

ACT

BYE BYE
BIRDIE

six
degrees
OF SEPARATION

MY
FAVORITE YEAR

HAMLET
CITY OF ANGELS

I
HATE
HAMLET

TAMING
OF THE
SHREW

MA RAINY'S
BLACK BOTTOM

The Sisters
Rosensweig

MEDea

ANN ARBOR CIVIC THEATRE
THE 1996-1997 SEASON

Judge not the play before the play is done.

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Ann Arbor Civic Theatre

2275 Platt Road

Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

(313) 971-0605

Dear AACT Patrons,

Thank you for attending this production and for supporting the work of the Ann Arbor Civic Theatre. When we complete our 1996-97 season, we will have presented 86 performances and seated nearly 24,000 theatre lovers. In addition, we will have hosted over a dozen productions by local presenters at the Playhouse on Platt and provided rehearsal and workshop space for other performing arts groups. We're proud to be so involved in the arts community!

When I moved to Ann Arbor nine years ago as a Theatre graduate student, the area's cultural vitality impressed me most. That vitality has continued even in a time of national artistic uncertainty and difficulty. The Ann Arbor Civic Theatre, Performance Network, University Musical Society, Ann Arbor Symphony, Michigan Theater, The Ark and others are testament to the strength of the arts in Southeastern Michigan. As the new Managing Director, I am pleased to play a role in shaping the Civic Theatre's future and look forward to the coming years. But AACT and Ann Arbor could not offer the quality and caliber of events it does if it were not for you: our audiences, contributors, sponsors, advertisers and friends. It is your involvement and enthusiasm that keeps the arts alive. We are grateful to you.

Enjoy today's performance and join us in continuing the success of the Ann Arbor Civic Theatre. In the coming year, we will be building on our strengths and improving where we need to. As we grow, your contributions will be invaluable. Whether you may be working a few hours a week in our box office, constructing sets for our next show, making a financial gift, or bringing new friends to our next production, participation from so many of our members and supporters is what makes AACT unique.

Thanks again for joining us. If you have any comments or want to get involved, let me hear from you. Look for me in the lobby, or give me a call at (313) 971-0605.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jay Pekala', written over a light background.

Jay Pekala
Managing Director

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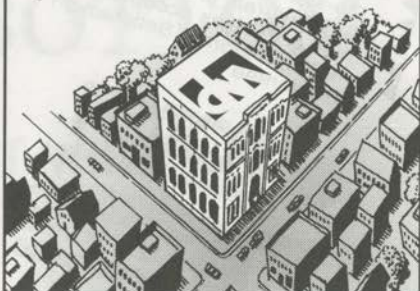


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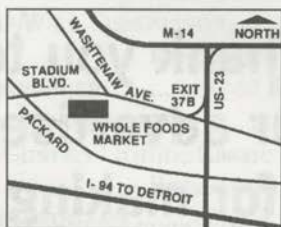
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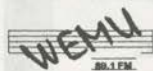
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Ann Arbor Civic Theatre Centerstage Productions Presents

MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM

BY AUGUST WILSON



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JAZZ BLUES NEWS



Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

The Cast

Sylvester Jermone "Rasheed" Marshall

Toledo (Piano) Michael Easterling

Cutler (Guitar/Trombone) Dock Riley, Jr.

Slow Drag (Bass) Kalonji D. Franklin

Levee (Trumpet) Joe E. Moore

Irvin Sanford Walke

"Ma" Rainey Elise Bryant

Dussie Mae Tammie Williams

Sturdyvant Markus Wischmeyer

Policeman Tom Coogan



The play takes place
in a Chicago recording studio, 1926

There will be one 15 minute intermission.

The Staff

Director	Dana Buck
Assistant Director	Tom Coogan
Set Design/Builder	Chuck Griffin
Costume Design	Ralph W. Hoy
Lighting Design	Thom Johnson
Props Mistress	Cheryl Berteel
Asst. Props Mistress	Barb Wells
Makeup & Hair	Rosemarie Rothe
Publicity	Darla Miller
Publicity Asst.	Barbara Daniel
Graphics Designer	Erik Olsen
Program	Joy Dennis
Stage Manager	Chuck Griffin
Set Crew	Todd Dillon
	Glen Massey

And Special Thanks To...

David Brownell	Kathe Johnson
Glen Massey	Mike Reed
Econo Print, Pinckney	Jay Pekala

...and all the unsung heroes who contributed time
and talent to this production.

We regret that some names may have been omitted from
the program due to printing deadlines.

About the Cast...

