

Pittsburgh Playwrights THEATRE COMPANY

2010-2011 Season

The Voodoo Trilogy by Frank Gagliano
World premiere of three plays based on
legendary voodoo queen Marie Laveau

Congo Square

February 10 - 27, 2011

A musical, directed by Marci Woodruff
Music by Claibe Richardson

In the Voodoo Parlour of Marie Laveau

February 25 - March 12, 2011

An unsung voodoo chamber opera, directed by Kim El

The Commedia World of Lafcadio B

March 5 - 8, 2011

A staged reading, directed by Frank Gagliano

King Hedley II by August Wilson

Directed by Eileen J. Morris

June 2-11, 2011

For tickets: ProArtsTickets.org or 412.394.3353

For information: pghplaywrights.com

Pittsburgh Playwrights THEATRE COMPANY

in association with



August Wilson
Center for
African American
Culture

Bedford Ave

King Hedley II

by August Wilson

Directed by Eileen J. Morris

June 3- 12, 2011

August Wilson Center Theatre

From the Producing Artistic Director



Welcome to the spectacular August Wilson Center for African American Culture. When our small company produced our very first play, August Wilson's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* which was directed by Eileen J. Morris, we had no idea that one day it would lead to this. What a transformation from that tiny black box in Garfield to our garage theater at Six and Penn to here. It's been an amazing journey and I have to thank Pittsburgh's amazing and talented actors who have made us shine as a company. I thank Pittsburgh's media and critics whose honest opinions have kept us on our toes and elevated us to new heights through their exposure.

The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust's Janis Burley Wilson, Rebecca White and Kevin McMahon and Alco Parking's Merill Stabile who believed in us and welcomed us to the downtown corridor.

I thank the funders who have monitored and assisted in our growth, and to all of our patrons, board members, directors, techs, crew, designers, carpenters, ticket takers and the rest who have assisted in making this journey possible.

I also would like to thank my wonderful wife Neicy who has done just about everything from box office to acting and has been a constant solid advice giver. I will tell you now, without her we would not have made it this far. And a special thanks to the August Wilson Center staff and its CEO Andre Guess for believing in us and inviting us to grace this wonderful stage. And last but certainly not least to the universe's most wonderful and engaging playwright, Mr. August Wilson:

Thank you, thank you, thank you for this beautiful gift that you have created for generations of theatre folks for all of eternity.

Peace and much theatre love!!

Special Thanks

THE HEINZ ENDOWMENTS
Small Arts Initiative



Production & Artistic Staff

Producing Artistic Director	Mark Clayton Southers
Playwrights	August Wilson
Director	Eileen J. Morris
Technical Director	J.R. Shaw
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Assistant Stage Manager	David Scott Jr.
Scenic Designer	Mark Clayton Southers
Sound Designer	Mark Whitehead
Lighting Designer & Technician	Stevie O'Brian-Agnew
Costume Design & Makeup	Cheryl El-Walker
Assistant Costume Design & Makeup	Kennedy Guess
Fight Choreographer	Randy Kovitz
Property Master	Maurice Redwood
Lead Carpenter	Diane Melchitzky
Set Construction	Barney McKenna, Mark Thompson
.....	J.R. Shaw, Mark C. Southers
.....	Lonzo Green
Audio Technician	Eric Smith
Crew	Mont Jones Carter Redwood
.....	David Scott, Jr.
Load-in Crew	Carter Redwood
.....	Mont Jones, Joshua Elijah Reese
.....	Barney McKenna, Lonzo Green
.....	Diane Melchitzky, David Connelly

Please consider supporting
Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company with a financial contribution.

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Theatre Company is a
501(c) nonprofit organization.**

Help us improve the comfort and utility of the theatre! Help us make capital improvements like a working heating/air conditioning system to keep the theatre open for business year round.

