



January 4, 2010
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**YALE REPERTORY THEATRE
PRESENTS
AUGUST WILSON'S
THE PIANO LESSON
DIRECTED BY LIESL TOMMY**

**FEATURING JONIECE ABBOTT-PRATT; EISA DAVIS;
TYRONE MITCHELL HENDERSON; CHARLIE HUDSON, III;
LEROY MCCLAIN; KEITH RANDOLPH SMITH;
CHARLES WELDON; AND MALENKY WELSH**

**JANUARY 28-FEBRUARY 19, 2011
OPENING NIGHT IS THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3**

YALE REPERTORY THEATRE (James Bundy, Artistic Director; Victoria Nolan, Managing Director) presents **August Wilson's THE PIANO LESSON**, directed by **Liesl Tommy**, at Yale Repertory Theatre (1120 Chapel Street, at York Street) January 28-February 19, 2011. Opening Night is Thursday, February 3.

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize in Drama, August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson* returns to Yale Rep, where it had its world premiere in 1987. *The Piano Lesson* was one of six plays in August Wilson's 10-play cycle chronicling the African American experience in the 20th century to premiere at Yale Rep. Wilson's other Yale Rep world premieres included *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (1984), *Fences* (1985), *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (1986), *Two Trains Running* (1990), and *Radio Golf* (2005).

The cast features **Joniece Abbott-Pratt; Eisa Davis; Tyrone Mitchell Henderson; Charlie Hudson, III; LeRoy McClain; Keith Randolph Smith; Charles Weldon; and Malenky Welsh.**

August Wilson's THE PIANO LESSON features original compositions and music direction by **Eisa Davis**, set design by **DeDe Ayite**, costumes by **Jennifer Salim**, lighting by **Alan Edwards**, sound by **Junghoon Pi**, vocal and dialect coaching by **Beth McGuire**, fight direction by **Rick Sordelet**, dramaturgy by **Cheng-Han Wu**, and stage management by **Allison Hall Johnson.**

ABOUT AUGUST WILSON'S THE PIANO LESSON

Pittsburgh, 1936. An ornately carved upright piano sits in the home of Berniece Charles (Eisa Davis), who plans to pass it along to her daughter. But her brother, Boy Willie (LeRoy McClain), has another plan for the prized, hard-won heirloom: to sell it for the hard cash to buy the same Mississippi land that their family once worked as slaves. *The Piano Lesson* is the intimate story of a brother and sister and their struggle to embrace or deny their epic inheritance.

TICKET INFORMATION AND PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Tickets for **August Wilson's THE PIANO LESSON** range from \$10-85, are available online at www.yalerep.org, by phone at (203) 432-1234, and in person at the Yale Rep Box Office (1120 Chapel Street, at York Street). Student, senior, and group rates are also available.

Friday, January 28	8PM	
Saturday, January 29	8PM	Grad Night reception begins at 7PM
Monday, January 31	8PM	ALL TICKETS \$10
Tuesday, February 1	8PM	
Wednesday, February 2	8PM	
Thursday, February 3	8PM	Opening Night
Friday, February 4	8PM	
Saturday, February 5	2PM	Talk Back
Saturday, February 5	8PM	
Tuesday, February 8	8PM	
Wednesday, February 9	2PM	Senior Reception begins at 1PM
Wednesday, February 9	8PM	
Thursday, February 10	8PM	Talk Back
Friday, February 11	8PM	
Saturday, February 12	2PM	Open Captioning, Talk Back
Saturday, February 12	8PM	
Tuesday, February 15	8PM	
Wednesday, February 16	8PM	
Thursday, February 17	8PM	
Friday, February 18	8PM	
Saturday, February 19	2PM	Audio Description
Saturday, February 19	8PM	

ABOUT THE CAST

JONIECE ABBOTT-PRATT (GRACE) is making her debut at Yale Rep. Her New York and regional stage credits include *The Good Negro* directed by Liesl Tommy (The Public Theater); *Dividing the Estate* (People's Light & Theatre Company); *Mama's Gonna Buy You* (William Inge Theatre Festival); *Dirt Rich* (Summer Stage); *The Piano Lesson* (Delaware Theatre Company); *Stick Fly*, *The Overwhelming* (Contemporary American Theater Festival); *False Creeds* (Alliance Theatre Company); *Breath, Boom* (Synchronicity Performance Group); and *The Doll Play's* (Actor's Express). Film and television: *Why Did I Get Married?*.

