

The Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company proudly presents

KING HEDLEY II BY AUGUST WILSON

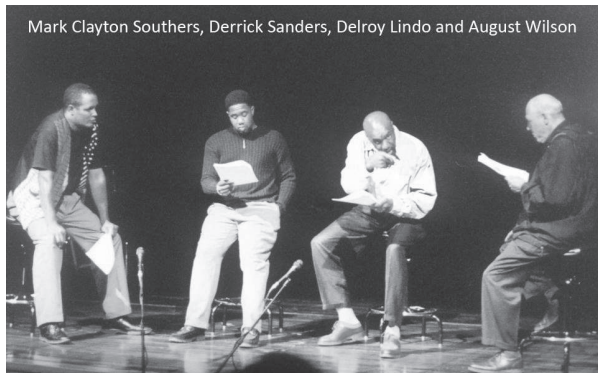
DIRECTED BY MARK CLAYTON SOUTHERS
MONTEZE FREELAND
DENNIS ROBINSON JR.



Cast of *King Hedley II* by Sherri Randolph

**APRIL 27TH —
JUNE 3RD, 2018**

WELCOME



Mark Clayton Southers, Derrick Sanders, Delroy Lindo and August Wilson

In August of 1998, I had the extreme pleasure of sharing the stage with August Wilson at the Edward Albee Theatre Festival in Valdez Alaska. That year, the festival was honoring Mr. Wilson for his many theatrical achievements. Along with actors Ella Joyce, Derrick Sanders, Javon Johnson, Delroy Lindo and August Wilson himself, we performed stage readings of several of Mr. Wilson's plays.

For our finale, we did a reading of a new play that Mr. Wilson was working on: *King Hedley II*. We sat on stools in front of an audience in excess of three hundred people. I was so excited to be onstage and actually reading with Mr. Wilson that I can't remember the dialogue, but I do remember that during these characters' conversations in the back yard of a Hill District home, we were throwing darts as we talked. It was during this time that I started to take a liking to playwriting. With this massive first-hand exposure to August Wilson, anyone who loved theatre would have.

Fast forward to the world premiere of *King Hedley II* at the Pittsburgh Public's O'Reilly Theater. I was surprised to find out that the dart-throwing scene did not make the cut; yet another lesson in playwriting for me, this time about the art of the rewrite. August, like his good friend the late great Rob Penny, was a great teacher through his writing and association. It's a privilege for our small company to be able to honor Mr. Wilson by staging his acclaimed work in the rear of his childhood home. We thank the board and staff of the August Wilson House, a project of the Daisy Wilson Artist Community, for collaborating and trusting us to mount a worthy production. We hope you enjoy the performance.

Mark Clayton Southers
 Founder & Producing Artistic Director

ABOUT THE PLAY

August Wilson's **KING HEDLEY II**

Directed by **Mark Clayton Southers,
 Monteze Freeland, and Dennis Robinson Jr.**

TONYA Karla Payne (through May 13)
 Dominique Briggs (beginning May 18)
RUBY Etta Cox*
ELMORE Wali Jamal
KING Leslie Ezra Smith
MISTER Sam Lothard
STOOL PIGEON Sala Udin

*Appears courtesy of Actors' Equity Association

KING HEDLEY II is produced by special arrangement with Samuel French.

August Wilson's *King Hedley II* is set in Pittsburgh's Hill District in the 1980's.
 The play runs approximately 3 hours with one 15-minute intermission.

SPECIAL THANKS

Heinz Small Arts Initiative ★ Champion Lumber ★ Spotlight Costumes
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PLAYWRIGHT | AUGUST WILSON (April 27, 1945-October 2, 2005) authored *Gem of the Ocean*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Seven Guitars*, *Fences*, *Two Trains Running*, *Jitney*, *King Hedley II*, and *Radio Golf*. These works explore the heritage and experience of the descendants of Africans brought to North America, decade-by-decade, over the course of the twentieth century.

