

THE PITTSBURGH PLAYWRIGHTS THEATRE COMPANY
IN ASSOCIATION WITH AUGUST WILSON HOUSE PRESENT

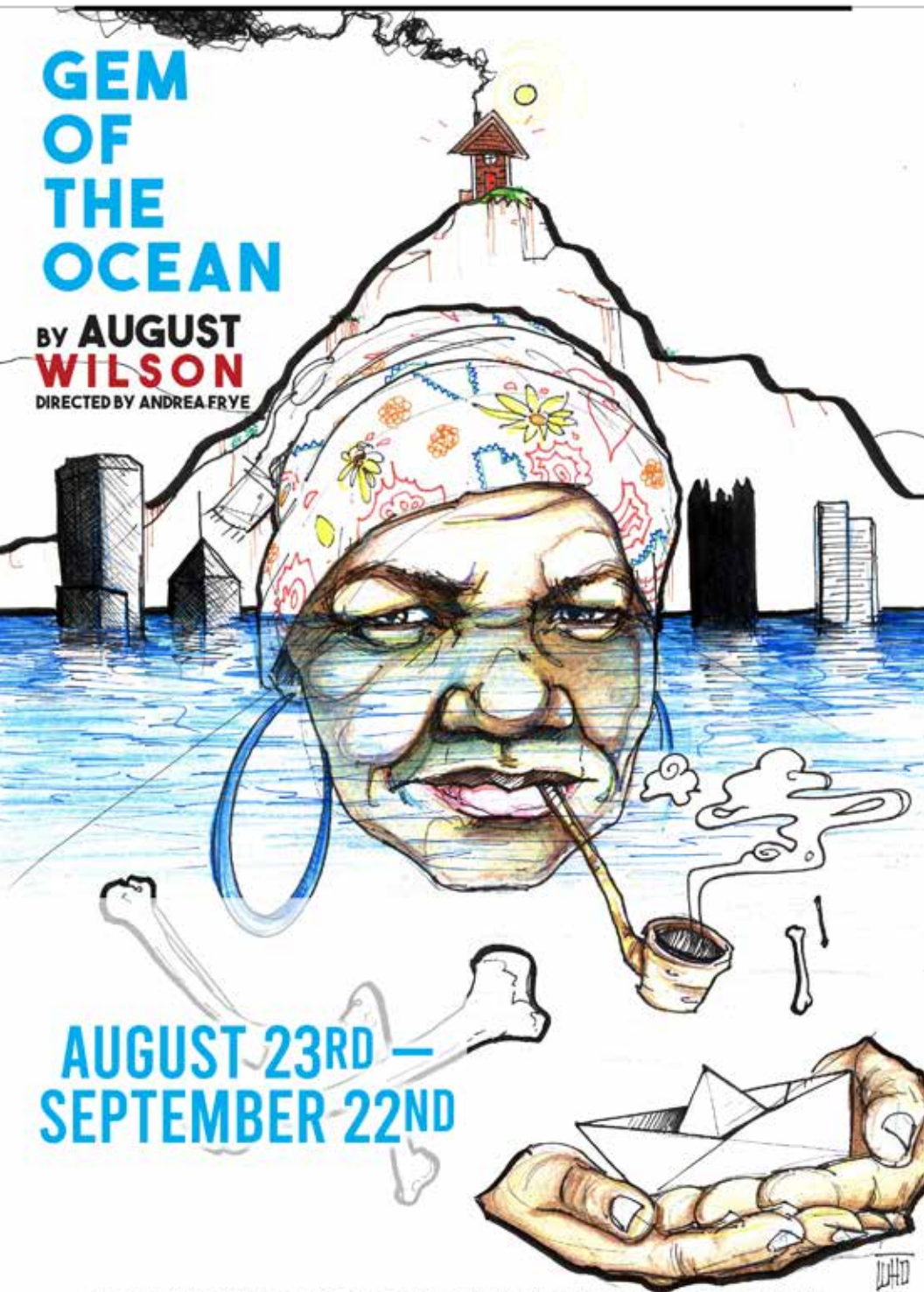
GEM OF THE OCEAN

BY **AUGUST
WILSON**

DIRECTED BY ANDREA FRYE

AUGUST 23RD —
SEPTEMBER 22ND

ORIGINAL MUSIC AND ARRANGEMENTS BY KATHRYN BOSTIC



WILLIAM
DRAKE

WELCOME



Welcome to our ground-breaking production of August Wilson's *Gem of the Ocean*. There actually was a lot of ground to be broken to make this show possible. Right under this grass, our construction team ran into lots of bricks and concrete. It was a major setback as we prepared for this show, but here we are, standing and sitting on holy theatrical ground, where Aunt Ester's fictional home once stood.

It's been a dream to mount *Gem* on this very site, and the many obstacles and setbacks have all been well worth the journey to bring August Wilson's masterpiece to life.

Our small theatre company feels blessed to be able to produce the work of Mr. Wilson. We thank the August Wilson estate and Samuel French.

