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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**August Wilson Center Announce Diverse, Innovative New Season of Programming Carved Out by New Artistic Directors**

*2011-12 season marks organization's formal transition from "presenting" to "producing"*

**PITTSBURGH, PA—June 21, 2011**—The August Wilson Center for African American Culture is pleased to announce its 2011-12 season. A compelling mix of cutting edge dance, music, theatre and visual arts, the August Wilson Center's new season is a departure from previous seasons in many ways: it encompasses the programmatic visions of The Center's four Artistic Directors; it represents The Center's formal transition from presenting to a producing organization and lastly, it showcases the talents of The Center's three resident companies, the August Wilson Center Dance Ensemble (AWCDE), the recently formed August Wilson Center Theatre Ensemble (AWCTE) and the Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra (PJO).

This is The Center's eighth season of programming, and the first full season under the organization's current President & CEO, André Kimo Stone Guess.

The Center's 2011-12 programs have been shaped by The Center's four Artistic Directors: dancer and choreographer **Greer Reed-Jones**, trumpeter and recording artist **Sean Jones**, theatre director and playwright **Mark Clayton Southers** and curator **Cecile Shellman**. Each Director has been charged with helping develop innovative and diverse programming accessible to all communities in their respective disciplines.

Taken together, their programs are transforming The Center from an organization that has, over its history, largely functioned as a *presenting* organization to an organization that will be responsible for *producing* its own events from concept to completion.

As a producer, The Center will primarily develop original programs around its three resident ensembles: the **August Wilson Center Dance Ensemble** (founded and led by Ms. Reed-Jones), the **Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra** (led by Mr. Jones) and the **August Wilson Center Theater Ensemble** (led by Mr. Southers).

"We want to continue the legacy of greatness birthed out of this region," said Mr. Guess. "Our goal is to expand our role as a vital incubator for emerging and established artists working in theater, dance, music and beyond."

"We want to do everything in our power to cultivate and nurture the enormous talent here in Pittsburgh—so that they only leave Pittsburgh if they want to, not because they have to," Mr. Guess added.

**/next**

## August Wilson Center Announces 2011-12 Season /Page 2

Artists and ensembles from outside of Pittsburgh will continue to have a presence in The Center's programming, primarily as complements to internally developed concepts, including this fall's **Black Dance Festival**, November 4-6, featuring **Ailey II**, **Dayton Contemporary Dance Company**, **Rennie Harris Puremovement** and **Deeply Rooted**; or the PJO's April 21 concert featuring legendary saxophonist and NEA Jazz Master **Benny Golson**.

Beginning in 2011-12, The Center will present the Continuum, a series of programs tied to a specific theme. The 2011-12 Continuum is **AFFRILACHIA** (af-ruh-LAY-shuh), a term describing African Americans living in Appalachia. The Continuum festival will highlight Afrilachian themes within each discipline. This season's Continuum programming includes two exhibitions focusing on the national **Romare Bearden** centennial celebration and lectures by **Dr. Mary Schmidt Campbell**, vice chairman of President Obama's Committee on the Arts and Humanities and dean of the Tisch School of the Arts, New York University and **Dr. Joe Trotter**, head of Carnegie Mellon University's Department of History.

Other programs in the Continuum include PJO's **Our Father Who Art Blakey**, the AWCDE's **Suite Bill**, which is set to the music of Bill Withers and the AWCTE's production of Linda Parris-Bailey's **Between A Ballad and A Blues**.

**Complete details of our season will be available online at [AugustWilsonCenter.org](http://AugustWilsonCenter.org).**

**MEDIA:** Please contact Treshea N. Wade, Manager of Marketing and Communications, at 412.338.8734 or [twade@AugustWilsonCenter.org](mailto:twade@AugustWilsonCenter.org) for any image or interview requests.

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### **ABOUT AUGUST WILSON CENTER FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE**

Named for Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning playwright and Hill District native August Wilson, the August Wilson Center for African American Culture engages regional and national audiences in its mission of preserving, presenting, interpreting, celebrating and shaping the art, culture and history of African Americans in Western Pennsylvania and people of African descent throughout the world.

Located in Downtown Pittsburgh's Cultural District, the multidisciplinary August Wilson Center is reflective of all aspects of African American culture. The Center's striking, two-story, green building houses a 486-seat theater for performances in all disciplines, exhibition galleries, multipurpose spaces for community programs and events and a gift shop. The Center is among a select few African American cultural institutions presenting visual and performing arts, the humanities and educational programs in a state-of-the-art venue.

More information is available on The Center's website at [AugustWilsonCenter.org](http://AugustWilsonCenter.org) and by calling 412.258.2700.