

AUGUST WILSON'S

MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM

DIRECTED BY
CHUCK SMITH

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR AND MUSIC DIRECTOR
HARRY J. LENNIX



CONTENTS

FEATURES

- 1 A Note from Susan V. Booth
- 2 Echoes of Chicago's Past

PRODUCTION

- 8 Ma Rainey's Black Bottom
- 14 Artist Profiles

THEATER

- 32 About Us
- 34 Accessible & Enhanced Performances

WELCOME

There are stories you feel in your body. Nearly 30 years ago, one such story unfolded on The Goodman stage when we produced Ma Rainey's Black Bottom.

Directed by Chuck Smith, that production featured a wholly combustible performance by Harry J. Lennix in the role of Levee. I was working at The Goodman at the time, and it was a show I kept returning to again and again because it did a rare thing: it overrode my brain and lived in my body. It did what only vividly live theater can do; it scrambled the senses and made you feel.

There are few legacies in American theater that rival Chuck's. Actor, educator, theater founder, director—Chuck has spent decades enriching the theater scene in Chicago and beyond. And while his repertoire as a director is wide, it is when he takes on the work of another legend—August Wilson—that the measure of his impact is most deeply felt.

To have him revisit this seminal Chicago work in our theater's Centennial Season feels right in every way.

I have a feeling you're in for a powerful ride.

Susan V. Booth

Walter Artistic Director

ECHOES OF CHICAGO'S PAST

BY NEENA ARNDT, MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM
DRAMATURG

As the 1920s dawned, Chicago reckoned with a recent race riot and the squalor and devastation wrought by the 1918 influenza pandemic. One hundred years later, as the 2020s began, history would nearly repeat itself when COVID-19 swept through town and George Floyd's murder sparked worldwide outcry for racial justice and police reform. Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, penned by playwright August Wilson in the early 1980s, depicts a Chicago recording studio in March of 1927, when Black musical artists blossomed yet faced systemic discrimination as slavery's shadow still loomed large. The story resonates today as we grapple, a century later, with that shadow.

On July 27, 1919, temperatures in Chicago soared to 96 degrees. Since air conditioners wouldn't become common in homes for another few decades, thousands of citizens went to the beach to find relief from the heat. Among them was 17-year-old Eugene Williams, who paddled with friends on a makeshift raft. When Williams and his friends, who were Black, inadvertently crossed an invisible line into "white" waters, a 24-year-old white man named George Stauber threw rocks at the boys, causing Williams to fall into Lake Michigan and drown. Eight days of racial violence ensued, leaving 38 people—23 Black and 15 white—dead.

In the decade prior, Chicago's Black population had more than doubled to nearly 110,000. Migrating from the rural South, these hopeful citizens aimed to escape poverty and lack of opportunity. While some did find economic opportunities, they did not fully escape the racial tensions that had plagued them in the South. Unwritten rules confined Black citizens to small areas of the city, and tensions erupted with neighboring white areas. White laborers resented having to compete with Blacks for jobs. And when Black veterans returned from World War I, they arrived with a renewed vigor to fight for equal treatment in the country for which they had fought.

Just a year before the race riot, the 1918 influenza pandemic had swept through Chicago. The city closed schools, theaters and churches, but without the benefit of Zoom, daily business could not easily be conducted remotely, and leaders had to choose between economic hardship and viral spread. The flu spread widely, killing 8,500 Chicagoans during an eight-week span (and among the dead was 35-year-old Kenneth Sawyer Goodman, whose parents would later found the Goodman Theatre in his memory).

When Wilson wrote Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, he could not have known what problems would befall Chicago and the world in the 2020s. But his play now feels remarkably prescient. Wilson's life spanned just 60 years, between 1945 and 2005, so he never lived in either the 1920s or the 2020s. But his depiction of the Black experience in

America applies to both decades, and all the ones in between.

Of course, with his Century Cycle, Wilson aimed to show us a panoramic view of Black life in America, and it's not surprising that this playwright—who studied history both by reading books and listening to stories told by his elders—created a body of work that echoes long after his footsteps have faded. Each of his 10 plays takes place in a different decade of the 20th century, depicting the changes—and lack thereof—of the Black experience over the course of 100 years. Dealing with everything from spiritual matters to the historical trauma of slavery and migration to the effects of gentrification, Wilson's characters bring the 20th century to vibrant life. Between 1986 and 2007, The Goodman produced all 10 plays in the Cycle, becoming the first theater to do so. Now, as the 20th century slides further into the past and a new generation comes of age, Wilson's words resonate as much as ever.