And we thank you, our dedicated patrons. We're so glad that you are here with us to be a part of this experience and we thank you for your continued support.

Mark Clayton Southers
Founder, Producing Artistic and Executive Director

Gem of the Ocean cover art by Darnell Chambers

August Wilson's *Gem of the Ocean*

Directed by **Andrea Frye**

AUNT ESTER TYLER	Chrystal Bates
CITIZEN BARLOW	Jonathan Berry
SOLLY TWO KINGS	Kevin Brown
ELI	Les Howard
CAESAR WILKS	Wali Jamal
RUTHERFORD SELIG	Marcus Muzopappa
BLACK MARY	Candace Walker

SETTING:

The parlor of Eli, Aunt Ester, and Black Mary's home at 1839 Wylie Avenue, 1904.

Gem of the Ocean is produced by special arrangement with Samuel French.



Chrystal Bates



Jonathan Berry



Kevin Brown



Les Howard



Wali Jamal



Marcus Muzopappa



Candace Walker

Presented by



AUGUST WILSON



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 was nominated for the Best Picture Oscar and received 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.

AUGUST WILSON HOUSE



The mission of August Wilson House is to promote the literary and social legacy of August Wilson. The restoration of his former home at 1727 Bedford Avenue in the Historic Hill District will allow us to promote greater appreciation and understanding of African-American literature and performing arts and the social legacy of August Wilson by exploring his and others' writings through seminars, readings, exhibits and performances. Soon to move from design to construction, the restoration will provide studio space for the fine arts, music and literature; inspire creativity and confidence among artists of many kinds; and foster a wide range of creative disciplines and public activities for visiting students, scholars and artists.

Our collaboration with Pittsburgh Playwrights Theater Company began with *Seven Guitars* in 2016 and *King Hedley II* in 2018, both on the August Wilson House backyard stage, followed now by *Gem of the Ocean* at Aunt Ester's address, 1839 Wylie Avenue. Presenting the plays in the places where they were conceived further showcases local and national artists and utilizes our public spaces in socially interactive ways that engage the legacy of Mr. Wilson and his supporters. We are proud to have worked with PPTCO to bring quality and history-making theater productions to the forefront of August Wilson House's programming initiatives. We will continue to bring new initiatives that promote the professional development of emerging artists and bring national attention to the talent that runs deep in our community.

Paul A. Ellis, Jr., Esq. is Executive Director of August Wilson House.

AUNT ESTER



In 2000, just as he was starting to write *Gem of the Ocean*, August Wilson (1945-2005) called Aunt Ester “the most significant persona of the cycle.” That was before she had even made an appearance on stage in his majestic ten-play American Century Cycle (sometimes called the Pittsburgh Cycle), each play taking place in a different decade of the 20th century. In *Gem*, the significance of the 285-year-old matriarch, prophet and shaman is clear in the history she teaches and the spiritual resources she shares. But it is made specific in her name. Say it out loud: Aunt Ester ... ant-ester ... ancestor.

To make this point, in *Gem*, after some humorous and mistaken discussion of her age, she turns out to be 285 years old. Since *Gem* takes place in 1904, that places her birth in 1619, the year when the first African slaves were brought to the English colonies that became the United States. Aunt Ester is the ultimate ancestor, the conduit for all the history of black America. The inspiration for her owes something to the “Conjur Woman” painted

in 1964 by Romare Bearden, the black artist who inspired several of his plays.

When Wilson finally put Aunt Ester on stage, we had already heard of her as an off-stage character. She first emerged in the sixth play he wrote, *Two Trains Running*, where she provides key advice to the play’s central characters. Two plays later, in *King Hedley II*, her influence is waning and she dies: the Hill is losing her spiritual legacy. There is a hint that she may be reborn, and a further hint in *Radio Golf*, where her house is central to a drama of cultural conflict and betrayal.

They debate her age in these other plays, too, but ultimately it always goes back to 1619. (So she’s 366 when she dies in *King Hedley II*. There’s a one-year glitch in *Two Trains*, due to a late revision in that text.) Her supposed age drove some literal-minded critics nuts, because they didn’t appreciate the significance of 1619. Meanwhile, in *Gem* Aunt Ester explains that as a girl she was trained to become Aunt Ester, that is, the latest in a series of folk priestesses, “ancestors” all. In *Gem* we see her grooming Black Mary to be her successor, and in *Radio Golf* we learn that Black Mary and Citizen Barlow had a child who carries the story forward.



We can only guess at Aunt Ester’s “real” age in *Gem*. She was nine when she was apprenticed to Miss Tyler and twelve when she was sold, but we don’t know when. So let’s say she’s 80 or maybe 90. We know much more about her successor’s age. In *Gem*, Wilson says Black Mary is in her late 20s, which means when she dies 81 years later in *King Hedley II* she would be about 108. It’s plausible.

