



## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### AUGUST WILSON'S STUNNING "FENCES" IS AS TIMELY AS IT IS POWERFUL, JAN. 16-FEB. 6

TUCSON, Ariz. (Jan. 6, 2016): Arizona Theatre Company celebrates the new year with a great American classic in August Wilson's stunning, Pulitzer-Prize winning play, **Fences**. A vivid, heartfelt exploration of the African-American experience set in the 1950's, the story remains strikingly relevant today. Performances begin at the Temple of Music & Art, 333 S. Scott Ave., on Jan. 16 and run through Feb. 6. I. Michael and Beth Kasser are Arizona Theatre Company's 2015-16 Season Sponsors. The Stonewall Foundation is the Production Sponsor.

Perhaps the best known of Wilson's plays and winner of the Tony Award for Best Play, **Fences** tells the gripping story of sanitation worker Troy Maxson, a star baseball player whose career was blunted by the racism prevalent in pre-Jackie Robinson America. Feeling his world rapidly changing, Troy builds a fence to protect what is familiar and hold off what threatens. Muscular and lyrical, filled with some of the greatest characters and scenes in American Drama, this August Wilson blockbuster shows what can happen when a strong man is robbed of his dreams.

**Fences**, the searing story of a man who stepped up to the plate too many times only to go down swinging, is as American as baseball itself.

Called “stunning, explosive and tender” (*The Seattle Times*), **Fences** is “August Wilson at his finest” (*Boston Herald*). “Time has enhanced the luster of the play and it stands apart thanks to its distinctive lyricism and theatricality and its unforgettable central character. **Fences** is universal enough to touch a chord in every human heart.” (*The New York Times*).

“Wilson's play and main character are so meaty and vivid that you can't help being gripped by this story of a man who may have thrived, but who is fenced in by the era into which he was born and by his own personality,” Lyn Gardner wrote in *The Guardian*.

“With this production of **Fences**, we welcome back to ATC not only the grandeur and power of August Wilson's work, but also the return of some of our favorite artists to create the production,” said ATC Artistic Director David Ira Goldstein. “Director Lou Bellamy is one of America's greatest interpreters of the Wilson world; keenly attuned to his themes, deeply connected to the rhythm of his dialogue, championing the universal truths in his words. Lou returns with him actors and designers who have created magic on our stages before under his guidance in such productions as **Jitney**, **A Raisin in the Sun** and **Ma Rainey's Black Bottom**.”

Tickets for **Fences** are \$23-\$63 and can be purchased at [www.arizonatheatre.org](http://www.arizonatheatre.org), by calling (520) 622-2823 or at the Temple of Music and Art Box Office at 333 S. Scott Ave.

**Fences** will be followed by another great American classic, John Steinbeck's classic tale of friendship in hard circumstances, **Of Mice and Men** (March 5-26). In between, is a special presentation of the recent off-Broadway hit **Sex With Strangers** (Feb. 11-21) in a unique collaboration with ATC and popular Phoenix-based theatre company Stray Cat Theatre.

ATC's 2015-16 season comes to a sparkling close with the witty Arizona premiere of Scott Carter's new play, **The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson**, **Charles Dickens and Count Leo Tolstoy: Discord** (April 9-30).

For more information call (520) 622-2823 or visit [www.arizonatheatre.org](http://www.arizonatheatre.org).

## **BIOGRAPHIES**

**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 the descendants of Africans in North America, decade-by-decade, over the course of the twentieth century. His plays have been produced at regional theaters

across the country and all over the world, as well as on Broadway. Mr. Wilson's works garnered many awards including Pulitzer Prizes for *Fences* (1987) and for *The Piano Lesson* (1990); a Tony Award for *Fences*; Great Britain's Olivier Award for *Jitney*; as well as seven New York Drama Critics Circle. Mr. Wilson's early works included the one-act plays *The Janitor*, *Recycle*, *The Coldest Day of the Year*, *Malcolm X*, *The Homecoming*, and the musical satire *Black Bart* and the *Sacred Hills*. Mr. Wilson received many fellowships and awards, including 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 on October 16, 2005, Broadway renamed the theater located at 245 West 52nd Street - The August Wilson Theatre. Additionally, Mr. Wilson was posthumously inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame in 2007. Mr. Wilson was born and raised in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and lived in Seattle, Washington at the time of his death in 2005. He is immediately survived by his two daughters, Sakina Ansari and Azula Carmen Wilson, and his wife, costume designer Constanza Romero.

