

## Bringing in the New Year, Asian Style

By Yu-Yee Wu  
Guest Writer

Some audiences show their appreciation by whistling or shouting. Others show their appreciation by sitting in their seats stoically. The audience members at the Chinese New Year celebration Feb. 3 in Great Hall, did neither.

They clapped instead.

They clapped as loudly for the older singer who sang, patriotic songs in a crackling voice, as they did for the younger, smooth-voiced singer crooning Chinese ballads.

They clapped as steadily to the uptempo beat of a Janet Jackson song, as they did to the slower Chinese folk songs.

They clapped as enthusiastically for the Black Student Movement's Opeyo Dancers who moved rhythmically

to the music, as they did for the out-of-synch shadow boxers, a group of nine men and women who performed "Karate Kid" moves in slow motion.

During the Lion Dance, where a man dons a multi-colored, snakelike "lion" with an enormous face and bulging eyes, the audience clapped thunderously for the bobbing and prancing two-person "lion" when it jumped deftly onto a small table.

For the young violin soloist, the audience clapped as parents clap at their children's music recitals, encouragingly and reassuringly, even though someone taped the young virtuoso's sheet music to the microphone, blocking her from view.

The audience even clapped heartily for the songs and speakers they could not hear because the microphones went out or could not understand because they did not know Mandarin.

With so much noise created from the clapping, the traditional setting off of firecrackers was not missed.

The New Year's celebration commemorates the departure of a man-eating sea monster, who was scared away by the sound of bamboo crackling in a fireplace and by the noise made from the chopping of food. For New Year's, many people recreate the noise that frightened the monster away by setting off firecrackers.

If the noise from the clapping couldn't have scared the monster away this new year, the talking probably could have. Snatches of English could be heard intermittently amid the continuous, mingled chatter of Mandarin and Taiwanese that filled the crowded hall, for it was a night for getting together with family and friends. Children squabbled with each other over toys, causing mothers to scold them and grandmothers to soothe

them. Fathers discussed life and politics with each other. Friends were reunited; others met for the first time.

And they all hungrily devoured the pre-packaged dinner of white rice, meat, vegetables and oranges, relishing the meal as if they were eating the sticky rice and sweet candies common on New Year's. Coke and 7-Up replaced traditional tea with more pop and fizz for the festive occasion. Many a calloused hand, worn with years of chopstick use, held white plastic forks and balanced Styrofoam boxes instead of chopsticks and small rice bowls.

The audience's hands were in all shades and in all stages of wear. Some hands were as white and smooth as a lily, others were as brown and bumpy as a dried pod of a lotus flower. Big, rough hands engulfed small, soft ones, but only briefly; the smaller hands tugged and wriggled themselves away to

find others of more equal size and softness to hold on to or to battle with.

Heads gray and white from decades of New Years, peppered the audience and mixed with other heads of various shades of black, brown and blond. Hair textures ranged from kinky and coarse to straight and fine; styles ran from the cropped and angular to the long and level.

The celebration of the "Year of the Monkey"—a year for developing intelligence—culminated in the distribution of prizes, a widespread tradition to promote prosperity and good luck for the new year. A Chinese man announced the winning numbers in Mandarin and in English, while a black woman and a Chinese woman handed out the prizes together. And the audience?

They clapped.

### BLAST Program Designed to Train Future Leaders

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Chief Justice; etc. The list goes on and on.

I am planning to launch such a program. It will be named Black Leadership Activists Strategy Training. What I am saying is that you can be a leader without running for office. When a black child sees you doing positive things in the community you are greater than Napoleon in their eyes. Hopefully, a spin-off can be implemented at local high schools such as Chapel Hill High and Northwood High School in Pittsboro.

As stated before, the primary purpose of the seminar is to raise up salient black leadership for future activism on UNC's campus, America and the world. It would educate as well as motivate students while they build lasting bonds of friendships that can later be utilized for effective networking and support, a facet of *ujamaa*. The program will be open for all students, faculty and staff. Target students are freshmen and sophomores but it

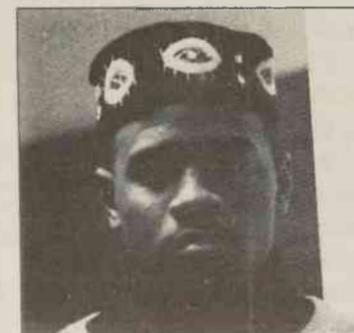
is recognized that many students come to stark realizations later in their academic careers. Since current leadership programs are designed exclusively for freshmen and sophomores (or, in the case of one program, you have to enter as a freshman), juniors, seniors and grad students are encouraged to participate in the seminar. Even if your aspirations do not include becoming a leader you are still welcomed to participate in order to gain knowledge and help strengthen the sense of community.

The seminar is still in its planning stage and will not get started until next semester. There are several obstacles to the program's implementation but the greatest one is getting people to come to it. I implore you, do not let three and a half years go by before getting active in your people's future. I also implore those who think it's too late to do anything, to not fold your hands and throw in the towel. Now is the time because life does not get

any easier as you get older. There will always be things to consume your time and energy. I only ask that you make your people one of them. I fully believe in the words of Charles Houston, the man who had the courage to take on Jim Crow and the audacity to win, "I would rather die on my feet, than live on my knees."

We must look back at our past and appreciate the brave and successful so that we can envision and strain toward fulfilling our destiny. If you are interested in such a program, contact me at 933-8265 or holler at me on the yard. Aluta Continua (the struggle continues)!

Special shout out to Huey P. Newton. Happy Birthday brother! (Feb. 17)



Arnie A. Epps

Habari Gani! Again it is in the spirit of community that I come to you. An Ethiopian proverb says, "He who learns teaches." The experiences I've had at this University have been amazing. I've learned that a man's word really doesn't mean anything anymore.

Now is the time where we as African Americans must demand ACTION. Action must not only come from administrators but from the grass roots of our community. I've LEARNED, therefore I teach that administrators on this campus have given us nothing but void promises that they aren't willing to stand behind. The Board of Trustees passed a resolution on December 1988 expressing their support for the Black Cultural

### BSM Leader: BCC Now!

Center and said it "recognizes the successful beginning of the Black Cultural Center and encourages and supports the Facility Planning Committee in its planning for adequate space." This motion was carried unanimously by the board.

No longer will we be diplomats and sit at the table to negotiate that which is already complete. Chancellor Hardin must respect the needs of African-American students, faculty and staff. He dismisses the notion of a new free-standing BCC and the compromise students were willing to make for Howell Hall. I've learned that African Americans have struggled for many things we have achieved and dealing with the administration will be no different. ALUTA CONTINUA (THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES).

Epps is president of the BSM.