



Runway Reigns Supreme

photo: www.dannyanphoto.com



Mister & Miss GAPA 2008, Saketumi (Robert Imada) and Ethnie Cali, together formed one of the most active, engaged and enthusiastic royal couples GAPA has ever had. As they look towards the end of their reign, they take a few moments to look back and, in the process, reveal what made them such an electric pairing.

RUNWAY 21

Mr. & Miss GAPA Pageant 2009
Saturday, August 1st, 7pm
Herbst Theatre, 401 Van Ness

Join **Tita Aida** as she hosts this year's Vegas-themed spectacular!

Featuring performances by:

Magic of Chin Chin
Rice Rockettes
Saketumi and Ethnie Cali
Mister & Miss GAPA 2008

All seats are reserved.

\$20: Rear Orchestra & Dress Circle
\$30: Regular Orchestra
\$50: Royal Box Seats

Order tickets at City Box Office:
(415) 392-4400 or
www.cityboxoffice.com

For more Info: runway@gapa.org

1) Can you share your background with us?

Robert Imada: Gay Fourth-Generation Japanese-American and proud! Both sides of my family are originally from Hawaii. I am a Bay Area native and was born in Sunnyvale. In my teenage years, I came out with a purpose in the high school newspaper and then went to college at UC Santa Cruz. Since then, I've worked in non-profit and education, while being involved in the colorguard/pageantry arts as a performer, teacher, and now adjudicator.

Ethnie Cali: Alaska was home before I made a brave soul move to the Bay Area. I studied at University of Alaska and started acquiring work experience from a Federal agency and State administrations. In between, I was: in a TV infomercial, a volunteer event planner, an extra in a Hollywood film, and a member of a tribal marching band. I have great memories of daylight-filled summers and glorious Aurora Borealis in the winter! However, San Francisco is where my heart is for now. Currently, I am an EDI Analyst for a banking centre and a member/volunteer of several international and non-profit organizations. I hope to be a Protocol Officer someday! I am fluent in Tagalog and I study Italian when I can. I was born and raised in The Philippines to a beautiful, loving family. My Mom was also a pageant queen.

RI: For me professionally, before Runway 2008, I was working at UC Santa Cruz in API student services. It was there that I lost 100lbs through pure diet and lifestyle change. For me, it was about getting healthy (beating out diabetes) as well as being comfortable in my own skin so I could be effective in all areas of my life. I achieved this level of health and fitness that I never thought possible. This life experience has always been the driving force for me to teach and be involved in the wellness field. Right

10 QUESTIONS

now, Saketumi/Robert teaches cardio kickboxing and helps others with fitness training. Whichever persona comes out at the gym...it all depends. (laughs)

2) How did you get involved in Runway?

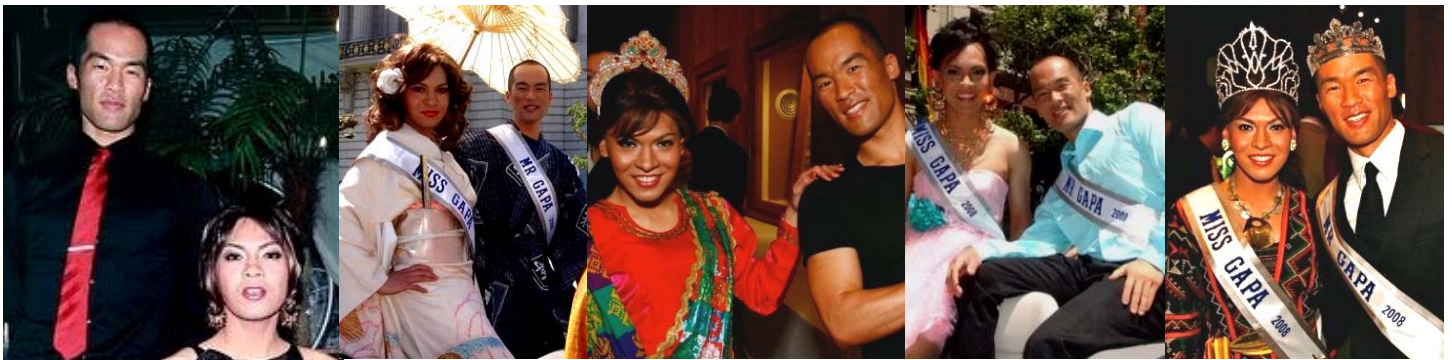
EC: My first foray to Runway was as Liona King in 2004, and like the Olympics, I returned in 2008 as Ethnie Cali. I still remember the first time I watched Runway and dreaming I'll be a candidate someday – the show grabbed me instantly! To see for the first time, a large gathering of gay API men at Herbst Theatre (outside of the regular clubs and street fairs) was extraordinary and empowering. In retrospect, I think pageants, like sports and politics, can unite

