

THE ENSEMBLE THEATRE

28TH MAINSTAGE 2004-2005 SEASON



Lee's Diner

TWO TRAINS RUNNING

By August Wilson

Directed by Eileen J. Morris

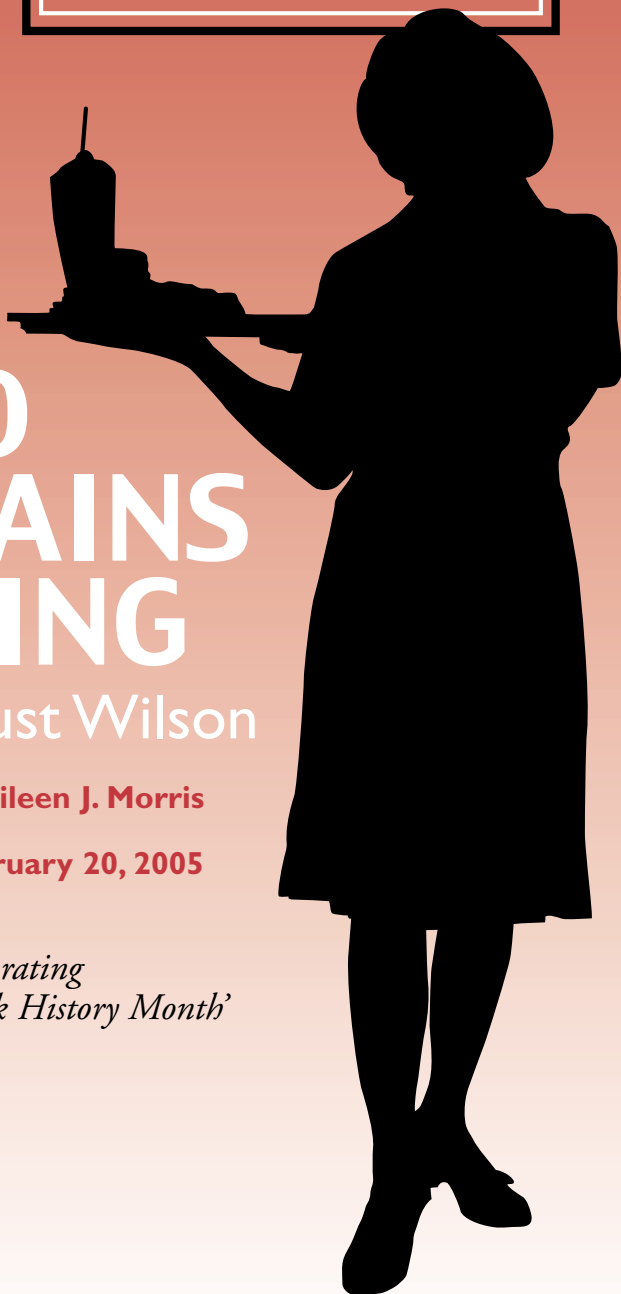
January 27 – February 20, 2005

*Commemorating
'Black History Month'*

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The Ensemble Theatre

TWO TRAINS RUNNING

by
August Wilson

directed by
Eileen J. Morris

featuring
Wayne DeHart* • Davi Jay • Aisha 'Moyo' Ussery
Clarence Whitmore • Timothy Eric Dickson* • Willie Dirden • Troy A. Hogan