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The Pittsburgh Playwrights
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King Hedley II

by August Wilson

directed by Eileen J. Morris

Setting: 1985 Hill District of Pittsburgh

King	Benjamin Cain*
Ruby	Chrystal Bates
Elmore	Kevin Brown
Mister	Leslie “Ezra” Smith
Stool Pigeon	Jonas Chaney
Tonya	Tyla Abercrombie*

There will be one 15 minute intermission

*Member of Actors' Equity Association

Director's Notes

When I begin the process to direct an August Wilson play, I know that the artists involved are in for a great journey. One that will strengthen us as a diverse group of people, as gender-specific individuals, as supporters of our community, but most importantly as artists. We get the opportunity, as artists to be taken on a ride that is spiritual, informative, educational, and creative, filled with love and truth. What a wonderful blessing this is. *King Hedley II* tells the story of a young man striving to make a difference in his world and those around him, by planting seeds. Seeds that will bring beauty to his environment and seeds that will ensure that his legacy can be carried on. His choices of how to make these things happen may not be my choice or yours, but it is definitely one that Mr. Wilson has given us that we need not turn our back on, one that we need to see looks beyond the physicality of the man but to the depth and substance within him. Within the artistic journey of this play, we discovered that there are two words to best describe its poignancy- HOPE and FORGIVENESS. Statistics show that when one forgives, it can lengthen our lives, preserve families, and save the world (literally). I ask each of you to listen to the language of this play, embrace these characters played by astonishing actors, and allow yourself to be taken on this journey, as this is the one that we are in at this moment and time. Thank you Mark Southers for another opportunity to collaborate and create art that moves and informs. In the words of August Wilson: “ Art does not change the world, it changes people. People change the world.”

Ashe'

Eileen J. Morris

About the Playwright



August Wilson (Playwright) authored *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Seven Guitars*, *Fences*, *Two Trains Running*, *Jitney*, *King Hedley II*, *Gem of the Ocean* and *Radio Golf*. These works explore the heritage and experience of African-Americans, decade by decade, over the course of the 20th century. Mr. Wilson made his professional stage debut in his one-man show, *How I Learned What I Learned*. Mr. Wilson's work garnered many awards, including Great Britain's Olivier Award for *Jitney* and eight New York

Drama Critics Circle Awards for *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Fences*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Two Trains Running*, *Seven Guitars*, *Jitney* and *Radio Golf*. Mr. Wilson also won the Pulitzer for *Fences* and *The Piano Lesson*. Additionally, the cast recording of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* received a 1985 Grammy Award and Mr. Wilson received a 1995 Emmy Award nomination for his screenplay adaptation of *The Piano Lesson*. Mr. Wilson's early works include one-act plays *The Janitor*, *Recycle*, *The Coldest Day of the Year*, *Malcolm X*, *The Homecoming* and the musical satire *Black Bart and the Sacred Hills*.

Mr. Wilson received many fellowships and awards, including Rockefeller and Guggenheim Fellowships in Playwriting, the Whiting Writers' Award, the 2003 Heinz Award, a 1999 National Humanities Medal from then-President Bill Clinton and numerous honorary degrees from colleges and universities, as well as the only high school diploma ever issued by the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. He was an alumnus of New Dramatists, a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a 1995 inductee into the American Academy of Arts and Letters and on October 16, 2005, Broadway renamed the theater located at 245 West 52nd Street the August Wilson Theatre. Mr. Wilson was born and raised in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, PA, and lived in Seattle, WA at the time of his death. He is survived by his two daughters, Sakina Ansari and Azula Carmen Wilson, and his wife, costume designer Constanza Romero.

Biographies

Maurice Redwood (Property Master) has been involved in the arts from a young age. Born and raised in Pittsburgh, Maurice began his artistic career in music playing drums and percussion at age seven. He was a member of the concert choir, African drum ensemble, concert band and jazz band at Schenley High School, and also a three year member of their annual spring musical. He has been a proud member of the Shona Sharif African Dance and Drum Ensemble for almost ten years and continues to use his love of music to entertain and educate. In 2003, Maurice began volunteering at Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre under the guidance of Mark Clayton Southers and has been working with the company ever since. Also an accomplished actor, Maurice has worked with many theatre companies in the city of Pittsburgh. Maurice was most recently seen in *Nativity: A Christmas Gift* (Shona Sharif African Dance and Drum Ensemble). Some of his other stage, musical, and technical credits include August Wilson's *Jitney* (Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre), *Pill Hill* (New Horizon Theatre), *Sarafina!* and *Revenge of a King* (Kuntu Repertory Theatre), Shakespeare's *King Lear* (PICT), and *Smokey Joe's Café*. "Many thanks to Mark Southers for always creating opportunities for me to learn and grow as an artist."

