

"MATIC HOME RUN"
-New York Post



AUGUST WILSON'S
FENCES

August Wilson

1945-2005

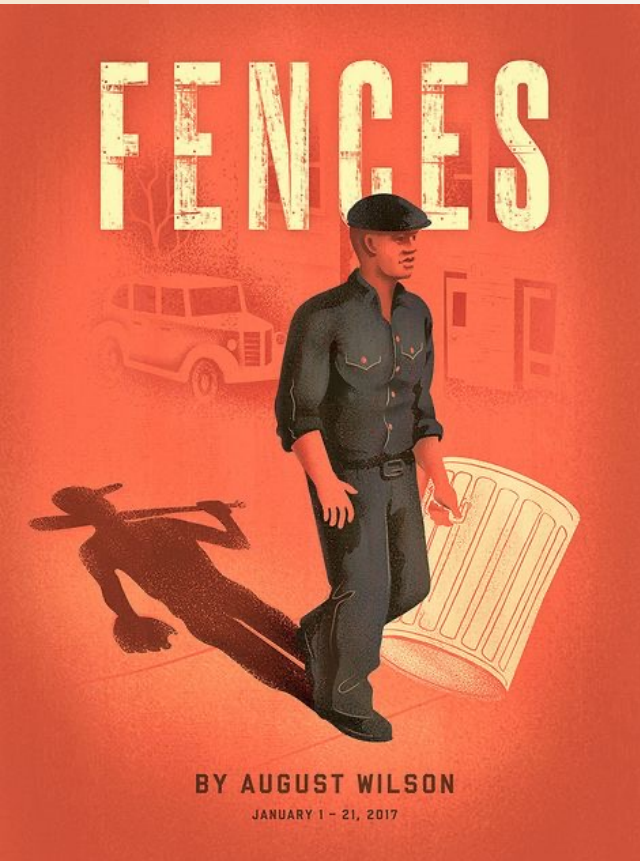


- Born in Pittsburgh to a hardworking black mother and an absent white father
- His Pittsburgh Cycle of plays chronicles the black experience in 20th-century America
- 10: Plays in Wilson's Pittsburgh Cycle, in which each play is set in a different decade
- 7: Best Play awards Wilson received from the New York Drama Critics' Circle
- 1987: Year Wilson won a Pulitzer Prize for Fences



The Other Side of the Coin

- ♦ If *Death of a Salesman* gave us the story of a man whose misguided pursuit of the “American Dream” fractured his family and unraveled his life, *Fences* gives us the story of a man whose jealous resentment of the “American Dream” fractures his family and unravels his life.



- ◆ Whereas Willy Loman's misguided ambition prevents him from capitalizing on opportunities and realizing his dreams, Troy Maxson's bitterness at having never been afforded those opportunities has left him a jealous and dreamless pragmatist.
- ◆ In the end, pride is the fatal flaw for both men, whose failure to recognize the changing world around them has left each man volatile and broken.

Troy Maxson's World

- ◆ 1957 Pittsburgh
- ◆ Blue-Collar Industrial City
- ◆ While the economic boom that followed WWII afforded more opportunities for white Americans, black Americans did not always have those same doors of opportunity open to them
 - ◆ Social Segregation
 - ◆ Professional Discrimination
 - ◆ Institutionalized Racism





Troy Maxson

- ♦ A star baseball player in high school who was never given the opportunity to play in the big leagues because of his race
- ♦ Now works as a trash collector, but wants to be a driver, a job largely reserved for white men
- ♦ The lack of opportunities afforded Troy in the past continues to haunt him in the present
- ♦ The great irony: Troy fails to recognize how he now impedes the dreams of others

Troy's Family

- ♦ Cory: Troy's talented and ambitious son
- ♦ Lyons: Troy's son from a previous marriage
- ♦ Rose: Troy's wife, a good churchgoing, patient woman
- ♦ Gabriel: Troy's brother, a veteran with a head injury
- ♦ Bono: Troy's longtime friend and committed husband
- ♦ Raynell: Troy's child from an affair





Themes

- ◆ Perception
 - ◆ Pragmatism vs. Idealism
 - ◆ Escape
- ◆ The “American Dream”
 - ◆ Ambition and Opportunity
 - ◆ Expectations
- ◆ Family and Masculinity
 - ◆ Loyalty, Betrayal, Guilt
 - ◆ Fathers and Sons
 - ◆ Cycles

Symbols and Motifs



FENCES



SEEDS



BASEBALL



BLUES