



No matter the profession,
America is your job.

CENTRAL
INTELLIGENCE
AGENCY

Arts & Entertainment Section

'Cowboy vs. Samurai'

Ryan Baladad, Jul 20, 2007

Though titled *Cowboy vs. Samurai*, there is neither a cowboy nor a samurai nor any imagined showdown between the two, in the new sensational play written by Michael Golamco, directed by 20-year theater veteran Keiko Shimosato and presented by the Asian American Theater Company.

Set in the present-day small town of Breakneck, Wyo., and centered on two Asian American residents, Travis Park and Chester A. Arthur, this is no Asian *Brokeback Mountain*, but rather a *Cyrano de Bergerac* with an Asian touch.

The fun begins in this comedy-romance when attractive and amiable Korean American Veronica Lee (Melissa Navarro) moves into town from New York City. Navarro's improbable biology teacher instantly becomes the center of attention and involved in a schoolhouse love triangle.

Travis (Chuck Lacson), a Korean American English teacher, starts to fall for Veronica but denies his feelings once he discovers that she has "preferences." Del (Wylie Herman), a non-Asian American PE teacher and Travis' close friend, tries to woo the new resident, but it takes more than looks to capture Veronica's attention. With reluctance, Travis writes love letters for Del, letters that successfully sweep Veronica off her feet. In a subplot, Chester (Jose Saenz) deals with struggles of his own. An adoptee unsure of the country of his birth, Chester is left confused about his identity.

While Lacson plays the role of Travis to a tee, allowing the audience to empathize with him throughout his ordeal, Saenz's comedic performance as Chester, alone, is worth the price of admission. Dressing in different costumes and acting like a watered-down Jim Carrey, Saenz is the yang to the yin of *Cowboy vs. Samurai*.

The dialogue between the characters is thought provoking, pointing out race issues, social interactions and various perspectives on life, all with witty banter. One particular scene between Veronica and Chester disproves some popular Asian stereotypes: imagine two boxers exchanging phrases instead of punches.

Between scenes, Herman performs monologues about love that have as much wisdom as the teachings of Confucius, gesticulating to emphasize his words in a pleasing contrast from his character.

Cowboy vs. Samurai is an enjoyable performance, not just for Asians, but for all. Although it has only a cast of four, the play will leave a fantastic impression on those who watch it.

TOP STORIES

[Supporters Chant for Jew in Court](#)

Samson Wong, Jul 20, 2007

['Tekkonkinkreet': Street Kids Save Futuristic City](#)

Phillip W. Chung, Jul 13, 2007

[Awesome Blossom: SF Orchid Company Springs to Top of Asian Heritage Street Fair Contest](#)

Angela Pang, Jul 06, 2007

[Lighting the Torch for the Next Generation, Reflecting on Past Generations](#)

Celina Chan and Hope Chu, Jun 29, 2007

[APA Pride and Joy: Celebrating LGBT Marriage and Families](#)

Julie D. Soo, Jun 22, 2007

[Manga for the Masses: Japanese Comics Hit the Mainstream](#)

Megan Kung, Jun 15, 2007

[Four More Years? Newsom & Harris Kick Off Re-Election Campaigns](#)

Samson Wong, Jun 08, 2007

[Giant Leadoff From Okinawa](#)

A. J. Hayes, Jun 01, 2007

[Jin the Emcee Rocks Asian Heritage Street Celebration](#)

Samson Wong, May 25, 2007

[San Franciscan of the Year](#)

Julie D. Soo, May 18, 2007

Search this site for

Go



AsianWeek.com

HOME

FEATURE

NATIONAL

BAY AREA

GAMES & TECH

SPORTS

ARTS & ENT.

OPINION

Forum

Archives

Media Kit

Contact Us

AsianWeek



Click for our latest cover

JOBS AT ASIANWEEK

Subscribe to AsianWeek!



Buy our Year of the Rooster poster!

Page 1 of 1

Post your comments on our moderated response board.

Comments using inappropriate language will not be posted. AsianWeek reserves the right to re-publish comments, into "Letters to the Editor," in which case, we reserve the right to edit comments for length and style. If you would like to write a letter to our editor, please email: asianweek@asianweek.com.

First/Last Name

Your Email Address

Your Comment

Submit

[Top of This Page](#) ▲

[Feature](#) | [National](#) | [Bay Area](#) | [Sports](#) | [Arts & Entertainment](#) | [Opinion](#)

©2001 AsianWeek. The information you receive on-line from AsianWeek is protected by the copyright laws of the United States. The copyright laws prohibit any copying, redistributing, retransmitting, or repurposing of any copyright protected material. [Privacy Statement](#)