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**It's a FUNNY world after all****Ambassadors provide free multicultural, international humor at the Coop tonight**

THE AMBASSADORS

Lahai Fahnbulleh is Mr. Africa in a show featuring international humor.

By **Nick Rabinowitsh**  
DAILY BRUIN CONTRIBUTOR  
nrabinowitsh@media.ucla.edu

When America's comedy becomes too homogenous, it's time to bring in a specialized international task force to overhaul the situation.

The self-proclaimed Ambassadors of Comedy, consisting of comedians from Vietnam, Bangladesh, Iran, the Virgin Islands and the Phillipines, will convene at the Cooperage tonight from 7-9 p.m. to bring a world of humor to UCLA.

"It's just cool that regardless of race, we're all performing together and making people laugh," said comedian Dat Phan, who performs as Mr. Vietnam.

Jeff Hodge, the Virgin Islands native and the Ambassadors' founder/master of ceremonies, describes the show as "the Kings of Comedy with accents."

But while one of the aims of the show is to bring to Americans a greater worldview of humor, Hodge explained that America is the only place in which people from all over can come together and make fun of anything and everything.

"America is probably the best country to live in, at least in terms of personal freedom," Hodge said. "I

have comics from Iraq, and they can't just make a routine in their home country. America is one of the few countries where you can do this, and make money while you're at it."

While the United States provides opportunities

for comics, Hodge had the vision for the group because he saw a lack of foreign flavor on the American comedy scene.

"I had never seen a show where they had three foreigners on the same bill," Hodge said. "Being a foreigner, I thought it'd be interesting if there was a show like that."

It wasn't until after Hodge moved from Texas to the melting pot of Los Angeles that he could complete his vision.

"There just wasn't a whole lot of diversity to draw from in Texas," said Hodge. "I knew that when I moved to L.A., I would be exposed to lots of new foreign cultures."

Since the Ambassadors of Comedy's start in 1996, it has become a traveling group with a foreign flavor, but also tries to include other foreign comedians from all over the United States.

"When we tour, it's usually about four of us, but I did a show in Texas with two other (comedians), since there are foreign comedians all over. I pull guys from other places," Hodge said.

Now, Hodge is working on finishing up a degree at Cal State Northridge, so his schooling limits the mobility of the show somewhat. Most of the show's touring happens in California, but shows in Germany are on the agenda - as long as the United States doesn't start a war with Iraq, Hodge said.



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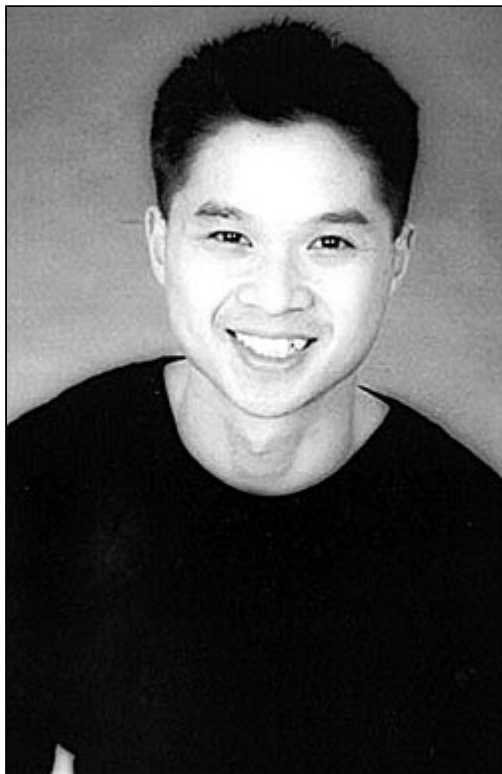
Edwin San Juan brings Filipino comedy as Mr. Philippines.

...i Vasseghi is Ms. Iran.  
Ambassadors  
have  
world humor on their minds, they also focus on world  
issues. For example, the show has been raising  
money for the fight against AIDS.

"I think it's pretty cool that (fund-raising) is a global  
effort where comics from all over the world come  
together to fight AIDS," Phan said.

On a college campus, where students can go for  
weeks without leaving a one-mile radius, Hodge likes  
to see the show as a new form of "travel-tainment."

"Each comic brings a different flavor to the show,"  
Hodge said. "I've never been to Bangladesh, but it's  
kind of like hey, I can take a vacation without leaving  
the room."



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Dat Phan is Mr. Vietnam in the free show playing tonight in t  
Cooperage.

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