



(26 August 2008)

**THEATREWORKS PRESENTS REGIONAL PREMIERE
OF AUGUST WILSON'S FINAL PLAY
"RADIO GOLF"
October 8-November 2, 2008**

MOUNTAIN VIEW (August 26th 2008) – **TheatreWorks**, the nationally-acclaimed theatre of Silicon Valley, proudly presents the regional premiere of Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright August Wilson's final masterpiece **RADIO GOLF** to the Bay Area. The last of Wilson's ten play cycle chronicling the African-American experience in the 20th century, this hustling comedy-drama set in the 1990's tells the story of an Ivy League-educated lawyer seeking to redevelop a rundown area of a Pittsburgh neighborhood while preparing his campaign to become the city's first black mayor. A brilliant and bittersweet look at the forces of change in a neighborhood and a people caught between history and the looming 21st century, **RADIO GOLF** captures the essence of alienation and assimilation occurring throughout America. Helmed by acclaimed Bay Area director and preeminent August Wilson scholar **Harry J. Elam, Jr.**, **RADIO GOLF** features a stellar cast including TheatreWorks favorites **Aldo Billingslea** (*The Elephant Man*) as Harmond Wilks, **Anthony J. Haney** (*Fences*) as Roosevelt Hicks, and **C. Kelly Wright** (*Caroline, or Change*) as Mame Wilks. In addition, TheatreWorks is welcoming back veteran **Charles Branklyn** (*Two Trains Running*), as well as Bay Area leading actor **L. Peter Callender**, who is making his TheatreWorks debut. **RADIO GOLF** plays **October 8th - November 2nd** (press opening: **October 11th**) at **TheatreWorks at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts**. For tickets (\$23-\$61) and information, the public may call **(650) 903-6000** or visit **TheatreWorks.org**.

Harmond Wilks is a successful African-American entrepreneur who has inherited a prosperous real estate firm from his family. Along with his friend Roosevelt Hicks, Wilks is engineering a deal to develop a blighted area of Pittsburgh, provided they can acquire federal money to help seal the deal. While his best friend hitches his wagon to the fiscal gravy train, finding himself the minority front man on a lucrative radio station ownership deal (on which he gives golf-improving tips over the air), Wilks' involvement in backroom dealing and politicking

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require him to confront his ideals and whether they include becoming a black front for white people's money, regardless of the overall benefits for his community, his family or himself. Fast-paced, politically-charged, and described as "gorgeous ... [Wilson's] most contemporary and accessible work" by *Newsday*, **RADIO GOLF** premiered in 2005 at Yale Repertory Theatre, and opened on Broadway in May of 2007 at Cort Theatre. The show went on to win the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Play and be nominated for four Tony Awards in 2007, including Best Play.

August Wilson's most famous works include the Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning *Fences* and the Pulitzer Prize-winning play *The Piano Lesson*. Wilson was the only African-American student at his high school, and dropped out of the 10th grade. Mostly self-educated, Wilson founded Black Horizon Theater in Pittsburgh, and went on to become one of America's most honored playwrights. He died at the age of 60 in 2005 shortly before the premiere of **RADIO GOLF**, the final play of his ten play cycle depicting the African-American experience, each play set in a different decade of the 20th century. (This will be the fourth play of Wilson's cycle that TheatreWorks has staged). Two weeks after his death, Wilson received the honor of having the first Broadway theatre named after an African-American bear his name.

TheatreWorks is happy to have Aldo Billingslea returning to the company for **RADIO GOLF**. Billingslea, who was featured in the company's productions of *The Elephant Man* and *The Old Settler*, returns to TheatreWorks in the starring role of Harmond Wilks. In addition to **TheatreWorks**, Billingslea's credits include productions at The Old Globe, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Magic Theatre, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, and Marin Theatre Company, where he recently appeared in *Splittin' the Raft* and *The Hairy Ape*.

Anthony J. Haney (Roosevelt Hicks) has been involved in over forty **TheatreWorks** productions, in addition to roles in many television shows and films. Some of his TheatreWorks credits include, most recently, the character of "Brooks" in *Grey Gardens*, the leading role of Troy Maxson in *Fences*, along with direction of *Intimate Apparel*, *Crowns*, and *RAISIN*. After spending seven years as **TheatreWorks'** Associate Artistic Director, Haney relocated to Los

Angeles where he has starred in many productions. His other theatre work includes productions with Ford Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and San Jose Repertory Theatre.

Also joining the company is veteran actress **C. Kelly Wright**, returning to **TheatreWorks**, where she recently starred in the title role of *Caroline, or Change*. Previously featured in **TheatreWorks'** productions *A Little Princess*, *Smokey Joe's Cafe*, *Memphis*, *Oo-Bla-Dee*, and *Triumph of Love*, Wright brings seasoned theatrical experience to her role as Mame Wilks in **RADIO GOLF**. Her other credits include roles with San Jose Repertory, Marin Theater Company, and West End Theater in New York, amongst other theaters, as well as various roles in film and television.

