

Down in the "Treme"

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During the "Art of 'Treme'" presentation on Thursday (Oct. 28) in the Lavin-Bernick Center on the uptown campus, the co-creators of HBO's "Treme" faced a room full of their harshest critics and strongest supporters ? residents of New Orleans.



Fans of the HBO series "Treme" crowd into the Kendall Cram Lecture Hall to hear the creators of the show talk about their work. (Photos by Sally Asher)

The event was open to the public, and community members and students gave frank and often-comical opinions of the "Treme" drama that is set in post-Katrina New Orleans and follows interconnected stories of local residents and musicians. Treme is one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city and an important source of African American music and culture.

"I think you guys are geniuses," said one audience member, who was followed by another who asked why there aren't more professional African Americans portrayed in the show.

"Treme" co-creator David Simon said that the show is not a documentary but he and his creative staff have made relentless efforts to ensure that the city is as accurately

depicted as possible.



Clarke Peters (from left), who plays Albert “Big Chief” Lambreaux on “Treme,” sits alongside series co-creators Eric Overmyer and David Simon to discuss the artistry involved in creating the show.

“We initially had a fear that if everyone is expecting the story to cover everything about the post-Katrina experience, then everyone is going to be disappointed on some level,” said Simon. “We are showing how the city came back one second-line, one trombone solo, one etouffee and one Mardi Gras Indian suit at a time because people couldn't imagine living anywhere else.”

Co-host for the event Shayne Lee, Tulane associate professor of sociology, presented the central question of the evening, asking, “What are the artistic responsibilities in trying to be true to a city and yet true to an artistic mandate of creating something alive and new?”

In addition to Simon, panelists included “Treme” co-creator Eric Overmyer, actor Clarke Peters, Tulane associate professor of communication Beretta Smith-Shomade and New Orleans poet Gian Smith. Joel Dinerstein, Tulane associate professor of English, served as moderator. Nghana Lewis, Tulane associate professor of English and African and African diaspora studies, also was co-host.

The event was sponsored by HBO, the [Tulane African and African diaspora studies](#) program, the provost's office and the New Orleans Gulf South Center.