While nine of the 10 plays take place in Pittsburgh, Ma Rainey's *Black Bottom* is set in Chicago. In the script, Wilson briefly describes the city: "Chicago in 1927 is a rough city, a bruising city, a city of millionaires and derelicts, gangsters and roughhouse dandies, whores and Irish grandmothers who move through the streets fingering long black rosaries. Somewhere a man is wrestling with the taste of a woman in his cheek. Somewhere a dog is barking. Somewhere the moon has fallen through a window and broken into thirty pieces of silver."

A hundred years ago, people bemoaned the hardships of everyday life, whatever their race. They tried, often unsuccessfully, to cope with their differences. They bundled up to protect themselves from the harsh Chicago wind. Some of them attended performances at The Goodman, settling in for a few hours with a new play or a classic that would invite them to consider the flaws and triumphs of the society in which they lived. And outside, just as now, the city hummed.

THE PEOPLE OF THE GOODMAN

During this milestone season, we spotlight the people who have filled our spaces for 100 years. Come to The Goodman. Leave More Human.

For Juaria Shelton, theater is an expression of love. As a Chicago native, she remembers her mother introducing her to The Goodman as a child—an experience that stayed with her. Now, she’s introducing her own grandchildren to the theater, continuing a family tradition rooted in shared experience. Juaria treasures the opportunity to gather with friends and family and create lasting memories together. For her, quality time is priceless, and the memories created at The Goodman last far longer than any physical gift.

Q: Has a Goodman production ever changed the way you think about something, or stayed with you long after the curtain fell?

I find that productions are teaching tools. If you’re really living and paying attention, most entertainment carries a meaningful message. Goodman Theatre has long been one of my favorite theaters. The artistry, the storytelling and the powerful connection created with the audience make every performance a truly unforgettable experience. Those moments stay with you.

Q: If you were to describe The Goodman in one word, what would it be, and why?

Extraordinary. When you enter the theater and you're greeted with excitement from the staff, it makes you feel at home and gives you peace of mind. Over the years, I've built real relationships with The Goodman team, and that personal connection means a lot. It feels good to be recognized and valued. The Goodman is like the wind, you can just feel it!

Q: Why do you think live theater matters?

Some things you just have to see to believe. Live theater matters because it invites us to use our imagination and be fully present.

Q: When you think about "leaving more human," what does that mean to you?

To me, it means feeling more connected. We live in a world that values roots—family, friends and the environments that shape us. Theater reminds us of our shared humanity. It gives us the human touch we all need.

Q: What's something you wish more people knew about attending live theater?

I wish more people knew how relaxing and restorative it can be. It's a place to escape the everyday hustle, to breathe and to enjoy meaningful entertainment. I hope future audiences have a breathtaking experience.

The Goodman

Susan V. Booth, Walter Artistic Director

John Collins, Executive Director

Presents

AUGUST WILSON'S

MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM

**DIRECTED BY
CHUCK SMITH**

**SET DESIGN BY
LINDA BUCHANAN**

**COSTUME DESIGN BY
EVELYN M. DANNER**

**ORCHESTRATIONS BY
DWIGHT ANDREWS**

SOUND DESIGN BY
ROB MILBURN AND MICHAEL BODEEN

MUSIC DIRECTION BY
HARRY J. LENNIX

LIGHTING DESIGN BY
JARED GOODING

DRAMATURGY BY
NEENA ARNDT

CASTING BY
LAUREN PORT, CSA

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER
ANGELA M. ADAMS*

STAGE MANAGER
IMANI ROSS*

August Wilson's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. concordtheatricals.com
Originally produced by Yale Repertory Theatre (Lloyd Richards, Artistic Director; Benjamin Mordecai, Managing Director) Initially presented at the 1982 National Playwrights' Conference by The Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center.

CAST

POLICEMAN.....**SCOTT AIELLO***
CUTLER.....**DAVID ALAN ANDERSON***
MA RAINEY.....**E. FAYE BUTLER***
STURDYVANT.....**MATT DECARO***
IRVIN.....**MARC GRAPEY***
DUSSIE MAE.....**TIFFANY RENEE JOHNSON***
SYLVESTER.....**JABARI KHALIQ***
LEVEE.....**AL'JALEEL MCGHEE***
TOLEDO.....**KELVIN ROSTON JR.***
SLOW DRAG.....**CEDRIC YOUNG***

UNDERSTUDIES

US STURDYVANT.....**SCOTT AIELLO***
US MA RAINEY..... **WYDETTA CARTER***
US TOLEDO..... **ROBERT CORNELIUS***
US DUSSIE MAE..... **ISIS ELIZABETH**
US LEVEE/US SYLVESTER.....**PATRICK NEWSON JR.**
US SLOW DRAG/US CUTLER.....**JOSEPH PRIMES***
US IRVIN/US POLICEMAN..... **RON E. RAINS***

UNDERSTUDIES NEVER SUBSTITUTE FOR A LISTED
PLAYER UNLESS AN ANNOUNCEMENT IS MADE.

