



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Taproot Theatre Celebrates Three Years of Kendall Center Exhibition Series with Artwork by Brenetta Ward

Quilted Legacies: Visual Stories by Brenetta Ward* opens during the PhinneyWood Art Walk and corresponds with Mainstage play, *My Lord, What a Night

SEATTLE, WA – August 15, 2024 – Taproot Theatre Company hosts *Quilted Legacies: Visual Stories by Brenetta Ward* this fall during the run of *My Lord, What a Night*, a regional premiere by Deborah Brevoort, based on the real-life friendship between famed contralto Marian Anderson and physicist Albert Einstein. Taproot Theatre began hosting the work of local visual artists through its Kendall Center Exhibition Series in September 2021 and features work that complements the Mainstage production. *Quilted Legacies* runs September 13 – November 4, 2024, coinciding with the PhinneyWood Art Walk, which runs September 13-14.

“Brenetta Ward is an oral historian. Her artwork captures the essence of the cloth she works with and the heart of the stories she tells with the layers of material she gathers and melds into quilts and story scrolls. When I shared the story of *My Lord, What a Night* with her, she immediately went into research mode, diving deeply into the history of Marian Anderson and Albert Einstein and their history together. I knew she was the perfect artist to expand on that story here in the Kendall Center Exhibition Series,” says Taproot’s Director of Development, Gina Cavallo, who curates the exhibition series.

In *My Lord, What a Night*, Marian Anderson is denied lodging after delighting a sold-out Princeton audience. When her long-time fan, Albert Einstein, invites her to stay in his home, the two begin a lifelong friendship. Watch as they grapple with their responsibility as an artist and scientist in a world plagued by racial segregation and a looming world war. Directed by Taproot’s Associate Artistic Director, Bretteney Beverly, the show opens on September 20, 2024 and runs through October 18, 2024.

Brenetta Ward is a Seattle-based fiber artist, third generation quilter and oral historian. Her work has been exhibited at the Postmark Center for the Arts; Wa Na Wari; Stark Museum of Art; California Museum; Booth Western Art Museum; The James Museum of Western & Wildlife Art; the Textile Center: A National Center for Fiber Art; National Afro-American Museum; Ethnic Heritage Art Gallery; Tacoma Art Museum; Northwest African American Museum and Spellman

College Museum of Fine Art. Selected pieces have been published in *We Are the Story: A Visual Response to Racism* and *Spirits of the Cloth*, and included in public, corporate and private collections. As a fiber artist, she believes quilts have the power to nurture our spiritual needs for creativity, beauty and comfort.

In addition to the Friday and Saturday of the PhinneyWood Art Walk, the exhibition is open to the public during regular performance times or by appointment. To make an appointment, please email gina@taproottheatre.org. Visit Brenetta's website - <https://www.brenettaward.com/> - for more information on her work.

BRENETTA WARD'S ARTIST STATEMENT

I combine traditional quilting techniques, ethnic fabrics and African design aesthetics to create quilted legacies. My quilting style honors my Southern roots and incorporates a range of techniques. Using cultural textiles, vintage photographs and symbolic embellishments, I construct contemporary quilts that keep you warm, narrative quilts that tell cultural stories and fabric art that celebrates the spirit of the cloth.

My art is influenced by my values, life experiences, spiritual beliefs and culture. The integration of these elements guides my creative expression. I believe fiber is a powerful influence in our lives. It is the first thing we are swaddled in when we are born, and it is the last thing we are wrapped in when we leave this earthly life.

Many of my pieces feature Mud Cloth, a textile from Mali. The narrow strips of this handwoven cotton are stitched together into a whole cloth, then resist-painted with symbols and dyed using mud from the local area. I carefully deconstruct the strips of fabric to use in my art. I believe its connection to the earth of my ancestors' homeland provides a powerful bond to my own history and personal story.

As an oral historian, I especially enjoy designing pieces that pay tribute to African Americans whose contributions to our shared history have not been sufficiently recognized. As a Black woman, an artist, and a citizen in this country, I believe my art and artistic practice are acts of liberation.

MY LORD, WHAT A NIGHT FACT SHEET

WHAT: Taproot Theatre Company presents *My Lord, What a Night* by Deborah Brevoort. *Marian Anderson is denied lodging after delighting a sold-out Princeton audience. When her long-time fan, Albert Einstein, invites her to stay in his home, the two begin a lifelong friendship. Watch as they grapple with their responsibility as an artist and scientist in a world plagued by racial segregation and a looming world war.*

WHEN: September 18 – October 19, 2024 • Wed/Thur/Fri/Sat, 7:30 PM; Sat matinee, 2:00 PM

Dates to note:

Previews: September 18 & 19, 7:30 PM

Opening Night: September 20, 7:30 PM

Pay What You Can: September 25, 7:30 PM

Midweek Matinees: September 24 and October 9 at 2:00 PM, October 16 at 10:30 AM (*limited availability*)

WHERE: Taproot Theatre Company, 204 N 85th St, Seattle, WA 98103

TICKETS: Tickets to *My Lord, What a Night* are available online at taproottheatre.org, by phone at 206.781.9707 (Tue-Sat, noon-5:00 PM), or in person at 204 N 85th St. Ticket prices range from \$25-62 with discounts available for students, seniors, active military, 25 & Under and TeenTix members. Accessible ticket prices are also available on TodayTix. Discounts are also available for groups of 8 or more by calling 206.781.9708 or by visiting taproottheatre.org/group-sales.

AGE RECOMMENDATION: 14+

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PHOTOS: Photos will soon be available online at <https://taproottheatre.org/for-the-press/> (Jewell Mainstage Theatre → *My Lord, What a Night* (link not to be published))

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Taproot Theatre Company is a professional, non-profit theatre company with a multi-faceted production program. Founded in 1976, Taproot Theatre serves the Pacific Northwest with Jewell Mainstage Productions, Isaac Studio Theatre Productions, Touring Productions and the Acting Studio. Taproot Theatre Company tells stories of hope, serving the Pacific Northwest through live theatre and educational programs. Taproot Theatre Company is a member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), Theatre Puget Sound (TPS) and Phinney Ridge Neighborhood Association (PNA).

Karen Lund, *Producing Artistic Director*
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