

# ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

Molly Smith Artistic Director Edgar Dobie Executive Producer Zelda Fichandler Founding Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FULL COMPANY ANNOUNCED FOR AUGUST WILSON'S *KING HEDLEY II*  
AT ARENA STAGE AT THE MEAD CENTER FOR AMERICAN THEATER  
DIRECTED BY TIMOTHY DOUGLAS  
FEBRUARY 6-MARCH 8, 2015

\*\*\* André De Shields, Jessica Frances Dukes, KenYatta Rogers and Michael Anthony Williams  
join previously announced cast members Bowman Wright and E. Faye Butler \*\*\*

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater announces the full company for **August Wilson's classic drama *King Hedley II***. Set in the 1980s Hill District of Pittsburgh, the ninth installment of Pulitzer Prize winner Wilson's acclaimed play cycle examining Black America follows a scarred ex-convict who struggles to turn his life around and lock away his past. The drama is directed by **Timothy Douglas**, who worked with the late playwright on the world premiere of *Radio Golf* and has directed eight plays out of Wilson's 10-play cycle. ***King Hedley II* runs February 6-March 8, 2015 in the Fichandler Stage.**

As previously announced, **Bowman Wright** stars as King, the returning ex-convict with seven years of prison haunting him. Wright, who was last seen at Arena Stage as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in *The Mountaintop*, is joined by returning Arena Stage cast members **E. Faye Butler** (*Smokey Joe's Café*, *Pullman Porter Blues*, *Oklahoma!*) as Ruby and **KenYatta Rogers** (*Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*) as Mister. Making their Arena Stage debuts are Tony Award nominee **André De Shields** (Broadway's *The Full Monty*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*) as Stool Pigeon, **Jessica Frances Dukes** (Playwrights Horizons' *Bootycandy*) as Tonya and **Michael Anthony Williams** (Round House's *Two Trains Running*) as Elmore.

"Playwrights like Eugene O'Neill wanted to write cycles of plays, but it was only August Wilson who completed his brilliant 10-play cycle," shares Artistic Director **Molly Smith**. "These plays are strong and contemporary and have already stood the test of time. Arena Stage has a long history of producing many plays in the cycle, from *Fences* to *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*. I know Timothy Douglas and our terrific cast will take *King Hedley II* and deliver the powerful storytelling that August Wilson intended."

"August Wilson's seminal *King Hedley II* provides a searing insight into the complex life and trials of a black American man," adds **Douglas**. "Through powerful and stirring spoken word—operatic in scope—the triumphant arias from Hedley and his Pittsburgh Hill District crew provide the very ignition that has sent present-day America into the streets to voice its rallying cry 'Black Lives Matter!'"

**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 20th

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century. His plays have been produced at regional theaters across the country and all over the world, as well as on Broadway. In 2003, Mr. Wilson made his professional stage debut in his one-man show, *How I Learned What I Learned*. Mr. Wilson's works garnered many awards including Pulitzer Prizes for *Fences* and *The Piano Lesson*; a Tony Award for *Fences*; an Olivier Award for *Jitney*; and eight New York Drama Critics Circle Awards. The cast recording of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* received a 1985 Grammy Award, and Mr. Wilson received a 1995 Emmy Award nomination for his screenplay adaptation of *The Piano Lesson*. 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 Rockefeller and Guggenheim Fellowships in Playwriting, the Whiting Writers Award, the 2003 Heinz Award, was awarded 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. Mr. Wilson was posthumously inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame in 2007. He was born and raised in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and lived in Seattle, Washington at the time of his death. He is immediately survived by his two daughters, Sakina Ansari and Azula Carmen Wilson, and his wife, costume designer Constanza Romero.

**Timothy Douglas** (*Director*) makes his Arena Stage debut with this production of *King Hedley II*. Other Washington area credits include *Two Trains Running*, *The Trip to Bountiful*, *Permanent Collection* and *A Lesson Before Dying* at Round House; *Insurrection: Holding History* at Theatre Alliance (two Helen Hayes nominations); the world premiere of *The Last Orbit of Billy Mars* at Woolly Mammoth and his Caribbean-inspired *Much Ado About Nothing* at the Folger. Recent credits include the world premiere of Rajiv Joseph's *The Lake Effect* for Silk Road Rising (Chicago's Jeff Award for Best New Work), off-Broadway's *Bronte: A Portrait Of Charlotte* and the world premiere of August Wilson's *Radio Golf* for Yale Repertory Theatre. He is currently an Associate Artist at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, where he has directed *Clybourne Park*, *The North Pool* and the world premiere of *Safe House*, and served as Associate Artistic Director at Actors Theatre of Louisville, where he directed 10 productions including three Humana Festival premieres. Timothy has directed over 100 projects for ACT, Guthrie, Berkeley Rep, Center Theatre Group, South Coast Rep, Steppenwolf, Playmakers Rep, Berkshire Theatre Festival, Downstage (NZ), National Theatre (Norway), Milwaukee Rep and many others. He is also a Linklater voice instructor and has served on the faculties of ACT, USC, North Carolina School of the Arts, New Zealand Drama School and Emerson College and holds an MFA in acting from Yale.

