

“ The English may not like music, but they absolutely love the noise it makes.

— Sir Thomas Beecham ”

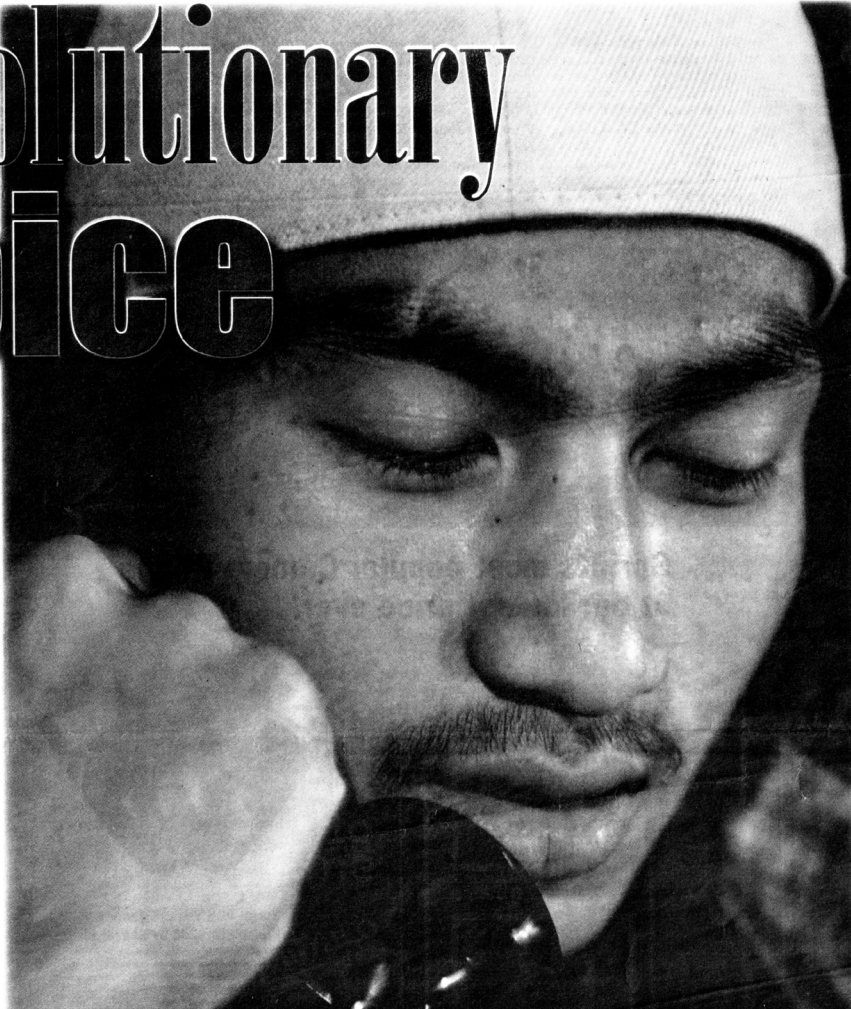
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# DAILY LOBO CULTURE

Culture editor / Jessica Del Curto  
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Felix Vazquez

Courtesy of Jane Blume

### ■ Playwright brings prison experiences to Albuquerque stage

by Jessica Del Curto  
Daily Lobo

Felix Vazquez has been in prisons in Massachusetts and Texas.

Now the 25-year-old poet and playwright is out, and he's heading to Albuquerque to perform for the community, as well as for inmates in the Bernalillo County Juvenile Detention Center.

What started in 2000 as a collaboration between artists and prison inmates turned into a permanent company, brought to this city by the Revolutions International Theatre Festival.

Performance Project is a group of performers, some of whom have been incarcerated, who travel the country performing the piece "Walk With Me."

The show is theater and movement based on life experiences and addresses different forms of imprisonment, said Julie Lichtenberg, artistic director.

"The project is about people who have been incarcerated having a voice and representing themselves," she said.

When Vazquez was still in prison, he wrote the poem "Walk with Me."

"It was based on a lot of experiences that I

put together," he said.

Vazquez dealt with poverty, coming from a single-parent family and his mother's dependency on drugs.

"A kid is guaranteed a jail cell before he is guaranteed a diploma, at least where I come from," he said.

Vazquez, who is also a rapper, originally intended to make the poem into a song.

"I never really thought it would turn into a whole play," he said.

Lichtenberg said imprisonment is more than just being incarcerated. A person can be imprisoned by silence, by not understanding one's history, or being held captive by

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poverty, she said.

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The troupe will perform "Walk with Me" Thursday and Friday night, at Theatre X. Then they will go on to perform at the detention center.

"Kids in detention relate a lot better to adults who have gone through what they have gone through," she said. "We will work with the kids to show them that everybody has a

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story to tell."

Vazquez said returning to jail to work with the inmates doesn't bring back old feelings of being incarcerated. Instead, it is a sense of liberation for him.

"First is a sense of gratitude," he said. "It's a good feeling to know I got out of it and I am seeing this vision come to life. Then to go back and share this with the kids is a lot more positive than negative."

He said the program has been

**"WALK WITH ME"**  
**THEATRE X**  
**THURSDAY AND FRIDAY**  
**7:30 P.M.**  
**\$12 AND \$16**

like a family to him and has given him a sense of hope.

"It gives me a voice for my pain and my vision," he said.