Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom

An American masterpiece, *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom* is an incredibly powerful depiction of rage, racism, and exploitation set in 1927 Chicago during a recording session at a white-owned studio with a singer inspired by Gertrude “Ma” Rainey, widely considered the Mother of the Blues. Tony Award winner Phylicia Rashad directs this groundbreaking play from August Wilson’s *American Century Cycle*, a series of ten plays chronicling the African American experience of the 20th century for which Wilson won two Pulitzer Prizes. The play will be presented by the Center Theatre Group, one of the nation’s most influential nonprofit theatre companies.

**ANTHONY ANDERSON** of the USC Libraries has selected the following resources to help you learn more about the play and its author. View the online version of this guide at [libguides.usc.edu/c.php?g=571084](http://libguides.usc.edu/c.php?g=571084) for more resources.

**Recommended Books**

**August Wilson and Black Aesthetics** (2004)
By Dana Williams

Doheny Memorial Library: PS 3573 .I45 6677 Z57 2004

**August Wilson’s Pittsburgh Cycle: Critical Perspectives on the Plays** (2016)
By Sandra Garrett Shannon


**Conversations with August Wilson** (2006)
By Jackson R. Bryan

Doheny Memorial Library: PS 3573 .I45 6677 Z63 2006

By Olasope Oyelaran


**Ma Rainey and the Classic Blues Singers** (1970)
By Derrick Stewart-Baxter

Music Library: ML 400 .S84

**Understanding August Wilson** (2011)
By Mary L. Bogumil

Doheny Memorial Library: PS 3573 .I45 6677 Z58 2011

Continued
Recommended DVDs

Films from Leavey Library’s DVD collection may be checked out from the library’s circulation desk.

**August Wilson**
“A conversation between television journalist, Bill Moyers, and playwright, August Wilson, in which they discuss Wilson’s plays and the Black experience in America.”

**Leavey Library: LVYD DVD 1991**

**August Wilson: The Ground on Which I Stand**
“Explore the life and legacy of August Wilson, the playwright some call America’s Shakespeare, who chronicled the twentieth-century black experience. Features James Earl Jones, Phylicia Rashad, Laurence Fishburne, Viola Davis, new dramatic readings, and rare footage.”

**Leavey Library: LVYD DVD 9659**

**The Piano Lesson**
“August Wilson’s Pulitzer Prize-winning tale of a family caught between their heritage and a dream for the future. The Charles family clashes over the fate of a magnificent, carved piano that carries their family’s story from their days as slaves. Boy Willie wants to sell the piano to buy a farm—the same fields their family worked as slaves. But his sister, Berniece, refuses to part with it. For her, the piano is their very soul, a legacy of pride and struggle that symbolizes their survival as a family. To resolve the conflict they must first deal with the past.”

**Leavey Library: LVYD DVD 3766**

Selected Electronic Resources

Find scholarly sources about *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom* and playwright August Wilson through these electronic resources, accessible through the USC Libraries homepage at libraries.usc.edu.

**Arts and Humanities Full Text**

**International Index to the Performing Arts**

**Literature Criticism Online**

**Literature Resource Center**

**LitFinder**

**MLA Bibliography**

**WorldCat**