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Day 5 Highlights of the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture



The fifth day of the Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture (FestPAC) saw a performance by the Amerika Samoa heritage arts group at the Polynesian Culture Center (PCC) and a Theater/Oratorical performance for FestPAC's literary arts.

Literary Arts: Solo o le Va: The Samoan Creation Myth

The theatrical production "Solo o le Va," created by Tapaau Dr. Daniel Aga, captivated audiences

at FestPAC. Led by Nellie Tuigamala and Loloma Faoliu, and narrated in English by Terisa Siagatonu and Lindsey Laupola, the performance delved into Samoan culture and mythology of our creation as told by Manu'atele

Opening Remarks and Poetry Reading by Pesetā Tia Seloti

Pesetā Tia Seloti opened the event with welcoming remarks and followed by reading a selection titled "The Narrow Way" from her new book of poetry, dedicating it to our Pacific brothers and sisters. This beautiful moment enriched the event, connecting the audience through shared cultural expressions and artistic reflection.

Exploring the Samoan Creation Myth

In "Solo o le Va," Tapaau Dr. Aga delves deep into the Samoan creation myth, offering one interpretation that weaves together elements from four main scholarly sources. This synthesis not only highlights the richness of Samoan lore but also showcases the diversity of interpretations that have emerged over time. Dr. Aga's approach highlights the complexity and depth of the myth, making it accessible and engaging for contemporary audiences.

Challenges of Depicting the Divine

One of the notable challenges addressed in the production was the depiction of God. Dr. Aga delved into the constraints of Western imagery in capturing the Samoan deity, prompting a thoughtful adaptation that respects the cultural and spiritual essence of Samoan beliefs.

Preserving Indigenous Knowledge through Oral Traditions

"Solo o le Va" emphasizes the importance of oral traditions in preserving indigenous knowledge. Dr. Aga and his team navigated the complexities of language, translation, and accessibility to ensure that the cultural narratives were conveyed authentically. Elders played a crucial role, offering hidden meanings and insights that enriched the storytelling, highlighting nuances often lost in literal translations.

Birds as Divine Messengers

A striking element of the production was the role of birds as messengers of the gods. The Samoan belief in the bird *Tuli* sending news from the heavens was portrayed, adding a layer of symbolism and connection to the natural world.

Intergenerational Communication

"Solo o le Va" explored intergenerational communication, highlighting its important role in bridging past and present cultural understandings. It demonstrated how the wisdom of elders and the perspectives of the younger generation collaborate to preserve and advance cultural heritage.

Heritage Arts - Dance & Choir: Polynesia Cultural Center

The American Samoa delegation was hosted by the PCC on Tuesday, June 11, 2024. The Performance groups represented the delegation on stage and performed segments of beloved traditional songs and dances to the audience.

The program commenced with an invocation offering by President Steve Lulu. The host emcee, Ms. Delsa Moe, Vice President of cultural presentations at the (PCC) and an alumna of Brigham Young University–Hawaii (BYUH) greeted the American Samoa Delegation.

At the PCC, formalities are customary when welcoming visiting cultural groups. Terry Pane'e, manager of the PCC Hawaiian village, delivered a warm welcome. After their performances, the American Samoa delegation received chocolate macadamia nuts as a gesture of ongoing friendship from PCC President and CEO Alfred Grace. Additionally, the American Samoa delegation enjoyed the Polynesian village, buffet, and show courtesy of the host.

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