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Poetry Slam compilation CD features local lyricists' work

CD review

Aaron Shakra
 Pulse Reporter

If there was any doubt to the existence of a thriving poetry scene in Eugene, let the newly released "Best of the Eugene Poetry Slam 2003" album quell any doubts. It's now available at Foolscape Books for an economical \$7.

This disc is being sold as a benefit for the Eugene poetry slam team. For those unfamiliar with slamming, it's basically competitive poetry, judged and rated for the audience's pleasure. For the first year ever, Eugene will send a poetry team to the 2003 National Poetry Slam in Chicago.

Slams at Foolscape Books have been going down since fall, but in the past few months a series of playoff rounds have been slimming down the competitors. The final round in May will determine the four players going to Chicago. All six finalists in that round are represented on this disc, among others who have read throughout the course of the school year.

While the poetry included on this disc doesn't reach perfection, that's a tough criteria to set in first place. There are mistakes, and things academic-types might consider breaking rules, or clichés, but what this disc contains above all is energy, unhindered, throughout all 31 pieces of material.

Jahan Khalighi's "Ode To All Fallen Creators," is among the numerous highlights on the album and drops numerous lyrical bombs, including, "For words whirl worlds into existence painting pictures as elixirs to feed your starving dreams." Parts of Martha Grover's "The 13th Step" actually have her singing. Closing out the disc is Nathan Langston's trickily titled "Ode." With lines such as: "Oh my slippery orifice oracle, oh my queenly delta miracle / oh my well my temple my sheath, slit above and slit beneath," it's not hard to tell what this piece is about.

Mentioning specific poems probably neglects to show the range of diversity among the poets. Events like slams



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bring a whole range of styles, ages and ethnicity together into one beautiful whole.

Due to slam rules, each poem hovers around the three-minute range. However some pieces seem to take poetry in a distinctly different direction. Might it better to call some of these things "performance pieces" or perhaps, simply, "slams?" Or maybe this discussion only gives further credo to the view that poetry encompasses life. Isn't everything poetry, after all?

A limited run of 100 discs has been manufactured, so get yours while they're still available. It's the sure first step into the local poetry scene, and hopefully, it won't be the last.

Contact the Pulse reporter at aaronshakra@dailymerald.com.

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Trek

continued from page 5
 longer hike. It's a five-mile round-trip trek and represents the highest

peaks in the park.

But Ander cautioned visitors to be prepared for the terrain.

"Most of these trails are not too strenuous, but you can't go into it with an amusement park mentality," Ander said.

The most weather-friendly time of year to visit Crater Lake is from mid-July to early October.

Beyond Crater Lake, Ander recommended hikers check out Mount Thielsen.

"It's been called the lightning rod of the Cascades," Ander said. "It's one of the most rugged hikes in the area."

This inactive volcano is not for the novice hiker. The trail is a steep climb — the last 200 feet is a hand-over-hand climb. The trail head is 1.5 miles north of the Highway 230/Highway 138 junction near Diamond Lake, just north of Crater Lake.

Pacific Northwest Trail Education Coordinator Erik Burge is particularly familiar with trails in the upper Northwest. The Pacific Northwest Trail runs from Alberta, Canada, to Tobacco Plains, Montana. Burge helps run the Service Knowledge Youth Leadership Program, an outreach service that targets at-risk youth using outdoor-based experience.

Among Burge's favorite regional hikes is the Pacific coastline segment of the Olympic National Park.

"It's one of the largest portions of uninterrupted wilderness in this part of the country," Burge said.

Burge said he is particularly fond of lesser known destinations, adding that he often ventures out to find old abandoned mine shafts, which he searches for via historic records.

For trails a little closer to home, hikers may want to check out Silver Falls State Park. Located 26 miles east of Salem, Silver Falls is a rain-forest nestled in the lower elevation of the Cascades. The Canyon Trail portion of the park winds through 10 water falls, ranging in size from 27 to 177 feet.

Rooster Rock State Park, located 22 miles east of Portland, is also known as a great spring season destination. Visitors can check out the meadows of wild roses and grapes that combine with the views of the Cascades and the Columbia River to make for a sensory-loaded trek.

Finally, there's Humbug Mountain State Park, six miles south of Port Orford, off US 101. This destination has some of the warmest weather on the Oregon coast; the surrounding mountains protect hikers from the ocean winds. The Park offers a three-mile trail leading to the summit of Humbug Mountain.

These hikes are certainly just a few of the backpacking destinations in the region. But with luck, they will serve to inspire consideration of the options. After all, summer is closing in and the trails are waiting.

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Carlson

continued from page 5

turning into my parents. Last month, it was my mother and her garden. This month, it's my dad and his pies.

Baking, then, evokes all the things that I don't have as a college student. It is an escape from the pointless effort of looking up vocabulary words and memorizing names and dates.

I'll be graduating in the fall. Instead of the stress of classes, I'll have the stress of a job. My time will be taken up by different responsibilities, and perhaps I still won't have the luxury of spending time baking. But I won't be wasting precious hours on mind-numbing textbooks, either. I guess that's a fair trade.

Contact the columnist at nikacarlson@dailymerald.com. Her views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.



"Best Old-Growth Forest Hikes: Washington and Oregon Cascades"

Authors John and Diane Cissel

Forest ecologist, John Cissel hiked over 2,000 miles on short day trips through ancient forests of the Cascades. He will show images of old-growth forests from his book.

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