# Up Close and Personal

Theater is a brutally honest artform. The actor tries to create an alternative reality in a limited space before a live audience. The reaction is immediate. Trazana Beverley's artistry places her among the frist rank of American actresses.

Her vivid and unforgettable performance in "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide when the Rainbow is Enuf" garnered a 1977 Tony Award for her, as the best actress on Broadway in a dramatic role.

Ms. Beverley transforms herself into a character with an ease that is both magical and technically impressive. Her roles have been as diverse as the "Lady in Red" in "For Colored Girls" to the title role in Bertold Brecht's powerful play on the Thirty Years' War "Mother Courage."

Her latest role is one that is even more meaningful and emotional than her previous roles. She is now trying to mount on Broadway a semi-autobiographical, one woman show entitled "The Spirit Moves."

The project is very close to Trazana Beverley's heart." This play is partially autobiographical," Ms. Beverly said, smiling almost shyly," It coincides with my own spiritual reawakening. I put it together over the last eight years."

"The Spirit Moves" is a great theatrical risk because it is, in the words of the author, Spiritual Theater. Spiritual theater according to Ms. Beverley is drama done with the highest professional standards with an uplifting spiritual message.

"Spiritual theater is not about preaching at people or denominationalism. It's about spiritual messages that are a part of the play.

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A person should be able to enjoy it like any other play," said Ms. Beverley.

Like most religious sagas worldwide that feature some test or hardship, Trazana Beverley's mountain to climb is the traditional reluctance of commercial theater to produce "religious dramas."

There have been plays on Broadway with religious themes, but many of them have been agnosite in tone and featured characters that wrestled with troubling doubts about religious faith. Some others plays that made it to Broadway with religious themes such as Langston Hughes' "Black Nativity" and James Weldon Johnson's "God's Trombones" featured rousing gospel music.

"The Spirit Moves" features some singing by Ms. Beverley along with her multi-character portrayals." It's basically about a woman who is living in the world. She comes home to where her grandmother lived, a place where the grandmother influenced her greatly and gave her love." the author-actress said.

She continued, "The 13th chapter of Corinthians says that love abideth forever. I believe genunine love has a way of coming back. During the course of the play the character personifies the grandmother and other persons in her life who made her face things."

As Ms. Beverly spoke her hands made graceful designs in the air, her smile became slightly wider and her voice became more lyrical. She was obviously speaking with fondness for the character.

"The play is an emotional catharsis, a house cleaning. The audience should see the actress go through changes before they know it's all right," she added.

Trazana Beverley is also going against another tide in American theater as she attempts to bring her spiritual drama to the Broadway stage. Aside from musicals, very few black dramas have made it on Broadway in the last few years.

"Broadway works on a formula; they don't take too many chances. About two thirds of all the plays on Broadway, black or white are musicals. We can support a drama on Broadway but we really have to go after advanced ticket sales and we have to do a lot of publicity to get our audience up there," she stated emphatically.

She continued her train of thought, "I don't see why a great play like 'The Mighty Gents' by Richard Wesley didn't make it. I believe the audience is there, if we can get the show up there and get the audience there initially then the word of mouth and other things will keep it going."



Another one of Trazana Beverley's obstacles to overcome is a lack of funds to mount the show. In September she held a radiothon to raise money in her hometown of Baltimore, Md. And she also held a September performance for potential backers in New York.

Despite her lack of funds, she has performed the show in Nashville, Tennessee, Seattle, Washington and other cities and has received rave reviews.

In theater parlance, what she needs is an angel to put the money up for the show to be mounted at its very best.

It is Ms. Beverley's spiritual beliefs that sustain her through the ups and downs of her career and through her attempts to succeed with "The Spirit Moves" although she would not portray herself as some kind of saint.

'I don't pretend that I've always gone to church. My spiritual revitalization has taken place over the last ten years," she said.

She continued, "I was raised in Sharp Street Methodist Church in Baltimore. Like the Bible says, if you train up a child in the way, he will not depart from it. At least not permanently. In my family, somebody always made sure I made it to Sunday School and church."

According to Ms. Beverley the basis of her spirituality is a closeness with God that transcends the traditional way of religious expression. When you get renewed spiritually, denominationalism gets last. You strive to get closer to God. Too many people who go to church have a cerebral religion but they don't feel it."

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### \* \* IT'S IN THE STARS \* \*

## Your horoscope

By Harriette Lane

### (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18)

The dreamer has all sorts of plans for the future during New Year's Eve — these plans come into sharp focus during your high cycle days (4th-6th). Don't give in to the argumentative moods of others, especially around the 10th.

You may feel misunderstood, but give if time, you'll be clear expressing yourself in business and romance on the 23rd.

