

Constant Star Makes World Premiere

By Torise Battle

The PlayMakers Repertory Company of Chapel Hill presented the world premiere of "Constant Star", its first production of the 1999-2000 season. "Constant Star", written and directed by Tazewell Thompson, ran from Sept. 22 to October 19 with a special Sonja H. Stone Black Cultural Center night on September 29.

Ida B. Wells is a unique and genuine American heroine. Her undying courage, intellectual savvy and fierce dedication to the crusade for civil rights have been shamefully neglected by historians. Born a slave in Holly Springs, Miss., Wells was a feisty, complex, independent journalist who would become one of the most influential activists in the civil rights, women's suffrage, and anti-lynching movements at home and abroad.

This provocative, compelling and entertaining new play, laced with laughter and song, has a host of memorable characters including Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. DuBois, Booker T. Washington, Marcus Garvey, Susan B. Anthony and Jane Addams. "Constant Star" celebrates the life and achievements of a great American woman and is a tribute to the invincibility of the human spirit.

Tazewell Thompson directed last season's acclaimed production of "Having Our Say", as well as "The Tempest", "Master Class", "As You Like It", "Cymbeline" and "From the Mississippi Delta for PlayMakers". He has produced or directed 25 world and American premieres, working in cities like Syracuse, Seattle, Cleveland, Paris, Tokyo and Madrid.

The cast includes Trazana Beverly, who won a Tony Award for her performance in "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf"; PlayMakers veterans Kimberly Hawthorne ("From the Mississippi Delta") and Brenda Thomas ("Having Our Say"), and, making their PlayMakers debuts, guest artists Marguerite Hannah and Kathryn Hunter Williams.



Photo by Barry Slobin

Top: (L-R) Marguerite Hannah, Brenda Thomas, Kimberly Hawthorne, Trazana Beverly and Kathryn Hunter Williams in PlayMakers' 1999-2000 season opener *Constant Star*. **Right:** Trazana Beverly in PlayMakers Repertory Company's world premiere 1999-2000 season opener *Constant Star*

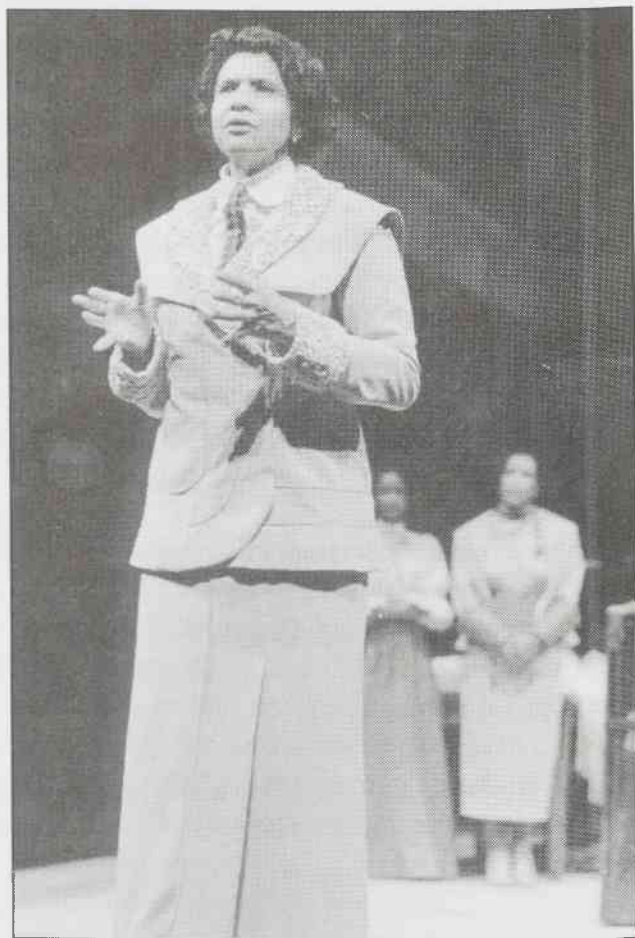


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