AUGUST WILSON’S AMERICAN CENTURY CYCLE

(in the order of each play’s premiere, with the year each takes place in parentheses)

- 1979** *Jitney* (1977)
- 1984** *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom* (1927)
- 1985** *Fences* (1957-58, 1965)
- 1986** *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone* (1911)
- 1987** *The Piano Lesson* (1936)
- 1990** *Two Trains Running* (1969); Aunt Ester is important off-stage
- 1993** *Seven Guitars* (1948)
- 1999** *King Hedley II* (1985); Aunt Ester dies off-stage
- 2003** *Gem of the Ocean* (1904); we meet Aunt Ester in person
- 2005** *Radio Golf* (1997); Aunt Ester’s legacy is in dispute

Photos

Above:

Prevalence of Ritual: Conjur Woman by Romare Bearden

Right:

Phylicia Rashad and Anthony Chisholm as Aunt Ester and Solly *Two Kings*, 2004 Broadway production.



1839 WYLIE AVE.

Photo

Chrystal Bates and Alan Bomar Jones as Aunt Ester and Solly Two Kings, Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company's 2012 production.

As significant as Aunt Ester is her house at 1839 Wylie, a site of refuge and healing for the community. It's fictional, but historically it would have been one of the mansions built by Pittsburgh's white industrialists when they started moving to the Hill in the 19th century to escape the smells and soot of downtown. By 1904, they had moved further east, to Shadyside, Squirrel Hill and beyond, and the Hill had become a scruffy melting pot. In *Radio Golf*, written soon after *Gem* but taking place 93 years later, there is a full description of the house's rich woodwork, sweet smell and sacred feeling.

But why the address? In Wilson's lifetime, the hillside portion of 1839 Wylie was a vacant lot, so there was no specific house to refer to. Anyway, on a steep hillside you couldn't build a house where you could drive up to both front and back doors, as the play requires. But Wilson never randomly invents addresses (or dates or phone numbers) – they always have some historical or personal significance. I figure he chose Wylie because it was then the main street of the Hill, and he chose 1839 for several reasons.

In his lifetime, I wrote that he chose 1839 because it was the year of the Amistad slave ship rebellion, when African slaves took over a ship bringing them to America and convinced a judge that they were free men. Wilson never corrected me on that interpretation, as he occasionally did on something I wrote. But when they were working on the Broadway premiere, he told Phylicia Rashad (who was playing Aunt Ester) that 1839 referred to the Underground Railroad. Indeed, some historians identify 1839 as the date of the earliest documentary references to that path to freedom, the "railroad" on which Solly served as a conductor. In either case, Wilson was thinking of the number – he needn't have been thinking specifically of this hillside.

But those who knew August say he did know the vacant lot at 1839 Wylie, because he had been gathered up with other neighborhood kids by Miss Sarah Degree and taken to St. Brigid's, the Catholic church then located up above 1839 on Enoch Street. Behind the church was its school, about where the Jeron X. Grayson Community Center is now. And beside them was a playground where the young Wilson played basketball (as an adolescent, he rarely was without a basketball). So the general area of 1839 was one that he knew.

For me, there is sufficient reason for him to choose this address in its geography. On a warm day, as you start to climb up from Wylie, the air cools and the breeze freshens. Then at the top you turn around for the view southward, looking down the Monongahela River valley toward the southern states from where many black Pittsburghers had come in the time of the Great Migration. I once had the pleasure of showing this hillside to Rashad, as she was preparing to direct *Gem* in Seattle, with CMU's own Michelle Shay as Aunt Ester. Rashad wanted to get a sense of the sort of house Aunt Ester would have lived in. Such houses aren't easy to find on the Hill, so we went to Shadyside for examples. But first, we went to 1839 Wylie. We climbed the hill and stood, silent, enjoying the view, feeling Aunt Ester's presence. Now *Gem* comes home, and we can meet her in person.



Chrystal Bates and Jonathan Berry as Aunt Ester and Citizen Barlow, in Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company's 2012 production.

The articles on pages 6-10 are by Christopher Rawson, senior theater critic of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. He serves on the board of directors of August Wilson House.

GEM OF THE OCEAN

What of the play's title? Aunt Ester says it's the name of the slave ship in the ritual (granted, it's just a paper boat), on which Citizen will suffer and then be taken to the City of Bones. And the mid-Atlantic City of Bones, however grisly in creation, is described as a kind of gem of the ocean. That a slave ship should be considered a "gem" is a bitter irony, and that a huge watery graveyard has become an object of reverence is a form of triumph.

But Wilson must have gotten the specific title from "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean," a well-known patriotic song that children regularly sang in schools back in the 1940s and 1950s. Wilson would have sung it as a child in the Hill; I sang it myself growing up in New England. ("Columbia" was then an alternative name for America.) The song begins:

O Columbia! the gem of the ocean,
The home of the brave and the free,
The shrine of each patriot's devotion,
A world offers homage to thee ...

So Wilson's title is bitterly ironic: the promise of freedom has not been extended equally, not even to the brave; the "gem" of America turned into a slave ship.

