



Courtesy

A band representative of the diverse costumes, unusual instruments and complete staging setups present at the festival each year performs at the 1987 Willamette Valley Folk Festival. The 2004 event kicks off Friday at 4 p.m. and runs through 6 p.m. Sunday.

Cultural Forum's Folk Festival hits campus Friday afternoon

The Willamette Valley Folk Festival will feature spoken word artists, international food, workshops and crafts

By **Natasha Chilingirian**
Pulse Reporter

Folk artists ranging from spoken word poets to tamale cooks will gather on campus Friday through Sunday for the 34th annual Willamette Valley Folk Festival.

The festival will boast what co-coordinator Ariel Zimmer calls "a consistent international flavor," and Zimmer and co-coordinator Will Reischman incorporated their personal tastes and passions into the event's agenda.

Unique additions to the 2004 festival include tabling by community organizations and craft booths that expand from the EMU south lawn to the amphitheater area. Zimmer's interests in Afro-Cuban music and spoken word poetry is reflected in the entertainment lineup with performers such as music group Obo Ady & Kukuru and Seattle-based spoken word artist Laura "Pie" Kelley.

"I'm a spoken word artist, and I wanted to bring in that flavor," Zimmer said. "Poetry is a folk art, and it needs to be just as popular as music, in my opinion."

From a planning perspective, Zimmer said the most significant new addition to the festival's planning was the use of a recognized fund-raising campaign. Zimmer and Reischman raised about \$500 after sending out letters to businesses asking for donations and sponsorships.

Beginning at 4 p.m. Friday and ending at 6 p.m. Sunday, nearly 20 musical acts will fill the main stage on the EMU east lawn, including Middle Eastern/jazz group Vagabond Opera and a reggae/funk/Afro-beat team, Jyemo & the Extended Family.

From noon Saturday to 5 p.m. Sunday, the EMU Amphitheater and The Buzz Coffeehouse also will be alive with performance. These acts will include West African drumming and dancing, samba music and dance and tunes from the Eugene Harp Circle.

Food vendors will line the border of the EMU east lawn. Options will range from tofu, fried rice and tamales to ice cream, smoothies and lemonade. Many food booths are returning from past years, but two new additions will join the old favorites: Cornucopia, which will provide hot and cold sandwiches, and BBQ King, which will serve up ribs, chicken, beans and cornbread.

Zimmer said the festival will feature more new craft sellers than food vendors this year.

"It is easier to pick up crafts and travel than to have a traveling kitchen," she said.

One standout craft participant will be the Eugene Glass School, which will make and sell decorative glass creations on-site. Other craft plans for the festival include massage centers and sales of drums, rocks and African art. Children will have the opportunity to engage in craft-making with old CDs.

A continuing activity of the festival will be the presentation of the New Song Contest winner. Budding singers and songwriters have competed in

PART 2 OF 2

May 13: A historical and behind-the-scenes look at the festival

Today: An in-depth preview of the 2004 Willamette Valley Folk Festival

one round so far this year for the title of best new song. The second and final rounds will take place in the Ben Linder Room from noon to 4 p.m. Saturday, and the champion will perform on the main stage Sunday at noon. Reischman said remaining contestants include a blues guitar artist and a singing pianist.

Finally, workshops in the EMU Fir Room on Saturday and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. will give festival-goers the opportunity to try a new folk art. Banjo and North Indian tabla playing and West African and Rumbana salsa dance are just a few of the activities to be taught.

"Workshops give people the chance to work on their skills with professionals," Reischman said.

Zimmer said the festival will emphasize cleanliness and recycling. To keep the event earth-friendly, festival workers will use raw paper products, recycled water and a compost system. The UO Campus Recycling Program will handle the festival's re-use of products.

"(UO Campus Recycling) is award-winning, progressive and cutting edge with their recycling methods and they should get props for that," Zimmer said.

The total cost of the event tallied up at about \$30,000, which is an improvement from 2002's bill of

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