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR.....**HARRY J. LENNIX**
LINE PRODUCER.....**MALKIA STAMPLEY**
INTIMACY & VIOLENCE..... **GREG GEFFRARD**
VOICE COACH.....**MARIE RAMIREZ DOWNING**
BASS COACH.....**ANDERSON EDWARDS**
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR..... **LO WILLIAMS**
ASSISTANT SET DESIGNER.....**DEVIN MESEKE**
ASSISTANT SOUND DESIGNER.....**KIM CARBONE**
ASSISTANT LIGHTING DESIGNER.....**TREY BRAZEAL**
INTIMACY & VIOLENCE ASSISTANT..**CHELS MORGAN**

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Goodman productions are made possible in part by the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events.

Goodman Theatre is a constituent of the Theatre Communications Group, Inc., the national service organization of nonprofit theaters; the League of Resident Theatres; the Illinois Arts Alliance and the American Arts Alliance; the League of Chicago Theatres; and the Illinois Theatre Association.

Goodman Theatre operates under agreements between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States; the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union; the United Scenic Artists of America, Local 829, AFL-CIO and the Chicago Federation of Musicians, Local No. 10-208, American Federation of Musicians. House crew and scene shop employees are represented by the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Local No. 2.

*Denotes member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

MUSIC CREDITS

MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM Composed by Ma Rainey.

THOSE DOGS OF MINE (FAMOUS CORNFIELD BLUES) Composed by Ma Rainey.

SHAKE IT AND BREAK IT (BUT DON'T LET IT FALL, MAMA) Composed by Charley Patton.

IF I HAD MY WAY Traditional. First recorded in 1927 by Blind Willie Johnson.

HEAR ME TALKING TO YOU Composed by Ma Rainey.

TRUST NO MAN Composed by Lillian Hardaway Henderson.

DOCTOR JAZZ Composed by Joseph "King" Oliver and Walter

Melrose.

C.C. RIDER Traditional. First recorded by Ma Rainey in 1924.

SETTING: Early March in Chicago, 1927.

PROFILES

SCOTT AIELLO* (POLICEMAN/US STURDYVANT)

Goodman Theatre debut! Chicago credits include Hamlet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Henry V, Richard III (Chicago Shakespeare); As You Like It (Writer's Theatre); A View From the Bridge (Shattered Globe); Perfect Mendacity (Steppenwolf). TV credits include Billions, American Rust (Showtime); Bull, Law & Order SVU, Blue Bloods (CBS). Jeff Award Recipient-Leading Actor in a Play (2024), Supporting Actor in a Play (2002). Training: The Juilliard School of Drama. Scottaiello.com

DAVID ALAN ANDERSON* (CUTLER) Chicago credits: Stick Fly, Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, Witch (Writers Theatre); The First Deep Breath (Victory Gardens); Gem of the Ocean, The Mountaintop (Court Theatre); West Side Story (Lyric Opera). Regional credits: American Players Theatre, Canadian Stage, Shaw Festival, The Guthrie, Indiana Rep, Penumbra Theatre (Company member), Denver Theatre Center, Arizona Theatre Co., Actors Theatre of Louisville, Pennsylvania Shakespeare, Idaho Shakespeare, Lake Tahoe Shakespeare, Great Lakes Theatre Festival, Cleveland Playhouse, Milwaukee Rep, KC Rep, et al. TV: The Chi, Chicago PD, Shameless. Honors: 2013 Lunt-Fontanne Fellow.

