



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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What's the price of progress? A Noise Within revisits August Wilson's 'American Century Cycle' with 'Radio Golf'

PASADENA, Calif (September 7, 2022) — A Black mayoral candidate on the verge of the business breakthrough of a lifetime must choose between his personal aspirations and his integrity in *Radio Golf* by **August Wilson**. **A Noise Within** presents the final installment in Wilson's "American Century Cycle," with **Gregg T. Daniel** directing. Performances take place at A Noise Within in Pasadena from **October 22** through **November 13**; previews begin October 16.

The final chapter in Wilson's extraordinary 10-play cycle exploring the Black experience in 20th century America, *Radio Golf* plays out the continuing struggle between history and progress.

It's 1997 in Pittsburgh's Hill District, where Ivy League-educated developer Harmond Wilks (**Christian Telesmar**) is determined to gentrify the dilapidated and broken-down neighborhood where he grew up. He and his golfing buddy Roosevelt Hicks (**DeJuan Christopher**) are on the cusp of finalizing a plan to tear everything down and replace it with an upscale, mixed-use property. In fact, Harmond and his wife, Mame (**Sydney A. Mason**) are staking his campaign to become the first Black mayor of Pittsburgh on the project's success. That is until Elder Joseph Barlow (**Alex Morris**) and local handyman Sterling Johnson (**Gilbert Glenn Brown**) step in to save a seemingly ramshackle old house from demolition.

"How much do we owe the past in terms of remembering where we came from?," asks Daniel. "Sure, we all want to get ahead, but what's the price we pay for assimilation when it means losing parts of our culture? What is gained, and what is lost?"

Taken as a whole, the ten plays in Wilson's monumental cycle span a period of 90 years, from *Gem of the Ocean* in 1904 to *Radio Golf* in 1997 — with nine of them set in Pittsburgh's Hill District, where Wilson himself grew up. But they were not written sequentially and are not connected in the manner of a serial story. Each play stands alone.

"Audiences, don't need to be familiar with Wilson's other plays to fully appreciate *Radio Golf*," notes ANW co-artistic director **Geoff Elliott**. "But those who saw *Gem of the Ocean* here in 2019 might recognize certain references. The plays in the cycle reflect and echo one another."

In addition to 2019's *Gem of the Ocean*, A Noise Within presented *Seven Guitars*, the fifth play in the series, last spring, with Daniel also at the helm of those two productions. Eventually, the company hopes to present the entire ten-play canon, a feat not yet achieved by any theater in the Southland.

Largely self-educated, American playwright and poet August Wilson's plays center on the struggles and identity of African Americans and the deleterious effect of White American institutions on Black American life. His works draw heavily on his own experience growing up in the Hill district of Pittsburgh, a Black ghetto where nearly all of his plays are set. The ten plays in his American Century Cycle (sometimes called the "Pittsburgh Cycle") include *Gem of the Ocean* (set in 1904, completed in 2004); *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (set in 1911, completed

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in 1988); *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (set in 1927, completed in 1984); *The Piano Lesson* (set in 1936, completed in 1990 – winner of the Pulitzer Prize); *Seven Guitars* (set in 1948, completed in 1996); *Fences* (set in 1957, completed in 1996 – recipient of the Pulitzer Prize and a Tony Award); *Two Trains Running* (set in 1969, completed in 1992); *Jitney* (set in 1977, first written in 1979, rewritten and expanded in 2000); *King Hedley II* (set in 1985, completed in 2001); and *Radio Golf* (set in 1997, completed in 2005). Each of the works focuses on the major issues confronting African Americans during each of the decades of the 20th century. *Radio Golf* was Wilson's final work; he succumbed to cancer in 2005.

"This cycle is unprecedented in American theater for its concept, size and cohesion," noted theater critic Christopher Rawson.

"No one except perhaps Eugene O'Neill and Tennessee Williams has aimed so high and achieved so much in the American theater," wrote John Lahr in *The New Yorker*.

The creative team for *Radio Golf* includes scenic designer **Sibyl Wickersheimer**; lighting designer **Brandon Baruch**; sound designer **Jeff Gardner**; costume designer **Mylette Nora**; wig and make up designer **Shelia Dorn**; properties designer **Shen Heckel**; and dramaturg **Miranda Johnson-Haddad**. The production stage manager is **Taylor Anne Cullen**.