set & prop design
James V. Thomas

costume design
Gregory J. Horton

lighting design
David Gipson

sound design
Bridget O'Connor

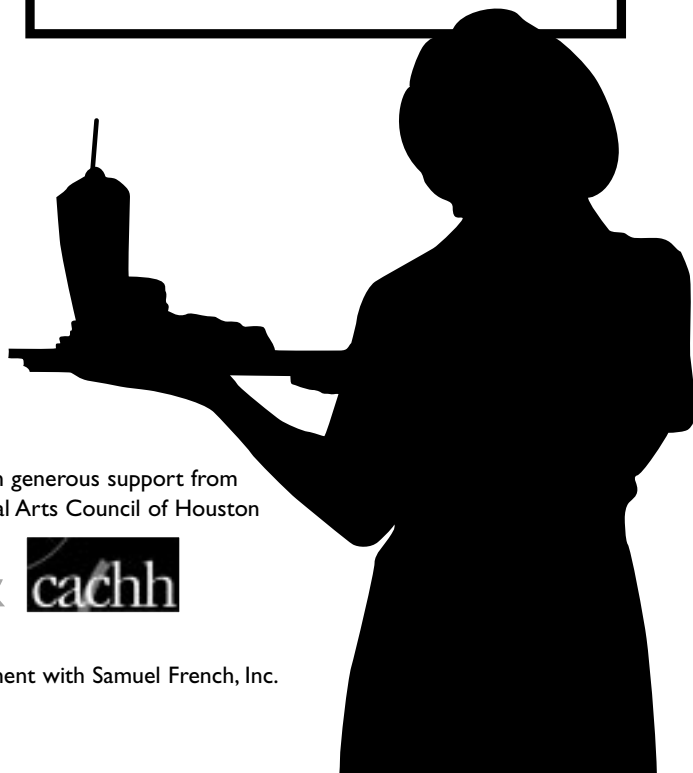
technical director
Ray Walker

production manager
Tommacina Bell

stage manager
Catrinia Troiani-Ruben

*Cast members appearing courtesy Actor's Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers.

Lee's Diner



Made possible with generous support from
Shell and The Cultural Arts Council of Houston



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Produced by arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.



About the Play

Two Trains Running... is a good ride, funny, painful, and radiantly alive. — *Talking Broadway/Nominated for 1992 Tony Award and winner of the American Theatre Critics award for Best Play.*

The place and time is America in the 1960s. Feel the winds of change. “Two Trains,” Wilson’s first post civil rights play, interweaves the lives and hopes of people in a small diner nesting their dreams. Set against the symbolic backdrop of trains that brought Southerners North in pursuit of the American dream, events unfold in gripping fashion and the forlorn cry of a homeless man, “I want my ham!” foreshadows retribution and “chickens coming home to roost.” The Ensemble welcomes Eileen J. Morris in her return to direct this encore staging of Wilson’s engrossing treatise of the complexity of social change and people who challenge fate, capitalism, and even history, to take destiny into their own hands.

RATED: PG-13 for some language

About the Playwright

August Wilson, born Frederick August Kittel in 1945, began as a poet. After his first play, *Jitney*, was accepted for a workshop production in 1982 at the prestigious O’Neill Theatre Center’s National Playwright’s Conference, he pursued playwriting. His works have been on Broadway and adapted for television. Wilson describes himself as a “cultural nationalist” influenced by ’60s activists, the artistry of blues music and even visual artists. He grew up poor in a family of five siblings, but felt his parents “shielded us from the indignities they suffered. My generation of blacks knew very little about the past of our parents.” He has brilliantly undertaken the task to illuminate that past with a series of plays, each set in a different decade of African American history. These plays have garnered numerous awards and unparalleled recognition, including two Pulitzers, and Tony Awards. The Ensemble continues a proud tradition of presenting the genius of one of the most celebrated playwrights of the 20th century.





From the Director

“There are always and only two trains running. There is life and there is death. Each of us rides them both. To live life with dignity, to celebrate and accept responsibility for your presence in the world is all that can be asked of anyone.” — August Wilson

