

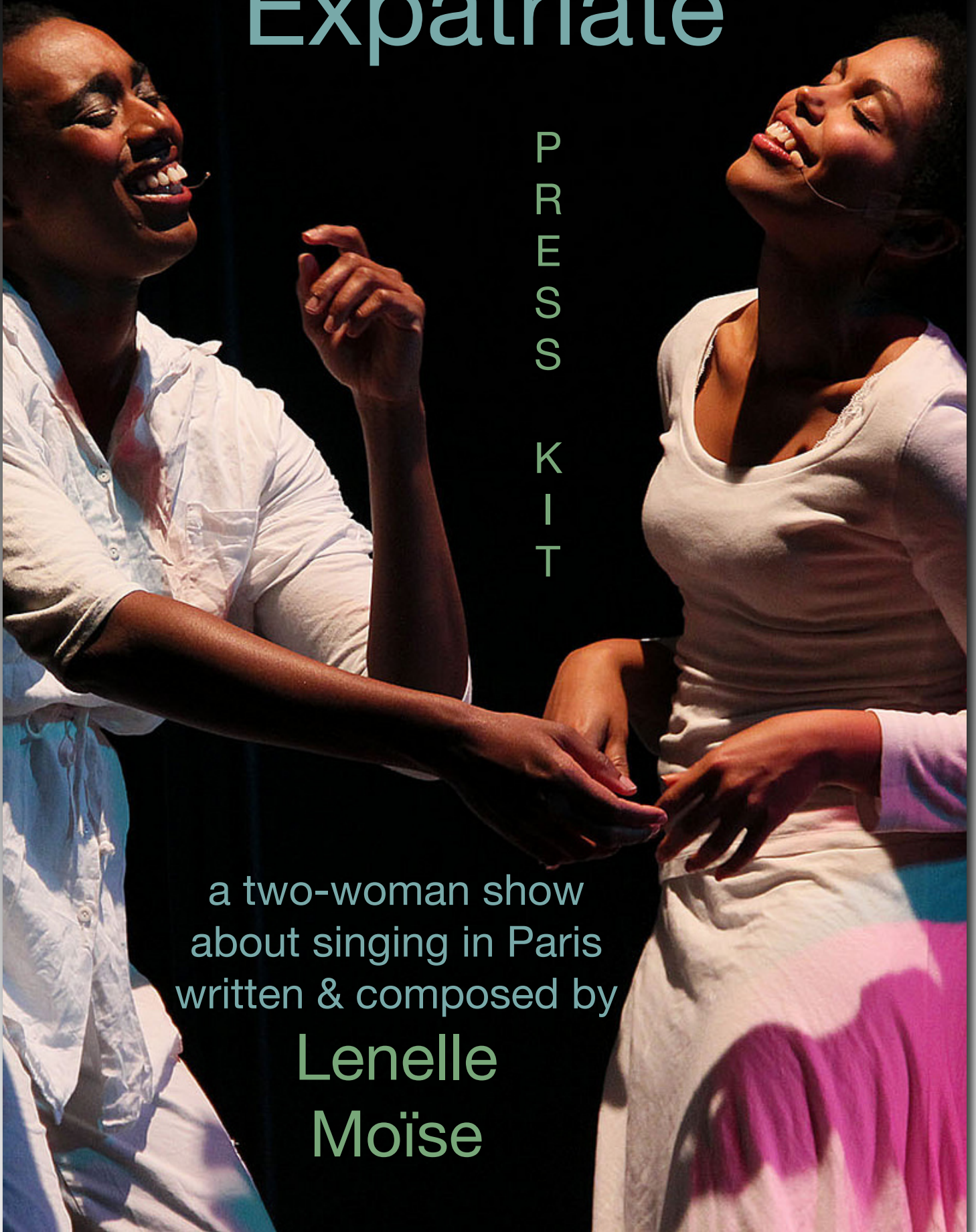
Expatriate

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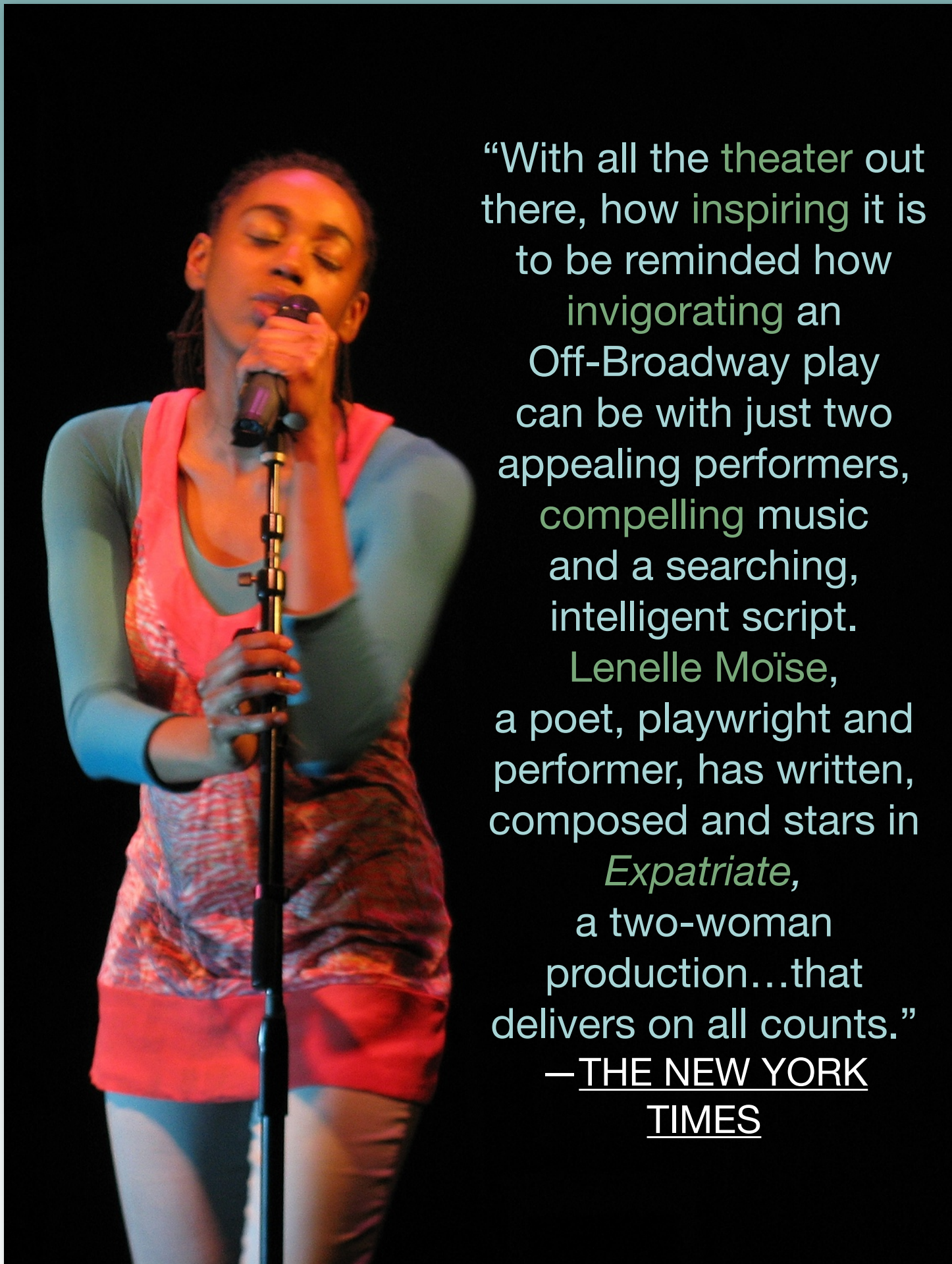
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a two-woman show
about singing in Paris
written & composed by

Lenelle
Moïse







“With all the theater out there, how inspiring it is to be reminded how invigorating an Off-Broadway play can be with just two appealing performers, compelling music and a searching, intelligent script.

Lenelle Moïse, a poet, playwright and performer, has written, composed and stars in


Expatriate, a two-woman production...that delivers on all counts.”

