ARTS and FEATURES

Just say yes: Lab's parody of Reagan years makes social statement

By MONDY LAMB Staff Write

Larry Kramer's "Just Say No" is a play that is simultaneously hilarious and bitter, throwing out punch lines but making a social commentary on how poorly the Reagan administration handled the AIDS epidemic.

Kramer, who declared that "good taste is not the mark of good theater," describes it as "a play about a farce."

Set in the Reagan era (hence the title), this comedy parodies political figures from the administration. Subtle

one-liners contribute to the humor, and allusions to well-known officials keep the audience guessing the playwright's intended targets.

Described by director Martin Grapengeter as a "political whorehouse," the play features characters that include an archetypal "political slut," the Fawn Hall/Donna Rice figure; a homosexual who sleeps around to gain prestige; and a Ron Reagan Jr. figure whose natural inclination to dance was discouraged by daddy.

"It is high comedy," Grapengeter said,

"but it's also about the farce that government has made about a plague that has killed millions of victims ... the play attacks the government, the press and elected officials."

Grapengeter, who starred in the Lab Theatre's production of "Burn This," has compiled an all-star cast for "Just Say No.'

Timothy Karcher, a senior drama major from New Jersey who last appeared in "'Tis a Pity She's a Whore," plays Foppy Schwartz, who in many ways acts as the voice of the playwright.

The action of the play centers around Foppy's relationship with the other characters on stage.

"Foppy is a very sincere hypocrite," Karcher said. "He plays along with the system of the Reagan era politics. He is friends with the first lady and he runs a brothel."

Lori Williams, a senior drama major last seen in the Lab Theatre's "Endgame," plays Mrs. Potentate, a character loosely based on Nancy Reagan. Mrs. Potentate is running the country but frequently participates in

illicit sexual liaisons arranged by Foppy. "Mrs. Potentate is a real bitch,"

Williams said. "She is Nancy Reagan in a sense. The play is cynical - it's my kind of administration bashing."

Drew Lazarus, last seen in "Rhinoceros," portrays a character who parodies Ed Koch; Kristine Watt, who last appeared in "Hogan's Goat," is producing the play.

Grapengeter said the biggest challenge in directing the play was walking the fine line between slapstick comedy

and the bitter edge of emotion.

"I'm not trying to change people's ideas about homosexuality or AIDS," he said. "I'm just trying to elicit a response. I don't care if the audience is pissed off or disgusted, loves it or is put off by it, just so long as they think.'

"Just Say No" will be performed at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 18 and Monday, Nov. 19, and at 5 p.m. Tuesday. Nov. 20. Lab Theatre performances are held in the basement of Graham Memorial and admission is free.

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BSM Gospel Choir to give fall concert

By RANDY BASINGER **Arts Coordinator**

The Black Student Movement Gospel Choir will perform its annual fall concert, "This Is the Day," in Great Hall at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 18.

"This is the day everyone can come together to celebrate being on campus at UNC," said Willie Robinson, BSM Gospel Choir president. "Together we can make a difference, but only together. We are celebrating 19 years of existence and striving for notoriety on campus."

Organized in 1971 by Francine Randolph Cummings, the BSM Gospel Choir has enjoyed growing success in its years on campus.

secretary, said, "I think the Choir has been very successful. Weekly we are invited to events not only on campus, but across the state."

The musical style of the group is based on the tradition of African-American ancestors who sang of their despair and cried out for freedom in Negro spirituals. The gospel style has been modernized, but remains a distinctive feature of the African-American culture. The BSM Gospel Choir will emphasize the emotional power of these inherited melodies during the

concert.

Emily Watkins, BSM Gospel Choir

In addition to the Choir, the Ebony Readers will showcase a dramatic interpretation of a poem written by former choir member and former BSM president Patrick Johnson. The poem was written especially for performance by the choir and the Opeyo! Dancers, an-

other performing subgroup of the BSM. The BSM Gospel Choir has received prestigious honors and progressed a great deal in the past 19 years. They have sung on the steps of the U.S. Capitol Building and in the Pentagon. In 1985 and 1986, the Choir participated in the McDonald's Gospel Fest Competition, placing fourth both years. During the choir's spring 1988 concert, they made their first recording for a live album. Even more recently, on Feb. 2, 1990, the choir was featured as guest performers on a program sponsored by N.C. Central University with the Rev. Marvin Winan, a member of the Grammy Award-winning gospel group

The choir has also been active in the community, raising money for scholarships and heading up a successful canned food drive.

"These things show we are a major part of the University," Watkins said. 'We are proud of that."

perience of a gospel performance won't

Lennox for the University, that this remain confidential information to avoid unnecessary escalation of a possible purchase price."