But the City of Bones really is a gem, a talisman of a tragic history polished by remembrance. That's a constant Wilson theme: honor the past to refresh the future. That's what Aunt Ester does. A spiritual seer (her Christianity is eccentric, at best), with a twinkle or passionate tears as needed, she initiates Citizen Barlow, Black Mary and us, the audience, into the heart of this play's mysteries.



Phylicia Rashad holding the paper "gem" in the 2004 Broadway production.

THE DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

IS PROUD TO SUPPORT

THE PITTSBURGH PLAYWRIGHTS THEATRE COMPANY'S PRODUCTION OF *GEM OF THE OCEAN.*

COLUMBIA, THE GEM OF THE OCEAN

Words by DAVID T. SHAW Music by THOMAS BECKET

Verses 1, 2 & 3:

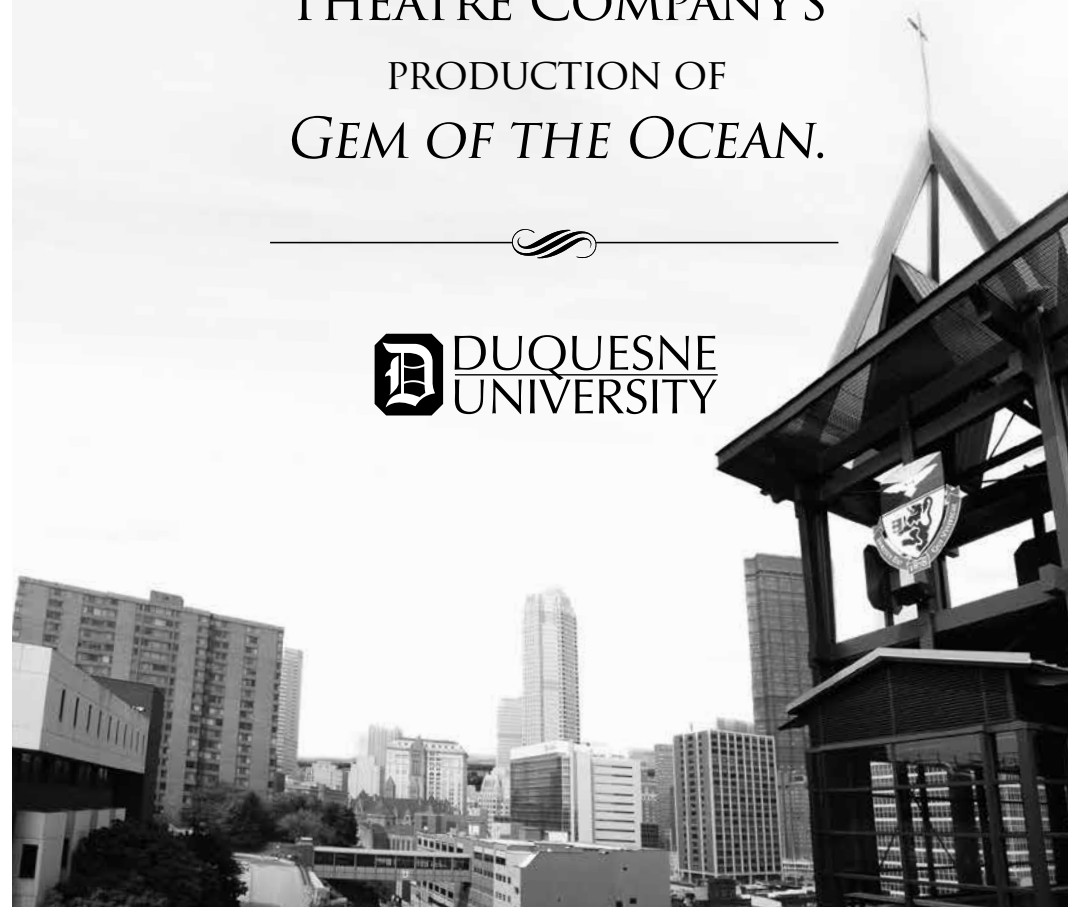
Maestoso

G D G C E7 Am G°

1. O Co - lum - bia, the gem of the o - cean, the home of the brave - and the
2. When war winged its wide des - o - la - tion, and threat - ened the land - to de -
3. The star span - gled ban - ner bring hith - er, o'er Co - lum - bia's true sons - let it

G D A7 D Em A7

free, — the shrine of each pa - triot's de - vo - tion, a world — of - fers hom - age to
form, — the ark then of free - dom's foun - da - tion, Co - lum - bia, rode safe — thro' the
wave; — may the wreaths they have won nev - er with - er, nor its stars — cease to shine — on the



BIOGRAPHIES

AUNT ESTER TYLER | CHRYSTAL BATES After a two-year absence from the stage, Chrystal is thrilled to be back with Pittsburgh Playwrights Theater Company to perform the iconic role of August Wilson's Aunt Ester. Chrystal has the distinction of being a three-time consecutive winner of the Onyx Award for best actress, the first recipient of Pittsburgh's Donna Award for best actress, and in 2017 she received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Pittsburgh New Works Festival. Also in 2017 she appeared as Clarissa in Mark Souther's world premiere of *Miss Julie*, *Clarissa and John* at the National Black Theater Festival, which then traveled to Edinburgh's Fringe Festival in Scotland. Some of her favorite roles include Big Mama (*Living' Fat*), Ruby (*King Hedley II*), Rebecca Pratt (*Ma Noah*), Mother-Sister (*Every Tongue Confess*) and Sophie (*Flying' West*).

