



MET plans August Wilson play, 'Seven Guitars'

Posted by Bob Evans



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Metropolitan Ensemble Theatre (MET) presents the Professional KC Premier

of August Wilson's Pulitzer Prize Finalist *Seven Guitars*

The Metropolitan Ensemble Theatre presents one of August Wilson's rarely produced masterpieces, *Seven Guitars*, the 1940's installment of his Pittsburgh Cycle, February 21-March 10 at the Warwick Theatre.

Wilson weaves the stories of seven African-Americans living off what they can in the row-houses of Pittsburgh. Floyd, a down on his luck thirtysomething, returns home after a 90 day stint in prison, to discover that a song he recorded in

Chicago almost a year ago has become a break out hit. Floyd is eager to return to Chicago, at the bequest of the recording company, to lay down more tracks and ignite his career. Vera, Floyd's on-and-off again fling and his neighbor Hedley warn Floyd of the temptation of success and the cost he may have to pay. *Seven Guitars* follows Floyd as he tries to escape from Pittsburgh and overcome the constant barrage of obstacles he finds himself up against.

Seven Guitars is the 1940's submission of Wilson's massive Pittsburgh Cycle, a series of plays from the Oscar nominated and Pulitzer & Tony winning playwright that focuses on the plights, progressions, and successes of African-Americans in the 20th century. Wilson wrote this installment in 1995 and the play premiered on Broadway that following year to wide critical acclaim and numerous Tony nominations. The drama was also shortlisted for the Pulitzer Prize that same year.

Director Karen Paisley (who is working through the Pittsburgh Cycle herself, having previously directed *Fences*, *Gem of the Ocean*, and *The Piano Lesson*) has tapped into the mystical realism of Wilson's narrative as well as the grandeur and beauty that is ever-present in his dialogue. Honing in on these literary aspects has allowed Paisley, with a more than able-bodied ensemble, to create a mesmerizing work brought to life onstage through intuitive staging that is supported by sound, lighting, and costume designs firmly grounded in realism. The ensemble is led by MET mainstays Sherri Mosley, Theodore Priest Holmes, Shawna Pena-Downing, Granville O'Neal, Robert 'Tre' Coppage and features debut performances from Keenan Ramos and Alexis Dupree. Ramos will also be seen this spring in the MET's North-American debut of *The Shawshank Redemption*.

This new classic opens Thursday, February 21 and runs through Sunday, March 10. Evening performances begin nightly at 7:30pm and at 2:00pm for Sunday matinees (please check the MetKC.org

website for more detailed information on shows, dates and times). The plays are produced at the MET's newly acquired venue – the historical Warwick Theatre. The Warwick is at 3927 Main St, KCMO 64111 and there's plenty of parking behind the building. Tickets can be ordered online at MetKC.org or over the phone by calling the box office at (816) 569-3226.