



**PITTSBURG COMMUNITY THEATRE**

**February 5 - 13, 2022**

**Performed on the Betty Brown Stage  
in The Little Theatre  
Creative Arts Building**

**Directed by  
LaTonya Watts**



**AUGUST WILSON'S  
FENCES**

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE



Welcome to Pittsburg Community Theatre's production of August Wilson's *Fences*. It is my pleasure to direct this amazing show.

August Wilson was an American playwright often referred to as the "theatre's poet of Black America." *Fences* explores the evolving African-American experience and examines race relations, among other themes. The action takes place in the backyard of a house in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and evolves around Troy Maxson. Troy is a family man, with a supportive wife, Rose. His son Cory is scared of him and often in disbelief of his father. Troy's story also includes his relationship with his disabled brother Gabriel, his best friend Bono; and a son, Lyons, from a previous relationship.

I have had the pleasure of working with a stellar cast remembering to push myself with all endeavors keeping up with the talent I am working with. My thanks to PCT for inviting me to direct such an iconic play. I also thank my family Pamela, Darlene, Michelle and my best friend Cara for their continued support. Finally, I will forever thank the most beautiful women in the world, the one who made me be who I am today, my adorable mommy. I dedicate this and all shows I do to Billie Jean, the Leopard Queen!

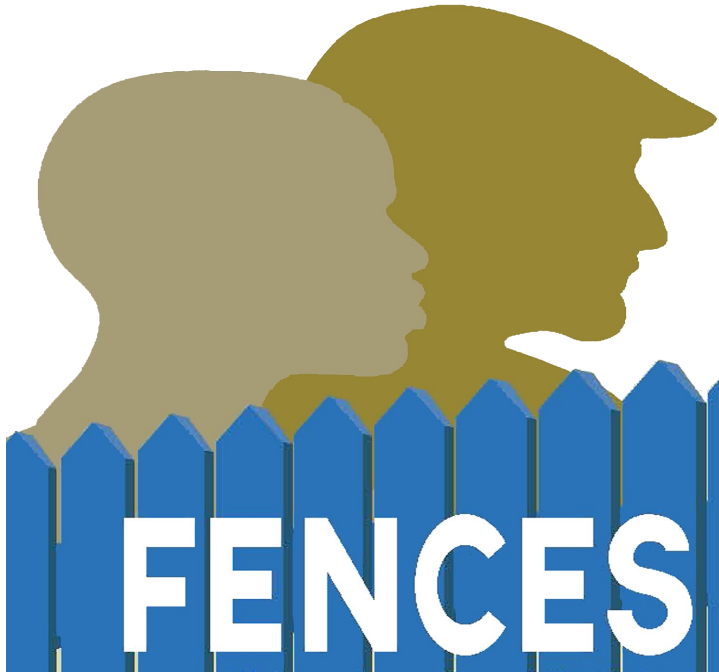
*LaTonya Watts, Director*

**LATONYA WATTS** has worked with several famous directors and choreographers to pursue her passion. She has directed and choreographed many theatrical performances for some of the Bay Area's popular theatrical companies. Her work includes: *Taming of the Shrew; Romeo & Juliet; The Wiz; Grease; Pippin; Oedipus; Cinderella; Macbeth; Dream Girls; Blackballin; Once on This Island, Chicago (2011 SFBATCC and Shellie Awards nominee for Best Choreographer); West Side Story; Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat; Hairspray; Life Could be a Dream; 9 to 5; Rent; Hedwig and the Angry Inch; The Robber Bridegroom; Night of January 16th; A Trip Down Broadway (2016 Shellie Award winner for Best Choreographer); Aladdin; A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum; Arsenic and Old Lace; Urinetown, the Musical; Rumors; You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown; Moon Over Buffalo (2018 Shellie Award winner for Best Director); The 1940s Radio Hour; Lend Me a Tenor; Once Upon a Mattress; The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee; Zombie Prom; The Savannah Sipping Society, School House Rock, Jr., Young Frankenstein, Freaky Friday and A Raisin in the Sun.*



# **PITTSBURG COMMUNITY THEATRE**

Presents



Written by

**AUGUST WILSON**

Directed by

**LaTonya Watts**

Produced by

**Michael Wilson**

FENCES is produced by special arrangements with Concord Theatricals.