I think back to the first time that I met Mr. Wilson; it was a most memorable event for me because here was a prolific man, a talented human being and a griot of the highest. Mr. Wilson showed so much grace, kindness and quiet strength that I was speechless at the thought of being in his presence. I had long acknowledged and loved his work and now I was getting the opportunity to meet him and share a word or two. Wow, this is better than hmmm. I was an actress in the play, *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone* at the Alley Theatre. This play changed my life and the way that I developed and created “my art.” He shaped and informed the way that I create. It was this play, the meeting of August and the sharing of the artistic process with my peers that has assisted me in being the artist that I am today. I pray that I will only continue to be able to share, give and express the beauty, the goodness and creativity of art. Since that time in 1990, I have been blessed to greet, spend time with and appreciate Mr. Wilson on many occasions: a weeklong conference at Dartmouth College *On Golden Pond*; a resounding performance at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago after *Jitney*; many opening nights of his plays all across the country; a fund-raising event in Los Angeles overlooking the mountains and the Pacific Ocean; a shared memory at the funeral of his lifelong friend and Pittsburgh native Rob Penny; having him view an intimate performance of mine in The Ensemble’s *Two Trains Running* in May 1997; a walk up a snow-covered hill; brunch atop the Warrick Hotel; a viewing of his cronies in a poetic smoke-filled room in Winston Salem, North Carolina; hearing him in Pittsburgh as he spoke graciously at the Carnegie Museum; and last summer as he accepted praise at the Los Angeles opening of *Gem of the Ocean*. I marvel at this man who has impacted so many lives and I bask in his hometown of Pittsburgh knowing that his roots are strong there and that he is much loved and respected. So as I share the quote from him about two trains, I ask you, our audience to do the best you can with what you have, to seek what you need and want, and to know that each of us creates our own space in the world, no matter how big or small, and that with our lives comes the responsibility to keep this train ready for the next.





The Cast

MemphisWayne DeHart*
 WolfDavi Jay
 RisaAisha ‘Moyo’ Ussery
 HollowayClarence Whitmore
 SterlingTimothy Eric Dickson*
 WestWillie Dirden
 HamboneTroy A. Hogan

*Cast members appearing courtesy of Actor’s Equity Association, the union of professional Actors and Stage Managers.

Setting

Time: 1969

Place: Pittsburgh, PA

The action of the play takes place in a restaurant across the street from West’s Funeral Home and Lutz’s Meat Market.

Act I

Intermission

Act II

Produced by arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

Play Publishers and Authors’ Representatives

45 West 25th Street New York, NY.

Production Staff

James V. ThomasSet & Props Designer
 Gregory J. HortonCostume Designer
 David GipsonLighting Designer
 Bridget O’ ConnorSound Designer
 Ray WalkerTechnical Director
 Tommacina BellProduction Manager
 Catrinia (Cat) Troiani-RubenStage Manager
Dramaturg: Andre Ford; **Crew:** Henry Edwards, ASM; Kertrina Fischer, Wardrobe
Production Department Interns: Autumn Knight, Gaelika Brown, Kimberly Hicks






About the Artists




Eileen J. Morris (Director) is thrilled to be 'back home' with The Ensemble Theatre. She has been living in Pittsburgh for the past 5¹/₂ years working as managing director of Kuntu Repertory Theatre with Houston native, Dr. Vernell A. Lillie, Kuntu's founder and artistic director. While in Pittsburgh, she has had the great opportunity to work at several theatre companies, continuing to bring the best possible theatre to the community. Most recently she directed for the third year, *Christmas is Comin' Uptown* for Renaissance Publications. She directed *Fences* and *The Ties That Bind* this fall for Penn Theatre. Her directing credits include New Horizons Theater's productions of *Blue* (for which she received the African American Onyx Award for Best Production and Best Director), *Dance on Widow's Row* (the ensemble from *Dance on Widow's Row* was mentioned in the *Post Gazette* for runner up for Best Ensemble), *Get Ready*, *Checkmates*, and *Dancing on Moonlight*. Other directing credits include, *A Love Song for Mumia*, *Murderer on the Hill District*, and *Indigo Blues* for Kuntu Repertory Theatre; *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (she received an honorable mention by the Pittsburgh Post Gazette for Best Director for *Ma Rainey*), *The Big Snow* at Penn Theatre; and *A Musical Level of Pain* and *Cells* for the Pittsburgh New Works Festival. As an actress she was seen last January in Houstonian Tré Garrett's play, *Rain and Rivers* for New Horizon (she received the African American Onyx Award for Best Supporting Actress) and *The Girls from Kankakee* for Penn Theatre. While in Pittsburgh, she has done industrial and commercial films for Crest, Adelphia Cable, Allied Security, Bayer Corporation and others. She is the immediate past president for the national organization, the Black Theatre Network, and she continues to work closely with the national arts organization, AGIA (African Grove Institute for the Arts). She is currently on the board of the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Alliance and is president of Xpressions Dance Company. Eileen serves on panels for PCA and the Youth Scholarship Program at the Pittsburgh Foundation. Eileen dedicates this play to her only son, Alex Jr. that he may believe as in Mark 6:45 that even though there is stormy weather, high winds and life's tribulations, Jesus, our Jehovah, the giver of life, doesn't let us go through the storm alone. For in and with His grace, He said, "it's alright, I am here, don't be afraid."



