

THE NATIONAL BLACK THEATRE MILESTONES

1968

NBT incorporated in New York State

National Black Theatre Workshop and Barbara Ann Teer featured in “Me and My Song”, a CBS-TV Production that premiered the choreopoem form.

The Cycles - a new black art standard premiered in National Black Theatre Workshop.

Barbara Ann Teer writes major article in Sunday New York Times Drama Section entitled “We Can Be What We Were Born To Be”.

1969

NBT creates and produces award winning film: “RISE: A Love Song for a Love People - a Tribute to Malcolm X” National Association of Black Media Women

1970

NBT granted Not-for-Profit 501(c)-3 corporate status in New York State.

The National Black Theatre becomes a tenant on the third floor loft of 2031 Fifth Avenue. As the organization develops and grows, it expands administrative activities and relocates its offices to the second floor loft.

NBT premieres production: “THE RITUAL: To Regain Our Strength and Reclaim Our Power” and it is introduced with overwhelming response on nationwide television, Channel 13's SOUL program produced by Ellis Hazlip.

1971

NBT performs “THE RITUAL” in Bermuda as guests of the Bermuda government; at the Apollo Theatre; at the Association of Black Social Workers Annual Conference; at Howard University; and at colleges and universities across the Eastern Seaboard

1972

NBT performs at the Lincoln Center as part of “SOUL at the Center” series.

NBT premieres a new art form in original production: “A Revival: Change/Love Together/Organize”, which runs for six months at 9 East 125th Street.

Barbara Ann Teer receives Ford Foundation Fellowship to visit and conduct research and development in Africa.

1973

Barbara Ann Teer travels to Africa for a four month research project in Nigeria.

NBT performs “A Revival To Go Back Home” featuring guest artist Michael Olatunji at the Lincoln Center.

NBT Company travels to Nigeria for a six week study project.

Nigerian performers, Twins Seven Seven and seven company members are artists-in-residence at NBT

Nana Oparebeah, traditional Ghanaian high priestess visits NBT

1974

NBT Company travels to Haiti for a two week research project.

NBT presents Swami Muktananda, a Siddha Yoga Saint from India at NBT.

NBT premieres “Soljourney Into Truth: A Ritualistic Revival” written by Barbara Ann Teer

NBT participates in the “est” Training.

1975

Fredrica Teer becomes Executive Director bringing professional management and training to NBT.

NBT tours “Soljourney” in Guyana, South America, Trinidad, Barbados and West Indies.

1976

NBT creates new theatrical technology “Pyramid Process of Performing Workshops”

NBT receives major grant from Lilly Foundation.

NBT develops a child care program for its employees with support of Bank Street College.

1977

NBT is selected to represent the United States at the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) in Nigeria and receives overwhelming response to “Soljourney” in Nigerian newspapers and television.

NBT produces three major fundraising events, “Glory, Glory, Glory: a Tribute to Gospel Music”, “Sights and Sounds of FESTAC 77”, “Hattie Winston in concert with Harold Wheeler”

1978

NBT produces first subscription season with “Wine in the Wilderness”, “Seven Comes Up, Seven Comes Down” by Lonne Elder III and a revival of “The Ritual”

NBT premieres a new production by Barbara Ann Teer entitled, “Softly Comes the Whirlwind, Whispering in Your Ear”

NBT tours Snowmass, Colorado with “Science of Celebration” workshop performs at the New York City Hunger Project Benefit and makes records featuring “Riding on the Wings of love” production.

Ifayemi Eleburuibon, Nigerian Yoruba Babalawo and performing artist, takes on a two month residence at NBT

1979

NBT celebrates tenth anniversary performing “Soljourney” at the Beacon Theatre, receives proclamations from both the Mayor and Governor of New York.

NBT produces season with revivals of “Whirlwind”, “The Ritual” and a traditional play, “The Owl and the Pussycat” in tribute to Diana Sands.

Joseph Papp hosts a fundraising event for The National Black Theatre at the Public Theatre.

1980

NBT premieres “Soul Fusion” at the Lincoln Center.

NBT hosts fundraising event: Uptown Harlem Casino Nite; Basketball Game with WBLS, and first annual giving campaign

Through major funding from the Beard's Fund, NBT introduces “The Joy of Performing” workshop with guest lecturers Ntozake Shange, Woodie King, Dan Fauci, Hattie Winston and Don Evans.

Barbara Ann Teer speaks at first World Conference on Orisha Tradition and Culture in Nigeria at the University of Ife.

NBT touring program reaches 13,000 people

NBT school graduates its first pre-schoolers class into first grade.

1981

NBT premieres “Looking for the Light in the Lion's Den” at the Lincoln Center.

NBT hosts fundraiser: Leon Thomas in Concert, featuring Zuri McKie.

NBT invites and hosts three kings and four chiefs to Harlem Day and representative of Ooni of Ife (traditional King and ruler of the Yoruba Nation) acknowledges Barbara Ann Teer.

1982

NBT produces season revival of “Soul Fusion” and premieres “Face It Baby, It's Really Your Show”

NBT Children's After School Performing Arts Program Premieres “When The Lion Roars” at NBT and performs in Seattle, Washington as artists-in-residence for one month.

