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Drag can bolster comedic reputation Perry latest in cross-dressing characters

THE DALLAS EXAMINER

DALLAS - Madea Perry is back with a vengeance. Another Tyler Perry play, "Madea Goes to Jail," will open in Dallas this week to packed audiences...

Madea's enormous appeal begs the question: Just what is it about men dressing as women that has brought so much laughter and entertainment value?

White male artists have been enormously successful playing women, such as the late Milton Berle in his 1950s television show and actor Dustin Hoffman in the 1982 movie "Tootsie."

* Tyler Perry as Madea. We know Tyler Perry, the man, the brilliant play writer from Atlanta, as the rowdy, gun-toting mama who tells it as it is. She emerged on stage in Perry's play "Diary of a Mad Black Woman," and she immediately had us all falling out laughing.

She runs into the room in a floral dress with an oversized butterfly collar and, out of all things, she's wearing a pair of beige pantyhose. With a head full of gray curls and a cigarette hanging out her mouth, she swings her black bag side to side and reaches in to pull out her hime, saying "Call the po-po's. I ain't scared of the po-po's!"

She says and does things that no grandmother (or so we thought) in her right mind would do, and SHE has

Please see CROSS/2D



ASSOCIATED PRESS/RICK HAWNER

Steve Harvey, who was in Charlotte for the CIAA tournament, stars in "Don't Trip...He Ain't Through With Me Yet."

Keeping it clean

Comedian Steve Harvey is Mr. Nice Guy in 'Don't Trip'

By Cheris F. Hodges
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Comedian Steve Harvey is a changed man.

Gone is the cursing King of Comedy. In his place is a cleaner mouth with a bit of an edge to it.

At least Harvey is in his new concert movie, "Don't Trip...He Ain't Through With Me Yet."

Filmed at MegaFest in Atlanta, Ga., Harvey talks about everything from

Michael Jackson to uppity church members. He even tells the crowd how he would introduce Jesus Christ if he had the chance to do it.

"I ain't been on stage and not cussed in 28 years," Harvey said in the film. "So, y'all pray for me."

Harvey said that there is an underserved audience that wants to laugh, yet doesn't want to feel embarrassed when they do. They

also don't want to hear the raunchy language that many comics use.

The movie opens Friday and should ride the trend of religious-theme movies that do well at the box office, like the Madea films ("I need all of Charlotte to go out and buy tickets on the 17th, 18th and 19th and make sure your ticket says 'Steve Harvey Don't Trip' or I don't get credit for it and I need all the credit I

can get with just 57 screens," Harvey said).

Harvey isn't all holy and pious in this film. He still has that Harvey humor that will have you either shaking your head because he's talking about someone you know or falling on the floor laughing.

"I was afraid that I would lose my core audience that made me all of this money," Harvey said. "But I think

Please see STEVE/2D

THEATRE PREVIEW

Arts, dance in 'Johannesburg Stories'

International theatre visits the Queen City

By Victoria Elmore
THE CHARLOTTE POST

South Africa's greatest story-teller is coming to Charlotte.

Gcina Mhlophe will perform in "Johannesburg Stories," a new production created by Moving Poets Theatre of Dance, at McGlohon Theater at Spirit Square March 15-19. "Johannesburg Stories" is a diverse collaboration of arts, crafts, and dance that delves into South Africa's culture and southern cultures in America. Mhlophe, who has performed over two decades, uses her story-telling abilities through acting, singing, and

dancing to deliver messages of cultural understanding. With her large imagination, she will offer inspiration along with the founder of Moving Poets, Till Schmidt-Rimpler.

Schmidt-Rimpler created Moving Poets in 1996 and is formerly of N.C. Dance Theater and Dutch National Ballet. Moving Poets Theatre of Dance is a mixture of dramatic story-telling through modern dance, visual arts, music and theater. The collaborative group of performers breathes life into southern culture and its history. With his choreographer skills, together Rimpler and Mhlophe will create an artistically entertaining production that will engage the heart, soul, mind and

spirit.

"Johannesburg Stories" puts audiences on the edge of their seats as they watch African stories come alive over two hours. The playwright, James McClure, has a history of success. The native of Louisiana made Broadway with "Lone Star" and "Pvt. Wars." He also partnered with Kathy Bates and Sigourney Weaver and was an actor in Oregon Shakespeare Festival and the Pacific Conservatory for Performing Arts.

Well-known stars and actors have come together to make "Johannesburg Stories" a production of success. Mhlophe and Rimpler are being accompanied on stage by Randall Haynes and Katherine Harrison. Artistic music will aug-

ment the stories by creating an African/Southern vibe. "Johannesburg" composer David Crowe, musician at heart and a Grammy Award-winning storyteller, who has orchestrated symphony concert stories for children. Crowe recently composed a music piece for the Dead Sea Scrolls at Discovery Place.