E. FAYE BUTLER'S* (MA RAINEY) career spans over 40 years in the entertainment industry as an actor and director. Goodman Theatre credits: Fat Ham, Nacirema Society... (Jeff Award), Fannie, Vanya, Sonia, Masha..., Crowns, Purlie, Pullman Porter Blues, Ain't Misbehavin, A Christmas Carol. National regional theater: Seattle Rep, Court Theatre, BCS, Arena Stage, CCT, CST, MSMT, La Jolla Playhouse, PPT, Milwaukee Rep, Yale Rep, Porchlight, PTC, Fulton, The MUNY, OSF, Steppenwolf, among others. Recipient of 11 Jeffs, two Helen Hayes, R.A.M.I. Ovation, Sarah Siddons, four BTA, two Black Excellence, four BroadwayWorld, among others. Inducted into RPS Fine Arts Hall of Fame, Women in the Arts Museum, Lunt- Fontanne Fellow, Chicagoan of the Year, LOCT Lifetime Achievement Awards. e-fayebutler.com

MATT DECARO* (STURDYVANT) The Cherry Orchard, Camino Real, Heartbreak House, Romance, The Play About the Baby, The White Snake, Boy Gets Girl, Spinning into Butter, Night of the Iguana, Richard II (Goodman Theatre); The Audience, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof [Joseph Jefferson Award] (Drury Lane Theater); Slaughterhouse V, Glengary Glen Ross, Our Lady of 121st St (Steppenwolf); The Great Society, The Little Foxes, Sweat, The Crucible, Rhinoceros (the Asolo Repertory Theater); Dark Rapture, A Streetcar Named Desire, Machinal, American Buffalo, Rhinoceros (A.C.T. San Francisco). TV/film credits include US Marshall's, The

Wise Kids, Prison Break, The Last Rites of Joe May, The Office, Curb Your Enthusiasm and House.

MARC GRAPEY* (IRVIN) returns to Goodman Theatre where he has appeared in numerous productions including the revival of The Iceman Cometh, both at The Goodman and at B.A.M. Many other stage appearances in Chicago at Writer's, Timeline, Victory Gardens, Famous Door, Steppenwolf and Chicago Shakespeare, among others. Broadway revival of The Odd Couple opposite Nathan Lane. Twenty feature films (The Daytrippers, Superbad, While You Were Sleeping). Over 100 guest appearances on television (Sex and the City, The West Wing, Arrested Development) and for the past 11 seasons as Peter Kalmick on Chicago Med.

TIFFANY RENEE JOHNSON*, she/her (DUSSIE MAE) Goodman Theatre: Holiday, School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play. Chicago: Blues For An Alabama Sky, Passage (Remy Bumppo); Chlorine Sky (Steppenwolf); Red Velvet (Chicago Shakes); The Garbologists (Northlight); Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, A Doll's House (Writers); Flyin' West (American Blues); truth and reconciliation (Sideshow); VANYA (Rasaka). Broadway Tour: Jaja's African Hair Braiding. Regional: Race (Next Act). TV: The Chi, Shameless (Showtime); Soundtrack (Hulu); Chicago Med, Chicago P.D. (NBC). Film: Range Runners. Reps: Gray Talent Group.
TiffanyReneeJohnson.com

JABARI KHALIQ*, he/him (SYLVESTER) Previous Goodman Theatre credits include: Toni Stone, The Nacirema Society... Chicago credits: Splash Hatch on the E... (Definition Theatre); The Hot Wing King (Writer's Theatre); Purpose (Steppenwolf Theatre); The Lifespan of a Fact (TimeLine Theatre); What To Send Up... (Congo Square); and Black Magic (Perceptions Theatre). Film credits: 15 Lines (short), Rhythm & Blu (feature). Represented by Stewart Talent. @jabari.khaliq, jabarikhaliq.com

AL'JALEEL MCGHEE*, he/him (LEVEE) Chicago: Revolution(s) (Goodman Theatre); Henry Johnson (Victory Gardens); Noises Off (Steppenwolf); Intimate Apparel, Fireflies (Northlight); Hamlet (Chicago Shakes); Paradise Blue, To Catch A Fish (TimeLine); Blues for an Alabama Sky (Court). Broadway/National Tour: A Soldier's Play. Regional: Paradise Blue (Westcoast Black Theatre); Toni Stone (Huntington Theatre); Noises Off (Geffen Playhouse). TV: Duster (HBO); Lady in the Lake, Shining Girls (Apple); 61st Street (AMC). Education: Northwestern Acting Inaugural Cohort (MFA), UIC, NC Central. Gray Talent Group, Principal Talent LA. @AntwonChekhov

KELVIN ROSTON JR.* (TOLEDO) Goodman Theatre: Gem of the Ocean, Crowns. Chicagoland: Sister Act (Drury Lane); Clue (Mercury); Oedipus Rex, The Gospel at

Colonus, The Tragedy of Othello, The Moor of Venice, King Hedley II, Seven Guitars, Ma Rainey's Black Bottom (Court); Dreamgirls (Marriott-Lincolnshire); Jackie Wilson Story (Black Ensemble); Twisted Melodies (Northlight, Congo Square); and many others. Regional: Fences (Trinity Rep); Radio Golf (The Black Rep STL); Twisted Melodies (BCS). Off-Broadway: Twisted Melodies (Apollo NYC). TV: South Side, Chicago Med, Chicago PD. AEA, SAG-AFTRA, Paonessa Talent, Michael Moore Agency.