### Cast Biographies

**E. Faye Butler** (Ruby)'s previous Arena Stage productions include *Smokey Joe's Café*, *Pullman Porter Blues*, *Trouble in Mind*, *Oklahoma!*, *Crowns*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Polk County* and *Dinah Was*. She performed with the Washington Ballet in *The Great Gatsby* and *Blues Until June* at the Kennedy Center. National and regional tours include *Mamma Mia!*, *Dinah Was*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Nunsense* and *Don't Bother Me...* E. Faye has appeared at regional theaters such as Signature Theatre, Centerstage, La Jolla Playhouse, Court Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, Lincolnshire Theatre, Dallas Theatre Company, Northlight Theatre, Philadelphia Theatre Company, Yale Repertory and Pasadena Playhouse. She is the recipient of six Jeff Awards, three Black Theatre Alliance Awards, an After Dark Award, John Barrymore Award, R.A.M.I. Award, two Helen Hayes Awards and seven nominations, Excellence in the Arts Award, Ovation Award, 2011 Sarah Siddons Society Leading Lady Award, 2012 Lunt-Fontaine Fellow and 2014 Kathryn V. Lamkey Award.

**André De Shields** (Stool Pigeon) is making his Arena Stage debut. Other Washington appearances include Jacob Strand in Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts* at Shakespeare Theatre Company, the title role in *King Lear* at Folger Theatre and the 10th anniversary revival of *Ain't Misbehavin'* at the National Theatre. In a career spanning 45 years, André has distinguished himself as an unparalleled actor, director and educator. A multiple Tony Award nominee, he is the recipient of the 2012 Fox Foundation Fellowship/Distinguished Achievement, the 2009 National Black Theatre Festival's Living Legend Award and the 2007 Village Voice OBIE Award for Sustained

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Excellence of Performance. He is best known for his show-stopping performances in six legendary Broadway productions: *Impressionism* (with Jeremy Irons and Joan Allen), Mark Medoff's *Prymate*, *The Full Monty*, *Play On!*, *Ain't Misbehavin'* (Emmy Award) and *The Wiz*. Television credits include *Rescue Me*, *Law & Order: Classic* and *SVU*, *Sex and the City*, *Cosby*, *Life on Mars* and *Lipstick Jungle*.

**Jessica Frances Dukes** (Tonya)'s D.C. credits include *Bootycandy*, *In the Next Room*, *Full Circle*, *Eclipsed*, *Fever/Dream*, *Antebellum* and *Starving* (Woolly Mammoth Theatre, company member); *The Conference of The Birds* (Folger Theatre); *The Piano Lesson* (Olney Theatre); *Passing Strange* and *Caroline, or Change* (Studio Theatre); *Trip To Bountiful* and *Permanent Collection* (Round House); *Jitney* (Ford's Theatre); *Spunk* (Tribute Productions, Helen Hayes nomination); *The Bluest Eye* and *Insurrection: Holding History* (Theatre Alliance) and more. Regional credits include *Beneatha's Place* and *Clybourne Park* (Centerstage); *Stick Fly* (Arden Theatre), *A Raisin in the Sun* and *The Piano Lesson* (Geva Theatre); *The Piano Lesson* (Indiana Rep); *Trip To Bountiful* (Cleveland Playhouse) and more. Off-Broadway credits include *Bootycandy* at Playwrights Horizons. TV credits include *A Raisin in the Sun Revisited* on PBS. MFA from The Catholic University of America.

**KenYatta Rogers** (Mister) returns to Arena Stage after performing in *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*. Regional credits include *Two Trains Running*, *Eurydice* and *A Lesson Before Dying* (Round House Theatre); *Holly Down in Heaven* (Forum Theatre); *Topdog/Underdog* and *A Raisin in the Sun* (Everyman Theatre); *Fever/Dream* (Woolly Mammoth); *Jitney* (Ford's Theatre); *Colossal* (Olney Theatre Center); *Comedy of Errors* (Folger Theatre); *The Piano Lesson* (Trustus Theatre); *Coriolanus* (Shakespeare & Company) and *As You Like It*, *Spunk* and *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (African Continuum Theatre). KenYatta received Helen Hayes nominations for performances in *Insurrection: Holding History* at Theatre Alliance and *Glengarry Glen Ross* at Round House (two nominations, one win). TV credits including the PBS series *Standard Deviants' Television*. KenYatta received his MFA in Acting from the University of Pittsburgh and is currently a faculty member in Montgomery College's Department of Speech, Dance, and Theatre.

