The assembled powerhouse line was Ruben Santiago-Hudson, Artistic Director Robert Falls, and playwright Constanza Romero.

(Chicago, IL) Goodman Theatre, in collaboration with Chicago’s various off-Loop theaters and Northwestern University, unveils partial programming in its spring 2015 citywide “August Wilson Celebration”—an extensive retrospective of the late playwright’s life, artistry and influence on American culture. The seven-week Celebration takes place in March and April 2015 on dual landmark occasions: the 70th anniversary of the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright’s birth and the 10th anniversary of his death. Resident Director Chuck Smith curates programming in communities throughout Chicago, together with Wilson’s wife and frequent collaborator Constanza Romero; actor/director Ron OJ Parson; and Northwestern University professor and critic Harvey Young. As the first theater in the world to produce every play in Wilson’s 10-play cycle exploring the 20th Century African American experience, the Goodman and partnering organizations pay tribute to and explore the enduring impact of “theater’s poet of Black America” (The New York Times).

“No artistic collaborator of the past 90 years has been more important to the Goodman than playwright August Wilson,” said Artistic Director Robert Falls. “His work was first seen by Goodman audiences in 1986 with Fences, starring James Earl Jones. Over the next 20 years, the Goodman became a primary artistic home to Wilson and the birthplace of two world-premiere productions, Seven Guitars and Gem of the Ocean. Chuck Smith, who directed our memorable production of Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom in 1997 and has the distinction of serving as August’s dramaturg on Gem of the Ocean, has assembled a powerhouse line-up that promises to make the Celebration a major American cultural event of 2015.”

The August Wilson Celebration includes the following productions and events (a current calendar follows):

- A major revival of Two Trains Running at Goodman Theatre, directed by Smith and featuring Alfred Wilson (Holloway); A.C. Smith (West); Nambi E. Kelley (Risa); Ernest Perry Jr. (Hambone); Anthony Irons (Wolf); Chester Gregory (Sterling); and Ron OJ Parson (Memphis). Individual tickets ($25 - $79; subject to change) are on sale now; visit www.GoodmanTheatre.org, call 312.443.3800 or visit the box office (170 N. Dearborn).

- One-night-only FREE readings of the other nine plays in the 20th Century Cycle at off-Loop theaters and community venues, including MPAACT, Congo Square Theatre Company, Pegasus Theatre Chicago, Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre, eta Creative Arts Foundation and Court Theatre

- A series of lectures and discussions that shine a spotlight on the cities where Wilson did his landmark work—Chicago, St. Paul, New Haven and New York—featuring acclaimed artists/scholars associated with him

- A discussion of the female characters in August Wilson’s work, featuring Tony Award winner Phylicia Rashad and hosted by Tony Award nominee Michele Shay

- A first-time presentation of Wilson’s poetry, in association with the Poetry Foundation of Chicago

- A major summit of leading African American artists and educators, culminating in a discussion of “The State of Black Theater in America: Past, Present and Future”

- Seminars for high school teachers, intended to encourage the inclusion of Wilson’s work in high school curricula

- Actor/playwright Ruben Santiago-Hudson performing Wilson’s autobiographical How I Learned What I Learned...
AUGUST WILSON CELEBRATION  
CURATED BY CHUCK SMITH

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**MARCH/APRIL 2015**

**20TH CENTURY CYCLE**

Two Trains Running (TT)  
Directed by Chuck Smith  
March 7 – April 12, 2015  
Goodman Theatre

Fences (F)  
A concert reading  
March 17 at 7pm  
Goodman Theatre

Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom (MR)  
A concert reading by  
Pegasus Theatre Chicago  
March 21 at 7pm  
Logan Center for the Arts (515 E. 60th)

Seven Guitars (SG)  
A concert reading  
March 24 at 7pm  
Chicago State University (9501 S. King)

Joe Turner’s Come and Gone (UT)  
A concert reading by MPAACT  
March 26 at 2pm  
Beverly Arts Center (2401 W. 111th)

**20TH CENTURY CYCLE**

*Gear of the Ocean (GO)*  
A concert reading  
March 31 at 7pm  
Pullman Museum (11111 S. Forestville)

The Piano Lesson (PL)  
A concert reading by  
Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre  
April 4 at 3pm  
Evanston Public Library (1703 Orrington)

Radio Golf (RG)  
A concert reading by Court Theatre  
April 6 at 7pm  
Court Theatre (5535 S. Ellis)