EISA DAVIS (BERNIECE; COMPOSER, MUSIC DIRECTOR) is happy to make her Yale Rep debut. Acting work includes *Passing Strange* (OBIE Award), *This, Intimate Apparel*, *Blues for an Alabama Sky*, *Valley Song*, and Adrienne Kennedy's *June and Jean in Concert*. Select film and television credits include *Passing Strange*, *The Wire*, *Damages*, *Mercy*, the *Law & Order* franchise, *Welcome to the Rileys* opposite James Gandolfini, *Robot Stories*, the HBO short *Happenstance*, and the upcoming *In the Family*. As a playwright and composer, Eisa has worked with Liesl Tommy on both *Angela's Mixtape* (named a Best of 2009 by *The New Yorker*) and *The History of Light*. Other plays include *Paper Armor* (presented at Yale's Langston Hughes Centenary), *Six Minutes*, *Ramp*, and *Bulrusher*, a 2007 finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. She has performed original music from her album *Something Else* at venues such as BAMCafe, Symphony Space, Joe's Pub, and the Yale Cabaret. A graduate of Harvard, the Actors Studio School, and an alumna of New Dramatists, Eisa lives in Brooklyn, NY. www.eisadavis.com

TYRONE MITCHELL HENDERSON (AVERY) made his Yale Rep debut in the world premiere of *The America Play* by Suzan-Lori Parks in 1994 and also appeared in the play at The Public Theater. His other New York credits include *The Tempest*, *Two Noble Kinsmen*, *The Public Sings*, *Letters to the End of the World*, *Stonewall*, and the first national tour of *Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk*. His regional theatre credits include *Radio Golf*, *The 39 Steps*, *Reckless*, *Enemy of the People*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *Topdog/Underdog*, *Intimate Apparel*, *Gutenberg the Musical*, *Yellowman*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Jitney*, *All My Sons*, *Art*, *The Crucible*, "MASTER HAROLD" ...and the boys, *Angels in America*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, and *Blues for an Alabama Sky*. Film and Television: *Ride for Your Life*, *The Treatment*, *Law & Order*, *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*, *A Legal Mind*, *As the World Turns*, and *All My Children*. Awards: AUDELECO Award nominee and recipient of the Dallas Theatre Critics and Leon Rabin Awards.

CHARLIE HUDSON, III (LYMON) is making his Yale Rep debut. Previous theatre credits include *White Women Street* (Irish Repertory Theatre); "MASTER HAROLD" ...and the boys (Portland Stage Company); *Fly* (Crossroads Theatre Company, The Vineyard Playhouse); *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Richard III*, *A Christmas Carol*, *All the King's Men*, *Cyrano de Bergerac* (Trinity Repertory Company); *Hillary* (New Georges); *Old Comedy* (Classic Stage Company); *Mother Courage and Her Children* (The Public Theater); *Sweet Bird of Youth* (Williamstown Theatre Festival); *Romeo and Juliet* (Bread Loaf Acting Ensemble); *Julius Caesar* and *Topdog/Underdog* (Brown/Trinity Consortium). Charlie's film and television credits include *The Rosa Parks Story* and *Waterfront*, and his voice is featured in the McGraw-Hill's PodClass GRE Vocabulary Study Guide. Mr. Hudson is the 2003 KC/ACTF Irene Ryan Best Actor Award winner, Region IV. He is a 2004 graduate of Alabama State University and a 2007 MFA graduate of the Brown University/Trinity Repertory Consortium.

LeROY McCLAIN (BOY WILLIE) is a proud graduate of Yale School of Drama and is excited to return to the Yale Rep stage where, as a student, he appeared in *The Taming of the Shrew*, *King Lear*, and *Medea/Macbeth/Cinderella*. His Broadway credits include *Cymbeline* and *The History Boys*. Other New York credits include *Measure for Measure*, *Othello* (with Philip Seymour Hoffman; also toured internationally in Austria and Germany), *The Good Negro*, *Oroonoko*, *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*, *Huck & Holden*, and *In Search of Stanley Hammer*. His regional credits include *Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Whipping Man*, *The Good Negro*, *Blue/Orange*, *Elmina's Kitchen*, *Othello*, *Trouble in Mind*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Rough Crossing*, *Richard II*, *Three Days of Rain*, *Private Eyes*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Like Sun Fallin' in the Mouth*, and *Twelfth Night*. His television and film credits include a recurring role on *Rubicon*, *The Adjustment Bureau*, *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*, *Guiding Light* (recurring), *Breaking In*, *The Stage*, and *After*. LeRoy also trained at the National Theatre Acting Studio in London.

