

Student actors return from scholarship auditions

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Staff writer

Ohlone acting students Idrees Najibi and John Vargas returned to Ohlone from scholarship auditions in Denver last month, where they got the opportunity to showcase their talents and meet other performers.

"It was a great experience. I learned so much from the whole process and have grown as an actor. I feel very blessed and privileged to have been given this opportunity," said Najibi.

Najibi, 24, and Vargas, 23, performed in the Irene Ryan Scholarship Auditions at the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival in Denver from Feb. 15 through 20.

According to its website, the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival "encourages, recognizes, and celebrates the finest and most diverse work produced in university and college theater programs." The ac-

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tors were nominated after their performances in the Ohlone production of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" last fall.

They were accompanied by their acting coach Michael Navarra Smith and scene partners Stacey Lynn and Amir Hasan. Each chose two scenes and one monologue to perform in front of an audience of judges.

Their scenes included the titles "Doubt" by John Patrick Shanley and "The Pillowman" by Martin McDonagh.

"The need for strong, dynamic and contrasting scenes that showcased my acting was the main criteria when looking for scenes," Najibi said.

He added, "My partner (Bell) would take on the role as a guide and mentor as she has more theater experience than I do, so I would look to

her for advice."

Bell has previously competed in the Irene Ryan competition both as a nominee and partner.

The actors rehearsed over a period of three months at the Smith Center.

"The whole process, from rehearsals to the auditions, required a great deal of collaboration and trust," Hasan said.

The group also attended workshops and seminars at the festival with actors and playwrights from all over the country.

Neither of the actors made it to the next round of competition this year, but said the opportunity still was invaluable.

"I didn't let the results dampen my spirits. I learned so much and feel I have grown as an actor," Najibi said.



IVAN VARGAS / MONITOR FILE PHOTO

Stacey Lynn Bell, left, and Idrees Najibi rehearse a scene from "Doubt."



LAURA GONSALVES / MONITOR

Video editor Peter Gamba, who has worked on "The Real Housewives of New York" on Bravo, and other reality TV shows, shows a clip during a lecture at the TV Studios on the Fremont campus on Friday.

Video editor describes career working on reality TV shows

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before you start getting customers."

The advice Gamba received helped to shape his career in video editing, which he now does for "The Real Housewives of New York" on Bravo, set to premiere Season 8 in early April.

He described what he had to work with in reality television as being a "monster," having to edit down hundreds of hours of footage into a single episode. He said a season is never set in stone, as what could originally be the first episode could be pushed to

later in the season.

"It drives us batty," he said. "You think you have the show down, and all of a sudden it's like, 'no!' You change stuff and it's kind of crazy."

Gamba also spoke out on his experience with show executives and having to revise his previous show edits to fit their vision of the show. He said that having a thick skin was important to dealing with the harder executives, but also noted that an editor of a show could be seen as more valuable than the executives funding it.

"You can make a show without executives," Gamba said. "You can't make a show

without editors."

Toward the latter part of his lecture, Gamba showed clips from both "The Real Housewives of New York" and "Child Geniuses," describing how each scene had to have a rhythm to it so that the transitions from one to the other weren't jarring.

For him, editing is all about storytelling, and he's the first voice and, after everyone else's input is put in, the last voice in the completion of a show.

"I do the first cut," he said. "Fifty percent of my first cut lives. The other 50 percent gets changed. Still 50 percent mine."

On the Airwaves

with Henry Ochs

An entertaining morning show

No matter how much you dislike going to work, at least you'll have something to talk about when you get there, thanks to the John Boy and Billy Big Show.

Johnny "John Boy" Isley and Billy James began working together in 1980, and their on-air antics

made them one of the top morning shows in Charlotte, N.C. The duo first began discussing the idea of syndicating their show to other markets in the early 1990s, which led to the launch of The John Boy and Billy Radio Network. They signed on their first affiliate in 1993.

John Boy and Billy provide an insider perspective on NASCAR racing, since most of the sport's top teams are based in the Charlotte area. Still, the show has grown its fan base far beyond its original market in the South, from Kansas and Nebraska to Wisconsin, Michigan and Illinois.

In 1999, "The Big Show" began offering live satellite feeds in both rock and

country formats. Will the John Boy and Billy Big Show finally get an affiliate here in the Bay Area? Maybe someday.

Meanwhile, the program's availability on the Internet has made fans out of listeners as far away as Israel, Mexico and Australia. The show also regularly receives emails and fan letters from U.S. military personnel stationed in Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Tune in every Monday through Saturday from 3 to 7 a.m. on 99.7 The Fox (WRFX) in Charlotte, which is available on the iHeart Radio app.

More information about the show is available on the show's website at www.thebigshow.com.

FORMAT CHANGES: On March 1, Cumulus Media dropped the country music format known as NASH-FM on KSJO in San Jose. The company decided not to exercise its option to buy the station and, as a result, returned the 92.3FM frequency to its owner, Universal Media Access, which began airing a South Asian format. NASH-FM never really put a dent into chief rival KRTY's ratings.

Speaking of Cumulus, KSAN/KFOG Program Director Jim Richards has left the building, sparking rumors that KFOG could flip to a country music format or begin a simulcast of sports talker KNBR 680. I'll keep you posted if events warrant.

TUNE-IN ALERT: Pop-

ular recording artists Shawn Hook and Fifth Harmony will be special guests this Saturday evening on Most Requested Live with Romeo. The show is aired Saturdays from 4 to 9 p.m. on more than 150 Top 40 radio stations nationwide, including Q102 in Philadelphia, which is available through the iHeart Radio app.

More information about this week's show is available at the show's website: www.mostrequestedlive.com

Monitor radio columnist Henry Ochs has spent many years working in radio and can be reached at DJHammerinhank@gmail.com or on Twitter @DJHammerinhank.