These plays form a compilation entitled *The American Century Cycle*. Mr. Wilson's plays have been produced on Broadway, at regional theaters across the country and all over the world.

In 2003, he made his professional stage debut in his one-man show, *How I Learned What I Learned*. His works garnered many awards including Pulitzer Prizes for *Fences* (1987) and for *The Piano Lesson* (1990); a Tony Award for *Fences*; Great Britain's Olivier Award for *Jitney* and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, as well as seven 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*, and *Jitney*. 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 included the 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 the Rockefeller and Guggenheim Fellowships in Playwriting, the Whiting Writers Award, 2003 Heinz Award, was awarded the 1999 National Humanities Medal by President Bill Clinton, and received 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. Today, he is considered one of America's finest playwrights. New York Public Radio recorded all ten plays in *The American Century Cycle* at the Greene Space, casting many of the actors that worked on the original productions. PBS aired a documentary on Mr. Wilson entitled, "The Ground On Which I Stand," as part of the *American Masters* series. A feature film adaptation of *Fences* released in 2016 won the Best Picture Oscar and many more awards. Mr. Wilson was born and raised in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and lived in Seattle, Washington at the time of his death in 2005. He is immediately survived by his two daughters, Sakina Ansari and Azula Carmen Wilson, and his wife, costume designer Constanza Romero, who is the executor of his estate.

CO-DIRECTOR | MARK CLAYTON SOUTHERS and his family of five reside in Pittsburgh's historic Hill District. He is an award-winning playwright, photographer, scenic designer, theatrical producer and stage director. He is the founder and producing Artistic Director of the Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company where he has produced well over 150 full-length and one-act plays, including August Wilson's complete ten play *American 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 aka End Angered Species* had a successful run at Teatr Śląski in Katowice, Poland in 2009. His play *Miss Julie, Clarissa and John* was featured at the 2017 National Black Theatre Festival and also had a three week run at the 2017 Edinburgh Festival in Scotland. He was the Artistic Director for the 2016 year-long August Wilson Festival at Short North Stage in Columbus Ohio, and from 2010 to 2013, Mr. Southers served as the Artistic Director of Theatre Initiatives for the 486 seat August Wilson Center for African American Culture in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania.

CO-DIRECTOR | MONTEZE FREELAND is a Baltimore native who has made Pittsburgh his artistic home, and was named the Pittsburgh Post Gazette's 2017 Performer of the Year. As artistic associate for Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company he has directed *Poe's Last Night*, *Sold*, *Christmas Star*, and *Miss Julie, Clarissa and John*, which traveled to the National Black Theatre Festival and the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland. Additional credits include The LAB Project: *The Gospel Singer*; ACH Clear Pathways: *The Wiz*, *Caps for Sale* and *The Children of August*; Kuntu Rep: *Harriet Tubman Loved Somebody*; Pittsburgh New Works Festival (PNWF): *Reservations Cancelled*; Pride One Act Festival: *Is That a Gun in Your Pocket?* and *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings* for Prime Stage. Many thanks to the PPTCO family!

CO-DIRECTOR | DENNIS ROBINSON JR. is a director and administrator based in Pittsburgh, PA. His directing credits include six productions with Opera Theater of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh CAPA (*Paul Bunyan*, *Griffelkin*, *Sweeney Todd*), The Glimmerglass Festival (*Cabaret Series*), The Bach Choir of Pittsburgh (*Sweeney Todd* in concert). Assistant Directing credits include *Susannah* (Toledo Opera), *L'elisir d'amore* (Resonance Works|Pgh), *Il matrimonio segreto* (Pittsburgh Opera), *Lost in the Stars* (The Glimmerglass Festival, Virginia Arts Festival & Opera Theater of Pittsburgh), *Porgy and Bess* (NJ State Opera and Opera Theater of Pittsburgh). He served as the Resident Assistant Director for Opera Theater of Pittsburgh for four seasons, collaborating with Artistic Director Jonathan Eaton on more than a dozen opera productions. Other Pittsburgh Playwrights credits include Assistant Director (*Seven Guitars* at CAPA, *The Homestead Strike of 1892* produced with The Battle of Homestead Foundation), Production Manager (*East Texas Hot Links*).