Cheryl El-Walker (Resident Makeup & Costume Artist) is a native Pittsburgher and an award winning actor/make-up artist/costume designer and voiceover artist. Some of her stage experiences include costume and hair designs for various theatre companies which won her Best Make-up Artist at the 2007 African American Council for the Arts Awards. Her creativity has also been seen in: AACTA's production of *Christmas Is Coming Uptown* (for which she won Best Costume for a Musical 2008); New Horizon Theatre (*Freeman*, for which she won Best Leading Actress as Teresa 2008); Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company (*Two Trains Running*, for which she won Best Costume Design for a Play 2008) and *For the Love of...Friends* (nominee for Best Leading Actress 2006). Most recently, she provided costumes and makeup in Dr. Tameka Cage's play, *Uprise: The Testimony* at The August Wilson Center. Cheryl is an alumna of Point Park University and is currently working at The AWC.

Biographies

Mark Whitehead (Sound Designer) has designed sound for numerous local theaters, and is Resident Sound Designer for PPTCO and The Unseam'd Shakespeare Company. Mark was named best sound designer and listed among the best directors in City Paper's 2001 Theater Round-up, and was named best sound designer of 2000 by the Post-Gazette. He won Best Sound at the 2008 AACTA/Onyx Awards for PPTCO's *Two Trains Running*, and again in 2009 for *Seven Guitars*. He is also the founder of Saints & Poets Theater, for which he produced and directed the world premiere of Christiane D's *Saffronia* and the local premiere of Sam Shepard's *The Late Henry Moss*. He was a founding member of timespace, and a founding producer of the Dark Night Cabaret and has produced and directed music videos for several local bands. He would like to thank Winston Vermillion, Eric Vermillion, Tracey D. Turner, Laura Smiley, Marci Woodruff, Karen Tuttle.

Eric A. Smith (Stage Manager) started with Pittsburgh Playwrights six years ago as a light technician for the production *Jonathan*. Over the years he has learned everything he needed to learn about theatre from the production side to the artistic side and even the business of theatre. Eric now works throughout Pittsburgh doing productions and teaching theatre to kids, and dabbles in other art forms such as photography, writing and technology art.

Stevie O'Brian Agnew (Lighting Designer) recently designed *Rinaldo* for Pittsburgh Opera. Upcoming designs included *Heart (Function vs. Emotion)* for Bodiography and *BikeFest 2011* for Bike Pittsburgh. He has designed for Pittsburgh Opera, Bodiography Contemporary Ballet, New Horizons Theatre, August Wilson Center for African American Culture, LabCo Dance, The Jewish Theater of Pittsburgh, Oklahoma Shakespearean Festival, and Carnegie Mellon University. Stevie has also worked at the Santa Fe Opera, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, and Lake Erie Ballet. He currently works for the August Wilson Center and Pittsburgh Opera. Stevie has a Masters of Fine Arts in Lighting Design from The Carnegie Mellon University School of Drama.

Kennedy Kehaulani Guess (Assistant Costumer & Assistant Makeup Artist) was born in Louisville, KY but attended elementary and middle school in New Jersey. She moved to Pittsburgh in 2010 and is a freshman majoring in costume design at CAPA. She has a 4.0 GPA and has been designing clothes since she was in the 4th grade. Two of her designs were featured in the Montclair Times in Montclair, NJ in 2006. Her credits include: *Annie, How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying, The Voodoo Trilogy* at the PPTCO 2011, *Deadwood Dick* at the August Wilson Center For African American Culture 2011, and Pittsburgh CAPA 6-12 productions of *Sweet Charity, The Learned Ladies*, and *Seussical*. I would like to dedicate this show to my Daddy, CEO and President of the August Wilson Center Mr. André Kimo Guess.

King Hedley II: The Search for Heritage

By Christopher Rawson

August Wilson's *King Hedley II* is as accidental as a roll of the dice and as inevitable as a mountain. It's a tragedy of throttled honor and dreams, set against a long history of killings. The eighth to be written in Wilson's astonishing Pittsburgh Cycle of 10 plays set in each decade of the 20th century, Hedley is the craggiest, the most deserving of its Shakespearean title.

That title is partly a joke. King was named for his supposed father, who was named King for the same reason Red Carter (in Wilson's *Seven Guitars*) named his son Mister, "so the white man have to call him Mister." King Hedley II is the hero's name, not his title. But a name is a kind of title, just as for a Shakespearean king, a title is also a name. The Shakespearean sound of this play's title is justified by its big themes, which are like those of Shakespeare's tragic histories: inheritance, honor and power.