**Michael Anthony Williams** (Elmore) is ecstatic to be making his Arena Stage debut. Other Washington appearances include *RACE* and *Intelligent Homosexual's Guide* at Theater J; *Two Trains Running*, *Treasure Island* and *Jesus Hopped the A Train* at Round House Theater; *Master Harold and the Boys* at Studio Theater; *Starving* and *We Are Proud to Present* at Woolly Mammoth Theater; *Jitney* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* at Ford's Theater and *Two Trains Running* and *Nomathemba* at The Kennedy Center. Off-Broadway credits include *Persephone* at BAM. Regional credits include *Nomathemba* at Steppenwolf and Schubert Theaters, *Of Mice and Men* at Cincinnati Playhouse and *To Kill a Mockingbird* at Capital Rep. Michael Anthony is a proud former member of The Second City Theater Company in Chicago. Film credits include *The Brave One*, *The Replacements*, *Contact* and *Unbreakable*. TV credits include *FBI Files*, *Homicide: Life On the Streets* and *The Wire*.

**Bowman Wright** (King) is excited to return to Arena Stage, where he was last seen as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in *The Mountaintop*. Theater credits include *Our Lady of Kibeho* (Nkango) at Signature Theatre Company; *Togdog/Underdog* (Lincoln) at Marin Theatre Company; *A Raisin in the Sun* (Walter Lee Younger) at Geva Theatre Center; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at La Jolla Playhouse; *The Dreamer Examines His Pillow* (Tommy) at Shakespeare & Company; *The Piano Lesson* (Lymon) at Virginia Stage; *Since Africa* (Ater Dhal) and *A House With No Walls* (Jacob, Austin) at Interact Theatre; *Fences* (Cory) at Actors Theatre of Louisville and *Death and the King's Horsemen* at Lantern Theatre. Films credits include *Sight* (Lionsgate Productions) and *Vinson* (Sainvil Productions). TV credits include *Person of Interest*, *Blue Bloods* and *Elementary*. Bowman is a graduate of the University of California, San Diego.

**The creative team for *King Hedley II*** includes set designer **Tony Cisek**, costume designer **Ilona Somogyi**, lighting designer **Allen Lee Hughes**, sound designer **Ryan Rumery**, New York casting director **Geoff Josselson**, stage manager **William E. Cruttenden III** and assistant stage manager **Marne Anderson**.

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Full company bios and images available upon request. Please e-mail [press@arenastage.org](mailto:press@arenastage.org).

*King Hedley II* is generously sponsored by Margot Kelly. The opening night celebration of *King Hedley II* is generously sponsored by The PNC Financial Services Group. Additional support is provided by Saul Ewing LLP.

### **King Hedley II Special Events**

#### **Post-Show Conversations**

Connect with our shows beyond the performance at a post-show conversation with artists and staff. February 18, February 24 and March 4 following the noon performance; February 26 following the 8:00 p.m. performance and March 3 following the 7:30 p.m. performance.

#### **Staging August Wilson—Wednesday, February 18 following the 7:30 p.m. performance**

Join us for a special post-show discussion with *King Hedley II* director Timothy Douglas and Arena Stage Director of Artistic Programming Robert Barry Fleming about the power and poetry of playwright August Wilson.

#### **The D.C. Job Fair—Friday, February 20 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

Arena Stage will open its doors for the fifth time to the D.C. community, now partnering with Ward 6 Councilmember **Charles Allen** and At-Large Councilmember **Elissa Silverman**, along with local businesses, non-profits and government employment agencies, to host *The D.C. Job Fair* on Friday, February 20 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Mead Center.

### **Production Information**

#### ***King Hedley II***

By August Wilson

Directed by Timothy Douglas

February 6-March 8, 2015 in the Fichandler Stage

**ABOUT:** King Hedley has returned, but to reign for how long? With an angry scar down the length of his face and seven years of prison haunting him, King has a chance to lock away his past and achieve an entrepreneurial dream. But Pittsburgh's Hill District is an unforgiving place, and the return of Elmore, a scheming conman armed with a derringer and family secrets, could strike a fatal blow to King's second coming. The ninth installment of August Wilson's acclaimed play cycle examining Black America, *King Hedley II* is one of the most stirring and ferocious explorations of fate, honor and the daily struggles of American life.

