

Festival showcases rich diversity of black arts

The BSU says the event is a unique chance to learn about the art of black America

By Chris Kenning
Student Activities Reporter

African-American art, music, dancing, cuisine and poetry filled the EMU courtyard yesterday as the Black Arts Festival got underway. The 11th annual festival, sponsored by the Black Student Union, showcases different facets of the African-American arts scene.

The celebration includes an art exhibit in the EMU Fir Room and continues until Tuesday at 7 p.m. The University's Gospel Choir will perform at the festival today at 5:30 p.m.

Organizer Ayana Kee, a member of the BSU, said the festival focuses on the diversity of influences within the black arts scene.

"You really see a blending of African cultures and American cultures in everything from jazz to dance," Kee said.

Putting on the festival every year is especially relevant in Eugene, where African-Americans are a small minority, according to Kee.

"We put this on because there's not much else in the community that focuses on African-American arts," she said. "It's nice to be able to share the culture with people who haven't been exposed to it."

African-American art, which addresses cultural and political issues of black America, has seen a boom in recent years, said Anita Mason, one of the vendors who came from Portland for the

event. Mason owns an ethnic arts gallery that specializes in African-American prints and posters.

"It used to be that lots of great African-American art was never exposed because black artists didn't have the same connections others did," she said. "But now the younger generation is really getting more exposure for their work."

She said an increasing presence of African-Americans in the media has spurred an interest in art that is representative of black culture.

"When 'The Cosby Show' was on in the 1980s, there were paintings on the walls of the set done by black artists. People didn't realize there were so many artists no one knew about," she said.

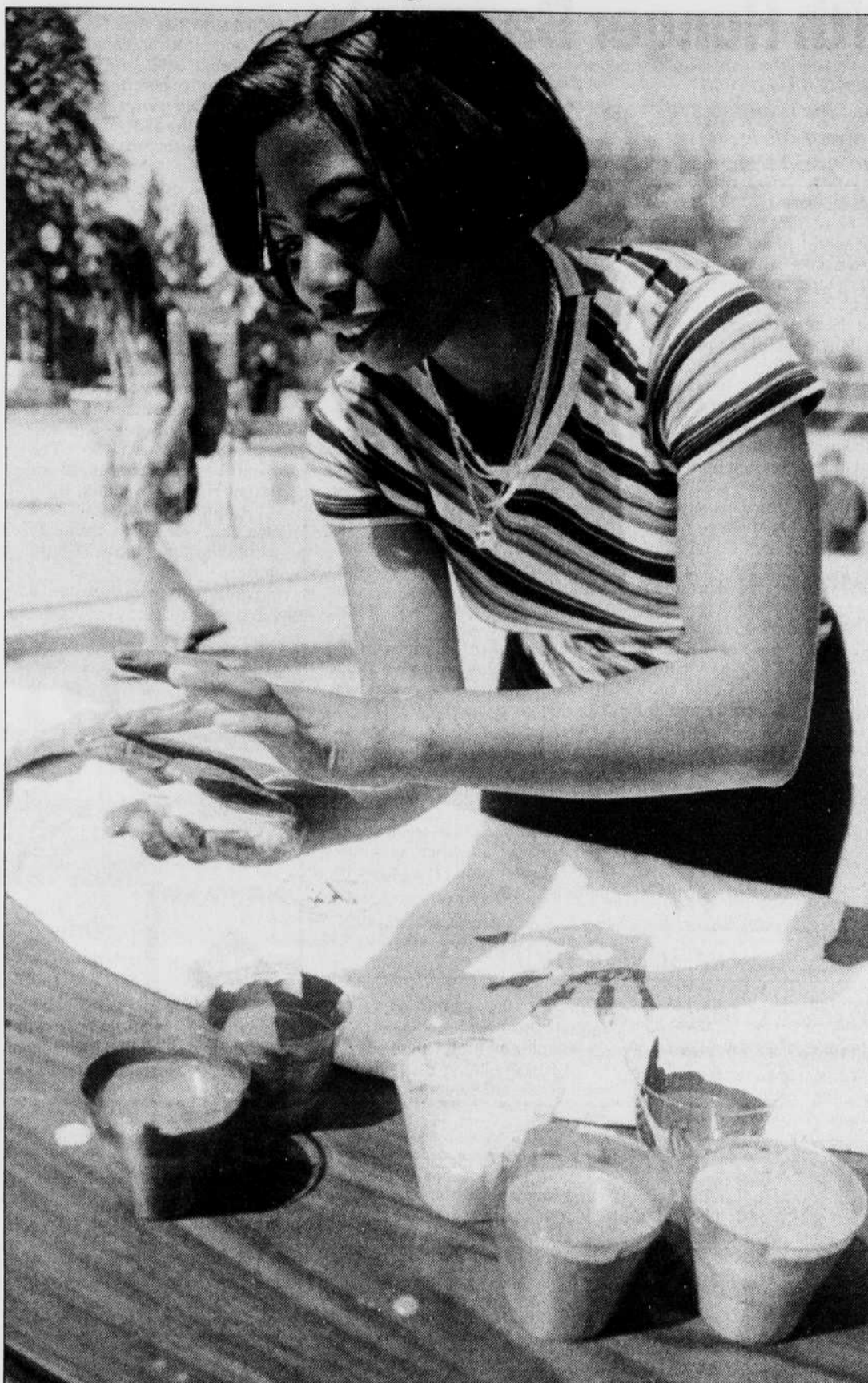
Carry-on-Q, a local barbecue joint, served up succulent ribs, red beans and rice, hot corn bread and iced tea in the EMU Amphitheater.