KEITH RANDOLPH SMITH (DOAKER) is making his Yale Rep debut. Broadway credits include the Tony Award-winning revival of August Wilson's *Fences* (standby for Troy Maxson) starring Denzel Washington, as well as the original productions of *King Hedley II* and *The Piano Lesson*; and *Come Back, Little Sheba*. His Off-Broadway appearances include *The First Breeze of Summer*, *Fabulation*, August Wilson's *Jitney*, *Holiday Heart*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. His regional theatre credits include *Antony and Cleopatra* (Hartford Stage), *In Walks Ed* (Long Wharf), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (California Shakespeare Festival), *Resurrection* (Philadelphia Theatre Company), *The Dreams of Sarah Breedlove* (Goodman Theatre), and *Looking Over the President's Shoulder* (Merrimack Rep). Film and television credits include *Three Windows*, *Warrior Class*, *Backstreet Justice*, *Girl Six*, and *Law & Order*.

CHARLES WELDON (WINING BOY) is the Artistic Director of The Negro Ensemble Company, Inc. He has starred in more than forty plays including *The River Niger* and *A Soldier's Play*. Film and television work includes *Stir Crazy*, *Roots: The Next Generation*, *Fast-Walking*, *The Wishing Tree*, and *Hill Street Blues*. Charles started his career as lead singer of the Paradox with the number one song *Diamonds and Pearls* and segued to musical theatre, starting with the original San Francisco company of *Hair*. His first Broadway performance was in the musical *Big Time Buck White* starring Mohammed Ali.

MALENKY WELSH (MARETHA) made her Yale Rep debut earlier this season in the world premiere of *Bossa Nova* by Kirsten Greenidge. Malenky's first stage experience was in the world premiere of Paula Vogel's *A Civil War Christmas* at Long Wharf Theatre, and she also appeared in the same show at New Haven Theater Company the following year. Malenky has worked for Wilhemina Models in New York and has performed in a children's music video. She is a member of the Elm City Girls Choir, and in her free time, she enjoys reading, drawing, playing with her sisters, and skateboarding. Her dream is to be a veterinarian one day.

ABOUT THE 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*. These works explore the heritage and experience of African Americans, decade-by-decade, over the course of the twentieth century. His plays have been produced at regional theatres across the country, all over the world and on Broadway. Pulitzer Prizes: *Fences* (1987) and *The Piano Lesson* (1990). Tony Award: *Fences*. Britain's Olivier Award for *Jitney*, and eight NY Drama Critics' Circle Awards. The cast recording of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* received a 1985 Grammy, and *The Piano Lesson* received a 1995 Emmy nomination. August Wilson received Rockefeller and Guggenheim Fellowships, the Whiting Writers Award, 2003 Heinz Award, 1999 National Humanities Medal from the President of the United States, numerous honorary college degrees and the only high school diploma ever issued by the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. He was an alumnus of New Dramatists, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a 1995 inductee into the American Academy of Arts and Letters. On October 16, 2005, Broadway renamed the theatre located at 245 West 52nd "The August Wilson Theatre." Posthumously received the Dramatists Guild Award for Lifetime Achievement, Theatre Hall of Fame induction, the namesake for Pittsburgh's August Wilson Center for African American Culture. Born and raised in Pittsburgh's Hill District, he lived in Seattle at the time of his death. He is immediately survived by his daughters, Sakina Ansari and Azula Carmen Wilson, and his wife, costume designer Constanza Romero.

LIESL TOMMY (DIRECTOR) made her Yale Rep debut last season with *Eclipsed*, which was honored with the Outstanding Production of a Play Award from the Connecticut Critics Circle, following the play's

McCarter Theatre workshop and Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company world premiere. Her other recent credits include *Ruined* by Lynn Nottage (Huntington Theatre Company, La Jolla Playhouse, Oregon Shakespeare Festival); the world premieres of *Peggy Pickett Sees the Face of God* by Roland Schimmelpfennig (Luminato Festival/Volcano Theatre), Eisa Davis's *Angela's Mixtape* (Synchronicity Performance Group, New Georges) and *A History of Light* (Contemporary American Theatre Festival), *The Good Negro* by Tracey Scott Wilson (The Public Theater, Sundance Theatre Institute, Dallas Theater Center), and *A Stone's Throw* by Lynn Nottage (Women's Project); *Yankee Tavern, Stick Fly* (CATF); *A Christmas Carol* (Trinity Rep); *In the Continuum* (Playmakers Rep); *Flight* (City Theatre); *Bus and Family Ties* (Cristian Panaite Play Company) for the Romania Kiss Me! Festival. Ms. Tommy was awarded the NEA/TCG Directors Grant, the New York Theatre Workshop Casting/Directing Fellowship, and is a New York Theatre Workshop Usual Suspect. She has also been a guest director and teacher at Juilliard, Trinity Rep/Brown University's MFA Directing and Acting Program, and NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. She is a native of Cape Town, South Africa.