Gregory J. Horton (Costume Designer), a designer and director, is currently an associate professor of theatre at Saint Louis University. The Durham, North Carolina native, who received his BS from North Carolina Central University and MFA from Michigan State University, has given 17 years to teaching, through appointments also at Olivet College in Michigan, Alabama State University, and Florida A&M University. His design credits reflect a wide range of theatrical productions at esteemed schools around the country, including *Sweet Charity*, *Something's Afoot*, *A Midsummer Nights' Dream*, *Tartuffe*, and numerous plays for Saint Louis University;





A Soldier Story, *The Wiz*, and *Macbeth* for FAMU, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *The Gospel at Colonus* at Alabama State University; *Dream Girls* and *Bubbling Brown Sugar* at North Carolina Central, *The Seagull* at El Camino College in Redondo Beach, California, and *Ain't Misbehavin'* at Tuskegee University. Highlights of his professional credits include: *Harlem Voices* at the Negro Playwrights Theatre (Nashville); *Eubie*, *Spirit North* and *Waiting To Be Invited* (Saint Louis Black Repertory); *Shaking The Mess Out of Misery*, and *Old Settler* (The Memphis Black Repertory); *Fortunes of a Moor* (Kuntu Theatre/ University of Pittsburgh); and *Tribal Macbeth* (The Colorado Shakespeare Festival). His work has previously been featured at The Ensemble in *The Trial of A Short Sighted Black Woman vs. Mammie Louise and Safreeta Mae*, and *The Tap Dance Kid*. Horton has also been director for *Tartuffe*, *Godspell*, *Dream Girls*, *Pretty Fire*, *Nonsense*, and *Purlie*, among numerous other plays.

His other career accomplishments include work in creative costuming at Walt Disney World and as the assistant to the wardrobe supervisor for the opening and closing ceremonies for the Atlanta 1996 Summer Olympics. Greg has also worked extensively as a state & national participant and adjudicator with the American College Theatre Festivals; his professional affiliations include service as a board member of the United States Institute of Theatre Technology (USITT) and as the current president of the Black Theatre Network (BTN).




Wayne DeHart (Memphis) Mr. DeHart is eager to return to the stage of The Ensemble. He was last seen on stage here as Sky in *In Walks Ed*; and was the director of last season's *Daytrips*. A veteran artist of The Ensemble, he has garnered a loyal following and critical acclaim for his performances over the years in shows that include *Johnny B. Goode*, *A Soldier's Story*, *Riffs*, and *Trick the Devil*, among numerous others. His work in film and TV include appearances in the upcoming feature film, *Roses*. Past directing assignments for The Ensemble have also included *The Dance on Widow's Row*, for which he received a Gorgee Award as Best Director, and *Sundown Names & Night Gone Things*, a premiere by Leslie Lee. Mr. DeHart was the most recent recipient of The Ensemble's Artist of the Year Award.