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GAPA General Membership Meeting/Elections & Volunteer Appreciation Party

- ♦ Saturday, August 15th, 12:30-2:30pm
- ♦ A&PI Wellness Center, 730 Polk Street, 4th floor

Elect your GAPA Co-Chair & Member-at-Large
Meet our newly crowned Mr. & Miss GAPA 2009
Enjoy refreshments and good company



and heal a community and it's evident in ours. I watched it every year since then and it became a tradition with my friends to do a pre-Runway late luncheon at a nearby restaurant.

RI: After getting involved in South Bay Queer & Asian, some friends encouraged me to represent the South Bay and compete. I honestly had no idea what I was getting myself into. I hadn't even SEEN a

GAPA Runway Pageant! At a SBQA event, some members helped me out and conjured up my stage name "Saketumi" (Sock-it-to-Me). It stuck. At this same time in June 2008, I had left my job, moved out of Santa Cruz back to the Bay Area, decided to go back to school to pursue nursing and fitness, and GAPA Runway was the next month.

3) What was your Runway pageant experience like?

RI: I just remember how much fun it was to take everything in and be around the other contestants. Being out of Santa Cruz and back amongst such a vibrant queer API community was overwhelming and reinvigorating. But the one thought I had as I walked onto the Herbst Theater stage – past 20 years of GAPA Royalty Titleholders, and looked out into the San Francisco audience: "I better not screw this up." (laughs)

EC: Generally all GAPA Runway candidates have astonishing preparations to make. However, mine was remarkably perplexing! Several weeks before the show, I was aghast to find out that I was on the Miss GAPA line-up waiting list. My initial reaction was that of a retail consumer as all of my prior major purchases were non-returnable – non-refundable! But seriously, the preceding weeks before Runway are crucial because it's when I'm supposed to be interviewing stylists, finalizing my fantasy, rehearsals, and other logistics. Instead, I was making phone calls and sending emails to generate a spin on a possible inclusion. Should I wait or should I quit?! The 20th Runway's historical value heavily influenced my desire to be part of it, regardless of the result! I think that mindset made me more relaxed and easygoing when I started stepping through the process. Finally I got a call on July 3rd, before July 4th, before my birthday on the 5th. Someone dropped out. I'm in. And as fate would have it — I was the winner in our first rehearsal!

4) How did it feel to win your title?

RI: The first person I called after I won was my mom. Her exact words were, "Hon, that's great. Just don't let it go to your head. I'm going to go back to bed now." (laughing) Mom was right, though. It was very humbling. And the fact that it was Runway's 20th Annual Pageant and all the judges were former GAPA Royalty made the title all that more special.

EC: It was a very emotional moment for me, and innocently funny too as I didn't know I won. I blanked out when it was being announced. I just remember the deafening cheers of the crowd. It was magical! What also makes our victory special was because a panel of distinguished former winners elected us. Another poignant moment was the morning after; I woke up to the fragrance of my large bouquet, the sight of the crown, sash and towering trophy on my bedside. It's when I genuinely felt I won, and that satisfaction still lingers now, a year after the event.

5) Can you describe what your reign has been like?

RI: It's been great! Both Ethnie and I have tried to get out there as much as possible to support events and be amongst the community. It's been over-

whelming with such a positive response and we've both been grateful for the support and to be able to represent GAPA with such a long and rich history. There is so much genuine warmth in the community.

EC: I must admit that there's nothing that could have prepared me for the reign. Any public appearance is a major production as it involves arduous motions of scheduling, consultation, gathering wardrobe, applying cosmetics. Given my lack of experience as gender illusionist, I was always at the mercy of exceptionally talented and creative individuals to whom I'll always be grateful. Of course, it wasn't glamour all the time — we too had a share of frustrations. There were invitations we had to turn down, events we'd so like to outreach but elements were against us, and there's always the omnipresent difficult people who stalls our breath.