Manning

UNC would have trouble paying for Glen Lennox if the recommendation were approved, the report said.

"Financing such a purchase might be difficult, given the University's \$4.1 million limitation on borrowing, and the need to come up with a further \$8.4 million as a minimum," the report states. The recommendation to purchase an existing complex caused Chapel Hill Town Council members to question UNC's concern for the town's wellbeing. Chapel Hill can't tax any of UNC's assets, and losing the revenue from a complex like Glen Lennox could seriously impact the local economy, council members said Thursday.

"Any amount of property, large or small, taken off the tax rolls is significant for the town," council member Joyce Brown said.

Chapel Hill Mayor Jonathan Howes said he had not heard of the recommendation that the University purchase an existing complex, but that he has urged UNC officials to avoid taking money away from the town's tax base. "I've often expressed my concern to the chancellor about the University purchasing private properties," Howes Those who savor the emotional ex- said. "The University has a lot of property on which it can build housing,

express their disapproval.

"I have investigated the UNC Land-Use Plan, met with representatives of both the Chapel Hill and UNC Planning Departments, and I have concluded that no serious consideration has been given to the needs of student families of Odum Village," resident Steve Wallace wrote in a statement.

Wallace, who is chairman of a committee of residents who want to preserve Odum Village, wrote that the N.C. Department of Transportation said the present alignment of Manning Drive was sufficient for the traffic it served, and that the planned new buildings were sited with respect to existing roads.

Destroying Odum Village would do more harm than good, Wallace said. "The replacement of Odum Village would involve a 'shell game' of cash flow," Wallace wrote. "These wellconstructed, well-planned and lowmaintenance buildings have an insured replacement ... value of \$10.9 million. ... Regardless of where replacement housing is sited, the quality of life in Odum Village could not be duplicated." But Chapel Hill Town Manager Cal

Horton said he understood UNC's need for the realignment, which officials estimated would be implemented within five to 10 years.

"We think the University's new landuse plan and it's proposal for building in the area make the realignment worth-

back the loan using rent payments, and the money for a new facility would come from bonds and rent money as well, Boulton said.

N.C. State University moved its married student housing for similar reasons, Miller said, adding that the new housing there is "of poor quality and has been made so unpalatable that students now prefer housing elsewhere. ... We should not let the same thing happen here."

Miller also suggested that at least one representative from the Odum Village Board of Aldermen, a residents' council, should be present at all meetings of the University's Facilities Management division that include discussion about family student housing.

The University is also planning to build an ambulatory care facility, an Environmental Protection Agency building and new hospital facilities near the proposed South Loop.

According to a report dated Oct. 26 by Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance Ben Tuchi, the additions would causemore traffic in the southwest portion of campus, necessitating the changes to Manning Drive.

The University wants to add the Manning Drive realignment proposal to the state-funded Thoroughfare Plan. If the realignment is included in the state plan, the town council would have the power to vote down the proposal.



The Black Student Movement Gospel Choir will perform in Great Hall in the Student Union at 3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 18. Admission is free and the concert is open to the public.

want to miss the BSM Gospel Choir and I hope it would consider using that." According to the committee's report, Glen Lennox has 440 units on 68.7

acres and had an appraised value for tax purposes of \$10,619,914 in 1989. Residents of Odum Village said they were upset about the proposal and have met with University administrators to

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-Vincent Canby, The New York Times

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while," he said.

In an interview, Wallace said residents' rent would increase because maintenance costs at Glen Lennox, or any other existing complex, would be far greater than at Odum Village.

Jonathan Miller, another Odum Village resident, wrote a letter to the town council expressing his displeasure with the realignment plan. He wrote about Odum Village's affordability, safety and the sense of community among the residents as reasons for keeping Odum Village in its present location.

"The University's debt for Odum Village is almost completely paid," Miller wrote. "It is short-sighted to destroy well-made, paid-for buildings."

Boulton, however, said the University would not finish paying off the loan for Odum Village until 2007. UNC pays

Residents are planning to address the town council at a public hearing scheduled for Monday night at 7:30 p.m. in the Municipal Building.

"This is one of the very few times the town can actually shape or steer the University's growth," Wallace said.

Late Thursday afternoon, Odum Village residents received announcements from Boulton and Tuchi about a question and answer session Sunday night in the Community Service Day room at Odum Village from 7-8 p.m., Wallace said.

Franzese said the committee's first choice would have been to keep Odum Village where it is, but that the situation left the committee members with no other choice but to seek replacements. Julie Ann Malveaux contributed to this report