#### **CAST:**

Ruby: E. Faye Butler

Stool Pigeon: André De Shields

Tonya: Jessica Frances Dukes

Mister: KenYatta Rogers

Elmore: Michael Anthony Williams

King: Bowman Wright

#### **CREATIVE TEAM:**

Director: Timothy Douglas

Set Designer: Tony Cisek

Costume Designer: Ilona Somogyi

Lighting Designer: Allen Lee Hughes

Sound Designer: Ryan Rumery

New York Casting Director: Geoff Josselson

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Stage Manager: William E. Cruttenden III  
Assistant Stage Manager: Marne Anderson

### Plan Your Visit

**TICKETS:** Tickets for *King Hedley II* are \$45-\$90, subject to change and based on availability, plus applicable fees. For information on savings programs such as student discounts, Southwest Nights, Pay-Your-Age tickets and Hero's Discounts, visit [arenastage.org/shows-tickets/single-tickets/savings-programs/](http://arenastage.org/shows-tickets/single-tickets/savings-programs/). **Tickets may be purchased online at [arenastage.org](http://arenastage.org), by phone at 202-488-3300 or at the Sales Office at 1101 Sixth St., SW, D.C.**

Sales Office/Subscriptions: 202-488-3300  
Group Sales Hotline for 10+ Tickets: 202-488-4380  
TTY for deaf patrons: 202-484-0247  
Info for patrons with disabilities: 202-488-3300

### **PERFORMANCE DATES:**

Sunday, Tuesday & Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.  
Thursday, Friday & Saturday at 8:00 p.m.  
Saturday & Sunday at 2:00 p.m.  
Weekday matinees at noon on Wednesday, 2/18; Tuesday, 2/24 & Wednesday, 3/4  
Full calendar: [tickets.arenastage.org/single/PSDetail.aspx?psn=18235](http://tickets.arenastage.org/single/PSDetail.aspx?psn=18235)

**Open-captioned performances:** 3/4 at 7:30 p.m. & 3/5 at 8:00 p.m.  
**Audio-described performance:** 2/28 at 2:00 p.m.

**CATWALK CAFÉ:** **Prix fixe meals** are now available at the Catwalk Café and include a choice of soup or salad, main entrée and dessert. Pre-ordered meals are only \$22 (\$25 if purchased that day). To pre-order and see the menu, call 202-488-3300 or visit [arenastage.org/plan-your-visit/the-cafe/](http://arenastage.org/plan-your-visit/the-cafe/). The Catwalk Café opens two hours before the show, and reservations are recommended.

To **pre-order drinks** from the Catwalk Café for up to 50% savings (\$6 house wine and beer), visit [tickets.arenastage.org/cart/precart.aspx?p=1007](http://tickets.arenastage.org/cart/precart.aspx?p=1007).

**METRO:** Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater is only one block from the Waterfront-SEU Metro station (Green Line). When exiting the station, walk west on M Street toward Sixth Street, and the main entrance to the Mead Center is on the right.

**PARKING:** Parking is available in Arena Stage's on-site garage. Subscribers may purchase parking in advance for \$16. Single ticket buyers may purchase parking in advance for \$18 or on the day of the performance for \$20 on a first-come, first-served basis. Limited handicapped parking is available by reservation. Advanced parking must be reserved by calling 202-488-3300. The entrance to the Mead Center garage is on Maine Avenue between Sixth and Seventh streets, and the garage closes one hour after the day's last performance ends. Patrons can also park at the Public Parking Garage at 1101 Fourth Street, one block from the Mead Center, for \$11. Street parking is also available along Maine Avenue and Water Street.

**VALET PARKING:** Arena Stage offers valet service at no additional cost to patrons with accessibility needs who call 202-488-3300 in advance to request valet parking. On days when valet parking is being used for accessibility, it is also available to general patrons one hour prior to show time for \$25, based on availability. To use valet parking, pull up to the main entrance on Sixth Street.

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*Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater, under the leadership of Artistic Director Molly Smith and Executive Producer Edgar Dobie, is a national center dedicated to American voices and artists. Arena Stage produces plays of all that is passionate, profound, deep and dangerous in the American spirit, and presents diverse and ground-breaking work from some of the best artists around the country. Arena Stage is committed to commissioning and developing new plays through the American Voices New Play Institute. Arena Stage impacts the lives of thousands of students annually through its work in community engagement. Now in its seventh decade, Arena Stage serves a diverse annual audience of more than 300,000. [arenastage.org](http://arenastage.org).*

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**Facebook:** [facebook.com/arenastage](https://facebook.com/arenastage)

**Twitter:** @arenastage, mention *King Hedley II* with #KingHedley

**YouTube:** [youtube.com/arenastage1](https://youtube.com/arenastage1)

**Pinterest:** [pinterest.com/arenastage](https://pinterest.com/arenastage)

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