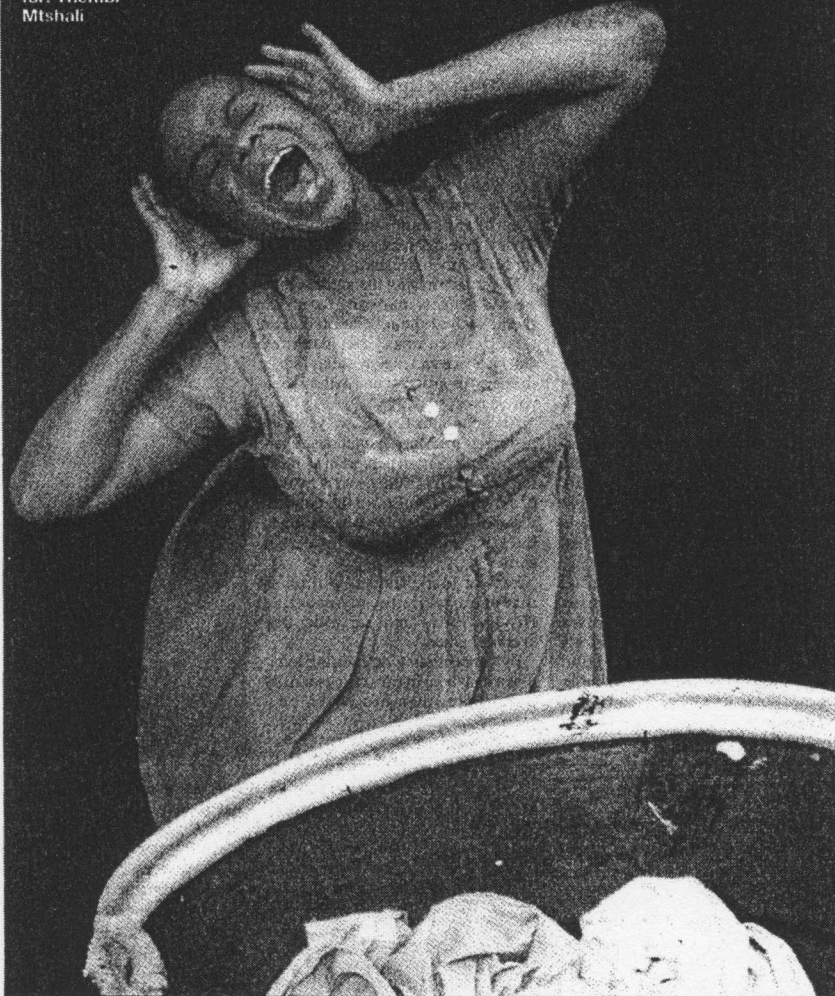


Worth waiting  
for: Thembi  
Mtshali



## THEATRE REVIEW

a woman in waiting

★★★★★

Until Aug 28, Assembly Rooms (Venue 3), 54 George Street, 2.30 pm, £9 and £10, £8 and £9 concs.  
Tel: 0131 226 2428

Near the beginning of Thembi Mtshali's bravura one-woman show, she sits inside a wooden box, recalling the time before her birth with some simple but powerful words: 'It was before I saw the world beyond my mother's womb – a world that would teach me to wait.'

This is an extraordinary performance from a South-African actress who grew up under apartheid. The crushing pressures of racism kept her apart from her

mother and, through ignorance, she became pregnant herself. She also missed her child growing up because she had to work as a nanny for a living.

When Mtshali achieved her dream of taking to the stage she was able to address the political issues which had moulded her life. One of her songs, originally performed for an all-white audience, rings out with the pungent line, 'May God protect my children from you.' She then tells us of the white soldier she had nannied who approached her afterwards and cried in her arms.

'We must speak or our hearts will burst,' Mtshali tells us and no one in the audience could disagree. Theatre at its most powerful, the word catharsis was invented to describe such glorious work.

Andrew J Wilson