DEDE AYITE (SCENIC DESIGNER), originally from Ghana, is a third-year MFA candidate at Yale School of Drama. She received her BA in theatre and behavioral neuroscience from Lehigh University. Past design credits include costume design for *American Schemes* by Radha Blank (NYC Summerstage); *Every Other Hamlet In The Universe*, *The Seagull* (Yale School Of Drama); *Passing*, *Orestes* (Yale Cabaret); *Frozen*, *The Fantasticks*, and *No Exit*. Dede has also worked as a Scenic Artist for The Santa Fe Opera, The Studio Theatre, Playwrights Theatre of New Jersey, Gateway Playhouse, and the Sono Dance Company's production of *The Nutcracker*.

JENNIFER SALIM (COSTUME DESIGNER) is a third-year MFA candidate at Yale School of Drama, where her credits include *Phèdre* and *Macbeth*. Yale Cabaret credits include *Waking*. Originally from Chicago, she worked as a fashion stylist for *Chicago* magazine, *American Idol*, *Time Out Chicago*, *Newcity* magazine, *Honest* magazine, *Heidi Hess Designs*, as well as styling consultation for various celebrity and corporate clients. She is the 2009-2010 recipient of the Zelma Weisfeld Scholarship for Costume Design and the 2010-2011 recipient of the Jay and Rhonda Keene Scholarship for Costume Design.

ALAN C. EDWARDS (LIGHTING DESIGNER) is a third-year MFA candidate at Yale School of Drama. Earlier this season he designed the lighting for Edward Albee's *A Delicate Balance* at Yale Rep. Other credits include *Every Other Hamlet In The Universe*, *the things are against us*, *La Ronde*, *Love's Labour's Lost* (Yale School of Drama); *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (also set design), *The Phoenix*, *Muse* (Yale Summer Cabaret); *The Maids*, *A Day in Dig Nation*, *Orestes*, *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill*, *See What I Wanna See* (Yale Cabaret); *The Pulp of the Matter* (Connecticut College Dance); and *The Marriage of Figaro* (Tri-Cities Opera). While studying at Ithaca College, he designed *Urinetown*, *Burn This*, and scenery for the opera *Acis and Galatea*. His New York credits include the Broadway productions of *A Catered Affair* (set design assistant), *Boeing-Boeing* and *The Country Girl* (props); and the Off-Broadway production of *Amazons and Their Men* (props). www.alancedwards.com

JUNGHOON PI (SOUND DESIGNER) is a Seoul-based composer and multimedia artist. He has written songs for major K-pop artists including R.ef, Zaza, Shinhwa, Roo'ra, Crown J. He has also composed scores for Korean blockbuster films including *Modern Boy*, *Man of Vendetta*, *A Better Tomorrow* (invited to the Venice Film Festival, 2010). His American theatre composition credits include *Price* (Kraine Theatre, New York International Fringe Festival); *Blood Wedding* (Schapiro Theatre); *Walkabout Yeolha* (The Riverside Theatre); *Every Other Hamlet In The Universe* (Yale School of Drama); *Electra: Mask Ritual*, *The Other Shore* (Yale Cabaret). Pi earned his BM and MM from Yonsei University and Dongguk

University, and he is a second-year MFA candidate at Yale School of Drama, where he is the recipient of the Eldon Elder Fellowship.

RICK SORDELET (FIGHT DIRECTOR) Fifty Broadway productions, including Disney's *The Lion King*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Tarzan*, *The Little Mermaid*, and *Aida*. More than fifty productions all over the world, including *Cyrano de Bergerac* starring Placido Domingo at the Metropolitan Opera, The Royal Opera House, and the LaScala in Milan. Stunt coordinator for the films *The Game Plan* starring Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, *Dan in Real Life* starring Steve Carell and Juliette Binoche, and *Hamlet* starring Campbell Scott. He served as the chief stunt coordinator for *Guiding Light*. Rick sits on the board of the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey and is a company member of Drama Dept. He teaches at Yale School of Drama, The New School for Drama, and The Neighborhood Playhouse; and he is the author of the play *Buried Treasure*. Rick is a proud recipient of the Edith Oliver Award for Sustained Excellence from the Lucille Lortel Foundation. He is married to actress Kathleen Kelly and has three children: Kaelan, Christian, and Collin.