In addition to his many television and film roles, veteran Bay Area actor **Charles Branklyn** has appeared in numerous theater productions, including August Wilson's *Two Trains Running* for TheatreWorks. He is well-known to Bay Area theater audiences for his performances with American Conservatory Theatre, Magic Theatre, and Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, as well as his regional work with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. He will be reuniting with *Two Trains Running* director Harry J. Elam, Jr. for **RADIO GOLF**.

The cast will also include acclaimed actor **L. Peter Callender**, whose resume includes work on Broadway, with Manhattan Theater Club and New York Public Theater, as well as with the New York Shakespeare Festival. Also a veteran of the Bay Area theater scene, Callender has appeared at many local and regional theatres, including California Shakespeare Theater, American Conservatory Theater, and Berkeley Repertory. He will be making his TheatreWorks debut in **RADIO GOLF**.

RADIO GOLF will be helmed by award-winning director **Harry J. Elam, Jr.**, a preeminent August Wilson scholar and a familiar face at TheatreWorks. Elam has previously directed acclaimed productions of *Blues for an Alabama Sky* and *Jar the Floor*, as well as the August Wilson plays *Two Trains Running* and *Fences* for TheatreWorks. His other directing credits include productions at Stanford University such as *The Colored Museum* and *Death of the*

Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World. As an actor, he has appeared in many productions, including the second production of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*. Mr. Elam, Jr. has also authored several books, including The Past as Present in the Drama of August Wilson, in addition to co-editing several books on African-American culture.

Following **RADIO GOLF**, the company brings off-Broadway sensations Brendan Milburn and Valerie Vigoda of the rock band GrooveLily and their latest musical to TheatreWorks for the holidays (in a co-production with City Theatre in Pittsburgh), the World Premiere musical **LONG STORY SHORT** in December, followed by the regional premieres of Tony Award-winning farceur Ken Ludwig's **TWENTIETH CENTURY** in January, and the sizzling Broadway hit musical **IT AIN'T NOTHIN' BUT THE BLUES** in March. The Regional Premiere of Lisa Loomer's **DISTRACTED** closes the season in April.

With nearly 10,000 subscribers and over 100,000 patrons per year, TheatreWorks has captured a national reputation for artistic innovation and integrity, often presenting Bay Area theatergoers with their first look at acclaimed musicals, comedies, and dramas, directed by award-winning local and guest directors, and performed by professional actors cast from across the country.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: **TheatreWorks**, the nationally-acclaimed theatre of Silicon Valley, honors Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright August Wilson by presenting the regional premiere of **RADIO GOLF**. The final play in Wilson's cycle of 10 plays (this will be the fourth presented by TheatreWorks) examining the African-American experience in 20th century America, **RADIO GOLF**, winner of the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Play, is at once a hustling comedy-drama and an inspired elegy for a lost time. In Pittsburgh in the late 1990s, a successful entrepreneur aspires to become the city's first black mayor. A brilliant and bittersweet look at the forces of change in a neighborhood and a people caught between history and the looming 21st century, **RADIO GOLF** captures the essence of alienation and assimilation occurring throughout America. Called "gorgeous ... [Wilson's] most contemporary and accessible work" by *Newsday*, **RADIO GOLF** opened on Broadway in 2007 at the Cort Theatre. Acclaimed Bay Area director Harry J. Elam, Jr., who directed **TheatreWorks** productions of Wilson's *Fences* and *Two Trains Running*, returns to the company to helm this extraordinary play. Cast will include TheatreWorks favorites **Aldo Billingslea** (*The Elephant Man*) as Harmond Wilks, **Anthony J. Haney** (*Fences*) as Roosevelt Hicks, **C. Kelly Wright** (*Caroline, or Change*) as Mame Wilks, **Charles Branklyn** (*Two Trains Running*), as well as Bay Area leading actor **L. Peter Callender**, who is making his TheatreWorks debut.

WHEN: Previews: October 8, 9 10
Press Opening: **Saturday, October 11**
Closes: Sunday, November 2

SHOWS: Previews: **8pm**
Tuesdays and Wednesdays: **7:30pm**
Thursdays and Fridays: **8pm**
Saturdays: **2pm, 8pm**
Sundays: **2pm, 7pm**

"Visual Voice" audio-described performances: October 31 and November 1, 8pm, and November 2, 2pm.

"How TheatreWorks" pre-show discussion: Thursday, Oct. 9, 6:30 in the Mountain View City Council Chambers, with an in-depth look at the play with director Harry J. Elam, Jr. moderated by New Works director Kent Nicholson.

Discussion Wednesdays: featuring post-show conversations with the cast and artistic staff, Oct. 15, 22, and 29.

WHERE: TheatreWorks at the Mountain View
Center for the Performing Arts
500 Castro St. (at Mercy)

TICKETS: \$23-61; savings available for youth, students, seniors, and members.
For tickets, information, and subscription information, the public may call
(650) 903-6000 or visit **theatreworks.org**.

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