CITIZEN BARLOW | JONATHAN BERRY was introduced to this wonderful world of theater acting in 1995 by Dr. Vernell Lillie of Kuntu Repertory Theatre. Stage: Shona Sharif African Dance and Drum Ensemble (Narrator and Preacher in Langston Hughes' *Black Nativity* for 19 consecutive years), the Theatre Factory, Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre, Bricolage, Organic Theatre, the Human Race Theatre Company of Dayton Ohio, City Theatre, and New Horizon (title role in *The Ballad Of Emmett Till*, *The Old Settler*, and *The Black Babe Ruth*). Film/TV: *Lightweight*, *The Next Three Days*, PA Lottery commercials (2015-2018). In August of 2016, he had the life-changing experience of playing Floyd "School Boy" Barton in August Wilson's *Seven Guitars*, mounted in the backyard of the playwright's boyhood home. Other August Wilson plays for PPTCO: *Gem Of The Ocean*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Two Trains Running*, *Fences*, *Jitney*, and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*. Last seen on PPTCO's stage in Mark Clayton Souther's play *Savior Samuel*. Jonathan could not feel more blessed to be back home in his role of Citizen Barlow in *Gem of the Ocean*. May God Bless You. Enjoy the show.

CAESAR WILKS | WALI JAMAL is the only actor in the world to have performed in all ten plays of August Wilson's American Century Cycle in addition to performing Wilson's one-man play, *How I Learned What I Learned*, which he recently performed at the 2019 National Black Theater Festival in Winston-Salem, NC. Wali was the 2018 Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Performer of the Year for his performance of that play. Wali is celebrating his 20th year of performing on the stages of da Burg and would like to thank Mr. Mark Clayton Souther for bringing me into the world of August Wilson, a world that has embraced me like a prodigal son. He would also like to thank all the theater patrons who have been so supportive and kind to him as he continues to serve the theater arts community of Pittsburgh.

RUTHERFORD SELIG | MARCUS MUZOPAPPA has been performing, set/sound designing and directing with the Old Schoolhouse Players since 1994. He has also worked with other area theaters including Prime Stage, Little Lake, South Park, Stage 62, Rage of the Stage, Comtra, Olin Fine Arts Center, the Baldwin Players, and the State Theatre Centre in Uniontown. He is a proud recipient of the Donna Award for Best Actor in the '05 Pittsburgh New Works Festival production of *Breakfast With Willie*. Film credits include: Chris in Tom Dixon's *The Korean*, Johanas Decker in Simon Barracchini's *Mason* series, and Edward Pigford in *Silent*

Tales for Carnegie Screenwriters. He first performed for Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre in 2006 as Uncle Jerome in *Stain*, and has played the Colonel in *Corps Values*, Admiral DuPont & Pres. Lincoln in *Legend of the Black Mariner*, and Officer Mulholland in 2012's *The Gammage Project* (in association with Pittsburgh Repertory Theatre). He also had the privilege to direct PPTCO's reprise of *Dorothy 6* in 2008, and most recently, *Sherlock Holmes and the West End Horror* for Little Lake Theatre.

BLACK MARY | CANDACE MICHELLE WALKER is a multi-disciplinary teaching artist from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In her professional theatrical career, she was nominated as Best Actress for her debut role as Sophie in *Sophie's Second Law (At the Speed of Life)*, by D.S. Jones, at the Pittsburgh New Works Festival in 2012. She was awarded Best Actress for playing the role of Sharifa in *Ubuntu Holiday* by Kim El with Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company in 2013. In 2014, Ms. Walker received an Advancing Black Arts grant for her mixed-media staged production *Hotep on Earth, Know ThySelf*. As a local event host and spoken word artist, she's often seen participating at open mics and cultural events. She now shares creative writing and performance technique at schools and programs with at-risk youth. She recently premiered her solo work in the show *Mime Candy* with the Pittsburgh Fringe Festival in 2019. She's thankful to her son and loving family for their support.