This is Wilson's darkest play. A tragedy without the final uplift of *Fences*, it is grimmer even than *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* or *Seven Guitars*. Although it contains robust humor, its layered plot makes it hard going for some audiences. But *Long Day's Journey into Night* is no picnic, either, or *King Lear* or *The Oresteia*. These are the company King Hedley keeps, all centered on the search for responsibility, guilt and identity in the most painful, intimate place — the family.

The truest background for King Hedley is the story of Abraham, Isaac and the demanding God of the Old Testament. The God of Hedley is "one bad motherfucker," Stool Pigeon admiringly calls him. That sounds sacrilegious, but how else to make sense of a world in which survival seems random and the killing claims children? The date, 1985, partially explains its dark bite: there is no historic distance to drape these characters with understanding or nostalgia.

At the center is King, duly anointed by Stool Pigeon (telling name), the backyard truth-teller, and by Aunt Ester, the unseen sibyl. There is a pitiable distance between high aspirations and everyday means — shooting craps for one's soul, a few green leaves to signal the future, a bedraggled black cat for resurrection. The action takes place on a poor patch of dirt, but as King says, "This is me, right here." So he plants his seed — literally and figuratively. Gradually the dusty ground becomes the arena for a primal ritual of honor, like the scruffy palace yards where Greek chieftains settled blood feuds in the aftermath of the Trojan War.

For the first time, Wilson picked up characters from a previous play. *Seven Guitars* ends with Floyd Barton dead, killed by the crazed Caribbean prophet, Hedley. One of Floyd's friends, Canewell, knows the truth of the murder; another, Red Carter, has named his baby Mister. And young Ruby, made pregnant down South by either Leroy or Elmore, has decided to marry Hedley and let her child inherit his name.

Flash forward 37 years to 1985. That child is now the angry King, searching for his kingdom after doing time for killing a man to avenge a 112-stitch scar. Mister has grown into King's best friend. King's new wife, Tonya, has an angry teen-age daughter and a baby on the way. Sharing their house is King's mother, Ruby, recently returned from years on the road as a singer, having long ago left King to be raised by his aunt. Next door lives Stool Pigeon, the Bible-spouting shaman

King Hedley II: The Search for Heritage, *cont'd.*

who hoards newspapers in an attempt to capture history. Slowly, almost accidentally, we realize he is Canewell.

You don't need to know *Seven Guitars*, because only Ruby and Stool Pigeon are continuing characters and any necessary information is included. But it's interesting that Wilson said *Seven Guitars* is set in the backyard of 1727 Bedford Avenue, where he grew up, and Hedley is based on 1621 Bedford, where his mother was living when she died in 1983.

The past is constantly present. "The people need to know the story, see how they fit into it," says Stool Pigeon, piling up newspapers. And how far back does history go? Aunt Ester ("an-cestor"), the ancient seer, is supposedly 366 years old, born the year the first shipment of African slaves arrived in the Virginia colony. (The mystery of her age is cleared up in the next play, *Gem of the Ocean*.)

King doesn't know that the play's hidden theme is the search for true parentage, a variant of the search for roots and identity always central to Wilson. The prophetic Stool Pigeon waxes explicit that King must seek the "key to the kingdom" to end the cycle of blood. There is hope. But history and that implacable God can't be easily swayed.

Hedley premiered in 1999 in Pittsburgh as a co-production between the Pittsburgh Public Theater and Seattle Repertory Theater — a fitting collaboration between Wilson's native city and his final one. Originally over 3 ½ hours long, it got gradually thinner before it arrived on Broadway in 2001.

As it went, its cast of six also changed. Eventually, only Charles Brown's Elmore made the entire journey from Pittsburgh to Broadway. Joining him were Brian Stokes Mitchell (King), Leslie Uggams (Ruby). Stephen McKinley Henderson (Stool Pigeon), Viola Davis (Tonya) and Monte Russell (a Pittsburgh native who knew to say "Picksburg").

Hedley survived for only 96 Broadway performances. Wilson took the early closing philosophically. "You can only close if you opened," he said. He showed the same acceptance when asked if he was disappointed to have been passed over for the Pulitzer Prize: "My attitude is, I got two."