Elise Bryant ("Ma" Rainey) - A program associate and adjunct lecturer at the U of M, Elise is also an accomplished playwright and director. Her play *River Dreams* was recently produced at Performance Network and, in 1993, her *Working for A Living* was staged by Common Ground. Elise has directed *To Kill A Mockingbird* for AACT and acted in U of M's *The Heidi Chronicles* amongst many other credits. She has been honored with an Annie Award from the Washtenaw Council for the Arts, a "Joady" Award from the Film Arts Foundation of California, and was a scriptwriter for the PBS program "Porgy and Bess: An American Voice." Elise admits to being a "trekkie" in her free time and would like to say thanks and "blessed be the name of the great blues singers like Ma Rainey."

Tom Coogan (Policeman, Asst. Director) - An account manager for Mitsubishi Electronics America, Inc. by day, Tom has been an active member of AACT in his spare time for several seasons. Last year he produced *R.U.R.* and performed in *As You Like It*, as well as worked props for *M. Butterfly* and *Accomplice*. Tom has also worked as a stage hand at Performance Network. A former rugby player, he keeps active by jogging. A special thanks to Tom for working double duty on this production.

Michael Easterling (Toledo) - The Director of Development for the Ann Arbor Community Development Corp., Michael has a degree in Finance from Jackson State University, Mississippi awarded cum laude. Making his acting debut in *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, Michael's only other stage experience was as a dancer in *Brotherman* at the U of M. His interests include creative and technical writing and computers. Michael extends his appreciation to "the Creator"; his loving wife, Stacey and son, Adam; and "shout outs" to everyone from Cleveland.

Kalonji D. Franklin (Slow Drag) - Employed by MGIC, Kalonji's special interests include football, basketball, video games, and spending time with his 2 1/2 year old daughter. A graduate of Morris Brown College, Atlanta, Georgia, he was a project research scholar and was awarded a Muriel S. Snowden Scholarship. Kalonji takes this opportunity to express his thanks to everyone for their support.

Jerome "Rasheed" Marshall (Sylvester) - Jerome's most recent theater credits include EMU's *Noah's Flood* and *A Raisin in The Sun*, and U of M's *I Am A Man*. His leisure time activities include exercising, reading, and shopping. He sends a special thanks to Allah for blessing him with the talent to act and for the opportunity to work with this diligent cast and crew.

Joe E. Moore (Levee) - A full-time student at EMU, Joe's recent stage credits include Swahilee in *I Am A Man* at the U of M, and the role of Walter in EMU's *A Raisin in The Sun*. His interests include writing poetry and reading plays, and he is a volunteer with young peoples' groups in Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor. Joe would like to thank "the Creator" for giving him the opportunity to work with a great director and cast.

Dock Riley, Jr. (Cutler) - Dock has lent his considerable talents to previous AACT productions including *Master Harold and The Boys*, *Fences*, and *The Piano Lesson* for which he won a Best Supporting Actor award in 1995. He has also been seen on other local stages in *I Am A Man* and *Famous Orpheus*. A motor vehicle operator for the U of M and a massage therapist for Body Works, Dock's other interest include martial arts and watching his children grow. He would like to acknowledge two people whom he knew for only a short time but whose influence will stay with him forever - Betty Jean Jones and Ric Hunt. Dock also thanks his family and friends for their support. "Peace and Love"

Sanford Walke (Irvin) - This is Sanford's first role with AACT but he has appeared in productions elsewhere including *Rehearsal for Murder*, *The Man Who Came To Dinner*, and *Burn This*. Employed as a systems administrator for the Isthmus Corp., he enjoys competitive handgun shooting, reading, hunting, fishing, and mountain biking in his spare time. He would like to thank his brother, Jim, for his "much appreciated" support.

Tammie Williams (Dussie Mae) - Tammie has worked with several Southeast Michigan church based theater groups, including Christian Vision and its productions of *Victory*, *Cloud of Witness*, and *The Verdict*. She is presently the coordinator of the theater group at Christian Love Fellowship in Ypsilanti and is the co-owner of Quality Pest Control. Tammie is thankful to God for all things, but especially for "blessing me with a patient and supportive family."

Markus Wischmeyer (Sturdyvant) - Among the roles Markus has played in AACT productions are the Executioner in *The Enchanted*, Lt. Byrd in *A Soldier's Play*, and Sharpless in *M. Butterfly*. Working frequently both on and off stage with Performance Network, Markus recently performed in *House of Life*, *Girls With Fans*, and in the *Feed The Poets* series.

About the Staff...

Dana Buck (Director) - An active AACT veteran, Dana serves on the Board of Directors, performed in last season's *The Secret Garden*, and directed *R.U.R.*. An exhibits preparator at the U of M's Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, Dana also performs in the acapella doo-wop group "The Gel Caps and is perpetually studying Japanese.

