



'Slabtown Convention' brings the house down

By Delores Gullick
Argus Reporter

Winston-Salem State University's Drama Department brought the house down with its rendition of Slabtown District Convention last month.

The play, written in 1942 by black women's rights advocate Nannie H. Burrough, was performed at the Kenneth R. Williams Auditorium.

Various students and teachers acted in the play. Kenita Upchurch, a student, performed as the primary character of the Slabtown convention. She played the Mission President, delivering a superb rendition of the updated 2001 Mission President.

Her show-stopping character snapped her fingers in the air to show control of the convention, tossed her head in disgust of the

delegates, danced around for joy when she got "happy," ruled with a determined, gruff voice, and dared anyone to defy her rulings.

Also starring was Avis B. Gray, the producer of the play and a teacher of Speech and Theater at WSSU. She performed as a parliamentarian who ruled stern and swift with a long pole.

Lorenzo Meachum, an instructor of English at WSSU, played the part of a renowned minister of the convention. He was introduced to the convention as the Rev. Big John, A.B., A.M., B.D., L.L.D., and C.B.B., which stands for Can't Be Beat!

Kerwin Graham, played the keyboard.

The play opened with a gathering of women from across the district coming to a convention in

the city of Slabtown. During the convention, hilarious speeches were given dealing with present-day church issues. A small amount of money was collected and an attempt was made to remove "the no-good" mission president from office.

Yet, when it was time to leave the convention, the women went home happy even though they had "hung out all their dirty laundry," collected very little money for missions, and the same, despised mission president remained in office.

Lorenzo Meachum, who also directed the play said, "The play causes African-Americans to examine or look at ourselves as pertaining to the black church. It causes us to look at our meager efforts in mission. It makes us realize how much we reverence

the preacher even more than the God we serve. We must reexamine how we educate our children in school, and how we have strayed from the disciplinary nature of children as it pertains to how our ancestors raised their children.

"The play also pokes fun at African Americans in terms of style such as our clothes and hair. Finally, the play makes us realize we as African-Americans, have neglected to support our African brothers and sisters."

Meachum said that he thought the play was a success due to Nanny Burrough's wonderful script and the talent of the students.

The group has been invited to perform the play at Livingston College in Salisbury and at a local church.

Author Omar Tyree works his magic again in 'Just Say No!'

By Nakida McDaniel
Argus Reporter

Omar Tyree — Just Say No!

We all know him from such renowned urban novels as Fly Girl, Do Right Man, and Single Mom. We've seen him turn lifeless characters into people we know or encounter everyday; whose problems and situations we can relate to. However, the

best is yet to come from Omar Tyree and his latest urban classic, *Just Say No* illustrates what we can look forward to in the future — more heartwarming and emotional fiction that reeks with undertones of truth.

Just Say No takes its readers behind the scenes of the music industry from the perspective Darin Harmon and John Williams

of Charlotte, North Carolina. The two grew up as best buddies and decided to go to the same college, North Carolina A&T. Both friends received scholarships to the university, Darin for football and John for music.

Upon making it big John asked Darin to come along with him as his manager. A reluctant Darin decides to take his friend up on the offer, not aware of what the two were about to experience.

Nevertheless, the fame, money, drugs, and women that came along with Superstar status overwhelmed both of them.

Just Say No allows its readers to experience the pain, joy, and revelations of its main characters. Tyree writes with such richness and detail it's hard not to finish what you've started. I suggest taking a weekend to read this urban-American novel from beginning to end.



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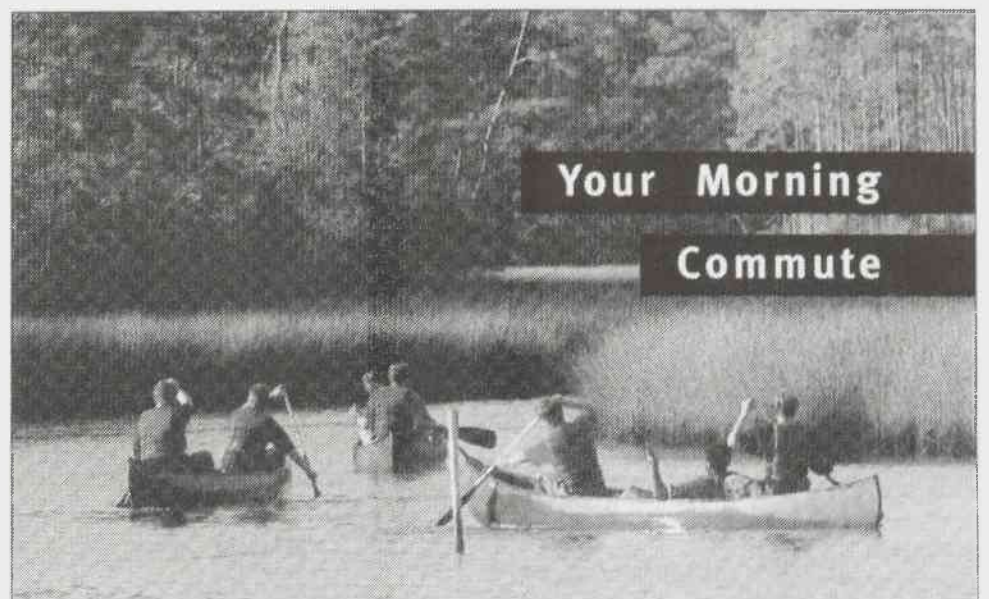


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