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AUGUST WILSON'S *FENCES* RETURNS TO TRINITY REP

Award-winning drama runs March 21 – April 28, 2024

PROVIDENCE: Trinity Repertory Company continues its 60th Anniversary Season with **August Wilson's *Fences***, directed by **Christopher Windom**. August Wilson's *Fences* runs March 21 – April 28, 2024 in the Dowling Theater. Tickets are available for purchase in person at the Ticket Office on 201 Washington St., online at trinityrep.com/fences, or by calling (401) 351-4242.

ABOUT AUGUST WILSON'S *FENCES*

What is perhaps August Wilson's most well-known play may also be his most powerful. In segregated 1957 Pittsburgh, former Negro League baseball player Troy Maxson is now scraping by as a sanitation worker. Once a towering figure in his community, he now only exerts control over his wife and two sons. Troy's desire to protect his loved ones from oppression grows warped by his stubbornness and pride. A devastating look at a man and his family's strained relationships, *Fences* is a must-see Pulitzer Prize-winning drama, returning to the Trinity Rep stage for the first time in over 30 years.

Trinity Rep previously presented *Fences* in its 1991-92 Season, featuring Gustave Johnson as Troy Maxson, the late resident company member Barbara Meek as Rose, and former Trinity Rep company member and Mixed Magic Theatre founder Ricardo Pitts-Wiley as Jim Bono.

"August Wilson's *Fences* is one of the greatest American plays of the last century, and we are so thrilled that it is back on our stage as part of our 60th season, interrogating the centrality of family in American life," Trinity Rep Artistic Director **Curt Columbus** said. "Director Christopher Windom's production, which centers the character of Rose, deals with the ways in which family is composed in complicated and unpredictable ways. Wilson's

incredible language is on thrilling display, as it always is, and so are some of the most memorable characters he has ever created.”

THE CREATIVE TEAM AND CAST

August Wilson was a Pulitzer and Tony Award-winning playwright, best known for his 10-play American Century Cycle. These works explore the heritage and experience of African Americans, decade-by-decade, over the course of the 20th century. Trinity Rep previously produced six of these plays: *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom* (1987), *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone* (1989), *Fences* (1992), *The Piano Lesson* (2001), *Radio Golf* (2020), and *Gem of the Ocean* (2022).

Director **Christopher Windom** previously helmed Trinity Rep’s productions of *Fairview* (2022) and *A Christmas Carol* (2010). A graduate of the Brown/Trinity Rep MFA Program in Directing, he has directed and choreographed across the country at The Alley Theatre, Marriott Theatre Lincolnshire, Cleveland Play House, The Vineyard Theatre, The Public Theatre Mobile Shakespeare Unit, The Guthrie Theatre, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Signature Theatre, Dallas Theatre Center, TheatreWorks (Palo Alto), and many others. Christopher also choreographed the first live production of the animated film *Frozen* for Disney Resort in Disneyland, and the feature film *Respect* starring Jennifer Hudson.

“At its core, August Wilson’s *Fences* is a story about a family of individuals who are each striving to fulfill their unique sense of self-expression, all while navigating the strained responsibility that being a family can demand,” Christopher said.

The production’s creative team includes scenic designer **Lex Liang** (*Fairview*), costume designer **Kenisha Kelly** (*Fairview*, *A Christmas Carol* 2021), lighting designer **Marika Kent**, sound designer and composer **Elton Bradman**, and fight choreographer **Mark Rose** (*Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, *Sueño*).

Trinity Rep resident company member **Jackie Davis** will portray Rose Maxson, one of Wilson’s most iconic female characters. Said Windom, “The pillar of this family is Rose, who is a matriarch and mother figure extraordinaire. As a character, Rose interests me greatly. It’s easy to lose sight of her when she’s being overshadowed by the life force of her husband, Troy. But Rose has my attention, and I’m interested in the message she has to say through the language of August Wilson.”

Chicago-based actor **Kelvin Roston Jr.** will play the role of Troy Maxson. While this marks his Trinity Rep debut, Kelvin brings a deep understanding of the Wilson canon, having previously appeared in productions of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Gem of the Ocean*, *King Hedley II*, and *Seven Guitars*.

Rounding out the cast are returning guest artists **Dereks Thomas** as Jim Bono and **Rodney Witherspoon II** as Lyons, Brown/Trinity Rep MFA in Acting student **Nicholas Byers** as Cory, and **Martinez Napoleon**, making his Trinity Rep debut as Gabriel. Two local child actors will alternate the role of Raynell: 10-year-old Cranston student **Felese Kparyea** and 11-year-old Providence resident **Blair Pierre**.

