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Poet closes Black History Month

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When was the last time you enjoyed hearing poetry being recited? A crowd of 100 people sat stunned as they listened to Slam Poetry performed by KAYO at Diastole House, Friday night. This event was held as a finale to African-American History Month.

KAYO recited his poetry from his book "Bridges to build, Rivers to cross and Mountains to move." He is a poet from Brooklyn, New York, and he travels around the world reciting his poetry.

He's been writing poetry since he was 13, and performing since 1998. At 29, he has developed a great respect amongst other poets.

KAYO has presented his poetry on HBO's Def Poetry Jam, on the STARZ Network, MTV and BET. He was also the youngest recipient of the Nuyorican's Grand Slam Champion in 1998.

"[When I write my poetry,] I'm inspired by the environment and education," said KAYO.

His voice is what makes him unique. As soon as he opens his mouth, an impressive bellow of emotions pours out over the audience, casting them under his spell.

He writes of political, racial and discrimination issues. He also adds comic relief to such controversial issues.

"I loved his performance," said Keichanda Burnett, Coordinator for Minority Student Affairs at UMKC, "I loved his voice. It was very eloquent."

KAYO gives workshops on poetry writing to kids in the New York City school district. He has also produced his own critically acclaimed one-person show entitled "Lessons I have learned as a man that I will tell my son."

KAYO's book can be purchased at his company's website urbintel.com.

In addition to poetry, the crowd also enjoyed listening to jazz music performed by The Millie Edwards and Friends Band and were served hors d'oeuvres.

The Diastole House was donated to UMKC by Dr. Dimond. The term "diastole" is a medical term for the pauses between heart beats. That was the theme of the evening, to pause.

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