Chuck Griffin (Set Designer/Builder, Stage Manager) - A true AACT asset, Chuck makes valuable contributions both to the productions as well as the running of the organization and the Playhouse. He most recently worked stage crew for both *Noises Off* and *Bye Bye Birdie* and designed and built the set for *My Favorite Year*. Chuck won the Best Set Design award for his work on last season's *Jeffrey*. He enjoys cooking (his lemon meringue pie is terrific!), computers, and reading science fiction and fantasy/adventure.

Ralph W. Hoy (Costume Design) - A full-time EMU theatre student and an employee of the Grizzley Peak Brew Pub, this is Ralph's first design work for AACT. At school he has designed for *The Play Called Noah's Flood*, *Oopsie Poopsie*, and *Alice In Wonder*. The recipient of EMU Service Awards the last four years, Ralph is also a costuming and makeup consultant to Huron High. He enjoys people watching and finds creative people to be extremely interesting.

Thom Johnson (Lighting Design) - TJ returns to lighting design after appearing in AACT's *I Hate Hamlet*. His most recent design was for *My Favorite Year* and he won the Best Lighting Design award for last season's *M. Butterfly*. Outside the theater, TJ works for a living, smokes an occasional cigar, and does not jog.

Cheryl Berteel (Props Mistress) - Cheryl's most recent AACT credits include costume design for *Noises Off* and *My Favorite Year*, but she can be found lending a helping hand in any capacity on just about every AACT production. Cheryl also served on the 1997/98 season selection committee. When not at work for the Ann Arbor Sears store, she enjoys taking cruises and vacations in Las Vegas and reading mysteries.

Barbara Wells (Asst. Props Mistress) - An employee of the U of M, Barb spends her free time at AACT working on such shows as *Hamlet*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, and *My Favorite Year*. She won last season's Best Set Design for *Noises Off* and enjoys crafts, reading mysteries, and spending time with her cat.

Rosemarie Rothe (Makeup/Hair Design) - An AACT "Jill of all trades", Rosie will be wearing only one hat for this production. She's back in the grease paint doing what she likes to do best - making characters come alive with makeup and wigs. Rosemarie also serves as Co-Chair of the Production Committee and produced both *Bye Bye Birdie* this season and *The Secret Garden* last year.

Darla Miller (Publicity) - Though she is the official "guardian" of the AACT Prop Department, Darla has spent countless hours publicizing the shows and the organization itself - or, as she puts it, "hanging poster after poster after poster...". An employee of the U of M Medical Center, Darla enjoys spending her spare time listening to show tunes and dancing with her cat.

Erik Olsen (Graphics Design) - A graphic designer for ITD Marketing Group,

Erik has designed numerous posters, programs, and the 1996/97 season brochure for AACT. He's also appeared on stage, most recently in *Six Degrees of Separation* and *Bye Bye Birdie*, and has been involved in award winning television production at the Detroit Area Teachers Student Film/Video Festival.

About...

August Wilson

Known for plays that portray the lives of black Americans, August Wilson's work often deals with conflict between African-Americans who accept mainstream American culture and those who want to embrace their African heritage. He won a Pulitzer Prize in 1987 for his play *Fences* in which an outstanding baseball player, ignored by the major leagues because he is black, objects to his son's desire to accept an athletic scholarship. In 1990 Wilson won a second Pulitzer Prize for *The Piano Lesson* in which a brother and sister argue over whether to sell a piano that has tragic significance in their family history. The piano was once traded for their grandparents, who were slaves.

Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Wilson dropped out of school in the ninth grade after a teacher accused him of plagiarism because his work was considered too good for a black student. He continued his education independently through extensive reading. During the 1960's, Wilson became involved in the civil rights movement. In 1968 he founded the Black Horizons Theater Company, a community theater in Pittsburgh devoted to addressing issues of black Americans. In 1978 he moved to Minneapolis and began writing plays for a small theater company. In 1985 his first major work, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* won the New York Drama Critic's Circle Award for best play. Wilson's other major plays include *Jitney* (1982), *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (1986), *Two Trains Running* (1990), and *Seven Guitars* (1995). Taken together, his major plays are to form a chronological cycle of black American life in the 20th century, with each play representing one decade.

Ma Rainey

Blues vocalist Ma Rainey began her career at a time when the blues was a rural folk music form. Although her voice and songs were deeply rooted in this early form, Rainey performed a vaudeville-style blues called classic blues. A more produced, performance-oriented style, classic blues became popular in the 1920's and early 1930's. Rainey was dubbed the "Mother of Blues Singers" for her gritty, deeply personal style and warm, highly entertaining performances. She traveled the country performing in minstrel shows and later in vaudeville and was one of the first blues singers to record professionally.