A Noise Within has been called "an oasis for those who love classic stories" by the *Los Angeles Times* and is a leading regional producer based in Pasadena, California. ANW's award-winning resident company is committed to representing the entire community at its state-of-the-art, 324-seat performance space. In addition to producing world-class performances of classic theater, the organization runs robust education programs with the goal of inspiring diverse audiences of all ages. ANW believes in working hard on its anti-racist practice across the whole organization. By interpreting its mission to fully engage audiences through community and artist-centered work in multiple creative disciplines, ANW is striving to be a theater that better serves the entire community.

Performances of *Radio Golf* take place **October 22** through **November 13** on **Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.**; **Fridays at 8 p.m.**; **Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.**; and **Sundays at 2 p.m.** (no 2 p.m. matinee on Saturday, Oct. 22, dark Thursday, Oct. 27). Four preview performances take place on Sunday, Oct. 16 at 2 p.m.; Wednesday, Oct. 19 and Thursday, Oct. 20 at 7:30 p.m.; and Friday, Oct. 21 at 8 p.m.

Audiences are invited to attend a **symposium** with director Gregg T. Daniel prior to the preview on **Wednesday, Oct. 19**, beginning at 6:45 p.m. The preview on **Thursday, Oct. 20** is "**Black Out Night**," an opportunity for audience members self-identifying as Black to experience the performance together along with a post-show reception. **Post-performance conversations** with the artists will take place on **Friday, Oct. 28**; **Friday, Nov. 4**; **Friday, Nov. 11**; and **Sunday, Oct. 30**. There will be **two student matinees at 10:30 a.m.** on **Tuesday, Oct. 25** and **Wednesday, Oct. 26**. Interested educators should email education@anoisewithin.org.

Tickets start at **\$25**. Student tickets start at **\$18**. Tickets to the preview on **Friday, Oct. 21** will be **Pay What You Choose**, with tickets starting at **\$5** (available online beginning at 12 p.m. the Monday prior to that performance). Discounts are available for groups of 10 or more.

A Noise Within is located at **3352 E Foothill Blvd., Pasadena, CA 91107**.

To purchase tickets and for more information, including up-to-date Covid-19 safety protocols on the date of each performance, call **(626) 356-3100** or go to www.anoisewithin.org

Go to lucypr.com/theater/radio-golf/photos to download high resolution photos from *Radio Golf*.

Details for Calendar Listings 'Radio Golf'

WHAT:

A Noise Within presents *Radio Golf*, the final play in Pulitzer Prize winner August Wilson's "American Century Cycle" decade-by-decade exploration of the Black experience in 20th century America. Harmond Wilks, Pittsburgh's first Black mayoral candidate, finds himself on the verge of the business breakthrough of a lifetime. The arrival of an unexpected visitor with surprising news forces Harmond to choose between his personal aspirations and his integrity. With humor and courage, *Radio Golf* challenges the steep price progress can exact upon the soul.

WHO:

- Written by **August Wilson**
- Directed by **Gregg T. Daniel**
- Starring **Gilbert Glenn Brown, DeJuan Christopher, Sydney A. Mason, Alex Morris, Christian Telesmar**
- Presented by **A Noise Within, Geoff Elliot and Julia Rodriguez-Elliott, producing artistic directors**

WHEN:

Previews October 16–October 21

Performances October 22–November 13

- **Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.:** Oct. 19* ONLY (Preview)
- **Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.:** Oct. 20** (Preview); Nov. 3; Nov. 10 (dark Oct. 27)
- **Fridays at 8 p.m.:** Oct. 21 (Preview); Oct. 28***; Nov. 4***; Nov. 11***
- **Saturdays at 2 p.m.:** Oct. 29; Nov. 5; Nov. 12 (no matinee on Oct. 22)
- **Saturdays at 8 p.m.:** Oct. 22 (Opening Night); Oct. 29; Nov. 5; Nov. 12
- **Sundays at 2 p.m.:** Oct. 16 (Preview); Oct. 23, Oct. 30***; Nov. 6; Nov. 13

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OTHER:

Go to www.anoisewithin.org/covidsafety prior to each performance to find up-to-date Covid-19 safety protocols.

PHOTOS:

Go to lucypr.com/theater/radio-golf/photos to download high resolution photos.

HOW:

(626) 356-3100 or go to www.anoisewithin.org