Asked how he'd characterize his accomplishment in Hedley, he said: "I like the size of it. I was able to layer this other story [the mystery of Aunt Ester] over the realistic aspects. I tried to model it after Greek tragedy and I was at least 80 percent successful. I'd do a few things different, now, but I learned a lot that will help on my next two plays." Then he told a story of a painter, 96 years old, who said, "I think I'm finally getting the hang of this drawing stuff."

Christopher Rawson is senior theater critic, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

Much of this essay appeared in *The Best Plays of 2000-2001* (N.Y., 2001). For much more on August Wilson, go to www.post-gazette.com/theater and scroll down on the left.

Biographies

Mark Clayton Southers (Founder & Producing Artistic Director) is an award-winning playwright, photographer, set designer, theatrical producer and stage director. He and his family reside in Pittsburgh's historic Hill District. He is the founder and producing artistic director of the Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company (PPTCO) where he has produced well over 100 full length and one act plays, including eight consecutive plays of August Wilson's Century Cycle. Mr. Southers is a published poet and playwright as well. His play *Ma Noah* was the recipient of the 2004 Theodore Ward prize at Columbia College, Chicago. His poem-play *Angry Black Man Poetry* had a successful run at Teatr Śląski in Katowice, Poland in 2009. He was recently named the Artistic Director of Theatre Initiatives for the 486 seat August Wilson Center for African American Culture in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, where in 2012 he will head the inaugural International August Wilson Theatre Festival. Some of his favorite directing credits include *Paul Robeson* for the Griot Ensemble Theatre Company; *Pill Hill* and *Freeman* for New Horizon Theatre; *Almost Maine* for South Park Theatre; the "August in February" Series for the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust; *Dutchman* for Bricolage Theater Company; *Angry Black Men Poetry* for Teatr Śląski; and *Dorothy Six*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Two Trains Running*, *Seven Guitars*, *VALU-MART* and *Jitney* for The Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company. He's received Best Director AACTA Onyx awards each of the past four years. His directed production of *Two Trains Running* was voted one of the top ten plays of the decade by The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. His recently directed production of *Jitney* broke all house attendance records at The Pittsburgh Playwrights Theater and was voted in the top ten of best plays for the 2010 season in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

Randy Kovitz (Fight Director) is proud to return to Pittsburgh Playwrights for his third August Wilson play in as many years. He has staged fights for hundreds of stage, film and television productions around the country with such notable actors as Sean Penn, Viggo Mortenson, Stacey Keach, John Malkovich, Noah Wyle, Kelsey Grammer, Kyra Sedgwick and many others. His work has been seen in theaters on and off Broadway, at the Kennedy Center, the Mark Taper Forum, Yale Rep, South Coast Rep and many others. Career highlights include the world premiere productions of *Angels In America* and *Burn This*, the Broadway production of *The Kentucky Cycle*, Sir Peter Hall's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and four seasons at the Tony award-winning Utah Shakespearean Festival. Fights staged on film include *The Ballad of the Sad Cafe* with Vanessa Redgrave and Keith Carradine, the animated feature *Quest for Camelot*, *The Addams Family* — as fencing double for Raul Julia — and most recently *Racing Daylight* with David Strathairn and *Staunton Hill*, directed by Cameron Romero. Pittsburgh audiences have seen his fights in *A Comedy of Errors* (Pittsburgh Public Theater), *Romeo & Juliet* (Point Park Conservatory), *American Buffalo* (The REP), *Corps Values* (Pittsburgh Playwrights), *Bug* (barebones), *Fool for Love* (Thank You, Felix productions). Up next: *Killer Joe* for barebones. Later this summer he will be directing the short film *Lightweight*.

Cast Biographies



Leslie "Ezra" Smith (Mister) is an actor and spoken word artist born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He's the recipient of two African American Council of the Arts Onyx Awards, best supporting actor in a musical in 2007 and best lead actor in 2008. Leslie is also the recipient of the 2010 Pittsburgh Hip Hop Awards Poet of the Year award. He's the host of various open mics in Pittsburgh, such as KINETIX! Poetry in Motion Open Mic Series at The New Hazlett Theater and The Sanctuary Revisited at The August Wilson Center for African American Culture. Leslie has performed in many

productions through out Pittsburgh for Pittsburgh Playwrights Theater Company, Kuntu Repertory Theater, and New Horizons Theater. His directing credits include "Weeding" as a part of *The Ancestor Series: A Trilogy of One-Act Plays* by P.J. Gibson and *I'll Get You Later* by Jann Kwasneski as a part of The Theatre Festival in Black and White, both produced by PPTCO.