BIOGRAPHIES



TONYA (starting May 18) | DOMINIQUE BRIGGS is excited to return to Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre as Tonya in *King Hedley II*. This is her first performance in a play written by August Wilson and she couldn't be more thrilled. She is a graduate of the University of Michigan and Duquesne University and loves spending her time on stage and screen. Her notable theater performances include *Ruined*, *The Ballad of Emmett Till*, *Lundyn Bridges*, Ray Werner's *Christmas Star*, and *Tambourines to Glory*. She has also appeared in films such as *Southpaw* (Antoine Fuqua) as Aileen, and *Set Free* (Patrice Johnson) as Danielle Singleton. Dominique has written her first children's book, one of a four-book series. It is set to be published December 2018. When not performing or writing, she enjoys spending time with her loved ones. She wishes to thank her friends and family for always believing in her, her baby girl, Rhea, and her husband, Cedrice, for his support as she continues to chase her dreams.



TONYA (through May 13) | KARLA PAYNE A veteran stage actress who has appeared in countless productions, PPTCO audiences will remember her performance as Berniece in our acclaimed 2015 production of August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson*. She has also appeared in New Horizon Theater's *The Dance on Widow's Row*, *Lotto: Experience the Dream* and *Do Lord Remember Me*, as well as Langston Hughes' *Black Nativity* produced by Shona Sharif African Drum and Dance Ensemble. Payne's musical theater work includes *The Wiz*, *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Into the Woods*. Payne is an accomplished spoken word artist who released her award-winning, debut spoken word recording, *Words Unspoken* in 2012. In 2015 she released her first poetry chapbook, *From My Indigo Pen*.

BIOGRAPHIES



RUBY | ETTA COX* has appeared on Broadway in *I Love My Wife* (with Lawrence-Hilton Jacobs), *The 1940's Radio Hour* (with Dee Dee Bridgewater), and starred in Showtime's production of *The Me Nobody Knows*. Locally she has appeared in the Pittsburgh Public Theater's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*; City Theatre's productions of *From the Mississippi Delta*, *Spunk*, *Avenue X* and *Crowns*; Ken Gargaro's production of *Beehive*; the Shakespeare Festival's *Two Gentlemen of Verona*; and many more. Her film career extends from 1985's *Silent Witness* (with Valerie Bertinelli and John Savage) to 2015's *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*. As an acclaimed vocalist, she has performed from New York City to Key West, and her many honors include being voted "Best Jazz Vocalist" in Pittsburgh for 8 consecutive years and being voted 1999's Performer of the Year by the Pittsburgh Post Gazette.



ELMORE | WALI JAMAL King Hedley II will be a milestone in my career as I will have gone ten for ten of the August Wilson TEN PLAY CENTURY CYCLE or The AMERICAN CYCLE. My former performances include: *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (Toledo, with August Wilson in attendance), *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (Seth Holly), *Piano Lesson* (twice as Avery/Boy Willie), *Two Trains Running* (Wolf), *Jitney* (Doub), *Seven Guitars* (three times; 1 as Canewell/2 as Hedley), *Fences* (twice as Bono), *Gem of the Ocean* (Caesar), *Radio Golf* (Sterling), and now *King Hedley II*, making number ten. The REAL MILESTONE for me is being perhaps the only actor in the world to have performed in all ten plays AND the one-man show, *How I Learned What I Learned*, on the mainstage of the AUGUST WILSON CENTER. The person I must thank the most as always is my dear friend, collaborator, and problem-solver extraordinaire, Mr. Mark Clayton Southers. THANKS MARKO!!!!



