

THOUGHTS ON THE FESTIVAL

Arun Gandhi, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi and founder and director of M. K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence: “I’d like to congratulate all the young people who were involved in putting on this wonderful show. I’d also like to join Dr. Ikeda in saying that you are the future of the world. And I hope that you’ll make the world a better place than we did. The 21st century’s just a few days away and we would like to make it a century of peace and harmony and do away with all the violence that we have seen in our society up until now. I was very moved by the theme of the show. This performance touched people because of the moral and ethical values it portrayed.”

Linda Pauling Kamb, daughter of Linus Pauling and President of L.C. Progeny, Inc.: “It was wonderful. Today they showed a history of nonviolence and of the violence we have had and in the different ways that people have taken to overcome the violence. I thought it was just a moving presentation. As Mr. Ikeda said, they’re so energetic, so vivacious, so enthusiastic. It’s wonderful to see a bit of history put together with dance and song.”

R. (Raj) Rajmohan, Program Developer and Director at M.K. Gandhi Institute: “I’m overwhelmed. These young kids gave an extraordinarily moving performance today. I have been spending the whole day meeting with the youth and we had some wonderful discussions. I was really impressed, especially by the young women who are a part of this organization. It was really heartening to see them sharing their independent ideas about the issues of nonviolence. The way they articulated how they view the issues of violence and asserted themselves as women—I was so impressed with their presentation. I wish them well.”

Laura Huxley, peace activist and wife of Aldous Huxley: “I loved the show, particularly the part that showed the history of the world and what has happened because of all the violence. We have to keep addressing the violence around us in order to create peace.”

Norma Foster, President of the Board of the Interfaith Council for the United Nations: “I have lived in many countries of the world and have met many of the leaders that were part of the era these young people kind of relived for us today. Their performance really drove home the shame of that era, but the way they dealt with it helped me to deal with it, too. I go away with far more hope and promise for the future. There were 700 hearts up there, but they all stood out as individuals. That’s what was so wonderful. They came at you one at a time individually and you know they were going to walk away as 700 emissaries who are going to change the world. It was so strong. I have never felt that kind of feeling from a performance before.”

Jazz musician and SGI-USA member Wayne Shorter: “It seems to me that there was a sense of self-instruction, rather than a sense of self-destruction. It looked like the young people did everything themselves, even allowed to run and bump into each other and drop things back stage. There was not the regimented element that somehow infiltrates profes-

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sionalism; it's hidden in a sense of authority that comes with being professional and aiming at being perfect. I think imperfect is perfect. I think that they will grasp what they are doing in other areas, and make it work in their lives as they go along on the road of living, where it hasn't worked in the past. It's time for courage and vision, a brave heart to activate before it's too late."

Musician and SGI-USA member Duncan Sheik, 29, has two hit CDs and billing on critics' Top Ten music lists: "I jumped at the chance to perform in the youth festival. I was just really excited to do it and I was really honored. I want those kids to really understand that if you chant and have a really consistent practice, if you really follow your heart and you take action about your dreams, there's no doubt you'll succeed in your endeavor — whatever you want to do!"

Guitarist and SGI-USA member Larry Coryell: "I really wasn't ready for the emotional impact! It really is a vision of presidents Makiguchi, Toda and, of course, President Ikeda. It was a crystallization of what we do in this practice. It was just an instant understanding. This is why we practice Buddhism."

Kadiji Ellis, 23, Los Angeles; dancer: "In the Victory Over Violence video that the Youth Peace Committee sent to all the areas, they talk about passive violence. A lot of the passive violence I feel is passive violence I do to myself: second-guessing myself and not feeling comfortable with the decisions I make. I want to blame other people, but it's really me. I'm chanting that with each move I make in the dance performance, I break what it is that's holding me back from being happy. Every move is a cause to stop the slander against my own life. How can I encourage anybody when I am fighting within myself? I've already seen the breakthroughs in the last few weeks. Just being able to see where the violence is in my life and understanding that I have to stop fighting myself is a breakthrough."

Midori Kobayashi, 24; Hunt-ington Beach; flautist/performer in classroom scene: "I just moved to Orange County from Japan. I am a student at Orange Coast College. I have to learn to have a self-motivated practice. I have made many new friends through this activity, especially in the student division. We all have the same problems at school. We worry about what we will do after we are finished. We are fighting for the future and we have to do this together to make our dreams come true."

Lindsey Crummett, 17, Yorba Linda, Orange County; played the role of Thomas Jefferson: "I was born into this practice. There are five kids in my family. I took chanting for granted. I'd go to meetings with my parents and