



NEWS RELEASE

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Director Lou Bellamy to Helm *Radio Golf* at Cleveland Play House

CPH to Create Community and Civic Engagement Events Based on Play by August Wilson

February 10 – March 4, 2012

Opening Night: February 15, 2012

Calendar Editors: See Fact Sheet for Performance Schedule and Special Events

CLEVELAND, OH (January 25, 2012) – **Lou Bellamy**, Artistic Director of the acclaimed Penumbra Theatre, will direct the Cleveland Play House production of ***Radio Golf***, the Tony Award®-nominated finale of playwright August Wilson's unprecedented ten-play cycle chronicling African-American life in the 20th century. **Bellamy**, recipient of 2007 Obie for Best Direction of the off-Broadway production of *Two Trains Running* at Signature Theatre, has been described as the foremost living interpreter of work of Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright August Wilson, and his Penumbra Theatre is proud to have produced more of Wilson's plays than any other theatre in the world. Throughout the run of ***Radio Golf***, Cleveland Play House will be partnering with civic, business and education leaders throughout the community to relate the themes and ideas of *Radio Golf* directly to Greater Cleveland. ***Radio Golf***, a co-production with Indiana Repertory Theatre, will begin in the Allen Theatre at PlayhouseSquare on Friday, February 10 and run through Sunday, March 4, 2012. Tickets are available at PlayhouseSquare ticket office by calling 216-241-6000 or online at www.clevelandplayhouse.com. ***Radio Golf*** is presented with support from Cuyahoga Arts and Culture and the Ohio Arts Council.

"It's a great pleasure to welcome back Lou Bellamy, one of the premiere directors of the August Wilson's plays," says **CPH Artistic Director Michael Bloom**. "Our production of *Radio Golf* will serve as a catalyst for very important civic discussions about progress and tradition."

ABOUT THE PLAY

Set in Pittsburgh in 1997, *Radio Golf* takes place in the Hill District, a blighted, crime-ridden ghetto full of condemned abandoned buildings. Harmond Wilks is a bright, engaging, Ivy-League educated man who grew up in "the Hill." He has returned to work in his father's real estate company and is running for mayor. The idealistic young politician and his ambitious college friend Roosevelt Hicks are organizing an urban renewal in the neighborhood. They have bought up a block of abandoned properties and are just weeks away from demolishing them to pave the way for a structure of chain stores, apartments and condos. When Elder Joseph Barlow disputes their claim of the rights to one of the houses, it sets off a storm of controversy that may jeopardize the project and Wilks' mayoral campaign, and poses a very real question about the value of heritage compared to the necessity of progress.

According to Margaret Booker, author of *Radio Golf: The Courage of His Convictions*, the title of the play metaphorically alludes to the aspirations of the black middleclass towards the accumulation of wealth and social status -- including celebrity -- within the larger American context. "Golf is, after all, an upper-class

individual sport played on manicured greens as opposed to team baseball played on back lots in urban neighborhoods," she writes. "Wilson chose golf – a professional sport once inaccessible to blacks – to examine the erosion of African American cultural values in pursuit of success as defined by a dominant white society."

This phenomenon is epitomized in *Radio Golf* by Harmond Wilks and Roosevelt Hicks, real estate developers who, to further their personal ambitions, are preparing to tear down the last vestiges of the historical African American presence in Pittsburgh. The address of Aunt Ester's residence, 1839 Wylie, is an allusion to the historical irony of their planned demolition. In 1839 there was an outbreak of racial violence in Pittsburgh as white residents of the city, who resented the growth of black populations in the North, did considerable damage to the city's black neighborhoods by burning and tearing down houses. In *Radio Golf*, set a century and a half later, this destruction is now being planned by African Americans themselves.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Cleveland Play House will be partnering with civic, business and education leaders throughout the community to bring the themes and ideas of *Radio Golf* directly to Greater Cleveland. There will be six special post-show panel discussions featuring local experts from areas of politics, education, urban studies and development, African American history and culture, and Community Development. These will take place after every Tuesday evening and Saturday matinee performance. CPH is also working with the Commission on Economic Inclusion (a program of the Greater Cleveland Partnership) on a unique program called "The Business of Change," featuring cast members from the play and facilitated discussion, to Employee Resource Groups at major area businesses like KeyBank. Finally, CPH is partnering with Cleveland State University for a series called "August (Wilson) in Spring (Semester)." In conjunction with CSU's Black Studies Program and the Howard A. Mims African American Cultural Center, CPH is proud to present several round table discussions with NEOhio directors from an unprecedented five area theatres who are producing August Wilson works this spring, as well as with Cleveland area playwrights and scholars who can connect us with Wilson's work in unique ways.

