



FRANCE-LUCE BENSON

PROFESSION: Playwright/educator
HOMETOWN: Born in the Democratic Republic of Congo (a.k.a. Zaire), raised in Miami

CURRENT HOME: Los Angeles

KNOWN FOR: Among Benson's most produced plays are *Fati's Last Dance* and *The Talk*. Her play *Deux Femmes on the Edge de la Revolution Part 1* also received attention during its workshop at the New Black Fest

in 2018. The first installment of a trilogy, *Deux Femmes Part 1* won Benson a residency at the Camargo Foundation in Cassis, France, as part of the Cultural Diaspora Program.

WHAT'S NEXT: Minneapolis's Playwright's Center will produce *Deux Femmes Part 1* as a workshop this July. Her play *Detained* is in development with Ensemble Studio Theatre/Los Angeles.

WHAT MAKES HER SPECIAL: Benson was among the first playwrights featured in the Monologue Project, an online resource for women of the African diaspora cultivated by Bishop Arts Theatre Center in Dallas. Her monologue "deeply resonated with me," says Bishop Arts' executive artistic director, Teresa Coleman Wash. In an interview for *The Dramatist*, Benson told Coleman Wash about "the emotionally debilitating narrow perceptions" she must combat as Black female writer. Concludes Coleman Wash, "Her work is beautifully compelling and engaging, and deserves a platform."

HEALING THROUGH HUMOR: Benson, whose plays celebrate Haiti's history and culture, believes in the power of laughter. "My favorite kind of work is anything that makes me laugh, really laugh, while also illuminating poignant truths about the human condition," she says. "Laughter can be profoundly transformative, and writing humor is such an extraordinary skill. If you can make people laugh, you're essentially a healer."

