



**Smithsonian Institution**

*National Museum of African American History and Culture*

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

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[[double line]]

Lawrence Theatre. Leader of the Pack, which played at the Bottom Line in Greenwich Village stars Ellie Greenwich, who wrote such song hits as "Chapel of Love" and "Da Do Run Run," playing herself. The score includes songs by both Miss Greenwich and other popular composers. The show has been booked into the Ambassador Theatre and is expected to open in the winter.

How's this for a Christmas present? Just in time for the holidays, Yul Brynner is slated to return in his classic role of the King in Rodgers and Hammerstein's The King and I.

Among plays, one highlight is already on the boards-Dustin Hoffman's return to the Broadhurst Theatre in Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman. This production is a revival of a revival--the same Salesman that Mr. Hoffman starred in last spring to great acclaim.

Another bright spot is the return of the Royal Shakespeare Company for a limited run, opening Oct. 14 at the Gershwin Theatre. The highly regarded troupe will present a double bill of Cyrano de Bergerac and Much Ado About Nothing, both starring Derek Jacobi, of I Claudius television fame, and Sinead Cusack. Miss Cusack, a much heralded British actress who will be making her New York debut, also has the distinction of being married to Jeremy Irons, who created a sensation in New York last season in The Real Thing.

Yet another British import is Kipling, a one-man play starring Alec McCowen, opening Oct. 10 at the Royale Theatre for a limited engagement. Mr. McCowen is known to New York audiences for his performance in another one-man theatre piece, The Gospel According to St. Mark. A combination of Rudyard Kipling's writings and musings on his life, Kipling was written by Brian Clark, the author of Whose Life Is It Anyway?

What about new American plays? The good news is there will be three this fall, Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, Alone Together and Boo.

Written by August Wilson, Ma Rainey's Black Bottom is the kind of new American play that producers love: It comes to Broadway from the Yale Repertory Theatre, where it accumulated a stack of rave reviews last spring. It opens Oct. 11 at the Cort Theatre. Theresa Merritt will play Gertrude (Ma) Rainey, the blues singer who was one of the first black performers to get a recording contract.

[[left image - black & white photograph of three women]]

The new musical, Quilters, about pioneer women who told their stories in quilts.

[[right image - black & white photograph of two actors]]

In time for Christmas, Yul Brynner back in his classic role in The King and I.

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