CEDRIC YOUNG* (SLOW DRAG) makes his return to The Goodman where he previously appeared in Inherit the Wind, Dartmoor Prison, Mary and The Upstairs Concierge. Most recently he was seen in Purpose at Steppenwolf, adding this production to Master Harold and The Boys, The Song of Jacob Zulu, A Clockwork Orange, Familiar, A Fair Country and Lindiwe. At Court Theatre he has performed in Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, Jitney and Two Trains Running. He's also been seen in the Black Ensemble in A Raisin In The Sun and Medea, and in Race at Lookingglass Theatre Company. Love to Mary.

WYDETTA CARTER* (US MA RAINEY) is thrilled to make her Goodman Theatre debut. Credits include Porgy and Bess (Court Theatre); The Bridges of Madison County, Footloose (Marriott Theatre). Tours: TINA The Tina Turner Musical, Dreamgirls, How To Succeed. Regional: Raisin (Skylight Theatre); Little Rock Nine (TheatreWorks, Palo Alto); The Trojan Women (Shakespeare Theatre of D.C.).

Television: Dark Matter, Power Book: Force, Deli Boys, Chicago P.D.

ROBERT CORNELIUS*, he/him (US TOLEDO) Lottery Day (Goodman Theatre); Her Honor Jane Byrne (Lookingglass Theatre); The Total Bent (Haven Theatre/About Face Theatre); Rightlynd, Wheatley, Spiele 36, Takunda (Victory Gardens Theatre); Hamlet (The Gift Theatre); Picnic (American Theatre Company); Wit (The Hypocrites); Raisin (Court Theatre). National Tour: Two Trains Running, Comedy of Errors (The Acting Company). Regional: Where the Mountain Meets the Sea (Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park/Signature Theatre); Jitney (Arkansas Rep); Dreamgirls (Goodspeed Opera House/McCarter Theatre Center); Joe Turner's Come and Gone (Huntington Theatre).

ISIS ELIZABETH, she/her (US DUSSIE MAE) is excited to be making her Goodman Theatre debut! Chicago credits include Brighter Futures (Paramount Theatre); Big River (Mercury Theater Chicago); Milo Imagines the World (Chicago Children's Theatre); Little Shop of Horrors (Citadel Theatre); Spring Awakening (Porchlight Music Theatre); and Once On This Island (Pulse Theatre Chicago), among others. TV credits include Chicago Fire (NBC).

PATRICK NEWSON JR. (US LEVEE/US SYLVESTER) is a Chicago-born, Jeff Award-winning actor. Chicago credits include: BUST (Goodman Theatre); Big White Fog/East Texas Hot Links (Court Theatre); Tambo & Bones

(Refracted Theatre); Alaiyo/Black Bone (Definition Theater); The October Storm (Raven Theater); The Singularity Play (Jackalope Theatre); The Second City e.t.c. 48th Revue (The Second City); and more. TV/film credits include: Liz Here Now (upcoming feature film debut opposite Aunjanue Ellis-Taylor), Chicago Fire, Chicago Med, Shining Girls, The Chi, South Side, and more. He is represented by Gray Talent.

JOSEPH PRIMES* (US SLOW DRAG/US CUTLER) is a Cleveland, Ohio native who now resides in Chicago. He attended Texas Tech University and Howard University before returning home to start a career and family. Primes spent many years as an activist and mentor before starting a career as an educator in the Euclid and East Cleveland school district. As a performance poet, he appeared with Vince Robinson and the jazz poets and the underground Hip Hop group, Chop Shop. Theater credits include works at Cleveland's Public Theatre, Karamu, Ensemble, Great Lakes and more. An award winning actor and producer, Primes produced the film #50 Fathers and the web series Seeing Tomorrow. He has worked at Steppenwolf, Court Theatre, Definition Theatre and Indiana Repertory Theatre. Television credits include Chicago PD. He is a member of SAG-AFTRA and AEA.