"I smelled the barbecue as I was passing by," said University senior Jason McKay as he licked fingers which were greasy with barbecued chicken. "It's awesome."

Mason said vendors at festivals like these usually don't make much money, but educating about black arts is important: "We may only make \$50, but it's good to get the word out," she said.

Along with vendors and exhibits, the BSU is trying to raise money by selling writing journals with covers designed by BSU co-director Yvonne Stubbs.

The BSU sponsors several events each year. In May, the group plans to celebrate the life of Malcolm X.



Jennifer Scott coats her hand in paint while making a T-shirt at the Black Arts Festival at the EMU Amphitheater on Monday.



AMANDA COWAN/Emerald

Jamila Flowers watches over the many books and cards for sale from the Looks Like Me Gallery at the Black Arts Festival on Monday.

Princeton professor to lecture on the economics of wine

Orley C. Ashenfelter is the man behind the 'taste' forecaster, which can predict wine quality

By Amalie Young
Higher Education Reporter

Wine tasters around the world are up in arms because of a method that uses meteorological data to calculate the quality of future grape harvests.

Orley C. Ashenfelter, a world-renowned economist who developed the computer-generated

"taste" forecaster, will present a public lecture called "Anatomy of an Inefficient Market: Bordeaux Wine" on Tuesday, April 28 at 4 p.m. in the Alumni Lounge of Gerlinger Hall. He will address both wine and economic issues.

"I got interested in wine when I was trying to buy it," Ashenfelter said. "I wanted to figure out how to do it without spending too much money." He uses statistics describing weather conditions that have helped create quality wine in the past to make predictions for future harvests.

An article appearing in Barron's magazine in 1996, "Grape Expectations," introduced Ashenfelter's method of generating wine predictions and sparked a controversy in the wine industry.

Traditional wine tasters take the juice of immature grapes and "swirl it around in their mouths," said economics Professor George Evans. While wineries have used centuries-old techniques to make proclamations about the quality of their wines, "statistical techniques can predict pretty well whether a particular harvest will be good or not," he said.

His forecasting method will be used to determine the quality of the grapes, but tasters are still needed to test their flavor, Ashenfelter said.

Ashenfelter's predictions are published in the newsletter "Liquid Assets," which provides early forecasts of wine quality. He has also written about the connection between weather and the quality of wine and how wine auctions work.

Although his recent exploration of the wine industry has been well documented, Ashenfelter is primarily a labor economist and made a name for himself with his

work on labor unions, arbitration, employment and discrimination, Evans said.

The Department of Economics has invited a number of top-ranking economists to the University in the past, and Ashenfelter will bring another representation of how economists work in the real world, Evans said. Ashenfelter will also explore the factors that determine wine prices in Oregon.

"We have tried to choose ... people who are thinking about applied economic issues," Evans said.

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