BETH MCGUIRE (VOCAL AND DIALECT COACH) Vocal and dialect coach credits include the Off-Broadway productions of *The Overwhelming* (Roundabout Theatre Company); *The Black Eyed* (New York Theatre Workshop); *Five by Tenn* (Manhattan Theatre Club); *People Be Heard* (Playwrights Horizons); *Candida*, *Gas Light* (The Roundtable Ensemble); *Free Market* (The Working Theatre); *Exit Cuckoo* (Midtown International Theatre Festival); *Art of Memory* (Company SoGoNo); and a workshop of *In Darfur* (The Public Theater). Regional: *The Servant of Two Masters*, *Eclipsed*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Lydia*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *dance of the holy ghosts*, *The Mystery Plays*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *King Lear*, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, *Kingdom of Earth* (Yale Rep); *Hamlet*, *Carnival*, *King John*, *The Glass Menagerie* (Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey); *The Cook* (Hartford Stage); and *Crimes of the Heart* (The Cape Playhouse). Ms. McGuire is currently on faculty at Yale School of Drama; is a member of VASTA (The Voice and Speech Trainers Association), Actors' Equity, SAG, and AFTRA; and is an actress with over 30 years of performance experience.

CHENG-HAN WU (DRAMATURG) is a second-year MFA candidate at Yale School of Drama, where his dramaturgy credits include *Homebody/Kabul* and *Uncle Vanya*. Originally from Taiwan, he received his BA in drama and theater from National Taiwan University (NTU), where his major dramaturgy credits include *Twelfth Night* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Later, he served as web editor of *PAR Performing Arts Magazine* and research assistant of NTU Shakespeare Forum. Currently, he is also Resident Dramaturg as well as translator of Ren-Shin Theatre, a Taiwan-based troupe renown for staging Euro-American contemporary plays in Chinese. For Ren-Shin, his dramaturgy credits include *The Homecoming*, *Wonder of the World*, and Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice*. He is also a director and actor in Taiwan. His directing credits include *Before Breakfast* (NTU), *I Am My Own Wife* (Ren-Shin), and *The Other Shore* (Yale Cabaret). His acting credits include the new musical adaptation *Mulan* (NTU).

ALLISON HALL JOHNSON (STAGE MANAGER) is a third-year MFA candidate at Yale School of Drama. Her Yale Repertory Theatre credits include assistant stage managing *Eclipsed* and *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*. Her Yale School of Drama credits include *Orlando*, *Jelly's Last Jam*, *Thriftcrawl*, *Tall Skinny Cruel Cruel Boys*, *The Current War*, *The Bedtrick*, and *the things are against us*. Her Yale Cabaret credits include *The Mystery of Irma Vep*, *Fly-by-Night*, *Evil Dead: The Musical*, *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill*, *Babs the Dodo*, and *A Portrait of the Woman as a Young Artist*. Her other credits include *The Daughters* (Yale Institute for Music Theatre), *Blues in the Night* (Post Street Theatre), and Joe Goode Performance Group's *Humansville* (Yerba Buena Center for the Arts). She graduated from the University of California, Berkeley in 2007 with a BA in theatre and performance studies and a minor in African

American studies. She got her start in theatre as a high school student at a performing arts school in Los Angeles called Amazing Grace Conservatory. She has been a proud member of Actors Equity Association for 3 years.

ABOUT YALE REPERTORY THEATRE

YALE REPERTORY THEATRE is dedicated to the production of new plays and bold interpretations of classics and has produced well over 100 premieres—including two Pulitzer Prize winners and four other nominated finalists—by emerging and established playwrights. Eleven Yale Rep productions have advanced to Broadway, garnering more than 40 Tony Award nominations and eight Tony Awards. Yale Rep is also the recipient of the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre. Established in 2008, the Yale Center for New Theatre is an integrated, artist-driven initiative that devotes major resources to the commissioning, development, and production of new plays and musicals at Yale Repertory Theatre and across the country. Professional assignments at Yale Repertory Theatre are integral components of the program at Yale School of Drama, the nation's leading graduate theatre training conservatory.

ALSO THIS SEASON

William Shakespeare's
ROMEO AND JULIET
Directed by Shana Cooper
March 11-April 2, 2011

U.S. Premiere
AUTUMN SONATA
By Ingmar Bergman
Directed by Robert Woodruff
April 15-May 7, 2011

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www.yalerep.org