Jitney (J)  
A concert reading by ETA  
April 14 at 7pm  
ETA (7558 S. South Chicago)

King Hedley II (KH)  
A concert reading by Congo Square  
April 18 at 7pm  
Cultural Center (78 E. Washington)

**PANEL DISCUSSIONS**

August Wilson in Chicago (AW Chi)  
Kick-Off Event  
March 9 at 7pm  
Harold Washington Library (400 S. State)

August Wilson at Yale (AW Yale)  
March 23 at 7pm  
Theatre School at DePaul University (2350 N. Racine)

August Wilson in St. Paul MN (AW SP)  
April 7 at 7pm  
Northwestern University (39 Arts Circle)

August Wilson in New York (AW NY)  
April 12 at 7pm  
Goodman Theatre

**SPECIAL EVENTS**

August Wilson Monologue Competition (AW Mnc)  
March 10 at 7:30pm  
Goodman Theatre

The Women of August Wilson (AW Women)  
March 22 at 7:30pm  
Black Ensemble Theatre (4450 N. Clark)

The Poetry of August Wilson (AW Poetry)  
March 25 at 7pm  
The Poetry Foundation (61 W. Superior)

*How I Learned What I Learned (HI)*  
A concert reading  
March 30 at 7pm  
Northwestern University (30 Arts Circle)

**SPECIAL EVENTS**

Directors Summit (DS)  
April 11-13  
Goodman Theatre

Black Theatre in America (BTA)  
A panel discussion  
April 13 at 6pm  
Goodman Theatre

*Goodman Theatre 90 Years*

GoodmanTheatre.org  
312.443.3800

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About August Wilson (April 27, 1945 – October 2, 2005)

August Wilson was born and raised in the Hill District of Pittsburgh and lived in Seattle at the time of his death. He is survived by two daughters—Sakina Ansari and Azula Carmen Wilson—and his wife, costume designer Constanza Romero. Wilson 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 African Americans, decade by decade, over the course of the 20th Century. Wilson’s plays have been produced at regional theaters across the country, on Broadway and throughout the world. In 2003, Wilson made his professional stage debut in his one-man show, How I Learned What I Learned.

His work garnered many awards, including the Pulitzer Prize for Fences (1987) and The Piano Lesson (1990); a Tony Award for Fences; 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. Additionally, the cast recording of Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom received a 1985 Grammy Award, and Wilson received a 1995 Emmy Award nomination for his screenplay adaptation of The Piano Lesson. Wilson’s early works include 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.

Fellowships and awards include Rockefeller and Guggenheim fellowships in playwright, the Whiting Writers’ Award and the 2003 Heinz Award. He was awarded a 1999 National Humanities Medal by the President of the United States, 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 America 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 W. 52nd Street: The August Wilson Theatre. In 2007, he was posthumously inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame.

About the Curators of the August Wilson Celebration

Goodman Theatre Resident Director Chuck Smith celebrated his 20th anniversary—and 20 productions—with the Goodman this past season, and has been a prominent member of Chicago’s theater community for more than 40 years. His Goodman credits include the Chicago premieres of By the Way, Meet Vera Stark, Race, The Good Negro, Proof (with an all-African American cast) and The Story; the world premieres of By the Music of the Spheres and The Gift Horse; James Baldwin’s The Amen Corner (which transferred to Boston’s Huntington Theatre Company, where it won the Independent Reviewers of New England Award for Best Direction); Lorraine Hansberry’s A Raisin in the Sun; Pearl Cleage’s Blues for an Alabama Sky; August Wilson’s Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom (which was seen and applauded by Chicago’s Mayor Richard Daley, Vice President Al Gore and basketball legend Michael Jordan); the Fats Waller musical Ain’t Misbehavin’; the 1993 to 1995 productions of A Christmas Carol; Crumbs From the Table of Joy; Vivisections from a Blown Mind; and The Meeting. He served as dramaturg for the world-premiere production of August Wilson’s Gem of the Ocean at the Goodman. At Columbia College he was facilitator of the Theodore Ward Prize playwriting contest for 20 years and editor of the contest anthologies Seven Black Plays and Best Black Plays. He won a Chicago Emmy Award as associate producer/theatrical director for the NBC teleplay Crime of Innocence and was theatrical director for the Emmy Award-winning Fast Break to Glory and the Emmy Award-nominated The Martin Luther King Suite. He was a founding member of the Chicago Theatre Company, where he served as Artistic Director for four seasons and directed the Jeff Award-nominated Suspenders and the Jeff Award-winning musical Po’. He is a 2003 inductee into the Chicago State University Gwendolyn Brooks Center’s Literary Hall of Fame and a 2001 Chicago Tribune Chicagoan of the Year. He is currently an associate producer of Legacy Productions, a Chicago-based touring company, and a board member of the African American Arts Alliance of Chicago.

