MAJOR REVIVAL OF TWO TRAINS RUNNING IS ON TRACK AT GOODMAN THEATRE, MARCH 7 - APRIL 12
***CHUCK SMITH’S PRODUCTION IS THE CENTERPIECE OF CITYWIDE CELEBRATION OF PLAYWRIGHT AUGUST WILSON***

(Chicago, IL) “There are always only two trains running, there is life and there is death. Each of us rides them both.” – Playwright August Wilson (1945 – 2005). Goodman Theatre revives Two Trains Running, Wilson’s poetic and personal portrait of the small dreams that fuel societal revolution. Resident Director Chuck Smith directs Wilson’s masterpiece, praised by Variety as “perfection...a writer at the peak of his powers.” A cast of seven—Chester Gregory (Sterling), Anthony Irons (Wolf), Nambi E. Kelley (Risa), Terry Bellamy (Memphis), Ernest Perry Jr. (Hambone), A.C. Smith (West) and Alfred Wilson (Holloway)—portray the denizens of a Pittsburgh diner who “talk and testify, dream and doubt, their fantastic speech almost qualifying as song” (Chicago Sun-Times), as “Wilson’s genius for translating common language into poetry through rhythm, repetition and telling imagery reveals a world of myth, religion and folk spirit” (Chicago Tribune). The creative team for Two Trains Running includes Linda Buchanan (set design); John Culbert (lighting design); Josh Horvath and Ray Nardelli (sound design); and Birgit Wise (costume design). Neena Arndt is the Dramaturg. Two Trains Running appears March 7 – April 12, 2015 in the Albert Theatre (opening night is Monday, March 16). Tickets ($27 - $80; subject to change) are on sale at GoodmanTheatre.org/TwoTrains, by phone at 312.443.3800 or at the box office (170 North Dearborn).

One of the 20th century’s most acclaimed playwrights, August Wilson won the Pulitzer Prize for Fences and The Piano Lesson, as well as Rockefeller and Guggenheim fellowships, a Tony Award, Drama Desk Award and four New York Drama Critics’ Circle Awards. Coinciding with Two Trains Running, the Goodman honors his artistry and influence on American culture with a citywide career retrospective, The August Wilson Celebration, March 7 – April 18. Celebration Curator Chuck Smith, together with Constanza Romero (Wilson’s widow), Ron OJ Parson (actor/director) and Dr. Harvey Young (Northwestern University), partners with more than 20 theaters, schools and organizations. The Celebration features FREE concert (script-in-hand) readings of Wilson’s nine other “20th Century Cycle” plays, educational seminars, discussions, poetry and more. The Goodman was the first theater in the world to produce all 10 plays in the cycle.

“Of all the Goodman’s artistic partnerships in my tenure as artistic director, none has been more meaningful than our 20-year association with August Wilson—a crucial voice in the American theater, an esteemed colleague, and a great personal friend,” said Artistic Director Robert Falls. “As the centerpiece of a massive Celebration that demonstrates August’s indelible effect, Chuck has chosen to revive Two Trains Running; we produced the Chicago premiere in 1993, and are thrilled to revisit this eloquent and powerful play two decades later.”

At the time of the Goodman’s Chicago premiere, directed by Lloyd Richards, August Wilson recalled, “The so-called ‘red letter events’ of the 1960s—the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Bobby Kennedy, the anti-war demonstrations, etc.—sometimes didn’t reach the average person who was confronted with just simply living. I was concerned about those people, how they were doing, where they were going.”

The civil rights movement is sweeping across Pittsburgh’s Hill District in 1969—but the promise of a better tomorrow hasn’t quite reached all the city’s residents. Folks gather daily at Memphis Lee’s once-prosperous diner to gossip about the neighborhood, blighted by the missteps of urban renewal and decimated by crime and poverty, and dream about the future. Memphis must decide if he should allow the government to take over his building or sell it to a ruthless businessman.

