

Malcolm X enjoying expanded, nearly omnipresent reach

By Herb Boyd

Special to Sentinel-Voice

NEW YORK (NNPA) - "Malcolm X seemed to be everywhere!" This was the general consensus in the activist community last week as hundreds turned out at a number of events to pay tribute to Malcolm X (El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz), particularly on Monday, the 40th anniversary of his assassination.

It was two weeks ago at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture that the Malcolm moments began when Warner Home Video announced the release of Spike Lee's film "Malcolm X" on DVD.

Remembering Malcolm, who was only 39 when he was gunned down at the Audubon Ballroom in Washington Heights, received additional impetus with the death of Ossie Davis.

Davis, 87, died on Feb. 4 in Miami Beach while there making a film. At Malcolm's funeral, Davis delivered the memorable eulogy that forever enshrined Malcolm "as our Black shining prince."

The shining prince got a fresh veneer of love and respect, even among hordes of young people who were discovering the real Malcolm for the first time.

"I thought I knew a little about him from the film, but I'm learning that he was a lot more than that," said a young participant at the ceremonies held at Abyssinian Baptist Church Monday evening.

Trying to capture the essence of Malcolm on film is daunting, and it is even harder to sum up his legacy and impact in a program, no matter how reasonably long or how many witnesses and experts on the panels and at the forums.

But at least three events gave it a shot — and did quite well.

At the Schomburg Center, the Malcolm X Museum presented Jeff Stetson's engrossing play "The Meeting." It is based on a fictionalized meeting between Malcolm and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In reality, the two only met once, fleetingly, on March 26, 1964, in the nation's capital. While that exchange was brief, Stetson has stitched together a highly imagined encounter that both captured their evolving political maturity and their enduring integrity.

All the performers were convincing: Michael Green (Dr. King), Lawrence



Malcolm X caption to come

Winslow (Malcolm), and Ron Wilks (Rashad).

This was followed by a panel (Professor Bill Sales, educator/activist Yaa Asantewa, and Shaun Neblett, a member of the Malcolm X Museum's board of trustees) that provided the packed auditorium with further enlightenment on Malcolm and brief remarks about the performance.

Asantewa, best known for her forthright stand against the city's board of education and her determination to teach

an African-centered curriculum, said the play expressed a need for unity in the Black community.

"It suggests that we should work as one, if we're going to make things better for us," she said of the play.

Later, during the question-and-answer session, Asantewa stressed the need to understand that Malcolm was talking about self-defense, not violence.

"And he was not an American hero," she continued, challenging an earlier point.

"Malcolm was always an African man. He was opposed to American foreign policy and against racism." What Asantewa said of Malcolm was strongly reiterated at Earl Hall on Columbia University's campus the next day.

"Malcolm struggled against empire," said Professor Robin Kelley, a noted anthropologist and historian, now teaching at Columbia.

"He was anti-colonial and anti-imperialist. It's hard to (See Malcolm X, Page 12)



There's a better way to get money from your home:
a Home Equity Loan from U.S. Bank.

It's time to make a change.
A Home Equity Loan from U.S. Bank is the easiest way to start any project.
You can get loans up to 125% of your home's value.
With competitive rates, you'll enjoy an easy way to manage debt, build an addition, or even start a new business. Plus, the interest on the loan may be tax-deductible.
And it's all backed by our Five Star Service Guarantee.
Take advantage of this offer without the worry of closing costs, points, or fees.
No coin counting necessary.

5.79% APR
20-year fixed rate

Go online at usbank.com, visit a local branch, or call 1-888-444-BANK (2265) ext. 4100 for any other questions.



*5.79% fixed APR available for terms up to 20 years on home equity loans with a U.S. Bank checking account with ACH and loan-to-value (LTV) of 80% or less. Higher rates apply for higher LTVs. Minimum loan amount or increase of \$10,000 required. Consult your tax advisor regarding deductibility of interest. On a \$10,000, 20-year loan at 5.79% APR, monthly payments would be \$70.44. Rates subject to change. Offer is subject to normal credit qualifications. Some additional restrictions may apply. Not available with other discounts. Home equity loans are offered through U.S. Bank National Association ND. Member FDIC.