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AKA SLAMS SAA FOR NOT PLAYING SA MUSIC

AKA yet again lambasted the national airline South African Airways (SAA) for not playing local music. In a series of tweets, the star blasted SAA not play-listing of the local artists' music, labelling the local airline "disgraceful".

LITERATURE



THIS year's Booker Prize was shared by Bernardine Evaristo, left, for *Girl, Woman, Other*, and Margaret Atwood, for *The Testaments*. | SUPPLIED

Two women share 2019 Booker Prize

ORIELLE BERRY

WHILE Britain's most prestigious literary prize may have courted controversy this week for having two joint winners, it also received praise for awarding the accolades to two female authors – and the first black female winner in its 51-year history.

In a departure from its rules, this year's Booker Prize – conferred at a ceremony in London on Monday night – was shared by British author Bernardine Evaristo, for *Girl, Woman, Other*, and Canadian author Margaret Atwood, for her novel, *The Testaments*.



Girl, Woman, Other follows the intertwining stories of 12 distinctive characters – mostly women, black and British.

Evaristo, born in London in 1959 to a white English mother and a black Nigerian father, in her works of fiction, often explores the lives of members of the African diaspora.

She said her prize-winning novel grew out of her frustration over the lack of representation in British literature. On sharing the prize, she said she was "absolutely delighted to share it with the legend that is Margaret Atwood".

The highly anticipated sequel to Atwood's 1985 dystopian thriller, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *The Testaments* is the writer's 18th novel. With her win, she becomes the fourth author to garner the Booker Prize twice.

Atwood's first Booker was in 2000, for *The Blind Assassin*. Through the explosively revealing testaments of three women, Atwood lifts the lid on the inner-workings of the patriarchal state of Gilead, a religious autocracy, and answers questions that tantalised readers for decades since *The Handmaid's Tale*.

That book sold more than 8 million copies worldwide in English and was adapted into a hit television series. It recently took on a renewed political resonance in the US as women dressed as handmaids flooded political institutions to protest restrictions on reproductive rights.

This is not the first time the award has been shared. In 1992, Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* and Barry Unsworth's *Sacred Hunger* shared the award, but organisers then altered the rules to only allow one winner to avoid undermining either book.

HISTORY

Book honours memories of Harfield Village families

NATHAN ADAMS

WHEN Professor Siona O'Connell saw pictures from Cape Town's Harfield Village before residents were forcibly removed during apartheid, she knew there was a story to be told.

A few years ago O'Connell was approached by photographer David Brown, who had an archive of photos he'd taken of Harfield Village families and children in the 1970s – before the apartheid government declared it a "whites only" area and coloured families were forced to relocate.

Brown and O'Connell worked on a documentary, *An Impossible Return*, released in 2015 and when the photographer died in 2016, the seeds of a book were sown.

But the author and academic had a conundrum – she had to put names to the faces in the handful of pictures Brown had taken and also hoped that the people in the snapshots were still alive.

After a feature in a community newspaper in 2016, she was able to track down some of the children in Brown's moving photographs – many of them now pensioners.

"I'm blown away – the images are intoxicating because they show them in a gentle way living lives of full humanness – notwithstanding what is going on around them," O'Connell said of the breathtaking photos.

O'Connell added the pictures of the Harfield Village children really struck a chord with her.

The search was fruitful and she managed to find some of the children who moved with their parents out of the area.

One such person was Denise Johnson, now 58 and who lives in Hanover Park – in the same house her parents moved into when they were forced out of Harfield Village.

"My father was a painter and my mother used to work at the City Hall in catering. Moving to Hanover Park was traumatic," Johnson recalled.

Now a mother of four, Johnson said when her cousin phoned her to alert her to their childhood picture in the newspaper, she couldn't believe it.

Johnson said: "Everyone got scattered and at the beginning, we couldn't



This picture was selected as the cover of *An Impossible Return*, a book about forced removals in Cape Town. | DAVID BROWN



BROWN'S images have been collated in new book documenting the forced removals in Harfield Village.

cope. If I wanted to go to my granny it was a lot of travelling – whereas we lived around the corner from each other in Harfield."

Her cousin, Beverley Petersen, now lives in Ottery. Petersen said her parents made the brave decision to not leave Harfield immediately, which meant that they were one of the last coloured families in the neighbourhood.

"They gave my parents the option of Mitchells Plain or Valhalla Park and when they went to look at the area and the houses they said no," recalled Petersen.

She said her electrician father and



BROWN captured images of Harfield Village residents and children before coloured families were forcibly removed.

self-taught seamstress mother both dug in their heels and stubbornly stayed in Harfield Village for as long as possible.

"Eventually they bought a house in Grassy Park," said Beverley. These stories have been documented in the book, *Impossible Return: Cape Town's Forced Removals*.

O'Connell's book launch is taking place today at St Matthew's Church in Harfield Village and she hopes that it will unite families.

COMEDY

Vlismas turns in his badge

Comic to give his last show next month

NATHAN ADAMS
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VETERAN comedian John Vlismas has dished out – and taken – some real comedy punches over the years.

But he's finally ready to say goodbye to the limelight with his sanity intact. The funnyman's final comedy gig will be at the Big Five Comedy Show at Grandwest Casino's Grand Arena early next month, a fitting farewell for the man who's spent the past 25 years entertaining the masses both locally and internationally.

Vlismas, 46, said while he's had a good run on the comedy circuit, he's also battled many demons, some of which have provided fodder for his stand-up shows over the years.

The comic told Weekend Argus the death of his father last October was a real wake-up call.

"It's a time when you do a bit of reflection and think about what you're actually doing."

"I realised that I really like the teaching that I'm doing and I wanted to turn that into my next adventure," Vlismas said.

About three years ago he went public with his battle with alcoholism and has since then stopped drinking.

He said it's just one of the many ways he's changed over the past few years, and reluctantly agrees that in his own way he's had a positive effect on the local comedy scene.

Known for his caustic comedy and no-holds-barred punchlines, Vlismas said speaking about his

own traumas and battles wasn't always the easiest thing to deliver on stage.

"It can feel kind of lonely when you're sticking to your guns all the time. I mean I helped the guys who went to Parliament to have the law re-written on hate speech."

"I always thought that I was really lucky because I saw my job as probably a lot easier than other people found their jobs."

"I think it takes more courage to go to an office every Monday morning."

"Whatever my k*k was I always felt very privileged."

So, what's next for Vlismas? Studying at Henley Business School has now led him to teach there.

"I'm doing an MBA at the moment... and then they asked me to start teaching their executive education programme. (The course is) about empathy and how performers connect with audiences they've never met before and that resulted in a bit of a study of the shared world," he said.

"I base my understanding of other humans on my understanding of myself because my underlying assumption is that we are all the same, even though we have different screen savers."

And while he may be stepping away from the bright lights of the stage and adoring audiences, Vlismas admits that he'll never stop being a comedian.

"As my dad passed away, and it was a hard harrowing time, I made a joke. In that moment, I knew my true nature, which is that I am that guy who tells a joke at the worst possible time," he said.



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Rössing Pension Fund - 2019 Road Show
Dates: 23 & 24 October 2019

Program

Notice: Rössing Pension Fund Former member surplus registration deadline - 01 December 2019
• Former member registration process final attempt
• Surplus payment update
• Any clarification to the fund pensioners

Time slots: 09:00 to 11:00
14:30 to 15:30

Venue: The Westin (Island conference room)
Convention Square
Lower Long Street
Waterfront
Cape Town

Facilitating Trustees:
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