Timothy Dickson (Sterling) is proud to return to The Ensemble Theatre stage. His former Ensemble credits include *The River Niger* and *The Piano Lesson*, for which he won a Gorgee Award for Best Actor. Other recent credits include Stages Repertory's *Speaking in Tongues*, The Alley Theatre's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Of Mice and Men*, and Main Street Theatre's *The Laws of Storm*. A composer and songwriter, Tim recently co-authored a musical score for Hawk-In-Flight Productions' *Street Tales of Terror*, which won second place at the Denver International World Independent Film Festival and Best Feature Film at the Motor City International Film Festival. He is also an





accomplished stage technician and lighting designer, most recently designing *The Princess and the Pea* for Houston Grand Opera 'To-Go,' at the Heinen Theatre. "I'm honored to return 'home' to The Ensemble, 'Love y'all!"



Willie Dirden (West) is overjoyed to be returning to The Ensemble Theatre after a considerable absence. His last appearance was as Cutler in The Ensemble's 1988 production of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*. He has performed at a number of area theaters including The Encore, Country Playhouse, The Actor's Workshop, Clear Creek Country Playhouse, and Urban Theater. His stage credits include roles in *Cementville*, *Lilies of The Fields*, *Waiting for Godot*, *Of Mice and Men*, *The Boys Next Door*, *Finian's Rainbow*, and *Jitney*. Willie's film credits include, *Rough Riders*, *Arlington Road*, and *The Rookie*.



Troy A. Hogan (Hambone) is a graduate of Prairie View A&M University. His Ensemble stage credits include performances in *The River Niger*, *The Tap Dance Kid*, *Before It Hits Home*, and *Flyin' West*. He is also a producer for Hawk-in-Flight/Spin 23, a film production company.



Davi Jay (Wolf) is no stranger to the "faithful" patrons of The Ensemble Theatre. He is a 22-year veteran to The Ensemble stage. Davi has had the honor of appearing in more than 25 productions at the Theatre, some of which include, *A Hatful Of Rain* as Polo; *Lotto* as Blaze; *And The Men Shall Also Gather* as Bobby (a role for which he won the coveted "Georgee" award); *Black Eagles* as Clarkie; *A Soldier's Story* as CPL. Ellis; *No Place to Be Somebody* as Gabe; *Flying West* as Frank; and The Ensemble's first and recent production of *That Serious He-Man Ball* as Twin, and now August Wilson's, *Two Trains Running*. The artist also recently appeared in *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* as Levee Greene, at the Lillian Theatre in Hollywood, California.



Aisha 'Moyo' Ussery (Risa) is a theatre/dance graduate of the University of Houston, who proudly accepted the honor of having the highest G.P.A. (summa cum laude) and the privilege to represent her department during graduation ceremonies in May 2004. Actively working in her field, Moyo has performed in several productions: *Ain't Misbehavin'* (Houston and Icelandic tour), *Praise the Lord* and *Raise the Roof*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *1950s Do-Wop*, *Once on This Island*, *One Mo' Time*, *B Angie B* in VH1's *Too Legit: The M.C. Hammer Story* and others. She is also anticipating the release of her second play, as a sequel of *Triptych: A Contemporary Love Story*.





Clarence Whitmore (Hollaway) a veteran actor, singer, director, has performed throughout the United States, The U.K. and a brief stay in Beijing, China. The artist toured with *The Diary of A Blackman* for 20 years. Whitmore previously appeared on stage at The Ensemble in *Distant Voices*, *Back Alley Tales*, *Who Killed Hazel Patton*, and *Two Trains Running*. The actor dedicates this performance in memory of his father, Clarence “Dinger”

Whitmore (1918-1967).

SPOTLIGHT ON YOUNG PERFORMERS PROGRAM

Coming June & July 2005

The Young Performers Program is a performance training program offered in two four-week intensive sessions. This coming summer, talented youth between ages 7 and 17 may receive training in acting theory and performance, vocal music, dance, theatre history and cultural arts, design and technical theatre. **Do you have a young talented and gifted performer? Early registrations are being accepted now, including gift certificate registration. Call 713-520-0055.**

Special Thanks



This organization is funded in part by grants from the **City of Houston through the Cultural Arts Council of Houston/Harris County.**

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