—THE NEW YORK TIMES

INTRODUCTION

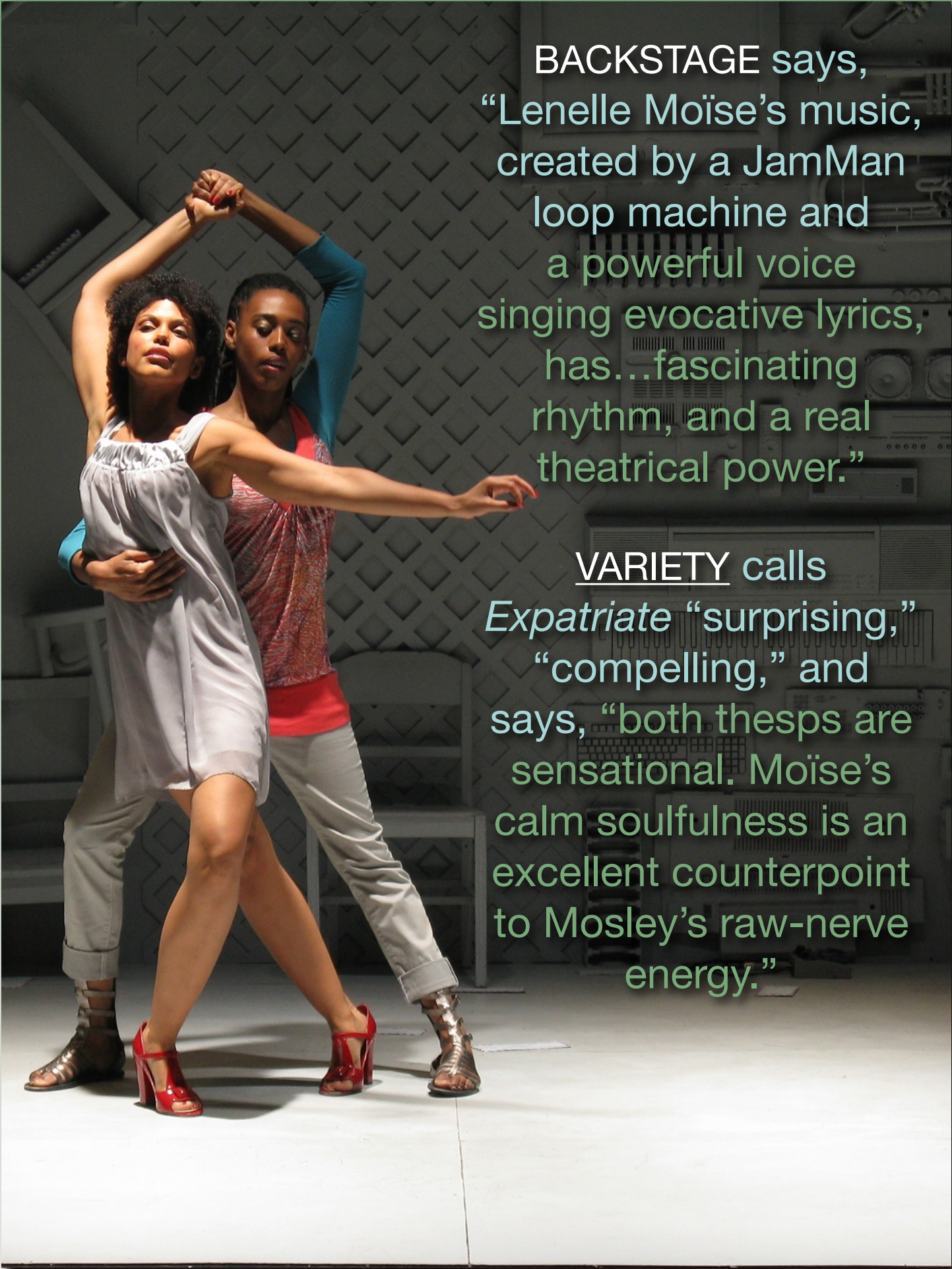
Expatriate—an explosive two-woman play with all-vocal music—launched Off-Broadway at the Culture Project in 2008. A seamless fusion of realism, poetic dream sequences and live concert numbers, this energetic two-woman show explores friendship, desire, addiction and survival. Critics have praised *Expatriate* for being a “**freshly imaginative**” (*New York Post*), “**feast for the eyes and ears,**” pulsing with “**an abundance of heart and conviction**” (*NYTheater.com*), “**a thoughtful narrative laden with observations about childhood, black identity in the United States and abroad, and the cost of show business on performers**” (*The New York Times*). In 2010, playwright and composer Lenelle Moïse released *The Expatriate Amplification Project*, a studio recording of *Expatriate*’s funk-infused score. The album features “**powerhouse singing**” (*CurtainUp*) by Moïse and her co-star Karla Mosley. A touring production of *Expatriate* has enraptured audiences in Seattle, Boston and Tulsa. And there’s more to come!