SOPLY TWO KINGS | KEVIN BROWN has appeared in seven of August Wilson's 10-play American Century Cycle. Brown appeared in New Horizon Theater's world premiere *Queens of the Blues* as Thomas Dorsey, the father of gospel music. He recently filmed a remake of the classic "crying Indian" commercial for PRC's antilittering campaign. Brown's additional theater credits include *Jitney*, *King Hedley II*, *Gem of The Ocean*, *Radio Golf*, *Comfort Zone*, *Romance*, *Do Lord Remember Me*, *Driving Miss Daisy*, *Gospel at Colonus*, *Beautiful Dreamers*, *Last of the Line*, *Living' Fat*, *Bubbling Brown Sugar*, *Flight*, *Jelly's Last Jam*, *Mahalia Jackson: Standing on Holy Ground*, *Get Ready*, *Blue*, *Sophisticated Ladies*, *The Billie Holiday Story* at the Grahamstown Theater Festival (South Africa) and *Miss Julie*, *Clarissa and John* (in Pittsburgh twice and at the National Black Theatre Festival and Edinburgh Festival Fringe).

ELI | LES HOWARD began his acting career as a member of the former and prestigious D.C. Black Repertory Company, founded by famed actor Robert Hooks. Local stage: PPTCO, New Horizon Theater, Gargaro Productions, the August Wilson Center and the former Kuntu Repertory Theater. Les appeared in Pittsburgh Festival Opera's acclaimed production *A Gathering of Sons*, directed by Mark Clayton Souther. Les played "Turnbo" in PPTCO's highly successful production of August Wilson's *Jitney*, played Brooke Benton in Ernest McCarthy's *Dinah*, and appeared in New Horizon Theater's *Nothing But The Blues and Dance on Widow's Row* and PPTCO's *Sold*, with actress Renn Woods. Les has also appeared in feature films and once produced and hosted his own local public access television show on PCTV channel 21. Les is also known locally in jazz circles where he performed for many years and produced a CD with the Roger Barbour Jazz Quartet, and also worked with other jazz locals such as Harold Betters and the late Leroy Wolford, among others.

BIOGRAPHIES

SOUND DESIGN | ANGELA BAUGHMAN has created designs for Pittsburgh Playwrights, City Theatre, Front Porch Theatricals, Gulf Shore Playhouse, Hiawatha Project, Kinetic Theatre, Lincoln Park Performing Arts Center, Prime Stage Theatre, University of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Mellon University, and Carnegie Museums. She made her stage debut in February at CMU, where she designed and performed Foley sound effects for the premiere of *It's In The Bag*. In addition to her theater work, she regularly mixes monitors for Grammy award-winning musicians at MCG Jazz and designed radio broadcast installations for Montez Press in MoMA PS1, Mathew Gallery NYC, and a sweet retro RV. Angela is a graduate of Berklee College of Music. You can find her online at www.thatoundgirl.com.

PRODUCTION MANAGER, STAGE MANAGER, SOUND TECHNICIAN | SHANITA BIVINS has stage managed three August Wilson plays (*Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Seven Guitars* and *King Hedley II*) and is happy to be back, working on a fourth. Shanita is Pittsburgh born and raised, and grew up on the Northside. After spending the last 3 years on and behind the stage, she has learned so much and gained much-appreciated experience. Following this production, she will be continuing her passions of acting, producing, and stage managing.

MUSIC | KATHRYN BOSTIC is known for her work on award-winning films, TV and live theater. Films/TV: 2019 Sundance Grand Jury winner *Clemency* (Neon Pictures), *Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am* (Magnolia Pictures), and *August Wilson: The Ground On Which I Stand* (PBS American Masters). Broadway/Stage: *Gem Of The Ocean*, *Radio Golf*, *Joe Turner's Come And Gone* (Mark Taper, dir. Phylicia Rashad). Her work *The August Wilson Symphony* (recipient of the Sundance Institute Time Warner Fellowship) received its world premiere in January 2018 by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (conductor: Lucas Richman). Other fellowships/awards: Sundance Fellowship for Feature Film Scoring, Sundance/Skywalker Documentary Film Scoring, BMI Conducting Fellowship, Best Music in Film (African-American Film Critics Association). In 2016 she became the first female African-American score composer in the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences.

COSTUME DESIGN | KIM BROWN holds MFA and BS degrees from Ohio University, Athens, Ohio. Founder and President of Spotlight Costumes in Pittsburgh's West End Village. Kim is pleased to be working with director Andrea Frye and the fine cast of *Gem of The Ocean*. Kim is the resident costume designer for Lincoln Park Performing Arts Center in Midland where she teaches costume design and theatrical makeup for the charter school. Her work has been seen nationally (replacement costumes for Disney's *Lion King* Gazelle Tour as well as numerous professional and amateur theaters and opera companies) and locally with Prime Stage, Kinetic Theater, Front Porch Theatricals, Pittsburgh Musical Theater, Duquesne University's Red Masquers, Throughline Theatre Company, City Theatre, Pittsburgh Children's Museum, the Gateway Clipper and Kennywood Park. Thank you for supporting live theater and enjoy the show!