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There is no smoking allowed in the auditorium, foyer, restrooms or outer lobby.

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During events at the Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre, the box office in the Michigan League is open Monday and Tuesday from 12:00 pm to 6:00 pm, and Wednesday through Saturday from 12:00 pm to 8:15 pm.

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DIRECTED BY RONALD P. BAUMANIS

September 5-21 • FootLights Series • Civic PlayHouse

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WRITTEN BY JOHN GUARE • DIRECTED BY CASSIE MANN

October 2-5 • CenterStage Series • Lydia Mendelssohn

I HATE HAMLET

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LYRICS BY LEE ADAMS • DIRECTED BY RONALD P. BAUMANIS

January 8-11 • CenterStage Series • Lydia Mendelssohn

HAMLET

WRITTEN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE • DIRECTED BY JOANNA WOODCOCK

January 30-February 15 • FootLights Series • Civic PlayHouse

MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM

WRITTEN BY AUGUST WILSON • DIRECTED BY DANA BUCK

March 5-8 • CenterStage Series • Lydia Mendelssohn

THE SISTERS ROSENSWEIG

WRITTEN BY WENDY WASSERSTEIN • DIRECTED BY WENDY WRIGHT

April 3-19 • FootLights Series • Civic PlayHouse

CITY OF ANGELS

BOOK BY LARRY GELBART • MUSIC BY CY COLEMAN

DIRECTED BY CONRAD MASON AND ANN VANDEMARK

May 7-10 • CenterStage Series • Lydia Mendelssohn

MEDEA

WRITTEN BY EURIPEDES • DIRECTED BY TOD BARKER

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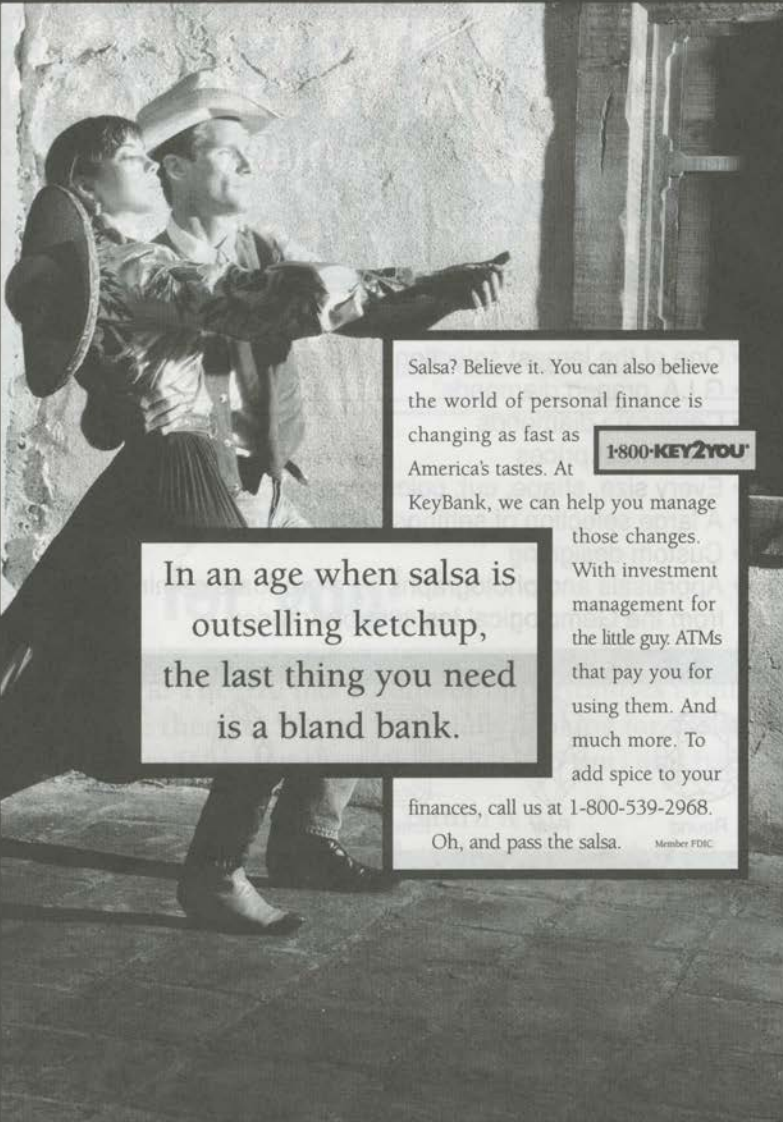
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