GO MAGAZINE says,
“Moïse and Mosley
play their finely-drawn
roles with haunting
passion and precision.
From scene to scene,
the arc of their
relationship is
beautifully and
convincingly rendered
in this refreshingly
honest and deeply
moving two-woman
tour de force.”

CURTAIN UP calls
Expatriate “exuberant,”
“theatrically sharp” and
“utterly life-affirming.”

A photograph of two women dancing in a studio. The woman in the foreground is wearing a light blue, off-the-shoulder, short-sleeved dress and red high-heeled sandals. She is looking upwards and to the right. The woman behind her is wearing a red and white patterned top, light blue long-sleeved shirt, and light-colored pants. She is looking towards the camera. They are both holding hands, with the woman in the back having her arms raised. The background is a dark wall with a diamond-shaped pattern. There are some pieces of equipment visible in the background, including what looks like a keyboard and some speakers.

BACKSTAGE says,
“Lenelle Moïse’s music,
created by a JamMan
loop machine and
a powerful voice
singing evocative lyrics,
has...fascinating
rhythm, and a real
theatrical power.”

VARIETY calls
Expatriate “surprising,”
“compelling,” and
says, “both thesps are
sensational. Moïse’s
calm soulfulness is an
excellent counterpoint
to Mosley’s raw-nerve
energy.”



THE STORY

Achingly platonic soulmates Claudie and Alphine are unsung musicians and longtime best-friends. Both wrestle with the addiction and abandonment that run in their respective family histories. Diligent, dutiful Claudie may or may not be celibate while sparkly, indulgent Alphine has more natural star-potential than she knows what to do with. When Claudie's troubled twin brother Omar dies of a drug overdose, the mourning women flee to Europe to pursue their American dreams. In Paris, the two forgo fruitless solo careers to join forces as the sultry singing duo Black Venus. Parisians dub them "the greatest act since Josephine Baker" and they quickly rise to fame and fortune. Tensions rise as Claudie finds sexual freedom, artistic sustenance and spiritual regeneration through her new life abroad while Alphine's hunger for adoration from a celebrity-mad culture spins tragically out of control. Two powerful actors play five characters to weave the story of Black Venus' fantastic rise to fame and tragic fall from glory. Runtime with intermission: 120 minutes.

INTERVIEWS

“Lenelle uses beauty and humor the way another artist might use brittle intellect or howling anger. Her luscious characters embody the scars of brutal poverty and bigotry in Boston and the outrageous determination that is also at the heart of our town.” —Artistic Director Abe Rybeck to *The Rainbow Times*, 2012

<http://www.therainbowtimesmass.com/the-theater-offensive-brings-off-broadway-hit-play-expatriate-to-the-south-end/>

“Philosophically, I make theatre to connect, not to exclude. My audiences tend to be ethnically diverse and intergenerational...All in all, we meet at the theatre to experience a skillfully told story. If you walk into the room, I’m going to love you! —Lenelle Moïse to *Edge Boston*, 2012

http://www.edgemedianetwork.com/entertainment/theatre/news//137613/lenelle_moise_searches_for_identity_at_home_and_abroad_with_%22expatriate%22

“My goal as a playwright is to create leading roles for women and people of color. I want to give voice to the range of our experiences. With my pen, I can steer marginalized narratives to the center of the stage. And I find that audiences —across race, gender, sexuality, class and culture—are ready to embrace well-told stories about complex women characters of color.” —Lenelle Moïse to *Live Unchained*, 2012

<http://www.liveunchained.com/at-the-edge-of-your-seat-how-lenelle-moise-takes-a-poets-approach-to-playwriting/>

“[Expatriate is] a hybrid piece...It’s a song-cycle, it’s a choreopoem...Our [Off-Broadway] production proved that theatre like this could exist. That you could come and see this thing that wasn’t quite a musical or a traditional play but that it was engaging and theatrical and exciting...There’s something in it for everyone.” —Lenelle Moïse to *NPR*, Tulsa, 2013.