RADIO GOLF cast:

Anchoring the cast is **James Craven**, who will play the role of **Harmond Wilks**. Craven is a longtime member of Penumbra Theatre Company and has performed as on Broadway in *The Gospel at Colonus*, and is the 2011 recipient of the Ten Chimneys Foundation Lunt-Fontanne Fellowship. The role of **Roosevelt Hicks** will be performed by actor **David Alan Anderson**, who previously appeared at CPH in *A Raisin in the Sun* (2008), also directed by Lou Bellamy. Regional credits include Indiana Repertory Theatre, Penumbra Theatre Company, Guthrie Theater, Arizona Theatre Company, Kansas City Rep, and Actors Theatre of Louisville. **Abdul Salaam El Razzac** will perform the role of **Elder Joseph Barlow**. He is an alumnus of Karamu House here in Cleveland and a founding member of Penumbra Theatre Company. El Razzac portrayed Avery in the national tour of *The Piano Lesson*, and regional appearances include Los Angeles Theatre Center, American Conservatory Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, Guthrie Theater, South Coast Repertory, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Kansas City Rep, and Arizona Theatre Company. **Austene Van** will perform the role of **Mame Wilks**. Van recently directed at Park Square Theater, History Theatre, Ordway and Penumbra Theatre. Her acting credits include *Gem of the Ocean*, *Blue*, *Ain't Misbehavin'* at Penumbra Theatre. **Terry Bellamy**, an actor, director, playwright, and educator, will perform the role of **Sterling Johnson**. Regional theatre credits include Guthrie Theater, Baltimore CENTERSTAGE, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Goodman Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, and The National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, NC.

For a complete list of cast bios, go online at <http://www.clevelandplayhouse.com/main-stage/radio-golf>

RADIO GOLF Creative Team:

August Wilson (*Playwright*) authored *Gem of the Ocean*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Seven Guitars*, *Fences*, *Two Trains Running*, *Jitney*, *King Hedley II* and *Radio Golf* among many others. His works explore the heritage and experience of African Americans, decade by decade, over the course of the twentieth century. Wilson's plays have been produced at regional theatres across the country, on Broadway and throughout the world. His work garnered many awards, including the Pulitzer Prize for *Fences* (1987) and *The Piano Lesson* (1990); a Tony Award for *Fences*; Great Britain's Olivier Award for *Jitney*; eight New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards; Rockefeller and Guggenheim Fellowships; the Whiting Writers' Award; the 2003 Heinz Award; and a 1985 Emmy Award nomination for his screenplay adaptation of *The Piano Lesson*. He was presented with a 1999 National Humanities Medal by the President of the United States and received numerous honorary degrees from colleges and universities, as well as the only high school diploma ever issued by the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. He was an alumnus of New Dramatists, a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a 1995 inductee into the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and Broadway changed the name of the theatre at 245 West 52nd Street to August Wilson Theatre. In 2007 he was posthumously inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame. Born and raised in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, Wilson lived in Seattle at the time of his death.

Lou Bellamy (*Director*) is founder and artistic director of Penumbra Theatre. During his 36-year tenure, Penumbra has evolved into one of America's premier theatres dedicated to dramatic exploration of the African American experience. Under Bellamy's leadership, Penumbra has produced 24 world premieres, including August Wilson's first professional production, and is proud to have produced more of Wilson's plays than any other theatre in the world. Bellamy is an Obie Award-winning director, an accomplished actor, and a sought after scholar. Directing credits include *A Raisin in the Sun* at Cleveland Play House, Arizona Theatre Company, and Guthrie Theater; *I Wish You Love* at Penumbra, Kennedy Center, and Hartford Stage; *Two Trains Running* at Signature Theatre in New York; *Jitney* at The Kansas City Repertory Theatre and Arizona Theatre Company; and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* at Arizona Theatre and the Guthrie Theater. He was for years a widely known and respected associate professor in the University of Minnesota's Department of Theatre and Dance.

The **design team** for *Radio Golf* includes Vicki Smith (Scenic Design), Don Darnutzer (Lighting Design), Karen Perry (Costume Design), and Todd Mack Reischman (Sound Design). Also on the team: Dramaturg Richard J. Roberts and Stage Manager Shannon Habenicht. For a complete list of design team bios, go online at <http://www.clevelandplayhouse.com/main-stage/radio-golf>

TICKET INFORMATION

Single tickets are on sale now; prices range from \$49 to \$69. Tickets are \$15 for all **students** under the age of 25. For single tickets, please contact the PlayhouseSquare ticket office at 216-241-6000 or online at www.clevelandplayhouse.com. **Groups of 10+** save up to 50% off single ticket prices; call 216-400-7027 or email cwheeler@clevelandplayhouse.com.

