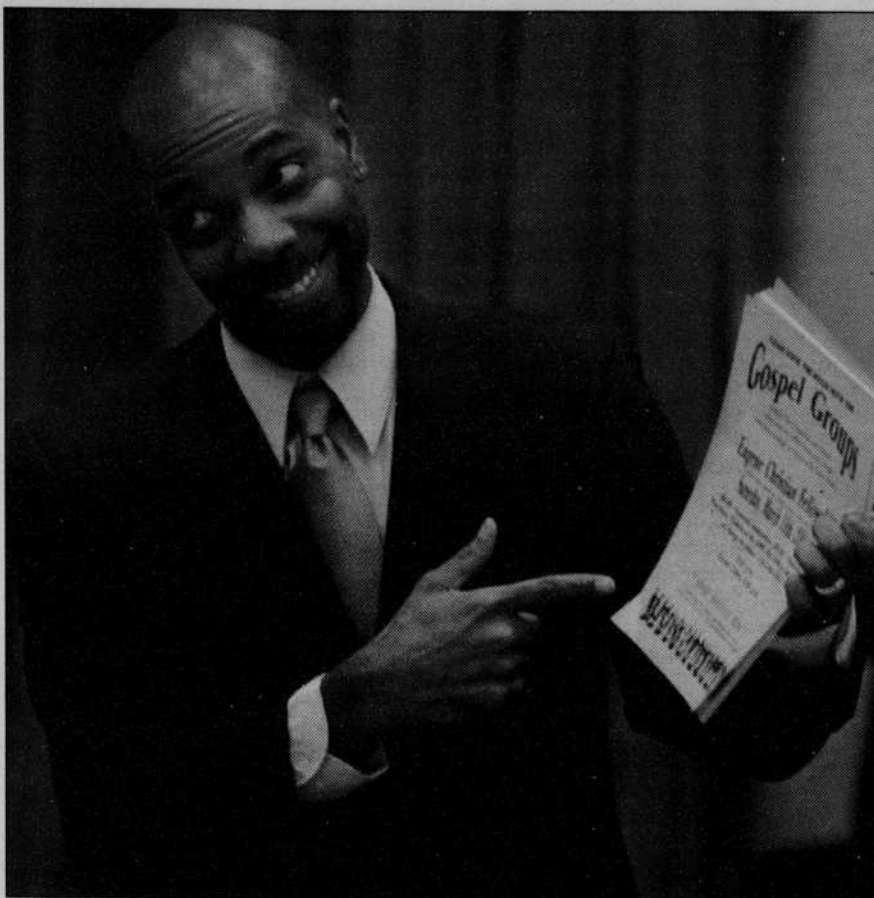


# Gospel Singers entertain students, community



Tim Kupsick Freelance Photographer

Gospel Ensemble Instructor Cedric G. Weary, who has taught at the University for about five years, says that he attempts to cover many aspects of gospel in his class, from worship-style to gospel rap.

The 26-member class performs for local crowds and at events statewide

By Chelsea Duncan  
News Reporter

The University Gospel Singers' voices resonate loudly and clearly in the Music Building's Room 198. The students stand as they sing, clapping their hands and swaying to the rhythm of the vibrant songs.

After singing a traditional gospel song of worship, some students clap and cheer, and they all sit down to catch their breaths.

"It's upbeat," senior psychology and communications major Cari Peck said. "There's a lot of energy in the choir."

Gospel Singers Director Cedric G. Weary said a gospel group needs energy, but it also needs commitment because the group doesn't just limit itself to the classroom. It is also actively involved in community events.

Singers also need skill. Weary said that out of about 45 students who auditioned fall term for the gospel singers class, he only accepted two. The class has about 26 students, many who stay in the group for several years.

"It takes quite a bit of energy," he said. "Some good technique is the number one thing."

Weary, who has taught the gospel singers, gospel choir and gospel ensemble classes for about five years, said that memorization skills are also important because most of the material students use is not charted.

"You have to be able to follow direction really well in the heat of the battle," he said, adding that he likes to improvise during songs.

"That's what makes gospel music so exciting," he said. "Not only for the audience but for the choir."

The singers perform at University events and hold their own concerts at the end of each term. Their next concert will be March 13 at Eugene Christian Fellowship.

Weary said that the concerts offer all students a break from studying for finals each term.

"It's kind of nice to unwind, come hear some gospel music, get up and stand and dance around a little bit," he said.

**"I've done many forms of music, but I always come back to gospel."**

Cedric G. Weary  
Gospel Singers Director

The group also travels around the state performing for different crowds.

The singers performed this month at the Martin Luther King Jr. celebrations in Portland and Eugene. They also performed at the annual Lane County Republican's Lincoln Day Dinner, where U.S. Sen. Gordon Smith, R-Ore., was an honored guest.

"We're all over the place, literally," Weary said.

Senior English major Dave Gomez said the singers performed before the dinner prayer, which demonstrates the "tone" of the music.

"It's to a certain audience," he said. "It's not just to people who are looking for a show."

Peck said that aside from just entertaining, she enjoys playing a role in the community when the group sings. "It's fun being up there and doing it," she said. "I'm bringing the community together."

Gomez said the group traveled to different high schools to teach

about the history of gospel music in honor of Black History Month. Songs included "Negro spirituals," "worship songs" and "work songs."

Weary said the program also teaches high school students how the sounds and forms of gospel music have influenced other genres.

"Most people don't know that jazz and blues and the early rock 'n' roll was kind of taken from ... African American gospel and Negro spirituals," he said.

Gomez said that he enjoys teaching high school students about the spirituality of the music, and not everyone has to be Christian to enjoy it.

"It's basically only a Christian program if you want it to be," he said.

Peck agreed that the songs can be both spiritual and fun, saying that she personally enjoys connecting prayer with singing.

"I definitely get some spiritual aspects through that," she said.

Weary said that most people are in the group because they like to sing and enjoy the genre.

"It is very contemporary," he said, adding that it reminds students of things they may hear on the radio. "It speaks to them in that way."

Weary said that gospel has many different forms, from "demure praise and worship style" to "gospel rap."

"Anything in-between hymns and rap, we try to cover a little bit of all of it," he said.

Weary added that gospel has always been a part of his spiritual life.

"I've done many forms of music, but I always come back to gospel," he said.

Contact the higher education/student life/student affairs reporter at [chelseaduncan@dailyemerald.com](mailto:chelseaduncan@dailyemerald.com).



The Gospel Singers will perform their next concert on March 13 at Eugene Christian Fellowship.  
Tim Kupsick  
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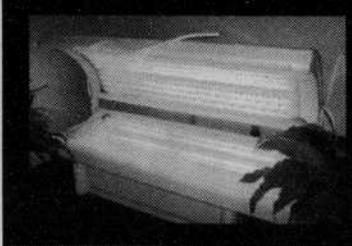
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