<http://publicradiotulsa.org/post/new-genre-xx-presents-expatriate-two-act-play-rhythmic-vocal-driven-music-throughout#stream/0>

▶ Stream songs from the play:
[http://music.lenellemoise.com/
album/the-expatriate-
amplification-project](http://music.lenellemoise.com/album/the-expatriate-amplification-project)



PRODUCTION HISTORY

2013: **Living Arts of Tulsa** (Tulsa, OK)

2012: **The Theatre Offensive** (Boston, MA)

2011: **Central District Forum for Arts & Ideas** (Seattle, WA)

2008: **Culture Project** Off-Broadway run (New York, NY)

Women Center Stage Festival workshop production (New York, NY)

Kitchen Theatre Company workshop production (Ithaca, NY)

STAGED READINGS

2010: **Smith College** (Northampton, MA)

2009: **New WORLD Theater** (Amherst, MA)

DEVELOPMENTAL SUPPORT

Hedgebrook Retreat for Women Writers (Langley, WA)

Northampton Arts Council (Northampton, MA)

OFF-BROADWAY PRODUCTION TEAM

Written and Composed by Lenelle Moïse

Co-starring Lenelle Moïse and Karla Mosley

Directed by Tamilla Woodard

Choreography by Nicco Annan

Sound Design by Nick Moore

Set Design by Deb O

Lighting Design by Stephen Arnold

TOURING PRODUCTION TEAM

Written and Composed by Lenelle Moïse

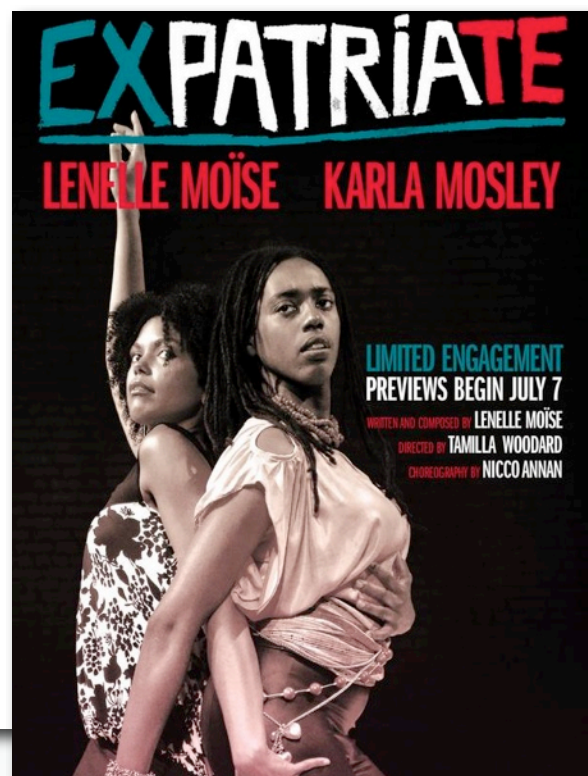
Starring Lenelle Moïse and Karla Mosley

Directed by Ashley Sparks

Sound Design by Mikhaal Sulaiman

Set Pieces by Vanessa Vargas

Lighting Design by Billy Muñoz



► Visit the project website:
[http://www.lenellemoise.com/
expatriatepresskit](http://www.lenellemoise.com/expatriatepresskit)



FULL REVIEW: THE NEW YORK TIMES

“Ah Paris, Beacon of Freedom, City of Jazz” by Andy Webster.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/25/theater/reviews/25expa.html? r=0>

With all the theater out there, how inspiring it is to be reminded how invigorating an Off Broadway play can be with just two appealing performers, compelling music and a searching, intelligent script. Lenelle Moïse, a poet, playwright and performer, has written, composed and stars in “Expatriate,” a two-woman production at the Culture Project that delivers on all counts.

In the first act the play follows the best friends Claudie (Ms. Moïse) and Alphine (Karla Mosley) from childhood in the Boston projects to New York. Understated, earnest Claudie, in dreadlocks, attends Juilliard while exuberant but needy Alphine, in a glittery short dress, works briefly as a stripper and sings at jazz gigs. Though Alphine goes out with Omar, Claudie’s ne’er-do-well twin, a rising hip-hop star, it’s clear the women reserve their greatest support for each other.

When Omar dies, Claudie, despondent, flees to Paris, where she falls in love and moves in with a woman. Alphine follows her there, and the two find success as the singing duo Black Venus. As they struggle to define their relationship, Alphine goes solo, succumbing to the temptations of fame and substance abuse. Claudie emerges from under her shadow and finds her own inner star.

