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Lorraine Hansberry

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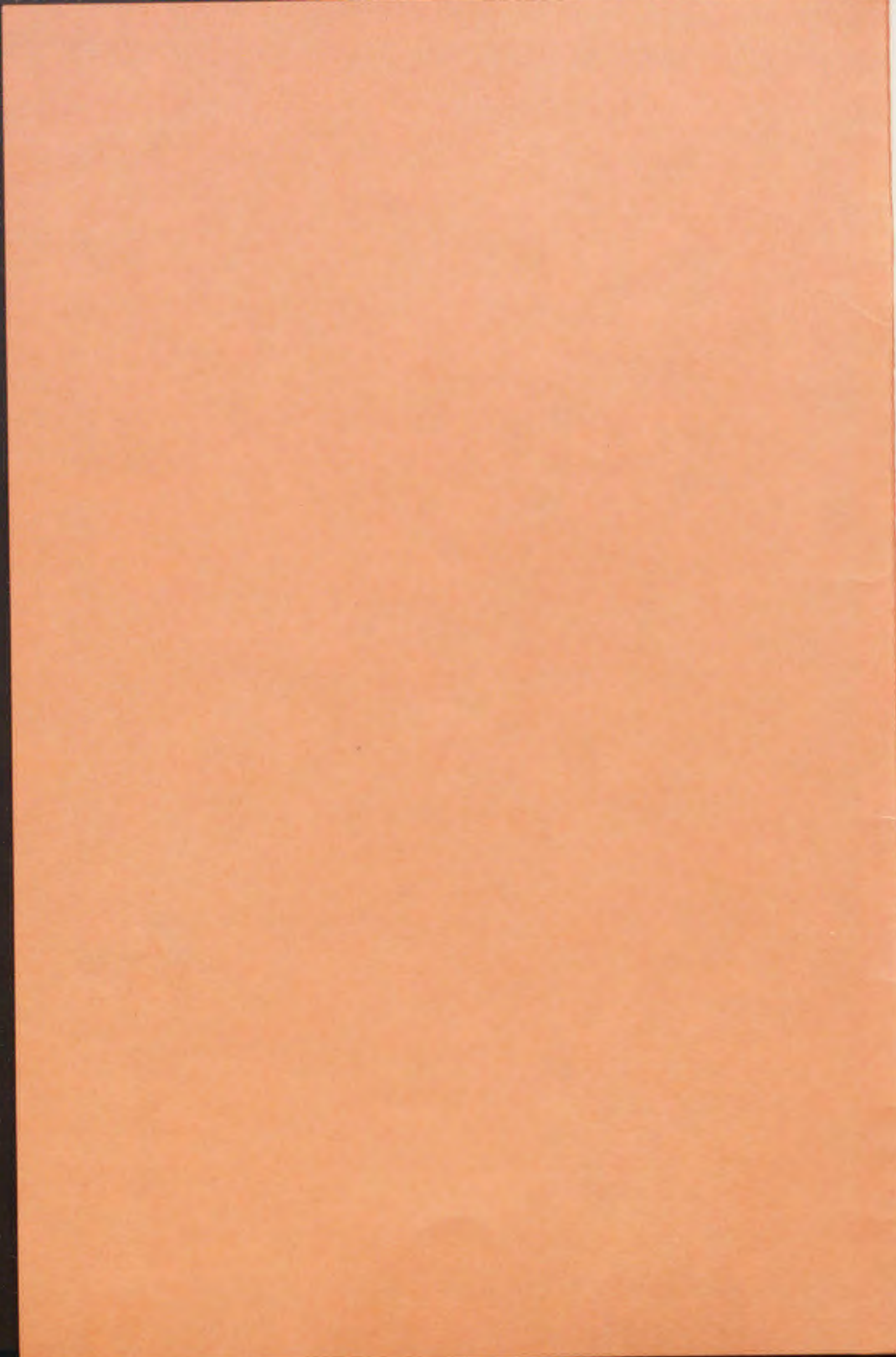
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To Be Young Gifted & Black



by LORRAINE HANSBERRY
JCU Little Theatre Workshop

April 25, 26, 27 May 2, 3, 4 1980



LORRAINE HANSBERRY
(1930-1965)

Lorraine Hansberry was born in 1930 in Chicago, Illinois and educated first in the public schools of Chicago's southside. Miss Hansberry sought initially to make a name for herself, not as a writer, but as a painter. She studied painting at the Chicago Art Institute, the University of Wisconsin, and the University of Guadalajara, in Mexico. Deciding that art was not to be her metier, Miss Hansberry left Chicago in 1950 to become a New Yorker, where she studied at the New School, worked odd jobs as a department store clerk, a producer's helper, and as a waitress in a Greenwich Village restaurant run by the family of Robert Nemiroff, a composer and writer, whom she later married.

Turning from painting to writing, Miss Hansberry in New York joined the staff of Paul Robeson's Freedom, a left-wing Harlem journal, in 1951. She wrote articles and reviews, and tried her hand at poetry and the writing of plays. Her first complete play; A RAISIN IN THE SUN, made her, at 29, the first woman and the only black playwright ever to win the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best Play of the Year (1959). Five years later, while her second play, THE SIGN IN SIDNEY BRUSTEIN'S WINDOW, was running on Broadway, Miss Hansberry died of cancer at the age of 34. Her posthumous play LES BLANCS was presented on Broadway in 1970.

