

## August Wilson: The Century Cycle

	Premier	Synopsis	Talent	Awards
<b>9. Gem of the Ocean (2003)</b>	2003, Goodman Theatre, Chicago; 2004, Broadway opening at the Walter Kerr Theatre	Set in Pittsburgh in <b>1904</b> , the play features a man whose small crime has had deadly consequences for another man. Feeling guilty, he comes seeking the spiritual healing of Aunt Ester. A recurring character in Wilson's plays, Ester claims to be 285 years old and is the kind matriarch of her household in Pittsburgh	Marion McClinton directed the Goodman Theatre premiere; Kenny Leon directed the Broadway premiere, which starred Phylicia Rashad (Aunt Ester), Lisa Gay Hamilton (Black Mary), Anthony Chisholm (Solly Two Kings), Ruben Santiago-Hudson (Caesar), Eugene Lee (Eli), Raynor Scheine (Selig), John Earl Jelks (Citizen Barlow).	
<b>4. Joe Turner's Come and Gone (1984)</b>	1986, Yale Repertory Theatre; 1988, Broadway opening at Ethel Barrymore Theater	Set in a Pittsburgh boardinghouse in <b>1911</b> , the ensemble play includes characters who were former slaves and examines the residents' experiences with racism and discrimination	Directed by Lloyd Richards, the cast included Delroy Lindo (Herald Loomis), Angela Bassett (Martha, Loomis's wife) and L. Scott Caldwell (Bertha, the boardinghouse owner's wife)	L. Scott Caldwell won a Tony Award for Best Featured Actress in a Play
<b>2. Ma Rainey's Black Bottom (1982)</b>	1984, Yale Repertory Theatre; subsequent 1984 Broadway opening at the Cort Theatre	Set in <b>1927</b> in a Chicago recording studio (the ten-cycle play not set in Pittsburgh), <i>Ma Rainey</i> examines racism in the history of black musicians and white producers, and the themes of art and religion	Directed by Lloyd Richards, the Broadway premiere starred Charles S. Dutton (Levee) and Theresa Merritt (Ma)	Wilson wins his first of his seven New York Drama Critics Circle awards for his plays.
<b>5. The Piano Lesson (1986)</b>	1987, Yale Repertory Theater; 1990 Broadway opening at Walter Kerr Theatre	Named after a painting by Romare Bearden, the play follows the Charles family in the Doaker Charles household in <b>1936</b> . A brother and a sister have different ideas about what to do with their piano, a family heirloom. Sell it to purchase land their enslaved ancestors once toiled upon, or keep the piano, which includes carved depictions of two distant relatives	Directed by Lloyd Richardson. Starring Charles S. Dutton (Boy Willie), Rocky Carroll (Lymon), Apryl R. Foster (Maretha), Carl Gordon (Doaker), Lisa Gay Hamilton (Grace), Tommy Hollis (Avery), S. Epatha Merkerson (Berniece), Lou Myers (Wining Boy)	Pulitzer Prize for Drama, Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Play.
<b>7. Seven Guitars (1995)</b>	1995 Goodman Theatre, Chicago; 1996, Broadway opening at Walter Kerr Theatre	Set in Pittsburgh in <b>1948</b> , blues singer Floyd "Schoolboy" Barton is newly freed from prison when he's asked to sign a record deal after a song he recorded months before becomes a surprise hit. He struggles to right wrongs and make his way back to Chicago. Black manhood is a theme of the play and a rooster is used in to symbolize it	Directed by Lloyd Richardson. Keith David (Floyd Barton), Rosalyn Coleman (Ruby), Viola Davis (Vera), Tommy Hollis (Red Carter), Roger Robinson (Hedley), Ruben Santiago-Hudson (Canewell), Michele Shay (Louise)	Ruben Santiago-Hudson won a Tony Award for Best Featured Actor in a Play.

<b>3. Fences (1984)</b>	1987, Broadway premiere at 46th Street Theatre	In <b>1957</b> , Troy Maxson, a former Negro Baseball League player, is a bitter man in his 50s who works as a garbageman. His frustration and disappointments in life affect his wife Rose and son Cory, who like his father, is a gifted athlete	Directed by Lloyd Richardson, the play starred James Earl Jones (Troy), Mary Alice (Rose), Courtney B. Vance (Cory) and Ray Aranha (Jim Bono)	Pulitzer Prize for Drama, four Tony Awards for Best Play, Best Direction, Best Actor (James Earl Jones), Best Featured Actress (Mary Alice), and three Drama Desk Awards.
<b>6. Two Trains Running (1990)</b>	1990, at Yale Repertory Theatre; 1992, Broadway opening at Walter Kerr Theatre	Set in <b>1969</b> , the play tells of a restaurant in Pittsburgh's Hill District, which has suffered a long economic decline. The restaurant owner, Memphis, worries what will happen when the city takes the building through eminent domain. A young activist, Sterling, tries to organize protests and rallies to help save the restaurant, but Memphis is not so supportive	Directed by Lloyd Richardson. Broadway premiere starred Roscoe Lee Browne (Holloway), Anthony Chisholm (Wolf), Laurence Fishburne (Sterling), Cynthia Martells (Risa), Chuck Patterson (West), Sullivan Walker (Hambone), Al White (Memphis)	Laurence Fishburne won a Tony Award and Drama Desk Award for best actor in a play.
<b>1. Jitney (1979)</b>	1982, Allegheny Repertory Theatre, Pittsburgh; 2000 premiere Off-Broadway at Second Stage Theatre	Set in an unofficial taxi station threatened with demolition in <b>1977</b> , <i>Jitney</i> explores the lives and relationships of drivers, highlighting conflicts between generations and different concepts of legacy and identity.	Directed by Marion McClinton. The Off-Broadway production starred Anthony Chisholm (Fielding), Paul Butler (Becker), Willis Burks (Shealy) and Stephen McKinley Henderson (Turnbo), all of whom had been performing the play regularly since 1996.	2001 Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Off-Broadway Play; 2002 Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Play.
<b>8. King Hedley II (1991)</b>	1999, at the Pittsburgh Public Theater; 2001 Broadway opening at the Virginia Theatre	Set in Pittsburgh in <b>1985</b> , an ex-con tries wants to support a family and aims to get the money to open a video store by selling stolen refrigerators. The play features some characters from <i>Seven Guitars</i>	Marion McClinton directed the Broadway production, with Brian Stokes Mitchell (King), Leslie Uggams (Ruby), Charles Brown (Elmore), Viola Davis (Tonya), Stephen McKinley Henderson (Stool Pigeon), and Monté Russell (Mister)	Viola Davis won a Tony and Drama Desk Award for Best Featured Actress; Charles Brown, a Drama Desk Award for Best Featured Actor
<b>10. Radio Golf (2005)</b>	2005 at Yale Repertory Theater; 2007 Broadway opening at Cort Theatre	Set in <b>1990</b> Pittsburgh, this play concludes the Cycle and is the last play he completed. The home of Aunt Ester (the setting of the cycle's first play <i>Gem of the Ocean</i> ) is threatened with demolition to make way for real estate development in the depressed area. Investors include Harmond Wilks, who wants to increase his chance of becoming the city's first black mayor. History and legacy test personal hopes and ideas of progress	On Broadway, Kenny Leon directed Anthony Chisholm (Elder Joseph Barlow), John Earl Jelks (Sterling Johnson), Harry Lennix (Harmond Wilks), Tonya Pinkins (Mame Wilks), and James A. Williams (Roosevelt Hicks).	