# THANK YOU

*The Director and Production Team wish to thank the following who helped to bring this production to life:*

**Keller Canyon Mitigation Fund**

**Pittsburg Presbyterian Church | Pittsburg Unified School District**

**The City of Pittsburg | Veronica Pope and People Who Care**

**Gwendolyn Sampson Brown**

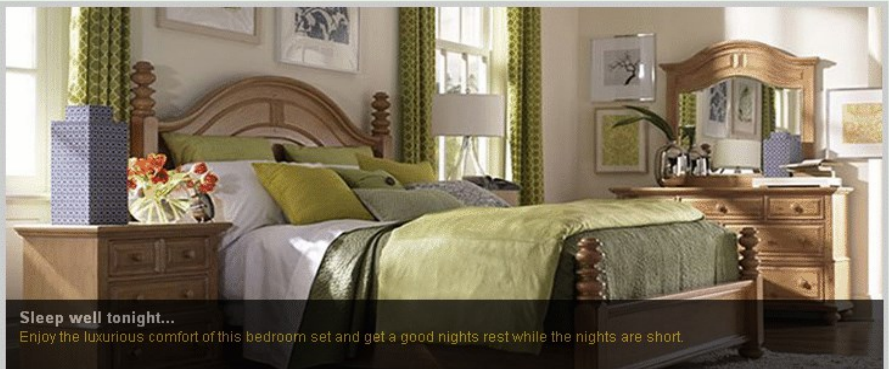


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# SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

The play is set in the front yard of the Maxson household, an old two-story house at the back of a small alley in a big-city neighborhood.

## ACT 1

**Scene 1:** A Friday evening, fall 1957.

**Scene 2:** The next morning.

**Scene 3:** A few hours later.

**Scene 4:** The following Friday.

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*THERE WILL BE ONE  
FIFTEEN MINUTE INTERMISSION*

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## ACT 2

**Scene 1:** Saturday, fall of 1957.

**Scene 2:** Friday, spring of 1958.

**Scene 3:** Three days later.

**Scene 4:** Two months later.

**Scene 5:** Summer of 1965.

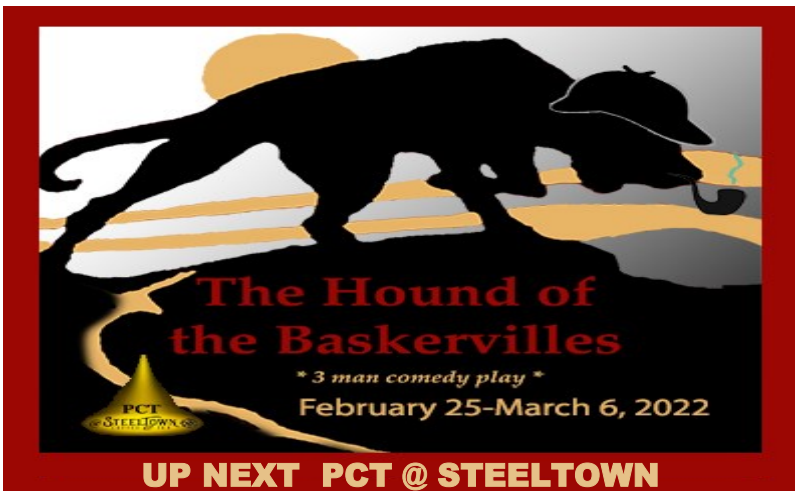


*The use of any recording devices, either audio or video, the taking of photographs, (with or without flash) is strictly prohibited.*

*Please turn off all electronic devices such as cellular phones, beepers, and watches.*

# PRODUCTION TEAM

PRODUCER .....Michael Wilson  
DIRECTOR .....LaTonya Watts  
STAGE MANAGER .....Terry Tracy  
SET DESIGN .....Michael Wilson  
COSTUMES .....Miresa Wilson, Flo Buchanan  
PROPERTIES .....Kim James  
LIGHTING DESIGN .....LaTonya Watts  
LIGHT / SOUND TECH .....Ronn Ton  
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER .....Ashley Forney  
STAGE CREW .....Alexander Paz, Michele Rhine  
SET CONSTRUCTION .....Michael Wilson, Dianna Schepers,  
David Ward, Wayne Steffen, Anjee Norgaard-Gallia, Keith Adair,  
Alexander Paz, Phillip Leyva, John Wilson, People Who Care,  
Cast / Crew  
VIDEOGRAPHER .....Mel Nash  
PHOTOGRAPHER .....Sara Leyva  
HOSPITALITY (DEN MOTHER TO CAST) .....Michele Rhine  
PCT HOSPITALITY / BOX OFFICE .....Amy Hart, Katie Rapolas  
MARKETING & PUBLICITY .....Phillip Leyva, Dianna Schepers