RI: On the positive side, I have always appreciated the one-to-one interactions when people feel comfortable enough to share their own stories about struggle, seeking to improve themselves, and pursue their own life goals. I get it. I think health and wellness can be such a big catalyst for that. We're constantly reinventing and improving ourselves.

EC: I do want to stress that our reign was highly engaging, lots of fun, filled with excitement, and a thrilling honor for me and Saketumi. We were thrust into the community as ambassadors of an organization that's larger than ourselves. Everywhere we went, we were greeted with warm praises and inquiries about GAPA. There is advocacy in our visibility and I believe that in our hearts, we have done our best representing GAPA and revitalizing its presence in the community at large.

6) Titleholders are often thrown together like an arranged marriage. How has your partnership worked out?

EC: Well, if that's the case, then Saketumi certainly looks great in my arms! Seriously, our reign wouldn't have been as fun and enriching if not for his dedication and optimism. An all around cool-guy. We were wired the first time we met at rehearsals! We think alike sometimes, we enjoy chatting up after each event over a cup of tea and whatever snacks I could find from my humble pantry. He's a perfect equalizer. Ultimately, we both acquired sophistication from each other and I will always treasure our partnership.

RI: I must add that, honestly, sharing the reign with Ethnie has been like having a second sister and 'partner in crime.' It has been an honor to share the title with someone with so much passion and integrity. We have talked a lot with each other about the Runway experience, especially how much of an honor it is to represent GAPA and such a great organization. We are also both performance artists at heart and it's been great to develop and perform creative dance projects over the year.

7) What are your favorite memories from the past year?

EC: The entirety of our reign is a favorite memory. From beginning to end: We clocked in hundreds of car mileage, wrote almost a thousand emails, logged in hundreds of cell phone minutes, splashed different makeup, several MUNI and BART rides, sunburnt or frigid temperatures, yards of thread for alterations, dry-cleaners, manicures and pedicures, embarrassing moments, impromptu public speaking, blistering rehearsals, press interview, photo-op, small talks, overcoming stereotype, verge of passing out, making new friends, knowing your real friends, shelled out \$\$\$\$ of personal income, wearing ethnic wardrobe, dancing to modern music with ethnic steps, discovering I'm size 2 women and 8 junior – all these and more truly humbles me on a very personal level.

RI: My favorite memories: Coronation, Castro Street Faire, Halloween at Shangrila, GAPA Banquet, Tita Aida's Birthday Party, SF Cherry Blossom

Festival Parade and being amongst the Japanese-American community, Pride Parade...and meeting lots and lots of folks along the way. Also, when Ethnie and I would arrive at every single event with our outfits matching! All unplanned, of course. No really! I think we had some sort of fashion psychic connection.

EC: By the end of our reign, we would have made about 15 appearances together, and each time we proudly wore the GAPA sash across our hearts. It's been our distinct personal pleasure to re-introduce GAPA to the world. Our visibility has reached so many people who may never have heard or seen our organization. Thousands have seen us at the SF Pride, on Market Street, online and in DVDs that's selling at this hour. People have read us on the local papers, hundreds viewed us from GAPA's June show on YouTube (search: *GAPA EPIC Fuego*) and Facebook, together with fellow ambassadors, GAPA Men's Chorus and GAPA Dance. In all, it was a tremendous positive experience and I thank GAPA for this uniquely special memory.

8) What should we look forward to at Runway 21?

RI: Runway with a Vegas theme? I think there will be some DEFINITE surprises in store. I don't know whether to be excited (or scared for my life). Something big is gonna happen, people! I give major props to the new blood candidates coming in. Go get 'em! As far as giving up the crown, I think my late grandfather always taught me, "There is a time to step up, and step down – both with honor." (Yes, very reflective of the Japanese culture).

EC: GAPA Runway gets exciting every year and this year isn't an exception. It's just getting better every time. The Producers and the Organizing Committee, including us, have introduced an audition this year. There were really over-the-top candidates that were screaming 'Vegas Baby' theme. This year we have also assembled an impressive panel of Judges. So it's not to be missed. I am very excited to relinquish my reign on such a high note.

