

JAG Productions Brings ‘Fences’ to Woodstock Stage

FENCES

By Virginia Dean

Standard Correspondent

Area residents are getting ready to be transported back to 1957 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where the strife of a former baseball leaguer is palpable in his battle against missed career opportunities and social change.

The play reveals the story of Troy Maxson, a past player in the Negro Baseball League who dreamed of stardom but was deemed too old to continue his career when the major leagues integrated. Becoming a sanitation worker instead, Maxson is bitter having missed his opportunity for success.

His resentment leads to deep tension with his wife and son in the midst of a changing American decade.

JAG Productions will present August Wilson’s “Fences” this weekend at the Woodstock Town Hall Theater with performances running through May 7.

Importantly, the play is the inaugural presentation of the production company’s 10-year commitment to staging The American Century Cycle, Wilson’s series of 10 plays charting the African American experience through the 20th century. “If you grow up in New York City or any major city, you have access to the most diverse theater in the world,” said Producing Artistic Director Jarvis Antonio Green. “You can see actors of all shades in all types of shows including “Hamilton,” “Lion King,” Shakespeare productions, and other classic American works. But growing up in the Upper Valley is a little different. So, part of our mission is to bring shows like ‘Fences’ here so the community – especially our young people – can have the opportunity to see more diverse theater.”

JAG Productions was founded in 2015 by Green with the mission of sharing new and inspirational stories with the Upper Valley community.

Green wants the audience to leave feeling “shifted” with new perspectives and awareness.

One of the goals of his company is for its patrons to move through the world with more love, greater

(“Hairspray,” “A Streetcar Named Desire,” “Rent”) as Maxson’s wife, Rose.

Other roles include Ralph McCain (“The Piano Lesson,” “The Sopranos”) as Jim Bono; Jolie Garrett (“The Mountaintop,” “Othello”) as Gabriel; Nathaniel J. Ryan (Lyons); Gabriel Jenkinson (Cory), and Celia Graham (Raynell).

Green moved from New York City to the Upper Valley in 2011 and founded BarnArts Center for the Arts in Barnard. He then became director of theatre arts for ArtisTree Community Arts Center located in Pomfret.

Two years ago, Green became the founding producing artistic director of JAG Productions. He received his training at the Stella Adler Studio of Acting in New York City, Anderson University and South Carolina Governor’s School for the Arts.

“We are particularly excited about this production,” said Alexa Smith, Marketing Associate. “Jarvis has committed to bring all ten of Wilson’s plays in the cycle to the Vermont stage and to have Fences as the inaugural production.”

Playwright Wilson’s “The American Century Cycle” (10 plays) explores the heritage and experience of the descendants of Africans in North America, decade-by-decade, over the course of the 20th century. His plays have been produced on Broadway, at regional theaters across the country, and all over the world.

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kindness, and compassion for one another after seeing a production.

The cast of "Fences" is led by Brian Anthony Wilson (HBO's "The Wire") as Maxson and Broadway veteran Danielle Lee Greaves

This is the JAG Productions cast of "Fences." Standing, from left: Ralph McCain, Jolie Garrett, Brian Anthony Wilson and Nathaniel J. Ryan. Sitting: Celia Graham, Danielle Lee Greaves and Gabriel Jenkinson.

Photo Provided by JAG Productions

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From Page 1C Wilson was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for "Fences" (1987) and for "The Piano Lesson" (1990); a Tony Award for "Fences"; Great Britain's Olivier Award for "Jitney"; and seven New York Drama Critics Circle Awards for "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom," "Fences," "Joe Turner's Come and Gone," "The Piano Lesson," "Two Trains Running," "Seven Guitars" and "Jitney."

Tickets for "Fences" can be purchased at

www.JAGProductionsVT.com or by calling 802-332-3270.

Performance schedule includes tonight and this Friday, April 28, at 7:30 p.m. for preview performances; this Saturday at 7:30 p.m. for opening night – followed by a reception for the audience and company; and performances continue on Sunday (at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.) and through May 7.