# THE CAST

*(in order of appearance)*

TROY MAXSON .....	Kirk Waller
JIM BONO, Troy's friend .....	Dodie Katague
ROSE, Troy's wife .....	Gwendolyn Sampson Brown
LYONS, Troy's oldest son by a previous marriage.....	Alijah Carter
GABRIEL, Troy's brother.....	Jason Anthony
CORY, Troy and Rose's son .....	Elijah Waller
RAYNELL, Troy's daughter .....	Makayla Rhine

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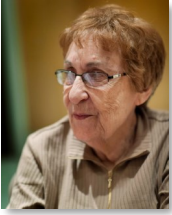
**Angel Sustaining Patron — Phillip Leyva**

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**Marilyn Berg Cooper**

**Gwendolyn Sampson-Brown**

# THE DRAMATURG PAGE



## THE BETTY BROWN STAGE

Tonight's performance is being performed on a stage that has been named for Betty Brown, PCT's founder and driving force for decades. Betty began her Pittsburg teaching career across the street at what was then Central Jr. High as a Speech and Drama teacher. Many years later, she started an Adult Education course in Drama that met here in the Little Theatre. PCT continued performing at the high school after incorporating in 1979. This theatre was PCT's home for most of its forty-year history, before moving to the historic California Theatre in October 2013.

While the California is undergoing extensive and necessary renovations, PCT is on the road for the 2021-2022 season and potentially the 2022-2023 season. The choice to perform August Wilson's *Fences* on the stage named for our founder, in the building that was the company's home for so long, has been emotionally rewarding for our company in ways we can't begin to describe.

## A TRIBUTE TO OUR OWN

PCT has been blessed with so many volunteers and sponsors throughout the years. Sadly, we have recently had to say goodbye to some treasured friends. In March 2020, we lost John "Jack" O'Leary. Jack was the kindest man you'd ever meet. He put the gentle in gentleman. He and his wife Honey were great performers and supporters of everything PCT. In October 2021, we lost the very special Judy O'Connor, to whom we dedicated this season. Then, in November 2021, Gary Cooper, husband of Marilyn Berg Cooper, passed away. Gary and Marilyn have been ardent supporters of PCT and our hearts go out to Marilyn and their family.

Finally, in December 2021, we learned of the passing of one of PCT's great actors and directors, Dean Creighton. On a personal note, I had the pleasure of working with Dean many times, but it is *The Odd Couple* I will never forget. Recently, I watched the video of this performance and even through the limitations of an old video recording, I can see and feel the genuine affection between Felix and Oscar. This, of course, was not acting. Much love to his wife Anne, and his daughters Heather and Shawn; I am so lucky to have shared the stage with your husband and father. PCT is proud to dedicate this season to all our treasured friends.







BY GREGORY BROWN

## **AUGUST WILSON— A CENTURY OF BLACK VOICES**

August Wilson was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania's economically depressed Hill District in 1945. The playwright's monumental cycle of ten plays, known as *The American Century Cycle*, all take place in this District (with the exception of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*). Each play takes place in a different decade of the last century, beginning with *Gem of the Ocean*, set at the turn of the century, through 1990's *Radio Golf*.

Wilson, who never intended to write a cycle of century-spanning plays, noticed he was doing so about three plays in: "I've written three plays in three different decades, so why don't I just continue doing that?" he said, referring to *Jitney* (set in 1971), *Fullerton Street* (set in 1941), and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (set in 1927). Two plays from the cycle won the Pulitzer: *Fences* (set in the 1950s) and *The Piano Lesson* (set in the 1930s) and *Fences* also won the Tony award for Best Play of 1987. The play was also a successful film starring Denzel Washington and Viola Davis in a performance that won her the Oscar for Best Supporting Actress.

Wilson, and arguably *Fences* particularly, now occupies a place in the American theatre canon, regularly appearing on annual lists of most produced playwrights of the year. He has been called The American Shakespeare and is routinely taught in schools. Whether that is a good or bad thing may depend on how one feels about being made to read anything in school, but Wilson's artistry cannot be denied.

*Fences*, while ostensibly a naturalistic family drama, also manages to be richly symbolic: the fence in *Fences*, for instance, has numerous possible meanings. Wilson's style has often been described as poetic realism, a genre of the theatre embraced by Williams and O'Neill before him, in which the play appears to be a realistic depiction of everyday life, but in the characters' speech one hears a heightened sense of the poetic. In Wilson's case, that poetry is deeply rooted in black history and culture.