Founded in 1915, Cleveland Play House is America's first professional regional theatre. Throughout its rich history, Cleveland Play House has remained dedicated to its mission to inspire, stimulate and entertain diverse audiences in Northeast Ohio by producing plays and theatre education programs of the highest professional standards. It has produced more than 100 American and/or World Premieres, and over the 95+ years more than 11 million people have attended approximately 1,300 productions. Today, under the leadership of Artistic Director Michael Bloom and Managing Director Kevin Moore, Cleveland Play House looks toward its centennial while performing in three state-of-the-art venues at PlayhouseSquare in downtown Cleveland.

Cleveland Play House is funded through the generosity of Cuyahoga County residents through Cuyahoga Arts and Culture, and The Ohio Arts Council helps to fund Cleveland Play House with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans.

The IRT celebrates its 40th season. Founded in 1972, the IRT is the largest and leading fully professional not-for-profit theatre in the state and has grown into one of the leading regional theatres in the country. The IRT continues to be one of the top-flight cultural institutions in the city and state, providing experiences that engage, surprise, challenge and entertain.

FACT SHEET

WHAT: **Radio Golf**

Written by August Wilson / Directed by Lou Bellamy

The Twentieth Century Cycle by August Wilson

1900s - <i>Gem of the Ocean</i> (premiere 2004)	1940s - <i>Seven Guitars</i> (1996)
1910s - <i>Joe Turner's Come and Gone</i> (1984)	1950s - <i>Fences</i> (1987, CPH in 1990)
1920s - <i>Ma Rainey's Black Bottom</i> (1982, CPH in 1985)	1960s - <i>Two Trains Running</i> (1990, CPH in 2000)
1930s - <i>The Piano Lesson</i> (1987, CPH in 2005)	1970s - <i>Jitney</i> (1979/2000)
	1980s - <i>King Hedley II</i> (1999)
	1990s - <i>Radio Golf</i> (2005, CPH in 2012)

SYNOPSIS: Aunt Ester's house at 1839 Wylie Avenue is scheduled for demolition to make way for Bedford Hills, a slick new real estate venture designed to revive Pittsburgh's depressed Hill District--and boost Harmond Wilks' chances of becoming the city's first black mayor. But first, the government must declare the historic neighborhood blighted, unleashing federal money for its development. All goes according to plan until a mysterious stranger, claiming ownership of the house, forces Wilks to reconsider his path to success. A contemporary play infused with the dreams of generations past, playwright August Wilson's last work for the stage completes his extraordinary 20th century cycle of the African-American experience.

WHERE: Allen Theatre, PlayhouseSquare, 1407 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio

WHEN: Preview Performances: Fri 2/10; Sat 2/11; Sun 2/12; Tue 2/14
Opening Night: Wednesday, February 15, 2012
Final Performance: Sunday, March 4, 2012
Tuesday Evenings 7:00 pm
Wednesday - Saturday Evenings 7:30 pm
Saturday and Sunday Matinees 2:30 pm
Weekday Matinee 1:30 pm, Thu 2/23

Special Events

- ***Pre-show Conversations*** – Join us 45 minutes before every performance for a lively discussion with a member of the cast or creative team.
- ***Reading Club – Monday, February 6, 2012 @ 6:30pm*** - In a fun, social group setting, patrons and guests spend 75 minutes with a member of the CPH Artistic Staff, who will provide insight into the play itself, and lead a lively discussion about how directors, actors, and designers put their skills to use in taking a play from the page to the stage.
- ***Post-show Discussions – Sunday, February 19; Sunday, February 26; Sunday, March 4, 2012*** – Join actors from the cast for these post-show discussions moderated by a member of the artistic staff.
- ***Post-show Panels – Tuesday, February 14; Saturday, February 18; Tuesday, February 21; Saturday, February 25; Tuesday, February 28; Saturday, March 3, 2012*** – Stay after the Tuesday evening and Saturday matinee performances and join local experts from areas of politics, education, urban studies and development, African American history and culture, and community development.
- ***Student Matinees – 10:30am on Friday, February 17 and Wednesday, February 29, 2012.*** For details, call (216) 400-7061.

Prices

- Regular ticket prices range from \$49 to \$69, with discounts available for groups of ten or more. Tickets are \$15 for all students under the age of 25. **For Single Tickets:** Call (216) 241-6000, or visit www.clevelandplayhouse.com. **Groups of 10 or more:** Call Cosandra Wheeler, (216) 400-7027.