“The two trains, or two ideas, in the play—cultural assimilation or cultural separatism—have confronted black America since the emancipation,” said Chuck Smith, who previously directed Wilson’s Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom (1997) and also served as dramaturg for the world premiere of Gem of the Ocean (2003) at the Goodman. “It’s a gift to work with this cast, whose many previous August Wilson credits deepen the process and enrich the experience.”

August Wilson on His Two Trains Running Characters and the Goodman’s Cast (Visit the Press Room for artist info)

— continued —
“The characters, as I write them, they grow, they change,” said Wilson, “And what happened was [Two Trains Running] became largely about Memphis at one point—and then it was more about Sterling at the other point. Gradually, I began to see it’s really about Hambone, because he’s the one character that affects everyone else in the play.”

As Memphis Lee, Terry Bellamy returns to the Goodman for the first time in in nearly 40 years. He has performed at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Cleveland Play House, Indiana Repertory Theatre and the Guthrie Theater. Bellamy is a founding member of Penumbra Theatre and has worked at Illusion Theater, Mixed Blood Theatre, The Humana Festival of New American Plays at Actors Theatre of Louisville, Jungle Theater, Hennepin Center for the Arts, History Theatre and Park Square Theatre. He received Drama Critics Circle Awards for his portrayal of Boesman in Boesman and Lena and for playing Estragon in Waiting for Godot. He has also received a William E. Griffin Award for outstanding contribution to Penumbra Theatre.

Appearing in his first August Wilson play, Gary, IN native Chester Gregory portrays Sterling—a young man just out of prison who helps right the injustice done years earlier to Hambone. Gregory was seen at the Goodman in Regina Taylor’s Drowning Crow and his numerous Broadway credits include Hairspray, Tarzan, Cry-Baby and Sister Act. He has toured nationally with Dreamgirls and Sister Act, as well as his one-man show The Eve of Jackie Wilson. In addition to acting, Gregory performs as a recording artist known as CHESS.

Ernest Perry Jr. portrays Hambone, a character Wilson took from one of his short stories; promised a ham for a painting job but received only a chicken, Hambone refuses to accept less than what he felt he was due. Perry has appeared in more productions than any other actor at the Goodman over the past three decades, including Smith’s production of Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom and Falls’ 1990 production of The Iceman Cometh. Other credits include Death and the King’s Horseman, An Enemy of the People, Play Mas, The Road, Edmond, A Raisin in the Sun, Galileo, A Christmas Carol, Black Star Line, Puddin ’n’ Pete, The Ties That Bind, Let Me Live, ‘Tis Pity She’s a Whore, Miss Evers’ Boys, Oo-Blu-Dee, Drowning Crow, Romeo and Juliet, As You Like It, Cry, The Beloved Country, The Merchant of Venice, Heartbreak House, Magnolia and Gas For Less.

Continued Wilson, “Risa has a curious story for all of the women that are mentioned in this play, and I thought one of the large ideas wrestled between male/female is the question of self-definition: women defining themselves in terms other than the terms by which men define them.”

Nambi E. Kelley plays Risa, a quiet but sharp waitress at Memphis’ diner—and the only female character in the play. Kelley, who was introduced to theater as a young participant in the Goodman’s Student Subscription Series, penned the critically-acclaimed adaptation of Native Son, Richard Wright’s iconic novel about oppression, freedom, and justice, at Court Theatre earlier this season. Her Goodman appearances as an actor include The Good Negro, The Ballad of Emmett Till, Crumbs From the Table of Joy, Drowning Crow and Mirror of the Invisible World. She was member of the Goodman’s Playwrights Unit during the 2011/2012 Season.

“Holloway became the character that knows everything,” said Wilson. “I discovered that in the process of writing the play, whenever you get stuck and don’t know where you’re going, just ask that character a question and you trust him. A lot of the exposition and things that I found out about the characters, I got from Holloway by simply asking him.”

