



AUDITION NOTICE

AUGUST WILSON'S MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM

PLAY/DRAMA

BY August Wilson

RATED: R

REHEARSALS BEGIN: Early June 2023

PERFORMANCES: August 10-26, 2022

AUDITIONS: Friday, March 3/By Appointment-7:00-9:00 PM
Saturday, March 4/By Appointment-12:30-3:00 PM

*Be prepared to read from the script.

*If you are auditioning for the role of **Ma Rainey**, you will be required to prepare 16 bars of a song (bring sheet music, accompanist provided) in the style of the show (blues or jazz) or from the show.

*If you are called back for the role(s) of **Cutler, Toledo, Slow Drag** or **Levee** and you play an instrument required for the role(s), please be prepared to bring and play your instrument at that time.

Auditions will be held at the Art & Music Center, located on the campus of Aquinas College.

*If you are unable to attend auditions and would like to make arrangements for a video audition, please contact auditions@circletheatre.org

CALLBACKS: BY REQUEST ONLY March 5, 2023 @ 6:00 PM

If you are called back, you will be notified by March 4, 2023.

If called back for the role of **Ma Rainey, you will be required to prepare 16 bars of a song (bring sheet music, accompanist provided) in the style of the show (blues or jazz) or from the show.*

If you are called back for the role(s) of **Cutler, Toledo, Slow Drag or **Levee** and you play an instrument required for the role(s), please be prepared to bring and play your instrument at that time.*

PRODUCTION STAFF: DIRECTOR/Will Gearing
MUSIC DIRECTORS/Vanessa Allen & Debra Perry
STAGE MANAGER/Sarah Carey Stoddard

THE STORY:

It's 1927 and Ma Rainey, the "Mother of the Blues," is recording new sides of old favorites in a rundown studio in Chicago. Fiery and determined, Ma Rainey fights to retain control over her music, while her cocky trumpet player Levee dreams of making his own name in the business. More than music goes down in August Wilson's riveting portrayal of rage, racism, self-hatred and exploitation.

CASTING:

Adults, age 18-60; Specific ethnicities.

*Actors/musicians who play instruments (as noted in character descriptions) are ideal.

NOTE: In reference to the character descriptions below – The characters in this show are on the binary and written with he/him or she/her pronouns as you will see in the following descriptions. However, we seek to be as inclusive as possible and ask gender non-conforming, gender queer, transgender and non-binary actors to list on the audition form the roles they most identify with. We also list race/ethnicity when specific to the character. Unless otherwise noted, roles will be open for consideration of actors of all ethnicities.

CHARACTERS :

Mel Sturdyvant: Recording studio owner and record producer. Preoccupied with money. Insensitive to Black performers and prefers to deal with them at arm's length. Age 30-60, White

Irvin: Manager of Ma Rainey and her musicians. Prides himself on his knowledge of Blacks and his ability to deal with them. Age 30-50, White

Cutler: Plays guitar & trombone. The leader of the group-possibly because he is the most sensible. His playing is solid and totally unembellished. His understanding of music is limited to the chord he is playing at the time he is playing it. He has all the qualities of a loner except introspection. Age 40-55, African American

Toledo: Plays piano. In control of his instrument. He understands and recognizes that his limitations are an extension of himself. He is the only member of the group that can read. He is self taught but misunderstands and misapplies his knowledge, though he is quick to penetrate to the core of a situation and his insights are thought provoking. Age 40-55, African American

Slow Drag: Plays bass. Perhaps the member most bored with life. He resembles Cutler but lacks Cutler's energy. He is deceptively intelligent but appears slow. Innate African rhythms underlie everything he plays and he plays with an ease that is startling. Age 40-55, African American.

Levee: Plays trumpet. He is younger than the other band members. His flamboyance is sometimes subtle and sneaks up on you. His temper is rakish and bright. He lacks fuel for himself and is somewhat of a buffoon. But it is an intelligent buffoonery, clearly calculated to shift control of the situation to where he can grasp it. His voice is strident and totally dependent on his manipulation of breath. He plays wrong notes frequently. He often gets his skill and talent confused with each other. Age 25-35, African American

Ma Rainey: Blues/Jazz Singer. Her manner is simple and direct. She carries herself in a royal fashion. Age 40-55, African American

Policeman: Age 20-50, White

Dussie Mae: Ma Rainey's girlfriend. Her greatest asset is the sensual energy which seems to flow from her.

Age 20-35, African American

Sylvester: An Arkansas country boy, in the care of Ma Rainey. Most of the time he stutters when he speaks.

Age 18-35, African American

For additional information, please visit the Circle Theatre website. (www.circletheatre.org)