MISTER | SAM LOTHARD has been acting, writing and directing since 2007. His last performance was as CJ in *Almost Mr. Right*. Sam also played Buckshot in Eugene Lee's *East Texas Hot Links* for PPTCO where he has also performed in *Findings*, *Lights Out*, and *Hercules Didn't Wade in The Water*. Other credits include: *The Bold and The Sanctified*, Uncle Moses in *The Ballad of Emmett Till*, LoBoy in *Lower Ninth* and an opera titled *A Gathering of Sons*. You may have seen him in Monteze Freeland's *Kalopsia The Musical*.

*Appears courtesy of Actors' Equity Association



KING | LESLIE EZRA SMITH Mr. Smith is an actor and spoken word artist who is a favorite of PPTCO audiences. A Pittsburgh native, he's the recipient of multiple Onyx awards from the African American Council of the Arts, the host of various open mics in Pittsburgh, and has appeared on stage in diverse productions throughout the area, including his 2014 one-man play *The Book of Ezra* for PPTCO.



STOOL PIGEON | SALA UDIN, Rob Penny and August Wilson attended elementary school together in the Lower Hill District and remained life-long friends. It was this friendship that helped to establish the Black Horizon Theatre, where Rob and August first cut their teeth, moving from poetry to playwriting. Mr. Udin played the leading roles in most of the Black Horizon plays during the late '60's and '70's and was asked to play the role of Becker, when August's first staged play *Jitney* was mounted in 1982. Sala Udin understudied for *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* in San Francisco, 1986 and played the role of Sunshine in Melvin Van Peebles' *Ain't Supposed To Die A Natural Death*, and other plays also in San Francisco. Mr. Udin collaborated with Elva Branson in 1993 to resurrect the New Horizon Theatre, where he served for several years as Chairman of the Board of Directors. Mr. Udin played the role of Holloway in the Pittsburgh Public Theater's 1994 production of *Two Trains Running*, reprising the role for PPTCO's 2008 production, and Becker in PPTCO's 2010 production of *Jitney*. Mr. Udin served for 11 years on Pittsburgh City Council, and in 1996 helped launch the August Wilson Center for African American Culture and has served on its board. He currently serves as a board member for Pittsburgh Public Schools.

STAGE MANAGER | SHANITA BIVINS *King Hedley II* is the third Pittsburgh Playwrights show Shanita has stage-managed (*Seven Guitars* and *Findings* being the other two). Shanita was born and raised on Pittsburgh's Northside. After spending the last 3 years on and behind the stage, she has learned so much and gained much-appreciated experience. August Wilson's way of connecting his characters, having them share and fight for their truth, is part of what drives her – and will continue to drive her – to take on theatre shows and projects. Following this production, she will continue pursuing both passions of acting and stage-managing.

COSTUME & MAKEUP DESIGN | CHERYL EL-WALKER (a Pittsburgh native) is an award-winning costume design and make-up artist who is also a veteran stage actor/director. Her work has been seen in nine of August Wilson's plays (she completes the Century Cycle with *King Hedley II*). Her talents have received seven Onyx Awards from the African American Council of the Arts, a Best Director award from the Theatre Festival in Black in White, and the Legacy Award from Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company. Her most recent performance was in *East Texas Hot Links* as the role of Charlesetta, followed by costume and makeup design for *In The Heat of The Night*.

FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER | RANDY KOVITZ has staged fights for many Playwrights productions, including *Seven Guitars*, *Jitney*, *Corp Values*, *In The Heat of the Night* and others. Also for PPTCO, he directed August Wilson's *The Janitor* and Andre Kimo Guest's *Apple Says Yes* for the Theatre Festival in Black and White. His fights have appeared on and off Broadway, at the Kennedy Center, Mark Taper Forum, Yale Rep, South Coast Rep and many others. Highlights include the world premiere productions of *Angels in America* and *Burn This*, the Broadway production of *The Kentucky Cycle*, Sir Peter Hall's *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *four seasons* at the Tony-winning Utah Shakespearean Festival. Film credits include *The Ballad of the Sad Café* with Vanessa Redgrave and Keith Carradine, the animated feature *Quest for Camelot*, *The Addams Family* — as fencing double for Raul Julia — and *Racing Daylight* with David Strathairn. Randy is also an actor with many stage, film and TV roles to his credit, and an award-winning film director.

