

Henrietta Lacks

**Anna Smolar | Nowy Teatr
Poland | Theatre**

Henrietta Lacks was an African-American woman who was treated for cervical cancer in a Baltimore hospital in 1951. During her treatment, samples were taken from her cervix without her knowledge or consent. She soon died of the illness and never knew that the samples helped produce the polio vaccine and the world's first immortalised human cell line. Her five children were left orphans and had no knowledge of the medical and financial benefits this discovery had for a long time. Aside from the social and human aspect of the story, the director Anna Smolar asks us to see the situation from a common good viewpoint and consider the issue of cellular ownership. Would scientific progress be possible if we could demand financial compensation for the use of our tissue? What kind of discrimination would such a system entail? The performance raises these questions and many more as figures from the past appear to tell us their story, sing and dance to the frenzied rhythm of cellular multiplication. The show explores the financial interests fuelling medical research and tells us the story of a forgotten woman whose atoms live on today.

«... Every performance by the actors is a physical and emotional show of prowess... that echoes our contemporary times and should inspire us to be part of the performance.» Aparté.com (2019)

**► FEBRUARY 15 & 16 – 8.15PM – MANEGE FONCK
DURATION: 65 MIN | Polish with French subtitles
At Théâtre National Wallonie-Bruxelles: February 18 & 19**