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ASUU VOTES TO CHANGE FIGHT SONG

ASUU has approved changes to the U's fight song, "Utah



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RYAN McDONALD

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After a much-deserved weekend of celebration following their victory at



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With jangling skirts and swaying hips, Utah belly



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**POETS COMPETE AT
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Salt City Slam announces its national team. Slam poetry a



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WASATCH GONE WILD

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EDITORS NOTE, MARCH 2014

We've had a busy month here at Wasatch Magazine. With the weather starting ...

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compete at SLC Slam for Nationals spot

SHAWNA MEYER on April 3, 2014 at 1:27 am

Salt City Slam announces its national team.

Slam poetry is a growing trend. In order to portray the most extreme emotions, this performing style combines spoken words, body movements and other theatrical elements.

And in the genre's tradition, a trigger warning is necessary at the beginning of every show, because no topic is off limits.

Audience members filled the seats at The Off Broadway Theatre on Tuesday night. In fact, some people were left without seats and spilled into the aisles. Everyone was there to watch 10 poets compete for the opportunity to represent Salt Lake City at the National Poetry Slam, taking place this August in Oakland, Calif.

In 2011 and 2012, the Salt City Slam team placed eighth out of 72 teams at Nationals, so the competitors this year had a lot to live up to.

It was clear when host Rebecca Mae stepped on stage that attendees did not feel obligated to speak in hushed tones. Throughout the night, the most powerful and articulate lines received cheers and snaps, while the less successful ones resulted in hisses and boos. The performers not only encouraged audience interaction but reveled in it.

"It's so rewarding to get feedback from the audience," said Jesse Parent, one of the 10 poets competing for a spot at Nationals. "The best possible feeling is to have someone come up after a poetry slam and tell you that your words meant something to them."

Saying that Parent is no stranger to slam poetry is an understatement. This two-time Individual World Poetry Slam runner-up started performing improv in 2001. He began competing in poetry slams in 2006 and has made every Salt City Slam team since 2007. Also in 2007, he became the Slam Master, which means he organizes readings and makes sure each local slam is in compliance with national regulations.

Parent's best poem of the night offered a modern reinterpretation of "Rumpelstiltskin." It was dramatic and daring. Parent's body movements allowed him to create a believable monster with a heart of gold. The theatrics involved in all three of his soliloquies and his ability to command the stage earned Parent one of five spots at Nationals.

"It seem[s] like monologues to me, and I love the different ways that you can use theater. You have to figure out what you can do with your body to take the place of punctuation on the paper, so I always say that performance is punctuation, because that's the way you make sure your words are understood in a way that's as close to how you meant it," Parent said.

Topics at Tuesday's event ranged from serious topics such as politics, pop culture, body image, depression and substance abuse to lighter poems about relationships, love, family and even Girl Scout Cookies.

"The writing is very cathartic," said Hannah Irene, a poet vying for a spot at Nationals. "It's really raw. You can express things through spoken words that you can't really express just on the page."

One of the best poems of the night came from Courtney Hammond. It centered around her battle with an eating disorder. While it started dark, it ended on a hopeful note with her learning to love herself. Hammond went on to win last night's slam, which earned her the second spot on the Nationals team.

In addition to Parent and Hammond, the other three poets representing Salt Lake City at the National Poetry Slam are Gray Thomas, DeAnn Emmett and Joseph K. Rogan (JoKyR). Each one earned the most amount of points from the judges, who were randomly selected audience members. Aside from points, the five poets selected for Salt Lake City's National Slam team received the most cheers and applause from the audience, which is probably more important than the scores.

"Points aren't the point — they don't matter. The focus is on the poetry. The whole idea of poetry slam is to trick the audience into listening to poetry by dressing it up as a competition," Parent said.

s.meyer@chronicle.utah.edu

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SHAWNA MEYER



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What is your favorite Winter Olympic sport?

Figure skating (32%, 47

Votes)



Alpine skiing (17%, 25

Votes)



Figure skating (32%, 47

Votes)



Alpine skiing (17%, 25

Votes)



LATEST TWEETS

Correction: ASUU voted to support changes, but did not vote on specific changes. We'll fix the story online as soon as website's back up.

[@@TheChrony](#) moments ago



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