Biographies



Eileen J. Morris (Director) is delighted to be back in Pittsburgh collaborating once again with Mark Southers toward completing the Pittsburgh Cycle for the Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre. She is artistic director of The Ensemble Theatre- the oldest black professional theatre company in the Southwest that owns its own facility. She is a director, actress and educator. She has served on several boards and panels during her 30+ years as an artist and has held the offices of president, immediate past president, vice-president and secretary with the national organization,

Black Theatre Network from 1994–2004. She currently serves on the board of The Midtown Management District. As artistic director, she has produced over 72 productions, which include four world premieres and 50 regional premieres. In 2007, The Ensemble Theatre was named Best Theatre by the Houston Press and 2007 Best Showcase for African American Actors by the Ultimate Section of the Houston Chronicle. The Ensemble Theatre also presented two out of the 10 best plays named by the Houston Chronicle as the Best of Houston Theatre in 2008, 2009, and 2010. Some of Ensemble Theatre directing credits include *Jitney*, *The Waiting Room*, *Stick Fly* (Named one of the top 2010 plays –Houston Chronicle), *American Menu* (2010 George Award winner for Best Ensemble and named one of the top 2010 plays–Houston Chronicle), *Seven Guitars* (named one of the top 2009 plays –Houston Chronicle) *The Man Who Saved New Orleans*, *Radio Golf*, *Ashes to Africa*, *Christmas is Comin' Uptown*, *Sty of the Blind Pig* and *Blue* to name a few. She has been honored to receive five Onyx Awards from the Pittsburgh African American Council on the Arts for her work as a director and one in acting, This past January, she directed *I, Barbara Jordan* by Celeste Bedford Walker for the prestigious Alley Theatre of Houston. Eileen holds the distinct privilege of being one of the few African American women in the country to have directed seven plays of the August Wilson 10 play cycle and to have performed as an actress in six of them. This year Eileen will be honored at the National Black Theatre Festival with the 2011 Larry Leon Hamlin Producer Award. Delighted to be return to Pittsburgh, which she feels is like home, she dedicates this play to her son, Alex Morris Jr. that he always knows that he is loved.

Cast Biographies



Tyla Abercrombie* (Tonya) is an accomplished actor based out of Chicago who has performed in regional theatres around the country. Credits include *Magnolia* (Goodman Theatre), *Piano Lesson* and Pearl Cleage's *Flyin' West* (Court Theatre), Short Shakespeare; *Romeo and Juliet* (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre), *Piano Lesson* (Portland Theatre Company), *Radio Golf* (Pittsburgh Public Theatre), *Gem of the Ocean* (Actors Theatre of Louisville), *Jitney* (St. Louis Black Repertory Theatre), *A Raisin in the Sun* (Studio Arena), *Ariadne's Thread* (Victory Gardens), *Four Queens*

No Trump (Onyx Theatre Company) and *Asylum (aka) Life* (The Coronet Theatre), the last written and performed by Tyla. Film and television credits include *The Chicago Code*, *The Beast*, *ER*, *The Tracey Morgan Show*, *The Poker House*, *Solomon's Song*, *Family Practice*, *Mary and Jo* and *Stay With Me*. Tyla is also a published author and poet, performing for Rainbow Push, Blackflim.com, Taste of Chicago, WVON Radio, Old Town School of Music, McDonalds, DePaul University, Columbia College, University of West Florida, Ebonyenergy.com, Blackvoices.com, Green Mill Jazz club, and Winds Cafe.



