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One-woman play shares multi-cultural viewpoints

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They call me Q

Posted: Thursday, February 27, 2014 12:26 am

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Actress Qurrat Kadwani performed a one-woman, award-winning show about her life growing up as an Indian-American woman in Sage Hall on Feb. 20.

In Kadwani's play, "They Call Me Q," she portrayed 13 different characters that have been part of her life growing up as an Indian immigrant in the Bronx.

Geneva Murray, Women's Center director, said "They Call Me Q" is a good example of UW Oshkosh's goal to teach all students how to become successful global citizens by providing intercultural knowledge and civic engagement.

"This is a performance that really touches on the idea of multiculturalism and identity and how it is that we should interact in a multicultural society," Murray said.

Kadwani won the Best Play Award during the Maui Fringe Festival in 2013 in Hawaii and the Best Actress Award during the Variations Theatre Group: Harvest Theatre Festival in 2012 in Long Island City, N.Y.

Bryan Hulbert, program assistant for the Women's Center, said he knew he wanted to invite Kadwani after watching the trailer for "They Call Me Q" because it was a one-woman show.

"Being the Women's Center, we're really about women's empowerment and women taking control of their lives and following their dreams and accomplishing their goals," Hulbert said. "That was one thing that really stood out to me was that this was a play that she had written. She put everything together for it."

From the start, Kadwani captivated the crowd in Sage. She flowed effortlessly through all 13 characters including her parents, a teacher, a friend who later



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committed suicide and a family member back in India.

Kadwani said she worked common themes into her play such as independence, bullying, gender roles and identity. She said she wanted to prove all of these are universal concepts, not just concepts that affect multicultural people.

"I think, as Americans, it's very easy for us to say, 'Oh, look what's going on over there. Look how these people live,'" Kadwani said. "And yet we kind of have

the same thing going on."

Kadwani said everyone has to be careful and think analytically when watching the news and reading the paper and know it's one person's depiction of the world.

"This is a play," Kadwani said. "This is something that I've been doing and touring with, but really it's about the ability to reflect on what's going on in society today. That's why I wrote this. That's why I perform it. I really hope that it will be a way for you all to look at what's going on in our society today and see how you can make things better."

The misuse of institutional power is another important theme Kadwani said she wanted to address because it is happening all over the world.

"We have to see when that's happening," Kadwani said. "We have to realize it, and we have to fight against it when we know it's wrong. We have to because if we don't then the institution will maintain its power and that's what life is all about; it's all about who has power."

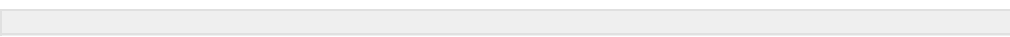
When she started writing the play, Kadwani said she wanted to share her own post-immigrant story and show people that everyone can relate to her.

"These are all things that we know, and I didn't want to be shy about it," Kadwani said. "I wanted to put it out there and say, 'Look, just because I'm giving an ethnic story, it's really our story. It's really a universal story.'"

Kadwani said she first performed "They Call Me Q" in Chicago in September 2012. Her 51st performance of the play was at Oshkosh and she said she is not done performing it yet.

She said she will continue to perform at theater festivals and small organizations, but university performances are always inspiring.

"I love the college tour because I just see how excited students get, and it just makes me so happy," Kadwani said.



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