

PRESS RELEASE



MOSAIC YOUTH THEATRE OF DETROIT / 610 Antoinette Street / Detroit, MI / 48202
t: 313-872-6910 / f: 313-872-6920 / www.mosaicdetroit.org

LYNN KEILY, Publicist / 313-872-6910 ext. 4005 / klynn@mosaicdetroit.org



For Immediate Release

CITY IN A STRAIT Explores Roots of Detroit's Racial Divide Musical Play and Forums with Civil Rights Leaders mark 40th Anniversary of events of 1967

April 2, 2007 Detroit, MI – This May the acclaimed Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit opens a powerful new play, CITY IN A STRAIT, by world renowned playwright OyamO. Marking the 40th anniversary of the 1967 riot/rebellion, CITY IN A STRAIT tackles Detroit's racially divided past and how it impacts the region today. Commissioned by Mosaic for its Ensemble, with research collaboration from NAACP, New Detroit, Focus: HOPE and University of Michigan, Mosaic's inspiring actors and singers bridge Detroit's past, present and future. The show will run for two weekends from May 11-20 at the Detroit Film Theatre in the Detroit Institute of Arts with post-show forums on the 12th and 13th featuring the playwright, Civil Rights scholars and community leaders.

Playwright OyamO's other acclaimed works have been performed at theatres around the world, including Yale Repertory Theatre, The Kennedy Center, The Goodman Theatre, Theatre du Horla in France and the National Theatre Institute in Montreal. He was awarded fellowships from the Guggenheim, Rockefeller and McKnight Foundations and won the prestigious *Eric Kocher Playwrights Award* for his play *The White Black Man*. For HBO OyamO wrote an episode for the Famous Black American Anthology and a TV adaptation of *I Am A Man*.

Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit, which in past productions told the stories of Detroit youth from the 1940's and the early days of Motown, delves into young people's involvement in the local civil rights movement of the 1950's and 1960s. Under the direction of award winner Janet Cleveland, CITY IN A STRAIT explores the roots of issues that still haunt Detroit's youth. Incorporating Mosaic's trademark blend of powerful vocal harmonies and high-energy acting, the play asks the question "Is the city, and its residents, dragging the past into the future?"

This inspiring and thought-provoking adventure is experienced through the eyes of two cousins, Ben and Angela, who are unexpectedly pulled into the past by "La Nain Rouge" a mythical red dwarf that legend says put a curse on Detroit when Cadillac spurned him in 1701. The two encounter a wide range of people and events in the 50's and 60s as they struggle to return to their own time. What they discover about themselves and the history of their city could change them forever. From the innocence and joys of true friendship, to the tragedies of the 1967 uprising, CITY IN A STRAIT is a theatrical event that will keep audiences talking long after the curtain comes down.

Mosaic invites you to start the discussion at the free post-show forums following CITY IN A STRAIT on Saturday, May 12th and Sunday, May 13th. These engaging sessions, made possible by the Michigan Humanities Council, will be lead by Janet Cleveland and include local Civil Rights scholars. Don't miss this chance to share your voice and express your thoughts on the play, Detroit's past and your hopes for the city's future.

CITY IN A STRAIT is presented at the Detroit Film Theatre in the DIA May 11–20, Friday and Saturday performances at 8pm, Sunday matinees at 4pm. Purchase your tickets in advance by calling the DIA box office at (313) 833-4005 or visit www.mosaicdetroit.org/tickets-may.htm. General admission is \$18, senior and student tickets are \$12. Group discounts for 10+ by calling (313) 872-6910 ext 4005. Children 5 and under not admitted.

Support Mosaic's young artists as they **excel on stage and in life**. For more information about Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit visit www.mosaicdetroit.org.

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In collaboration with the
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