Alfred Wilson (Holloway)’s numerous Wilson credits include Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom, Jitney and The Piano Lesson (Court Theatre); Two Trains Running and Jitney (Pegasus Players) Radio Golf and Gem of the Ocean (Ensemble Theatre Cincinnati); Jitney (West Coast Black Theatre); Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom (Milwaukee Repertory Theater and Actor’s Theatre of Louisville); Radio Golf (Pittsburgh Public Theatre); and Two Trains Running (Geva Theatre).

“Wolf likes his women in the daytime, because he doesn’t want to close his eyes; he don’t trust anyone. He is almost the opposite of what his name would imply,” said Wilson. Anthony Irons plays Wolf in his Goodman Theatre debut. He is a Congo Square Theatre ensemble member whose television credits include Chicago Fire, Boss and The Chicago Code.

A.C. Smith (West) returns to Goodman Theatre, where he previously appeared as the Ghost of Christmas Present in A Christmas Carol (2013); Measure for Measure; Black Star Line; and The Visit, as well as many staged readings and workshops. His Wilson credits include Jitney, Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom and the national tour of The Piano Lesson, directed by Lloyd Richards.
**Two Trains Running** Takes the Stage March 7 – April 12, 2015
Chuck Smith Directs the Centerpiece Production of the Citywide “August Wilson Celebration”

**Two Trains Running At-A-Glance**
**Artists, dates and ticket prices are subject to change**

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**EVENTS AND SPECIAL PERFORMANCES**

- **March 11.** “Two Trains and a Sidecar” – 6pm reception, 7:30pm show ($65 promo SIDECAR, [a Scenemakers Board event](#))
- **March 15.** Artist Encounter: Chuck Smith, Todd Kreidler, mod. Dr. Harvey Young, 5pm ($5; FREE for Subs/Donors/students)
- **March 18.** College Night – 6pm pre-show pizza party, 7:30pm show ($10 promo COLLEGE w/valid student ID)
- **March 18.** Sign Interpreted Performance, 7:30pm
- **March 19 and 31.** Student Matinee Performances, 11am (free for students in the Student Subscription Series)
- **March 25.** Audio Described Performance, 7:30pm
- **March 20 and 27; April 3 and 10.** PlayTalks – Pre-show discussions with members of the Goodman’s Artistic Staff
- **Every Wednesday and Thursday evening.** PlayBacks – Discussions with actors immediately following the performance

**TICKETS ($27 - $80) AND DISCOUNTS**

Tickets: [GoodmanTheatre.org/TwoTrains](http://www.GoodmanTheatre.org/TwoTrains) or call 312.443.3800. Fax: 312.443.3825; TTY/TDD: 312.443.3829.

**Box Office Hours:** 12noon - 5pm; on performance days, the office remains open until 30 minutes past curtain.

**MezzTix** – Half-price day-of-performance mezzanine tickets available at 10am online (promo code MEZZTIX)

**10Tix** – Student $10 tickets for any performance; limit four, with valid student ID (promo code 10TIX)

**Group Sales** – Discounted tickets for parties of 10+ – 312.443.3820

**Subscribe** – Three-Play Albert Theatre subscriptions start at $72 ([GoodmanTheatre.org/Subscribe](http://www.GoodmanTheatre.org/Subscribe))

**WILD Card** – $199 flex pass including four mix/match Albert/Owen tickets ([GoodmanTheatreorg/WildCard](http://www.GoodmanTheatre.org/WildCard))

**Gift Certificates** – Available in any amount ([GoodmanTheatre.org/GiftCertificates](http://www.GoodmanTheatre.org/GiftCertificates))