On its opening in 1987, New York Times critic Brent Staples noted that Wilson "brings us here a naked vernacular language intact, a language from the streets of his native Pittsburgh. There is laughter, the raucous call-and-response of the black church sermons, jazz and blues music - all inevitably rooted in the African style. And as Troy holds court on his back step with his buddy, wife and children as audience and participants, we are back in Mr. Wilson's Pittsburgh, with men and women not even a full generation removed from tarpaper shacks, and just in from the very edge of the culture. Their style and language speak to that point."

## WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST



**GWENDOLYN SAMPSON BROWN (ROSE)** is thrilled and humbled to play Rose Maxson in the Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Fences*. This is Gwen's second play with Pittsburg Community Theatre. The first was *A Raisin in the Sun* as Lena Younger. Gwen is no stranger to the stage. Gwen aspired to be an actress in high school and college, and then life happened, and her father convinced her to pursue nursing as a career instead. Still, her love for the performing arts never wavered. To date, one of her favorite performances

was the role of Libby in *Bee-Luther-Hatchee* and, of course, Lena Younger in *A Raisin in the Sun*. Gwen wants to thank PCT for trusting her with such a vital role in this powerful production. Additionally, she wants to thank her husband for his continued support and the many hours of running lines with her. Gwen sincerely hopes that you enjoy this presentation as much as the cast and crew have enjoyed preparing this timeless and passionate piece of American literature for your consideration. Enjoy!!



**ALIJAH CARTER (LYONS)** is pleased to be joining Pittsburg Community Theatre as Lyons. He has been going to school at Diablo Valley College studying Theater, and is getting ready to transfer to SF State, where he will continue to pursue it, alongside film. He has performed as Leaf Coneybear in *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* at Clayton Theatre Company, and General Ghankis Khan Smitz in *Seussical* at Diablo Valley College. He is so excited to be back on-stage after lockdown.



**DODIE KATAGUE (JIM BONO)** is enjoying his debut performance with PCT. He has previously performed as the Boatswain and Ceres, in Vallejo Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, as Bob Cratchit in *(Not) A Christmas Carol*, and as Evan in Benicia Theatre's *Sweat*. Eons ago, Dodie performed in many high school musicals and choir. Dodie is now retired and looks forward to other performing and singing opportunities. He is also a published writer with his novel "Cloyne Court." Dodie wants to thank his friends and family for their support

in allowing him to try something new.

# WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST



**JASON ANTHONY (GABRIEL)** is excited to return to PCT for another iconic show. His previous work includes *A Raisin in The Sun* (Walter Lee Younger), *Hand To God* (Jason, Tyrone and Timothy). He is honored to play the role of Gabriel. When he is not onstage he enjoys spending time with family and friends, most importantly being a father to his beautiful girls. Demi and Jadyn Daddy loves you!! Thank you PCT for this amazing opportunity!!



**MAKAYLA RHINE (RAYNELL)** made her acting debut in 2021 as "Young Simba" in PCT's summer production of *Lion King Jr.* Prior to this, Makayla competed in competitive dance from the age of 7 and led her team to multiple awards while semi-annually performing at Disneyland. A natural born performer, she discovered a passion for singing and acting that is being further refined under the tutelage of Gregg Klein. Makayla manages a healthy balance between performing, church, and academics as a leader in her school where she placed third overall in the spelling bee. She has set her eyes on attending Contra Costa Performing Arts in the Fall of 2022. In her spare time she enjoys traveling with her mom and spending time with friends.



**ELIJAH WALLER (CORY)** Elijah is excited to be in his 6th production with PCT and his 36th show overall. Some favorite roles include Dwight in *Dead Mans Cell-phone*, Tom Sawyer in *Big River*, Dan in *Joseph, The Player* in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, and Travis Younger in *A Raisin in the Sun*. Elijah is a junior in high school and is the current junior class president. In His free time, Elijah likes making Tik-Toks with his most viral one getting 1.7 million views.



**KIRK WALLER (TROY MAXSON)** is thrilled to be in his first community theater production, but he's no stranger to the stage. Kirk has spent the past 25 years as a solo performer and storyteller. He's performed nationally and internationally. His favorite moments include performing at the National Storytelling Festival, winning a Gold Award rating for his collection of stories and performing his original piece *Stagger Lee*.



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