BIOGRAPHIES

SCENIC PAINTER | DIANE MELCHITZKY has designed and built Pittsburgh Playwrights sets since our 2003 debut. She recently worked as a carpenter on the movie *Fences* directed by Denzel Washington. Most recent projects include set design for the Gateway High School and various exhibits at the Clemente Museum and the August Wilson Center.

LIGHTING TECHNICIAN, D.I.A.P. | ASHLEY SOUTHERS is a D.I.A.P. (Do-it-all-person) in training at the Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company. She has worked in the box office, as a lighting tech, costume assistant, house manager, stage manager, assistant stage manager as well as directed for the Theatre Festival in Black & White. She is currently a Senior at Point Park University majoring in creative writing.

SOUND DESIGN | MARK WHITEHEAD is the founder of Saints & Poets Theater, for which he produced and directed the world premiere of Christiane D's *Saffronia*, and the local premieres of Sam Shepard's *The Late Henry Moss* and Donald Freed's *Secret Honor: The Last Testament of Richard M. Nixon*. He was a member of timespace, for which he produced *hamletmachine* and directed *4-H Club* and *Insignificance*. Additional directing credits include *Comfort Zone*, *The Revenants* for PPTCO, *Cry Havoc*, *Taking Sides*, and *Fool for Love*. Mark is Resident Sound Designer for PPTCO and The Unseam'd Shakespeare Company, and has designed for numerous local theaters. Mark has won Onyx awards for best sound design three years in a row for his work on PPTCO's annual August Wilson productions. He 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 Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. Mark was a founding producer of The Dark Night Cabaret performance series. He has also produced and directed music videos for several local bands.

ASSISTANT MAKEUP/COSTUME DESIGN | ARIONA SHERWOOD is a native Pittsburgher who holds a degree in Business Administration. In addition to her work in makeup and costumes, she has stage managed and been a sound technician, and her world revolves around writing every day. She has two beautiful little boys, Ameer and Niyeer. Her production credits include: *Miss Julie*, *Clarissa*, and *John, Jitney*, *Fences*, *In the Heat of the Night*, and the 2016 Theater Festival in Black and White. This show is dedicated to all her friends and family that believe in her, and her journey toward becoming a phenomenal woman, but most importantly to God she gives all the glory, thanks, and praise.

STAFF

PLAYWRIGHT	August Wilson
DIRECTOR	Mark Clayton Southers, Monteze Freeland, Dennis Robinson, Jr.
PRODUCTION MANAGER	Monteze Freeland
STAGE MANAGER	Shanita Bivins
SCENIC DESIGNER	Mark C. Southers
SOUND DESIGNER	Mark Whitehead
LIGHTING DESIGNER	Alex Barnhart
COSTUME DESIGNER	Cheryl El-Walker
HAIR & MAKEUP DESIGNER	Cheryl El-Walker
ASSISTANT COSTUME, HAIR & MAKEUP	Ariona Sherwood
FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER	Randy Kovitz
HEAD CARPENTER	Diane Melchitzky
SCENIC PAINTING	Diane Melchitzky
SCENIC CONSTRUCTION	Diane Melchitzky, Mac Miller, Monteze Freeland
LIGHTING TECHNICIAN/D.I.A.P	Ashley Southers
SOUND TECHNICIAN	Shanita Bivins/Mac Miller
WARDROBE	Cheryl El-Walker, Ariona Sherwood
PROPS	Austin Sills
CREW	James Howard

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Our signature one-act theatre festival returns for its thirteenth year with more entertaining short plays.



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