tia Carrere, and Daniel Ho, Grammy award-winning artists, who had collaborated on two Hawaiian albums, performed at the program at the South Lawn of City Hall, which was hosted by ABC-7 health specialist and reporter Denise Dador.

The Library of Congress is also celebrating during the month of May with several events, a display and a web presentation.

With a theme of "Lighting the Past, Present and Future" these events are free and open to the public. Among the events scheduled is a discussion with author Svetlana Kim, who will talk about her new book, *White Pearl and I: A Memoir of a Political Refugee*. Kim, who arrived in New York in 1991, was inducted into the Asian Academy Hall of Fame in 2008. She shares this honor with former US Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao and former Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta.

Later this month, a program titled *Who Is Babysitting Whom?* will be held in the Pickford Theater and will explore the Asian tradition of respect for elders. It will feature a 22-minute film titled *I Wanna Babysit Lola*, with special guest, centenarian Remy Cabacungun; and a display of multigenerational family photos from the Library of Congress Asian American Association.

In her statement, Speaker Pelosi also paid tribute to Asian American leaders who are leading the way in the community.

"Leadership in this country is also drawing from the AAPI community and gathering the best minds and forces to guide them. With President Obama's appointments to his Cabinet of Secretary Steven Chu to the Energy Department, Secretary Eric Shinseki to the Veterans Affairs Department, and Secretary Gary Locke to the Commerce Department, we now have represented AAPIs as key decision-makers. Their heritage will add a key dimension in America's history of leaders and how they shaped this country," Pelosi said.

According to the Census, there is an estimated 15.2 million US residents in July 2007 who said they were Asian alone or Asian in combination with one or more other races. This group comprised about 5 percent of the total population.

Chinese-Americans are still the largest Asian group at 3.54 million, followed by Filipinos (3.05 million), Asian Indians (2.77 million), Vietnamese (1.64 million), Koreans (1.56 million) and Japanese (1.22 million). (*Mommar G. Visaya*)



'Kaleidoscope: An Invitation to Dance' Southland Classical Showcase

Los Angeles, Orange County and Santa Barbara Dance Organizations Unite for a Stage Spectacular

ORANGE COUNTY, CA— Offering an exquisite and unique tasting of classical and contemporary dance,

Kaleidoscope: An Invitation to Dance will showcase more than 50 dancers from Orange County and Los Angeles.

The Saturday evening performance will take place on May 9 at 7:00pm at the Northwood Performing Arts Theatre (4415 Portola Parkway) in Irvine.

Says Kaleidoscope's Artistic Director Charles Maple, "My goal is to bring audience members this golden opportunity to be part of the wealth of local talent and creativity that is prominent throughout southern California. Styles range from strictly classical to gutsy modern, stylishly unique, delightful and daring."

A dance collective, organizations represented include The Maple Youth Ballet, Anaheim Ballet, UC Irvine, Chapman College, Los Angeles County High School of the Arts, Media City Ballet, Los Angeles Youth Ballet, Motion Tribe, Trudi Zipper Dance Institute, Hartin Dance Company, State Street Dance and Body Current Dance.

"Perhaps one of the show's most riveting numbers will be *The Cage*, choreographed by Marie de la Palme of Motion Tribe," offers Mr. Maple. "A female dancer trapped in a moveable cage, while her male companion and suit- or remains outside of it. The audience will be mesmerized by the sheer beauty and athleticism of this piece."

Sharing the stage for the first time, each group will perform individual pieces from their extensive repertoires including a world premiere from Body Current Dance and Mr. Maple's latest creation, *Diamonds 2.5*. Additional works include *Valse Fantaisie*, *Pas de Quatre*

and *Napoli: The Royal Danish Ballet*.

Kaleidoscope promises to be an evening of impressive dance repertory that will showcase a treasure trove of choreography with up-and-coming and current stars of ballet and dance," says Mr. Maple. "*Kaleidoscope* is an opportunity for these exemplary organizations the means to perform outside of their own setting and collaborate in the exchange of information for the advancement of the larger dance community."

The program will encompass a variety of genres and disciplines, ranging from baroque, improvisation, and romantic, classical to contemporary.

"Take ten outstanding dance companies, spice with the work of several inspired young choreographers and sprinkle liberally with intriguing music. The result is *Kaleidoscope: An Invitation to the Dance*."

Suitable for children 10+. All seats \$20 (\$25 at the door). To purchase tickets or for more information, contact the Maple Youth Ballet box office at (949) 660-9930 ext. 24, or online at <http://www.mapleconservatory.com/>. Tickets also available 1-hour before showtime at the Northwood Theatre box office. Email inquiries at info@mapleconservatory.com.

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