Constanza Romero’s Broadway costume design credits include The Mountaintop, Fences (Tony Award nomination, also associate producer), Gem of the Ocean (Tony nomination), Seven Guitars and The Piano Lesson. She also designed the artwork for the Broadway productions and publications of Two Trains Running and Seven Guitars. In addition to Goodman Theatre, Romero has worked with regional theaters including Seattle Repertory Theatre (where she is a resident artist), Huntington Theatre Company, Center Theatre Group (2003 Ovation Award for Best Costume Design for Gem of the Ocean), Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Crossroads Theatre Company, Intiman Theatre, A Contemporary Theatre, Yale Repertory Theatre and Milwaukee Repertory Theater. Romero taught costume design at the University of Washington, as well as scenic — continued —
Goodman Theatre Announces Partial Programming for March/April 2015 August Wilson Celebration
Curated by Resident Director Chuck Smith, Constanza Romero, Ron OJ Parson and Dr. Harvey Young

Ron OJ Parson will appear as Memphis in the Smith’s upcoming revival of Two Trains Running at the Goodman (March 7 – April 12, 2015), where he most recently appeared in Romance by David Mamet, during the 2005/2006 Season. Parson is a native of Buffalo, New York and a graduate of the University of Michigan's professional theater program. He is the co-founder and former artistic director of the Onyx Theatre Ensemble of Chicago, and current Producing Artistic Director of The New Onyx Theatre Project. He currently resides in Chicago, Illinois and is a Resident Artist at the Court Theatre. Since moving to Chicago, Illinois from New York in 1994, Parson has worked as both Actor and Director. He has worked with many Chicago theaters including the Goodman, Chicago Theatre Company, Victory Gardens Theater, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Chicago Dramatists, TimeLine Theatre, Teatro Vista, Northlight Theater, Court Theater, Black Ensemble Theater, ETA Creative Arts Foundation, Congo Square Theatre Company, Urban Theater Company and Writers Theatre. Regional theater work includes Virginia Stage Company, Portland Stage Company, Studio Arena Theatre, Studio Theatre, Roundabout Theatre, Wilshire Theatre, Mechanic Theatre, Center Stage tHEATER, Actors Theatre of Louisville, South Coast Repertory Theatre, Pasadena Playhouse, Geva Theatre, and, most recently Milwaukee Repertory Theatre. TV and film credits include ER, Early Edition, Turks, Boss, American Playhouse, Vamping, Ali, Barbershop 2, Primal Fear and Drop Squad.

Harvey Young’s research on the performance and experience of race has been widely published in academic journals, profiled in The New Yorker, The Wall Street Journal and the Chronicle of Higher Education and cited in The New York Times and The Boston Globe. He has published seven books, including Embodying Black Experience, winner of “Book of the Year” awards from the National Communication Association and the American Society for Theatre Research and, most recently, Black Theater is Black Life: An Oral History of Chicago Theater (coauthored with Mecca Zabriskie). A past President of the Black Theatre Association and former Vice President of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education, he has served on the Board of Directors of the American Society for Theatre Research, the Yale Club of Chicago, and the African American Arts Alliance of Chicago. A former Harvard University and Stanford University fellow, Dr. Young graduated with honors from Yale University and holds a Ph.D. from Cornell University. He is Associate Chair and Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Theatre at Northwestern University and holds appointments in African American Studies, Performance Studies, and Radio/Television/Film.

About Wilson’s 20th Century Cycle
*Denotes a Goodman Theatre world-premiere production

GEM OF THE OCEAN*
Set in 1904, written in 2003, produced at the Goodman in 2003, produced on Broadway in 2004

Written in 2003, Gem of the Ocean introduces Aunt Ester, who conducts young Citizen Barlow on a spiritual voyage to the City of Bones. Caesar lords over Pittsburgh’s Hill District as sheriff. Solly Two Kings gets his revenge. The world-premiere Goodman production (April 18 – May 24, 2003) was directed by Marion McClinton with a cast including Paul Butler (Eli); Kenny Leon (Citizen Barlow); Greta Oglesby (Aunt Ester); Yvette Ganier (Black Mary); Raynor Scheine (Rutherford Selig); Anthony Chisholm (Solly Two Kings); and Peter Jay Fernandez (Caesar). The consulting producer was Benjamin Mordecai and the creative team included David Gallo (Set); Constanza Romero (Costumes); Donald Holder (Lights); Michael Bodeen and Rob Milburn (Sound); and Dwight Andrews (Music and Musical Direction). Chuck Smith was the Dramaturg and Joseph Drummond was the Stage Manager.