TO BE YOUNG, GIFTED AND BLACK is the story of Lorraine Hansberry, told

THE CHARACTERS

Actresses:

Miss. Hansberry.....Debbie Mitchell
Playwright

First Actress.....Esther Parker
She I

Second Actress.....Bridget Ratcliff
Candace

Third Actress.....Angela Mitchell
Mama
Sarah
Fourth girl

Mariela.....Theresa Tracy
Mavis
She II

Iris.....Alice Burns
Professor

Actors:

Hannibal.....Harold McNeal

Walter.....James Thomas
Monasse
Waiter

Sidney.....Tom Welch

in her own words. It begins with a gallery of the characters she created and a speech she delivered shortly before the opening of A RAISIN IN THE SUN. From there, it moves back and forth in time—from earliest childhood in the Chicago ghetto to memories of her first trip south and the images of slavery it stirred in her; from school days and the race riot at Englewood High to the year at the University of Wisconsin when she first encountered the plays of Sean O'Casey, the great Irish writer whose work so profoundly influenced her own; from the years of creation and triumph in New York to the search for meaning and relevance and that followed success. (Her last book, written in the hospital for S.N.C.C., was called THE MOVEMENT.)

Boldly contemporary in form, the play was woven together from letters, diaries, notebooks and portions of her plays by Robert Nemiroff, her husband and literary executor. The form is free-flowing but chronological, with scenes and memories merging into each other without sharp divisions. No single member of the company plays Miss Hansberry; rather, all in turn—male and female, black and white—portray her, her characters and the people who most affected her.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

PROLOGUE: Lorraine Hansberry

Act I

Scene I: Childhood Southside Summers
First & Second Actress

Scene II: School days
First & Second Actress
Fourth girl

Scene III: "The Drinking Gourd"
Sarah & Hannibal

Scene IV: Memories of Childhood
Professor, Candace, Monasse,
Mariela

Act II

Playwright

Scene I: Purpose for writing
Second & Third Actress

Scene II: "The Sign In Sidney Brustein's
Window"
Iris, Sidney & Mavis

Scene III: Cocktail Party
She I & She II
Waiter & Guest

Scene IV: Close to the end
First & Second Actress

Epilogue: First & Second Actress

Little Theatre production. She is the director of the John Carroll Gospel Ensemble and the Parker Memorial Church of God in Christ Youth Choir. She States: "Never be afraid to meet challenges for life itself is one big challenge."

Bridget L. Ratcliff, a freshman from Indianapolis and a Pre-Law student, makes her acting debut in this production. Bridget is a member of the J.C.U. Afro-American Society. Her interests include gymnastics, reading, and music.

James Thomas, a junior majoring in biology makes his second appearance in a Little Theatre Production. James is a lab assistant at one of Cleveland's well known hospitals. His interests include basketball, reading mysteries, and discussing world philosophies. He states, "Everyone can contribute something to humanity no matter how small or large, the essential part is to contribute!"

Theresa Marie Tracy is a sophomore communications major and English minor from the Cleveland area. This is her first appearance on the Little Theatre stage. Terri is a special Minister in Campus Liturgy and she also holds a FCC license which enables her to work at WUJC as a disc jockey. Terri loves to travel. Her dream is to visit England. Terri wishes all, "may all of your dreams bloom like daisies in the sun."

Thomas B. Walsh, is a sophomore from Pittsburgh currently majoring in

MEET THE CAST
(alphabetically)

Alice Burns, a freshman from Parkridge Illinois, majoring in English makes her second debut in a Little Theatre Production. She made her first appearance in, THE ENCOUNTER. Alice plans to go into law after graduation. She enjoys ballet and gourmet cooking.

Harold McNeal, a junior majoring in Business makes his first appearance on stage. He is presently involved with an accounting firm where he plans to continue upon graduation. His interest include basketball and reading. Harold quotes, "Time is one of the most precious items an individual possess so use it well."

Angela M. Mitchell, a junior accounting major makes her second performance in JCU's Little Theatre. Angela enjoys deep thinking, dancing, music and people. Angela states, "Why accept one only for their physical attributes when that aspect only dies away-the soul is much more lasting?"

Debbie Ann Mitchell, a junior from the greater Cleveland area, majoring in Elementary Education, makes her first debut on stage. For the past three years she has been a member of John Carroll's Women's Varsity Tennis team and also an active member of The John Carroll Gospel Ensemble.

Esther Lorraine Parker, a junior majoring in Special Education and minoring in child psychology makes her first appearance in a

friend and an inspiring teacher for
all of his assistance and guidance.
Thanks to my family for understanding
when I was spending long hours at
John Carroll for rehearsals.

Marsha Kinney

communications. Tom is presently serving as the Sports Director of WUJC where he holds a third class operators permit.

Marsha Kinney is a senior majoring in Business Management with a minor in communications. She has been involved with the Little Theatre workshop since her freshman year. During her freshman year she served as stage manager and cast in WE'VE GOT TIME, sophomore year as house manager in A RAISIN IN THE SUN. This year her dream came true as being the director of "TO BE YOUNG GIFTED AND BLACK."

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The performance you will see is a culmination of four months of a lot of hard work, laughter, and tears. I wanted a play that had a unique appeal, and one that expressed a wide range of thoughts and emotions and the many other different aspects of the human experience. TO BE YOUNG GIFTED AND BLACK, provided this and much more. It provided us with the opportunity to work and share with each other, and is an experience that we have all grown from.

I would especially like to thank Mr. Leone Marinello, a good and warm.

James Thomas
Harold Mc Neal