With the Black Venus numbers, the play breaks out its big musical guns, suggesting the glory of the stage but with minimal fuss. Ms. Moïse’s compositions, enhanced by Nick Moore’s music direction and sound design, are often recorded percussive vocals accompanied by live singing. The stripped-down result is effective. Nicco Annan’s choreography and Stephen Arnold’s unobtrusive projection design also make an impact.

Ms. Moïse has written a thoughtful narrative laden with observations about childhood, black identity in the United States and abroad, and the cost of show business on performers. As directed by Tamilla Woodard, it never lags nor gets ahead of itself. But the production’s greatest asset is Ms. Moïse and Ms. Mosley’s heavenly symmetry, entwined in dialogue and song.

Ms. Mosley’s contribution cannot be underestimated. She calibrates Alphine’s decline with subtlety, bringing out her shrill, brittle insecurities and petty vanities organically, without undue pyrotechnics. You see the result but know where it came from.

Claudie has her own transformation. When she tears into the song “Rebel” toward the end, it’s as if a spirit has been passed on — of Nina Simone, of Josephine Baker, of Alphine.

July 25, 2008

▶ Listen to the cast on *NPR*:
[http://publicradiotulsa.org/post/
new-genre-xx-presents-
expatriate-two-act-play-rhythmic-
vocal-driven-music-throughout](http://publicradiotulsa.org/post/new-genre-xx-presents-expatriate-two-act-play-rhythmic-vocal-driven-music-throughout)



FULL REVIEW: GO MAGAZINE

“Theater Review: *Expatriate*” by Chloe Liederman.

http://www.gomag.com/article/theater_review_expatriate/

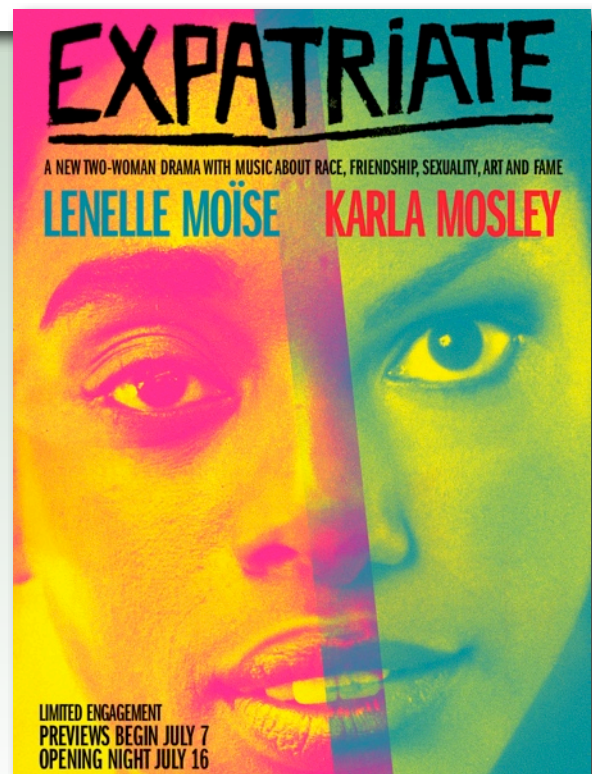
Spoken-word artist, playwright and composer Lenelle Moïse’s latest work is a vibrant and bittersweet ode to race, sexuality, art, family and fame. Steeped in rich neo jazz by Moïse and interpretive choreography by Nicco Annan, this theatrical exploration of black womanhood stars Moïse and Karla Mosley as lifelong sister-friends who flee to Europe and rise to stardom on the Paris jazz scene.

As close childhood companions, Claudie (Moïse) and Alphine (Mosley) negotiate a rocky terrain of sex, longing and addiction—all themes which inform their journey through profound loss into womanhood, across the Atlantic and into the spotlight as the smoldering jazz duo Black Venus.

Armed only with their phenomenal voices and a JamMan loop machine, Moïse and Mosley perform *Expatriate*’s electrifying original musical score. Moïse’s sensual, velvety timbre is a sublime counterpart to Mosley’s glorious soprano, and her composition is hauntingly beautiful.

From the concrete jungle to the Paris elite, the characters’ mutual evolution is both seamless and textured. Moïse and Mosley play their finely-drawn roles with haunting passion and precision. From scene to scene, the arc of their relationship is beautifully and convincingly rendered in this refreshingly honest and deeply moving two-woman tour de force.

July 16, 2008



► Contact the playwright:
booking@lenellemoise.com