"Johannesburg" is rich in meaning, understanding, and is culturally driven. Actors, dancers, and musicians have brought some of South Africa's historical ideologies and America's southern culture to life on stage for the world to experience.

For more information, log on to www.movingpoets.org. For tickets call: (704) 372-1000.

Rapper T.I. adds acting credit to resume

By Cheris F. Hodges
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In the new movie "ATL," rapper T.I., also known as Clifford Harris, plays a character that most might not expect him to fit.

A good guy. "It was just a script," he said. "My character is a young man in a lot of grown up situations. It's not a character that people would expect me

to play, he's the good guy and not the bad man."

The movie will be released March 31, three days after T.I.'s album "King" hits the stores.

So, is T.I. the King of the South as he has proclaimed time and time again?

"I'm sorry you had to ask," he said confidently.

T.I. had beef with Houston rapper Lil' Flip, who also

to Allhiphop.com, the two rappers got into a physical altercation last March.

According to the internet site, T.I. dismissed reports that he sustained serious injuries during the fight as reports suggested, noting to on air personalities that he did not have a blemish on his body.

"I'ma die by mine's," T.I. said.

"If you're not willing to die, or kill about the things you say (and) disrespect me, my family and my loved ones, then you might as well leave me alone."

The rapper stated that on his end, the beef between him and Lil' Flip is over.

Now that T.I. has added actor to his resume, he plans to continue the craft, though

Please see RAPPER/2D

Neo soul newcomer has potential for greatness



Ne-Yo
In My Own Words
Various Producers
Def Jam Records



Whether Ne-Yo is a play on the sputtering neo soul movement or not, this upstart singer is the real thing.

New, yes he is, but only in the length of time the world has known about Ne-Yo. This fellow has an ol' soul when it comes to his music. When "In My Own Words" is drenched in today's sound, but it has its roots in the 1970s and '80s. There are a couple of samples from each decade, both involving a DeBarge brother. The opening song "Stay With Me," by DeBarge. It's more of an interpretation than sample, with Ne-Yo gently massaging it to new heights. "It Just Ain't Right" takes a page from '70s soul



group Switch's "I Call Your Name." It is a sample, but used cleverly. Ne-Yo fashions a chorus by simply using call and response: I call your name/And it just ain't right.

Clever, indeed. When Ne-Yo gets to the monster hit "So Sick," you think something this good has to be a sample from back in the day. Nope. It's original and one of the best things to happen to radio in a long time.

Ne-Yo's voice is a cross between Usher and Donnell Jones, with a hint of Michael Jackson during the "Off The Wall" era. He uses it like a fine-tuned instrument most of the time. On occasion he gets into the ghetto fabulous stuff like "Sign Me Up" but it does

Please see NE YO/2D



Keep 'Jarhead' on the shelf

Jarhead
Jamie Foxx,
Jake Gyllenhaal,
Chris Cooper and
Peter Sarsgaard
Sam Mendes, director
Universal Pictures
Home Entertainment



As bad a movie that "Jarhead" is it reaffirms a few beliefs I had: War is stupid. I'm glad the Marines are on our side. I don't want to live near a Marine that's seen action.

Not only is "Jarhead" a bad movie, it doesn't even seem original. Yes, it's updated to the Gulf War, but it seems so derivative. It's also a bit slow. Director Sam Mendes wants character development, so you go about three quarters before these Marines even see Iraqis.

With all that development we could have least gotten one interesting character. Jake Gyllenhaal (Oscar nominated for "Broke Back Mountain") is Swoff, the guy that just wants to do right. He doesn't really fit into the Marines - he seems to care too much. But he never gives you enough to care about him. Even the problems he thinks he's having with his girlfriend seem contrived.

Jamie Foxx may be the biggest disappointment His portrayal of Staff Sgt. Sykes is so seen-it-all-before that he barely registers. He seems to be slumming his way between gigs until the next possible Oscar role.

This movie leads up to these guys spending less than a week in Iraq. It's no one's fault the skirmish didn't last very long but surely something of interest happened. Maybe they all should have watched "Three Kings."

The DVD contains 35 minutes of deleted scenes, some of which expand on the Swoff's fantasies. There are also some in-depth interviews and a few other things that don't turn a bad movie into a good DVD. Don't say you missed it. Just say you didn't see the movie.



Jarhead is also released in a collectors edition.

Ratings

Classic:	★★★★★
Excellent:	★★★★★
Good:	★★★★★
Fair:	★★★
Why?	★★
No stars - A mess	★

