

## Poetry slam disappoints without club involvement

Cory A. Thompson

coryetc@gmail.com - Asst. Arts & Features Editor

The first poet, a lanky vagabond from Vermont, rattled on for about an hour. He performed his final poem in a British accent and when he finished, he placed the microphone down onto the empty stage and scanned the audience.

With the stage lights off and the house lights on, **Malachi Achilles, the out-of-town poet**, watched the well-lit faces of the 30 audience members stare back at him. Someone coughed. Achilles inched his way toward the stage stairs and stopped.

"If no one else has anything to share," Achilles said. "I've got a few more."

The audience shifted in their seats. The microphone sat on the stage. In the back, a student who had taken up knitting around the time of the first dialect poem put down her needles and exhaled powerfully. Next to her, a girl furrowed her eyebrows and shifted her gaze from her friend to the door. Achilles reached for the microphone which had begun to roll across the stage.

A new arrival to the Grotto leapt to their feet.



Photo by Cory A. Thompson - Asst. Arts & Features Editor

Student-poets Bryan Head and Makeda Sandford lament the poor planning of Friday's Poetry Slam.

"Do we have a host, or are the inmates running the asylum?" Achilles shrugged.

An audience member said, "There is no host. This is the most open mic."

When Lamar Hylton, director of the UNC Asheville multicultural center, reserved space in the Highsmith

Union Grotto for Friday's poetry slam, he neglected to find a host for the event. He also failed to contact UNCA's slam poetry club Rock(y) The Mic, a student organization to which **Makeda Sandford and Bryan Head** belong.

"I really didn't appreciate that they

didn't tell us," Sandford said. "If they didn't want to host the event, the least they could do is hand it off to someone else. After all, everyone knows Colette and Aaron."

**Colette Heiser and Aaron Kreizman, the two leaders of**

See SLAM page 13

## Dancers entertain at Fringe Arts Festival showcase

Elizabeth Valenzuela

evalenzu@unca.edu - Staff Writer

The showcase opened in a small, dark theater with a black and white projection of trees and birds on the back wall. The only noise came from birds chirping.

One dancer appeared and shortly after, a second. The music picked up and together the dancers formed a contemporary piece.

"The mission of the Fringe Dance Showcase is to push artists out of their comfort zone," said **Kevin Patrick Murphy, Fringe Festival staff member**.

The Fringe Dance Showcase took place at the BeBe Theatre in downtown Asheville on both Jan. 23 and 25 at 7 p.m. It featured a number of artists, all of whom contributed a unique work of art.

Claire Dima, the third performer of the showcase revealed her belly dancing skills and incorporated the skill of balance, using two long swords in her performance. She began standing on the swords and later balanced both on top of her head, continuing to belly dance.

Keith Campbell, part of juggling troupe Forty Fingers & A Missing Tooth, not only balanced pins on his arms, hands and head, but also told a story through movement from the moment he stepped on stage.

Bonnie Freestone, Jenny Paris and Lily Ovadya took the stage next with an improvisation act. With the words "banana" and "sleep" given from the audience, Freestone, Paris and Ovadya performed a skit that kept the audience laughing.

The only disturbance during the improvisation act occurred from construction taking place at the

### Local Event

building next to the theater, but rather than detracting from the performance, the occasional drilling and banging noises enhanced the act. This resulted in the audience laughing even harder.

The final dance showcase was put together by Erin Braasch and Kathy Meyers Leiner, part of Moving Woman Performance Ensemble.

"This performance is inspired by Dante's *Inferno*," said Murphy when introducing a piece.

"Their movement seemed not only to be free but also trapped. It expressed the dance's topic very clearly," said **Hyejung Jung, an exchange student at UNC Asheville**.

According to Jung, Leiner being her ballet professor at UNCA made her excited to attend the showcase.

"I want to give a big hand to my

professor and all dancers," said Jung.

The Fringe Dance Showcase that took place on the night of Jan. 25 was a sold-out show, although staff members of the theater made room for eager last minute guests who bought tickets at will call.

At the end of the showcase, some of the performers came to the entrance of the theater and interacted with audience members.

"I'm glad you enjoyed it," said Freestone to a member of the audience who had just congratulated her on her improvisation skit.

According to the festival's homepage, this was Asheville's 11th year hosting the Fringe Arts Festival. The festival was a weekend affair that ran last Thursday through Sunday and included a variety of events such as a puppet slam, comedic bus tour of the city of Asheville and much more.