



Ma Rainey's Black Bottom: A Play (Plume)

By August Wilson

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**Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Fences* and *The Piano Lesson*
Winner of the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Play**

The time is 1927. The place is a run-down recording studio in Chicago. Ma Rainey, the legendary blues singer, is due to arrive with her entourage to cut new sides of old favorites. Waiting for her are her black musician sidemen, the white owner of the record company, and her white manager. What goes down in the session to come is more than music. It is a riveting portrayal of black rage, of racism, of the self-hate that racism breeds, and of racial exploitation.

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Editorial Review

Review

"The play's themes are not new to the stage . . . the black American search for identity . . . and the process by which any American sells his soul for what Arthur Miller calls the salemean's dream. Mr. Wilson's style, however, is all his own. . . . He has lighted a dramatic fuse that snakes and hisses through several anguished eras of American life. When the fuse reaches its explosive final destination, the audience is impaled by the impact."—Frank Rich, *The New York Times*

"Extraordinary! *Ma Rainey* rides on the exultant notes of the blues!"—Jack Kroll, *Newsweek*

"What a joy! Brilliant... explosive! One of the most dramatically riveting plays I've seen in years. You must see it!"—William A Raidy, *Newhouse Newspapers*

"A genuine work of art."—Brendan Gill, *The New Yorker*

About the Author

August Wilson was a major American playwright whose work has been consistently acclaimed as among the finest of the American theater. His first play, **Ma Rainey's Black Bottom**, won the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for best new play of 1984-85. His second play, **Fences**, won numerous awards for best play of the year, 1987, including the Tony Award, the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award, the Drama Desk Award, and the Pulitzer Prize. **Joe Turner's Come and Gone**, his third play, was voted best play of 1987-1988 by the New York Drama Critics' Circle. In 1990, Wilson was awarded his second Pulitzer Prize for **The Piano Lesson**. He died in 2005.

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