RON E. RAINS* (US IRVIN/US POLICEMAN) returns to The Goodman, where he played Bob Cratchit in A Christmas Carol for 11 seasons. Other Goodman Theatre

credits include *Holiday*, *The Music Man*, *The Matchmaker*, *By the Way Meet Vera Stark*, *Passion Play* and *The Revenge of the Space Pandas*. He's worked at many Chicago theaters, including Chicago Shakespeare, Steppenwolf, TimeLine, Drury Lane, Northlight, Paramount, Marriott and Writers Theatres. Television credits include *Chicago Justice* and *Med*. Rains is most known for his role as Head Film Critic for *The Onion* and is represented by Gray Talent Group. Ronrains.com

AUGUST WILSON (PLAYWRIGHT) (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 in North America, decade by decade, over the course of the twentieth century, forming the compilation entitled *The American Century Cycle*. His plays have been produced on Broadway, at regional theaters across the country and all over the world. In 2003, Mr. Wilson made his professional stage debut in his one-man show, *How I Learned What I Learned*, currently touring and featuring Eugene Lee reprising Mr. Wilson's role. Mr. Wilson's works garnered many awards including: the Pulitzer Prize for *Fences* (1987) and for *The Piano Lesson* (1990); a Tony Award for *Fences*; Great Britain's Olivier Award for *Jitney*; and 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 and the 2003 Heinz Award. He was awarded a 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 theatre located at 245 West 52nd Street "The August Wilson Theatre." Today, his plays continue to be produced and his place in the American Theatre continues to grow. New York Public Radio recorded all ten plays in the 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. Mr. Wilson was born and raised in the Hill District of

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and lived in Seattle, Washington at the time of his death. 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.

CHUCK SMITH (DIRECTOR) is The Goodman Family Resident Director, Board of Trustees member and resident director at the Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe in Sarasota. Smith's Goodman Theatre credits include *Objects in the Mirror*, *Two Trains Running*, *Pullman Porter Blues*, *By the Way*, *Meet Vera Stark* and *The Amen Corner*, among many others. He also served as dramaturg for The Goodman's world-premiere of August Wilson's *Gem of the Ocean*. Regionally and locally, he has directed at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Seattle Repertory Theatre, MPAACT, *American Blues*, *Black Ensemble Theatre*, and *Congo Square Theatre Company*, among others. Smith is an Emmy Award-winner, a recipient of the Paul Robeson Award and was the 2001 Chicago Tribune Chicagoan of the Year.

LINDA BUCHANAN, she/her (SET DESIGNER)

Goodman Theatre: 26 productions including *Gem of the Ocean*, *Two Trains Running*, *American Mariachi*, *House and Garden*, *Black Snow*, *Marvin's Room*. Off-Broadway: *Marvin's Room* (Minetta Lane Theatre). Chicago credits include *The Lion In Winter*, *Blues From an Alabama Sky* (Court Theatre); *Stick Fly* (Writers Theatre); *Miss Saigon*,

Annie, Tommy (Paramount). Regional/International: Arena Stage, Alley Theatre, Indiana Rep, Cleveland Playhouse, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Milwaukee Rep, Seattle Rep, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Resident Ensemble Theatre, Opera Northern Ireland, Marvin's Room (London).

EVELYN M. DANNER (COSTUME DESIGNER)

Goodman Theatre credits include Joe Turner's Come and Gone, Gem of the Ocean, Swing State (Premiere), This Happened Once At The Romance Depot Off Of I-87 In Westchester. Other costume credits include Trying, The Rainmaker (Peninsula Players Theatre); You're A Good Man Charlie Brown (Marriott Theater); No Such Thing, Wipeout (Rivendell Theatre); The Other Cinderella, Real Housewives of Motown (Black Ensemble Theater); Red Summer, When Good Broccoli Goes Bad. (MPAACT Theater).

DWIGHT ANDREWS (ORCHESTRATIONS), composer, musician, educator and minister, is an Associate Professor of Music History and Jazz History at Emory University since 1987 and Senior Minister of First Congregational United Church of Christ in Atlanta. He received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in music from the University of Michigan. He continued his studies at Yale University, receiving a Master of Divinity degree and a Ph.D. in Music Theory. He also served as the Resident Music Director (1979-1986) at Yale Repertory Theater

under Lloyd Richards and served as music director for the Broadway Productions of August Wilson's Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, Joe Turner's Come and Gone, The Piano Lesson and Seven Guitars, and music for A Raisin in the Sun and Ohio State Murders.

