

FEATURES

African Folktales and Drumming: A Cultural Experience

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An interesting presentation of culture and entertainment is what best describes Obakunle Akinlana, African Folktales and Drums, which took place February 10 in the Thompson Center.

This program was sponsored by the Campus Activities Board (CAB) and was part of Winston-Salem State University's month long events celebrating Black History Month.

Also featured in the program were April Turner, an actress and dancer and master drummer, Asheem. Although the crowd was very small, only five people (one of them was the Campus Activity Board's adviser), it did not stop the trio from performing. Turner opened the program with a traditional African dance, followed by an African folktale told by Akinlana.

During the presentation Akinlana told the history of the beautiful and colorful wood carvings, drums and musical gourds that were on display during the program. He discussed how before cameras were invented, Africans made their documentations with wood carvings to represent kings, the birth of children and other important events in the villages.

According to Akinlana, a drummer was a very important person in the African village. "Drummers in the villages announced the marriages, births, deaths, and the politics in the village. To play a drum without permission brings the penalty of death."

Later in the performance the audience was invited to participate in a traditional African song Akinlana called "Bringing Back Your Ancestors."



Obakunle Akinlana, African Folktales and Drums Performers

Poetry Corner

Who Am I?

I stand tall
Black and lean
A man as I seem

You huddle behind doors
And laugh at me
Because I'm not
Like you!

I press my ears
To the door
Listening to those harmful words;
Those snarling cracks

As I listen
Tears roll down my face
Like waterfalls
Wondering why?
Am I not like you?
If not then....
Who am I?

I've read your books,
I've walked your walk
And talked your talk
But those things
Are not me.

I am a thinker
Among men

A hidden leader
In the making
If I'm not like you...
Then who am I?

To you I may seem
Odd and not at home
But to me
You are ignorant and
Uncaring

If you're wondering
Who I am
I will tell you!!

I am Adam
I am Moses
I am Jesus
I am Martin Luther King, Jr.
I am the slaves
Who build your foundation

I am all those
Who came before me
Those who fought for
Peace and Love.

All of those things
That I am
I am also human
Man of flesh and bone
Who is not perfect

And you say
I am not like you?
If not then...
Who am I?

Omar Marks

A POEM FOR THOUGHT

Lord, Lord, Why did You make me
Black?
Why did you make someone the
world wants to hold back?
Black is the color of dirty clothes,
The color of grimy hands and feet.
Black is the color of darkness,
The color of tire-beaten streets

Why did you give me thick lips,
A broad nose and kinky hair?
Why did you make someone
Who receives the hatred stare?

Black is the color of the bruised eye
When someone gets hurt.
Black is the color of darkness,
Black is the color of dirt.

How come my bone structure's
so thick,
My hips and cheeks are high?

How come my ears are brown
And not the color of daylight sky?

Why do people think I'm useless?
How come I feel so used?
Why do some people see my skin
And think I should be abused?

Lord, I just don't understand.
What is it about my skin?
Why do some people want to hate me
And not know the person within?

Black is what people are "listed"
When others want to keep them
away.

Black is the color of shadows cast.
Black is the end of the day.

Lord, you know my own people
mistreat me
And I know this just ain't right.
They don't like my hair.
They say I'm too dark or too light.

Lord, don't you think it's time for
you to make a change?
Why don't you re-do creation and
Make everyone the same?

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