HAIR/MAKEUP DESIGN | CHERYL EL-WALKER is an award-winning costume designer and makeup artist who is also a veteran stage actor from Pittsburgh. She is the resident costume/makeup artist for the Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company. Her creative work in various venues has earned her several Onyx awards from the African American Council of the Arts (AACTA): Best Make-up Artist (2007); Best Costume for a Musical for *Christmas Is Coming Uptown* (2008); Best Leading Actress for *Freeman* (New Horizon Theatre, 2008); Best Costume Design for a Play (Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company, 2008, 2009, 2010,

2012) and the PPTCO 2012 Legacy Award. In 2013, Cheryl debuted another one of her skills and received PPTCO's Theater Festival in Black and White Award for Best Director. Most recently, Cheryl was seen in PPTCO's *Savior Samuel* as Virginia. Cheryl is an alumna of Point Park University and is pleased to announce that she has done costume, makeup and special effects for all ten August Wilson plays.

PRODUCING ARTISTIC ASSOCIATE | MONTEZE FREELAND is a native of Baltimore and graduate of Point Park University. Mr. Freeland joined the PPTCO family six years ago and has served as director, actor and production manager. Select credits include: *Poe's Last Night*, *Christmas Star*, *Miss Julie*, *Clarissa and John*, *In The Heat of The Night*, *East Texas Hot Links* and *The Piano Lesson*. This marks his sixth August Wilson production with the company.

DIRECTOR | ANDREA FRYE is an acclaimed director and actor. Stage direction: *Miss Julie*, *Clarissa and John* for St. Louis Black Rep, *Black Pearl Sings!* (Kevin Kline nomination), *Pericles*, and *Art* for St. Louis Black Repertory Company, *Blues for an Alabama Sky* for Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre Company, *Crowns* for Actors Theatre of Louisville. Stage acting: *Goodnight*, *Tyler*, *The Nacirema Society Requests...*, and *Intimate Apparel* for Alliance Theatre, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* for Arena Stage, *Ruined* (Kevin Kline nomination), *Romeo and Juliet*, and *A Song For Coretta* (Kevin Kline nomination) for St. Louis Black Repertory Company. Film/TV: *If Loving You Is Wrong*, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, *Baby Driver*.

FIGHT DIRECTOR | LISA ANN GOLDSMITH is a professional actor and director with many Off-Broadway and regional credits. Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Public Theater, Pittsburgh CLO, Pittsburgh Irish and Classical, Pittsburgh Playwrights, The Rep, Quantum Theatre. NYC and Regional: HERE Theater, Primary Stages, Protean Theatre Company, Arkansas Rep, Human Race Theatre Company, Theatre by the Sea, Tulsa Shakespeare in the Park, Studio Theatre. Film and TV include: *The Next Three Days*, *One for the Money*, *Love and Other Drugs*, *Progression*, *The Elephant in the Room* and others. Next up: Cassius in Pittsburgh Shakespeare in the Parks' all-female *Julius Caesar*, and Mary Travers of Peter Paul and Mary in the feature film *116 MacDougal*.

LIGHTING DESIGN | LATRICE LOVETT is a native of Washington, DC who currently resides in High Point, NC. She has done lighting in several different genres of the performing arts including dance, theatre, musical theatre, live concerts and opera. She completed her bachelor's degree at North Carolina Central University in Technical Theatre. She has also received her MFA in Design & Technology from University of Missouri-Kansas City where she studied Lighting Design. She is currently creating lighting designs and working on other lighting projects under her company Lovett Lighting LLC.

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

BIOGRAPHIES

PRODUCER, ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER, LIGHTING TECHNICIAN/D.I.A.P (DO-IT-ALL-PERSON) | 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 a graduate of Point Park University.

FOUNDER, PRODUCING ARTISTIC AND EXECUTIVE 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. Southerns 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 Fringe in Scotland. He was the Artistic Director for the 2016 year-long August Wilson Festival at Short North Stage in Columbus Ohio. Mark is a member of the Dramatists Guild of America, a board member of August Wilson House and the former Artistic Director of the August Wilson Center in Pittsburgh PA.

MASTER ELECTRICIAN | MADELEINE STEINECK has been working as a Lighting Designer and Master Electrician in western Pennsylvania since 2011. Companies she has designed for include: Pittsburgh Festival Opera, off the WALL Productions, Carnegie Stage, Mercyhurst University Theatre Program, the New Hazlett's CSA Program, MCG Jazz, Texture Contemporary Ballet, fireWALL dance theatre, Morgantown Dance Studio, and Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company. She also designs for local high school and middle school productions. Master Electrician credits include: 2019 and 2016's Regional Dance America: Northeast in Erie, PA, Lake Erie Ballet, Erie Contemporary Ballet Theatre, PICT, Erie Festival of Dance, and Mon Valley Sizzles at the Carrie Furnace. Her design for PPTCO's production of *Miss Julie, Clarissa, and John* was seen at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 2017. She has also traveled as the lighting director for Raphael Xavier's productions: *The Unofficial Guide to Audience Watching Performance* (Chicago, IL and Burlington, VT in 2014) and *Point of Interest* (Lake Placid, NY in 2018).

