



NEWS RELEASE

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A Noise Within celebrates 35 years with 2026-27 'Those Better Angels' season

PASADENA, Calif (April 15, 2026) — **A Noise Within** celebrates its **35th anniversary** with the **2026-27 "Those Better Angels"** season of six classic plays that speak to our best attributes as human beings, illuminating our ability to embrace unity and moral courage in the face of division.

"Inspired by Lincoln's call to be our best selves, this season explores empathy and the enduring human capacity for compassion," explain co-artistic directors **Julia Rodriguez-Elliott** and **Geoff Elliott**. "Each of these stories reminds us of the power we have to choose connection, understanding and hope, and of the better instincts that guide us toward one another."

A Noise Within favorite **Gregg T. Daniel** returns to direct two productions in this celebratory anniversary season, launching it in August with ***Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*** by **August Wilson**, then closing it in May with ***Trouble in Mind*** by **Alice Childress**. Longtime resident artist **Susan Angelo** will helm the company's annual Shakespeare offering, bringing the Bard's charming romantic comedy ***As You Like It*** to the stage in February. Rodriguez-Elliott will direct an intimate, up-close rendition of the hit musical ***Come From Away*** in October, as well as a new staging of **Neil Bartlett's** adaptation of ***Great Expectations*** in March. She and Elliott will also co-direct the company's annual production of his adaptation of ***A Christmas Carol***, this year on a brand new set.

Ma Rainey's Black Bottom is the third play, chronologically, in Wilson's ten-play "American Century Cycle" that explores the Black experience in America decade by decade, and the seventh directed by Daniel for A Noise Within as the company continues its journey through the complete series. The only one of the ten not set in Pittsburgh, the action unfolds in 1927 in a rundown Chicago recording studio where Ma Rainey fights to retain control of her music even as her ambitious trumpeter, Levee, reaches for opportunity in a world determined to hold him back. Against a backdrop of racism and inequity, Wilson's searing drama illuminates the struggle to claim dignity, voice, and self-worth. (*August 29 – September 20; previews August 23 – August 28.*)

Come From Away recounts an extraordinary true story of kindness in the wake of crisis. When 38 planes were diverted to the small town of Gander, Newfoundland on September 11, 2001, its residents opened their homes to thousands of stranded strangers. With an infectious score and a spirit of generosity at its core, this uplifting, Olivier Award-winning musical is a testament to the best aspects of human nature. (*October 10 – November 1; previews October 4 – October 9.*)

A Noise Within's beloved production of *A Christmas Carol* returns in December with a fresh new look. This year, an imaginative, revamped design will guide cold, miserly Ebenezer Scrooge on his timeless journey of transformation as he awakens to the joys of community, compassion and giving. (*November 28 – December 24.*)

MORE—MORE—MORE

Shakespeare's gender-bending comedy *As You Like It* brims with laughter and keen insights into life, love and human nature. When her uncle, the usurper of her father's estate, threatens her life, Rosalind flees into the woods accompanied by her cousin Celia. For safety, she disguises herself as a boy, a clever ruse that lets her test the devotion of her steadfast admirer, Orlando. In the magical Forest of Arden, better angels prevail as love and justice triumph over the forces of rivalry, banishment and exile. (*February 13 – March 7; previews February 7 – February 12.*)

In celebration of this 35th anniversary season, A Noise Within revisits a seminal piece in the company's history with Bartlett's highly theatrical *Great Expectations*. Pip, orphaned as an infant and thrust into a childhood of cruel poverty, clings to the hope of a brighter life. When an anonymous benefactor names him heir to a fortune, his prospects shift suddenly from hardship to possibility. As Pip learns that wealth and status cannot replace compassion and integrity, this sweeping coming-of-age tale affirms that our better nature is shaped not by circumstance, but by the choices we make. (*March 27 – April 18; previews March 21 – March 26.*)

Finally, *Trouble in Mind* is Alice Childress's scathingly funny backstage drama about interracial politics. On the stage of a New York City theater in the mid-1950s, a recently integrated theater company is in rehearsal for a so-called "progressive" drama. The play-within-a-play, *Chaos in Belleville*, marks the first opportunity for gifted African American actress Wiletta Mayer to play a leading lady on Broadway. But what compromises must she make to succeed? By turns biting and deeply humane, this groundbreaking work challenges us to examine whose stories are told, and what it takes to honor them with honesty and respect. (*May 8 – May 30; previews May 2 – May 7.*)

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 is committed to strengthening its anti-racist practice across the organization. By interpreting its mission to fully engage audiences through community and artist-centered work in multiple creative disciplines, ANW strives to be a theater that better serves the entire community.

For more information about A Noise Within's 35th Anniversary "Those Better Angels" season, and to purchase season subscriptions (save up to 28% — subscriptions on sale now) or single tickets (on sale beginning June 9), call (626) 356-3100 or go to anoisewithin.org.

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