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RENEE HANNANS / Staff

Alain Eagles, co-director of the Drum Cafe, leads a group of drummers at the Mythic Journeys Conference. Below: James Flannery of Atlanta prepares to teach a workshop, "Bardic Reveries"; that's Gwen Knighton of Ball Ground playing the harp in the background.

By PHIL KLOER / pkloer@ajc.com

Myths and legends get a retelling as new stories unfold

## A MODERN-DAY JOURNEY

Christopher Vogler recalled the first time he read the book "The Hero With a Thousand Faces" by mythologist Joseph Campbell. "My teeth were falling out of my head and my brain was boiling. He was answering all the questions I had," said Vogler.

Campbell, the guiding light in the world of myth study, went on to influence George Lucas' first "Star Wars" trilogy, while Vogler, one of his many protégés, became a story consultant on myth-drenched movies like "The Lion King."

This weekend at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Atlanta, more than 1,000 followers of Campbell (1904-1987), best known for his 1987 PBS interviews with Bill Moyers, "The Power of Myth," are gathered to celebrate the centenary of his birth. The first Mythic Journeys Conference is an intense immersion in the world of metaphor and legend, an experience that can appeal to both the head and the gut.

"In the common parlance now, myth means something false," said Michael Meade, a storyteller and anthropologist. "But the old meaning of myth is emergent truth."

Poets and professors, seekers and searchers and intellectual gadflies of all species are singing, analyzing, chanting and generally getting a deep-tissue mind-and-soul massage by some big names in various fields: poets Galway Kinnell and Robert Bly; biblical scholar Elaine Pagels; authors Charles de Lint and Joyce Carol Oates; Atlanta actor Tom Key; and art director Alan Lee, who won an Oscar for "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King."

In the conference's first two days, names were tossed around like confetti at a bridal shower: Freud, Einstein, Descartes, Langston Hughes, Zeus, Yeats, Jung, Tolkein and Oedipus, as well as those you might not expect: Jackie Onassis and Elvis.

The scope ranged from flautist Ulla Suokko singing



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