ROB MILBURN AND MICHAEL BODEEN (CO-SOUND DESIGNERS) Milburn returns to The Goodman where from the late 1980's he spent 17 seasons as a composer or resident sound designer working on over 70 productions including Ma Rainey's Black Bottom in 1997. Bodeen returns to The Goodman, where he previously worked on Mirror of the Invisible World, The Odyssey and productions of The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci, among others. Credits for Milburn and Bodeen include music composition and sound for The Goodman's Betrayal and Broadway productions of Eureka Day, No Man's Land & Waiting for Godot, The Miracle Worker; and sound for Purpose, Sweat, The Price, Of Mice and Men and Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf, among others. They have created music and sound Off-Broadway, at many of America's resident theaters (often at Steppenwolf) and at several international venues.

HARRY J. LENNIX (ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR/MUSIC DIRECTOR) is a film, television and stage actor, and producer. He returns to Goodman Theatre following productions of Inherit the Wind, How I Learned What I Learned (produced by Congo Square in association with The Goodman) and Ma Rainey's Black Bottom. Recently

at Steppenwolf Theatre, he appeared in Purpose. He appeared in Purpose on Broadway and was Tony-nominated in the Lead Actor in a Play category. He starred for 10 seasons on NBC's The Blacklist. Moviegoers know Lennix from Man of Steel, Batman V. Superman, The Matrix: Revolutions, Ray and The Five Heartbeats. He has directed A Small Oak Tree Runs Red, The Five Heartbeats and The Glass Menagerie. In 2001 he played in Cymbeline for Theatre for a New Audience at the Royal Shakespeare Company. In 2014, Lennix created Exponent Media Group.

JARED GOODING, he/him (LIGHTING DESIGNER) is happy to be making his Goodman Theatre return after designing Joe Turner's Come and Gone last season. Credits include designs for: Writers Theatre, Court Theater, Depaul University, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Victory Gardens, The Lincoln Center, TimeLine Theatre, University of Illinois Chicago Theatre, American Blues, Remy Bumppo Theatre, Strawdog Theatre, Definition Theatre, MPAACT, Bristol Riverside Theatre, Florentine Opera Company, First Stage. He is also an architectural lighting designer for the engineering firm EXP.
Goodingdesigns.com

NEENA ARNDT (DRAMATURG) is a dramaturg, writer and professor. From 2008 to 2025, she served as the Resident Dramaturg and Literary Manager at The Goodman. During her tenure she was the dramaturg for

57 productions; highlights include the world premieres of Rebecca Gilman's plays *Luna Gale*, *A True History of the Johnstown Flood* and *Swing State*, and director Robert Falls' productions of *The Seagull*, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Iceman Cometh*, *Measure for Measure* and *The Winter's Tale*. She has also worked with Milwaukee Repertory Theater, the American Repertory Theater, Actors Theater of Louisville and Long Wharf Theatre, among others. She has taught at Boston University and DePaul University, and holds an MFA in dramaturgy from the A.R.T./MXAT Institute for Advanced Theatre Training at Harvard University.

LAUREN PORT (CASTING) joined The Goodman as Casting Director in August of 2019 after eleven years casting in NYC, where she worked on many Goodman productions over the years, including *Father Comes Home from the Wars*, Parts 1, 2 and 3, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window*, *Disgraced* and *Sweet Bird of Youth*. Broadway highlights: *Junk*; *Meteor Shower*; *A Doll's House Part 2*; *The Front Page*; *It's Only a Play*; *Disgraced*; *Fish in the Dark*; *The Trip to Bountiful*; *Grace*; *Death of a Salesman*; *Seminar*; *Stick Fly*; *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*; *Lend Me a Tenor* and *Fences*. Television/Film includes: *New Amsterdam* (NBC); *American Odyssey* (NBC) and *Steel Magnolias* (Sony for Lifetime). Port is a five-time Artios Award winner, a recipient of the 40th Annual Media Access Awards and a proud member of the Casting Society of America.

ANGELA M. ADAMS*, she/her (PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER) is pleased to be returning to The Goodman. Chicago credits include: Goodman Theatre, Drury Lane Oakbrook, Marriott Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Remy Bumppo, Silk Road Rising, Gift Theater, Victory Gardens, Congo Square Theater and Steppenwolf Theatre. Off-Broadway credits include: Lord Strange Company, Verse Theater Manhattan and Theater B. Regional credits include: Theater at the Center, Bristol Riverside Theater and Ozark Actor's Theater. Proud Equity member!

