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***Women of August Wilson Brings Drama and Laughter to Midtown***  
***Ensemble Theatre actors perform scene reading highlighting women characters***  
***from Pulitzer Prize winning playwright August Wilson***

**Houston, TX** (Oct. 5, 2015) – The Ensemble Theatre brings to life women characters from the works of Pulitzer Prize winning playwright August Wilson in ***Women of August Wilson***. The event is a compilation of scenes portraying the voices of the women in Wilson's plays and features monologues, songs and dance. ***Women of August Wilson*** takes place **Monday, Oct. 12, from 6:15 to 7:30 p.m. at Bagby Park**, located on the corner of Bagby and Gray Streets. The event is free.

***Women of August Wilson*** celebrates the work of the prolific playwright during the 10-year anniversary of his death, which happened October 2, 2005. During his lifetime, Wilson received two Pulitzer Prize awards, a Tony Award and numerous other prestigious honors for his decade of work that chronicles the 20<sup>th</sup> Century of African American life.

The scene reading features actors Michelle Elaine, Yunina Barbour-Payne, JoAnne Davis Jones and Loren Holmes, who is also the choreographer. Eileen J. Morris, artistic director at The Ensemble Theatre, is the director.

“August Wilson is such a favorite of those who love theater and the arts,” says Morris. “We are so excited to take a creative approach in sharing his work with a broad Houston audience. The beauty of his words is that he speaks to all of humankind.”

***Women of August Wilson*** is part of the increasing offering of programming in Midtown as part of its Cultural Arts & Entertainment District designation.

“There are so many fantastic opportunities for Houstonians to enjoy the arts, and Bagby Park is one more place where the community can come for a great cultural experience,” says Matt Thibodeaux, president and CEO of Midtown Houston.

The 10 August Wilson plays to be presented and its women characters are:

**Gem of the Ocean**

Set in 1904 Pittsburgh, this play begins August Wilson's ten-play cycle. Aunt Ester, the drama's 285-year old fiery matriarch welcomes into her Hill District home Solly Two Kings who was born into slavery and scouted from the Union Army and Citizen Barlow, a young man from Alabama searching for a new live. Characters Presented: Aunt Ester and Black Mary



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### **Joe Turner's Come & Gone**

Set in a Pittsburgh boarding house, Joe Turner's Come and Gone tells the story of owners, Seth and Bertha Holly and the makeshift family of migrants who pass through during the Great Migration of the 1910's.

Characters Presented: Zonia, Mattie, Molly and Bertha

### **Ma Rainey's Black Bottom**

Legendary blues singer, Ma Rainey and her band players convene in a Chicago studio to record a new album. As their conversation unfolds, their bantering, storytelling and arguing raise questions of race, art and the historic exploitation of black recording artists by white producers.

Characters Presented: Ma Rainey and Dussie Mae

### **The Piano Lesson**

The Piano Lesson is set in 1936 Pittsburgh during the aftermath of the Great Depression. The play deals with themes of family legacy and tells the story of the Chartes family and a brother and sister who have different ideas on what to do with the piano they own – keep or sell it.

Characters Presented: Berniece and Maretha

### **Seven Guitars**

Set in 1948, Seven Guitars tells the story of a blues singer who is just released from prison and is ready to right the past years' wrongs and return to Chicago with a new understanding of what's important in his life. Unfortunately, his means of righting wrongs are inherently flawed.

Character Presented: Vera

### **Fences**

Set in 1950's Pittsburgh, Fences tells the story of Troy Maxson, a restless trash-collector and former baseball athlete who is struggling to provide for his family.

Character Presented: Rose

### **Two Trains Running**

Two Trains Running is set in 1969 in Pittsburgh's Hill District. It tells the story of a local diner owner who fights to stay open as a municipal project encroaches on his establishment. His regulars must deal with racial inequality and the turbulent, changing times.

Character Presented: Risa



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### **Jitney**

Set in 1977 in a worn-down gypsy cab station in Pittsburgh. Jitney tells the story of men hustling to make living as jitneys – unofficial and unlicensed taxi cabs. Character Presented: Rena

### **King Hedley II**

One of Wilson's darkest play, King Hedley II tells the story of an ex-convict trying to rebuild his family by selling stolen refrigerators so that he can save enough money to buy a video store. The play is set in 1980's Pittsburgh. Character Presented: Tonya

### **Radio Golf**

Radio Golf is set in 1997 in Pittsburgh's Hill district. It tells the story of a charming, powerful African-American politician who is running for the highest office of his career with the support of his savvy wife. As he steps into political prominence, his plans collide with his past. Character Presented: Mame

### **About Midtown Houston**

Midtown Houston is comprised of two organizations committed to making Midtown a model of urban living in the center of Houston, Texas. The two organizations are the Midtown Redevelopment Authority/Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone No. 2 and the Midtown Management District. These organizations undertake projects with widespread benefit to the area that is beyond the ability of individual property owners or businesses within the district to provide. Both organizations share the common vision of shaping Midtown into a thriving, pedestrian-friendly urban community with distinct responsibilities. Midtown is the first district in Texas to receive the Cultural Arts & Entertainment District accreditation from the Texas Commission on the Arts.

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