SPECIAL PERFORMANCES

Continuing Trinity Rep's tradition of offering affordable tickets for all, the theater will hold a **Pay What You Wish** performance of *Fences* on Thursday, March 21, 2024 at 7:30 pm. Pay What You Wish tickets go on sale at 2:00 pm the day of the performance and are limited to two per person.

Continuing this season are **Neighborhood Nights**, where Rhode Island residents can access a 20% discount on Sunday evening performances, based on where they live. Providence County residents are eligible for a Neighborhood Night discount for every Sunday evening performance. The Neighborhood Night performances for Kent County, Washington County, and Bristol & Newport County residents are on March 31, April 7, and April 14, respectively. Guests may claim this discount by entering their county name in all capital letters at checkout (i.e., PROVIDENCE). For this production, the theater will host special community engagement events surrounding the performances on these dates.

Open Captioned performances are on April 17, 20, and 21 at 2:00 pm; and April 17, 18, 19, and 20 at 7:30 pm. The **Sensory Friendly** performance of August Wilson's *Fences*, designed to meet the needs of guests with sensitivities to light and sound, will be held on April 10 at 7:30 pm.

Through Trinity Rep's **Project Discovery** program, schools can arrange for students to experience this live production with tickets to a student matinee performance, a study guide that can be used in the classroom to prepare for the play, and a post-show discussion with the production team. The Project Discovery performance dates for August Wilson's *Fences* are March 28, April 4, April 10, April 11, April 24, and April 25 at 10:00 am. Visit trinityrep.com/project-discovery for more information and to book your school.



The supporting sponsor for August Wilson's *Fences* is **Washington Trust**. Trinity Rep's 2023-24 Season is sponsored by the **Rhode Island State Council on the Arts (RISCA)** with supporting sponsorship by the **Providence Tourism Council**. **Southwest Airlines** is the official airline of Trinity Rep.

ABOUT TRINITY REPERTORY COMPANY

Rhode Island's Tony Award-winning theater, Trinity Rep has created unparalleled professional theater for and with its community since its founding in 1963. Trinity Rep strives to facilitate human connection and has been a driving force behind the creativity that fuels and defines the region for more than 50 years.

Trinity Rep is committed to reinventing the public square and inspiring dialogue by creating emotionally stimulating live productions that range from classical to contemporary and innovative education programs for all ages and abilities. Its annual production of *A Christmas Carol* has brought families together for more than four decades and made memories for nearly two million audience members.

Trinity Rep's 60th Anniversary Season runs through June 2024, and includes productions of *The Good John Proctor*, *Becky Nurse of Salem*, *A Christmas Carol*, *La Broa' (Broad Street)*, August Wilson's *Fences*, and *La Cage aux Folles*. For more information, visit Trinity Rep's website at www.trinityrep.com.



AT A GLANCE
August Wilson's *Fences*

Director – Christopher Windom

Set Designer – Lex Liang

Costume Designer – Kenisha Kelly

Lighting Designer – Marika Kent

Sound Designer – Elton Bradman

Fight Choreographer – Mark Rose

Stage Manager – Amanda Kosack

Assistant Stage Manager – Polly Feliciano

Cast – Featuring resident company member Jackie Davis as Rose; Brown/Trinity Rep student Nicholas Byers as Corey; and guest artists Martinez Napoleon as Gabriel, Kelvin Roston Jr. as Troy Maxson, Dereks Thomas as Jim Bono, and Rodney Witherspoon II as Lyons. Including child actors Felese Kparyea and Blair Pierre as Raynell.

August Wilson's *Fences* Opening Press Night | Wednesday, March 27, 2024 at 7:30 pm
Invitations and RSVP instructions to come

Pay What You Wish – March 21 at 7:30 pm

Neighborhood Nights – Patrons can receive 20% off tickets for the 7:30 pm evening performance on the following Sundays:

March 31 (Kent County residents using discount code KENT at checkout)

April 7 (Washington County residents using discount code WASHINGTON at checkout)

April 14 (Bristol & Newport County residents using discount code BRISTOL or NEWPORT)

All Sunday evenings (Providence County residents using discount code PROVIDENCE)

Open Caption Performances – April 17, 20, and 21 at 2:00 pm; April 17, 18, 19, and 20 at 7:30 pm

Sensory-Friendly Performance – April 10 at 7:30 pm

Masked Matinee Performance – April 3 and 14 at 2:00 pm

Project Discovery Performances – March 28; April 4, 11, 24, and 25 at 10:00 am

Ticket Office – (401) 351-4242; 201 Washington Street, Providence, RI 02903

Group Sales – (401) 453-9238; discounts for groups of 10 or more

Website – trinityrep.com/fences

Supporting Sponsor – Washington Trust

Season Sponsor – Rhode Island State Council on the Arts (RISCA)

Supporting Season Sponsor – Providence Tourism Council

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