Chrystal Bates (Ruby) is happy to be back at PPTCO after having appeared earlier this year in *The Voodoo Parlour of Marie LeVeau* as the title character. This follows her Onyx-award winning performance as best actress for her role as Willa in *The Ancestor's Series: Blood on the Seats*. Chrystal is excited to be working again with Ms. Eileen Morris, who directed her in *Livin' Fat* and *Get Ready*, for which she also won Onyx Awards. Chrystal has performed in various venues, including City Theater (*From the Mississippi Delta*), Pittsburgh Public Theater (*Jitney*), Dillard University Theater

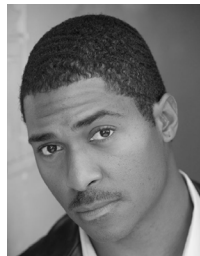
- New Orleans (*One Mo' Time*), Allegheny Regional Theater (*Tinytypes*), Little Lake Theater (*Member of the Wedding*), Southern Repertory Theater - New Orleans (*Flyin' West*), Gateway to Music, the House of Blues - New Orleans (featured singer: jazz, R&B, blues, rock), Holt Cabaret (*Divas*), as well as television/movies roles (*The Temptations*). Chrystal would like to dedicate these performances to her mother, Shirley Brown.



Kevin Brown (Elmore) as a native of August Wilson's Hill District (Whiteside Rd.) Is honored to be a part of this production! Brown has performed from Pittsburgh, PA. to Grahamstown, South Africa. (Thank you Dr. Lillie!) Honored by AACTA with seven Onyx awards and two People's Choice Awards. Credits include *The Janitor*, *Jitney*, *Piano Lesson*, *Fences*, *I Nipoti* (PPTCO), *Gospel at Colonus*, *Beggar's Holiday*, *Carmen Jones*, *Among the Stars* (Opera Theater of Pittsburgh) *Beautiful Dreamers* (PICT) *Flight* (City Theater)

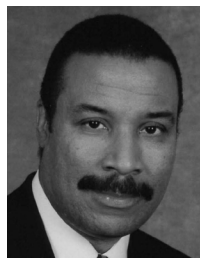
Livin' Fat (New Horizons Theatre) *Sing Black Hammer* (Kuntu Repertory Theater). I dedicate my performance to Jackie Boy Williams for always trying to keep the Whiteside families connected.

Cast Biographies



Ben Cain* (King) was raised in Flint, MI and Aliquippa, PA. He is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University. Ben now makes his home in Los Angeles. His television and film credits include *Law and Order*, *New York Undercover*, *Homicide: Life on the Streets*, *The Homeboy*, *Dogma*, The Emmy-winning made-for-TV movie *The Temptations*, a recurring role on the TV pilot *Miriam Teitelbaum: Homicide* and appearances on *Numb3rs*, *CSI: Miami* and *Lost*. He has also appeared in commercials for Coors Light, Bell South, Kmart, and Sears. Ben is a member of The Actor's Gang where he performed

in the Ovation Award-winning play and national tour of *The Exonerated*. In 2004 Ben performed in Tim Robbin's production of *Embedded* off-Broadway at The Public Theatre in New York City and in London at the Riverside Studio. Ben is also a member of the Kuntu Repertory Theatre, Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre, and the Lost Angeles African American Repertory Theatre. Ben was honored by the Pittsburgh Post Gazette for his roles in August Wilson's *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* in 2005 and *Seven Guitars* in 2006. He is honored and thankful to be here working with this cast and crew. It is great to be home!



Jonas Chaney (Stool Pigeon) is a Chicago born veteran who migrated to Pittsburgh from Indianapolis in 1985. His theatrical tenure includes memberships with SAG, AFTRA and Actor's Equity. Film credits: *Silence of the Lambs*, *Iron Maze*, *Dark Wake*, *End Game*, *River of Darkness*. Movies made for TV: (NBC) *What She Doesn't Know*, *Stuck With Each Other*, (CBS) *Blind Spot*, *Alone in the Neon Jungle*, *For I have Sinned*, (ABC) *Bride in Black*, (HBO) *Criminal Justice*. Jonas won the AACTA Onyx Award for Best Leading Actor in a Play for his role as Troy Maxon in *Fences*. His other theater

credits include: *Testimony*, UPRISE: *Raising Black Men Project*, *Miss Evers' Boys*, *Black Nativity*, *Lovesong for Miss Lydia*, *Big River*, *Sherlock Holmes and the Hands of Othello*, *Her First American*, *Home*, *The Amen Corner*, *Of Mice and Men*, *The Conjure Man Dies*, *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well*, Jonas is currently Public Affairs Director for WPXI-Television. He has worked for WTAE-Radio, American Urban Radio Networks, WAMO, and WDUQ-FM.

*Member of Actors' Equity Association