



Black Theatre USA Revised and Expanded Edition, Vol. 1 : Plays by African Americans, The Early Period 1847 to 1938

Ted Shine

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This revised and expanded Black Theatre U.S.A. broadens its collection to fifty-one outstanding plays, enhancing its status as the most authoritative anthology of African American drama with 22 new selections. Building on the well-respected first edition published in 1974, this edition features previously unpublished works including *In Dahomey*, *Liberty Deferred*, and *Star of Ethiopia*, and the Department of Interior's infamous 1918 food pageant. Contemporary plays by women have been added - Robbie McCauley's *Sally's Rape*, Anna Deavere Smith's *Fires in the Mirror*, and Aishah Rahman's *The Mojo and the Sayso*, as well as the modern classics - Ntozake Shange's *Colored Girls...*, Adrienne Kennedy's *Funnyhouse of a Negro*, and Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*. The range of this collection extends from 1847 to 1992, including the great names in the African American pantheon of writers - Paul Laurence Dunbar, W. E. B. Du Bois, Angelina Grimke, Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, and James Baldwin. The chronology begins with William Wells Brown's *The Escape: or, a Leap for Freedom*, based on his own life as an escaped slave. Two expatriot authors, Ira Aldridge and Victor Sejour, provide glimpses of life in Europe, while at home, playwrights struggled with the issues of birth control, miscegenation, lynching, and migration. The book embraces both commercial successes such as George C. Wolfe's *The Colored Museum*, and Charles Fuller's *A Soldier's Play*, as well as lesser-known masterpieces - Ben Caldwell's *The First Militant Preacher*, Owen Dodson's *The Confession Stone*, and Ted Shine's *Contribution*. The stylistic range, too, runs the gamut of genre from the realism of Ted Ward, Lonnie Elder III, and Ed Bullins to the surrealism of Marita Bonner and Aishah Rahman. Comedy is present in Abram Hill's *On Strivers Row* and Douglas Turner Ward's *Day of Absence* which mock the racism of both Blacks and Whites.

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