

THE PIANO LESSON

April 15 - May 11, 2008
by August Wilson
Directed by Seret Scott



Geva
Theatre
Center

Great Theatre Lives Here

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Geva Theatre Center

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Geva Theatre Center

75 Woodbury Boulevard
Rochester, New York 14607

Administrative Offices: (585) 232-1366
Box Office: (585) 232-Geva (4382)
Voice and TTY: (585) 325-1441
www.gevatheatre.org

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Editorial Offices:

Geva Theatre Center
75 Woodbury Blvd., Rochester, NY 14607
Phone: (585) 232-1366 • Fax: (585) 232-4031
Editor: Dawn Kellogg
Cover Image: Jenna Fava
Layout & Design: David G. Danglis

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Rochester Theatre Publications
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A Message from the Artistic Director

The Past Can Be Right in Front of Us

The Piano Lesson, for which August Wilson won the Pulitzer Prize, represents the 1930's in his decade-by-decade look at Twentieth Century African America. Wilson never set out with this lofty accomplishment in mind, but by his third play he realized that his work was going to focus on the journeys—geographical, spiritual, and emotional—of Blacks migrating north in the aftermath of southern slavery. His hometown was Pittsburgh so he based his stories there, following characters, neighborhoods and aspirations over a hundred years of forging a new culture in the steel city.

The early arrivals had come to the free North in search of jobs and a fair shake. They quickly encountered another set of problems by competing with whites for scarce jobs, but more importantly they were challenged by a restlessness as they endeavored to call a new environment their home. The demons of the past traveled along with them and fought for attention. Some, like Berniece and Doaker in *The Piano Lesson*, succeeded in keeping the past from their door for awhile. But when Boy Willie bursts into his sister Berniece's house in the early morning hell-bent for selling off their family legacy, it sets off a chain reaction of ghostly threats that can only be doused by conjuring the ancestors for assistance. The past needs to be respected, even as a family has to move on.

Last season, we witnessed a young man from the south, Citizen Barlow, plead with Aunt Esther to wash away his sins in *Gem of the Ocean*. Citizen was another new arrival in Pittsburgh, trying to make his way in the world, and found his salvation in a boarding house with other wanderers—much like in *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*. This season, we see a family home and a family heirloom as the center of activity. There is an intimacy in *The Piano Lesson* that can only reside in a family story. As siblings fight over the future, we begin to see another layer to August Wilson's tapestry. This one is passed along generations, as the Twentieth Century unfolds in new and surprising ways. Next season, we'll re-visit Wilson's monumental *Fences*, as the playwright weaves a powerful tale of father-son legacy and another dream deferred.

Geva is proudly presenting all ten of August Wilson's plays in decade order during "August Wilson's American Century." Please join us for this season's free reading of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* to be held at Geva Theatre Center on Monday, May 5th. Tickets are required.

And thank you for joining us on this unique journey.

MARK CUDDY



Geva
Theatre
Center

Artistic Director
MARK CUDDY

Managing Director
GREG WEBER

Executive Director
NAN HILDEBRANDT

present

THE PIANO LESSON

By **AUGUST WILSON**

Directed by **SERET SCOTT**

Scenic Designer
RUSSELL METHENY

Costume Designer
KAREN PERRY

Lighting Designer
MICHAEL LINCOLN

Sound Designer
TODD MACK REISCHMAN

Stage Manager
JANINE WOCHNA*

Assistant Stage Manager
KIRSTEN BRANNEN*

Casting
HARRIET BASS

Co-Produced with Indiana Repertory Theatre

JANET ALLEN
Artistic Director

STEPHEN STOLEN
Managing Director

PRISCILLA LINDSAY
Associate Artistic Director

SUZANNE SWEENEY
Associate Managing Director

Presented by special arrangement with Samuel French Inc.

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THE CAST

Boy Willie	Carl Cofield*
Grace	Jessica Frances Dukes*
Lymon	Warner Miller*
Doaker	Chuck Patterson*
Berniece	Roslyn Ruff*
Wining Boy	Glenn Turner*
Avery	Geoffrey D. Williams*
Maretha	Xiomara Figueroa, Jessa Audra Glaspy

TIME AND PLACE

1936

The Hill District, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

There will be one intermission.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Piano courtesy of Actors Theatre of Louisville
Tom Ryan of Rochester Piano Key



ssdc



*Members of Actors' Equity Association,
the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

The Director is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc.,
an independent national labor union.

The scenic, costume, lighting and sound designers in LORT Theatres are represented by
United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE.

Please note that the taking of photographs or use of recording devices during the performance is not permitted. Cell phones and all other electronic devices are strictly prohibited in the theatre.

This theatre operates under agreements between the League of Resident Theatres (LORT), a consortium of regional theatres throughout the nation; Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States; the Society of Stage Directors & Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union; and United Scenic Artists (USA), a union of scenic, costume, lighting and sound designers.

Geva Theatre Center is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national service organization for non-profit, professional theatres.

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