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Seattle Rep presents August Wilson's *Jitney*, the acclaimed Broadway production from director Ruben Santiago-Hudson

February 28 - March 29, 2020

Seattle, WA (January 30, 2020) – Seattle Rep is proud to present the acclaimed Broadway production of August Wilson's *Jitney*, beginning February 28 in the Bagley Wright Theater. Directed by Ruben Santiago-Hudson, *Jitney* was the last of Wilson's plays to premiere on Broadway, where it won the 2017 Tony Award for Best Revival of a Play.

A masterpiece by two-time Pulitzer Prize winner August Wilson, *Jitney* is a richly textured piece set in the 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.

Jitney was the first play Wilson wrote for his American Century Cycle, a ten-play cycle documenting the 20th century African-American experience. With one play for each decade—most set in his native Pittsburgh—Wilson connected his characters to larger historical narratives, including slavery, the Great Migration, the Jim Crow era, and the scars of structural racism. Recognized as one of the greatest achievements in American theater, the Cycle is a vivid representation of hope and struggle.

"August Wilson was not only a pillar of American theater," said Seattle Rep Artistic Director Braden Abraham, "but also a beloved member of our Seattle community. We have produced every play in the Century Cycle, and are thrilled to present this production of *Jitney* from Ruben Santiago-Hudson—a master interpreter of Wilson's work."

The full company for *Jitney* includes **Francois Battiste** (Booster), **Harvy Blanks** (Shealy), **Amari Cheatom** (Youngblood), **Anthony Chisholm** (Fielding), **Brian D. Coats** (Philmore, Understudy: Shealy, Fielding), **Steven Anthony Jones** (Becker), **Nija Okoro** (Rena), **Keith Randolph Smith** (Doub), and **Ray Anthony Thomas** (Turnbo), **James T. Alfred** (Understudy):

Booster, Youngblood), **A. Russell Andrews** (Understudy: Philmore, Becker, Doub, Turnbo), **Patrese D. McClain** (Understudy: Rena), **Kamra A. Jacobs** (Production Stage Manager), and **Mandisa Reed** (Assistant Stage Manager). The creative team includes **David Gallo** (Scenic Designer), **Toni-Leslie James** (Costume Designer), **Jane Cox** (Lighting Designer), **Darron L. West** and **Charles Coes** (Sound Designers), **Bill Sims Jr.** (Original Music).

The original Broadway production was produced by Manhattan Theatre Club at the Samuel J. Friedman Theatre. Produced by Eric Falkenstein and Ron Simons in association with Manhattan Theatre Club.

August Wilson (Playwright) Wilson's plays include *Gem of the Ocean*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *The Piano Lesson* (Pulitzer Prize winner), *Seven Guitars*, *Fences* (Pulitzer Prize winner, Tony Award winner), *Two Trains Running*, *Jitney* (Olivier Award winner), *King Hedley II* and *Radio Golf*. In 2003, he made his stage debut in his one-man show, *How I Learned What I Learned*. He received an Emmy Award nomination for his screenplay "The Piano Lesson." Other works include *The Janitor*, *Recycle*, *The Coldest Day of the Year*, *Malcolm X*, *The Homecoming* and the musical satire *Black Bart and the Sacred Hills*. Other awards include eight New York Drama Critics Circle Awards, Rockefeller and Guggenheim Fellowships in Playwriting, a Whiting Writers Award, 2003 Heinz Award, 1999 National Humanities Medal and induction into the Theater Hall of Fame.

Ruben Santiago-Hudson (Director) is honored to continue this journey with August Wilson's *Jitney* whose recent Broadway production garnered several awards for Outstanding Revival including the Tony Award, Drama Desk Award, Outer Critics Circle Award, Drama League, and the NY Drama Critics Circle Awards, along with six Tony nominations. Ruben's directing credits include: *The Piano Lesson*, *Skeleton Crew*, *Othello*, *Gem of The Ocean*, *Paradise Blue*, *My Children! My Africa!*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Cabin in the Sky*, *The Happiest Song Plays Last*, *Two Trains Running*, *Things of Dry Hours*, *The First Breeze of Summer* and *Your Blues Ain't Sweet Like Mine*, among many others. Mr. Santiago-Hudson received a Tony Award as featured actor for his performance in August Wilson's *Seven Guitars*. He made his Broadway acting debut alongside Gregory Hines in *Jelly's Last Jam*. Other Broadway credits include *Stick Fly* and *Gem of The Ocean*. The multi-award-winning director/writer/actor wrote, executive produced, and co-starred in the HBO film "Lackawanna Blues" based on his Obie and Helen Hayes Award-winning play. The movie received several honors including Emmy, Golden Globe, NAACP Image Award, Humanitas, National Board of Reviews, Black Filmmaker's Foundation and Christopher Awards. In a career that spans over four decades, Ruben considers opening The Ruben Santiago-Hudson Fine Arts Learning Center in 2014 in his hometown of Lackawanna, NY as one of his proudest and most cherished accomplishments.

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