### (Feb. 19 - March 19)

Don't be fooled by shallow promises made by over-zealous New Year celebrants. The 7th may be a source of revelation or depression, depending on your state of mind. Be clear on the reasons you use for decision-making. Be fair to others you think are neglecting you, especially on the 21st.

You may want to get away from it all, especially around the 28th, but be careful how you plan your escape.

### (Merch 20 - Apr. 29)

You had the energy you needed to party New Years, but do you have it when you return to work?- You will, if you got the rest you needed before returning to work. Your presence seemed to dominate the holidays, and this energy continues as you impress those on the job who marvel at your stamina, especially during those peak power days (10th-11th).

You're in danger of burnout if you don't get the rest you need by the 23rd.

### (April 20 - May 20)

It may have been a surprise to some when you seemed the life of the party after New Years, and taken over the workplace at the same time. This feeling of power becomes particularly intense the 10th thru 14th, but be careful the motivation is not to impress someone else.

Let romance rule your heart for a change instead of work on the 19th. Focus on the homefront on and around the 25th.

### (May 21 - June 20)

You've made a definite impression on several people already — remain in the background and know who needs you. What needs to be done can succeed on the 15th, the height of your peak power period.

You'd do well to listen to the concerns of others, especially around the 21st. You can learn from others and gain insight that will lead to an important decision by the end of the month?

Capricors is a condinal earth sign. It shares the practical methodical characteristics of follow earth signs, Tourse and Virgo.

The condinal quality gives them the motivation they need to personned through anything. They are resourceful in using anything they read to keep abreast of current events, or whatever they must state out to be a second to be a seco

Integrate the requestion good plotting like very up as the chorus and graves at anything that gots in his way. This is the coprious and this is the coprious and this is action. Striving for success coldly and single-mindedly, till they reach the mountaintep. Insert the god of your choice.

They are the traditionalists of the sediac. Many of their present actions guided by the dominant rate model early in their life. They are trying to subconsciously pattern their own lives after this example, soughly their parents. "If it was good enough for Mann, it's good enough for me."

On the positive side, this quality can embedy Capricarn with beauty enhanced by the depth of their wiedom and loyally to those they love. Negatively aspected, this singleminded determination can lead to an appartunistic person of "blind ambittee", ready to ignore or use anything to achieve their desires.

A factinating physical feature of this sign is the ability to leak younger as they mature. The youngest Capricoms look older when younger, and younger when older. The older they get, the more fun they have. An aternal testament to their zest for life.

Your New Year usually follows true to form with the sun in your sign right from the start. A sense of anticipation is heightened by the mean in your sign the first week of January.

### (June 21 - July 21)

Pay attention to yourself by nuturing your health, make appointments early in the month. Financial gains are indicated toward the 17th. This could also be interpreted as emotional wealth. Live with your feelings instead of fighting them. Unnecessary pressure can only make you more tense.

You wonder if people really believe you when work takes its toll on your, especially around the 27th.

### (July 23 - Aug. 22)

Your resistance is slightly run down when the year begins, and affairs of the heart are intense, especially around the 7th. There will be a renewed commitment from someone who counts on the 19th.

Beware of the tendency to enjoy pleasures to excess, particularly on or around the 25th. Watch impulsive spending on the 27th

### (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22)

Proceed diligently toward the goals you've set for yourself in the New Year. Your mind is keen, and discipline will be an asset, especially around the 13th. Lend your help to a Capricorn on the 17th.

Your high power days (20-22) come at a time when other tempers need cooling down. Your reassurance will be helpful to them. Force yourself to take your own advice, your high-strung energy may make you nervous.

### (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22)

Someone you've met on the New Year proves beneficial to you romantically around the 12th. This is also a good time to redecorate after the holidays. Pay closer attention to finances around the 19th; your generosity may put you in trouble when you need your assets

Libras will find travel appealing toward the end of the month, along with perhaps the desire to change jobs as well.

### (Oct. 23 - Nov. 22)

Let the celebrating continue without you in the beginning of the New Year-You're receiving conflicting messages from superiors who are not sure of your commitment to your work. Use your high power days (7-9, 25-26) to set up the lines of communication you need to get your ideas across.

Community service is highlighted the week of the 21st. It's possible you may hear from a distant relative by the end of the month.

### (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21)

Others may not want to listen to your ideas as they settle back to the saltmines--curb your tendency towards self-righteousness especially around the 10th. Your communications become more eloquent on the 15th, and by week's end your expressions are geared towards romance.

This excitement over a loved one may lead to the purchase of special gift around the 27th.

Plan a breather by the end of the month for rejuvenation.