**PRODUCTION SPONSORS**

The Goodman is grateful to its production sponsors. Allstate Insurance Company and JPMorgan Chase are the Major Corporate Sponsors; ComEd is the Official Lighting Sponsor; ITW is the Corporate Sponsor Partner; the National Endowment for the Arts is the Major Production Supporter; Heidrick & Struggles is the Opening Night Sponsor; and EBONY and WBEZ91.5FM are the Media Partners for *Two Trains Running*. The Chicago Community Trust is the Major Supporter of the *August Wilson Celebration*. Ardmore Associates and Mesirov Financial are the Century Cycle Reading Series Sponsors. PepsiCo is the Landmark Discussion Series Sponsor. The Joyce Foundation is the Principal Supporter of Artistic Development and Diversity Initiatives.
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About Goodman Theatre

The Goodman’s 2014/2015 Season features nine productions on its two stages—six in the 856-seat Albert Theatre and three in the 400-seat flexible Owen Theatre, plus the annual New Stages Festival that includes additional developmental productions, and partner productions with The Second City and Albany Park Theater Project. On stage now: Rapture, Blister, Burn by Gina Gionfriddo, directed by Kimberly Senior, a Chicago premiere (through February 22, in the Albert); Two Trains Running by August Wilson, directed by Chuck Smith, in conjunction with a citywide August Wilson Celebration (March 7 – April 12, in the Albert); The Upstairs Concierge by Kristoffer Diaz, directed by KJ Sanchez, a world premiere co-commission with Teatro Vista (March 28 – April 26, in the Owen); The Little Foxes by Lillian Hellman, directed by Henry Wishcamper (May 2 – June 7, in the Albert); stop. reset, written and directed by Regina Taylor, a Chicago premiere (May 23 – June 21, in the Owen); Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike by Christopher Durang, directed by Steve Scott, a Chicago premiere (June 20 – July 26, in the Albert), and Albany Park Theater Project’s Feast (Summer dates TBA in the Owen).

Now celebrating its 90th year as Chicago's flagship theater, Goodman Theatre is an artistic and community institution dedicated to the art of theater and to civic engagement in the issues of the contemporary world. The Goodman has transformed over the past 35 years into a world class theater and premier Chicago cultural institution distinguished by the quality and scope of its programming and its culturally and aesthetically diverse creative leadership; artistic priorities include new plays, reimagined classics, culturally specific works, musical theater and international collaborations. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Robert Falls and Executive Director Roche Schulfer, achievements include the Goodman’s state-of-the-art two-theater complex in the heart of the downtown Theatre District. Over the past three decades, the Goodman has generated more than 150 world or American premieres and nearly 30 new-work commissions. Joan Clifford is Chair of Goodman Theatre’s Board of Trustees, Swati Mehta is Women’s Board President and Gordon C.C. Liao is President of the Scenemakers Board for young professionals. American Airlines is the Exclusive Airline of Goodman Theatre.

“A mainstay of Chicago and beyond” (Chicago Sun-Times), the Goodman is internationally acclaimed for its “fresh work of magnitude and ambition (and) bold, risky theatrical choices” (Chicago Tribune). From new plays to “first-class revivals” (The New York Times), the Goodman has earned numerous awards for its productions: two Pulitzer Prizes; 22 Tony Awards, including Outstanding Regional Theatre (1992); and nearly 160 Joseph Jefferson Awards.

The 90th Anniversary “Season to Celebrate” programming is rooted in the same spirit that launched the Goodman in 1925—an array of dramatic fare, from classics to noteworthy contemporary works, innovative and often controversial, embracing genres from farces to searing social dramas—honoring the theater’s past and envisioning its future. The nine-play season begins with an All-New Fall of works fostered and developed in the Goodman’s new play development programs followed by the August Wilson Celebration in spring 2015, the 10th anniversary of the playwright’s death and the 70th anniversary of his birth. This city-wide Celebration honors the longstanding collaboration between Wilson and the Goodman, the first theater in the world to produce all 10 works in his “20th Century Cycle.”

Visit the special anniversary website, GoodmanTheatre.org/90, to see famous faces who’ve worked at the theater, browse photos of classic productions and read interviews with noted artists.