JOE TURNER’S COME AND GONE
Set in 1911, written in 1984, produced on Broadway in 1988, produced at the Goodman in 1991

Herald Loomis arrives at Seth and Bertha’s boarding house in search of the wife he lost when he was conscripted into chain gang service years earlier, but resident “conjure man” Bynum helps him to see that he is actually in search of himself. The Goodman production (January 11 – February 23, 1991) was directed by Jonathan Wilson and featured Jaye Tyrone Steward (Seth Holly); Pat Bowie (Bertha Holly); Norman Matlock (Bynum Walker); Dick Sasso (Rutherford Selig); Danny Johnson — continued —
(Jeremy Furlow); Johnny Lee Davenport (Herald Loomis); Jené Marie Culp (Zonia Loomis); Susan Diane Payne (Mattie Campbell); Dwight Golden (Reuben Scott); Glenda Starr Kelly (Molly Sunningham); and Linda Marie Brighs (Martha). The creative team included Michael S. Philippi (Set); Claudia Boddy (Costumes); Robert Christen (Lighting); Rob Milburn (Sound); and Rob Milburn and Elihoenai (Original Music and Traditional Arrangements). Lois Griffing was the Stage Manager.

**MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM**
*Set in 1927, written in 1982, produced on Broadway in 1984, produced at the Goodman in 1997*

Composer/trumpeter Levee arrives for Ma Rainey’s recording session filled with ambition that turns to rage in the play’s tragic final act as he realizes that the white power structure has no interest in his skills. *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom* is Wilson’s only play set outside of Pittsburgh. The Goodman production (*June 20 – August 10, 1997*) was directed by Chuck Smith and featured Gary Houston (Sturdyvant); Paul Ratliff (Irvin); Ernest Perry, Jr. (Cutler); Tim Edward Rhoze (Toledo); Percy Littleton (Slow Drag); Harry J. Lennix (Levee); Felicia P. Fields (Ma Rainey); Paul Amandes (Policeman); Lori Holton Nash (Dussie Mae); and Dwain A. Perry (Sylvester). The creative team included Scott Bradley (Set); Paul Tazewell (Costumes); Robert Christen (Lights); Rob Milburn (Sound). Barbara Burton was the Stage Manager.

**THE PIANO LESSON**
*Set in 1936, written in 1986, produced at the Goodman in 1990, produced on Broadway in 1990*

Boy Willie and his sister Berniece can’t agree on what to do with the heirloom piano passed down to them by their ancestors, but a confrontation with an angry ghost helps resolve the matter. The Goodman production (*January 11 – February 23, 1990*) was directed by Lloyd Richards and featured Paul Butler (Doaker); Charles S. Dutton (Boy Willie); Rocky Carroll (Lymon); S. Epatha Merkerson (Berniece); Tommy Hollis (Avery); Lou Myers (Wining Boy); and Tonya Pinkins (Grace). The creative team included E. David Cosier Jr. (Set); Constanza Romero (Costumes); Christopher Akerlind (Lighting); J. Scott Servheen (Sound); and Dwight Andrews (Musical Direction and Original Music Composition). Lois Griffing was the Stage Manager.

**SEVEN GUITARS***
*Set in 1948, written in 1995, produced at the Goodman in 1995, produced on Broadway in 1996*

In an extended flashback, the play shows blues musician Floyd “Schoolboy” Barton seeking a recording career after his release from prison, and an unexpected encounter with a mystical old New Orleans man named Hedley. The Goodman production (*January 13 – February 25, 1995*), directed by Walter Dallas, was the first world premiere of a Wilson play at the Goodman. The cast included Michele Shay (Louise); Ruben Santiago-Hudson (Canewell); Tommy Hollis (Red Carter); Viola Davis (Vera); Albert Hall (Hedley); Jerome Preston Bates (Floyd Barton); and Rosalyn Coleman (Ruby). The creative team included Scott Bradley (Set); Constanza Romero (Costumes); Christopher Akerlind (Lighting); Tom Clark (Sound); and Dwight Andrews (Musical Direction). T. Paul Lynch was the Stage Manager.

