

Cultural Festival aims to create 'global bazaar'

by Ebum Adewumi

For more than 1,200 people on the HUB lawn on Friday, Sept. 9, the night was filled with the exotic sounds of Middle Eastern music, the jubilant noise of an Irish jig and the familiar beat of American rap as the Paul Robeson Cultural Center hosted Penn State's first Around the World Cultural Festival.

"We're committed to have this happen annually at the beginning of the semester. We would love to get more departments involved and more students involved," said Toby Jenkins, director of the Robeson Center and one of the main organizers of the festival.

Jenkins said she would love to see it grow into an even bigger event that would "become cemented into Penn State history."

Jenkins said a planning committee worked through the summer to create a "global bazaar." Members from a number of campus groups volunteered to help, adding to the festival's diversity. University

There were displays, things to taste, free stuff and ever-important stamps to collect from four tents representing the four corners of the world.

Park Allocations Committee (UPAC) was the major sponsor along with Residence Life; The Commission on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Equity; and the Multicultural Resource Center.

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Besides the free barbecue, the crowd pleasers included stage performances by a belly dancer, a rap group, a dance group and a DJ.

Misa Watanabe and Miho Yoneda, both juniors from Japan, said they liked the belly

dancer and thought the dancing was "sexy."

On the main stage the Penn State International Dance Ensemble performed a variety of dances that had obvious Irish roots.

"I learned [the dance] in four days!" said

Jenna-Lee Martin, a sophomore from the Bucks County area. Before Martin joined the dance group two years ago, she had had no experience dancing.

The festival closed with Audio Imagery, one of State College's only hip-hop groups, comprised of three emcees and a deejay. They opened with a "sound check" to get the crowd geared up for DJ Super Nova, who was picked for the variety of music he spins, including reggae, rap and Latin.

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