### **Lou Bellamy, Director**

Lou Bellamy is the founder and Artistic Director of Penumbra Theatre Company. During his thirty-seven year tenure, Penumbra has evolved into one of America's premier theatres dedicated to dramatic exploration of the African American experience. Under his leadership, Penumbra has grown to be the largest theatre of its kind in America and has produced 35 world premieres, including August Wilson's first professional production. Penumbra is proud to have produced more of Mr. Wilson's plays than any other theatre in the world. Mr. Bellamy is an OBIE Award-winning director, an accomplished actor, and for 38 years was appointed as an Associate Professor at the University of Minnesota in the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance. Selected directing credits include plays at Arizona Theatre Company, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Penumbra Theatre, Signature Theatre, The Cleveland Play House, The Guthrie Theater, The Kennedy Center, and Hartford Stage Company.

### **Cast Biographies**

**David Alan Anderson (Troy Maxson)** previously appeared at ATC in *A Raisin in the Sun* in the role of Walter Lee. Recent regional credits include *Gem of the Ocean* and *The Mountaintop* (Jeff Nomination, Lead Actor) at the Court Theatre, Chicago; *What I Learned in Paris*, *The Giver*, *The Mountaintop*, *Radio Golf*, *The Whipping Man*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Romeo and Juliet* at Indiana Repertory Theatre; *Othello* and *King Lear* at Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival; *The Tempest* at Actors Theatre of Louisville. Other credits include Lake Tahoe and Idaho Shakespeare Festivals, Guthrie Theater, Baltimore Center Stage, Cleveland Play House, Syracuse Stage, Geva Theatre Center, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Berkshire Theatre Festival, Great Lakes Theater, and others. Mr. Andersen is a Penumbra Theatre Company member and was awarded a Lunt Fontanne Fellowship.

**Kim Staunton (Rose)** previously appeared in *Touch the Names* at ATC. She has been a guest company member at the Denver Center Theatre Company (DCTC) for the past 14 seasons. She represented DCTC as an inaugural Lunt-Fontanne Fellow at Ten Chimneys Foundation. Regional credits include Portland Stage Company, Ebony Repertory Theatre, South Coast Repertory, Center Theatre Group/Kirk Douglas Theatre, Lake Dillon Theatre Company, Lone Tree Arts Center, Seattle Repertory Theatre,

Syracuse Stage, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Virginia Stage Company, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, Colorado Shakespeare Festival, Folger Theatre, Arena Stage, Hartford Stage, and the O'Neill Theatre Center. She has performed in numerous productions on and Off-Broadway. Film credits include *First Sunday*, *Changing Lanes*, *Heat*, *Dragonfly*, *Bark*, *Holy Man*, *Deceived*, and *Amos & Andrew*. Television appearances have included guest starring roles on *Eleventh Hour*, *Army Wives*, *The Nine*, *Bones*, *Strong Medicine*, *Judging Amy*, *Law and Order*, *City of Angels*, *New York Undercover*, and TNT's original movie, *Glory and Honor*.

**James T. Alfred (Lyons)** previous ATC credits include *Jitney*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and most recently, *The Mountaintop*. Other theater credits include Penumbra Theatre Company, Congo Square Theatre Company, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Guthrie Theater, Denver Center, NY Public Theater, Court Theater, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Second City, Round House Theatre, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, A.R.T., and Indiana Repertory Theatre. Mr. Alfred recurs as Tyree on the FOX hit drama series *Empire*. Other television credits include the award-winning Starz Original Series *Boss*, *Prison Break*, and *Chicago P.D.*

**Terry Bellamy (Gabriel)** is a founding member of Penumbra Theatre Company and the recipient of two Twin Cities Drama Critics Circle Awards (MN). He has performed at the Goodman Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Center Stage Baltimore, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Cleveland Play House, Guthrie Theater, Guthrie II, Hudson Guild (Off-Broadway), Park Square Theatre, Mixed Blood Theatre, Illusion Theater, and Ten Thousand Things Theater.

**Marcus Naylor (Bono)** last appeared at Arizona Theatre Company as Floyd Barton in August Wilson's *Seven Guitars*. Off-Broadway credits include: *Black Stars of the Great White Way* at Carnegie Hall, *Breaking Phillip Glass* with The Collective, *Cool Blues* at New Federal Theatre, The Joyce Theatre, The New Federal Theatre, Pearl Theatre Company, Primary Stages, The Lee Strasberg Theatre, Lincoln Center's Clark Studio, and Theatre Four. Regional credits include: Denver Center, Kennedy Center, Arena Stage, Cleveland Play House, Karamu House, Berkshire Playwrights Lab, Crossroads Theatre, Shakespeare on the Sound. Film and television credits include: *In Our Youth*, *Hudson Sunset in the After-while*, *The Reunion: A Jazz Fantasy*, *King Lear*, *Slings and Arrows*, *Boardwalk Empire*, *Law & Order*, *Law & Order: SVU*, *Without a Trace*, *The Meeting*, and *Only in America*.