9) Any advice for current candidates?

EC: Allow yourself to flow naturally on stage. Enjoy the process of your preparations, during the show. Have fun at it. Be a humble winner and a gracious candidate. Joining a pageant like GAPA Runway is an exercise of our social IQ. Smile, meet someone new outside your cliques, make friends,

send Thank You emails, acknowledge emails, and support your winners. Give out what you need in return!

RI: I agree. Be yourself, be fierce, have fun. Learn something new about others during your Runway experience. Learn something new about yourself in the process as well. It's exciting to see people who become something larger than (real) life when they step onstage. For the next 2009-2010 Titleholders: represent GAPA well.

EC: Definitely. To the new Royalty, your victory is a great extension of yourselves. This is a year long commitment. You will discover that a GAPA Royalty's reign is event packed. I don't think everyone is cut up for that – evidently, we have seen that in the past. It's a privilege sustained by obligations, challenges, a solid character, accomplishments. It reforms you, and fulfills you in many ways – that's why it's a place of class and distinction. Be strong, optimistic and proud. Be Amazing. Shine! We hope your reign will duplicate our efforts on a big scale.

10) What does the future hold for you?

RI: Would the correct answer be: "I'm finally looking forward to getting involved on the GAPA Board?" (laughs) Honestly, I really am and look forward in continuing to work with folks in the community. As far as the future after Runway...The next morning: Waking up and crying with Ethnie as GAPA Runway "has been." The next week: Starting work at some fitness/wellness organizations. Going back to kickboxing classes. The next month: Traveling back to Hawaii to see my grandmother, whom I haven't seen in 10 years. The next year: Putting on my scrubs in nursing school and pushing the fitness training to survive the clinical rotations. The next several years: Hopefully working in either gerontology and/or community health. And forever: I look forward to keeping the SF Bay Area my home and being amongst the community and helping people out in anyway I can.

EC: Opportunities are endless from here on. However, I need a much needed vacation to recharge my senses. On my return, I should have a better perspective on the immediate future. In closing, I want to sincerely thank everyone for the support and encouragement you have accorded me and Mister GAPA. All my best wishes to you and to everyone reading this now.

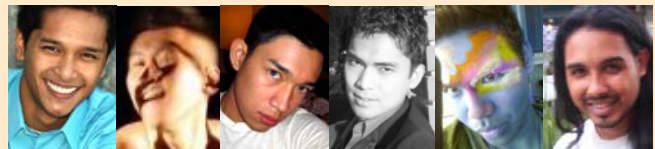
photo: Joshua Lim



Well, it'll end up on YouTube, fo' sho'! But be at the historic Herbst Theatre to catch the spills and thrills LIVE AND UNCENSORED on **August 1, 2009**, when—at the strike of **7:00pm**—the curtain will rise to reveal thirteen candidates competing for bragging rights at our 21st Annual Mister & Miss GAPA Pageant.

In line with the Vegas theme, the producers have upped the ante by assembling candidates from a pool of applicants who each underwent a preliminary interview in the late spring. The result is thirteen highly-competitive contestants that have been priming themselves for the last two months. You might have seen them campaigning at bars and clubs such as Shangri-La and the Lookout; on internet sites like Facebook and mySpace; you might have received even a Tweet or two.

The new titleholders will each receive a crown, a custom-made sash, and opportunities for public appearances; but most importantly, cash winnings. (GAPA is not responsible for any vicious rumors of police records and unwanted pregnancies that manifest during the reign).



Competing this year for MISTER GAPA are:

- ♦ **Aris**, back for Round Two!
- ♦ **Eric**, trapeze freak
- ♦ **Jade**, believes that beautiful hair leads to beautiful one-night stands
- ♦ **Jay**, who will take the boy out of Fresno
- ♦ **Jose Kanyusi**, a hermaphrodite cabaret artist visiting from the future
- ♦ **Neo**, survivor, dreamer, cheerleader



Competing this year for MISS GAPA are:

- ♦ **BeyonSoy**, apesitter
- ♦ **Ceeyalis**, ready to give stiff competition, side effects included
- ♦ **Sha-Kiki**, who dreams of being a slot machine
- ♦ **Doncha Vishyuzme**, no stranger to Runway, hoping three's a charm
- ♦ **Rhea Lidad**, has something personal to share, REALLY personal...
- ♦ **Sandra O. Noshi-Di'n't**, crowned Miss San Francisco Hooker 2008 at Peaches Christ's Midnight Mass
- ♦ **Vham Vu Tri**, all about durability, versatility and easy availability

All seats for Runway are reserved. \$20 Rear Orchestra & Dress Circle tickets, \$30 regular Orchestra, and \$50 Royal Box seats.