**FENCES**
*Set in 1957, written in 1983, produced at the Goodman in 1986, produced on Broadway in 1987*

Negro League slugger Troy Maxson, who works as a garbage collector, doesn’t want his son to seek a football scholarship—perhaps because his own baseball career was limited by the color line. His wife Rose accepts his baby from an adulterous affair, but banishes Troy from her bed. The Goodman production (*January 31 – March 9, 1986*) was the theater’s first Wilson play; it was directed by Lloyd Richards and featured James Earl Jones as Troy.

**TWO TRAINS RUNNING**
*Set in 1969, written in 1990, produced on Broadway in 1992, produced at the Goodman in 1993*

A Pittsburgh restaurant is the scene for philosophical discussions about the appropriate course of action for African Americans in the late 1960s. Sterling, a young man just out of prison, helps to right an injustice done years earlier to Hambone, who was promised a ham for a painting job but only received a chicken. The Goodman production (*January 15 – February 21, 1993*) was directed by Lloyd Richards and featured Bellary Darden (Risa); Anthony Chisholm (Wolf); Paul Butler (Memphis); Roscoe Lee Browne (Holloway); Lou Ferguson (Hambone); Eriq LaSalle (Sterling); and John Beasley (West). The — continued —
creative team included Tony Fanning (Set); Chrisi Karvonides-Dushenko (Costumes); Geoff Korf (Lighting); and Rob Milburn (Sound). Lois Griffing was the Stage Manager.

**JITNEY**

*Set in 1977, written in 1979, produced at the Goodman in 1999, produced off-Broadway in 2000*

Drafted in the 1970s and completed in 1982, *Jitney* is a window into the world of Pittsburgh's gypsy cab drivers; the release of a man from prison leads to a tense father-son reunion. The Goodman production (*June 18 – July 31, 1999*) was directed by Marion McClinton and featured Russell Hornsby (Youngblood); Stephen McKinley Henderson (Turnbo); Anthony Chisholm (Fielding); Barry Shabaka Henley (Doub); Willis Burks II (Shealy); Leo V. Finnie III (Philmore); Paul Butler (Becker); Michole Briana White (Rena); and Keith Randolph Smith (Booster). The creative team included David Gallo (Set); Susan E. Michey (Costumes); Donald Holder (Lighting); and Rob Milburn (Sound). Alden Vasquez was the Stage Manager.

**KING HEDLEY II**

*Set in 1985, written in 1999, produced at the Goodman in 2000, produced on Broadway in 2001*

*King Hedley II* is Wilson's purest tragedy—a world of back-alley crime and drive-by shootings. The Goodman production (*November 30, 2000 – January 6, 2001*, the first production in the new Goodman Theatre at 170 N. Dearborn St.) was directed by Marion McClinton and featured Lou Myers (Stool Pigeon); Richard Brooks (King Hedley II); Leslie Uggams (Ruby); Monté Russell (Mister); Yvette Ganier (Tonya); and Charles Brown (Elmore). The creative team included David Gallo (Set); Toni-Leslie James (Costumes); Donald Holder (Lighting); Rob Milburn (Sound); and Dianne McIntyre (Choreographer). Diane Divita was the Stage Manager.

**RADIO GOLF**

*Set in 1997, written in 2005, produced at the Goodman in 2007, produced on Broadway in 2007*

*Radio Golf* introduces Harmond Wilks, grandson of *Gem of the Ocean*’s Caesar, a real estate developer running for mayor of Pittsburgh. But an old house—Aunt Ester’s—and its history get in his way. The Goodman production (*January 13 – February 25, 2007*) was directed by Kenny Leon and made the Goodman the first theater in the world to produce every play in the "Pittsburgh Cycle." The cast included Michole Briana White (Mame Wilks); Hassan El-Amin (Harmond Wilks); James A. Williams (Roosevelt Hicks); John Earl Jelks (Sterling Johnson); and Anthony Chisolm (Elder Joseph Barlow). The creative team included David Gallo (Set); Susan Hilferty (Costumes); Donald Holder (Lighting); Dan Moses Schreier (Sound); and Kathryn Bosti (Original Music). Joseph Drummond was the Stage Manager.