

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A Noise Within continues commitment to August Wilson's 'American Century Cycle' with 'Joe Turner's Come and Gone'

PASADENA, Calif (REVISED September 23, 2025) — "I poured my life into a cracked jar, and it all leaked out the bottom." On the heels of critically acclaimed **A Noise Within** productions of *Gem of the Ocean*, *Seven Guitars*, *Radio Golf*, *King Hedley II* and *The Piano Lesson*, director **Gregg T. Daniel** returns to direct August Wilson's ***Joe Turner's Come and Gone***: the second play in Wilson's extraordinary 10-play "American Century Cycle" and the sixth in A Noise Within's commitment to stage them all. Performances begin **October 18** and continue at the company's Pasadena home through **November 9**. Previews begin October 12.

Set in a Pittsburgh boarding house in 1911 during the Great Migration, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* introduces us to a group of men and women teetering on the brink as they search for lost family, identity and purpose in the aftermath of slavery. Owners Seth Holly (**Alex Morris**) and his wife, Bertha (**Veralyn Jones**) play host to a makeshift family, as residents come and go during a time when descendants of former slaves were moving North in large numbers. When tormented Herald Loomis (**Kai A. Ealy**) arrives with his young daughter, Zonia (**Jessica Williams**), he is a free man after seven years' hard labor on Joe Turner's chain gang. Loomis is looking for the wife he left behind (**Tori Danner**), believing she can help him reclaim his identity. But through his encounters with the rootmaker, Bynum (**Gerald C. Rivers**), and the other residents (**Brandon Gill**, **Briana James**, **Nija Okoro**), he comes to realize that what he really needs is to "find his song" — and it will take more than the local people finder (**Bert Emmett**) to discover it. Also in the cast is **Jared Bennett** as the neighbor boy, Reuben.

"Seth and Bertha's boarding house is a way station where souls come on their way to find redemption," explains Daniel. "Thousands of former slaves and their descendants moved from the South into the jungles of the northern cities after the end of the Civil War. They needed to find each other, to reconnect with their heritage, their ancestry and their culture.

As in all of Wilson's plays, a recurring motif in *Joe Turner* is the complex relationship between Christianity and African mysticism.

"I would like [audiences] to leave the theater with the understanding that the Black characters they see in the play are African people," Wilson once said in an interview. "And that as African people, they have a different cultural response to the world than do white people. In fact, that is the source of their strength. So, if white or Black audiences are seeing the play, if it dawns on them at some time during the play that these are African people, then they begin to see the commonalities of different cultures. And they understand, even though these are African people, they wrestle with the same questions that all of humanity wrestles with. Why God got to be so big?"

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 the plays were not written sequentially and are not connected in the manner of a serial story. Each play stands alone.

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Joe Turner's Come and Gone, the second in the cycle chronologically, premiered in 1986 at Yale Rep, opening on Broadway in 1988 and running concurrently with *Fences* (the sixth play chronologically), which had opened on Broadway the year prior. The original working title was *Mill Hand's Lunch Bucket*, the name of a [collage painting by Romare Bearden](#). The title *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* is a line from an early blues song, "[Joe Turner's Blues](#)," about the post-Civil war convict leasing system, a form of neo-slavery that sentenced Black males who ran afoul of the law to seven years of hard labor on chain gangs, profiting from their labors.

The creative team for *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* includes scenic designer **Tesshi Nakagawa**; lighting designer **Karyn D. Lawrence**; sound designer **Jeff Gardner**; costume designer **Kate Bergh**; wig and makeup designer **Shelia Dorn**; properties designer **Stephen Taylor**; dialect coach **Andrea Odinov**; choreographer **Joyce Guy**; fight choreographer **Kenneth R. Merckx, Jr.**; and dramaturg **Dr. Miranda Johnson-Haddad**. The production stage manager is **Sami Hansen**, with **Jenny Nwene** assisting.

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. Under the leadership of Elliott and Rodriguez-Elliott, the award-winning resident theater company is honored to represent 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 anti-racist policies and practices across the entirety of the 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 *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* take place **October 18** through **November 9** on **Thursdays, Fridays** and **Saturdays 7:30 p.m.**, with **2 p.m. matinees** every **Saturday** and **Sunday** (no matinee on Saturday, Oct. 19). Four preview performances take place at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 12, and at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 15; Thursday, Oct. 16; and Friday, Oct. 17.

A one-hour **INSiders Discussion Group** will take place prior to the matinee on **Sunday, Oct. 19** beginning at **12:30 p.m.** **Saturday, Oct. 25** at **7:30 p.m.** is "**Black Out Night**," an opportunity for an audience self-identifying as Black to experience the performance together; tickets include a post-show reception (non-Black-identifying patrons are welcome to attend, or to select a different performance). **Post-performance conversations** with the artists will take place **every Friday** (except the preview) and on **Sunday, Oct. 26**. **GalaPro closed captioning** is available at select performances, courtesy of the **Perenchio Foundation**. Student matinees are scheduled on select weekdays at 10:30 a.m.; interested educators should email education@anoisewithin.org.

Tickets to *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* start at **\$51.50** (including fees). Student tickets start at **\$20**. Tickets to the previews on Wednesday, Oct. 15 and Thursday, Oct. 16 will be **Pay What You Choose** starting at **\$10** (available online beginning at noon the Monday prior, and at the box office beginning at 2 p.m. on the day of the performance) Discounts are available for groups of 10 or more.

A Noise Within is located at **3352 E Foothill Blvd., Pasadena, CA 91107**. For more information and to purchase tickets, call **(626) 356-3100** or go to www.anoisewithin.org.

[Click here](#) to download high-resolution photos.

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Details for Calendar Listings 'Joe Turner's Come and Gone'

WHAT:

Gregg T. Daniel returns to direct another play in **August Wilson's "American Century"** cycle, the sixth produced by **A Noise Within** as the company makes it way through the entire cycle. Set in 1911 during the Great Migration, this second play in Wilson's series chronicling Black life in each decade of the 20th century introduces us to a group of men and women in a Pittsburgh boarding house who form a makeshift family as they search for identity and purpose in the aftermath of slavery.

WHO:

- Written by **August Wilson**
- Directed by **Gregg T. Daniel**
- Starring **Jared Bennett, Tori Danner, Kai A. Ealy, Bert Emmett, Brandon Gill, Briana James, Veralyn Jones, Alex Morris, Nija Okoro, Gerald C. Rivers, Jessica Williams**
- Presented by **A Noise Within, Geoff Elliot and Julia Rodriguez-Elliott, producing artistic directors**

WHEN:

Previews Oct. 12 – Oct. 17:

- *Sunday at 2 p.m. / Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at 7:30 p.m.*

Performances Oct. 18 – Nov. 9:

- *Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. / Saturdays and Sundays at 2 p.m. (no Saturday matinee on Oct. 18)*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

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PHOTOS:

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HOW:

www.anoisewithin.org
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