

# WHITTIER DAILY NEWS

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PHOTOS BY GREG ANDERSEN / STAFF

**TEENAGE PLAYWRIGHTS:** Members of the Young Artist Workshop listen as Avi, center, delivers his dialog Wednesday in La Mirada. The artists are part of the 13-member cast participating in the summer workshop in La Mirada.

## Teens take over theater

### Phantom Projects presents play created by youths

BY MIKE SPRAGUE  
STAFF WRITER

**L A MIRADA** — For the last 10 years Phantom Projects has put on plays dealing with teenage issues ranging from underage sex to drugs and alcohol to eating disorders.

But these performances always were written by adults about teenagers.

On Saturday, there were be another performance, but this time the writers are the young people themselves.

Thirteen young artists between the ages of 15 and 21 will combine to put on 18 different pieces as part of a nearly two-hour show at 7 p.m. at the La Mirada Theatre for the Performing Arts, 14900 La Mirada Blvd., La Mirada.

"Everything in the show has been written from their perspective on culture, society or how adults view teens," said Steve Cisneros, founder and producing artistic director for Phantom Projects.

"The whole idea was to get kids to speak to themselves," Cisneros said. "Hence, that's why you have topics from self-mutilation to crummy jobs."

This show will be unique in the performance world because no other theater company would produce a piece from a teenager, Cisneros said.

Saturday's show will be the result of the last three weeks of five to six hours of daily work, including one session that ended at sunrise. They developed one-act plays and



**ASPIRING ARTIST:** A member of the Young Artist Workshop, Adam Mesa, performs a hip-hop song Wednesday in La Mirada.

other performances — some of which include music.

The process started when 25 people applied to be in the show. After interviews, the number was narrowed to 13.

Selection was based on talent and experience, Cisneros said. Every individual had at least five years of experience performing.

Then on July 16, the 13 got together at the Phantom Projects warehouse in La Mirada and began brainstorming.

"By the end of the first night, they had an

outline of the show they wanted," Cisneros said. "It was a matter of figuring out what their talents were and what they wanted to bring to the table."

Each brought many different written pieces — from dance to monologues to songs. Eighteen were chosen.

In almost every case, they're not one-person acts, but a combination of two to as many as four.

"It's not a talent show," Cisneros said. "They've made an effort to make these pieces show where they are in their lives and what's important to them right now."

For example, Ryan Wade, 15, of Anaheim wrote about a job he had.

"My main monologue is about a job I had as a construction worker and how I didn't like it," Wade said.

Johanna Middleton, 17, of Los Angeles wrote about her first pop-punk rock music festival.

"What drew me to this was the opportunity to work with other kids my age, who are so passionate, and the creative environment," Middleton said.

The pieces will range from a couple of minutes to as long as eight or nine minutes and from comedy to drama.

Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$12 for high school students and \$5 for middle school students. They can be purchased by calling (562) 944-9801 or going online at [www.phantomprojects.com](http://www.phantomprojects.com)

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