

For immediate release.

**CAST IS SET FOR AUGUST WILSON'S "JITNEY" AT THE MARK TAPER FORUM
NOVEMBER 22 THROUGH DECEMBER 29, 2019**

The cast is set for **August Wilson's "Jitney,"** which will be presented by Center Theatre Group at the Mark Taper Forum November 22 through December 29, 2019, with the opening set for November 24. Originally presented by Manhattan Theatre Club, "Jitney" is directed by Tony Award winner **Ruben Santiago-Hudson.**

The cast includes, in alphabetical order, **Francois Battiste, Harvy Blanks, Amari Cheatom, Anthony Chisholm, Brian D. Coats, Steven Anthony Jones, Nija Okoro, Keith Randolph Smith and Ray Anthony Thomas.**

The creative team features scenic design by **David Gallo,** costume design by **Toni-Leslie James,** lighting design by **Jane Cox,** sound design by **Darron L. West** and **Charles Coes** with original music by **Bill Sims Jr.** and fight direction by **Thomas Schall.**

A masterpiece by two-time Pulitzer winner August Wilson with the production that completed his American Century Cycle on Broadway and received the 2017 Tony Award for Best Revival of a Play, "Jitney" is a richly textured piece set in the early 1970s that follows a group of men trying to eke out a living by driving unlicensed cabs, or jitneys. When the city threatens to board up the business and the boss' son returns from prison, tempers flare, potent secrets are revealed and the fragile threads binding this makeshift family together threaten to come undone at last.

A Tony winner for his performance in Wilson's "Seven Guitars," Ruben Santiago-Hudson earned a Tony nomination and Drama Desk Award for his direction of the Broadway debut of "Jitney."

In reviewing Santiago-Hudson's 2017 revival of "Jitney," The New York Times' Ben Brantley said, "How sweet the sound. And how sorrowful and jubilant, as life in a storefront taxi company in an African-American neighborhood in Pittsburgh comes to feel like a free-form urban concerto, shaped by the quick-witted, improvisatory spirit that makes jazz soar." David Rooney of The Hollywood Reporter asked, "Is there a more accomplished living interpreter of the plays of August Wilson than Ruben Santiago-Hudson?" Maya Stanton of Entertainment Weekly added, "It's like eavesdropping on an often funny, occasionally hostile, always honest discussion about race, urban development (or lack thereof), and relationships — between fathers and sons, men and women, coworkers and friends."

Tony and Obie Award winner Ruben Santiago-Hudson recently directed the world premieres of Dominique Morisseau's "Skeleton Crew" at the Atlantic Theater and "Paradise Blue" at the Williamstown Theatre Festival. Other directing credits include "Seven Guitars," "The Piano Lesson," "The First Breeze of Summer," "Cabin in the Sky" and many more. The multi-award-winning director and actor wrote, executive produced and starred in the

HBO film of "Lackawanna Blues." It received several honors, including Emmy, Golden Globe, Humanitas, National Board of Review and Christopher Awards. In the spring of 2019 he returned to "Lackawanna Blues" directing and performing in a rare revival of the autobiographical piece at the Mark Taper Forum. Ruben starred in BET's drama "The Quad," recurs on Showtime's "Billions" and starred in TNT's "Public Morals." The Lackawanna, New York native opened the Ruben Santiago-Hudson Fine Arts Learning Center in 2014 in his hometown.

Center Theatre Group has presented nine of August Wilson's plays: "Gem of the Ocean," "Joe Turner's Come and Gone," "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom," "Jitney," "King Hedley II" and "Radio Golf" at the Taper; "Seven Guitars" at the Ahmanson Theatre; and "The Piano Lesson" (1990 Pulitzer Prize) and "Two Trains Running" at the James A. Doolittle Theatre in Hollywood.

In addition, through its Education and Community Partnerships department, Center Theatre Group hosts the annual August Wilson Monologue Competition regional finals in which students in grades 10 through 12 perform monologues from Wilson's Century Cycle. The winners travel to New York to compete in the national finals at the August Wilson Theatre on Broadway. Center Theatre Group also offers an in-school residency as part of the larger August Wilson Program. The August Wilson In-School Residency is a semester-long program that provides Title 1 students with an in-depth study of the work of August Wilson.

Center Theatre Group, one of the nation's preeminent arts and cultural organizations, is Los Angeles' leading nonprofit theatre company, which, under the leadership of Artistic Director Michael Ritchie, Managing Director Meghan Pressman and Producing Director Douglas C. Baker, programs seasons at the 736-seat Mark Taper Forum and 1600 to 2100-seat Ahmanson Theatre at The Music Center in Downtown Los Angeles, and the 317-seat Kirk Douglas Theatre in Culver City. In addition to presenting and producing the broadest range of theatrical entertainment in the country, Center Theatre Group is one of the nation's leading producers of ambitious new works through commissions and world premiere productions and a leader in interactive community engagement and education programs that reach across generations, demographics and circumstance to serve Los Angeles.

Tickets are available online at CenterTheatreGroup.org, by calling Audience Services at (213) 628-2772 or in person at the Center Theatre Group Box Office (at the Ahmanson Theatre at The Music Center in Downtown Los Angeles). Tickets range from \$25 – \$110 (ticket prices are subject to change). The Mark Taper Forum is located at The Music Center, 135 N. Grand Avenue in Downtown L.A. 90012.

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October 10, 2019