**Edgar Sanchez (Cory)** is making his ATC debut. Chicago credits include *Water by the Spoonful* and *Native Son* (Court Theatre); *The Wheel* (Steppenwolf); *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night* (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre); Sankofa Theatre Company; Eclipse, Congo Square, Adventure Stage, Strawdog, American Theatre Company and The House. Regional Credits: *Water by the Spoonful* (Theatre Squared); the title role in *Hamlet* (The Gable Stage); *Twelfth Night*, *Richard III*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *The Admirable Crichton* (American Players Theatre); *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Othello*, and *The Comedy of Errors* (The Oregon Shakespeare Festival). Major television credits: *Sense 8*.

**Simeeyah Grace Baker (Raynell)** is making her Arizona Theatre Company debut. Her time on stage includes performances in *The Nutcracker* ballet production with Dancing in

the Streets Arizona, where she danced in the corps, and most recently as Clara. Ms. Baker has danced in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as Queen Tatiana's Attendant with Dancing in the Streets Arizona and in the corps of *Requiem* with the same company. She is a fifth grade student and native Texan but currently resides in Tucson, AZ. She began her ballet training at the age of six with Joey Rodgers and Soleste Lupuat, Dancing in the Streets Arizona.

#### **CREATIVE TEAM**

**Scenic Design:** Vicki Smith

**Costume Design:** Matthew J. LeFebvre

**Lighting Design:** Don Darnutzer

**Sound Design:** Brian Jerome Peterson

**Production Stage Manager:** Timothy Toothman

Tickets for ***Fences*** start at \$23 and are subject to change depending on time, date and section, and are available at [www.arizonatheatre.org](http://www.arizonatheatre.org) or by calling the box office at (520) 622-2823. Discounts are available for seniors and active military. A \$10 student ticket pricing is now available for all performances. Half-price rush tickets are available for balcony seating for all performances one hour prior to curtain at the ATC box office (subject to availability). ***Pay What You Can*** performance is Tuesday, Jan. 19 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are available for a suggested \$10 donation. (Tickets must be purchased at the Temple of Music and Art starting one hour prior to curtain. Tickets are first-come, first served. *Cash only*. Two tickets maximum per person.) For discounts for groups of 10 or more, call (520) 622-2823.

#### **Arizona Theatre Company offers accessibility services for patrons with disabilities for select performances.**

**Audio Description** provides patrons with vision loss a running audio description of the movement and activities onstage through an infrared broadcast system. An Audio-Described performance is offered on Thursday, Feb. 4 at 2 p.m. Interested patrons with vision loss may request a tactile tour one hour prior to curtain. **American Sign Language Interpretation** is presented by professional, theatrically-trained ASL-interpreters for people who have deafness or hearing impairment. An ASL-interpreted performance is offered on Thursday, Feb. 4 at 7:30 p.m. **Open captioning** allows patrons to read the play's dialogue on an LED screen as the play progresses. An open captioned performance is offered on Thursday, Feb. 4 at 2 p.m. For open-captioned or ASL-interpreted performances, patrons should request seats best suited to ASL interpretation or captioning when purchasing tickets. Large print and Braille playbills and infrared listening amplification devices are also available at every ATC performance with reservation. TTY access for the box office is available in Tucson at (520) 884-9723 or via Arizona Relay at (800) 367-8939 (TTY/ASCII).

#### **Fact Sheet:**

*Fences*

By August Wilson

Directed by Lou Bellamy

#### **Venue:**

The Temple of Music and Art

330 S. Scott Avenue

Tucson, AZ 85701

**Previews Begin:** Saturday, Jan. 16 at 8 p.m.

**Opening Night:** Friday, Jan. 22 at 7:30 p.m.

**Closing Performance:** Saturday, Feb. 6 at 8 p.m.

**Ticket Info:**

Ticket prices currently start at \$23 and are available in-person at the Temple of Music and Art box office, via phone at (520) 622-2823 or online at [www.arizonatheatre.org](http://www.arizonatheatre.org).

**About Arizona Theatre Company:**

Arizona Theatre Company (ATC) is the preeminent fully professional theatre in the state of Arizona committed to inspiring, engaging, and entertaining - one moment, one production, and one audience at a time. Boasting the largest seasonal subscriber base in the performing arts in Arizona, ATC is the only resident company in the U.S. that is fully based in two cities providing its wide array of programming and community outreach across the region. Now in its 49th season, more than 130,000 people a year attend our performances at the historic Temple of Music and Art in Tucson, and the elegant Herberger Theater Center in downtown Phoenix. Each season of home-grown productions reflects the rich variety of world drama—from classics to contemporary plays, from musicals to new works—along with a wide array of community outreach programs, educational opportunities, access initiatives and new play programs. Designated The State Theatre of Arizona, ATC is led by Artistic Director David Ira Goldstein, and a dedicated Board of Trustees.