To purchase tickets, contact City Box Office by phone **415/392-4400** or by web **www.cityboxoffice.com**.

GAPA 35-Plus Potluck/Rap



GAPA 35-Plus is social and conversational group open only to gay/bi API men at least 35 years of age. It is a safe space for this group of guys to chat, socialize and learn from each other's experiences. It meets for dinner (usually potluck) once a month, followed by a facilitated discussion of various topics.

Rap discussion guidelines: (1) Vegas rule (what happens in Vegas, ...); (2) One Mike - One Diva; (3) Step Up & Step Back (Allow others to speak); (4) Don't Yuck on my Yam (Be respectful of the opinion and/or experience of others); (5) "I"-Rule (Speak for Yourself); (6) Information Only (not advice or therapy); (7) "Miranda" rule (Right To Remain Silent); and (8) Cell Silence Is Golden (Silence electronic devices).

Our conversations are informal and we encourage attendees to participate at their own pace. Attendance is free and confidentiality is observed. You do not have to be a member of GAPA to attend, but you have to be a gay or bisexual API man, and at least 35 years of age. For more details on meetings or any additional info, please email GAPA 35-Plus Coordinator Dion Wong: dion@gapa.org.

August-December 2009 Calendar

Wisdom Through Experience, or What Have We Learned after All These Years?

8 August 2009, 6:00PM
545 Leavenworth #4 (@ Geary), San Francisco

Enhancing Our Physical Health & Appearance

13 September 2009, 6:00PM
Venue: TBA

Long Term Care & Other Health Support Issues

11 October 2009, 6:00PM
Venue: TBA

Intercultural Issues Among Gay/Bisexual APIs

8 November 2009, 6:00PM
22950 Larrabee Street, Hayward, CA

Grab Bag (Anything You Want to Talk About?)

20 December 2006, 6:00PM
2470 - 24th Avenue, San Francisco (Sunset District)

*This will also be the GAPA 35-Plus Holiday Gathering;
holiday garb/attire welcome*

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Gay Asian Pacific Alliance (GAPA) is an organization dedicated to furthering the interests of gay & bisexual Asians & Pacific Islanders by creating awareness, by developing a positive collective identity and by establishing a supportive community.

Gay Asian Pacific Alliance
P.O. Box 421884
San Francisco, CA 94142-1884
www.gapa.org



GAPA Men's Chorus Seeks New Members

Perhaps the first ethnically based gay choral group, but certainly the longest lasting cultural organization of its kind, **GAPA Men's Chorus** was formed in 1989 as a showcase for the vocal music talents of gay/bi Asian & Pacific Islander men. Now celebrating its 20th Anniversary, the Chorus is actively seeking new members to join its ranks.

Gay API men at all skill levels are encouraged to participate. The Chorus meets every Monday night from 7:00-9:00, and joining is a painless, audition-free process. If you're interested in developing your vocal skills in a warm and relaxed atmosphere, there's a place for you here. For more info, please email: gapachorus@aol.com

GAPA Membership Application/Renewal Registration Form

Asian Pacific Member New Renewal
 Supporter New Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

Phone(s) _____

E-Mail * _____

* The GAPA email list will only be used by the GAPA Board for official and timely announcements of GAPA activities, and your email address will not appear as an addressee on any of these messages.

DUES	1 Year Membership	2 Year Membership
student / senior (60 & over)	<input type="radio"/> \$10	<input type="radio"/> \$20
Single	<input type="radio"/> \$20	<input type="radio"/> \$40
couple / single household	<input type="radio"/> \$30	<input type="radio"/> \$60

DONATION: Support the work of GAPA by making a donation. You have the option to remain anonymous.

\$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 other _____

Please make checks payable to "GAPA" and mail to:
GAPA, P.O. Box 421884, San Francisco, CA 94142-1884