IMANI ROSS* (STAGE MANAGER) is excited to be joining the team at The Goodman again with Ma Rainey's Black Bottom. Based in Chicago, she has many years of experience in production, education and stage management. Select theatrical credits include: The Color Purple, Revolution(s) (Goodman Theatre); A Chorus Line, Mary Poppins, Elf the Musical (Drury Lane Theatre); Twisted Melodies (Congo Square Theatre); Noises Off (Steppenwolf Theatre); Hot Wing King (Writers Theatre); The Comedy of Errors, Two Trains Running (The Acting Company); Scott Joplin's Treemonisha (Harris Theatre).

SUSAN V. BOOTH (GOODMAN THEATRE WALTER ARTISTIC DIRECTOR) joined Goodman Theatre in the fall of 2022, having previously served as Artistic Director of

Atlanta's Tony Award-winning Alliance Theatre, premiering new work that went on to national, international and commercial life. She has directed at The Goodman, Hartford Stage, National Playwrights Conference, The Contemporary American Theater Festival, La Jolla Playhouse, St. Louis Repertory Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse, New York Stage and Film, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Northlight Theatre, Victory Gardens, Court Theatre and others. She has held teaching positions at Northwestern, DePaul and Emory Universities. She serves on the boards of the Erikson Institute and Denison University, the Executive Board of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Union, is past president of the Board of Directors for the Theatre Communications Group, the national service organization for the field, was a 2024 Leadership Greater Chicago Daniel Burnham Fellow, and is a member of the Chicago Network.

JOHN COLLINS (GOODMAN THEATRE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR) began his career with a summer internship at the Goodman, where he has since served in various senior leadership positions over the past two decades. During his tenure, Collins has overseen numerous production transfers to Broadway, regional and international venues and tours of Goodman productions, including The Who's TOMMY; Good Night, Oscar; War Paint; Desire Under the Elms; and Chinglish (Broadway); The Iceman Cometh (New York/BAM); The White Snake (China); and Luna

Gale (Los Angeles). He also helped open the Alice Rapoport Center for Education and Engagement—a 10,000 square foot center for expanded programming and activities. Collins is a past Chairman and current board member of the League of Chicago Theaters, and a board member of the Chicago Loop Alliance and the League of Resident Theatres (LORT). Collins also is a member of The Economic Club of Chicago. He is a graduate of Marquette University and resides in Chicago with his wife Melissa and their two children.

ABOUT US

Since 1925, The Goodman has been more than a stage. A theatrical home for artists and a gathering space for community, it's where stories come to life—bold in artistry and rich in history, deeply rooted in the city it serves. Led by Walter Artistic Director Susan V. Booth and Executive Director John Collins, The Goodman sparks conversation, connection and change through new plays, reimagined classics and large-scale musicals. With distinctions including world and American premieres, Pulitzer Prizes, Tony Awards and Joseph Jefferson Awards, The Goodman is proud to be the first theater to produce all 10 plays of August Wilson's "American Century Cycle." But The Goodman believes a more empathetic, more connected Chicago is created one story at a time, and counts as its greatest legacy the community it's built. Generation-spanning productions and programs offer theater for a lifetime; from Theater for the Very Young (plays designed for ages 0-5) to the long-running annual A Christmas Carol, which has introduced new generations to theater over five decades, The Goodman is committed to being an asset for all of Chicago. The Goodman was founded by William O. Goodman and his family to honor the memory of Kenneth Sawyer Goodman—a visionary playwright whose bold ideas helped shape Chicago's early cultural renaissance. In 2000, through the commitment of Mr. Goodman's descendants—Albert Ivar Goodman and his late mother, Edith-Marie Appleton—The Goodman

opened the doors to its current home in the heart of the Loop.

The Goodman stands on the unceded homelands of the Council of the Three Fires—the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi Nations—and acknowledges the many other Nations for whom this land now called Chicago has long been home, including the Myaamia, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Sac and Fox, Peoria, Kaskaskia, Wea, Kickapoo, and Mascouten. The Goodman is proud to partner with the Gichigamiin Indigenous Nations Museum (Gichigamiin-Museum.org) and the Center for Native Futures (CenterForNativeFutures.org)—organizations devoted to honoring Indigenous stories, preserving cultural memory, and deepening public understanding.

ACCESSIBLE & ENHANCED PERFORMANCES

American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreted Performance

April 17 at 7:30pm

Audio-Described Performance and Touch Tour

April 18 at 2:00pm, Touch Tour at 12:30pm

Spanish Subtitles Performance

April 18 at 7:30pm

Open-Captioned Performance

April 19 at 2pm