PPTCO 2019-2020

Gem of the Ocean

By August Wilson

August 23 -- September 22, 2019

1839 Wylie Avenue,
Pittsburgh's Hill District

presented in association with
August Wilson House



Rhapsody In Black

By LeLand Gantt

November 15, 2019 - 8 pm

August Wilson Center

Straddling the color line, not at home in any hue, a young man struggles with what it means to be black and discovers what it means to be a man.



Pyramid Builders

By Kyle Bostian

Spring 2020

Pittsburgh Playwrights Theater

Ancient myths. Modern agriculture. Tribalism. War. Climate change. White supremacy. In 2012 and 2032, two diverse sets of characters experience the impact of these things on their lives in an exploration of the rise — and fall? — of civilization.



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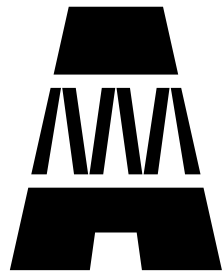
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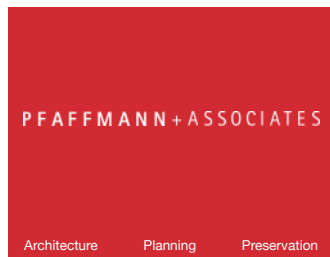
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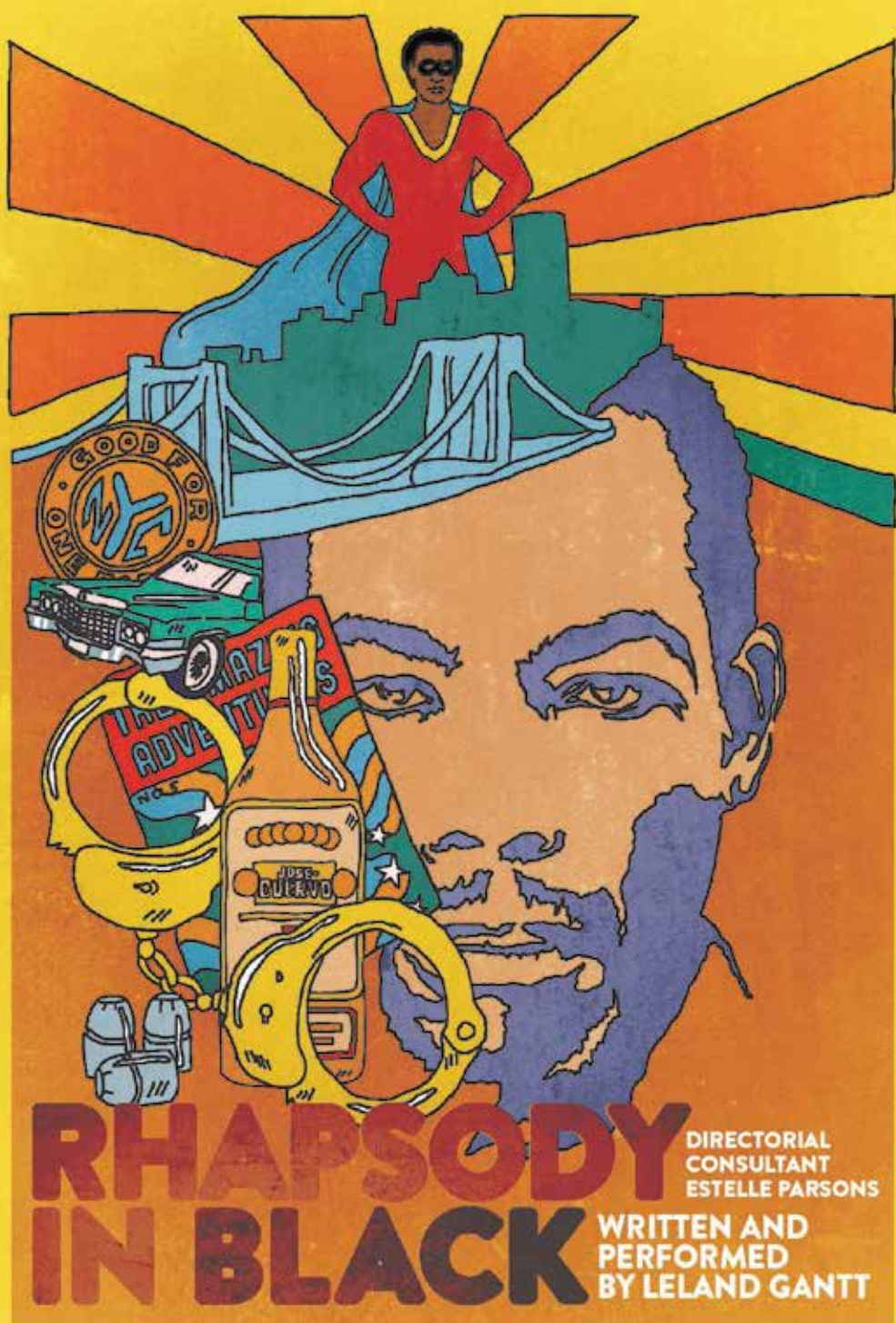
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A PPTCO production - November 15, 2019

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