NBT receives Urban Initiatives grant of \$35,000 from DHCR toward purchase of building

NBT tours Richmond, Virginia as artists-in-residence offering workshops and performances.

NBT renames its performance workshop, “The Teer Technology of Soul”

The Ooni of Ife, traditional king and ruler of the Yoruba Nation, donates to NBT Cultural Complex.

“Soul Fusion” wins AUDELCO Awards for Outstanding Musical Creator and Outstanding Male in Musical.

1983

NBT facility destroyed by fire and water, programs temporarily suspended.

NBT collects 17,000 signatures on petitions for restoration funds from New York State.

“The Teer Technology of Soul” introduced and taught at Cathedral School of St. John the Divine.

NBT Children’s School graduates second group of pre-schoolers into first grade at Abyssinian Baptist Church.

NBT celebrates purchase of building at 12Sth Street and Fifth Avenue.

NBT announces sponsorship of the “National Black Institute of Communication Through Theatre Arts”.

NBT resumes programs and premieres production “The Best of Both Worlds”.

NBT produces the first Harlem “Communication for Action Workshop” conducted by world-renown philosopher and educator, Dr. Fernando Flores.

NBT is acknowledged in a tribute by the New York Urban Coalition during the annual “Kwanza Celebration” at City College.

Through the support of CBS and Griot Productions, a 30 minute documentary “The Quest” is produced, that chronicles 15 years of NBT achievements.

1984

Barbara Ann Teer writes major two-part editorial opinion in Amsterdam news entitled “Reinvention of a People”.

March 5th through the 12th is officially proclaimed National Black Theatre Week.

New York Governor Cuomo, Manhattan Borough President Andrew Stein and City Clerk David Dinkins, individually acknowledge and commend NBT's heroic return to the Harlem community.

Full week of theatrical productions, workshops, seminars, children's programs, panel discussions and awards presented with chair-persons Flo Kennedy and Bob Law as honorary hosts.

NBT creates the Harlem Communication for Action coaching committee.

Melba Tolliver becomes a trainer for Harlem Communication for Action Workshops.

NBT produces "One Monkey Don't Stop No Show" by Don Evans, marking the directorial debut of NBT's Business Manager, Shirley Clemons-Faison

NBT launches the "NBT Financial Family"

NBT in partnership with Roger Furman's New Heritage Theatre produces "One Monkey" and "Aftertaste of Sherry" on NBT's premises at 2033 Fifth Avenue.

1985

Barbara Ann Teer featured in publication: Black Masks.

Barbara Ann Teer and NBT featured in arts media services publication: The Gap

Shirley Faison titled "a new force in Black theatre" in Manhattan Plaza Newsletter.

Racism seminar held at the National Black Theatre.

The Entrepreneurial Artist Program (EAP) is established.

1986

NYS UDC loan approved for two million dollars.

NBT's EAP holds a series of fundraising events. "Conrad Neblett and Vivian Prince at Village Gate" and "Conrad/Tunde and Friends at Mikell's"

NBT participates in Liberty Day 200th Celebration of America.

NBT introduces “Performing Writers” workshop.

NBT receives Challenge Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)

NBT's performing season receives recognition through an AUDELCO nomination for production: “Affinity”

1987

CBS Foundation donates \$92,000 to NBT building fund

NBT receives six AUDELCO nominations for its various productions

Edmar Corporation's Marguerite Chandler financially supports NBT.

“Legacy” wins four AUDELCO Awards.

EAP produces fundraiser, Dimensions of a Higher Love at Village Gate.

NBT re-activates Touring Program

Wole Soyinka, Nobel Laureate in Literature endorses NBT.

NBT receives unanimous loan approval from NYC Board of Estimate toward real estate development project

1988

Harlem Week honors NBT for 20 Years of service in the Harlem Community.

“The Legacy” completes a one year run and becomes “longest consistent run of a production in NBT history”

“The Legacy” becomes part of CBS-TV's “World of Difference” series as a one hour special.

New York Newsday publishes “Success Without Compromise: Struggle of Black Theatre”, a major article on Barbara Ann Teer and NBT.

Black Masks features Tunde Samuel.

Theatre Week magazine features NBT, EAP and “The Legacy”.

NBT receives contract from Board of Education - George Washington High School.

NBT introduces new workshop Soulful Seduction Leadership and Life.

NYS Urban Development Corporation holds public hearings to approve building project loan of 3.2 million dollars

“The Fruits of Miss Morning” and “The Crescent Tales” win 11 AUDELCO awards

1989

NBT breaks ground for NBICTA with New York State Governor Cuomo as keynote speaker.

“The Legacy” receives Award Of Merit at 1989 CEBA Awards Presentation

“The Song of Sheba” wins 8 AUDELCO Awards

“The Legacy” completes its' second year.

1990

NBT raises money to totally rebuild the South Tower at 2033 5th Avenue that had been damaged by fire in 1983. To commemorate this accomplishment then New York Governor Mario Cuomo agreed to be the keynote speaker at the opening. NBT now owns, operates and manages the entire 64,000 square feet facility.

1994

New York Mayor Guiliani signed Local Laws 10 and 11 renaming the street at Fifth Avenue and 125th street, "National Black Theatre Way" and "Fredrica L. Teer Square." Fredrica L. Teer Square is named after NBT's late Executive Director and sister of founder Dr. Barbara Ann Teer.